



Preface

The 8th International Conference on Unsaturated Soils “Towards Unsaturated Soils Engineering” UNSAT2023 was organized by the Hellenic Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (HSSMGE) at the “Milos Conference Centre - George Iliopoulos” on the island of Milos, Greece, between 2 and 6 of May 2023. The conference series is supported by Technical Committee TC106 of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE) on ‘Unsaturated Soils’. UNSAT2023 followed the previous successful conferences held in Hong Kong (2018), Sydney (2014), Barcelona (2010), Phoenix (2006), Recife (2002), Beijing (1998) and Paris (1995).

UNSAT2023 aimed from the beginning at providing researchers and practitioners alike with a unique opportunity of sharing up-to-date knowledge on Unsaturated Soil Mechanics and Engineering, both through its scientific sessions, the parallel technical exhibition and specially designed satellite events in a relaxed environment, so as to make for a most fruitful scientific event and provide a unique opportunity for the unsaturated soils community to meet again in person after several years of pandemic restrictions. Originally, the conference was planned for 2022 but it was decided to postpone it for 2023 due to the worldwide pandemic. This allowed to have a face-to-face event, the first for the unsaturated soils’ community after the pandemic.

The conference attracted quite a good response to the call for papers with participants from 33 countries, themed lectures and the 3rd Blight Lecture. All these made UNSAT2023 a most memorable scientific event supported by satellite events such as:

- the Workshop “Long-term measurement of soil suction in the field and its modelling” with its presentations and visit to the field station monitoring suction and volumetric water content in the premises of the conference centre,
- the Short Course “Introduction to Unsaturated Soil Mechanics and its importance in Geotechnical Practice”, an event in support of non-expert delegates attending the conference,
- the technical visit to the Milos bentonite mines and mining facilities, and
- the cultural visit to some of the superb landscapes and monuments of the island.

On top of this, the conference benefitted from the response to the call for papers for special sessions, eventually having a special session on “Unsaturated soil mechanics in the preservation and pathology of historic monuments”, a special session on “Partial saturation and tailings” and the panel discussion “Unsaturated Soil Mechanics instruction: Guiding the non-specialist instructor”.

As HSSMGE, we take pride in that we managed to have an International Conference on Unsaturated Soils fostering the activities of the Unsaturated Soils’ community as always, but also leaving an as large as possible ‘footprint’ of unsaturated soil mechanics to non-experts and experts of other disciplines, in the latter case showing the potential of unsaturated soil mechanics for input to many other subjects. We could not have achieved this without our generous sponsors, exhibitors and supporters and the superb work of the Scientific Committee members and the additional Reviewers they suggested for the rigorous peer review of all papers. We acknowledge their contributions with gratitude.

Dr Michael Bardanis
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