THE DJANAVARA HILL PROJECT: EXCAVATIONS OF AN EARLY BYZANTINE MONASTERY AT VARNA, BULGARIA

Course ID: ARCH XL 159

July 24-August 21, 2017

DIRECTORS:

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INTRODUCTION

The monastery on Djanavara Hill was one of the biggest and most impressive Early Christian complexes not only at Varna (ancient Odessos), but in the entire Northeastern Balkan Region. It was situated seven kilometers outside the Ancient city and not far from the renowned Via Pontica – the main road along the western Black Sea Coast connecting the Danube Delta and Constantinople. The remains of the monastery were discovered in the beginning of the 20th century by one of the founders of the Bulgarian Archaeology and Varna Archaeological Museum - Hermengild Skorpil. He excavated the monastery church which had an unusual floor plan in the Balkans. The church monumental architecture, the colorful mosaics and the beautiful marble decorations were impressive but possibly the most breathtaking discovery was buried under the altar. In an underground crypt, Skorpil discovered human bones – likely of a person the community believed was a saint – put into an elaborated golden reliquary decorated with semi precious stones. The reliquary itself was placed in a small silver sarcophagus-shaped box, placed in another one made of fine white marble. Known as 'relics', these type of physical remains from a spiritual world was commonly used in Byzantine churches to attract visitors, and their donations, to churches across Christendom.

Skorpil confined his excavations to the church and the colonnaded courtyard in front of it. Unfortunately he did not publish a detailed report of this excavation and all notes and manuscripts were lost after his death. For almost 100 years, no further research was taken at the monastery on Djanavara Hill.

Recently, Prof. Alexander Minchev and his team from Varna Archaeological Museum decided to come back to this important structure and reopen research there. After 20 years of research, we now

know that the church was only the nucleus of a sprawling monetary complex which grew gradually as the site gain in importance and renown. Thus far, archaeologists identified four periods of building and reconstructions between the middle 5th and the early 7th centuries CE.

As research at the site continues archaeologists focus on a number of research questions. First, domestic life and organization and associated technology is unknown. The project is investigation of the water supply system, location & scale of kitchen, location of outbuildings and gate to the complex. Second, life expectancy of the monks (and other residents) and their general health conditions are unknown. Project members are searching for the necropolis so human remains may be excavated and shed light on this issue. Third, archaeologists are attempting create a comprehensive plan of the complex so they may try and understand why the architecture here is so different from the style used in almost every other church and monastery in the Balkans. Finally, archaeologists are not sure about the identity of the saint buried under the alter and try and find inscriptions that may shed light on the name and history of that individual.

This field school provides a glimpse into the Early Byzantine history and culture. It enables students to learn more about the Early Christian art, architecture, theology, cults, monastic art and everyday life. This field school also includes visits to numerous archaeological and historic sites along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast.

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.

THE VENUE

Varna is the largest Bulgarian city along the Black Sea coast. It is an important trade, cultural and tourist center with millenary history and numerous archaeological monuments around it. One of the most famous is the Varna Copper Age necropolis (known as Varna Golden Necropolis). Dated to the second half of the 5th millennium BCE, it is one of the oldest cemeteries of complex societies discovered in Europe. Over 3,000 gold artifacts were recovered there, presenting a unique achievement of the world's oldest goldsmith industry. Varna itself was founded in the early 6th c. BCE during the Great Greek colonization by settlers from Milletos in Asia Minor. Varna was initially known as Odessos - a name of Protothracian origin that is related to the abundant water resources in the area. Its prosperity was based on its excellent harbour and the intensive maritime trade with the Mediterranean world. The Early Byzantine period (4th-6th c. CE) is one of the most remarkable in the

history of Odessos. After the Late Roman administrative reforms, Odessos benefitted from its geographical proximity to the the new capital Constantinople (Istanbul) and the new center of the province Moesia Secunda - Marcianopolis (present-day Devnya). The city grew into an important administrative and religious center. It later became an episcopal see. Not surprising, a cathedral and six churches dated to the Early Byzantine period have been discovered within the city walls. At least ten more churches and two monasteries existed in the vicinity of Odessos.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To prepare students to perform basic excavation tasks: the use of tools, digging techniques, sieving, scraping, etc.
2. To prepare students to perform basic field documentation tasks: the use of measuring and documentation tools and devices, creating written (context sheets, field journals, finds labels, etc.), photo, and graphic documentation (drawing of stratigraphical situations, architectural structures, contexts, etc.).
3. To introduce students to basic find processing procedures: cleaning, selecting and arranging archaeological finds, technical pottery drawing, the organization of finds storage, etc.
4. To introduce students to the Early Byzantine and Early Christian history, archaeology and culture in the region of the Western Black Sea Coast.
5. To introduce students to contemporary standards of work in the Field Archaeology.
6. To introduce students to the health and safety requirements at an archaeological site.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Archaeological fieldwork involves physical work outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. Note that South European (subtropical) climate dominates in the region, making summers hot (25-40^{0}C) and breezy. 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 with the project director – as appropriate.

COURSE SHEDULE

This Field School schedule consists of four modules:

MODULE I - Theoretical module. Consists of three components (30 hours):

1. Lectures and instructions about field methods and practices;
2. Lectures about different aspects of the Late Antique/Early Byzantine Archaeology (4th – 6th C. CE) along the Western Black Sea Coast;
3. Lectures about the history and archaeology of the Balkans, Bulgaria and a range of regional sites.

MODULE II – Practicum. Consists of two components:

1. Field work, including basic practices of excavation and archaeological recordation (105 hours);
2. Workshops dedicated to archaeological finds processing and documentation (35 hours).

MODULE III - Excursions accompanied by lectures, presentations and behind-the-scenes visits to sites of historical/archaeological significance. These include: the Early Byzantine and Medieval fortress at Kaliakra cape, the Early Byzantine fortress and the archaeological reserve Yailata, the Early Byzantine fortress with episcopal basilica and a winery on St. Atanas cape, the archaeological sites and the museums of history in the towns of Devnya (Late Roman city of Marcianopolis) and Balchik (ancient Dionysopolis), the Late Antiquity and Medieval site Madara (UNESCO World Heritage Site), the first capital of Bulgaria – Pliska (VII-XI c. CE) as well as several archaeological sites in Varna and Varna Archaeological Museum. (app. 25 hours).

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

Date	Morning	Afternoon
Day 1 July 24 Mon.		- Meeting students at the airport. Transfer to Varna. - Traditional Bulgarian welcome dinner.
Day 2 July 25 Tue.	Orientation panel	- Visiting the Archaeological Museum - Varna and the historical neighborhood of the city - Town sightseeing and orientation walk.
Day 3 July 26 Wed.	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.	Lecture: "Introduction to the Early Byzantine History with Focus on the Eastern Balkans "
Day 4 July 27 Thur.	Field work Instruction: Introduction to the Field Journal; Contextual Sheets, Log Book and Other Forms.	Lecture: "Introduction to the Early Christian Architecture with Focus on Eastern Roman Empire"
Day 5 July 28 Fr.	Field work Instruction: Three Dimensional Positioning of Finds, Features and Structures.	Lecture: "Early Christian Church: Rite and Architecture"
Day 6 July 29 Sat.	Field work Instruction: Horizontal and Vertical Stratigraphy	Workshop: Recognizing Late Antiquity pottery and lamps
Day 7 July 30 Sun.	Visit to the archaeological sites of Balchik (ancient Dionysopolis), the Early Byzantine and Mediaeval fortress of Kaliakra cape, and the Early Byzantine fortress and the archaeological reserve Yailata.	
Day 8 July 31 Mon.	Day off	
Day 7 August 1 Tue.	Field work Instruction: How to Draw a Ground-plan/elevation-plan/Cross-section Using Scale	Workshop: Recognizing building techniques and materials from Late Antiquity
Day 10 August 2 Wed.	Field work Instruction: Field Photography	- Lecture and Workshop for cleaning, sorting and drawing of ceramic artifacts.
Day 11 August 3 Thur.	Field work Instruction: Excavation Preparation. Preliminary Indoor Research	- Lecture and Workshop for cleaning, sorting and drawing of ceramic artifacts.
Day 12 August	Field work Instruction: Excavation	- Lecture and Workshop for cleaning, sorting and drawing of ceramic artifacts.

4 Fr.	completion. Post excavation work and analyses	
Day 13 August 5 Sat.	Field work	- Lecture and Workshop for cleaning, sorting and drawing of ceramic artifacts.
Day 14 August 6 Sun.	Field work	- Free time
Day 15 August 7 Mon.	Visit to Devnya (ancient Marcianopolis), Late Antiquity and Medieval site Madara (UNESCO World Heritage Site), and the first Medieval capital of Bulgaria (Pliska).	
Day 16 August 8 Tue.	Field work	Lecture: "Every Day Life in the Early Christian Monastery (According to Historical and Archaeological Evidence)"
Day 17 August 9 Wed.	Field work	Workshop on Early Byzantine numismatics
Day 18 August 10 Thur.	Field work	Workshop on Early Christian mosaic art
Day 19 August 11 Fri.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds
Day 20 August 12 Sat.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds
Day 21 August 13 Sun.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds
Day 22 August 14 Mon.	Visit to the Early Byzantine fortress with episcopal basilica and a winery on St. Atanas cape.	
Day 23 August 15 Tue.	Day off	
Day 24 August 16 Wed.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds

Day 25 August 17 Thur.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds
Day 26 August 18 Fr.	Field work	Workshop: Cleaning, sorting and documenting of archaeological finds
Day 27 August 19 Sat.	Field work	Exam
Day 28 August 20 Sun.	Field work	- Free afternoon - Dinner and farewell party
Day 29 August 21 Mon.	Departure – return home or further travel	

Course structure may be subject of change upon directors' discretion

Typical work day

6.30 - 7.10 am	- Breakfast
7.30 - 8:00 am	- Lecture on field archaeology's methods and practices (at the site)
8:00 am - 1.30 pm	- Field-training at the excavation site (with 30 min break)
1.30 -5.00/5:30 pm	- Lunch and siesta
5.00/5.30 -7.00/7:30 pm	- Lectures and workshops
7.30 - 8.30 pm	- Dinner

In case of rainy days lectures, sites visit and lab work will be performed.

GRADING MATRIX

Students will be graded based on their work as follows.

% of Grade	Activity
20 %	Exam (test)
10 %	Excavating (use of tools, digging, scraping, brushing, cleaning, sieving, etc.)
10 %	Keeping a field journal and filling in context sheet and labels
10 %	Scale drawing (ground plan/ cross section/ specific archaeological structure or feature); Measuring and leveling
10 %	Photography
10 %	Finds processing: washing and sorting, labeling and registration
10 %	Artifact drawing (pottery)
10 %	Numismatic workshop
10 %	Mosaic workshop

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of the field school is 85% of the course hours. Any significant delay or early departure from an activity will be calculated as an absence from the activity. An acceptable number of absences for a medical or other personal reasons

will not be taken into account if the student catches up on the field school study plan through additional readings, homework or 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 Varna Excavation Project will host students and professionals from across the world. With such an international team, it is vital that all students respect the IFR Student Code of Conduct, local culture, and local rules and laws.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Work shoes (preferably closed toe shoes like sneakers or running shoes);
- A set of walking or hiking shoes for the excursions;
- Clothing suitable for outdoor activities (consider weather conditions from hot and sunny to rainy and chilly);
- A light raincoat for possible rainy and windy days is recommended;
- Wide brim hat for the field work;
- Medication - It is not necessary to bring over-the-counter medicine 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;
- Converter for an EU type electricity wall-plug if needed;
- A good attitude for work, fun, study, and discoveries.

ACCOMMODATION

Students will reside at Hotel Cherno More (http://www.chernomorebg.com/home) in downtown Varna in comfortable rooms with two to three beds each (bathrooms with shower and WC, TV, air-conditioning and fridge). Laundry service and free Wi-Fi are available at the hotel. Participants are not expected to bring any additional equipment, beddings or towels. Single rooms are available upon request for the supplement of 120 EUR per week. Staying an extra day at the hotel costs 30 EUR (per night per person). The distance from the hotel to the site is app. 8 km/4.5 mi, and it takes app. 15 min drive. Daily shuttle service will bring students to and from the site.

MEALS

Three meals per day are covered by tuition. Meals usually take place (except the brown-bag lunches during the excursions) at a local restaurant. This field school can accommodate vegetarians and individuals with lactose intolerance diet. Vegans and people with kosher and gluten-free diets may not be accommodated at this location

TRAVEL

Students will be met by project staff at the Varna Airport (VAR) on July 24 at 5:00 pm. The meeting point is at the arrival area. Look for a person carrying the “Balkan Heritage Program” sign. Students will be transferred from the airport to the field house by taxi. If you arrive by bus from Sofia or from elsewhere in the Balkans, contact project staff for meeting arrangements.

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.

Bus lines connect Varna with Burgas, Sofia (the Bulgarian capital) and Plovdiv.

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. Varna is the third biggest Bulgarian town and offers medical facilities, first aid, and numerous pharmacies. Proper personal hygiene and resting after a hard day of field work are good prevention methods against the summer flu.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Bulgarian dialing code: +359

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

Measure units: degree Celsius (ºC), 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

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via shared Dropbox folders.

Lowden, J. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art.* Phaidon Inc Ltd, 1997 (Chapters 1 – 3)

Maas, M., eds. *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2005. (Chapter 10)

Krautheimer, R., Ć., Slobodan. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. The Yale University Press Pelican History of Art, 1993 (Parts 2 – 4)

Minchev, A. *The Mosaics of the Early Christian Church at Djanavara by Varna*. – In: Pontica Christiana, 1. Constanta (Ronmania), 2009, pp.18 – 36.

Minchev, A. *Early Christian Reliquaries from Bulgaria (4th – 6th century AD)*. Varna, 2003, pp.15 – 18, Cat. N 1 –3

Ovcharov, D., N. Ovcharov. *Early Byzantine Architecture and Art in Bulgaria*. In: Athena Review, Volume 3, no.1, 2001, pp.47-52.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Brown, P. *The world of Late Antiquity*. New York, 1971

Cormack, R. *Byzantine Art (Oxford History of Art)*. Oxford University Press, 2000

Dalton, O. M. *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*. London, 1911

Dalton, O. M. *Early Christian Art*. London, 1925

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

Jones, A. H. M. *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*. Volume 1 and 2. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986

Mango, C. *History of World Architecture: Byzantine Architecture.* Rizzoli International Publishing, New York, 1978.

Painter, K. *Gold and Silver in the Late Roman World*. British Museum Publications, London 1977

Renfrew, C. and P. Bahn. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. Thames & Hudson; Fifth Edition, 2008

Velkov, V. *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity (Studies and Materials)*. Amsterdam 1977.