

**FORTH - ARCHERS (NIARCHOS) Conference**

ARCHERS FINAL (VIRTUAL) CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 6-8, 2021

**WORKING ON THE MOUNTAINS, WORKING WITH THE MOUNTAINS.****ARCHAEOLOGY IN UPLANDS**

Gianluca Cantoro (MA, PhD)

Researcher at the *Institute of Heritage Science* of the *Italian National Research Council* (ISPC-CNR)**Abstract**

The presentation offers an overview of the main research activities undergoing on a hardly accessible mountainous site in Eastern Crete (Greece), the Mount Oxa in the framework of ARCHERS program and its following developments.

On the Northern coast of Crete (Greece) is located the largest bay on the Greek islands, Mirabello Bay, at the point where the island is the narrowest. The western edge of this bay is defined by the Mount Oxa, a narrow and long mountain (about 500-600 m in length and 50-100 m in width) with steep hillsides and a rugged topography crowned by steep and rocky cliffs. The natural setting of this overlooking mount, makes it a natural stronghold which often served as a refuge for the population of the surrounding areas across time, as attested from prehistory to byzantine times in other mountainous sites on the island. The prominent location of this particular peak makes it an excellent observation post for controlling the surrounding area and more specifically the whole Mirabello bay to the South-East and the town of Elounda (ancient Olous). Declared as archaeological site in 1976, Mount Oxa is little known to the scientific community so far. Indeed, due to the steepness of its landscape, no systematic archaeological research has been carried out at the site. As matter of fact, the extant archaeological remains on the summit of the mountain, made up of a fragmentary preserved fortified circuit wall, water towers, cisterns and numerous buildings, are possibly dated to the Byzantine centuries and more specifically to the end of the Early Byzantine period.

The presentation will give particular focus to the employment of digital technologies, their adaptation to complex contexts and how this technological adaptation affects and is affected by ad hoc methodological approach to peak sites in the archaeological fieldwork.