

ABSTRACTS MAR 10

Biomolecular and isotopic characterisation of lipid residues absorbed in Impressed Wares from the Early Neolithic village of Skorba, Malta - Cynthianne Debono Spiteri and Oliver Craig

Organic residue analysis (ORA) was used to characterise the lipid content of Impressed Ware vessels recovered from the Early Neolithic village of Skorba, Malta. ORA utilises both chromatographic and isotopic analytical techniques, and provides direct evidence for the function of ceramic vessels analysed. Lipid residues were interpreted against authentic reference fats of Mediterranean origin, and in light of the archaeological data available. The results showed that lipid yields were generally low, however direct evidence for the processing of an admixture comprising ruminant fat and marine oil was obtained in a vessel dated to the Early Neolithic period. This investigation also tests the feasibility of carrying out ORA on ceramic vessels recovered from Maltese archaeological contexts.

Archaeometric identification of Maltese imports in prehistoric Sicily: Żebbuġ phase pottery from Licata-Caduta (Agrigento) - Germana Barone, Domenica Gulli, Paolo Mazzoleni, Simona Raneri, Davide Tanasi

During the study of a pottery assemblage collected at the Sicilian site of Licata-Caduta (Agrigento), continuously occupied between the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, some ceramics presented typologies, fabrics and surface treatments alien to Sicilian repertoires and closer to Maltese productions. Sampled for petrographic (OM) and chemical (XRF) analyses one artefact turned out to be produced in Malta and imported into Sicily. The search for its chronological and cultural placement has led to the discovery of the first certified Żebbuġ phase import in Sicily.

Ġgantija and the surrounding lands: insights through a late eighteenth-century contract - Anton Bugeja

The deed through which Giovanni Battista Cassar Desain protected Ġgantija is described and possible reasons behind his decision discussed. A plan accompanying the contract has been utilised to throw light on Ġgantija and the surrounding late eighteenth-century landscape. Relevant contemporary representations are analysed to throw light on the state of Ġgantija before the clearances of the 1820s. Caves, an underground spring, and a forgotten path have been rediscovered, highlighting the fact that the area remains largely unexplored.

Xrobb l-Għaġin revisited: recovery and discovery - Ruben P. Borg and Reuben Grima

The purpose of the exercise reported here was to establish whether and to what extent the remains of the megalithic building at Xrobb l-Għaġin survive today, as part of a wider discussion of vulnerability of the archaeological resource in coastal environments. This goal has been achieved, through an examination of the archival record created a century ago, and observations of the remains that are visible on the surface of the site today. In addition, an unexpected discovery was made, which promises to shed new light on attitudes to monumentality and its landscape setting in Late Neolithic Malta.

A missing work of art: Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Asklepios, Serapis, or Herakles? - Anthony Bonanno

This is an edition of a small marble head of a male bearded divinity found in 1924 in an underground space in the area behind the Domvs Romana Museum, Rabat (Malta). It was stolen from its showcase in the 1980s. Its physiognomy qualifies it as a representation of any of the abovementioned divinities. A closer examination of its head cover based on available photographs, however, identifies it as part of a statuette of Herakles.

The underwater aviation heritage of the Second Siege of Malta - Anthony Burgess and Timmy Gambin

Between the years 1940 and 1943, the skies over the Maltese islands and their surrounding seas witnessed some of the most intense aerial combat of the Second World War. The prolonged duration of this conflict in a relatively well-delineated area has resulted in a submerged legacy that bears witness to a period of rapid advancement in aviation technology. After discussing the potential size of this cultural resource, this paper will explain why all of the in situ aircraft remains from this conflict now exist underwater, as well as a working hypothesis as to its composition. This paper concludes by urging a re-appraisal in how this archaeological resource is regarded and treated, advocating a wider holistic approach to construct an 'airscape' of Malta during the Second World War.

O. F. Gollcher and underwater archaeology - George E. Camilleri

During the last three years of his life Olof Frederick Gollcher (1889-1962) took an interest in the archaeological possibilities of underwater diving. He was anxious to encourage Maltese divers to include an archaeological interest in the pursuit of their hobby. His contact with the Sicilian pioneer, the Marchese Pier Nicola Gargallo, led to the formation of the International Institute of Mediterranean Archaeology and its Malta branch. He coordinated several activities and also provided essential logistic and financial support to the fledgling Maltese underwater archaeological scene.