

WORKSHOP

#TransMed

Landscape, display and economy at Abdera and Thrace

Using modern archaeological field
and lab methods to better understand
colonial landscapes (3000BC-AD100)



PROGRAMME

Time (CET)	Thursday 24th November 2022
09.45-10.00	Welcome
10.00-10.30	Merkouris Georgiadis: "The economic exploitation of the landscape at Abdera"
10.30-11.00	Constantina Kallintzi: "From the 'Soils' (Chomata) to Landscape Archaeology: On the burial tumuli in the area of Abdera in Aegean Thrace"
11.00-11.30	Alfredo Mayoral Pascual: "Geoarchaeology and palaeoenvironments of the Greek colony of Abdera (Thrace): recent advances and perspectives"
11.30-12.15	Coffee-break
12.15-12.45	Eurydice Kefalidou : "Tracking Re-cycling: Archaeological and Anthropological Survey in the Habitat of Xanthi Region-Thrace (TRAASH)"
12.45-13.45	Domna Terzopoulou: "Roman tumuli in Thrace as indicators of rural wealth. The case of Mikri Doxipara-Zoni in the Evros Prefecture-Greece"
13.45-15.15	Lunch break
15.15-16.45	Arnau Garcia-Molsosa and Hèctor A. Orengo: "Computational approaches to archaeological surface survey and the analysis of the organization of Ancient landscapes: the chora of Abdera as experimental ground"
15.45-17.15	Round Table: "New developments in the archaeology of Abdera and Thrace"
17.15-17.30	Closing remarks
21.00	Dinner

ABOUT

Dates: 24th November 2022

Organisers:

- Merkouris Georgiadis. Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology & National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- Hèctor A. Orengo. Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology.
- Maria Ferrer Bonet. Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology.

Organised and hosted by: Landscape Archaeology Research Group, (GIAP), Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC).

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WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

Landscape, display and economy at Abdera and Thrace: using modern archaeological field and lab methods to better understand colonial landscapes (from 3000BC to AD100)

This workshop aims to bring together researchers working in Thrace to discuss current state and future archaeological developments in the area with a particular emphasis on its colonial productive landscape within and around the city of Adbera.

Most work resulting in economic analysis takes place on site. Techniques such as zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, and material culture studies from multiple sites are used to analyse different aspects of the economy, consumption, trade, commerce, and production. Different methods such as excavations and systematic surveys provide new evidence for the local economy in a given period. However, these studies rarely take into account the areas where the actual production and display take place. Equally, landscape studies do not count within its main topics the study of productive and display landscapes, even those subfields such as the study of field systems rarely delve in the actual products being developed or how these contribute to the economy of the area. Funerary landscapes are also often overlooked in favour of the material culture recovered within burial grounds rather than the sites themselves and their impact. These trends become more evident when dealing with colonial landscapes where colonists adapted to but also transformed the environments in which they settled, changing them to fit their economic and production needs using their particular culturally inherited agro-silvo-pastoral procedures. These reflected and responded to their own concepts of landscape and were limited and shaped by the interaction with local communities and the particularities of the new colonial environments.

This workshop aims to start bridging this gap by defining the study of productive landscapes and collecting data from Abdera and Thrace more broadly in which the analysis of productive landscapes is addressed.

Keywords: Colonial Landscapes; Industrial landscapes; Agropastoral landscapes; Burials and display of wealth in funerary landscapes; Consumption landscapes

CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Arnau Garcia-Molsosa (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology)
2. Merkouris Georgiadis (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology & National and Kapodistrian Uni. of Athens)
3. Constantina Kallintzi (Ephorate of Antiquities of Xanthi)
4. Eurydice Kefalidou (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens)
5. Alfredo Mayoral Pascual (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology)
6. Hèctor A. Orengo (Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology)
7. Domna Terzopoulou (Ephorate of Antiquities of Evros)

ABSTRACTS 1/4

Computational approaches to archaeological surface survey and the analysis of the organization of Ancient landscapes: the chora of Abdera as experimental ground.

Arnau Garcia-Molsosa and Hèctor A. Orengo

Locate and characterize surface assemblages is the first step in almost any archaeological-based analysis. Besides continuing its traditional function of identifying the most interesting sites to excavate; surface data is nowadays recognized by itself as a significant source of information used to analyse aspects of Ancient settlement and economy.

The Landscape Archaeology Research Group of ICAC has been developing a fruitful research line directed to develop innovative methods for the study of surface traces using aerial images obtained from multiple sensors and representing different scales. The participation in the APAX project has provided the ideal scientific environment to test some of the new methods. In particular, the work in Abdera focus in two of the most significant superficial signals of archaeological features: ceramic assemblages and topographic anomalies.

In this paper we will present the conceptualization and first results of the tests performed in the chora of Abdera. That include the development of Machine-Learning-based methods to automatically map pottery assemblages and remains of small mounds using UAV-acquired aerial imagery. The examination of future development, will provide the ideal framework to discuss how the integration of this new methods can contribute to the study of Ancient settlement patterns, landscape dynamics and economical processes.

The economic exploitation of the landscape at Abdera

Merkouris Georgiadis, Eurydice Kefalidou and Constanina Kallintzi

From the beginning of the 5th century BC a new economic model was introduced at Abdera that changed the way the landscape was exploited. The appearance of farmsteads was a significant addition to the way the land was worked and a number of activities can be recognised in the taskscape of Abdera's chora. The economic interactions centred within the city can be well defined, while some can be recognised as domestic, large scale and international and even funerary in character. At the same time more can be identified to take place in the countryside from 500 BC onwards, closer to the primary areas of agro-silvo-pastoral produce. It is of great interest that the farmsteads that appeared were not restricted only to the primary sector of the economy, but they participated in the secondary as well. At the same time the emphasis on burials provide another of link of production and consumption in the landscape of Abdera's chora. Finally, the palaeoenvironmental data as well as the in-depth analyses of the amphora of the sites in the countryside will provide in the future a more varied image of the local produce and the circulation modes of the internationally imported commodities.

ABSTRACTS 2/4

From the 'Soils' (Chomata) to Landscape Archaeology: On the burial tumuli in the area of Abdera in Aegean Thrace

Constantina Kallintzi & Eurydice Kefalidou

Abdera is an Ionian colony on the coast of Aegean Thrace. It was initially founded ca. 654 BC by citizens of the Greek city of Clazomenae on the peninsula of Erythraea, while a century later, circa 545 BC, it was re-colonised by citizens of Teos, another Greek city located very close to Clazomenae. The city has two adjacent circuit walls, the earlier of which lies at the north and has been inhabited by the first colonizers from Klazomenai and, later, from Teos. The south defensive wall was built later, during the late 4th or early 3rd century BC in order to relocate the city near the waterfront because the sea bay to which the original city had access was dammed up.

The people who succesively occupied these adjoining enclosures utilised a rather extensive area (ca. 300 hectares) for their burial grounds which extended to the west, north and especially to the northeast of the city. During the early stages of the colony, in the 7th -6th century BC, the cemeteries were flat. A significant change sets about the late 6th century BC and lasts until the middle of the 3rd century BC: Numerous small and large tumuli (the earliest reference to them in Greek is chomata/soils) are raised above single burials or clusters of graves thus dominating the landscape around the city. This practice comes to an end in the Hellenistic period, when the burial grounds are relocated and occupy a much smaller area.

Our study utilises older and recent field research in order to provide some insights on the economic parameters which set the process of the foundation, expansion, development and uses, and, finally, the contraction of the Abdera burial grounds.

'Tracking Re-cycling: Archaeological and Anthropological Survey in the Habitat of Xanthi Region-Thrace (TRAASH)'

Eurydice Kefalidou and Constantina Kallintzi

In the last decades we have a continuous encouragement to "Think Green" and to recycle, upcycle, reuse, reduce waste and repurpose a variety of objects, which could be called a "secondary use" of materials. However, all these concepts and actions were nothing new to the ancient Greeks and to the pre-modern and modern traditional rural Greek communities, all of whom routinely reused and adapted numerous types of items and recycled many different materials. The TRAASH Project aims at providing a diachronic outlook of recycling, reusing and re-adapting of the environment, materiality and ideas in a specific geographical area through the ages, from Antiquity to pre-modern and modern times. The Xanthi region in Thrace is selected as a case study for this analysis of refuse management because it is an area which allows a synchronous understanding of how all these practices were employed by various cultural groups in the past, such as the Greek colonists and the indigenous Thracians or, later, the pre-modern and modern rural communities which still depend mainly on agriculture and livestock. TRAASH will allow us to record, study, interpret and harness the various (continuous, evolving or alternating) ways of exploiting and managing the objects, the landscape and the natural resources, which can provide a footprint of how distinct cultural groups acted through time. Moreover, the overall conceptualization and practice of recycling and reusing/readapting has a significant symbolic meaning with a strong cultural character. The unique diachronic analysis of all these aspects in the Xanthi region can provide a paradigm of environmental and material sustainability for present and future application in modern societies.

ABSTRACTS 3/4

Geoarchaeology and palaeoenvironments of the Greek colony of Abdera (Thrace): recent advances and perspectives

Alfredo Mayoral¹, Ana Ejarque², Arnau Garcia-Molsosa¹, Merkouris Georgiadis¹, Giannis Apostolou¹, Vincent Gaertner⁴, Constantina Kallintzi⁵, Eurydice Kefalidou⁶ and Hèctor A. Orengo¹.

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Mediterranean landscapes are the result of complex and long-term socio-environmental interactions since the Prehistory. Within the framework of several research projects focused on the landscapes of Greek colonization, an integrated geoarchaeological approach has been developed since 2020 in Abdera, a Greek colony founded during the VIIth c. BCE by the Klazomenians in a hilly promontory of coastal Thrace.

Geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental research around the city has included geomorphological mapping, sedimentary coring and radiocarbon dating. Litho-stratigraphic and sedimentological observations along five cross-sections based on drillings allowed to reconstruct Holocene sea-level rise and palaeogeographic evolution of the area from the Neolithic to the Antiquity. The Mid-Holocene marine transgression submerged after c. 5000 cal BCE the previous landscape of small coastal valleys. Lagoonal and beach-barrier areas developed thereafter and remained stable until the settlement of the Klazomenians c. 650 cal BCE. From the IVth c. BCE accelerated coastal progradation, likely connected to an increasing anthropogenic forcing of coastal dynamics, caused the gradual silting of the the large bay west of the colony, where its harbour facilities were located. However the date of the relocation of the city southwards, in a period when this coastal advance was only incipient and the harbour area still navigable, indicates that causes of this displacement were certainly historical events. The coastline continued to advance in the following centuries, and by late Roman times it was close to its current position, with most of the lagoons transformed into shallow marshes. A marine high energy event, likely a tsunami, hit the coastal lowlands in the V/VIth c. CE, although the city had already started its decay a couple of centuries before.

Since 2022, new geoarchaeological works in the area of the Archaic harbour including trial trenches, intensive borehole drilling and geophysical survey are providing fresh data about this crucial part of the colony. Forthcoming multiproxy palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological analyses of available sedimentary sequences will provide a much more detailed view of how ancient Abderitans modified and impacted their close environment, and how their city adapted to and co-evolved with these changing colonial landscapes.

ABSTRACTS 4/4

Roman tumuli in Thrace as indicators of rural wealth. The case of Mikri Doxipara-Zoni in the Evros Prefecture-Greece

Domna Terzopoulou

The annexation of Thrace to the Roman Empire in 46 AD resulted in radical changes of the Thracian society and economy through the foundation of new cities and the improvement of the transportation network. The new organization of the urban space and the redefined social hierarchies of the Imperial period had also a great impact on the landscape around the cities and the rural economy.

The paper will focus on the region of Evros, a small part of the Roman province of Thrace which stretched from the River Nestos to the Black Sea and from the Aegean Sea to the northern foothills of the Balkan Mountains. Today this area is split among Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. The region of Evros, is located in the northeastern verge of Greece, between Bulgaria and Turkey and in the Roman Imperial Period it constituted the wider rural area of two newly founded cities: Plotinopolis and Hadrianoupolis.

Epigraphic testimony and excavations in the area of Roman Thrace testify to the organization of rural landscape and the existence of large estates with luxury villas and small agrarian settlements. In the part of Roman Thrace which today belongs to Greece, however, only isolated large and richly furnished burial mounds help us to evaluate the rural wealth of the area. Our case study will be the tumulus of Mikri Doxipara-Zoni where a total of four richly furnished cremation burials, five wagons with two draft animals each and two burials of horses were revealed.