



THE SHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, ETHIOPIA

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INTRODUCTION

The Shire region in Northern Ethiopia is virtually unexplored. Mai Adrasha is a large settlement located 50 km west of Aksum (Axum), which is the ancient capital of the Aksumite Kingdom (ca. first to sixth century CE). The site, the region and its complex cultural heritage provides important information on the sub-Saharan counterpart of the Greco-Roman world. This society with an economic base of agriculture and trade, was in contact with the North and embraced early Christianity. The research area consists of almost 100 km² and is located east of the modern city of Inda Selassie. The Shire Archaeological Project concession comprises of extensive ancient remains dating from the prehistoric to the medieval period including two large sites, Mai Adrasha and Mezaber Adi Menaber.

During the 2017, field school participants will work in Mai Adrasha, a site under threat of destruction due to continuing panning of natural gold by the local population. In addition to survey and intensive excavations, students will participate in community outreach and site management as these are important parts of our work.

Mai Adrasha

The site of Mai Adrasha is located in the province of Tigray in the vicinity of the modern town of Inda Selassie just off the paved road to Axum. It is only about 50km west of the ancient capital of Aksum, a major destination for both Ethiopian pilgrims and foreign tourists. The site itself is an extensive tell, approximately 1 x 1 km. Niall Finneran and Jacke Phillips identified Mai Adrasha in a survey conducted in 2002 and 2003, and data from their work was published only partially (Finneran 2005). From the ceramic assemblages recovered from the surface Finneran and Phillips dated the majority of the tell to the

Proto-Aksumite and Aksumite (120/40 BCE - 800/850 CE) periods. They also identified in limited areas pre-Aksumite and Post-Aksumite (800/850 CE - 1500 CE) remains. The site has not been formally excavated, though it has been extensively looted by the local population, which pans the soil for natural gold (Phillips 2005).

UCLA conducted a short exploratory season at Mai Adrasha in November and December of 2015. The 2016 field school will build upon this work. There is good preservation of the ancient remains and a wide range of archaeological materials, including botanical macro-remains, wood and metal. This project includes a large group of archaeological specialists and students will be exposed to a range of archaeological methods and practices. This project focuses on two main research questions.

1. How was agriculture initiated, developed and employed in ancient Ethiopia?
2. How did the economic circumstances, based on agriculture, craft specialization and trade influence the forming and expansion of the Aksumite state in the western Ethiopian highlands?

In relation to these questions other work will be taking place that students will have a chance to participate in. These will include community archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, site management and preservation. Engaging in such activities mainly entails working with the local community to find alternatives for the panning of gold on the site. The Shire Field School combines teaching American students with training Ethiopian MA students from Addis Ababa University – this should make cultural exchange an integral part of the program. During the five weeks of the field school students get an intensive on-the-job training in archaeological research questions, excavation techniques, survey and finds processing. Students will have the opportunity to work closely with archaeological specialists and are encouraged to take on finds recording tasks. Excursions to important sites in the vicinity and ethnoarchaeological assignments are also part of the training.

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

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 two primary goals: (1) to provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation; and (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.

Student will participate in the following research activities:

Excavations: Students will participate in guided excavations at Mai Adrasha.

Survey: Students will conduct survey and learn how to create plans and maps.

Recording: Students will participate in recording stratigraphy, filling out excavation forms, making top plans and elevations, mapping finds, maintaining an excavation notebook, writing a report, and recording finds.

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

Laboratory: Scheduled lab tasks may include washing, sorting, drawing, and cataloging of finds. If students show interest, they may assist in specialist analysis potentially leading to participating in the publication of the results.

The Shire Field School is a project that provides training for Master's students from Addis Ababa University and undergraduate students in the latest archaeological techniques. All Ethiopian student participants have university training and most have experience in the field. The field school is an opportunity to work together with an international team of archaeologists in order to increase your knowledge and gain practical experience. It is a wonderful way to experience archaeology first hand, and decide whether it is something you want to spend your life doing. Field school experience is very important on your CV if you decide to apply for graduate school in archaeology whether through Anthropology, NELC, Classics, or another department.

This field school forms part of a larger research project directed by Prof. Willeke Wendrich (University of California, Los Angeles) and Rachel Moy (University of California, Los Angeles). Your work within the field school will be part of publication effort directed by the two directors.

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 in your home, dorms or college town. This program operates in a dry highland climate with direct sun exposure. For reasons of modesty and protection against sun and insects you should wear full length pants and preferably long sleeved shirts.

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

PREREQUISITES

None. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will learn 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 in the outdoors. 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, and with your trowel. The work requires patience, discipline and attention to detail.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

Students should arrive to the Axum airport (AXU) on November 12 and will be met their by project staff members. Multiple shuttles will be available based on students' arrival times. Please make sure to arrive in Addis Ababa on the morning of the 12th or the day before to catch a connecting flight to Axum. The domestic airport in Addis Ababa is adjacent to the international airport. When you leave the international arrivals hall turn left and follow the signs for a distance of approximately 600 meters.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email to the project director. Local cell phone numbers and other emergency contact information will be provided to all enrolled students.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Travelers to Ethiopia are required to obtain an Ethiopian visa. To apply for a visa, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after the date of entry. It is recommended that you obtain a visa before arrival from the Ethiopian embassy or consulate and you will be provided with a letter from Prof. Wendrich and a copy of the excavation permit, which will allow you to do so. If for some reason you are unable to acquire a visa before your trip, tourists can obtain a 1 or 3 month tourist visa on arrival at an Ethiopian airport. The fee is \$50 for one month and \$70 for three months, payable in U.S. dollars.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Ethiopian Embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirement.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND DAILY SCHEDULE

Students and staff will be staying in a dedicated excavation house in a quiet neighborhood in Shire/Indaselassie. The accommodations are shared bedrooms, with two or three persons per room and a basic shower and squat toilet in each room. Sheets and pillows will be provided, but participants should bring towels.

Once we start fieldwork, the day is fairly full. We will have breakfast in the dig house at 6:30 am and we leave for the field at 7:15am – arriving there by 7:30 am. A light lunch will be served at 12:00 am. Work in the field concludes each day at 3:30pm. The late afternoons are reserved for lab work and daily lectures. At 6:00 pm we get together in the labs to discuss the day's work. Every work group gives a brief report on the results, problems and successes. During these meetings we will discuss results and interpretations. You are urged to contribute information and suggestions. At 7:00 pm we will eat dinner as a group at a local restaurant.

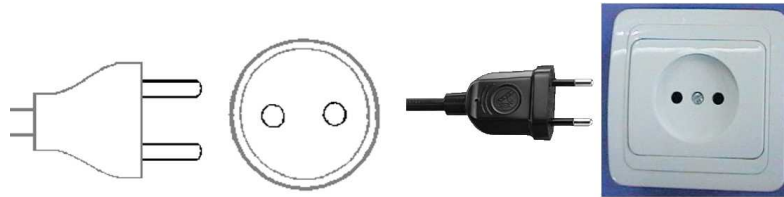
COMPUTERS, MAIL AND CELL PHONES

You are encouraged to bring a laptop, tablet, or phone to keep in contact with loved ones at home. The dig house does not have internet, but if you have an unlocked telephone then you can purchase a local telephone/data SIM card. Unlocked US quad band and smart phones should work in Ethiopia. Basic cell phones can also be purchased in Shire. To be contacted in Ethiopia, your family must dial **011 251** before the number. A week before the start of the field school we will forward an emergency number in Ethiopia in case someone from home needs to contact you.

Another option to get online is to buy a USB modem for 3G internet connection at the local telecommunications office. None of these options are 100% reliable. Be prepared for both power and

internet outages. You may want to advise friends and family not to send emails with large attachments or photos while you are in Ethiopia. Bringing your computer will also facilitate work on assignments and reports.

More generally, where electronics are concerned, Ethiopia has different plugs from the US. They use a European plug with two circular metal pins and operate on **220V 50Hz**. The plug looks like this:



You should check all of your electronics before you come to make sure that they will work. Some people bring surge protectors as well. In Shire there are several shops that sell flashlights that can be recharged.

HEALTH SAFETY

Two vaccinations are legally required to enter Ethiopia: yellow fever and polio. Proof of vaccination consists of the International Certificate of Vaccination (also known as a yellow card.) You should get the vaccination and the yellow card, which specifies the vaccination type and date, at the medical office which gives you the travel vaccinations. The CDC recommends that all travelers to [Ethiopia](#) be fully vaccinated against polio. Adults who have been fully vaccinated should receive a single booster dose of polio vaccine. Students with prescriptions should make sure they have all required documents and medication with them as it may be difficult to receive equivocal prescription medication at the site. While in Ethiopia, students are covered through the IFR Health Insurance for the 5 week Field School period. Insurance information will be sent separately.

The malaria zone in Ethiopia begins below 2,000m altitude. Inda Selassie seat at 1,953m. We will be in the field in the dry season, thus the mosquito population will be low and risk will be minimized. Please discuss with your health-care professional whether you wish to take anti malaria drugs.

We will be at high elevation and outside in the heat most days. The highland sun is intense and a highly protective sun-blocking cream is indispensable to prevent acute as well as long-term skin problems. Due to the “crowding effect,” caused by the gathering in one location of a lot of people from different countries, it is almost inevitable that some minor communicable diseases, such as influenza or diarrhea, will do the rounds. Your personal hygiene may help to prevent this. Food sanitation in Ethiopia is not yet at the same standards as the U.S. and food poisoning will likely happen to at least some members of the group. To help minimize such risks, eat in the busiest restaurant you can find (for this will have a high turnover of food and the local appreciation is usually deserved) and drink only beverages that are boiled (like tea, coffee, or one of the many local hot drinks) or bottled (like water, *Coke* or *Pepsi*, or beer). Do not drink tap water! Restaurants recommended in guidebooks are usually a safe option and people will certainly suggest their favorites! It is recommended that you bring traveler’s diarrhea medication prescribed by your doctor.

GRADING MATRIX

Undergraduate Students		Graduate Students	
Participation	30%	Participation	30%
Field notes	30%	Field notes	30%
Exam on archaeological field methods	20%	Exam on archaeological field methods	20%
5-10 page paper on a subject to be	20%	10-15 page paper on the relation between theory	20%

determined during the Field School

and practical field work on material from Mai Adrasha

SCHEDULE

Our normal work week will be Monday to Friday. Saturday and Sunday are off. Students can use the weekends to venture out and travel the area. On some days, including some of the weekends, excursions will be organized to locations related to the project or the broader cultural context. The schedule below is subject to change, but outlines what will be covered during the field school.

Sunday: Arrival in Aksum and transport to Inda Selassie.

Week 1	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Lecture “Doing research in Ethiopia”	Tigrinya crash course/ Excavation English
Tuesday	Tour of Mai Adrasha and discussion of the location of trenches	Tigrinya crash course / Excavation English
Wednesday	Lecture: “Stratigraphic excavation and field recording I: introduction” Lecture: “Stratigraphic excavation and field recording II: recording deposits”	Tigrinya crash course / Excavation English
Thursday	Field practice: the use of a grid, laying out trenches. Field practice: leveling and total station.	Lecture: “Stratigraphic excavation and field recording III: recording cuts” Stratigraphic excavation and field recording IV: structures”
Friday	Field Work	Lecture: “Seglamen: Pre and Post Aksumite”
Saturday	Excursion to Seglamen	
Sunday	Free	
Week 2	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Field Work	Lecture: “Stratigraphic excavation and field recording V: Stratigraphical Matrix PART 1
Tuesday	Field Work	Lecture: “Stratigraphic excavation and field recording VI: Stratigraphical Matrix PART 2
Wednesday	Field Work	Ethiopian Archaeology: an overview
Thursday	Thanksgiving	
Friday	Field Work	Modern Ethiopian History: an overview
Saturday	Field Work	Lecture: “Lithic analysis, including wear analysis”
Sunday	Free	
Week 3	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Field Work	Lecture: “Pottery analysis”
Tuesday	Field Work	Lecture: “Surveying”
Wednesday	Field Work	Lecture: “Analyzing organic materials”
Thursday	Field Work	Lecture: “First Aid Conservation”
Friday	Field Work	

Saturday Free
Sunday Free

Week 4	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Field Work	Lecture: "Archaeobotanical research"
Tuesday	Field Work	Lecture: "Surveying"
Wednesday	Field Work	Lecture: "Zooarchaeological research"
Thursday	Field Work	Lecture: "Site management"
Friday	Field Work	Lecture: "Ethnoarchaeology"
Saturday	Mapping and Ethnoarchaeology at Mezber Adi Menaber	
Sunday	Free	

Week 5	Morning	Afternoon
Sunday	Field Work	Lecture: "Report Writing"
Monday	Field Work	
Tuesday	Report writing	
Wednesday	Report writing	Lecture: "The Monuments of Aksum"
Thursday	Report writing and Exam	
Friday	Visit of Axum Monuments; End of season dinner in Axum	

EQUIPMENT LIST

Required Tool Kit:

- ❖ Trowel (pointed, 5.5 x 2.5")
- ❖ North arrow / photo scale
- ❖ Large paint brush (4-6")
- ❖ Small paint brush (2")
- ❖ Calipers (for drawing circles)
- ❖ Ruler (for drawing lines)
- ❖ Drawing pencils (automatic)
- ❖ rubber
- ❖ 5 meter tape measure
- ❖ Line levels (2x)
- ❖ Pens
- ❖ Notebook (preferably with lines on one side and mm paper on the other)

Recommended Additional items:

- ❖ Calipers (for measuring mm)
- ❖ 1 meter folding ruler
- ❖ Scale ruler
- ❖ Compass to determine North
- ❖ Camera
- ❖ Drawing board

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

We have created a GoogleMap for you to view which has the location of some of the places which are mentioned in this syllabus.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?hl=en&hl=en&authuser=0&authuser=0&mid=zA3lq_Bjs2tl.kYgcdTzOZKTA

Currency in Ethiopia

Travelers' checks are accepted at some banks in Ethiopia, but not always. It is probably better if you bring your ATM bankcard with you. You should also bring some cash – in major currencies (dollars, Euros and British Pounds are best) for emergency. Local ATM's will charge a fee for withdrawal and for the

exchange rate. ATMs are available in most places, but often break or run out of currency. So it's best to exchange a little foreign currency for Ethiopian birr upon arrival. To avoid any problems with your bank, you should contact them before you leave and inform them that you will be traveling to Ethiopia, otherwise they will likely block your card if you try to use it outside the US. In October 2016, the exchange rate was: **1 US \$ = 22.50 birr.**

Travel

A few Ethiopian guidebooks are available. The Rough Guide and Brandt have recently published new editions and are recommended. In general, traveling in Ethiopia is safe, as long as you are not careless. If you travel often, you know that the best advice is to use common sense and to always try to be aware of your surroundings (eg. don't be oblivious, don't be rude, don't just walk into a church or mosque without checking whether you would be welcome, etc.). In recent years, there has been unrest, but not in the Tigrinya region, which has remained quiet throughout. Petty crime in large cities is a problem, however, so keep a close eye on your personal belongings in Addis Ababa and Aksum.

You will find that at most places you can bargain for things that do not have a set price (and even those can sometimes be negotiated!). Hopefully you will have a chance to experience the great hospitality that Ethiopia has to offer.

Feel free to ask any of the team members about any concerns, questions, etc.

International Cooperation

The Shire Project will host students and professionals of archaeology from the United States, Canada, Netherlands, India, Italy, and of course, Ethiopia. With such an international team it is vital that all participants are willing to respect the cultures other than theirs. It is also important to remember that Ethiopia is a multi-cultural society with both large Christian and Muslim populations. Everyone should respect religious differences.

Weather in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has two main seasons: summer (dry) and winter (wet). We will be in Ethiopia during the dry winter season. Day temperatures should be in the low 70s. They drop slightly at night. Generally, there will be low humidity, but it is likely to rain a few times while we are there.

Dig Attire

Modest dress is recommended as Ethiopia is a conservative country. Also practically covering up is common sense: the sun can be extremely damaging to uncovered skin, so loose clothing that covers most of the body should be worn while working in the outdoors. Make sure that your clothes are not see-through in the sun, both for reasons of modesty and sun protection. A wide brim hat is also vital for shielding yourself from the heat and the damaging effects of sun exposure. A baseball cap is simply not enough; you want a hat with a wide brim to protect your face and neck. It is also a good idea to bring a scarf or bandana for your neck.

You will probably want to bring bug spray (repellent with a higher level of DEET will protect you better).

Walking boots can be useful in survey, but when in the trenches we work in shoes with very smooth soles or even socks to avoid making deep imprints or damaging features. Try to avoid any shoes with heavy rubber soles.

REQUIRED READING

The readings listed below will be posted on-line for students to access in advance of the project on the program Moodle page. You will also receive a manual, which has readings linked to each of the lectures.

- Shire team 2016 and 2017 preliminary reports for the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH).
- Finneran, N. (2005). The Archeological Landscape of the Shire Region, Western Tigray, Ethiopia (Vol. 21, pp. 7–29). Presented at the Annales d’Éthiopie, Editions de la Table Ronde.
- Finneran, N. (2007). “A Sense of Place,” in *The archaeology of Ethiopia*. London; New York: Routledge, Ch. 1 pg. 1-32.
- Phillipson, D. W. (2003). *Aksum : an archaeological introduction and guide*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Phillipson, D. W. (2012). “Aksumite Civilization: An introductory summary,” in *Foundations of an African civilisation : Aksum & the northern Horn, 1000 BC- AD 1300*. Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: James Currey, Ch. 4 pg. 47-50.
- Sernicola, L. & Phillipson, L. (2014). Archaeological Expedition at Aksum (Ethiopia) of the University of Naples“ L’Orientale”-2012 Field Season: Seglamen.
- ADDITIONAL READING & OTHER SOURCES**
- Fattovich, R. (2000). *The Aksum archaeological area: A preliminary assessment* (Vol. 1). Isituto Universitario Orientale, Centro Interdipartimentale di Servizi per l’Archeologia.
- Fattovich, R., & A Bard, K. (2001). The Proto-Aksumite period: an overview (Vol. 17, pp. 3–24). Presented at the Annales d’Éthiopie, Editions de la Table Ronde.
- Fattovich, R., Berhe, H., Phillipson, L., Sernicola, L., Kribus, B., Gaudiello, M., & Barbarino, M. (2010). Archaeological Expedition at Aksum (Ethiopia) of the University of Naples“ L’Orientale”-2010 Field Season: Seglamen.
- Finneran, N. (2007). *The archaeology of Ethiopia*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Finneran, N., Boardman, S., & Cain, C. (2000). A new perspective on the Late Stone Age of the northern Ethiopian highlands: excavations at Anqer Baahti, Aksum, Ethiopia 1996. *AZANIA: Journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa*, 35(1), 21–51.
- Finneran, N., & Phillips, J. (2003). The prehistoric settlement of the Shire region, Western Tigray, Ethiopia: Some preliminary observations. *Nyame Akuma*, (59), 26–33.
- Finneran, N., Phillips, J., Desie, A., Cain, C., Harlow, M., & Hagos, T. (2003). The archaeological landscape of the Shire region, Western Tigray, Ethiopia: A preliminary report on the 2001 field season. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 38(1), 139–147.
- French, C., Sulas, F., & Madella, M. (2009). New geoarchaeological investigations of the valley systems in the Aksum area of northern Ethiopia. *Catena*, 78(3), 218–233.
- Gajda, I., & Dugast, F. (2013). Investigation on the Site of Wakarida (Sa’esi’e Ts’ada Emba Woreda/Tigrai).
- Harrower, M. J., McCorrison, J., & D’Andrea, A. C. (2010). General/specific, local/global: comparing the beginnings of agriculture in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia/Eritrea) and southwest Arabia (Yemen). *American Antiquity*, 75(3), 452–472.
- Harrower, M.J. and A.C. D’Andrea (2014) – Landscapes of State Formation: Geospatial Analysis of Aksumite Settlement Patterns (Ethiopia). *African Archaeological Review*.

- Japp, S., Gerlach, I., Hitgen, H., & Schnelle, M. (2011). Yeha and Hawelti: Cultural contacts between Saba'and D'MT—New research by the German Archaeological Institute in Ethiopia. In *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* (Vol. 41, pp. 145–160).
- Phillipson, D. W. (1993). The antiquity of cultivation and herding in Ethiopia. *Archaeology of Africa : Foods, Metals, and Towns / Edited by Thurstan Shaw, Paul Sinclair, Bassey Andah and Alex Okpoko.*, 334–357.
- Phillipson, D. W. (2003). *Aksum : an archaeological introduction and guide*. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Phillipson, D. W. (2012). *Foundations of an African civilisation : Aksum & the northern Horn, 1000 BC- AD 1300*. Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: James Currey.
- Schmidt, P. R., Curtis, M. C., & Teka, Z. (2008). *The archaeology of ancient Eritrea*. Red Sea Press, Inc.
- Terwilliger, V. J., Eshetu, Z., Huang, Y., Alexandre, M., Umer, M., & Gebru, T. (2011). Local variation in climate and land use during the time of the major kingdoms of the Tigray Plateau in Ethiopia and Eritrea. *Catena*, 85(2), 130–143.
- Wolf, P., & Nowotnick, U. (2010). The Almaqah temple of Meqaber Ga'ewa near Wuqro (Tigray, Ethiopia) (pp. 367–380). Presented at the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, JSTOR.