

# MALVIEU: A MEDITERRANEAN HILLFORT OF THE EARLY 1<sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM BCE, FRANCE

Course ID: TBA (to be posted by December 15, 2017)

July 1-July 28, 2018

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR:

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## INTRODUCTION

The site of Malvieu occupies the higher part of a limestone hill, dominating the small valley of the Salesses in the heart of the Montagne Noire (Black Mountain) in southern France. It is located on the Mediterranean side of the mountain, about 60 km away from modern-day Narbonne and 45 km from Béziers. In the lowlands, close to the sea, emerged a dense settlement during the 6<sup>th</sup> century, of which the predominant feature is a number of enclosed sites with ramparts built in dry stone, often located at the top of a hill. These hillforts, called *oppida*, have a surface of about 2 to 11 hectares. Their inner part consists of houses built with stone and mud-bricks and connected by narrow streets, giving to the urban fabric a very dense aspect. Such settlement pattern is considered very different from the one existing during the previous period.

It is generally thought that this change is linked to the founding of Greek colonies in the neighboring areas, first in Marseilles (*Massalia*, 600 BC), then in Sant Martí d'Empuries (*Emporion*, c. 575 BC). As a reaction to the intensification in seaborne trade in the North Western Mediterranean, the native populations developed new types of social organization, characterized by a new, more productive economy, allowing for surpluses. The acquisition of these surpluses led to the development of an enclosed settlement.

Excavated since 2001, the site of Malvieu challenges such simplistic hypotheses. Occupation began at the site in the Late Bronze Age, sometime around 1000 BC, and ending around 500 BC. The site begins as an open hilltop settlement: only the northern cliff provided a natural defense. Although very steep (around 30-40 %), the other parts of the site were accessible from the valley. From its very beginning, the 2 hectares of the site seem to be occupied. The original form of architecture which characterizes the site is made of mixed stone, clay and lumber-- exploiting in a very efficient way the local resources— which seemed to appear at this time period.

Towards 800 BC, a stone rampart 325m long, 2m thick, and probably 5m high, was built in order to protect the western, southern and eastern accesses to the site. The construction of this rampart marked the beginning of a densification of the inner urban area, as well as diversification in the size and architecture of the houses. In other words, as the population grew the social differentiation increased. As early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Malvieu would have appeared as a hillfort which inner occupation was very dense and characterized by blocks of houses built with stone and clay, the very definition of the *oppidum* (plur. *oppida*) of Mediterranean Gaul. Such a fact suggests that the origins of the Iron Age settlement patterns previously described are rather linked with long-term native dynamics rooted in the Late Bronze Age, rather than with the growth of seaborne trade.

The 2018 season will have the objective of investigating further these native dynamics, through the study of yet unexcavated features and the extension of the excavation area of one third. This is a typical operation that allows for the delineation of the main construction and for the excavation of part of the stratigraphy. At the end of the season, we can therefore expect to have significantly increased our knowledge of the morphology of the settlement (density of the occupation, nature of the architecture) at least during its last phase, and to gather elements for a functional interpretation of the different spaces (mainly through the study of artifacts and ecofacts distribution). This will allow for an assessment of whether the exceptional features uncovered at this point are unique on the site, or if they repeat themselves according to a regular pattern, thus clarifying the intensity of social differentiation as well as the nature of the social structure. We will therefore shed a new light on a nearly unknown period.

#### ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

**Credit Units:** Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institutions prior to attending this field school.

**Transcripts:** An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One additional transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no additional cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvrkl>.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this field school is to reach excellence in all the aspects linked to the archaeological excavation and to explore the possibilities of the archaeological investigation. It will provide an introduction to the archaeology of the Mediterranean and Western European Iron Age. Through the research questions structuring the excavation project, it will encourage a critical, fact-based approach of past societies, and a basic understanding of the dynamics of social complexity.

To achieve this objective, we will introduce students to the construction of an archaeological research, from the **recovery of the data in the field to the construction of short-range hypothesis concerning the evolution of an archaeological site**. Emphasis will be put on every stage of the **field research**, from the very beginning of the excavation to the study of the artifacts (cataloging, dating, and basics of drawing). One of the specific aspects of the Malvieu archaeological excavation is the use of innovative field recording methods, based on the systematic use of 3D scanner to record the archaeological feature and the stratigraphy. Through the use of this methods and their implementation by the students themselves, **we will also teach them how our own practices impact the perception we have of past societies**.

The course will take place in Malvieu itself and in Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, a small town in the French Hérault *département*, some 55 km north from Carcassonne and 130 km east of Toulouse. Student activity will focus on excavation practices and in artifact analysis.

Student will participate in the following research activities:

**Excavations:** Students will participate in guided excavations in Malvieu, Saint-Pons-de-Thomières. Paired with a French student and under the supervision of the scientific staff, they will first participate in the opening of a new excavation area and successively take charge of the excavation of an archaeological feature or a part of it.

**Recordation:** Students will be responsible, *under the supervision of the scientific staff*, of the recording of the observations made during the excavation. This recording will be made with the supports of tablets giving access to the excavation database. 2D graphic drawing of plans and sections will be made on paper, and the students will participate in 3D recording of the significant elements characterizing the stratigraphic sequence.

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

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

The course begins on Sunday, July 1 and will meet every weekday and for a half-day on Saturdays until July 28th. An intensive lecture series during the first days of the project will provide the cultural and archaeological background to the fieldwork. Periodic presentation of the project results by members of the scientific staff will take place during the remainder of the course.

#### **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 Mediterranean France. During the day, temperatures can reach up to 90F. Humidity is relatively low and some insects may be found close to the excavation area. In order to be protected from sunburn and/or insects you will not be allowed to work in shorts or tank tops at the site.

Working in another country, together with foreign people, can be demanding when physical stress increases the discomfort linked to cultural differences. Although the differences between US and French students are not particularly significant, they lie in the small things of everyday life– insignificant details that become very important when repeatedly observed. If you are subject to grumpiness when tired, or if you are not willing to do any concessions to other ways of life other than your own, you should probably avoid this excavation. If you have any concern regarding these aspects, please consult with the project director.

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

## PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for participation in this field school. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. You will have to follow instructions. 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. They are also required to keep in mind that any instruction given by the scientific staff is not given for the sole pleasure of displaying authority. It is based on experience, and if we say something it is because we believe it is important for young archaeologists to *embody* certain gestures, and to be aware of the best practices required in an archaeological excavation.

Last, but not least, you will be embedded in an international team, with half the members being French (or other European nationalities). You will have to work with them, and to live with them... as they will have to live with you. English will be the language of the excavation, and French students will be required to speak correct English. However, and beyond language issues, you (as the French students) have to be aware that in spite of sharing many common points, French and US people have their differences. The mental and physical strains of fieldwork can cause that even tiny differences of habit and behavior, can affect your patience. Every member of the excavation team, regardless of his/her nationality or identity will be requested to display *patience*, *tolerance* and *respect* towards the others. These are also the values structuring archaeological research.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the field school, students will be able to:

- Understand the different elements of an archaeological field project and the relationships between these elements. The staff will take every measure to explain the development of the campaign strategy in order to provide as much insight as possible in the research project and in the nature of decision-making in field archaeology.
- Apply standard excavation methods to archaeological contexts: students will be taught the use of any usual tool, and will be taught how to observe stratigraphic or taphonomic evidence through digging.
- Use standard recording techniques to document excavation results. 2D drawing of plans and sections and recording of observation in SU files will be made directly by the students, under the supervision of members of the staff.
- Display a basic knowledge of new recording techniques (3D). Recording (through the use of an Artec Eva handyscan) will be taught on-field, according to the advancement of the study of stratigraphy. Post-recording treatment will be explained: a lecture is scheduled during the first week, and demonstrations will be made during the lab sessions of the afternoon.
- Undertake preliminary processing of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts: pottery is very abundant (although not well preserved) and metal and stone artifacts are often found. Animal (and on very rare occasions human) bones are very present in the occupation layers. Basic procedure for cleaning and conditioning of all these remains will be taught and implemented by the students.
- Undertake preliminary analysis of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts: the cataloguing of pottery, stone and metal artifacts will be taught to and implemented by the students. Drawing will be explained to, and practiced as much as possible by the students. A lecture about archaeo-zoological analysis principles will be given by David Cochard (assistant Professor, University of Bordeaux) during the first week. Day-to-day work on identification and cataloging will be supervised by a graduate student specializing in archaeo-zoology.

## GRADING MATRIX

We firmly believe that the grade must not reflect the quality of the student as future scholar, but his/her dedication and involvement in the learning experience and in the scientific "adventure" this excavation is. Therefore, we propose a grading matrix avoiding "formal exams", and rather focusing on the active involvement of the student. We hope that such matrix would make the students more comfortable, but also that it will reflect more directly on their desire to engage with archaeology.

**30%:** Attend and participate each scheduled day, including lecture and field and laboratory work.

**30%:** Be active and accurate in the recording of archaeological data and on the exchange of ideas about possible interpretations. Accuracy in recording (2D drawing, 3D recording, stratigraphic description and analysis) will be discussed directly on the field, in front of the evidence, with staff members. The staff will focus on the progression of the students, rather than on their accomplishments, which can be expected to be modest, at least at the very beginning of the field school.

Involvement in the exchange of ideas will be favored by day-to-day exchange with the staff and among the whole team, but also by the organization at least once a week (probably more frequently in the last two weeks, when clear results will begin to emerge), of on-site presentations by the US-French pairs, who will have to explain their work, the way they implemented it and their results to their colleagues. Such a process should help to clarify the outcomes of the archaeological excavation, and to dominate the specific vocabulary of archaeological description and analysis. Other presentations may take place on other opportunities, according to the advancement of the excavation. All these oral reports will be made in English.

**20%:** Description and analysis of artifacts. Much of the lab time will be devoted to explain, through the direct observation of the artifacts, the techniques used during the LBA and the EIA to make pottery, metal (mostly copper-alloy, but also some iron) and stone objects. The students will be asked to analyze specific artifacts, as far as possible those found in their own excavation sector, and to explain how they think they were made and used. Lab time will provide plenty of informal time for such discussions. We do not expect the students to be able to develop perfect technological analysis in the framework of the field school, but we will base our evaluation on their progression.

**20%:** General assessment of the progression of the student and of his/her involvement in the project by the scientific staff. Such assessment will be based on the day-to-day observation of the student performance and on weekly staff debate about that point, but also in direct and individual exchanges with the students (at least twice during the excavation) that will allow the staff for understanding and addressing the difficulties that may hinder individual progression.

## TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

The meeting point will be at Mazamet (Tarn, France) Train Station, on Sunday July 1<sup>st</sup>. For those reaching Toulouse by airplane (probably the most direct connection from the US): take tram Line 1 to the *Palais de Justice* station (terminus of the line), and the metro L2 to "Marengo SNCF" station, and there take a train to Mazamet (6 trains between 11.44 am and 5.40 pm on July 1st).

For students reaching Toulouse from Paris by train, change train at Toulouse-Matabiau station towards Mazamet.

Mazamet is 40 km away from Saint-Pons, but is the nearest train station. Pick-up by staff members will be organized according to the hour of arrival of the students, in two or three rotations.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, or if you have any other problem, please call or

text project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

## VISA REQUIREMENTS

US citizens do not need visa to enter France for stay up to 90 days, including short academic visits. France is part of the Schengen agreement. Immigration officer may ask you to show sufficient funds for your stay and a return ticket. No vaccines are required.

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

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Housing will be provided in Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, a charming town of southern France, in the valley of the Jaur, in a small structure called the *Campotel du Jaur* (<http://www.campoteldujaur.fr>). Students will be housed in small but comfortable apartments of 4 beds, each one with its own kitchen and bathroom. Apartments will be shared between the US and French students. Most of the meals will be prepared by the students themselves. In the evening, the dinner will be a communal event with the entire team while lunch will be taken separately in each apartment (to provide time for a possible nap). Shopping for ingredients will be done by the staff for the whole team. In such conditions, some accommodation can be made for vegetarians, but at the risk of monotony in the diet (rice, noodles, etc.). Specialized diets such as vegan, kosher, and gluten free will be difficult to accommodate.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1 (July 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>):

- Sunday      1:00 pm-afternoon: students are picked-up in Mazamet and gathered in Saint-Pons.  
6:00 pm: Preliminary introductions  
8:00 pm: Group dinner
- Monday      6:30 am: meet at minibus, leave from Saint-Pons for Malvieu.  
7:00 am: transportation of the tools to the site, cleaning of the excavation area.  
Monday morning: The team will be divided into 2 groups. Each group will have a separate visit of the site (2h.)  
11 am: snack  
2.30 pm: lunch  
4.00 pm: Lecture: "The Iron Age fortifications in the North Western Mediterranean". Prof. P. Moret, CNRS.  
6.00 pm: Lecture: "Archaeological field methods: an introduction- I": Dr. Alexis Gorgues, Université Bordeaux Montaigne.  
8.30 pm: Dinner.
- Tuesday      6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.  
7.00 am-2 pm: excavation (snack break at 11 am).  
2.30 pm: lunch  
5.00 pm: Lecture: "The birth of the Iron Age communities in the Western Mediterranean". Dr. Alexis Gorgues, Université Bordeaux Montaigne.  
8.30 pm: Dinner.
- Wednesday      6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.

7.00 am-2 pm: excavation (snack break at 11 am).  
2.30 pm: lunch  
5.00 pm: Lecture: "War, warrior, and social differentiation during the Mediterranean Iron Age. Dr. Alexandre Bertaud, Université Bordeaux Montaigne.  
8.30 pm: Dinner.

Thursday 6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.  
7.00-2 pm: excavation (snack break at 11 am).  
2.30 pm: lunch  
5.00 pm: Lecture: "Archaeological field methods: an introduction- II": Dr. Alexis Gorgues, Mr. Florent Comte, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, UMR 5607 Ausonius  
8.30 pm: Dinner

Friday 6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.  
7.00 am-2.00 pm: excavation (snack break at 11 am).  
2.30 pm: lunch  
5.00 pm: Lecture: "Archaeozoology of complex societies: an introduction": Dr. David Cochard, Université de Bordeaux.  
8.30 pm: Dinner

Saturday Morning: Excavation  
Afternoon: Free

Sunday: Free

### **Week 2-4 (July 9-26):**

Daily schedule for the four weeks of field work Monday through Friday, half day Saturdays:

6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.  
7.00 am-2 pm: excavation (snack break at 11 am).  
2.30 pm: lunch  
5.00 pm: Lab work  
8.30 pm: Dinner

**Friday July 27: cleaning of the lab and of the apartments.**

**Saturday July 28:** Return home.

### **EQUIPMENT LIST**

Students must bring these items to the field. These tools will help in your research and accommodations.

- Sturdy work boots
- Hat (wide brimmed hat are usually best for outdoor working conditions)
- Sunscreen
- Daypack/backpack
- Sheets for a single bed.
- Flashlight
- Tent with waterproof cover
- Any medication you need and prescription medication to last for the duration of the field school

- Water bottle, at least 2 liters
- Insect repellent

### **MANDATORY READINGS**

Please note that French scholars are not used to writing in English, and tend to privilege their native language. Papers published in English do not really focus on our area, but rather on neighboring ones. They deal mainly with issues linked to exchange and trade, and there are only a few publications about settlement dynamics. The following readings intend to give some context (Dietler 2010 and Sanmartí 2004) and to introduce research questions specific to the Mediterranean at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC (Crielaard 2013 and Nijboer 1998).

Crielaard (J.P), Cities. In: Raaflaub, K. A., Van Wees, H. *A companion to Archaic Greece*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, pp. 349-372.

Dietler (M.), *Archaeology of colonialism: consumption, entanglement and violence in ancient Mediterranean France*. University of California Press, 2010.

Nijboer (A.), *From household production to workshops; archaeological evidence for economic transformations, pre-monetary exchange and urbanisation in central Italy from 800 to 400 BC*. Groningen, University of Groningen, 1998, pp. 1-49 and 208-237.

[http://www.lcm.rug.nl/lcm/teksten/teksten\\_uk/lcm\\_uk.htm](http://www.lcm.rug.nl/lcm/teksten/teksten_uk/lcm_uk.htm)

Sanmartí (J.), From local groups to early states: the development of complexity in protohistoric Catalonia. *Pyrenae*, 35(1), 2004, pp. 7–41.

### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

Gorgues, (A.), Trade in a liminal zone: commercial encounter and transformations in the Iron Age North West Mediterranean. In: Armit, I., Potrebica, H., Črešnar, M., Mason, P., Büster, L. (eds), *Cultural encounters in Iron Age Europe*, Archaeolingua, Serie Minor, 38, 2016, pp. 167-210.

[https://www.academia.edu/28365635/2016\\_Trade\\_in\\_a\\_liminal\\_zone\\_commercial\\_encounter\\_and\\_transformation\\_in\\_the\\_Iron\\_Age\\_North\\_West\\_Mediterranean](https://www.academia.edu/28365635/2016_Trade_in_a_liminal_zone_commercial_encounter_and_transformation_in_the_Iron_Age_North_West_Mediterranean)

### **Highly recommended for readers of French:**

Garcia (D.), *La Celtique Méditerranéenne*, Paris, Errance, 2014.