

It is now possible to indicate also some sectors of the Islamic city destined to the productive activities, thanks to the discovery of furnaces datable in the 10th-11th century or of structures connected to other handicraft activities. Another important element concerns the funeral aspect, since we have a more reliable picture of the distribution of the cemetery areas of Islamic age.

The ever increasing knowledge of decorated ceramics, so-called glazed, in its passage between the Islamic and Norman ages, also allows us to acquire new elements to define some characteristics of the organization of Palermo in Norman age. Recent investigations in the historical center, and in the area outside the fortifications, throw new light on some aspects related to the great buildings of Ruggeriana age, both in the City Heart (Palace of Normans) and in the immediate periphery of Palermo of the Kingdom of Ruggero II, as at Maredolce and in the territory of Altavilla, where the exploration of one of the first Norman churches of the island is underway.

## **02 AT THE EDGE OF MEDIEVAL PALERMO: THE COMPLEX OF SAN GIOVANNI DEI LEBBROSI IN CONTEXT**

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**Presentation Format:** Oral

This paper aims to present the undergoing research of the complex of San Giovanni dei Lebbrosi (Palermo), where a Norman church and a hospital were built outside the city walls upon a (presumably) previous Islamic settlement.

This site is located to the south of Palermo, on the ancient right bank of the river Oreto, at one of the main access points to the city. Written sources and new data indicate that the territory of Palermo was densely inhabited during the 9th-12th centuries, with neighbourhoods, mosques and other buildings located both inside and outside the city walls, though unfortunately these have not yet been discovered or thoroughly investigated. It is within this state of the art that the research of San Giovanni dei Lebbrosi, a complex hitherto mostly ignored by modern research, must be understood.

With the aim of better understanding San Giovanni and the transition of this area of the city from the Islamic to the Norman period, and thanks to four successive projects (2014-17) funded by the Spanish government (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes) and The Barakat Trust (Univ. of Oxford), we have been able to carry out a photogrammetric drawing survey of the site, an archaeological analysis of the standing structures, an excavation of the south-western area of the church and documentary analyses.

Preliminary results reveal that the church and the hospital were probably coeval and formed part of the building programme promoted by Roger II in the first half of the 12th century, rejecting thus the late 11th-century chronology defended by traditional scholarship for the church. This information does not affect only the comprehension of the site of San Giovanni, but also of the royal architecture of Norman Sicily in terms of characterization, resources and organisation of labour, among others aspects.

## **03 TOWN AND COUNTRY IN FATIMID SICILY (10-11TH CENTURY)**

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**Presentation Format:** Oral

Palermo is a flourishing city and as a result of ongoing development new contacts are made every year with its rich Islamic and Norman buried past. Castronovo di Sicilia in central Sicily has been under intensive archaeological investigation since 2014, and has so far revealed a sequence of occupation that includes a Byzantine agri-town (6/7th century), a Byzantine fortress (8/9th century), an Arabised rural centre of the 9/11th century and 12-13th century citadel and town. Our paper summarises what is known from archaeological work in the Fatimid city of Palermo (10/11th century) and compares it with the same period at Castronovo di Sicilia in the light of recent excavations. We describe, contrast and reflect upon how the respective pictures are moderated by the site formation processes and modes of investigation, and the ways that cultural distinctions between rural and urban settlements in Sicily may be interpreted and further explored. The evidence used comprises, at Palermo, the results of rescue excavations and their assemblages of pottery, animal bones and human bones, and, at Castronovo, excavations on Monte Kassar and at Casale San Pietro, building recording on Monte Kassar and Colle San Vitale, and investigations of landscape and hydraulic systems in the present town of Castronovo and its neighbouring valleys. The research is being conducted under the ERC Research project Sicily in Transition (sictransit).

For references and further information see <http://sicilyintransition.org>

## **04 LONG-TERM OCCUPATION OF A MEDIEVAL RURAL SETTLEMENT IN SICANI MOUNTAINS (C-W SICILY): NEW DATA FROM CONTRADA CASTRO (CORLEONE, PALERMO)**

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**Presentation Format:** Oral

The "Harvesting Memories" project focuses on the study of long-term landscape and settlement patterns change - in Sicani Mountains rural district (central-western Sicily) - as a result of diachronic interactions between socio-economic human factors and environmental and ecological trends. A new hilltop site has been identified during field survey in Contrada Castro (Corleone, Palermo). The settlement pattern linked to the selection of reliefs and hills as places for controlling rural districts seems to have changed in the Roman age, when it was characterized by intensive occupation of low-lying lands associated with potential agricultural produc-

tivity and proximity to road networks. A shift in settlement pattern with the rise of agglomerated hill-top settlements during the Early Middle Ages is a global phenomenon also occurred in Sicily. This paper aims to show the long-term sequence of the excavation (started in spring 2017) in the site of Contrada Castro. The main evidences date back to the Middle Ages with dry-stone structures related to the Islamic and Norman age (9th-12th c. AD) resettling a place already occupied during Byzantine period (infant burial) and also by a Late Archaic/Classical indigenous settlement (6th-5th c. BC). The investigation of this new rural site provided insight into longue durée patterns at hilltop rural settlements in Sicily between Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

## **05 CONTESSA ENTELLINA: A RURAL VS. URBAN MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPE IN INNER WESTERN SICILY**

**Author(s):** Corretti, Alessandro (Scuola Normale Superiore)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

In the last decades, the Scuola Normale Superiore has made archaeological surveys in the territory of the municipality of Contessa Entellina (Palermo, Sicily), and has been dealing excavations in the main settlement, the town of Entella. This wide range research, centered both on landscape settlement and on the principal urban site, enables a comparison between rural and urban settlement patterns in the same area.

Since the early 2nd century AD, the town of Entella - lying on a steep plateau barely endowed with water - is abandoned in favor of rural sites (villae and villages) situated in places better suited for agriculture and nearer to water courses and roads. After a decrease of settlement in late byzantine age, the Arab conquest sees a rise in sites number, dimension and richness. We assist to both continuity of occupation of major late antique sites, and foundation of new settlements. While in the 9th and 10th centuries there is no clear evidence of reoccupation of strong sites, at the end of 10th-early 11th century a new large and structured settlement - a town? - appears again on top of the plateau of Entella.

In the following centuries (11th-beginning of 12th centuries) a diffused and rich rural settlement exists side-by-side with a town, possibly the see of local administration, though the surroundings of Entella are now void of settlements. At the end of Norman rule, Entella will absorb refugees both from the near countryside and from eastern Sicily and from Palermo, standing as a fortress in an almost empty landscape.

## **06 THE MADONIE MOUNTAIN AREA, EAST OF PALERMO, IN NORMAN TIMES: FROM IDRISI TO ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Author(s):** Cucco, Rosa Maria (Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. Palermo)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The Madonie Mountains, in Sicily, extend from the North coast to the heart of the island. This area was of great importance from Prehistoric to Medieval times and several archaeological sites bear witness to the various chronological phases.

The entire area has not yet been fully explored, although archaeological surveys have been carried out on some parts, mainly along the Valley of the North Imera river. Excavations were carried out on Prehistoric, Hellenistic, Imperial, Late Roman rural sites - particularly associated with the agro-pastoral economy of the land- and Medieval villages and castles. In several cases, the researches, some of which is still ongoing, were carried out in collaboration with the Superintendence of Palermo, Italian and Foreign universities and interested communities.

Via Messina Montagne is the road that goes across the area and was built during the rule of the Byzantine State. It became indispensable for the transport between Palermo and East Sicily and in the Norman conquest of the island.

The Islamic geographer Idrisi, author of "Il Libro di Ruggero" used this road to cross the Madonie range. We will also visit the ancient towns of the Madonie and we attempt to gain an understanding of late antiquity to Medieval times through the archaeological findings.

## **07 CHANGES IN THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF SICILY AFTER NORMAN CONQUEST IN THE LIGHT OF EXCAVATIONS AT THE SITE ALTAVILLA MILICIA**

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**Presentation Format:** Oral

The Altavilla project concerns the history of local cult centre - the church and the Italo-Greek monastery - known as Santa Maria di Campogrosso. Centre for Late Antique and Early Medieval Studies in Wrocław started excavations in the area in connection with implemented, based on an agreement on scientific cooperation with Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. di Palermo, research programme on the role of the Normans in shaping the cultural image of medieval Europe.

Archaeological works are intended i.a. to clarify the chronology of the site. In the literature concerning the site in question there are different versions of dating of the church extending from the 11th century to the 15th century.

Preliminary excavations led to the unearthing the external face of southern wall of the church and the adjacent cemetery. The problem of chronology of the church is inseparable from the dating of the cemetery, which was established after the construction of the temple. Amongst the 30 graves, three children's graves were encountered. The coins discovered in children's tombs as well as the