

Description of Finds by Material to Accompany Database

S'Urachi Site-Based Survey 2015
San Vero Milis, Oristano, Sardinia
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Ceramics (A)

General Observations: Ceramic has been divided into 4 categories for the purposes of this database. These include Nuragic (Iron Age, pre-1st millennium BCE), Phoenician (early 1st millennium BCE), Punic and Early Roman (mid-late 1st millennium BCE), and Imperial Roman (1-3rd centuries CE). Ancient ceramic construction materials have not been categorized by period because of their fragmentary nature. Historic ceramic includes primarily glazed wares from Oristano from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as 1 Medieval glazed bowl. Finally, modern ceramics includes tableware (whiteware, transfer printed whiteware) and tableware (non-glazed or slipped vessel forms) and construction materials (machine and handmade tile and brick). We collected all ceramic encountered including non-diagnostics and diagnostics in all fabrics as well as construction materials (tile and brick).

* Ceramics were divided into periods by Linda Gosner with the help of Andrea Roppa, Peter van Dommelen, Jeremy Hayne, and Emanuele Madrigali

Bone (B)

General Observations: Many bones were too fragmentary to assign to a species and in most cases it was not possible to determine whether they were recently discarded or archaeological material (it is perhaps easier to use relative levels of other modern refuse vs. ancient ceramic to hypothesize about this). It appears, however, that most bones collected were ancient. In general, the species seen in the faunal survey assemblage reflect closely the variety of species uncovered in Trenches D and E over the past three seasons. The one exception to this was the presence of chicken bones in one instance (chicken is a more recent addition to Sardinia).

*Bones were analyzed by Damiá Ramis and these observations reflect his analysis.

Shell (C)

General Observations: There are four types of seashells present (land snail shells were not collected). The predominant type is small and ovular with ridges (Type A), followed by elongated and shiny shells (Type B), the singular appearance of a limpet, and extremely fragmentary pieces of an unknown form. With the exception of Unit #26, most shells appear to have been brought here from the ocean rather than to have eroded out of limestone.

Stone (D)

General Observations: Although three modern tile fragments were found, most of the construction material encountered was made of ceramic. This may represent a differential sorting of construction refuse or a tendency to reuse stone construction material rather than to throw it away. The lithics and groundstone are consistent with that found on the excavations—locally sourced obsidian and chert, which primarily appears to be debitage from stone tool production. The fact that we have found debitage during survey at all speaks to the quantity and distribution of lithics even on superficial layers at S'Urachi. Further comment must be saved until the lithics from excavation are considered during the study season. The groundstone appears to be a broken fragment of a quern.

Metal (E)

General Observations: We collected most metal objects that we encountered, all of which are modern objects ranging from domestic objects (caps for beer, medicine, and cans, as well as scissors) to utilitarian objects for outdoor work (a gear, and nondescript metal rods and objects, and a bullet). Most identifiable pieces are iron.

Glass (F)

General Observations: The glass encountered is overwhelmingly bottle glass from water, beer, wine and medicine bottles with smaller quantities of broken tableware (cups and wine glasses), window glass, nail polish containers, and a single marble. These proportions are expected considering that containers for liquid are meant to be disposable and that recycling procedures must have been non-existent before the late 1970s, which is the terminus ante quem derived from several dated base fragments of glass bottles for medicine. These medicine bottles are probably used to administer hormones to livestock, and at least two are branded with the name "Pfizer." Aside from drinking and dining, the nail polish bottles and marble attest to the use of glass for other domestic activities. Glass colors include clear, brown, and green with smaller quantities of blue and purple. Most glass was broken aside from smaller bottles of medicine or nail polish. Several pieces also showed signs of burning. While most pieces of glass are undiagnostic, several bottles were marked with expiration dates in the late 1960s. At least one bottle was labeled "Oristano."

Other (slag, plastic, plaster)

General Observations: Most other materials were not collected apart from ceramic, bone, shell, glass, and stone. We collected several other objects at random including one plastic piece of analog film because it gives a relative terminus ante quem to the unit (#51) and one plastic button (#46). Most other plastic objects were food wrappers and/or unsanitary to collect. Plaster (#11) was collected before we decided that we would not collect non-ceramic construction materials. The final remaining items are the only 2 instances of slag encountered.