

Central Mediterranean Prehistory Seminar 2021

School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh
Wednesday 19th May – Free online seminar: register at:

<https://prehistoryworkshop.eventbrite.co.uk>

PROGRAMME

10:00-10:20 Welcome and introductions

SESSION 1: BROAD-SCALE APPROACHES

10:20-10:40 John Robb & Jess Thompson (University of Cambridge)
Revisiting politics and inequality in Italian prehistory

10:40-11:00 Robert H. Tykot (University of South Florida)
*Obsidian Distribution to the Fringes of the Central Mediterranean:
Multiple Sources in the Far North, East, and South*

11:00-11:10 Coffee break

SESSION 2: NEOLITHIC AND COPPER AGE

11:10-11:30 Kirsty Lilley (University of Edinburgh)
Carving out communities: funerary architecture and identity in pre-Nuragic Sardinia

11:30-11:50 Robin Skeates (Durham University)
Tensions between kin and community in Italy during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC

11:50-12:10 Pascal Tramoni (INRAP)
Nothing else matters: settlement metallurgy during the Corsican Copper Age, a point of view

12:10-12:30 Guillaume Robin (University of Edinburgh), Pascal Tramoni (INRAP), Kirsty Lilley (University of Edinburgh), Guillaume Bruniaux (Université de La Rochelle), Enrico Contini (independent) & Antonio Pecci (Università Basilicata)
The prehistoric stone settlement of Punta Ferulosu in Bonorva (Sardinia): results of the 2019 survey

12:30-13:30 Lunch break

SESSION 3: BRONZE AGE

13:30-13:50 Kewin Peche-Quilichini (Museu di l'Alta Rocca, Livia, Corsica)
Metallurgical nightmare and exotic dream during the Corsican Bronze Age

13:50-14:10 Flavia Palazzini & Elisa Pizzuti (Sapienza-University of Rome)
News from Torre Castelluccia in the Gulf of Taranto: re-discovering a key site of the II millennium BC

14:10-14:30 Luca Lai (University of North Carolina at Charlotte)
Which secondary products in the Sardinian Bronze Age? Animal management from a stable isotopic perspective

14:30-14:40 Coffee break

SESSION 4: IRON AGE

14:40-15:00 Elisa Scholz (University of Cambridge)
A communications revolution in the central Mediterranean: the emergence of figurative art and alphabetic scripts in the Early Iron Age

15:00-15:20 George Prew (University of Glasgow)
Corpse, Costume, and Community: Reconstructing Social Organisation through Funerary Dress at Iron Age Osteria dell'Osa

15:20-15:40 Frijda Schmidt (University of Cambridge)
Feeding the Etruscans

15:40-15:50 Coffee break

SESSION 5: BOOK PRESENTATIONS

15:50-16:10 Francesca Fulminante (Bristol University)
Book presentation: The Rise of Early Rome: Transportation Networks and Domination in Central Italy, 1050-500 BC

16:10-16:30 Ruth Whitehouse (Accordia Research Institute)
Book presentation: Neolithic Spaces

16:30-17:00 Discussion and closing remarks

ABSTRACTS

Revisiting politics and inequality in Italian prehistory

John Robb & Jess Thompson (University of Cambridge) - 10:20-10:40

jer39@cam.ac.uk ; jet71@cam.ac.uk

Since the 1980s, there has been very little discussion of what politics was like in prehistoric Italy. The processualist model of social evolution does not fit the evidence well, and its narrow focus on formal political hierarchy blinds us to much of the complexity of tribal micropolitics. A structural Marxist model works somewhat better but has not been systematically developed for earlier prehistory. In this paper, we review the discussions and the evidence for political process and social inequality. We conclude by presenting a possible model for political change in Italian prehistory, and by discussing ways it could be investigated, introducing a new project using skeletally and molecularly based osteobiographies to reconstruct individual lives.

Obsidian Distribution to the Fringes of the Central Mediterranean: Multiple Sources in the Far North, East, and South

Robert H. Tykot (University of South Florida) - 10:40-11:00

rtykot@usf.edu

Obsidian from four islands in the central Mediterranean was acquired starting about 6000 BCE and distributed long-distance to sites hundreds of kilometers away. There are small percentages of obsidian in the lithic assemblages of sites in Spain and the Balearic Islands, southern France, northern Italy, Croatia, Albania, Malta, and Tunisia. My analytical source analyses of more than 10,000 obsidian artifacts from hundreds of archaeological sites provide information on distribution patterns, and may be used to infer frequency, methods, and direction of travel over both sea and land, and assess potential changes from the Early Neolithic through Early Bronze Age. Does distribution over such great distances suggest exotic, eccentric, or just occasional exchange?

The data now available on obsidian distribution in the central Mediterranean show striking differences between sites in the distribution patterns from each source, as well as changes over time which may be related to increasingly complex socioeconomic patterns over the course of the Neolithic. The obsidian distribution patterns are used to propose potential transportation routes - likely not just for obsidian - while assessment of the typo-technology of the artifacts addresses the involvement of lithic specialists in various stages of the chaîne opératoire.

Carving out communities: funerary architecture and identity in pre-Nuragic Sardinia

Kirsty Lilley (University of Edinburgh) - 11:10-11:30

s1310314@ed.ac.uk

The Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic (pre-Nuragic) societies of Sardinia are characterised by the construction of rock-cut tombs, which survive across much of the island. These funerary sites, known locally as *domus de janas* ('houses of the

fairies'), diverge from the wider Mediterranean tradition of rock-cut tomb-building in a unique way: many examples display architectural and artistic elaboration, often to the extent that they appear to reproduce structural interiors.

But the embellishment of rock-cut tombs varies widely across the island, potentially allowing us to see the ways in which communities interacted with this widespread tradition and reworked it in accordance with their own customs – in other words, how tombs were utilised to express identity at smaller scales. Employing spatial analysis and the identification of specific identity 'markers' at both Sardinia-wide and regional scales, this research attempts to construct a social geography of Sardinia, and consider the extent to which funerary architecture contributed to the construction and maintenance of identities in this period. In doing so, it introduces a new means of understanding the lived experiences of the island's Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities, and to consider why architecture held such significance within the funerary sphere.

Tensions between kin and community in Italy during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC

Robin Skeates (Durham University) - 11:30-11:50

robin.skeates@durham.ac.uk

This paper offers a brief overview of long term trends in the archaeology of Final Neolithic, Copper Age and Early Bronze Age Italy (c. 4100-1800 BC). It argues that social identities and dynamics during this period were informed by a growing and fundamental tension between increasingly assertive kin groups (centred on longhouses, ancestral tombs and prestige goods) and traditional farming communities (associated with large communal settlements, defences, cemeteries, and field systems). Despite some widely shared materials and styles (that have led some social archaeologists to envisage a 'great simplification' of personhood and the social order in Italy at this time), the author argues that this tension actually added to behavioural and archaeological diversity over space and time in Italy, and to a social instability that was rooted in the 5th millennium BC.

Nothing else matters: settlement metallurgy during the Corsican Copper Age, a point of view

Pascal Tramoni (INRAP) - 11:50-12:10

pascal.tramoni@inrap.fr

Until recently, evidence for prehistoric copper metallurgy in Corsica was known from two settlement sites. At Terrina, excavated by Gabriel Camps in the 1970s, evidence for a local metallurgy (kilns, crucibles, slags, artefacts) were dated to the Final Neolithic, somewhere during the second half of the 4th millennium. The antiquity of this chronology is still debated. A few years later, the site of I Calanchi was excavated by Joseph Cesari and Giuseppa Tanda, and yielded comparable finds in a domestic context, also dated to the end of the 4th millennium, however, in this instance without evidence for kiln. Over the past decade, new data have emerged and have reactivated reflections on the chronology, nature, status and significance of this early metallurgy in Corsica.

We offer here a detailed review of current knowledge on the issue, and some avenues of reflection that lead us to question the cultural and economic significance of the phenomenon within the wider regional context of the Tyrrhenian basin.

The prehistoric stone settlement of Punta Ferulosu in Bonorva (Sardinia): results of the 2019 survey

Guillaume Robin (University of Edinburgh), Pascal Tramoni (INRAP), Kirsty Lilley (University of Edinburgh), Guillaume Bruniaux (Université de La Rochelle), Enrico Contini (independent) & Antonio Pecci (Università Basilicata) - 12:10-12:30
guillaume.robin@ed.ac.uk

Sardinia is renowned for its thousands of Neolithic and Copper Age rock-cut chambered tombs. By contrast, very little is known about the settlements and domestic architectures of the communities who created and used these tombs. In 2019, a survey was carried out on the hilltop settlement of Punta Ferulosu in Bonorva. The site includes several exposed stone structures (foundations of houses), and is located in an area rich of rock-cut cemeteries with elaborate 'house-like' decorated tomb interiors (Sant'Andrea Priu, Monte Donna, Furria Cuguddos, Sa Pala Larga). Combining fieldwalking, 3D recording, and geophysics, the objective of this preliminary survey was to document exposed and buried stone structures, and to estimate their chronology. The presentation will discuss the architectural diversity of the structures, likely reflecting multiple phases of use of the site, and its landscape relations with neighbouring cemeteries.

Metallurgical nightmare and exotic dream during the Corsican Bronze Age

Kewin Peche-Quilichini (Museu di l'Alta Rocca, Livia, Corsica) - 13:30-13:50
baiucheddu@gmx.fr

We propose here a review of current knowledge about Bronze Age Corsican metallurgies. Based on recent syntheses, this issue will be approached according to several points of view. Firstly, the questions of copper exploitation and supply will be discussed, whether they were local or involved maritime exchanges. Where possible, chemical composition studies will be discussed. The question of Bronze Age workshops will be addressed through a review of smith tools, in particular with a description of the corpus of crucibles and moulds, and with an opening on the utensils linked to cold deformation. The eastern origin of certain techniques and imported objects will be developed. Finally, based on the moulds and productions, the typologies of the finished objects, their contexts and their economic and cultural significance will be commented on.

News from Torre Castelluccia in the Gulf of Taranto: re-discovering a key site of the II millennium BC

Flavia Palazzini & Elisa Pizzuti (Sapienza-University of Rome) - 13:50-14:10
palazzini.1751702@studenti.uniroma1.it ; elisa.pizzuti@uniroma1.it

Excavated in the second half of the XX century, the fortified site of Torre Castelluccia (18 km south-east of Taranto) was continuously occupied since the South Italian Middle Bronze Age (1700 - 1300 BC) until Greek colonization (ca. 700 BC). The site, like other long-lasting settlements in the Gulf of Taranto (e.g., Scoglio del Tonno, Taranto S. Domenico and Porto Perone-Satyrion), stands on a promontory flanked by two natural bays, in a highly accessible and thus privileged landing position. During the excavations, both settlement -set on the hilltop- and funerary areas were unearthed; notably, the Late Bronze age cremation cemetery is in part coeval with the use of one rock-cut chamber ("grotticella"-type) tomb, revealing a complexity of

coexisting rituals. Our research combines the recovery of legacy data (diaries, inventories, photos, plans, and drawings) with the renewed study of artifacts. This analysis offers a fresh perspective of the occupation history of Torre Castelluccia, increasing our awareness of the significant role played by this site in the intense communication networks established within the Mediterranean (e.g., Late Bronze Age Mycenaean contacts).

Which secondary products in the Sardinian Bronze Age? Animal management from a stable isotopic perspective

Luca Lai (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) - 14:10-14:30
melisenda74@yahoo.it

Based on stable isotopic values on animal remains from several sites dating from the Copper Age- Early Bronze Age transition down through the Middle Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, this presentation will attempt to outline what appear to be variations in livestock management, ranging from extensive, free-ranging to more controlled feeding for the different species. This contributes to the effort to unpack the local version of a secondary products revolution that rather than punctuated appears protracted for about two millennia in its components, and such differences are interpreted on the basis of current models of social and political developments of the Nuragic culture.

A communications revolution in the central Mediterranean: the emergence of figurative art and alphabetic scripts in the Early Iron Age

Elisa Scholz (University of Cambridge) - 14:40-15:00
es774@cam.ac.uk

The first half of the first millennium BC witnessed a remarkable communications revolution which burst and spread throughout the Central Mediterranean during the 8th-6th centuries BC. This explosion is made manifest in primis by the emergence of two 'new' communication systems: writing and figurative art. In stark contrast to the East, where such forms of communication had never disappeared, both Greece and Italy exhibit a sharp break from the past.

Studies on these two phenomena abound, notoriously taking a rather Greek-centred view on the matter, and connecting both practices with the birth of the city state as we find it there, or to a particular way of thinking and to Western ideals of 'democracy'. However, alphabetic writing and figurative art were taken up at different moments and in different ways in diverse regions, with distinct social and political organisations, which ultimately developed along different paths. Regional variations must therefore be taken into account, but so should wider Mediterranean networks and relations. The key issue is the appearance across a vast area of new forms of communication, which must therefore find their explanations not at a local, isolated level, but on a larger scale. Communities are clearly in the process of forming, inventing or (re)imagining themselves. What can the emergence and consumption of these two media tell us about the roles they played in shaping and constructing communities and identities?

Corpse, Costume, and Community: Reconstructing Social Organisation through Funerary Dress at Iron Age Osteria dell'Osa

George Prew (University of Glasgow) - 15:00-15:20

g.prew.1@research.gla.ac.uk

The dressed corpse in its funerary context can provide vital insights into the life of a community, and this is particularly evident among those communities formed during the upheavals of the central Italic Early Iron Age. This paper presents new understandings of dressed corpses from the Osteria dell'Osa cemetery in Latium, focusing on how the dressed corpse would have been experienced in its original setting, during the funerary ritual. Through this, scholars can reconstruct choices made, consciously or subconsciously, by those who dressed the corpses; choices which would have reflected, conveyed, and helped to construct both the identity of the deceased, and, on a larger scale, the social values, relationships, and networks that existed in these communities.

The research achieves this using a new approach to funerary analysis which brings together multiple existing approaches to funerary and dress study, including sensory, material, body mapping, and more traditional analyses to provide a varied, if incomplete, view of the functions and effects of funerary dress. The results then present a drastically different narrative of an oft-studied site, and one that is pivotal for scholarly understandings of how states and cities, including Gabii, Rome, and sites across Etruria, emerged in Iron Age Italy.

Feeding the Etruscans

Frijda Schmidt (University of Cambridge) - 15:20-15:40

afs42@cam.ac.uk

Food production and consumption, especially relating to agriculture, is central to cultural development of all societies. Food, as well as being a biological necessity, plays a significant role in the social and cultural identity of a society. In the case of the Etruscans, however, especially crop-food production has yet received little archaeological attention and is mainly focused on secondary sources.

To gain a better understanding of crop-foods during the central Italian urbanization processes in the 1. Millennium BC this study will consider the archaeobotanical macroremains from the urban centres Tarquinia and Gabii and the rural farmstead Col di Marzo. All three sites have been extensively sampled for botanical remains and will hopefully offer social diverse insights into the past human-plant interaction. Central research objectives will amongst others comprise the reconstruction of major staples and the organization of labour and distribution, and the developments of these aspects throughout the millennium.

Ultimately, the aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the development and functioning of one of Europe's earliest urban societies through one of the most important aspects of both the daily life and a given economic and political system, namely the production, and distribution and consumption of food.

Book presentation: The Rise of Early Rome: Transportation Networks and Domination in Central Italy, 1050-500 BC

Francesca Fulminante (Bristol University) - 15:50-16:10

francesca.fulminante@bristol.ac.uk

The trajectory of Rome from a small village in Latium vetus, to an emerging power in Italy during the first millennium BC, and finally, the heart of an Empire that sprawled throughout the Mediterranean and much of Europe until the 5th century CE, is well known. Its rise is often presented as inevitable and unstoppable. Yet the factors that contributed to Rome's rise to power are not well understood. Why Rome and not Veii? In this book, Francesca Fulminante offers a fresh approach to this question through the use of a range of methods. Adopting quantitative analyses and a novel network perspective, she focuses on transportation systems in Etruria and Latium Italy from ca. 1000-500 BC. Fulminante reveals the multiple factors that contributed to the emergence and dominance of Rome within these regional networks, and the critical role they in the rise of the city and, ultimately, Roman imperialism.

Book presentation: Neolithic Spaces

Ruth Whitehouse (Accordia Research Institute) - 16:10-16:30

r.whitehouse@ucl.ac.uk

Neolithic Spaces provides a large-scale synthetic survey of the Neolithic sites (villaggi trincerati – ditched villages) of the Tavoliere plain, southeast Italy, one of the most important world regions for the scale of early Neolithic settlement. The volumes cover original research at regional, inter-site and intra-site scales. They explore the social use of landscape and 'taskscape' and focus on interfaces of domestic, specialist and ritual sites. The work combines innovative and traditional survey methods, including interpretation of aerial photographs, surface survey and mapping and approaches for understanding the human experiential aspects of 'dwelling' (phenomenology/sensory archaeology). The techniques developed and associated data are relevant to all archaeological and landscape studies. The work concludes that the world of the villaggi trincerati was maintained and regenerated as a series of socially nested scales of settlement that allowed uptake of new land and expanding populations without the emergence of hierarchical organisational structures.