Fieldwork at the Greek colony of Abdera, Thrace, Greece: report on GIAP summer adventure

Originally posted by the GIAP team at http://giap.icac.cat/news/

2020, a complicated year for the whole world! And in the midst of the pandemic, GIAP team had somehow to move on with the **TransLands project** to ensure the provision of good datasets to continue with the **palaeoenvironmental reconstruction** and analysis of the twice-funded Classical colony of Abdera (Thrace, Greece).

> We somehow had to reach our study area and retrieve Holocene sedimentary sequences suitable for multi-proxy palaeoenvironmental analysis. We also wanted to explore the Holocene stratigraphy and reconstruct the palaeogeography around the colony in order to better understand the landscape configuration through time.

As related by GIAP: The logistics were very complicated, not least due to the uncertainties until the last minute of whether the team would be allowed to travel. Yet, the **excellent collaboration between five different institutions** (GIAP/ICAC, GEOLAB Laboratoire de Géographie Physique et Environnmentale —UMR 6042 UCA-CNRS—, EVS UMR 5600 Environnement Ville Société —UMR 5600 UNIV LYON2-CNRS—, Xanthi Ephorate of Antiquities and the Kapodistrian University at Athens) and the determination of Drs Alfredo Mayoral, Ana Ejarque, Arnau Garcia, Mercourios Georgiadis, Yannis Apostolou and the rest of the team did the trick!

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The coastal wetlands around Abdera. Mosquitos apart, there are worse places to be!
Photo: GIAP/ICAC

GIAP completed **two drilling campaigns** in July and in September/October at the coast of western Thrace. And here are the campaigns in numbers: 18 days in the field, 6 people from 3 different institutions, 22 drilling points, several flights, 5800 km crossing 4 countries with a van, 700 km in a ferry, 500 km with an Opel Corsa (some of them off-road), 5 PCRs, several kg of feta, +/- 50 souvlakia, and lots of fun!

> In total, we drilled more than 140 metres of sediment in different wetlands around the Greek colony (max depth 8.2 m). Of these, we got 54 m of sediment, which is dated to between the Neolithic and the post-Classical period.

Dr Alfredo Mayoral is the first one to put his hands on the cores and he has just started the **stratigraphic and sedimentological analysis of the cores** in the lab at ICAC! Secured in a newly acquired fridge, these cores will be studied during the next few years by a team of palaeoenvironmentalists under the direction of Dr Ana Ejarque (GEOLAB UMR 6042).

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The analysis will include several proxies and will allow discerning the environmental history of Abdera's colonization to be compared with the extensive palaeoenvironmental record revealed during the last years at Emporion, in Catalonia at the eastern coast of Spain.

However, given the number, distribution, and **depth of the sedimentary records** and given the results of **preliminary radiocarbon-dating**, GIAP will be able to use them also to study a wide variety of socio-environmental related topics, such as the first human impact on the area (particularly important as the Aegean is considered to be one of the entry routes of the Neolithic in Europe), the so-called 'Dark Ages' and so much more.



The Russian corer head full of lagoon sediments (and of palaeoenvironmental

information!). Photo: GIAP/ICAC

The team in the field were: Alfredo Mayoral, Ana Ejarque, Arnau Garcia, Yannis Apostolou, Mercourios Georgiadis and Vincent Gaertner.

Follow updates in the GIAP Twitter account and ICAC Twitter account!

> The harbour of Abdera (Greece): organic sediment mixed with marble, mussels and wood (to be expected?) as Dr Alfredo Mayoral 'unpacks' the cores that GIAP got last summer. This is just the beginning as we got more than 90 m of sediment… Stay tuned! pic.twitter.com/dnVfUkiznG
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> — Landscape Archaeology Research Group (@GIAP_ICAC) November 2, 2020

Summer fieldwork campaing in Abdera (Greece) belongs to these research projects:

TransLands: Paisajes mediterráneos transportados: un análisis integrado de las dinámicas de ocupación a largo plazo a ambos lados del Mediterráneo. PGC2018-093734-B-I00. (MCIU/AEI/FEDER, UE)

LR: Josep Maria Palet, Héctor A. Orengo
01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021

Funding: Agencia Estatal de Investigación (Spanish Government), Projects

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(PGC2018-093734-B-I00)

TransMed: Transported Landscapes of Greek Mediterranean Colonisation (H2020-MSCA-IF-2018: 839650)

LR: Héctor A. Orengo, Merkouris Georgiadis
16/09/2019 – 15/09/2022

Funding: European Commission, Marie S. Curie Action – Individual Fellowships (H2020-MSCA-IF-2018: 839650)



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