

THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS PROJECT

Contact, commerce and colonisation 6000 BC - AD 600



The whole Illyrian seaboard is exceedingly well supplied with harbours, not only on the continuous coast itself but also in the neighbouring islands.

Strabo (5.10)

XV, 13. While these events were taking place (i.e. Dionysius the Elder joining with the Molossians and Illyrians in Epirus), the Parians, in accordance with an oracle, sent out a colony to the Adriatic, founding it on the island of Pharos, as it is called, with the cooperation of the tyrant Dionysius. XV, 14. This year (384 BC) the Parians, who had settled Pharos, allowed the previous barbarian inhabitants to remain unharmed in an exceedingly well fortified place, while they themselves founded a city by the sea and built a wall about it. Later, however, the old barbarian inhabitants of the island took offence at the presence of the Greeks and called in the Illyrians of the opposite mainland. These, to a number of more than ten thousand, crossed over to Pharos in many small boats, wrought havoc, and slew many of the Greeks. But the governor of Lissus appointed by Dionysius sailed with a good number of triremes

against the light craft of the Illyrians, sinking some and capturing others, and slew more than five thousand of the barbarians, while taking some two thousand captive.

Diodorus Siculus (History)

C. H. Oldfather, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass. - London 1954.

Next to exploring for oneself, the best an explorer can do is to promote exploration in others. My highest ambition for these pages is to show how much remains to be done. A party of three to four friends, forming a committee of discovery, could hardly spend their time better than by devoting the best season of the year, from April to June included, to a careful study of the Dalmatian Archipelago, visiting every site called Grad and collecting the folk-lore which everywhere abounds.

Sir Richard Francis Burton (1876) The Long Wall of Salona and the Ruined Cities of Pharia and Gelsa di Lesina.

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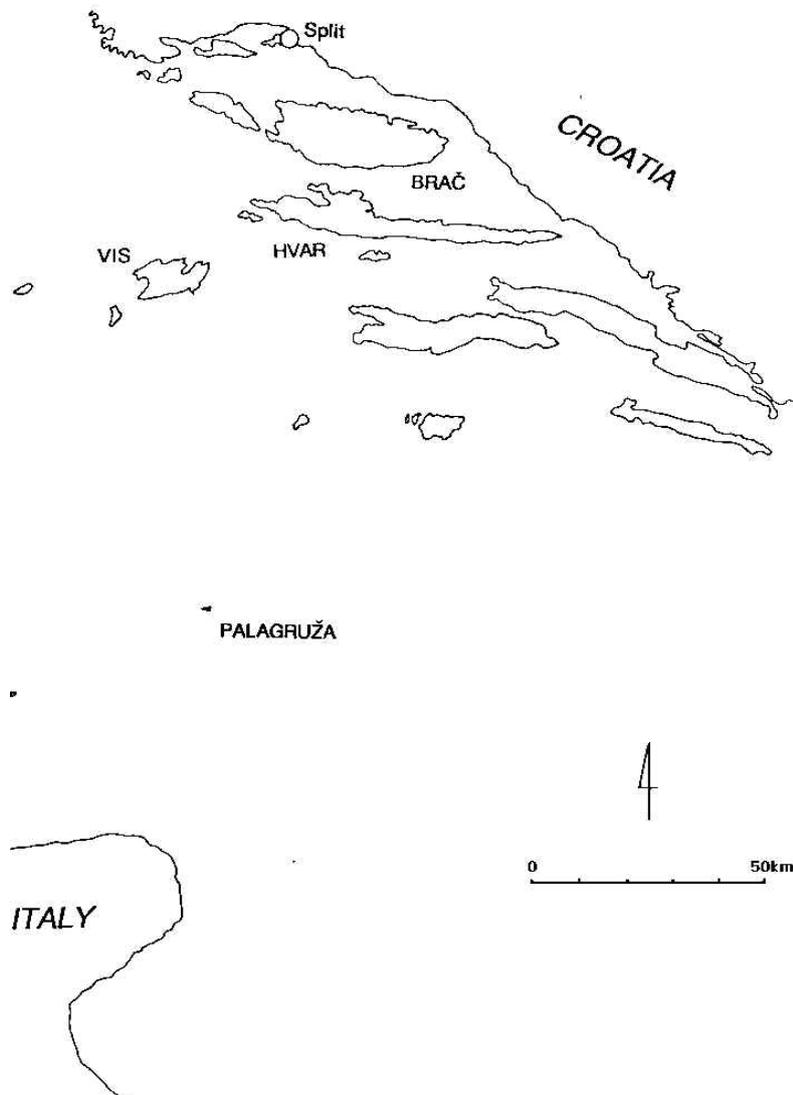
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1 THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS

The Central Dalmatian Islands are amongst the most beautiful islands in the Mediterranean. From the earliest of times these islands were settled, fought over and colonised by numerous peoples including Venetians, Byzantines, Greeks and Romans. The importance of these islands may seem strange to visitors today. However, the key to understanding the history of the region lies in the way the islands link the eastern and western shores of the Adriatic. To early mariners, who needed frequent safe ports and always tried to sail in sight of land, the islands represented the safest sea route from Greece to Italy. Traders also had to pass the Central Dalmatian islands to go north to the head of the Adriatic. There to join the great trade routes into central and northern Europe. The islands were also strategic positions. Greeks, Romans and Venetians fought in turn to control them. The dramatic history of Central Dalmatia is reflected in the archaeological and historic monuments which are scattered across the landscapes. Ancient burial mounds, prehistoric hillforts, Greek colonies, Roman villas and Venetian defences all bear witness to the importance of the islands over millennia of European history.



Central Dalmatian Islands

The Adriatic Island Project is studying how these islands were settled, and the evidence for how man used the area from the earliest of times to the arrival of the Slavs. The earliest communities in the area were hunter-gatherers who lived here more than 12-13,000 years ago, during the Upper Palaeolithic. Unfortunately most of the settlements of these people may have been lost

when, following the end of the Ice Age, the Adriatic basin was inundated by the sea between 8,500 - 6000 B.C. After this time the islands were settled by people who were farmers. Carbon 14 dates from the settlements of early farmers show that agriculture spread from south to north after the 8th millennium B.C. Within the Central Dalmatian islands this time, known as the Neolithic and Eneolithic period, is almost exclusively represented by cave sites. Key sites include Grapceva and Markova Spilja on Hvar, and Kopacina on Brac. An important exception to this situation was the discovery, by the Adriatic Islands Project, of an open site associated with the very earliest Neolithic. The island of Palagruza provides some of the first evidence for Early Neolithic ventures into the deep-waters of the Adriatic. Thus demonstrating that the chain of islands was important for communication over 8,000 years ago!

The first use of metals in Dalmatia is in the form of simple copper and, later, bronze objects. During the Early Bronze Age our evidence is largely restricted to isolated finds in caves and burial mounds (tumuli). However, discovery of Early Bronze Age artefacts on the island of Vela Palagruza which seem to be associated with use of a flint quarry on Mala Palagruza, is very exciting. Aside from this, a series of tumuli on Hvar represents the most significant group of sites associated with the Early Bronze Age. However, the construction of a tumuli cemetery at Vira (Hvar) suggests that this period may also have witnessed the creation of the first public ritual monuments, and that these were associated with rituals linked to land fertility. Soils on the Dalmatian limestone are very fragile, and early farmers may have been affected by declining soil fertility and soil loss only a very short time after the introduction of farming.

Evidence for settlement and land use during the Middle Bronze Age is almost unknown within the islands, and is poorly documented elsewhere in central Dalmatia. It is only in the Late Bronze Age in Central Dalmatia that we see a conspicuous increase in settlement evidence - mainly associated with defended hilltop enclosures (hillforts or gradine). Work on the islands suggests a tendency for large hilltop enclosures to be sited with respect to fertile land, and it is possible that they are positioned to control agricultural resources - again possibly the result of increased soil erosion caused by agriculture. More significant has been the recent find of Mycenaean pottery at Skrip on Brac, which suggests that by the late second millennium BC, there was contact between this region and Greece, or communities in contact with Greece.

In many ways the Iron Age is very similar to the Late Bronze Age. It is dominated by hillforts, but there is increasing evidence for intensive external contact. Of particular importance is the presence of pre-colonial Greek finds at a number of localities in the region. Sites which are particularly important during this period include Hvar Castle, Talez (Vis) and Palagruza. During the earliest period it is likely that we are seeing evidence for trade, and for Greek exploration. The links of the region with Italy and to the Etruscan sites at the head of the Adriatic must have been appreciated as important by the Greeks. They must also have noted that the islands possessed land which could be colonised. We know of several Greek colonies in the area, but there is some debate as to which is the first. The colony on Vis, named Issa, may be the product of a 4th century Syracusean venture but it is also possible that the colony may be a slightly later foundation. The first colony that can be confidently dated is that of Pharos on Hvar, whose foundation, by the Parian Greeks, at Stari Grad on Hvar in 385-4 B.C. is recorded by Diodorus Siculus (XV, 13-14). Diodorus provides a dramatic account which tells how the city was founded - and then attacked by the local inhabitants (a translation of the text is on the front, inside cover). According to Diodorus only a last minute rescue by the navy of Dionysius of Syracuse saved the colony.

Whichever was first, the fate of these two cities varied considerably. Pharos may eventually have been controlled by local dynasts, and probably went into steep decline and perhaps abandonment, during the 2nd century BC. Vis, although occupied by Ardiaean forces during the First Illyrian War (228 BC), seems to have maintained its independence, and indeed planted further colonies on other islands and the mainland.

Elsewhere on the islands, the native inhabitants lived without significant change. Indeed, it is uncertain when the islands eventually came under direct Roman control, although it seems likely

that both Pharos and Issa were de facto Roman possessions by the late 1st century BC. Following incorporation into Empire the Roman city of Salona emerged as the local political and economic centre. The islands lost their strategic value, but the Pax Romana allowed them to flourish economically. The islands prospered by feeding the growing urban populations of the coast.

The fate of the islands under the later Empire is less certain. Dalmatia passed between Western and Eastern Empires during the fourth century but it is likely that the central Dalmatian islands were largely unaffected by the civil wars of that time. During the mid 5th century the area functioned as a semi-independent territory under the comes rei militaris of Salona. However, after this date the region changed hands between the Goths, the Byzantine Empire and, at some time during the first half of the 7th century, the Slavs. The fate of the Central Adriatic islands during this period is uncertain. The islands were undoubtedly an important source of food whilst the mainland urban centres functioned, but when the urban centres fell, or declined, much of the evidence we have for settlement disappears.

The Adriatic Islands Project has recorded more than 2000 archaeological sites, amply reflecting the rich history of the region. The size of this booklet does not allow us to provide all this information here. However, we can present short summaries of some of the most important sites. In doing this the text flows from island to island. We start with Palagruza, the tiny island group right in the centre of the Adriatic and finish with Solta, an island just off the mainland. The following table provides a chronology for the islands and shows how the sites mentioned in the text are placed in time.

Date	Period	Sites
7-800	The Arrival of the Slavs	
		Salona, Roman Issa, Lovrecina
AD		
	Domination by Rome	
BC		
		Foundation of Greek colonies at Pharos and Issa
5-300	Greek colonisation	
		Hillforts at Hvar Castle and Talez. A Greek sanctuary on Palagruza?
1000	The Iron Age	
		The first hillforts. Mycenaean contacts on Brac
2200	The Bronze Age	
		Tumulus burials and the beginning of the cemetery at Vira
		Cave sites at Grapceva Spilja and Krajicina
		Farming starts and there is the first evidence for deep sea sailing at Palagruza
6000	The Neolithic	
		Hunter-gatherers at Kopacina (Brac)
13000	The Upper Palaeolithic	

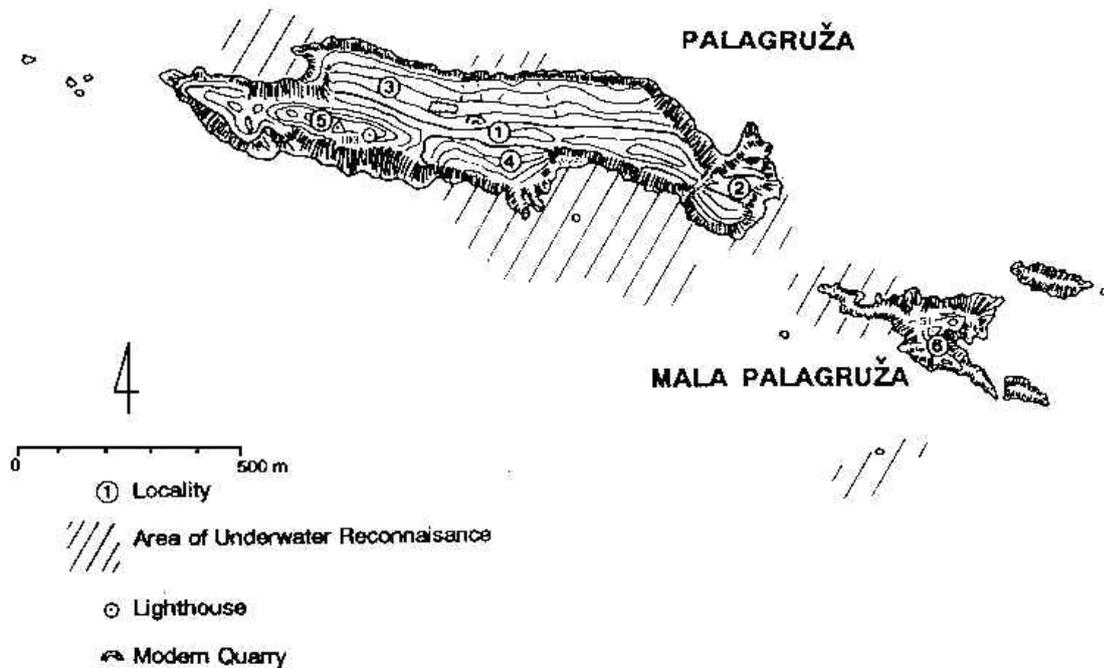
Chronological Table for the key archaeological sites in the Central Dalmatian Islands

2 THE ISLANDS OF PALAGRUZA

2.1 Palagruza: the Islands of Diomedes?

Of all the places explored by the Project, the island of Palagruza is certainly the smallest. It also may well be the most surprising. On little more than a splinter of rock, archaeologists have found the traces of the medieval, classical and prehistoric sailors who once plied the waters of the central Adriatic. These remains indicate that long ago Palagruza was far more important than its diminutive size might suggest.

Merely 1300 m long and 330 m wide, Palagruza is waterless and rugged. Cliffs and steep slopes rise from the waves, folding knife-like along a central ridge which is indented by a pair of small plateaux. Anchoring one end of the island, at its highest point, stands the oldest manned lighthouse in the Adriatic. Across a narrow channel lies Palagruza's sister island, Mala Palagruza, only a fifth the size but an even more forbidding terrain. Parts of the scrub vegetation and animal life forms here are indigenous to Palagruza and are unique. They are sustained by moderate amounts of rainfall throughout the year. Yet despite its barren aspect, voyagers visited Palagruza repeatedly over the last eight thousand years. Why?



2.2 Palagruza

Palagruza is the central island in a chain that spans the Adriatic. From Italy to Dalmatia, the islands of Treporti, Pianosa, Palagruza, Susac and Vis are stepping stones across the sea. Standing on one of these islands you can see the next one, sometimes even the mainland. Offering anchorage, a modicum of shelter, and a place to rest, these islands have attracted sailors and fishermen for millennia. Look at any map of the area. The logic is clear. By using these islands as stopping places, sailors could traverse the Adriatic without losing sight of land. And Palagruza is right in the middle. Indeed, ancient mariners could hardly help making Palagruza a port of call, for, among other things, two major currents --one easterly, the other westerly-- converge on Palagruza. Where they meet, the water swirls and eddies around the island, helping to make Palagruza the center of the Adriatic's most productive fishery. In retrospect, the island's archaeological riches might perhaps have been expected.

Indeed, Palagruza has been known to archaeologists since the late 19th century. The Italian archaeologist, Carlo de Marchesetti, and the English adventurer, Sir Richard Burton, visited the island in 1875 when the lighthouse was being built. They reported finding stone blades, broken pottery, and architectural fragments bearing Latin inscriptions. Their lead, however, was never followed, so since 1992 the Project has visited Palagruza four times in order to carry out surface survey, underwater reconnaissance, and limited test excavations. Thanks to this research we now recognize that Palagruza's archaeological record touches on several key periods of prehistory and history. Localities on Palagruza and Mala Palagruza include prehistoric remains of the Neolithic, of the Copper Age and of the early Bronze Age; historic localities yielded Classical Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and early Medieval finds.

2.3 Palagruza in Prehistory

Several potsherds and stone blades mark the first landfalls on Palagruza, made sometime around 6000 B.C. Like calling cards left behind after a visit, fragments of pottery distinctively decorated with the zigzag impressions of a Cardium sea shell were found on the island's easternmost extremity. Test trenching of this area revealed no structures, just a low density distribution of Neolithic pottery and lithics. There was nothing to suggest that anything more than a brief visit (or visits) ever took place. And yet...

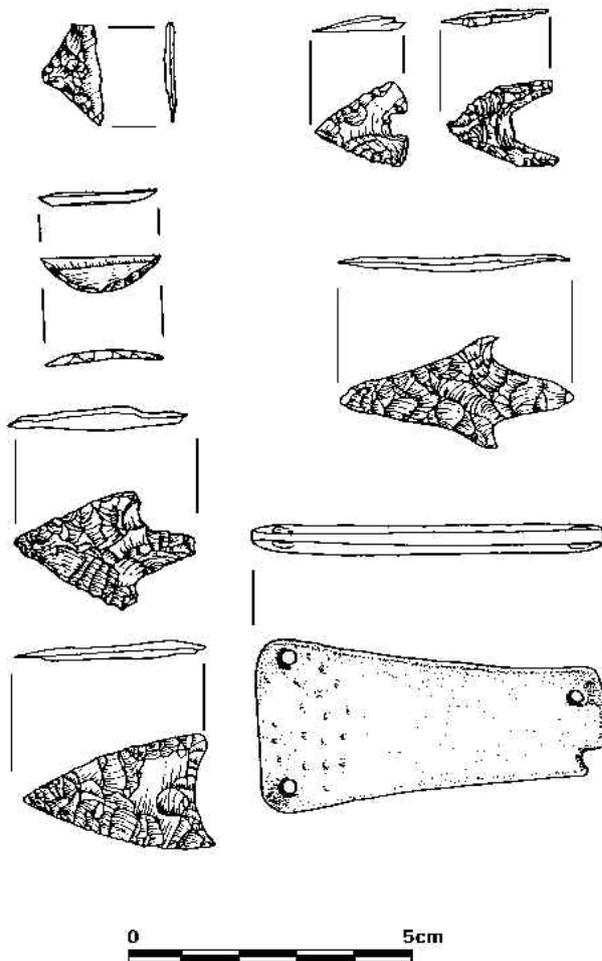
Pottery of the kind found on Palagruza is elsewhere firmly associated with the spread of the first farmers throughout the north Mediterranean basin. Known to archaeologists as the Cardial Impressed Ware culture, small communities of agriculturalists began settling into places along the coast, never penetrating far inland, in the seventh millennium B.C. With their gardens and their flocks these people introduced food production, changing human life in the Mediterranean forever. Given how dispersed these early farmers were, it is remarkable that their material worlds, the things they made for themselves, are so similar. Somehow, despite distance, time and tide, people maintained contact with one another. And as Palagruza so clearly shows, at least part of that contact was seaborne, carried out by voyagers sailing from one island to the next.

As the ensuing centuries stretched into millennia, sailors calling on Palagruza to rest, shelter or fish, left little trace of their passage. At some point early on, though, visitors made another discovery. They found that Mala Palagruza was an abundant source of chert, the rock preferred by makers of stone tools -- the chipped knives, blades and arrowheads that signpost prehistory. Nodules of grey-blue chert speckle exposed rock faces all over the tiny islet; eroding out of their limestone matrix, broken nodules collect at the bases of cliffs and ledges. In places, gaping holes mark the spots where chert was quarried. The evidence suggests that low-intensity chert mining on Mala Palagruza began in the Neolithic, probably as a pastime on the part of disembarked voyagers.

The next chapter in Palagruza's prehistory takes place towards the end of the third millennium B.C., as the Copper Age drew to a close. The story can be read at a site at the island's centre where a small plateau overlooks cliffs and the broad sweep of the pebble beach. Excavation here failed to find any structural features dating to the prehistoric period. However, a careful search of the slopes below located a profusion of stone tools, lithic production debris and ceramics of the Cetina culture scattered over 6000 sq. m. Other significant finds included decorated, stone archer's wristguards and several blades of central Mediterranean obsidian. A systematic transect of the site was dug revealing that these artifacts were consistently associated with each other, washing down the north slope of the island in a layer of colluvial sediments.

The Cetina culture spans the transition from the Copper Age to the Bronze Age. It is best known to archaeologists from a series of stone cairns, elite burials, in central Dalmatia. The burials typically contain as grave goods intricately decorated beakers and other drinking gear, finely flaked arrowheads, and archers' wristguards. Like the closely related Bell Beaker phenomenon, this kind of elite, male, sumptuary behavior is a common expression of the competition for prestige in third millennium B.C. Europe. Its appearance in Dalmatia is significant because it marks the first serious social differentiation to cleave local communities there as high status

individuals began to act out roles on a broader stage. Finds of Cetina pottery among rock-cut tombs in Puglia in Italy demonstrate the extent of the network in which Adriatic elites now participated.



2.4 Lithics from Palagruza

Finding Cetina material in the middle of the Adriatic now makes sense, and all the more so when the nature of the material is considered. Chipped stone artifacts, in astonishing numbers, make up the largest part of the Palagruza assemblage. They show that highly skilled flint knappers used Mala Palagruza chert to produce blades, blade segments, arrowheads, and lunate arrow armatures. Extrapolating from the controlled excavated sample, thousands of arrowheads and tens of thousands of blades must have been made on Palagruza -- far more than anyone there ever needed. It is reasonable to suppose that specialized stone tool production at this scale was aimed at export, that these goods were destined for use elsewhere. For a while in the second half of the third millennium B.C. Palagruza seems to have occupied an important position in a newly-created network of elite-oriented production and exchange that linked the central Adriatic islands to the mainland of Dalmatia, to the Italian mainland regions of Puglia and Calabria, and even as far as the central Mediterranean Aeolian islands. It was on the basis of maritime networks like this one that the early civilizations of the Mediterranean were later to emerge.

2.5 Palagruza in the Greek and Roman Periods

Following the very important evidence for prehistoric activity on Palagruza, one of the most intriguing discoveries was copious amounts of Greek Black- and Red-figure pottery and Hellenistic

fine wares. More than 2000 fragments have now been recovered, (mostly representing kylixes and skyphoi, as well as bowls, plates and hydriae). The presence of such a variety of fine wares (along with the specific shapes of the vessels) suggested that there must have been a Greek shrine or sanctuary as early as late 6th century BC. The position of the islands on important maritime routes further suggested that any shrine may have been dedicated to the Greek Hero Diomedes, whose cult was known to be important for sailors and traders.

This suggestion that there may have been a shrine to Diomedes on the island is of immense importance. Many ancient literary sources state that there were points on the Adriatic where the Trojan hero was worshipped, and some of these sites are known. Most significantly, the ancient sources mention an island (or two islands) of Diomedes situated in the Adriatic. Unfortunately, none give a precise location. Italian medieval cartographers and historical geographers connected these islands with the Tremiti islands to the west of Mount Gargano, possibly because it was thought that the cult of Diomedes was also present on the Italian Adriatic coast, and also because the Tremiti are the only Italian islands on the Adriatic coast. As a result of this early identification, the location of the islands of Diomedes has rarely been a contentious issue amongst academics. However, the discoveries on Palagruza prompted a re-assessment of the evidence by project staff. Further reading of the texts of Strabo (2, 5, 20/123-124; 5, 1, 8/214; 5, 1, 9/215 and 6, 3, 9/283-284) suggested that the description of the island of Diomedes better corresponds to Vela and Mala Palagruza, rather than the Tremiti.

The evidence of Greek activity found during project work seemed to support this conclusion, particularly in comparison to the lack of Greek evidence on the Tremiti. None of this would have been conclusive but for further evidence provided by pottery collected on the central plateau of Vela Palagruza by Jadranko Oreb, lighthouse keeper at Palagruza. This pottery was brought to the attention of project staff in 1994, and comprised of over 100 Greek and Hellenistic fine wares. Most significantly, amongst this collection were several fragments of pottery with graffiti of the sort archaeologists often find in Greek sanctuaries. One of the sherds with graffiti bears the name of Diomedes.

This seems to be firm evidence of a sanctuary dedicated to the hero, and this has been further supported by finds of more pottery during 1996, some of which also have graffiti mentioning Diomedes. Palagruza was also inhabited during the Roman period. A Latin inscription recording the existence of a temple on the island was found here during the 19th century. Excavation on Vela Palagruza has also provided mosaic tesserae, round bricks from a hypocaust, fine and coarse pottery and glass. Late Roman material is also present in abundance.

Palagruza is an intriguing place. Apparently isolated, it was clearly an important point for successive travellers and traders who have moved across the Adriatic throughout the past eight millennium, connecting communities on both sides of the Adriatic. Shipwrecks, unfortunately now all robbed, from all periods further emphasise the role of the island. These, and the recent discoveries from Palagruza allow us to imagine why these islands seemed so important to people in the past, and why such a small island group was important enough to be mentioned in the ancient texts and to have shrines, sanctuaries and temples, and more recently chapels, built there.

3 THE ISLAND OF VIS

3.1 ISSA - a Greek colony on the island of Vis

"Agatharchides claims that the wine from Issa, an island on the Adriatic sea, in contrast with other wines, is the best"

Athenaeus I, 28, d (51)

Vis, which lies some 8 miles to the south-west of Hvar, covers an area of 90.26 km². During the summers of 1993-4 and 1996-7, the Adriatic Island Project carried out survey, and a series of excavations, across the island. This field work recorded more than 240 sites, as well as mapping the area of the ancient town of Issa. Prior to this, a survey of classical sites on the island was carried out in 1986 by local archaeologists Dinko Radic and the late Vid Bilicic, who recorded some 60 sites in addition to the 20 sites from other periods which were already known on the island.

The remains of the ancient city of Issa, which was founded by Syracuseans in the 4th cent. BC, are situated at the end of the bay of Vis and adjacent to the modern town of Vis. The ancient town covered an area of some 12 hectares at its zenith. Not much of this settlement has been excavated and, sadly, much has already been destroyed, especially following the construction of new houses, hotels, entertainment complexes and roads. The site of Martvilo (which means the place of the dead) at Vis is particularly important as here one can still see the remains of the only ancient Greek graveyard in Croatia. Nearby, on the hill slope at Gradina, visitors can also follow the route of the 4th-3rd centuries BC city walls which lie preserved within long stone, clearance mounds. In several places the original masonry can still be seen. Nearer the shore are also the ruins of the later Roman baths - the largest in the Adriatic. Whilst on the Prirovo peninsula one can see the remains of the Roman theatre preserved within the walls of the Medieval monastery. All around the seafront are submerged remains of the sunken Greek and Roman ports, but these and other monuments still await investigation.

The rural sites on the island belong essentially to the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. During this time the entire island was occupied and the land fully utilised. This suggests that as early as the Hellenistic period, Issa could have supported a considerable population. If so this may help explain the evidence we have for other Greek colonisation in the region. In the early 3rd century B.C. the Isseians founded a settlement somewhere near Lumbarda on the neighbouring island of Korcula - Kerkyra Melaina - here some 200 colonists were settled. Following this Issa also founded settlements on the Dalmatian coast: at Tragyrion (modern Trogir) and Epetion (modern Stobrec). It is also likely that they later settled at Salona (modern Solin). All of these settlements are on the coast, not far from Split. In this manner the oldest state (dinasteia) with democratic institutions on the Adriatic grew and expanded - playing a vital role in the settlement and development of the region.

The richness and the vitality of the people of Issa is perhaps best attested by a bronze head of Aphrodite - the goddess of love, made in the 4th century B.C., and found on the island. It is said that it was made under the strong influence of Praxiteles, the most famous Greek sculptor. This head of Aphrodite is a unique representation of this goddess in bronze. Although the sculpture is, perhaps, the most important from the island, the Archaeological collection in the modern town of Vis contains much from this period and, indeed, is probably the most important collection of Greek material in Croatia as a whole.

What of the later history of the island? One of the most striking results of the field survey on Vis was the discovery that whilst there was a proliferation of sites during the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, very few sites produced Late Roman finds. This pattern is in striking contrast to the neighboring islands of Hvar, Brac and Solta, where Late Roman sites predominate in the archaeological record. What happened on Issa? After nearly 500 years during which Issa was the most important urban centre in the region, did it perhaps decline in the later Roman period as

Salona became the central settlement and the other islands competed more successfully to supply the regional centre?

3.2 Talez - the precursor to Issa?

The hillfort site of Talez lies on the southern and central side of Vis. The site consists of a series of massive terraces and walls associated with a precipitous west-east ridge. Although many walls have either collapsed or been destroyed by later military activity, it is clear that they incorporate a minor peak at 245 m above sea level. To the south the ridge dominates a more gentle plateau covering about 5 hectares. The land falls away sharply on all sides of this plateau. The site is also separated by a steep valley from a narrow ridge to the east which contains the Vela Gomila tumulus. Geodetic survey of the site also revealed the location of a semicircular structure on the eastern edge of the hillfort - that which directly overlooks the tumulus at Vela Gomila.

The results of surface survey at Talez were remarkable. Survey and excavation provided tens of thousands of prehistoric objects (mainly pottery). What was surprising was the quantity of imported "Greek" wares found which comprised 8.3% of the total, and dated from the 6th -4th century BC. Equally surprising is the widespread occurrence of iron slag and other evidence for metal working on the site, which suggests that the hillfort at Talez is associated with a hitherto unknown, exploitable, iron resource.

The significance of the results from Talez cannot be underestimated. The presence of a pre-Greek colonial settlement with access to an exploitable iron resource was totally unexpected. The region is mineral deficient and the nearest known resources lie in Bosnia. The importance that must have derived from control of this resource during the early Iron Age must have been considerable. Indeed, the presence of such iron reserves may also go some way to explaining early Greek activity both on the island of Palagruza and, perhaps, even the position of the later Greek colony of Issa. Certainly the extraordinary quantities of imported pottery on the site can only be explained through the active exploitation of this resource and trade with the Greek world. The dating evidence for the abandonment of the site should coincide with the beginnings of Greek urban settlement at Issa. Unfortunately, an exact date for the "foundation" of Issa currently escapes us. Despite this there can be little doubt that the settlement of Talez must have controlled a large part (if not all) of the island of Vis during the 5th century B. C. It therefore becomes a keystone for our understanding of pre-colonial Greek contacts with the central Adriatic.

3.3 Krajicina - a prehistoric cave site on Vis

Winding through the dense brambles and thickets that blanket the north coast of Vis, a minor trail pauses at the lip of an extremely steep hillside, a cliff almost, before tumbling down towards the rocky shore below. This is the way to Krajicina Spilja, a large limestone cave renowned among spelunkers as the finest on Vis. Almost sixty meters long, the cave consists of five chambers and the passages that string them together. Travertine and roof-fall rubble cover most of the cave's floor. Stalactites and stalagmites encrust the horizontal surfaces.

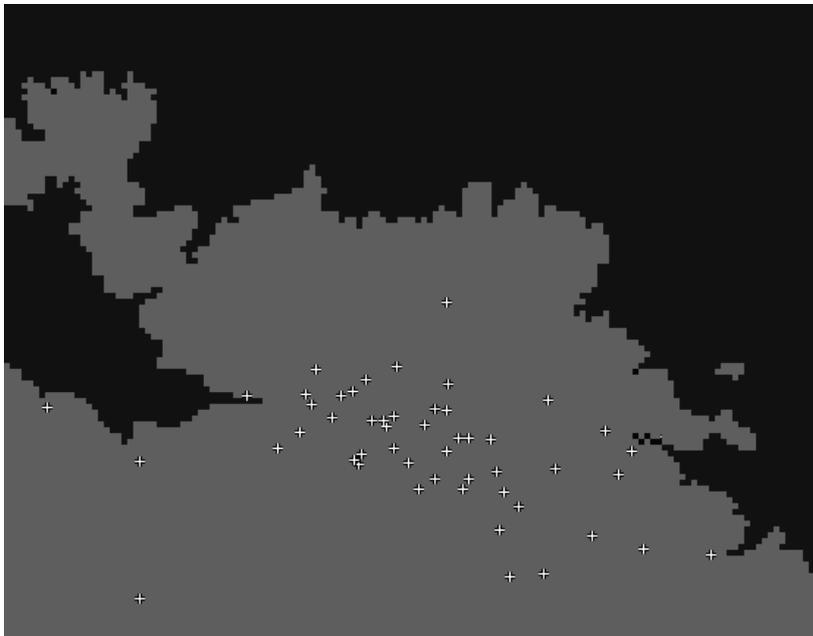
In 1994 small-scale excavations were conducted at Krajicina to see if any part of the island's basic prehistoric cultural chronology was preserved there. Beneath a surface layer of disturbed deposits at the front of the cave, careful trowelling revealed a compact layer of Bronze Age date. Wide, flat-rimmed bowls with tubular handles indicate an early Bronze Age date, while an everted-rim form is more reminiscent of the late Bronze Age. This stratum overlies an older (but as yet undated) deposit of mixed charcoal and shell (marine and terrestrial). Elsewhere in the cave, isolated finds of early Neolithic, late Neolithic, and Iron Age pottery make it clear that sporadic visits to Krajicina have been a part of life on Vis for a long time.

Only a very restricted range of pottery appears at the site, and animal bones and stone tools are quite rare. From this we can conclude that the cave was used only for short stays. Although some of the Bronze Age ceramics at Krajicina were intentionally placed in remote cracks and crannies and may therefore indicate some kind of ritual behaviour, there is little about this

material to suggest that ritual practices were among the major preoccupations of the prehistoric visitors to the cave. In this Krajcina differs from other caves in the Adriatic, where a prehistoric ritual focus is more easily demonstrated. What then is the significance of Krajcina? Neither settlement nor shrine, the importance of this cave is that it hints at the existence on Vis of a more extensive, but still hidden, Bronze Age record.

4 THE ISLAND OF HVAR

The island of Hvar is distinctively "Dalmatian". Strikingly long and thin, the island stretches for 68 kilometres from east to west, but never exceeds 15 kilometres in width. Although dominated by a rocky mountainous spine, which reaches 628 metres above sea level at Sveti Nikola, Hvar's most notable characteristic is the wide and fertile plain which runs for six kilometres between the towns of Stari Grad and Jelsa in the central northern section of the island. Hvar has many attractions. Frequently called the "Madeira of the Adriatic" in deference to its climate, the island has attracted millions of tourists. Aside from this, it also possesses some of the most important archaeological sites in the region. One eminent academic called Hvar "a museum sub divo", and it is no surprise that so many archaeologists and antiquaries have chosen to study Hvar and its monuments. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that after such continuous and intensive study so much remained to be discovered. Work by the project members on the island has involved the excavation and survey of Neolithic caves and Roman villas, prehistoric tumuli and Greek watchtowers. The Adriatic Islands Project started on Hvar, and the outstanding results of study on this island inspired the larger project.



Roman Sites in and around the Stari Grad Plain

4.1 Pharos

In Stari Grad on Hvar when priests, judges, doctors or other eminent people sit, wearily, on return from the plain, they hoist themselves up, doff their cap and greet it, because they know that it is their provider"

(Milicevic 1975, 416)

Pharos and its chora

On the northern side of the Island of Hvar surrounded by hills and situated between two deep bays is the Stari Grad Plain. This beautiful plain is the largest and most fertile area on the Adriatic Islands. Apart from its obvious agricultural wealth, it is also the site of the Greek colony of Pharos. Pharos was situated on the position of the modern town of Stari Grad (which means "Old Town"), and was founded in 385/4 BC by Greeks from the Aegean island of Paros. We are particularly lucky in having a dramatic account of the founding of the colony in a text written by the ancient historian Diodorus Siculus (XV. 13-14.), and which can be read in translation on the inside cover of this book. However, if this was the date of the foundation of the colony, it may not be the date

of the arrival of the Greeks on the island or even the first Greek settlement. Greek pottery has been found at Stari Grad which suggests that an earlier Greek settlement may have existed here, prior to the historic date for foundation. Intriguingly, a settlement named Anchiala is mentioned by Stephen of Byzantium and this may be a precursor to Pharos (Ethnika, s.v. Pharos). Unfortunately, what form this early settlement may have taken cannot be proven, and we await further discoveries to clarify whether the Greeks had such a settlement or not.

Despite the clarity of the foundation tale, the position of Pharos on the island of Hvar was a subject of domestic and foreign academic debate for more than a century. Although most authorities eventually accepted the claim of Stari Grad as the site of the colony, the size of the town and its defences was not clear until a programme of excavation and survey was carried out after 1993. We now know that the town may have covered more than eight hectares and part was surrounded by a substantial wall.

Beyond the walls are the remains of the colony's chora or territory. The territory of Pharos is remarkable because it contains the remains of a massive field system which was laid out by the colonists. Survey and excavation inside the Stari Grad plain, as well as aerial photographic, geodetic and geomorphological analysis of the field system demonstrates that the whole plain was divided into a series of parcels (striga). Seventy three of these parcels can be identified, each measuring 906 x 181.2m. (16.4 ha.), and covering a total area of c. 1100 ha. Whilst similar systems can be found elsewhere (eg Metapontum and Hersonas), the remains on Hvar are probably the best preserved examples of such a system in the whole of the Greek world. Research on the plain suggests that the basic unit used by the Parian colonists for laying out the field system was a "foot" measuring 302.16mm. At the present moment this measure is not paralleled elsewhere, but it is similar to units used at Isthmia and Epidarus.

Survey suggests that there are only a small number of Greek sites in the plain, and that they are concentrated near Pharos. There are, however, numerous Roman villas, some of which are very large, and it is possible that later land use has destroyed or covered early Greek occupation.

Despite this, it is probably true that the majority of Greeks lived within the city at Pharos, if only because of the ever-present dangers of living outside the walls of the town. Diodorus Siculus' account of the attack by the original inhabitants of the island emphasises the danger the colonists were in, whilst the region was frequently noted in ancient sources as unstable and with a reputation for piracy. This insecurity is best demonstrated by the construction of two defensive towers by the colonists. One was situated on the northern edge of the plain, on a hill called Maslinovik, whilst the other lies at Tor, high on a hill, south of the town of Jelsa and east of the plain. These watchtowers or phryktoria communicated with each other via smoke or fire signals. Taken together these towers functioned as part of a single defence system. The farthest tower at Tor was in direct visual communication with that at Maslinovik (a distance of 7.5 km). Whilst the tower on Maslinovik, situated 3.5 km from Pharos, was positioned to communicate between Tor and the town. Together the towers controlled the northern and eastern approaches to the colony. One suspects that, despite the victory of the Greeks over the natives in 385/4 BC, life may always have been uncertain for the colonists and that defence always remained important.

4.2 Hvar Castle

The site of the modern town of Hvar must always have been attractive to settlement. Lying on the south-west of the island, the town possesses an excellent port which is protected to the south by the Pakleni group of islands. It also has a large fertile area to the east which is well provisioned with water. However, in the past the site of the town of Hvar achieved a far wider significance because of its key role in long distance trade up and down the eastern Adriatic course. The importance of the medieval and modern town is emphasised in the splendid medieval buildings set around the town piazza, its castle and the medieval cathedral. The Bishopric of Hvar also includes the neighbouring islands of Brac and Vis. The premier position of Hvar amongst the Central Dalmatian islands is clear, and it seems reasonable to ask whether this position was reflected in earlier times.

This was one of the questions which the Adriatic Islands Project team sought to investigate when, in 1989, it carried out an extensive survey of the Hvar Castle hill.

Clearly a strategic position, the hill, which dominates the harbour at Hvar, was the obvious site for the Venetians to construct a castle in the 12th century. Prior to the survey, there had always been a suspicion that a prehistoric site had preceded the castle. A short assessment of the distribution of prehistoric material within the outer ward of the Venetian Castle indicated that this was the case, and that considerable quantities of prehistoric material covered an extensive area.

The potential importance of the site led to a more detailed surface survey over an area of c. 1.43 ha. This survey allowed a more precise definition of the prehistoric settlement area, and provided considerable amounts of datable pottery. A few fragments suggested that there was some sort of settlement on the site from the Eneolithic period onwards, but the most intense occupation is testified during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (c. 25% of the collected material was of Bronze Age date and 75% of Iron Age date). Of special interest is the presence of imported Italian, Messapian and Appulian geometric pottery dating from the 9th to the 4th centuries BC. These finds, along with imported pottery from Greece and Greek colonies in Italy, indicate that the site maintained extensive outside contacts throughout most of the first millennium BC. Unfortunately, despite the quantity of the prehistoric finds on the hill, there are virtually no other traces of the settlement. It must have possessed defences originally, but the construction of the medieval castle and later landscaping have removed all traces of any houses or walls.

The discoveries raise a number of very important points about the status of the Hvar castle site within the island as a whole. The existence of the Greek colony of Pharos at Stari Grad, and literary and epigraphic evidence for troubled relations between the native populations and colonists, has often led to an over-emphasis of the importance of the Stari Grad plain within the pre-Roman history of the island. The results from Hvar Castle suggest that a more complex social situation existed on the island during the first millennium BC than is represented in the historical record. The finds from Hvar Castle indicate that this settlement was probably the largest and most important later prehistoric site on the island. The presence of imported pottery on the site suggests that the settlement had privileged access to exotic imported goods during the pre-Greek period and that it enjoyed some degree of social pre-eminence within the island. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the proximity to the largest barrow cemetery on the island; at Vira to the north west of Hvar.

Almost certainly the importance of the site at Hvar Castle was achieved as a result of its geographical position on the eastern Adriatic trade routes. If this is correct, the available data goes some way towards answering some fundamental problems with respect to the nature of Greek/Native relations during the initial period of Greek colonisation on Hvar, i.e. why were the colonists allowed to establish themselves and why was there a period of peace between the two communities before the violent conflict recorded by Diodorus?

The evidence seems to suggest that the Greek colony on the Stari Grad plain was peripheral to the principal prehistoric settlement situated above the town of Hvar. The distance between the two settlements probably allowed the peaceful establishment of the colony. A peace which was shattered when the increasing activities of the new colony eventually came into conflict with the authority of the inhabitants of the site at Hvar Castle.

4.3 Grapceva Spilja

The best known Neolithic cave site in the eastern Adriatic lies hidden in a hill above the remote southern shore of the island of Hvar. From the top of the island, the ridgeline that is Hvar's rugged spine, the view south opens towards the outlying islands of Korcula and Lastovo and the sea beyond. Descend from here across a short stretch of broken rock and there you may notice a small, inconspicuous hole among the blocks of limestone. This is the entrance to Grapceva cave.

The entrance was once much larger, but at some time in the past a massive rock slide almost succeeded in sealing up the cave. The result was a well-protected shelter that also acted as an

almost ideal sediment trap, collecting over the passing millennia the refuse left by occasional tenants of the cave.

After crawling through, one enters a spacious hall, divided by stalagmitic pillars and curtains into several chambers of different sizes. The first and largest of these measures some 20 meters across. The earliest explorers dug here late in the 19th century, looking for traces of the ancient past. They found thick sediments, sealed at the surface by a travertine slab.

Between 1887 and 1952, the cave was excavated by a number of different people. The most important excavations were carried out during the second quarter of the 20th century. They were directed by Grga Novak, a native of Hvar who was later to become president of the Academy of Sciences and Arts. It is to his credit that the attractive, red-painted pottery from the cave became synonymous with the eastern Adriatic Neolithic, and that the first well-defined Neolithic "culture" in the area was named after his island.

Novak excavated about half of the available area down to the bedrock. Most of the rest of the cave was disturbed by earlier digging. Together, Novak and his predecessors gathered a massive amount of archaeological material from the cave, but preserved relatively little of the contextual information that would give meaning to the finds. This state of affairs inspired the latest archaeological exploration of Grapceva by the Adriatic Islands Project. In 1996 a small trench was opened in order to learn something about the context of the Neolithic finds. This was to be done by a minimal intervention, armed by the more sophisticated recovery methods and analytical techniques that have become available in recent years.

The test unit located the edge of Novak's trench, as well as the undisturbed cultural strata beyond. More than 40 stratigraphic units (mostly superimposed hearth remains) were recognized in an almost three meter thick sequence. They represent some 3500 years of occasional occupation that spans the periods from the Late Neolithic to the full-blown Bronze Age. Abundant fragments of charcoal throughout the sequence have allowed reliable absolute dating of the deposits and the associated finds. This marks a major contribution. Previously, the regional prehistoric cultural sequence had nothing to moor it in time; there were virtually no absolute dates. Now, some of the gaps have been filled and a reliable chronology is being built.

Analyses of the various classes of recovered archaeological materials are currently under way. For the moment, we know that the late Neolithic occupants visited the cave repeatedly during the 5th millennium B.C. We also know that goats and/or sheep were one of their main sources of protein, and that they intensively collected marine molluscs from the tidal zone along the shore, but only exceptionally ventured offshore to fish. To some extent, they complemented their diet by collecting and processing acorns. Among the more intriguing finds are occasional isolated human bones (most of them fragmented) which indicate possible function of the cave as a burial place, or for other ritual purposes which, for the moment, remain unclear.

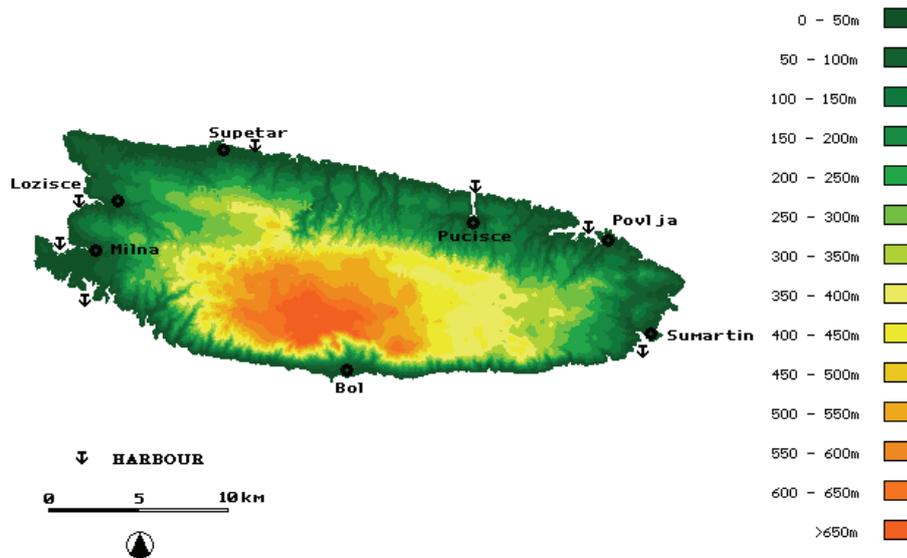
To reach Grapceva, one takes a steep dirt track that forks off the main longitudinal island communication half-way between Jelsa and Poljica. Less than a kilometer up the track is Humac, a picturesque seasonal village located near the island's crest, which seems to have fallen asleep a couple of centuries ago. From here, one continues on foot along a barely visible trail, for some 20 minutes. The entrance to the cave is locked, but visits (including a guide) can be arranged through the Tourist Office in Jelsa.



Hvar Culture pottery

5 THE ISLAND OF BRAC

The island of Brac is the third largest island in the Adriatic Sea. Mountainous in aspect it is nearly 36 kilometres in length and 12 kilometres wide. Its precipitous southern coastline rises to 778m above sea level at Vidova gora, the highest peak on all the Adriatic islands. Composed primarily of limestones and dolomite, the quarries of the island have been a source of stone for building and decorative stonework for centuries. Indeed Brac "marble" was even used in the construction of Diocletian's Palace in Split.



Although studied for more than a century, the archaeology of the island was imperfectly known, and heavily biased toward the prehistoric and Early Christian monuments on the island. However, this picture was changed dramatically following an extensive survey of Brac by the Adriatic Islands Project team. During a four month field campaign in 1994 team members recorded a total of 597 sites, an increase of nearly 60 percent. This massive increase of known archaeology spans all periods from earliest prehistory through to the early Middle Ages. The important data from the survey now permits analysis of settlement on Brac for every period.

5.1 Skrip: Myceneans in the Adriatic?

A peep through the excavation "keyhole", more often than not, opens up far wider vistas. Nowhere has this been clearer than in the team's investigation of the hillfort at Skrip, on the island of Brac. This site was the excavation focus for an investigation of the origins of later prehistoric territorial centralisation within the islands, the emergence of hillforts or hilltop enclosures, and on Brac itself, the apparent change in site distributions from higher inland plateau locations in the Late Bronze Age to the more coastal orientated sites of the Iron Age. The still partly preserved "megalithic" walled enclosure at Skrip was always presumed to be Greek Iron Age in date, and the site was subsequently a focus for both Roman religion and Christianity on the island. It had already been subjected to some of the most extensive series of excavations in the study region by other workers. However, the material results of this earlier work suggested that a well directed, modern excavation might achieve significant results.



Walls at Skrip

Excavations at Skrip in 1995 sampled two areas of deep stratigraphy surviving close to the east and west perimeters of the walled enclosure. To the west, and partly beneath it, the earliest phase of activity at the site involved the deposition of Early Bronze Age Cetina type vessels within a natural rock crevice. The earliest structure here seems to be the base of a drystone revetted cairn, of a type identified widely elsewhere in the islands, Dalmatian mainland, and in Bosnia. Many such cairns probably originated in the Early and Middle Bronze Age, some as burial mounds, while others functioned primarily as ritual and territorial foci, as here at Skrip. No great interval may have separated the erection of this cairn with the building of a circuit of massive drystone "megalithic" walling around the top of the hill. Behind this had accumulated over 2m of deposits, dumped from over the cairn to the east to seal its surviving lower revetment and at least one shallow, drystone-built platform at its base. An extensive and well stratified assemblage of native coarseware and animal bone was recovered here, associated with several sherds of Late Helladic IIIc Mycenaean pottery. A second section to the east revealed the full width of the "Megalithic" wall and its rubble rampart backing, butted by occupation deposits and the remains of a complete fired-clay oven within a natural rock fissure.



Detail of stratigraphy behind the main wall and the structures behind

In contrast to the earlier assumed Iron Age date for the walls at Skrip, virtually all of this activity can be assigned to the Middle-Late Bronze Age. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the work is the discovery of Mycenaean pottery in association with a massive defensive wall which must be of the same date. Mycenaean material, either from the core Mycenaean territories in Greece or centres with trading or permanent settlements in Italy, is very rare on the Eastern Adriatic coast. The presence of Mycenaean pottery at Skrip, once again, emphasises the strategic importance of the islands for trade, and is indicative, perhaps, of maritime trade links up to the head of the Adriatic. The amount of such pottery, however, is very small; so we would be unwise to suggest that this was a Mycenaean "colony" or settlement. It seems better to suggest that the "Megalithic" style of walling at Skrip was perhaps inspired directly by Mycenaean or, perhaps more likely, south Italian prototypes. It may be that here we are seeing a native settlement/ritual centre reflecting the aspirations of a local chief or ruler. The context of contact or inspiration is less clear. It may

simply be the result of a single influential person's whim. However, Skrip may also be one part of the complex trade network which linked the Myceneans with much of continental Europe. It may not be too far fetched to imagine Skrip as one link in the chain that stretched along the eastern Adriatic shore past the northern Dalmatian Islands (later known to the Greeks as the Electrides or Amber Islands), and perhaps helping to supply the Mycenean aristocracy with some of their luxury goods- including Baltic amber.

6 THE ISLAND OF SOLTA

6.1 Survey on the Island of Solta

The island of Solta lies some 16 km south of Split and is separated from Brac by a narrow channel only 700m. wide known as "the gates of Split". Solta is very small and even with the smaller islands (known as the skoji), it has an area of only 58.8 kilometres. During 1994, team members explored Solta in a programme of systematic fieldwork supported by archival and bibliographic research. Up until 1986 there had only been 37 recorded archaeological sites on Solta. A few short months of fieldwork and research revealed 215 archaeological sites. Thirty three of these sites were prehistoric in date and included 4 hillforts and, more commonly a number of burial mounds. These burial mounds can occur as isolated tumuli or within larger groups. At Gornja Polja, several groups of such mounds were recorded, some of which had metal finds which dated them to the late Bronze Age. Unfortunately, road construction has already resulted in the destruction of one cemetery.

The most frequent finds date to the Roman period, and in the course of survey nearly 133 Roman locations were recorded ranging from Roman villas to small scatters of pottery, presumably all that is left of smaller structures. The distribution of these sites around the edges of fertile land suggests that they must have been farms. The greatest concentration of finds on the island occurs near Grohota. Here archaeologists have found the remains of mosaics, inscriptions, fragments of columns, sarcophagi and the remains of a Early Christian church. The extent and quantity of finds here suggest that these are the remains of a vicus or village.

The Roman occupants of Grohota and all the other Roman sites on Solta were probably producing food to be sold to the cities on the coast. In many ways this situation has existed for many centuries, and the history of the island of Solta has always been intrinsically linked with the fortunes of the nearest big centre - Split and, at an earlier period, Salona. In making such an observation it is possible to view Solta as the last step of the island bridge studied by the Adriatic Island Project. Starting with Palagruza, each island looks to its neighbours north, south, east and west until eventually the islands of Solta and Brac finally link with the mainland, and thus to the massive pass at Klis, behind Split, which leads directly into the heart of the continent.

7 COMPUTERS AND THE ADRIATIC ISLAND PROJECT

Archaeology is often been perceived as a rather old-fashioned discipline which has no need for advanced computer technology. However, things are very different today. Archaeologists have not only started using computers to write their texts, they have become a basic part of the archaeological toolbox.

The Adriatic Islands Project has been at the cutting edge of research in archaeological computing, and has led the way in the application of regional computer databases, geographical information systems and remote sensing in archaeology. All the data collected during more than ten years of field work has been stored in a large sites and monuments database. This database contains extensive information on all the known archaeological sites on the Central Adriatic Islands from the earliest prehistory to the early medieval period. Now that it is available in digital format this information can be easily accessed and used in any number of archaeological analyses. Apart from its academic use this data is also used to study the condition of archaeological monuments and to manage them as a resource. Having such an extensive database allows archaeologists to predict the impact of economic development on the cultural heritage.

At the same time that archaeologists were carrying out field work on the ground, they were also using airborne and satellite remote sensing techniques to gather information on archaeology and the local environment. For instance, aerial photography has been used to plot the extent of the exceptional Greek field system on Stari Grad plain on the island of Hvar, while interpretation of LANDSAT TM satellite images has allowed archaeologists to plot land-use and examine land potential across very large, and poorly mapped regions.

All this information is integrated into a Geographical Information System (GIS). GIS is a fairly new technology used for the spatial analysis of archaeological data. Using a variety of analytical modules provided by a GIS, archaeologists can analyse the relationship between the natural environment and archaeological site locations, model the territories of past communities and much more. Innovative use of GIS can give us an insight into how past societies used the land and for what. Finally, using all the environmental and archaeological information within the GIS archaeologists can construct predictive models for the location of different types of archaeological sites, enabling the discovery of new sites as well as protection and management of existing archaeological resources.

8 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS

One of the most important aspects of Adriatic Islands Project is its ability to provide quantitative information on the state of preservation of the cultural monuments in the study area. This information can be used to assist in providing policies for protection and conservation.

Preliminary analysis of this information suggests that, until very recently, the destruction of cultural sites on the islands was a relatively slow process, and was largely restricted to natural erosion and agricultural damage. However, the rate of destruction has increased dramatically in the last 30 years and the current situation is outlined in table.

	Brac	Solta	Hvar
Well preserved	43	37	52
Slight damage	16	5	13
Damaged	16	13	3
Destroyed	9	11	13
Excavated	14	10	19

Destruction data for the AIP in percentages

Most of the damage recorded in table results from the development of mass tourism and the construction of tourist and infrastructure facilities. Unfortunately, specific types of monument are particularly vulnerable to development. Significant lengths of the remarkable Greek land divisions on the Stari Grad plain on Hvar have already disappeared. However, the most obvious victims are the prehistoric stone tumuli on the islands which are being robbed for hard core.

Leaving the land it will come as no great surprise to realise that the coastal seas of the Central Dalmatian Islands are also amongst the most attractive archaeological regions of the eastern Adriatic coastline. Here one finds virtually every type of underwater archaeological find or site, covering every time period, and originating from many parts of the Mediterranean - both east and west. Many of these finds are unique. This observation must, however, be put into the context of the very high levels of damage recorded for underwater sites including deliberate or accidental destruction and theft of antiquities from sites. Whilst the information we have on the levels of exploration and condition is far below that of sites on land, the data collected by the project suggests that the majority of underwater sites have now been damaged or looted.

How should these monuments be protected? Such decisions are not for archaeologists alone, but archaeologists have a role to inform and influence. By making the Adriatic Island Project data on monument survival available to anyone in the region who has an interest in their protection we hope we are doing just that.

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9.1 Adriatic Island Project volumes in preparation

The Archaeological Heritage of the island of Brac (BAR IS, Oxford 1999)

The Archaeological Heritage of the islands of Solta, Vis, Bisevo, Svetac and Palagruza (BAR IS, Oxford 2000)

The Adriatic Island Project: Intensive Surveys and Excavations (BAR IS, Oxford 2001)

The Adriatic Island Project: Final Report (BAR, Oxford 2002)

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