



CONNECTICUT  
COLLEGE

# THE BONCUKLU PROJECT, TURKEY: INVESTIGATING THE SPREAD OF FARMING IN THE NEAR EAST

*Course ID: ARCH 350B*  
*July 15- August 14, 2021*

## DIRECTORS

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## OVERVIEW

Turkey has evidence of one of the earliest transitions from hunting and gathering to village farming in the world, but the early Neolithic of central Turkey is poorly understood. The Boncuklu project is investigating the appearance of the first villages and farmers in central Turkey. At Boncuklu we are also exploring the origins of the remarkable symbolism seen in paintings and reliefs at the nearby famous Neolithic town of Çatalhöyük. Well preserved decorated Neolithic houses and artifacts are notable features of Boncuklu, apparently representing ritual practices that are direct predecessors to those seen at Çatalhöyük. Working alongside experts in the analysis of evidence from early farming communities and professional excavators, students will learn a range of archaeological research techniques and methods and about the wider context of Anatolian archaeology.

The course will take place at the Neolithic site of Boncuklu, dating to c. 8500 BCE, the earliest village in central Anatolia and the predecessor of the famous Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük. The site is located in the Konya Plain in central Turkey, 40 km east of the major city of Konya, a

famous Medieval centre where the 'whirling dervish' sect was founded by the Medieval philosopher Celaleddin Rumi. There are many medieval buildings of the Seljuk period to visit in Konya, a booming city. The field school also includes visits to other sites and museums in central Turkey including Çatalhöyük, the dramatic Neolithic site of Aşıklı, with evidence of repeated rebuilding of houses and an experimental village. There will be an opportunity to visit Aşıklı, which is located about 3 hours east of Konya in Cappadocia, also famous for its underground cities and painted medieval churches. Students will also visit a number of remote Byzantine and Hittite sites around Konya.

#### 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 institution 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 more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

#### PREREQUISITES

No prior experience in archaeology is required. 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. 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.

### DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. [insuremytrip.com](http://insuremytrip.com) or [Travelguard.com](http://Travelguard.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by any number of unforeseen circumstances, including revised decisions by local permitting agencies, political unrest, and changes in the weather. While this schedule represents the best of the director(s) intentions, we - students and staff alike - need to be adaptable and tolerant of necessary alterations. This adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research.

This program operates in a hot Mediterranean summer environment. During the day, temperatures in the shade fluctuate between 70°-90°F. However, under the sun they may reach 80°-90°F. Humidity is relatively low and some mosquitoes and/or flies may be close to the excavation area and dig house. In order to be protected from sunburn and/or insects students will not be allowed to work in shorts or tank tops at the site. Good footwear, working cloths, and sun protective gear (hat, sunglasses and sunscreen) are required.

We live in a friendly but conservative small rural community. We must respect local customs so clothes that do not reveal any flesh are appropriate for these reasons as well as to protect you from the sun. In contrast to hot daytime temperatures it can be cool in the evening and morning.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

### 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 three primary goals: (1) to provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation; (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; and (3) to introduce students to the Neolithic and later archaeology of Anatolia.

The course primary directive is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practiced in the field. Students will also learn how archaeologists study the origins of agriculture

in an area where it first began and the spread of agriculture outside of such primary areas of origin.

## PROGRAM

*Excavations:* Students will participate in guided excavations at the site of Boncuklu, excavating Neolithic houses, burials and middens.

*Survey:* Students will be instructed in use of survey equipment and on-site survey.

*Recording:* Students will participate in filling out specific excavation forms, planning, AND recording the excavated stratigraphy.

*Flotation and sieving:* participation in retrieval processes for archaeobotanical and other finds

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

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

## ASSESSMENT & OUTCOMES

Undergraduate Student grading:

- **33% of Grade:** One essay on Anatolian Neolithic archaeology
- **67% of Grade:** Fieldwork participation, assessed in relation to competence in
  - Excavation tool use and observation of stratigraphic phenomena
  - Accurate and precise planning
  - Comprehensive, accurate, precise and insightful compilation of context and feature records
  - Contribution to retrieval processes such as flotation and residue sorting
  - Effective on site survey
  - Contribution to team activity

Students completing this course will have significantly developed excavation and recording skills and thus be able to operate more independently and take on more responsibility on future archaeological fieldwork; they will have achieved a better understanding of the whole archaeological process including interpretation, which will be a good preparation for graduate work; they will have developed significant transferable skills relating to teamwork, initiative, work to demanding deadlines, adaptability in the face of challenging conditions, all prized by a wide range of employers and key to success on future field projects of whatever nature.

## TRAVEL, ROOM & BOARD, & SAFETY LOGISTICS

**Disclaimer for 2021 Season.** The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, such as the presence and availability of a vaccine, new travel protocols, and updated local policies.

An IFR field school is designed to provide positive, constructive experiences for communities, students, and researchers. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the following protocols have been developed based on the assumption that any participant in an IFR field school may be an asymptomatic carrier of SARS COVID-19. Our goal, with these protocols, is to reduce the possibility for COVID-19 transmission among participants, staff, and local community members. IFR depends on the complete and sustained commitment of all students to stay healthy and to help others stay healthy. On enrollment, students commit to comply with all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 avoidance policy as well as any/all policies specific to their respective IFR field school.

### **PRIOR TO TRAVEL**

Students must arrange a test for current infection for COVID-19 through a RT-PCR test for themselves in their home location within 72 hours prior to arrival at the destination and upload proof of negative result to their IFR application portal.

After demonstrating they tested negative, students must take all precautions possible to ensure they remain COVID-19 free prior to and during travel to the field school. Students should plan to travel in the safest manner that they are able (e.g., avoid flights with long layovers and multiple connections). In addition, we require the following from all students: use of a face mask during travel to, from, and on airlines, ferries, trains, busses, and the like; regular washing of hands; and, in so far as possible, maintain social distancing of 6 feet / 2 meters in airports and other spaces.

### **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Participants in excavations in Turkey require a research visa. As the excavation permit holder from the Turkish government, Professor Baird arranges the research visas involving a project permit application through the Turkish embassy in London. He will be in touch about the relevant forms that participants are required to complete and send to him for these purposes. Research visas are issued through Turkish consulates in your home countries, for example, there are 6 consulates in the USA which issue these visas on receiving the approval from Ankara. Issuing of research visas normally occurs in June. Consult with Professor Baird about which consulate would work for you.

**Please note that passports should have minimum 6 months remaining validity at the time you will enter Turkey.**

### **TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)**

Students are responsible for making your own travel arrangements, once the timing of permit issue by the Turkish authorities is confirmed (see note below).

The closest city to the site is Konya. There is an international airport at Konya although most flights route through Istanbul. Flying to Konya is easiest, and Professor Baird will meet IFR students at that airport. Alternatively, one can fly to Istanbul and travel by high-speed train (4 hours) from Istanbul to Konya, although these trains book up quickly. Professor Baird will also

meet people at the train station in Konya if required. You will be driven from collection point to the site in the dig vehicle.

If your flight is delayed, you missed your connection, or you are held at the border, please call, text or email the project director immediately. A local cell phone number will be provided to enrolled students.

Students will arrive on Wednesday, July 14. Instruction ends on the afternoon of Friday, August 13. Students should prepare for onward travel or return home on Saturday, August 14.

**PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT BOOK FLIGHTS UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY THE FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS. MINOR CHANGES TO THE MEETING POINT AND STARTING DATE (BY A DAY OR TWO) MAY BECOME NECESSARY IN THE LIGHT OF ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES WHO ISSUE THE OFFICIAL PERMIT FOR THE EXCAVATION.**

### **COVID Testing / Screening On Arrival**

All arrivals into Turkey will be subject to a medical evaluation for symptoms of coronavirus, including temperature checks. Any passengers showing symptoms including high fever, coughing or respiratory difficulties will be required to undergo a PCR test (a swab test) for coronavirus. In the event that a test returns a positive result, you will be provided with medical treatment at a facility determined by the Ministry of Health or, if preferred, at a private medical facility in Turkey. You should check whether your health insurance policy includes coverage for Covid-19. You will need to phone Professor Baird in such an eventuality (phone numbers will be provided provided).

You will need to complete a passenger locator form prior to arriving in Turkey. Details will be provided by your airline.

You will be asked to provide the residential address of where you will stay, within the borders of Turkey, and your contact information.

You may be asked by your airline to provide personal information regarding COVID-19 that may be shared with Ministry of Health and third countries when necessary. Anyone who knowingly provides false information may be prevented from travelling.

### **On the Ground**

The dig house complex is located immediately next to the site, so no additional travel arrangements are required in this regard.

Travel at weekends for leisure purposes may be restricted depending on Covid19 circumstances. Trips relating to the field school programme, for example to other archaeological sites, will be carefully managed in regard to COVID-19 circumstances, especially at the sites we might visit.

## **LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS**

### **Local Community**

The site and dig house are located next to a small Turkish village, although we are based within our own self-contained compound. We have good relations with the village community and respect local sensibilities and traditions, dressing appropriately in that regard (guidelines will be issued preceding the excavation).

Normally the excavation has many visitors from local communities as well as Turkish and foreign tourists. We will probably limit such public access according to Coronavirus conditions in summer 2021. Team members regularly visit village shops in normal seasons, but we will also limit such contact.

We will explain these circumstances to the local community through the local mayor and village head, with whom we have good relationships and who can issue relevant public announcements. We can also communicate health concerns through these communication channels and through the site guards who are community members. We will, thus, create our own isolated 'social bubble' amongst the excavation team.

### **Public Spaces and Services**

The wearing of masks is mandatory at all times outside the home throughout Turkey. This includes, but is not limited to, all public places, including streets, side streets, parks, gardens, picnic areas, markets, seaside and public transportation including Metro, buses, taxis and ferries. Masks are also mandatory in all shops, restaurants, hairdressers and barber shops. Smoking in open areas (streets, avenues and other open public areas) is banned.

Shopping centres, markets, restaurants and hairdressers will be open from 10am to 8pm throughout the week, with restaurants only providing takeaway services.

Those who do not abide by COVID-19 restrictions may be issued with a fine of 900 TL (approximately £100). Follow Turkish announcements and local media for up to date information.

Interaction with the local community must be limited to situations where everyone can maintain the required 6-foot/2-meter physical distance, wear masks, and ideally be outside.

## **FACE MASKS / FACE COVERINGS**

All students, faculty and staff are expected to wear face coverings. Face masks, along with social distancing, are among the most effective ways of minimizing the spread of the coronavirus.

The objective of wearing a mask is to capture potentially infectious droplets from the wearer. Therefore:

- Masks or respirators that are equipped with an "exhalation valve" are not permitted, unless covered by another mask.
- Neck fleeces (gaiter masks) are considered the least effective form of face masks, and are not permitted. (The material found in gaiters tend to break down larger droplets into smaller particles that are more easily carried away in the air.)

- Folded bandanas and knitted masks are ineffective and are not permitted.
- Masks must be worn so as to cover both the mouth and nose. If your mask becomes loose, it can be tightened by twisting the ear loops.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

IFR students will occupy well ventilated shared rooms in the dig house complex and large well ventilated tents, in social pods of 2-3 students. These pods will work together and eat together. Single occupancy isolated sleep spaces can be made available if COVID-19 related circumstances require this.

There are toilets and showers within the dig house complex adjacent to the sleeping rooms and tents. The project has machines for laundry and the laundry service is organized centrally. Maximum occupancy limits will be set on these facilities and suitable spacing guidelines established for users respecting 2m distances.

Rooms and wash/toilet as well as other dig house facilities, including kitchen (which is in its own separate building), will be cleaned regularly by a cleaner hired by the project utilising disinfectants and other COVID-19 related protocols (as advised by University of Liverpool which is engaged in much cutting edge COVID-19 related research).

People will be well spaced in the well-ventilated labs in pods when using lab space. We have a large outdoor roofed work space, but with open sides, in which the well separated pods can work on material processing. Similarly covered but open sided work areas for flotation and sieving well removed from other work areas can be operated by pods.

Materials that might be contaminated by COVID-19 will be kept isolated until they can be safely disposed of. Up to date advice will be sought on this aspect before the field season.

All participants in a field school, students and staff, will wear masks while indoors (i.e. during lectures, during labs, in shared residential spaces, etc.).

Regular hand washing will be a part of the project's daily schedule.

Excavation areas are extensive, have tented covers but open sides and are thus well ventilated and separated from each other by 10s of metres. The team pods will thus be well separated during excavation. Some tools will be allocated to individual team members for the project duration but shared equipment (e.g. survey equipment) will be cleaned after each use (a method already successfully used on a Liverpool field school in October 2020).

### **Food**

Catering is carried out by two local cooks preparing Turkish village style food. This is of course halal. We cater for vegetarians, lactose intolerant and gluten free diets.

There is a large open air, but roofed, dining area which can seat several pods respecting Covid19 related distance requirements. Prepared food will be served in shifts to allow COVID-19 distancing requirements. The cooks will be regularly tested, masked and gloved and use disinfected space and utensils and remain socially distant from the team.

## MANAGING COVID-19 CASES & OUTBREAKS

Anyone with Covi-19 symptoms will need to isolate in dedicated rooms on site. Their laundry will be isolated separately and after the suitable time period laundered according to Covid-19 protocols. They will have separated toilet/shower facilities subject to regular deep clean. Likewise meals will be supplied and their utensil subject to isolation and deep cleaning. Testing will be provided through local health services.

High quality hospital and ICU facilities are available in Konya c. 40 minute drive away. Ambulance services are available in the village, but in emergency the ambulances equipped with higher quality paramedical equipment would come from Konya. If advised by the local health services the dig vehicle could also transport medical cases to Konya. Any health situation in regard to Covid-19 on the excavation will be communicated to the local municipality and Konya health teams. The government representative who works on the project will also implement relevant Ministry of Culture protocols pertaining to Covid-19, which we anticipate will be updated in summer 2021.

The project will continue for 4 weeks after the IFR field school so if an IFR student needs to stay and isolate longer this will be possible.

## EQUIPMENT LIST

### *What to bring checklist*

We supply bedding and facilities for clothes washing, as well as work equipment, but you should bring or obtain the following before you come to site (the items marked \* can easily be obtained in Turkey; those marked ^ are not easily available, unavailable for larger/taller people or surprisingly expensive in Turkey and should be brought with you). Note that there are more specific notes on some of these items elsewhere in this guide.

- Towel\*
- Toiletries\* in a bag that can be hung in the showers while you wash
- Sheet sleeping bag if using communal sheets creeps you out
- Flip-flops for use in shower, bathroom and around the dig house
- A minimum of 2 changes of work clothing (light, strong and covering arms and legs)^
- Work shoes (desert boots or similar – no or very light tread)^
- Wide brimmed hat^
- Sunblock^
- 4 inch pointing trowel and plasterer's leaf – US -Marshalltown^ (Pack in hold luggage!)
- Water bottle\*
- Torch and replacement batteries
- Small rucksack or bag to take gear to site
- Entertainment: books, cards, tablet/i-devices

- Stationery for personal use (notebook, pens etc)
- Personal medication (many medications are available in Turkey but bring specific medicines)
- Insect repellent
- Rehydration salts – e.g. UK Dioralyte.
- Diarrhoea relief tablets e.g. Immodium etc.
- Currency and/or cash cards plus a credit card

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

All IFR field schools begin with a safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

### **Week 1:**

Thursday      Morning: Lecture: The Neolithic of the Near East and origins of agriculture  
Afternoon: Lecture: The Neolithic of Turkey

Friday          Morning: Boncuklu lecture  
Afternoon: Çatalhöyük lecture

**Weeks 2-5:** Excavations at Boncuklu. Daily program: 7-9.30 am, 10 am -1 pm, 3.30-6 pm. Students will rotate between excavation, sampling, laboratory work and planning on site and in the labs.

**First long Weekend:** Trip to Cappadocia, visiting Neolithic sites under excavation and Byzantine underground cities.

**Week 5, Friday:** finish field work

## **EXCURSIONS**

Three types of excursions are planned within the course: (1) an extended visit to the nearby site of Çatalhöyük; (2) a weekend in Cappadocia visiting Neolithic sites and the famous Byzantine underground cities (3) visits to local Byzantine and Hittite sites.

## REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

Baird D 2011 The Late Epipalaeolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic of the Anatolian Plateau, 13000-4000 BC calibrated. In D Potts ed. *Blackwell's Companion to Near Eastern Archaeology*

Baird D, Fairbairn A, Martin L and Middleton C 2011 The Boncuklu Project; the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia, in Ozdoğan and Başgelen eds *The Neolithic of Turkey; new excavations, new discoveries*. Arkeoloji ve Sanat.

Baird D 2011 Pınarbaşı; from Epipalaeolithic camp-site to sedentarising village in central Anatolia, in Ozdoğan and Başgelen eds *The Neolithic of Turkey; new excavations, new discoveries*. Arkeoloji ve Sanat.

Baird – A. Fairbairn – E. Jenkins – L. Martin – C. Middleton – J. Pearson – E. Asouti – Y. Edwards – C. Kabukcu – G. Mustafaoğlu – N. Russell – O. Bar-Yosef – G. Jacobsen – X. Wu – A. Baker – S. Elliott, Agricultural origins on the Anatolian plateau, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 115 (14) E3077-E3086

Collis J. 1996 *Digging Up the Past – an introduction to archaeological excavation*. (Available as a Kindle edition)

During, B 2011 *The prehistory of Asia Minor*. Cambridge University Press

Hodder, I 2007 *The Leopard's Tale*. Thames and Hudson

Sagona, A and Zimansky, P 2009 *Ancient Turkey*. Routledge

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

You can find out much more about the project on our website: [boncuklu.org](http://boncuklu.org)

The British Institute at Ankara produces an annual publication detailing the results from its projects. Until 2011 this was called *Anatolian Archaeology*. Now it is called *Heritage Turkey*. The Boncuklu project has an article in each year since 2006.

Baird D 2002 'Early holocene settlement in central Anatolia: problems and prospects as seen from the Konya Plain' in F Gerard and L Thissen eds. *The Neolithic of central Anatolia*, 139-159.

Baird D 2006 The history of settlement and social landscapes in the Early Holocene in the Çatalhöyük area in Hodder I ed. *Çatalhöyük perspectives. Çatalhöyük Project Volume 6*, 55-74. McDonald Institute/British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara Monographs

Baird, D 2007 The Boncuklu Project; the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology Vol 13*,14-17

- Baird D 2008 The Boncuklu project; investigating the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* Vol 14, 11-13
- Baird D 2009 The Boncuklu project; investigating the origins of sedentism, cultivation and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* Vol 15, 9-11
- Baird D 2010 The Boncuklu Project: investigating the beginnings of agriculture, sedentism and herding in central Anatolia. *Anatolian Archaeology* vol 16 11-13
- Baird D 2010 'Was Çatalhöyük a centre; the implications of a late Aceramic Neolithic assemblage from the neighbourhood of Çatalhöyük' in Bolger and Maguire eds in *The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East*. Oxbow books
- Baird D, Carruthers D, Fairbairn A, and Pearson 2011 Ritual in the Landscape; evidence from Pınarbaşı in the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC cal Konya Plain. *Antiquity* 85, 1-16.
- Baird D *et al* 2013 Juniper smoke, skulls and wolves tails. *Levant*
- Hodder I and Meskell, L 'A "Curious and sometimes trifle macabre artistry"' *Current Anthropology* 52/2, 251-2
- Lichter C 2007 ed. *Die ältesten Monumente der Menschheit*, 123. Badische Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe. (Some sections in English and good images of Neolithic sites)