



ANNUAL REPORT: THE LOBOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL & BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, CROATIA FIELD SCHOOL 2021.

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PART 1: RESEARCH OUTCOMES **(PUBLIC-FACING PORTION OF THE REPORT)**

Lobor (northwestern Croatia) has been continuously excavated since 1998. After the break in 2020 due to the COVID 19 outbreak, this year we went back to the field school respecting the official safety measures. We were working on two major historical periods: Late Antiquity and Carolingian Age. In the year 2019, we discovered a small dislocated graveyard. It was located on the small hilltop and most of the human remains belonged to children. Students showed huge interest while they discovered human remains and their belongings. They contributed in every

step of research. They learned how to prepare the site for the new archaeological trench and how to use equipment and tools for digging. They also faced some difficulties while working at the field: adapting to the terrain, clearing out the forest so they could access the trench and cleaning the working place in the nature. They learned how to work in a group of brand-new people in their lives, which was not so easy, because we all came from a different environment and we had different habits. There was also a significant age difference between them and some of the students thought it could be an issue. In the end, they experienced they could easily adapt and work with different people, share their personal experiences and learn from each other. Some of the students also experienced struggles within themselves because they were far away from home. They did a great inner work with their decision to finish the program instead of leaving the program they loved but they still felt frightened at the time. This occurred especially in the second week of the field school. Students learned how to work in the archaeological trench, when and how to use certain digging techniques, how to use total station, how to draw and how to document the finds. They also learned how to work with pottery and bones in the workshops, mostly how to recognize the difference between pottery from one period from another. They also learned how to interpret human remains, parts of the human skeleton, how to recognize traces of life and traces of death on the bones. Through their work, some of the students realized they would rather work in the lab than in the field, some students realized that field archaeology is not for them, not what they expected. Some of them realized that it is much more difficult that they thought it would be and some of them discovered their new passions. Some of them proved to themselves that field archaeology is exactly what they want to do in their lives and some of them realized that they prefer working in the museum. In the end, all the students expressed their passion for archaeology, meeting new cultures, knowing European history and, what is the biggest value of the field school, they learned a lot about themselves, they felt so proud because they finished a program so far from their home and they didn't have any major issues within the group. It was the great success, especially because it had to do a lot with their self-confidence and with their decision what to do in their professional lives.

During the field school, they helped in everything needed: collecting samples, preparing samples for the lab and taking photographs for the exhibition about the field school. All of their work will contribute to the research of the site in Lobar.

Students also loved that they had an opportunity to discover Croatia and they tried to get to know this area as much as they could despite COVID-19 restrictions. Due to the very bad situation in the area (Northwest Croatia and Zagreb were still in the green on the EU map at the time), we were constantly under great pressure and therefore we could not afford improvisations. The students were accommodated in Zagreb in a hostel in double rooms, a minibus with 27 seats was provided for 13 of them and 3 team members so that a distance could be maintained. In the field, we also tried to separate students into smaller working groups / balloons.

Some of them also described their experiences with some other field schools and most of them concluded they would love to come back to Croatia for research.

With their work, they contributed to the future research of Lobar, especially to writing new papers about the research of the Late Antiquity graveyard and hopefully some of the students could use their experience for their own research at their universities.