

## RESEARCH UPDATE - JUNE 18 2008

*Issued on behalf of the authors of  
'Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca' and Fugro N.V.*

### **Successful first year's Fugro sponsorship of the "Odysseus Unbound" project**

- Successful first year's deployment of Fugro-sponsored geoscientific techniques
- Latest technology is used to investigate Europe's earliest enigma
- Land, sea and airborne methods accurately image sub-surface beneath key valley
- Geological update to appear in September 2008 issue of *Geoscientist*
- Public lecture to be held at the Geological Society, London on October 2 2008



**Aerial view of 'Strabo's Channel' (Thinia isthmus, Kefalonia)**

**London and The Hague, June 18 2008.** The results of the first year of sponsorship by **Fugro** of the *Odysseus Unbound* project are to be released in September 2008 and will be described in the September issue of *Geoscientist*, the monthly journal of the Geological Society of London. A carefully designed combination of land, sea and airborne techniques has provided a wealth of new data about 'Strabo's Channel', the isthmus described 2,000 years ago by the great geographer as being "so low-lying that it is often submerged from sea to sea".

The techniques deployed have included gravity, resistivity, seismic refraction, marine seismic reflection, side-scan sonar and electromagnetic methods over the isthmus and its marine extension to the north and south, together with a comprehensive survey using high-resolution helicopter-borne laser tele-altimetry methods and terrain analysis software. These technologies have enabled the project team to penetrate deep below the surface, as opposed to assessing only the superficial terrain.



### **Land, sea and airborne geoscientific techniques deployed by Fugro**

In January 2007 new geological results were announced which supported the proposals in the book "*Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca*". A 122 metre deep borehole was drilled at the southern end of the isthmus between Kefalonia and Paliki, to see whether the drill-bit would encounter solid limestone bedrock or loose rockfall and landslide material. The borehole penetrated to well below sea level and as the theory predicted, no solid limestone bedrock was encountered.

In March 2007 the global geoscientific company FUGRO announced its sponsorship of the *Odysseus Unbound* project. This provides the project team with industry-scale geoscientific resources and includes the sponsorship of a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh.

Geoscience leader Professor John Underhill of the University of Edinburgh comments on the major new capabilities that this cooperation now provides:

*“During the last year Fugro has successfully deployed a remarkable array of state-of-the art geophysical methods in a robust attempt to test the hypothesis that there was a marine channel beneath the Thinia valley during the late Holocene period that has now been buried by catastrophic rockfall.*

*If this hypothesis is confirmed it will mean that Paliki, the western peninsula of Kefalonia, would have been a free-standing island 2,000-3,000 years ago, corresponding precisely to Homer’s description of Ithaca in the Odyssey.*

*Fugro’s specialist air, sea and land-based divisions from around the world have worked together to collect an unprecedented amount of new data in a quest to image the sub-surface beneath the Thinia isthmus. The data collection was very successful and the interpretation of the results is now under way.*

*We are currently engaged in analysing this new information and correlating it with what is already know about the landscape. We plan to release initial results of the first year’s joint activity in September 2008, coincident with an article in the Geological Society’s Geoscientist journal, and also at the Geological Society’s public Shell London Lecture Series at Burlington House on Thursday October 2nd 2008.”*

**\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\***

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For further details of the latest research, visit the project website:

<http://www.odysseus-unbound.org> (English), <http://www.odysseus-lyomenos.org> (Greek)

or visit the Fugro corporate website <http://www.fugro.com> and look for the *Odysseus Unbound* sponsorship icon.

A Press Resources area is provided on the website containing high-resolution versions of the images in this document, photographs of the authors and other material. To access the Press Resources area, email [anne.stephenson@metapraxis.com](mailto:anne.stephenson@metapraxis.com)

To book for the October 2 2008 public lecture visit <http://www.odysseus-unbound.org/events.html>