

## PHILEAS OWL, THE OWL OF THE SEMINARS!

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I guess there is no better way of introducing DIADRASIS' new educational schemes, the seminars, than the protagonist "Phileas Owl"! Like his distant and a bit more famous cousin Phileas Fogg, our owl decided to face the new challenge of the seminars, keeping up with our educational line: learning by doing within complete projects. And if this concept is already difficult to deal with in our one-month-long project-workshops, just imagine how much harder it can become in short seminars of three or seven days. Actually many would argue that this is simply impossible!

While we were seriously thinking that in DIADRASIS we translate the word impossible in "ah yet another wonderful challenge", we created Phileas, the owl that would organize two short seminars on the magical Mount Pelion. The subjects were very different from one another. In the first one, we would explore the dissemination strategies for heritage, focused on a small museum, while in the second one we would deal with the application of stratigraphic analysis methodology in architecture.

What remained unaltered was definitely the phase of the preparation: excitement, ideas, meetings, discussions, schedules, agreements with collaborators and institutions, open calls, awaiting applications, their screening and finally their selection. Once more an exceptional international team was created, thanks also to various of scholarships: participants

from Albania, Greece, Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Spain, Thailand, Turkey and the UK, formed Gatzea I and II team, ready to learn by doing and help "Phileas owl" complete his two tasks.

The months of preparation went by quickly and here we were on Mount Pelion, in the small village of Gatzea, a spot where nature gives its best, and where fortunately human intervention is limited and harmoniously integrated in the green and blue landscape. The "Olive Museum", which was hosting us, is situated right next to the old railway lines. It was created with love and enthusiasm by two inspired locals, Athina Argiropoulou and Kostas Moraros, whose hospitality is beyond any description. And very similar to the way DIADRASIS was founded, with a strong eagerness but no real strategic plan behind, that little museum became the perfect case study for comprehending tools of modern dissemination tools and their potentials during Gatzea I.

In only three days, Phileas' and the participants' 'luggage' was filled with all the necessary tools for drafting a new strategic plan for the operation of the museum and the promotion and dissemination of its activities. Right from the first day, it became clear that this would be an intensive seminar: starting with the history of the area and the museum, and following immediately after with concepts of dissemination, public awareness and marketing. "Marketing for heritage", here you should allow Phileas a small parenthesis to express his admiration to our lecturer



Fig. 1. Participants of the seminar Gatzæa II: Stratigraphy seminar. Image by DIADRASIS.

Maria Varouta, who stretched a whole new world before us in such a simple way that made us all think, “why haven’t I thought of that till now”? Full of ideas, we moved on to the second day, where the subjects of management, dissemination and evaluation helped us focus on our specific case study. For the last day, a short summary of the previous subjects and a closing presentation on social media tools, led us to finally write down our team’s ideas and guidelines. To better use the potential of our group we were split into two working teams. One dealt with proposals for the museum, improvements for its museology and ideas for sources of income; the second worked on strategies for the interaction with the wider public, presenting a proposal entitled: “Overriding goal to create a hands-on experience to promote the value of the olive and its place in our lives”. In conclusion all the results were debated in a round table with participants, lecturers and the museum owners and managers. We were all really tired at the end of it, but the concrete results had surely fixed smiles in everyone’s faces.

Phileas, more secure of his capacities, thanked and waved goodbye to Gatzæa I team. He just had one day to rest before welcoming the new team, all architects

plus one brave archaeometrist, who wished to explore the potentials of stratigraphic analysis for buildings during Gatzæa II.

For Gatzæa II, apart from the subject itself and the case study, which was an abandoned olive mill, there was another notable difference. Very short time spent on theory followed by immediate action...lots of action! Observing, measuring, confronting, filling forms, correcting forms again and again. We were, however, certain that this was the only way to comprehend Dr. Edward C. Harris’ principles of archaeological stratigraphy for recording evidences of sequential development and dating. You may explain them with as many power points as you can produce, you may have participants nodding their heads that they have understood, but if you do not look carefully at a building, fill the forms yourself, make mistakes and find ways to solve them, you can never understand the geniality of this simple and completely integrated methodology. In six days, our participants grasped and applied the methodology so well that the old charming olive mill revealed to us many of its stories. Phileas was really pleased; he learned and taught in action how to read the history of buildings by organizing the



Fig. 3. Participants of the seminar Gatzzea I: Dissemination strategies for Heritage. Image by DIADRASIS.

observations on overlapping elements and knew that he would never again look at the buildings the way he did before!

In conclusion Phileas Owl was, against all predictions, a very successful owl and we certainly wish to repeat the experience of these seminars! Synergies worked, the support of the Universities of York (UK) and Patras (Greece) were once again catalytic agents for the success of our efforts. We wholeheartedly thank them for their trust and support.

But our greatest thanks as usual go to our participants. They were the real surprise of this experiment, as they

gave the best of themselves not only professionally but also personally. Although this was one of our shorter activities, we are pleasantly surprised to see our participants meeting again in different countries for different occasions. These, we must say, are the happiest posts we get in our social media. After all, Diadrasis' deep desire is that interaction in action is not only for brief collaborations but that it may have long lasting effects.

So thank you all, and thank you Phileas Owl for convincing us to try this educational scheme as well!