

The Enigma of Late Hellenistic and Roman Crete; Unanswered Questions

1st International Conference of the Colloquium on Roman Crete
University of Nottingham 18-19 November 2016.

The 1st International Conference of the Colloquium on Roman Crete was held at the University of Nottingham 18-19 November 2016. The conference, which was sponsored by the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies and the University of Nottingham, welcomed speakers from several countries who enthralled the audience with presentations on their research and discoveries. Over the two days there were 14 presentations from experts from 5 different countries, including keynote speaker Dr Jane Francis from Concordia University, Montreal (Canada), and Drs Theotokis Theodoulou and Stavroula Markoulaki from the Greek Ministry of Culture.

Hellenistic and Roman Crete is often regarded as an understudied area; however, the speakers showed how current research is increasing our knowledge and understanding of life on the island during these periods.

The presentations gave tantalising glimpses of the plans and buildings of both inland and coastal settlements and the differences between them and how this changed from the Hellenistic to the Roman period.

The results of the geophysical survey work at Knossos was enhanced by the presentation on the results of excavations at the Roman coastal settlement of Kissamos. Here the fully glory of Roman influence could be seen with a gridded street layout, insulae, stone-lined drainage, lead water pipes and some spectacular mosaic floors.

Further insight into some of the possible sources of this prosperity was gained from research into Hellenistic and Roman pottery demonstrating not only that Cretan products were widely distributed during these periods but also that the scope of Cretan exports was probably significantly larger than previously thought. Research into pottery types and distribution was also providing useful indicators of economic change and disruption during the late second century A.D. that seems to have resulted in different patterns of distribution in the following

Department of Archaeology


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University of Nottingham, University Park, NG7 2RD
Friday 18–Saturday 19 November 2016

Registration: <https://goo.gl/Jfj4ZB>

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century. The variety of the exports was demonstrated by Nicholas Sekunda's presentation on whetstones and their export to Italy during the Hellenistic period.

The conference also heard about the investigations into the Basilica of Mitropolis at Gortyn providing first hand evidence of the impact of growing religious influence on Crete from the late Roman onwards. This research is providing valuable information not only about the architecture but also how the community lived in this part of the settlement.

The results of the land-based projects were well matched by Dr Theodoulou's presentation on underwater archaeology of this period. His presentation included Hellenistic and Roman wrecks, debris fields and harbour works, demonstrating that perhaps the answers to some of the questions about trade, contact and the development of coastal settlements lie beneath the waves as opposed to being above them.

This conference formalised the Colloquium on Roman Crete and another conference is being planned for 2018.

