



The Last-glacial/Interglacial Transition in northern Greece: consequences on physical environments and implications for human populations.

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Across the Mediterranean Basin, the glacial-interglacial transition (15000-6000 BP) is the transition from hunter-gatherer societies of the Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic Final companies to Neolithic farmers.

In Epirus (northwestern Greece), the lack of archaeological sites is obvious for this period: only two cave sites have yielded Upper Paleolithic occupations and one open air site was dated to the Mesolithic. At the scale of the Tardiglacial and the Holocene, climate fluctuations have been multiple and caused palaeogeographic changes that we do not yet fully measure the amplitudes and limitations: significant change in the coastline and coastal paleogeography and modification of river systems.

The prehistoric remains in a continental environment can not be easily found: they were either destroyed by marine erosion during the post-glacial rebound, or they were buried by sediment. The study we are conducting as part of a PhD in geoarchaeology tries to better understand the response of the physical backgrounds in northwestern Greece.

Our study focuses on two specific areas: the delta formed by the river Thyamis (or Kalamas) and the inlet between the island of Corfu and the mainland. The first has never been paleoenvironmentally studied. Likewise, archaeological researches in the watershed are almost nonexistent. The second study area is of paramount importance to understand the likely impact of the post-glacial rebound on the prehistoric and archaeological maps: initial investigations indicate that this space was occupied by a lake that has ceased to function around 10 000 BP. The paper will present preliminary results on the paleogeographic evolution of the delta Thyamis. In June 2009, combined measures of electrical resistivity, seismic refraction and GPR profiles have established the thickness of the Holocene sedimentation: nearly 15 meters at the upstream of the delta. To better understand the prehistoric and historical evolution of this space, a first serie of 8 cores was conducted in conjunction with geophysical profiles. Preliminary results of sedimentological analysis and malacology allow us to reconstruct the chronology of sedimentation environments that we still need an absolute date. Two cores of reference allowed us to calculate rates of sedimentation will be checked against the existing data at the scale of Greece and Italy.

The methodological approach consists of simultaneously geophysical surveys and coring seems promising in geoarchaeology. We will also present the advantages of expanding this type of study across the lower valley of Thyamis.