



The mid- to late-Holocene environmental evolution at the marsh of Vravron (Attiki, SE Greece): a multidisciplinary approach

M.V. TRIANTAPHYLLOU (1), K. KOULI (1), T. TSOUROU (1), O. KOUKOUSIOURA (1), K. PAVLOPOULOS (2), and M.D. DERMITZAKIS (1)

(1) University of Athens, Faculty of Geology & Geoenvironment, Dept. of Historical Geology-Paleontology, Panepistimiopolis, 15784 Athens, Greece. (mtriant@geol.uoa.gr), (2) Harokopio University, Faculty of Geography, El. Venizelou 70, 176 71 Athens, Greece.

The Vravron bay, in the vicinity of the homonym archaeological site is a marshy area located on the eastern coast of Attiki peninsula (eastern Greece). Vravron was inhabited already since the Early/ Middle Neolithic, although it's mainly known from the famous Archaic and Classical sanctuary of Vravronia Artemis. A sediment core from the marshy deposits of Vravron was submitted to detailed palynological, micropaleontological and sedimentological analyses, in order to investigate the environmental evolution of the area since approx. 3000 BC (AMS 14C).

Benthic foraminifera and ostracoda assemblages were used to trace the depositional environment of the sequence: open shallow marine conditions with constant input of fresh water due to the influx of Erasinos River are recorded until 400BC, confirming the existence of the natural port known from a Mycenaean legend, while repeated flooding events recorded between 400BC and 50 AD should be linked with the destruction of the famous sanctuary of Artemis and the abandonment of the area. Around 50 AD the ongoing progression of Erasinos River resulted in the gradual development of lagoonal environment that after 1300AD got isolated from the sea becoming progressively a fresh water marsh.

Pollen assemblages included representatives from all modern phytogeographic zones, indicating the complexity of the plant communities in the area and outlined the vegetation development since the Early Bronze Age. Even if human presence has been continuously recorded, its impact on natural environment appears profound only during the Mycenaean times, when cereal cultivation seems to be the main rural activity and after 1300AD, when a remarkable rise in like ploughing and herding evidence marks the introduction of the Arvanites population in the area. The establishment of the Vravronia Artemis sanctuary during the Geometric times coincides with a turnover in agricultural activities, as cereal cultivation is neglected and olive groves are amplified.