

Making ancient Mediterranean landscapes accessible

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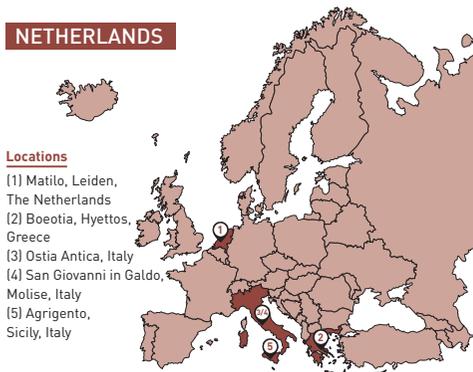
Introduction

During the last five years (2010 to 2015), the University of Leiden has been participating in the Pan-European Archaeo-Landscape programme with great enthusiasm and success. The Leiden team organised eight International technical fieldschools at five different archaeological key sites in the Mediterranean. These fieldschools provided excellent training opportunities for students of archaeology, as well as professionals active in the field of heritage protection and local resource management. In line with Leiden's commitment to the ArcLand action points 3, 4 and 6, these activities focussed on the exchange of expertise and the transfer of knowledge. The training programmes offered have been firmly rooted in Leiden's long-standing legacy of experience in Mediterranean landscape studies, and the available expertise in computer applications in archaeology.

The fieldschools concentrated on ground-based digital recording techniques for the assessment, interpretation and conservation of complex archaeological sites. The techniques and skills acquired in these courses are not site specific and can be applied to most time scales. The Leiden workshops also opened up opportunities to bring in expert knowledge offered by partner institutions within the network of Archaeo-Landscapes (e.g. IMS-Forth, Crete). Most fieldschools consisted of two parts: Part I took place in Leiden, where teaching focussed on methodologies and theories. Part II was concentrated on supervised practical work fully embedded in ongoing archaeological research conducted by Leiden staff members at key sites in Italy and Greece.



Fig. 1: Total Station Recording, Boeotia Survey Project 2011.



These complementary parts allowed participants to deepen their knowledge and apply their acquired skills to the archaeological field. Through the application and international sharing of skills and experience in the use of varied forms of remote sensing, including digital ground recording, geophysics and aerial photography, the Leiden training promoted non-destructive methods for the retrieval of archaeological data, and contributed to the enhancement and exchange of knowledge within the field of archaeology and heritage.

Key projects and expert knowledge

The Leiden fieldschools, organised at five different archaeological key-sites, offered first-hand experience in digital recording and remote sensing to about 90 students from different European countries. The first fieldschool took place in 2011 in Boeotia, Greece. It was hosted by the Boeotia survey project directed by John Bintliff. The project's research area comprises ancient cities, rural settlements and isolated architectural remains; in its diversity the landscape offered an ideal training environment for intensive total station and dGPS recording (Fig. 1).

The specific aim of the 2012 Leiden fieldschool was to combine urban and rural environments to confront both archaeologists and the equipment with the challenges provided by densely packed standing architecture and dispersed single archaeological sites. After a thorough introduction in Leiden, at the Archaeological Park Matilo (part I), part II of the training took place in Italy. Ostia, the port-town of ancient Rome (research project into Roman Urban neighbourhoods, Hanna Stöger), and the rural Samnite sanctuary and its surroundings of San Giovanni in Galdo, Molise (the Roman Colonisation Project by Tesse Stek) provided excellent environments for participants to acquire experience in digital recording (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Fieldschool 2012, Differential GPS survey of architectural features at the Samnite sanctuary of S. Giovanni in Galdo, Molise.



Fig. 3: Fieldschool 2013, Akragas, Sicily: Introduction to the equipment and method by Jo Ann Kvamme.

In 2013 two fieldschools took place. One was hosted by the Leiden Project of Ancient Akragas, (Agrigento, Sicily) directed by Natascha Sojc. The area of a small extra urban sanctuary held yet a different set of problems in store for the Leiden fieldschool. In addition, the Akragas project offered the opportunity to invite experts in geophysical prospection: Ken Kvamme and Jo Ann Kvamme, from the Univ. of Arkansas (Fig. 3).

The second 2013 fieldschool was hosted once more by the Boeotia Survey Project in Greece. The enigmatic site of ancient Hyettos was the focus of research. The fieldschool brought expertise from the ArcLand network into the project, when a team from IMS-Forth Crete joined the Leiden team. The fieldschools of 2014 and 15 were focussed on Ostia and Greece. The 2015 Ostia fieldschool allowed the Leiden team once more to co-operate with experts in geophysical prospection (Till Sonnemann, Leiden and TU-Delft) (Fig. 4), offering the participating students first-hand training in a range of tools for non-destructive methods in remote sensing (Fig. 5).



Fig. 4: Fieldschool 2015, Ostia, GPR survey, (students from Leiden, TU-Delft and Augsburg).



Fig. 5: Fieldschool 2015, Ostia, Low-altitude aerial photography (Till Sonnemann, Leiden).