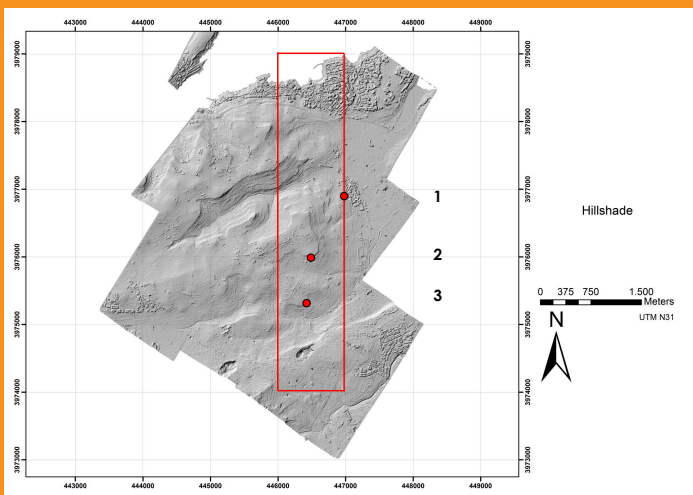


Rural Sites in Northwest Malta

Results of the Belgo-Maltese Survey Project

MSP 2008

Since 2008 a joint survey project in the northwest of Malta is being conducted yielding finds that range from the Prehistoric till the Early Modern period. The project is a trilateral endeavour of the Department of Archaeology of Ghent University (Belgium), the University of Malta and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (Malta). It is an intensive systematic field-walking survey in a kilometre-wide transect, beyond the main Phoenician and Punic urban centre on the island, the present-day Rabat/Mdina. It is interdisciplinary, involving not only archaeologists, but also ceramic specialists, geophysicists, geomaticians, and geomorphologists.



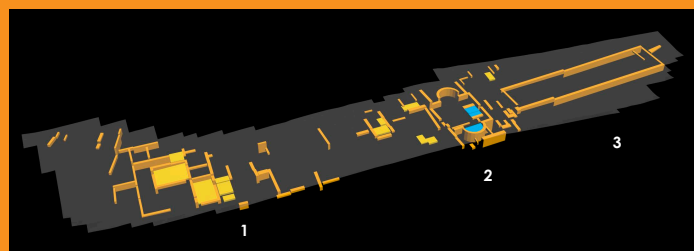
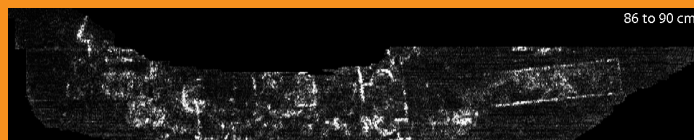
1. San Pawl Milqi; 2. Ġebel Ghawżara; 3. Tal-Ghazzi, projected upon a digital elevation model of the survey transect and adjacent areas in hill shade restitution

Three sites

Three permanently inhabited sites were encountered, lying 700-1000m apart, below garrigue plateaux. They date to at least the late 6th or early 5th century BCE, with a clearer attestation in the Hellenistic/Roman and Late Antique periods. The resulting reconstructed settlement pattern of the Phoenician/Punic period suggests a managed landscape that seems to be a good reflexion of what is happening in North Africa and elsewhere in the central and western Mediterranean. At least from the Roman period on, these sites seem to have specialised on the production of olive oil.

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Part of the Ġebel Ghawżara site: ground penetrating radar slice (above) and 3D reconstruction (below). 1. villa / farm building; 2. Bath installations; 3. storage facilities. (Late Roman with Punic predecessor).

The Ġebel Ghawżara site

The Ġebel Ghawżara site consists of several contiguous tracts. It is centred round an area with an old olive grove and an extensive bamboo bush which is indicative of a water source. Earlier, stone troughs and fragments of an olive piper (or *trapetum*) were found here and during the survey a vat cut into a large limestone block was found and documented. It belongs to a type well known from other Roman villa sites in Malta, including the San Pawl Milqi establishment. The survey yielded more than 1,200 artefacts from one tract with pottery dating to the Punic, Roman, Late Antique and Medieval periods. Two rock-cut graves on the garrigue plateau above the site are of Punic or Roman date. One of these, with a rounded rock-cut shaft giving entrance to an equally rounded burial chamber, may even date to the 6th or 5th century BCE.



Ġebel Ghawżara site: 6th or 5th century BCE grave on the garrigue plateau above the site.