



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of the funded research project
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty
Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value
Research Equipment

Archaeological and geophysical research at the *peraiia* of Samothrace

Principal Investigator: Amalia Avramidou

Reader-friendly title: ArcGeoPerSa

Scientific Area: Archaeology

Institution and Country: Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

Host Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Collaborating Institutions:

Ephorate of Antiquities of Rhodope

Ephorate of Antiquities of Evros

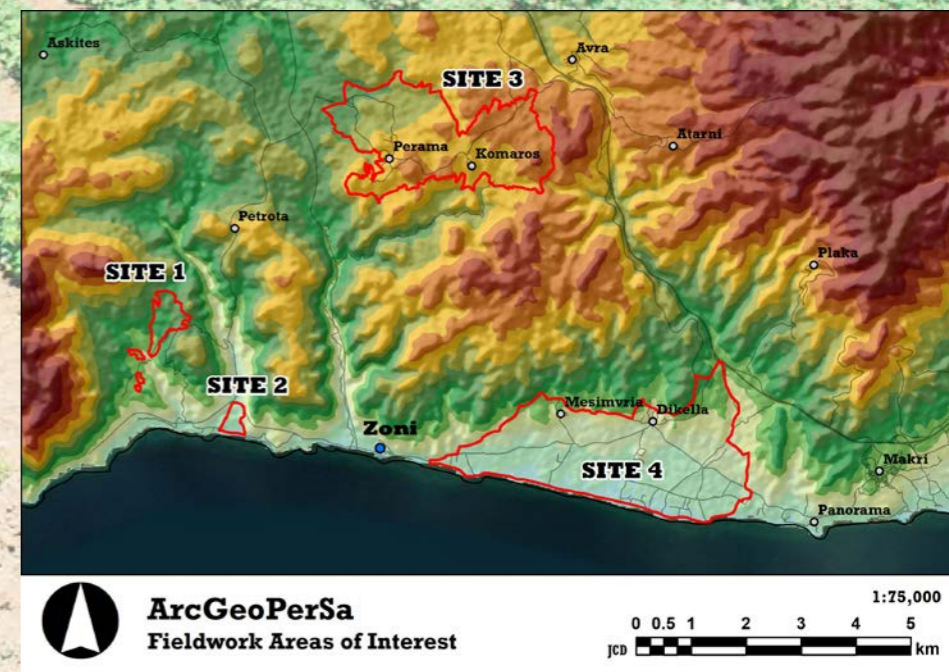
Laboratory of Geophysical–Satellite Remote Sensing and Archaeoenvironment, FORTH

Project webpage: peraiasamothraceproject.gr

Twitter: @peraiaproject

Budget: €198,702

Duration: 36 months



Research Project Synopsis

ArcGeoPerSa explores questions of the archaeology and topography of Aegean Thrace, combining multiple methods and scientific fields for the first time in the region. The proposed research brings together History, Archaeology (pedestrian field survey, study of pottery and related finds) and Geoinformatics, and it is expected to set a best practice example for future research endeavors.

We focus on four areas of interest at a region known as Samothracian *peraia*, i.e., the coast across the emblematic island of the Northern Aegean, which is defined to the north by Mt. Zonaia and Via Egnatia, to the West by Mt. Ismaros and Cape Serrheion and to the east by the modern settlement of Dikella. The geomorphology of the local environment varies greatly from site to site, as do the archaeological indications, a phenomenon that requires the joint application of several scientific methods for effective research. Depending on local conditions and diagnostics, we apply a combination of methods on each site, such as field survey, geophysical prospection, satellite remote sensing, and aerial remote sensing.

In particular, **ArcGeoPerSa aims to:**

- **Locate and explore settlements** through systematic survey and composite large-scale research,
- **Study the pottery and other finds** collected during the survey to investigate diachronically land-usage, as well as commercial and cultural relations,
- **Apply non-invasive methods of archaeological research:** use new technologies and methodologies that reveal the big-picture context and makeup of the sites, and experiment with spatial analysis and interpretation models based on processed results from geophysics and remote sensing to contextualize the selected sites within the larger geographic and historical framework of the Northern Aegean.
- **Maximize the research benefits for the local history and archaeology** through a methodological dialogue between the Sciences and the Humanities and **improve our understanding of the topography of Aegean Thrace.**

Project Originality

ArcGeoPerSa's cross-disciplinary approach of the topography of the region across from Samothrace will not only produce extensive archaeological data but it will also boost the development of non-invasive archaeological methods through a composite analysis of individual settlements. More specifically, the special characteristics of each site foster the ideal conditions for innovative combinations and the development of new interpretative models for the combined processing of geophysical measurements and high-resolution satellite imagery and historical aerial photos. The productive collaboration of varied scientific fields provides new perspectives for the study of the archaeo-environment and the decoding of historical landscape. **ArcGeoPerSa is a multifaceted project that enhances the usage of GIS in archaeology, while allowing for the control and counter-examination of results extracted via pedestrian survey, imagery analyses and maps, as well as the study of ancient sources.**

The examination of select coastal and inland sites in the prefectures promotes the archaeological research of Aegean Thrace and the study of settlement organization in a region inhabited by diverse populations (e.g. Thracian tribes, Greek colonists, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines et al.). Our goal is to **reconstruct the dynamics of these sites and to understand the chain of habitation and the criteria for selecting these landscapes.**

Expected Results & Research Project Impact

ArcGeoPerSa will face existing research questions and scientific gaps and it will contribute to the investigation of select coastal sites and hill-top settlements in the prefectures of Rhodope and Evros. **The application of geophysics and geoinformatics on both micro- and macro-scale archaeological exploration, i.e. the four sites under scope and the wider region of coastal Thrace, will be consequential for the study of the area and for the advancement of the scientific fields.** More specifically, the expected impact on scientific level will be to: (i) Advance our knowledge of ancient Thrace using traditional tools (study of pottery, maps, ancient sources); (ii) Enhance the archaeology and history of an understudied area; (iii) Produce high-quality research upon which further projects will be undertaken, while the results of our study will be rendered available to the academic community; (iv) prepare the next generation of researchers for the application of innovative scientific methods to the study of the past and our cultural heritage.

ArcGeoPerSa has its own webpage periasamothraceproject.gr and twitter account [@peraiaproject](https://twitter.com/peraiaproject) where research results are posted, along with interactive, digital maps complete with georeferences of sites, spatial analyses data and information on the history and archaeology of the region. This apparatus **enhances our outreach activities towards the wider public and highlights the diachronic significance of the local heritage and its potential, offering both the tools and stimulation to those interested in exploring the past** (e.g., educators, students, antiquarians, citizens). Such a high-impact initiative becomes a reference point for the land and its diverse history; it procures the preservation of cultural heritage, while attracting, at the same time, the interest of researchers and other visitors of Aegean Thrace.

The Importance of the HFRI Funding

Being the recipient of the competitive HFRI funding-initiatives is a **concrete reward** of the hard work and high-quality research produced by the PI, as well as an **approval** of his/her organizational skills. **It is a recognition of scientific efforts and an opportunity for higher achievement.** Despite the bureaucratic obstacles that such an undertaking entails, the financial support of HFRI provides the much-desired tools to **put an idea into action**, while promoting scientific excellence, cultural heritage awareness and community outreach.



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