

NATIVE GROWTH OR EXTERNAL PRESSURE? THE EVOLUTION OF EARLY IRON AGE SOCIAL COMPLEXITY AT THE MALVIEU HILLFORT, SOUTHERN FRANCE

Course ID: ARCH XL159

June 14-July 11, 2020

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

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 6th century, of which predominant feature is several enclosed sites with ramparts built in dry stone, often located at the top of a hill. These hillforts, named *oppida*, have surface areas of about 2 to 11 hectares. Their inner part consists mainly of houses built with stone and mud-bricks and connected by narrow streets, making the urban fabric a very dense environment.

Such settlement patterns are dramatically different from the those existing during the previous period. Traditionally, scholars postulated 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 BCE). It has been suggested that native populations engaged and traded heavily with the new arrivals, generating significant increase in surplus. The need to protect such surplus led to the intensification of defense architecture and site became fortified, enclosed by thick walls to protect inhabitants and their material culture.

Excavated since 2001, the site of Malvieu challenges such interpretations. The site was established in the Late Bronze Age, sometimes around 1000 BCE – possibly earlier according to data emerging from our 2019 season results – and is abandoned by 500 BCE. Malvieu begins as a hilltop, open settlement: only the northern cliff provided a natural defense. Although steep (some slopes are around 30-40% degrees), the site was accessible from the valley floor. At its genesis, Malvieu seem to occupy *ca.* two hectares with architecture characterized using mixed stone, clay and lumber – efficiently exploiting local resources.

By *ca.* 800 BCE, a massive stone rampart was built. It is 325m long, 2m thick, and probably 5m high protecting the western, southern and eastern accesses to Malvieu. 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 houses. As the population grew, it seems social differentiation increased. By the 8th century BCE, Malvieu is 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 is rather linked with long-term native dynamics rooted in the Late Bronze Age, rather than with the growth of seaborne trade.

The 2018-2019 seasons focused on the excavation of the upper part of Malvieu, providing new and exciting insights into the chronology of the site's evolution. The 2020 season will continue work on the upper sections of the site as well as excavations around the southern gate of Malvieu. Our goal is to generate new data about space and space-use considered in a long-term perspective. The 2020 campaign will therefore represent a significant step forward in our understanding of the social dynamics operating during the Early Iron Age in the area and potentially a template to better understand and provide more granular interpretation of social, economic and political changes impacting many regions of the Mediterranean area in southern France. Malvieu excavation provide a unique opportunity to follow a community, from the beginning of its history to its end, during a period that we used to referred to as the *Dark Ages*. It seems that the period was nothing but. It seems that Malvieu evolved and became a significant and large site when Greek cities where only villages, when Rome was only founded, and when the Phoenicians just began their expeditions throughout the Mediterranean.

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE

The Malvieu Project is an international one running on French soil and directed by a French scholar. Half of the team will be French nationals (students and faculty) and the other half with consist of students and scholars from throughout the world, including the IFR students. The official langue of the project is English and that is the language that will be used for all activities. Nevertheless, expect folks to interact in their own native language on personal matters and embrace the fact that Europeans usually speak two or more languages. Also expect locals to speak French. It may serve you well to take a few lessons of French before coming to this program so you may enhance your ability to interact with the local population.

French culture is different from US culture, with local sensitivities, politics and perspectives. Expect to discover a new world out there with ideas that may be challenging to your own beliefs or sensitivities. Because of the nature of archaeological field research, expect to be tired and both physically and mentally challenge by the work – you will be working for hours in the outdoors engaging with physical labor. Be cognizant that such stress may challenge patience. However, respect for and tolerance of the other are

basic requirements and the hallmarks of all archaeological projects and particularly this one – one of the most international archaeological projects in France.

This project creates a community of learners. As a community, EVERYONE is required to participate and partake in common tasks that support the research, work and maintenance at the site and the housing. These include cooking, cleaning rooms and labs, maintenance of equipment and a range of other tasks required to have a smooth running of this archaeological project.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 12 quarter credit units (equivalent to 8 semester units) through our academic partner, Connecticut college. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. 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/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no academic 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 will work in the outdoors. For your own safety and that of others, 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.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including 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 or Travelgurad.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. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you with to help to decide whether to purchase such insurance

Archaeological work days are long (students will work on site from 7:00am to 2:00pm with a 30 min break at 11:00am for snack). Work involve physical labor 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 100°F,

despite the fact that we work in forested area. Humidity is relatively low and some insects may be present at the excavation area. In order to be protected yourself from sunburns or insect bites, you will not be allowed to work in shorts or tank tops at the site.

No need to be an athlete to participate to this program. However, you must be minimally fit. The site is located on the top of a hill, and we walk *ca.* 15 minutes to reach it each morning and get back to the cars each afternoon. This walk up steep slopes and you will be laden with equipment. Each member of the team participates in the transportation of excavation equipment, water and food, each day. This could be demanding if you are not used to such physical activity.

Working in another country with folks speaking a different language and having a different culture may be demanding, especially when physical stress increases the discomfort linked to cultural differences. Although differences between US and French students are not particularly significant, issues may arise from minor, daily routines – insignificant details that may become profound if not properly reflected and considered. If you are unwilling to compromise or find cultures other than your own irritating and challenging, please reconsider participating in this program. There are scholars and students from a range of nationalities at Malvieu and you will be exposed to languages, views and values that may be vastly different than your own. Only willingness to accommodate for such differences will make your own experience positive and beneficial.

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this field school is to reach excellence in all the aspects linked to archaeological excavation and research. This program provides an introduction to Iron Age archaeology of the Mediterranean and Western European. Through the research questions structuring the excavation project, this field school encourages critical thinking, evidence-based approach for the study of past societies, and a basic understanding of the dynamics and evolution 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 innovative aspects of the Malvieu Project is our use of field recording methods, based on the systematic use of 3D scanner to record the archaeological feature and the stratigraphy. This method will allow students not only to evaluate the data but also to question how our recording methods impact the perception we have of past societies.

The field school will take place at the site of Malvieu. The field house is located at Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, a small town in the French Hérault *département*. The town is 55 km north from Carcassonne and 130 km east of Toulouse. Student activities will focus on excavation practices and feature and artifact analysis.

Student will participate in the following research activities:

Excavations: Students will participate in guided excavations at Malvieu. Together with French students and under the supervision of the scientific staff, students will first learn basic excavation methods and then 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*, for the recording of the observations made during excavations. This recording will be made with the support of tablet

computers, giving access to the excavation large database. 2D graphic drawing of plans and sections will be made on paper, and students will be introduced to 3D recording methods.

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 Monday, every weekday until the end of the program. An intensive lecture series during the first days of the field school will provide the cultural and archaeological background to the fieldwork.

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. Staff will take every measure to explain the development of the campaign strategy in order to provide as much insight as possible to this research project and the nature of decision-making in field archaeology.
- Apply standard excavation methods to archaeological contexts: students will be taught the use of typical excavation tools (trowels, brush, sifters, etc), and will be taught how to observe stratigraphic and 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 staff members.
- Display a basic knowledge of new recording techniques (3D). Recording (through the use of an Artec Eva handyscan) will be taught in the field. Post-recording treatment will be explained: a lecture is scheduled during the first week, and demonstrations will be made during lab sessions in the afternoons.
- Undertake preliminary processing of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts: pottery is abundant at Malvieu (although not well preserved) and metal and stone artifacts are often found. Animal (and on very rare occasions human) bones are present in the occupation layers. Basic processing techniques for cleaning and conditioning of such remains will be taught and implemented by the students.
- Undertake preliminary analysis of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts: pottery, stone and metal artifacts cataloging will be taught and implemented by the students. Drawing will be explained, and as much as possible practiced by the students. A lecture about zooarchaeological analysis principles will be given during the first week. Day-to-day work on identification and cataloging will be supervised by a graduate student specialized in zooarchaeology.

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, our grading matrix avoid "formal exams", and rather focus on the active involvement of the student in this project. We hope that such matrix would make students more comfortable, but also that it will reflect more directly a desire to engage with archaeology.

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

30%: Be active and precise in the recording of archaeological data and the exchange of ideas about possible interpretations. Accuracy in recording (2D drawing, 3D recording, stratigraphic description and analysis) will be discussed continuously in the field, in front of the evidence, with staff members. Staff will focus on the progression of 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 evaluated by the day-to-day exchange with staff and among the entire team. Such a process should help to clarify outcomes and interpretation of the archaeological excavation and allow students to acquire the specific vocabulary of archaeological description and analysis.

40%: General assessment of the progress the student made and of his/her involvement in the project by the staff. Such assessment will be based on the day-to-day observation of the student performance and direct and individual exchanges with the students (at least twice during the excavation). Individual meeting with each student is design to allow staff to understanding and address difficulties/challenges that may hinder individual learning engagement and progression.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

The field school meeting point is at the Mazamet Train Station (Tarn, France), on Sunday June 15. Mazamet is 40 km away from Saint-Pons and the nearest train station. We will meet the students at the train station at 3:30pm on that day.

From Toulouse: For those reaching Toulouse by airplane (probably the most direct connection to the US): take tram Line 1 to the *Palais de Justice* station (the end of the line), or the metro L2 to "Marengo SNCF" station. From there, take the train to Mazamet (6 trains daily between 11:44 am and 5:40 pm).

From Paris: For students reaching Toulouse from Paris by train, change train at Toulouse-Matabiau station and take the train to Mazamet.

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 a visa to enter France up to 90 days, including for short academic stays. But US citizens must have a valid passport with at least six months left before expiration date.

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

Housing is located at 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 (2 in a separate bedroom, 2 in the living room), each one with its own kitchen and bathroom. Apartments will be shared between US and French students. **Most meals will be prepared by the students themselves.** In the evening, 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 of ingredients will be made by 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 not be possible to provide at this program.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sunday June 14: 3:30pm-afternoon: students are picked-up in Mazamet and gathered in Saint-Pons.
6:00 pm: Preliminary introductions

8:00 pm: Group dinner.

Week 1 (June 15-21):

- 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: "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-: The relevance of Malvieu excavation". Dr. Alexis Gorgues, Université Bordeaux Montaigne.
8.30 pm: Dinner.
- Wednesday 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: 3D methods in archaeology. Florent Comte, Ausohnum, Ausonius
8.30 pm: Dinner.
- Thursday 6.30 am: departure from Saint-Pons-de-Thomières.
7.00-2.00 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: economy and trade in the Iron Age Mediterranean, Dr. Thibaud Poigt, Université Bordeaux Montaigne.
8.30 pm: Dinner
- Saturday: Free
Sunday: Free

Week 2-4 (June 22 to July 10):

Daily schedule for the four weeks of field work Monday through Friday:

- 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

Saturday July 11: cleaning of the lab and of the apartments.

Saturday July 11, late morning/early afternoon: 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 is usually best for outdoor working conditions)
- Sunscreen
- Daypack/backpack
- Sheets for a single bed.
- Flashlight
- 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 write in English and tend to privilege their native language. Papers published in English do not really focus on our area, but rather in neighboring ones. They deal mainly with issues linked with 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 1st 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

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

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR READERS OF FRENCH

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