

5. Summary

GIA research is data-driven, based on primary or legacy data, in which various strands of archaeological evidence are combined to study long-term developments in prehistoric, protohistoric and historic societies in parts of the Arctic, in Northwestern Europe and in parts of the Mediterranean and Near East. In these research areas, we analyze mortuary practices, settlements, material culture, landscape use and the relations between people, animals and plants in order to understand the development of social organizations, identities and connectivity or mobility. In our research, we combine data analysis with new methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives.

In the period 2016-2021 we accomplished:

Scientific relevance

- Demonstrable products: GIA maintains a high level of scientific output in which peer-reviewed articles, monographs and book chapters are the main categories;
- Demonstrable use: we are very successful within our research themes;
- Demonstrable marks of recognition: Our success in grant capture has stayed at the same high level.

Societal relevance

- Demonstrable products: we produce reports in order to 'translate' scientific expertise into best practices within an Archaeological Heritage Management framework. The political relevance of archaeology in present-day society was also addressed;
- Demonstrable use: GIA research projects are essential for the training of the next generation of archaeologists;
- Demonstrable recognition: The relevance of our expertise to our stakeholders is demonstrated by the list of projects and resulting commissioned reports and by GIA staff frequently taking on roles as scientific advisors.

In addition, GIA has been successful in increasing the proportion of Open Access publications, and taken steps to improve the timely completion of PhD projects.

GIA aims for 2022-2027 are:

- to position its research more strategically in relation to the University and Faculty strategies and the sectorplan and maintain the current level of grant capture;
- To further the relevance and impact of bioarchaeological datasets for historical baseline research;
- To further the relevance and impact of fieldwork research;
- To strengthen our position in the field of heritage studies;
- To capitalize on our strong position in Roman period Mediterranean archaeology;
- To strengthen our national and international position in Arctic Studies by taking resilient human-nature relationships in changing polar environments as a centre theme.

Case studies

Case study – Yesse Monastery excavations

Since 2017, the training excavation (“field school”), where first-year archaeology students are taught the fundamentals of surveying, pedology and archaeological excavation and registration is undertaken at Yesse monastery. This is an example of the successful collaborations we maintain between private organizations, governmental organizations and landscape managers, as part of the GIA strategic plans on societal relevance and knowledge dissemination.

Yesse Monastery

Yesse monastery is Cistercian nunnery founded in 1215 and situated 7 km to the south of the city of Groningen ([Arnoldussen et al. 2018](#)). It functioned until 1595, when it was discontinued as part of the Protestant Reformation. The landscape in which the principal monastic buildings are situated, is owned and managed by the Stichting Groninger Landschap (a major regional landscape managing organization). Unfortunately, the monastery was dismantled after 1595 and nothing is visible above ground today. This means that telling the story of Yesse monastery is done by a local foundation (Stichting Bezoekerscentrum Yesse) based on the finds recovered and historical data known in a small exhibit room on site. Both Stichting Groninger Landschap and Stichting Bezoekerscentrum Yesse were keen to know more details of the outlook and life-histories of Yesse monastery by using excavations. In collaboration with the municipality and provincial authorities of Groningen, a long-term research project into the Yesse monastery was started.

Student engagement

Every spring, first-year students of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology excavate a small part of the Yesse monastic site. Throughout the year, more advanced (MA) students work on the post-excavation analysis of the data obtained (e.g. [Van Rijn et al. 2018](#); [Lugtigheid 2019](#)). Various students at levels from BA to ReMa write their final thesis on a topic pertaining to the Yesse project (e.g. [Ens 2019](#); [van Wijk 2019](#); [de Mulder 2021](#)).

Wider audience engagement - IRL

Beyond academia, there is much emphasis on community outreach within the Yesse projects: open days are organized each year (covid permitting), and public talks are given frequently. If possible, local residents are invited to join the excavation for a day, and primary schools are invited to visit.

Unfortunately, as Covid-19 did not permit a physical exhibition in 2021, a virtual exposition was launched in which the main iconic finds were showcased ([PREZI 2001](#)). In 2022, in addition to the excavations, an on-site exposition was undertaken to showcase the highlights of the Yesse excavations to a wider audience. Also, a glossy catalogue for the general public was drafted ([Bekenkamp et al. 2022](#)) in cooperation with both local heritage enthusiasts and landowners, as well as with heritage professionals.

Wider audience engagement - virtual

To engage with even wider groups of people, the Yesse project uses social media and YouTube uploads to create strong ties with a digital audience. Hundreds of followers have connected through the [Facebook page “Opgravingen Yesse”](#) that feeds updates (daily

during excavations, periodically in between). YouTube movies reach audiences of several thousands.

Offspin

The Yesse Project acts as a springboard for further societal and scholarly collaborations. Within academia, colleagues from the History department co-supervise student theses, and plans for more close and formalized cooperation in a joint 'Monastery Project' are being drafted. Outside of academia, projects together with the Province of Groningen that are aimed at active participation of the public (e.g. at Ter Apel monastery) are being put into play. On more incidental basis, students pick archaeological studies of other monastic sites (such as Thesinge or St Annen) as their thesis' topics.

References

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Bekenkamp, H., S. Arnoldussen, A. Bos, W. Braakman, A. van der Laan, F. Mulder, E.J. Reker, K. Schuil & B.L.M. van Wijk, 2022, *Van Yesse naar Sint Jan. Middeleeuwse mirakelen in kerk en klooster*, Groningen, Stichting Bezoekerscentrum Klooster Yesse & Vereniging Vrienden van de Martinikerk.

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Wijk, B.L.M. van, 2019, *Book fittings. The archaeological reconstruction of (post-) medieval books*, Groningen (ReMA thesis).

Yesse project

Academic output

Arnoldussen, S., 2018, In oerkunde der waerheit. De Yesser bulla van Paus Gregorius IX, in: A. Nieuwhof, E. Knol & J. Schokker (eds.), Fragmenten uit de rijke wereld van de archeologie. Opgedragen aan Ernst Taayke bij zijn afscheid als beheerder van het Noordelijk Archeologisch Depot in Nuis (Jaarverslagen Vereniging voor Terpenonderzoek 99), Groningen: Vereniging voor Terpenonderzoek, 199-204.

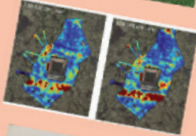
Arnoldussen, S., B. Flikkema & A. Bos, 2018, De ondergrond van Yesse opnieuw onderzocht, Historisch Jaarboek Groningen 2018, 146-148.

Moolenbroek, J.J. van & S. Arnoldussen, 2018, Twee pauselijke zegels en de vroege geschiedenis van het cisterciënzer vrouwenklooster Yesse te Haren, Historisch Jaarboek Groningen 2018, 6-15.

OFFSPIN



Geophysical study
Thesinga Monastery



Geophysical study
Ter Apel Monastery



Thesis project
St Annen Monastery



Executive partners



provincie
groningen

Provincial authority



Municipal authority



Het Groninger
Landschap

Land owner/manager



Stichting Bezoekerscentrum Yesse

Local organisation

Popularizing output

Arnoldussen, S., 2018, Klooster Yesse: sleutel tot de Middeleeuwen, De Spieker.39, 31.

Bekenkamp, H., S. Arnoldussen, A. Bos, W. Braakman, A. van der Laan, F. Mulder, E.J. Reker, K. Schuil & B.L.M. van Wijk, 2022, Van Yesse naar Sint Jan. Middeleeuwse mirakelen in kerk en klooster, Groningen, Stichting Bezoekerscentrum Klooster Yesse & Vereniging Vrienden van de Martinikerk.

Rijn, M. van, F. Koolstra & S. Arnoldussen, 2018, Wat de Yesser nonnen aten: Voedselconsumptie in een Cisterciënzer nonnenklooster te Essen, Groningen, Paleo-aktueel 29, 85-94.

Popularizing efforts
DIGITAL

- VIRTUAL EXPOSITION
- CATALOGUE
- YOUTUBE MOVIES
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- PRESS / TV COVERAGE

Popularizing efforts

PHYSICAL



OPEN DAYS



SCHOOL VISITS



OPEN DIG (PUBLIC)



TALKS



EXPOSITIONS

Case Study – Landscape Archaeology in Italy, the Pontine Region Project

The Groningen Institute of Archaeology has a long tradition in Mediterranean landscape archaeology going back to the 1980's when it first started to map landscapes archaeologically on a regional scale in the Pontine region close to Rome. Over this long period staff, PhD candidates and post-doc researchers and students have reconstructed the deep history of settlement and land use in this fascinating landscape of mountains, former marsh, and coastal lagoons over a period of 3000 years between the Bronze Age and the Early medieval period. Such work is being done within the framework of the Pontine Region Project that ranks among the major landscape archaeological projects in the Mediterranean.

Methodological innovation

In the Mediterranean, mapping of past settlement and land use on the regional scale has developed from simply fieldwalking ploughed fields to find archaeological remains into a sophisticated interdisciplinary field methodology incorporating the earth and environmental sciences and combining remote sensing techniques with intensive artefact surveys. In the Pontine Region Project the application of such integrated methodology has led to detailed reconstructions of the changing human environment of the Pontine region and has yielded insight into the long term exploitation and perception of its mountains, former wetlands and coastal lagoons. Supported by grants of the Dutch Research Council, the Pontine Region Project grew over the years into a laboratory of methodological experiment and innovation and a fertile learning environment for generations of students from Groningen and other (inter)national institutes from which other landscape archaeological projects benefit.

Historical relevance

Visitors of the Pontine region today will encounter a highly urbanized and intensively cultivated landscape, linked to Rome by a busy highway. This development is however recent, as before the fascist land reclamations of the 1930's under Mussolini the Pontine landscape was a malaria-ridden and deserted wetland. In reality, the region hides a rich archaeological history starting with sparse Bronze Age inland lakeside settlements, perilagoonal settlement and hilltop settlements and a long tradition of the use of upland caves going back to deep prehistory. The Iron Age and Roman period saw concentration of people in hillforts overlooking the Pontine plain that on account of landscape changes gradually turned into a marsh. In the Roman Republican period, Rome attempted to reclaim the marsh. Land divisions, canals and rural settlement attest to a period of agricultural colonization instigated by Rome itself. In the Imperial period and Late Antiquity the marsh returned and settlement concentrated once again in the foothills. Revealing this rich environmental and geopolitical history is a major contribution to the historical knowledge of the *longue durée* of a landscape close to Rome and specifically the impact of Rome.

Scientific collaborations

The Pontine Region Project collaborates with various Italian Institutions and Universities, among which the Sapienza, with which it shares PhD candidates and the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome. The Pontine Region Project database is merged with two other large datasets of landscapes around Rome within the framework of the Roman Hinterland

Project (<http://comparativesurveyarchaeology.org/>). This project, instigated by Groningen, enabled the detection of regional spatial and chronological patterns and in-depth analyses of the socio-economic dynamics of the hinterland in relation to the city's growth and decline. It is the largest and most detailed survey database of its kind. The methodological expertise built up in the Pontine Region Project and other Groningen survey projects is shared and discussed with international colleagues in the bi-annual conferences of the International Mediterranean Survey Workshops (IMSW) conferences, co-organised by Groningen at universities all over the Mediterranean ever since its start. The recently started project Salt and Power. Early States, Rome and Resource Control, granted in 2021 by the Dutch Research Council and spearheaded by the discovery along the Pontine coast of the earliest evidence so far of Bronze Age salt production in Italy, guarantees continuity of the Pontine Region Project in the years to come.

Public outreach

The Pontine Region engages in various forms of public outreach supported by the Dutch Research Council, notably exhibitions.

Attema, PAJ, JL Bintliff, PM van Leusen et al., 2020, A guide to good practice in Mediterranean surface survey projects, *Journal of Greek Archaeology* 5: 1-62.

Luca Alessandri, Katia F Achino, Peter A J Attema, Majoi de Novaes Nascimento, Maurizio Gatta, Mario F Rolfo, Jan Sevink, Gianluca Sottili, Wouter van Gorp Salt or fish (or salted fish)? The Bronze Age specialised sites along the Tyrrhenian coast of Central Italy: New insights from Caprolace settlement, *PLoS One*, 2019 Nov. 3;14 (11): e0224435. doi: 10.1371