

ALL OVER THE PLACE

Relational Approaches to Mediterranean Landscape Archaeology

10th to 12th October 2025, Sant'Antioco/Sardinia



Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation



WORKSHOP AIM

The workshop has a twofold aim: On the one hand it wants to bring together specialist in landscape archaeology focusing on the pre- and protohistory of the eastern, central and western Mediterranean and thus explore potential differences in research traditions. On the other hand it seeks to explore and critically discuss relational approaches in landscape archaeology, no matter whether they are driven by ANT (actor-network theory), practice theoretical or posthuman approaches by providing a platform for leading and emerging experts to engage in scholarly exchange and dialogue about the possibilities and challenges.

Organizational matters

The workshop will take place from 10th to 12th October 2025 at the Museo Archaeologico Ferruccio Barreca in Sant'Antioco, Sardinia.

The workshop proceedings are planned for publication in 2026/2027.



Fotos (© E. Suà):

Inside: Panoramic view of the Canai plain.

Back: Trench 2 on the Crisionis Hill overlooking the Canai plain.

Front: View of the Canai plain.



TIMETABLE

FRIDAY, 10.10.2025

20.30 **Dinner at local restaurant Zefiro**
Via Giosuè Carducci 15
09017 Sant'Antioco

SATURDAY, 11.10.2025

9.00 - 9.15 **Welcome**
Saluti dall'amministrazione comunale

9.15 - 9.30 Constance von Rüden
Introduction

9.30 - 10.15 Mark Pearce
"Fieldwalking in the central Mediterranean - a comparative survey"

10.15 - 11.00 Martin Bartelheim
"Research into the archaeology of landscape and prehistoric settlement in the Guadalquivir valley (southern Spain)"

11.00 - 11.15 **Coffee Break**

11.15 - 12.00 Alexia Dorkel, Kewin Peche-Quilichini, Marie Besse
"Land Use in Corsica: Fortified Sites from the Late Neolithic to the End of the Bronze Age"

12.00 - 12.45 Riccardo Cicilloni, Federico Porcedda,
Marco Cabras
"Nuraghi and landscape: locational modalities and territorial choices"

12.45 - 14.00 **Lunch Break**

14.00 - 14.45 Mauro Perra
"Seascapes: Chronicles from a Liquid Continent"

14.45 - 15.30 Constance von Rüden, Tim Klingenberg, Yvonne Schmied, Marie Usadel
"Making Landscape on the island of Sant'Antioco - a more than Human Approach"

15.30 - 15.45 **Coffee Break**

15.45 - 16.30 Helen Dawson
"Greener Shores? Place-Making, Mobility, and Abandonment in Island Archaeology"

16.30 - 17.15 Maja Gori
"Per terra e per mare: a (re)assessment of different Cetinascaes"

17.30 **Aperitivo at the Museo Archaeologico Ferruccio Barreca**
Via Sabatino Moscati
09017 Sant'Antioco

SUNDAY, 12.10.2025

9.00 - 9.45 Marco Iamoni (online)
"Human - Environment relationship and the formation of "urban" complex societies: a comparative view from the Levant and northern Mesopotamia"

9.45 - 10.30 Hermann Genz
"The Chekka Hinterland Survey (Northern Lebanon) from 2016 to 2022: First Results"

10.30 - 11.15 Robert Schiestl
"Surveying in Egypt - potential of a neglected field"

11.15 - 11.30 **Coffee Break**

11.30 - 12.15 Mark Pearce
Final Discussion

12.15 - 13.15 **Lunch Break**

14.30 **Excursion Grutt'i Acqua**

Fieldwalking in the central Mediterranean – a comparative survey

Mark Pearce

University of Nottingham, UK

Fieldwalking is a powerful technique for the reconstruction of past landscapes, whose methodologies have become well established since the Second World War. It is now a standard procedure for preventive archaeology on Sardinia.

In this paper I shall explore aspects of the history of the technique in the Mediterranean domain, exploring differences in research traditions with specific reference to a number of field projects: the Minnesota Messenia expedition and the Melos survey in the Aegean, and in mainland Italy, the British School at Rome's pioneering Tiber Valley survey, the Dutch surveys in central and southern Italy, and the work of Armando De Guio and his collaborators at the University of Padua from the 80s to the 2000s. I shall compare the development of field survey in Italy with that in the British Isles, where an Atlantic climate and vegetation pose contrasting and complementary problems. I shall highlight the loss of confidence in fieldwalking as a predictive technique for preventive archaeology in Britain, where it has largely been replaced by test-pitting, geophysics and other forms of remote sensing, such as LiDAR. This contrasts with its continuing use as a tool for research by both academic and amateur archaeologists, whose results demonstrate its power as a research tool for the reconstruction of prehistoric landscape and specifically for documenting the archaeology of the plough-zone.

Research into the archaeology of landscape and prehistoric settlement in the Guadalquivir valley (southern Spain)

*Martin Bartelheim, Döbereiner Chala-Aldana and Marta Díaz-Zorita Bonilla
University of Tübingen*

The lower Guadalquivir valley is one of the historical hotspots of the Mediterranean region. Thanks to its mild climate, favourable agricultural conditions, abundant raw materials and convenient location, it has been an important economic and political centre of the Iberian Peninsula for millennia. These advantages have repeatedly attracted interest from outside the region, particularly from the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans and Arabs.

Since 2013, interdisciplinary teams from the universities of Tübingen and Seville have been conducting research mainly into the Copper and Bronze Ages (3rd–2nd millennium BC) at various sites in the Seville region. The project aims to document the evolution of landscape and settlement in relation to resource use, providing a basis for understanding how local societies functioned. The project also seeks to characterise the role of this region at the western edge of the Mediterranean world. The prospecting, excavation and scientific investigation carried out for this purpose have yielded promising results. In particular, the Mesa Redonda settlement centre (Villaverde del Río, Seville) has emerged as a focal point of research. Evidence of settlement continuity has been found there from the Chalcolithic to the Middle Ages, offering new insights into the region's development over the last four millennia.

Land Use in Corsica: Fortified Sites from the Late Neolithic to the End of the Bronze Age

Alexia Dorkel (1), Kewin Peche-Quilichini (2), Marie Besse (3)

(1) University of Geneva (2) Alta Rocca Museum, Collectivité de Corse, ASM UMR 5140 CNRS

This presentation examines the organization and distribution of fortified sites in Corsica from the Late Neolithic to the end of the Bronze Age, roughly between 3500 and 1000/900 BCE. Our study is based on the analysis of the geomorphological characteristics of the Corsican landscape, such as altitude, as well as the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and statistical analyses. The aim is to understand the choices made by prehistoric societies in the placement of their fortified sites and to highlight the environmental and strategic factors that may have influenced these decisions. The results show that site locations were not random and reveal a temporal evolution in settlement patterns. This research illustrates how natural constraints and human strategies combined to shape the archaeological landscape and provides insights into the socio-political dynamics of prehistoric Corsican societies.

Nuraghi and landscape: locational modalities and territorial choices

Riccardo Cicilloni (1), Federico Porcedda (2), Marco Cabras (3)
University of Cagliari (1, 3), University of Granada (2)

During the Bronze Age, in many Western Mediterranean areas (Spain, France, Italian peninsula, islands), we can observe the development of a series of fortified centers and structures, often on high places, aimed to the defense of strategic locations and resources. In Sardinia, Nuragic phenomenon developed during Protohistory: an extraordinary culture ranging from the Middle to Late Bronze Age (XVIII-XII centuries BC), some of whose features could last from Final Bronze Age until the beginnings of Iron Age (XI-VIII centuries BC), characterized by the building of great monuments, especially nuraghi, cyclopean-type constructions similar to towers. These great buildings have multiple functions, but in particular were used to surveil the whole island territory. We have mainly carried out different GIS analyses on different sample areas with the aim to reading the visual-perceptive aspects and to try to research about the relationship between settlements and territory and the mobility systems across different territories. Reconstruction of certain characteristics of Sardinian Protohistoric Landscape in these areas is achieved. GIS-based analysis show how these territorial control systems, consisting of several nuraghi and settlements, were intended to control the most important natural and economic resources and transit routes.

Seascapes: Chronicles from a Liquid Continent

Mauro Perra

Museo Archeologico Su Mulinu

The history of the Mediterranean during the Bronze Age is told to us through the documents of the "Great Kings," such as the Egyptian pharaohs, the Hittite kings, and those of Ugarit. But archaeology delves into the gaps of the "Great History" and offers us documents that the "papyrus" of the great empires do not reveal.

It is the chronicle of unrecognized peoples, a considered minor history—the history of the barbaric West. A story of men who neither glorified themselves nor celebrated their conquests with monumental reliefs in temples (like that of Abu Simbel), and who left no trace of themselves in ancient archives. Yet, these peoples, among them the so-called Nuragic civilization, have nonetheless left a footprint that archaeology, through its material evidence, has recognized and passed on to contemporary humans.

The Maritime Mode of Production, as Kristian Kristiansen and Timothy Earle teach us, is based on a solid agropastoral economy, robust enough to enable participation in those Mediterranean trade routes that were neither centralized nor controlled by the "Great Kings" and their pressing demands for prestige goods, but conducted by private entrepreneurs who played an important role in the exchanges across our sea, as evidenced by the Ugaritic documents. Not all Nuragic communities were able to make the transition from the Kinship Mode of Production to the Maritime one, but only those human groups that produced the surplus which made this great transformation possible.

Making Landscape on the island of Sant'Antioco – a more than Human Approach

*Constance von Rüden, Tim Klingenberg, Yvonne Schmied, Marie Usadel
Ruhr-University Bochum*

Perhaps even more than in other Mediterranean regions, it is evident for the 'Nuragic' period that a site cannot be understood in isolation. Nuragic towers and settlements are not merely related to those humans they accommodate; rather, they constitute extensive networks across the mountains, plains, and coasts of microregions. The spatial organization of the inhabitants' dwellings within these microregions appears to be non-centralized, with the community spreading across multiple monuments. The inhabitants' activities widely reach out to the forests, grasslands and bodies of water and sensually intertwine with their materiality. Rocks and sediments play an active role in human building activities or pottery making, the changing water flows impact settlement shifts or an adjustment in subsistence activities, the interplay of mountain ranges, monuments and people permits specific sensual experiences. Therefore, this paper will present some results of our study on Sant'Antioco, which combines various empirical methods of landscape archaeology, including remote sensing, geomorphology, surveys undertaken on land and underwater, as well as excavations with New Practice theoretical approaches and Posthuman inspirations.

Greener Shores? Place-Making, Mobility, and Abandonment in Island Archaeology

Helen Dawson

University of Bologna

This paper explores small Mediterranean islands as relational spaces continuously reshaped by environmental change and human action through processes of place-making, mobility, and abandonment. The metaphor of "greener shores" reflects both this complex dynamic and the human pursuit of new opportunities. In the context of prehistoric islands, this perspective allows us to reinterpret episodes of settlement followed by abandonment, which are often viewed as signs of failure. Patterns of abandonment during the Bronze Age, when advances in sailing enabled the settlement of small and remote islands, reveal the importance of mobility within networks. From this perspective, place-making, mobility, and abandonment emerge as adaptive strategies to environmental and cultural pressures, vital to the long-term survival of island communities. This approach also encourages a critical reassessment of resilience: the "greener shores" metaphor does not minimise the real challenges faced by islanders but reframes narratives of failure to emphasise the creative strategies communities employed to engage with their environments.

Per terra e per mare: a (re)assessment of different *Cetinas*capes.

Maja Gori

ISPC-CNR & University of Trento

What is conventionally described in the literature as the “Cetina culture” can be understood as a broad network of Mediterranean interconnections, traceable through a distinctive ceramic tradition that spread from Dalmatia across the wider Adriatic–Ionian region during the second half of the third millennium BCE. This extensive connectivity unfolded across diverse landscapes and gave rise to multiple cultural spheres, materially expressed through the diffusion of burial mounds, the circulation of raw materials and prestige objects, and in some cases processes of transculturation and hybridization evident in pottery production over long distances. This paper reconsiders these dynamics by examining the practices of ceramic-making communities of practice in relation to different types of landscapes and seascapes, with the aim of reassessing the cultural significance and variability of what we might call “Cetinasca”pes.

Human - Environment relationship and the formation of "urban" complex societies: a comparative view from the Levant and northern Mesopotamia

Marco Iamoni

University of Udine

The environment has often been considered a potential stimulus for the development of ancient complex human communities, shaping their growth and contributing significantly to the emergence of urbanization. In ancient Mesopotamia, this aspect has been widely explored, with numerous case studies showing how large urban centers emerged within the socio-economic landscape. Recent studies in the Southern Levant suggest, however, the existence of alternative trajectories that may have led to the formation of different type of settlement model. Through the analysis of selected published case studies, this paper argues that these alternative solutions may have been more widespread than previously assumed, characterizing specific sub-regions of both the Central Levant and Northern Mesopotamia. This suggests that the dynamics of settlement development were quite varied and that the human–environment relationship may have fostered multilinear mechanisms of development.

The Chekka Hinterland Survey (Northern Lebanon) from 2016 to 2022: First Results

Hermann Genz

American University of Beirut

Tell Mirhan, located on the coast of Northern Lebanon in the modern town of Chekka, has been under investigation by a combined mission from the American University of Beirut and the Austrian Archaeological Institute since 2016. From the originally 6 ha site, less than ten percent are still preserved today. Work there has uncovered a massive MB fortification, with the remains of larger buildings of the Iron Age II squeezed between it and the sea. Dominating the Bay of Chekka, this site played an important role in the International trade of the Bronze and Iron Ages, as evidenced by imports from Egypt, Cyprus and the Aegean.

Accompanying the excavations is a survey in the hinterland of Chekka. In 2018 we conducted a LiDAR survey, scanning approximately 300 km². In 2022 core-drillings for geoarchaeological and archaeobotanical investigations were taken for environmental reconstruction of the area. In addition, our research focusses on examining possible timber transport routes from the higher mountains towards the coast, together with a forest technician. First results of these survey projects will be presented here.

Surveying in Egypt - potential of a neglected field

Robert Schiestl

LMU Munich

It may come as somewhat of a surprise, both to archaeologists working in Egypt and to those working in the wider Mediterranean, how little of Egypt has been surveyed. For large swaths of the country, we lack basic data on ancient landscape(s) and settlements. The Eastern Mediterranean "survey boom" starting in the last decades of the 20th century never quite happened in Egypt, and Egyptology remains hesitant to invest in this field. The richness of Egypt's textual and material sources is keeping Egyptology very busy and keeps producing extraordinary results. However, there continue to be huge gaps in our knowledge regarding, for example, regional settlement history, landscape changes and non-monumental archaeological remains. This deficit is generally not seen as a problem. The enduring focus on Egyptian monuments (tombs and temples) and texts reinforces the established narrative of Egypt as a country of monuments in a land full of papyri. What this narrative fails to acknowledge: The monument is the exception and there are large areas of Egypt for which we have almost no textual sources. This holds in particular true for the Nile delta, historically half of Egypt's ancient settlement and economic area. Presenting some of the results of survey work in the central northwestern delta will highlight some of the potential and specific challenges to surveying in Egypt. This area, long considered marginal and never systematically surveyed, has emerged as a flourishing region during the Graeco-Roman period (late 4th c BC-7th c AD). Based on the combined implementation of traditional fieldwalking, geophysical auger core drilling and the analysis of remote sensing data, a dense network of settlements, connected by newly discovered finely ramified Nile branches crossing this region, has emerged.

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES

MAKING LANDSCAPE

Approaching the pre- and protohistoric tasksapes on the island of Sant'Antioco/Sardinia

As a landscape-archaeological study, the project has been investigating the inhabitant's daily routines within the realm of subsistence economy and exchange as well as their involvement in ritual, social or political activities since 2017. Through remote sensing, geomorphological investigation, survey, excavation, experimental approaches and underwater investigations the project reconstructs the communities' tasksapes and their spatial layout to trace the specific land- and seascape appropriation of the inhabitants and to carve out their possible perceptions and meanings. It hence has the potential to break the almost stereotypical idea of the Nuragic population as mountaineers and herdsman, restricted to pastoral life and averted from the sea, which is often perpetuated in literature and touristic commercialization and has been partially incorporated into narratives about local identity.

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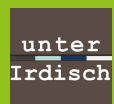
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