

THE SCALORIA CAVE

DISCOVERY

#2
Scaloria Cave is located on the outskirts of Manfredonia, approximately 2 kilometers from the Adriatic Sea. Discovery of this site was due to the construction in the early part of this century of an aqueduct to convey water from the Gargano to the city of Manfredonia. In the course of construction, a small orifice leading to subterranean chambers was uncovered. Dr. Santo Tinè entered the cave in 1967 and collected a large number of neolithic vases placed around stalagmites in the lower passage of the cave regarded to be a sanctuary.

1979 EXCAVATION

#3
A systematic excavation of the upper cave took place from July 27 to September 6, 1979, supervised by Professor Marija Gimbutas of University of California, Los Angeles, and Professor Shan Winn of the University of Southern Mississippi as field director, assisted by 4 Italian students, 4 American students, and 17 volunteers from the USA, supported by the University Research Expeditions Program. The project also included Dr. János Nemeskéri, physical anthropologist from Budapest.

PALAEOLITHIC

The surprise of the excavation was the discovery of an upper palaeolithic camp, dated by Radiocarbon method to 12,000 - 10,000 B.C. The settlement yielded remains of hearths and four deposits of bones of game animals hunted in the area (aurochs, deer, wild horse), as well as local shells, flint tools, and flint refuse.

NEOLITHIC

Most of the finds from 1979 excavation come from the settlements and burials of several phases of the neolithic Scaloria culture, dated to C. 5600 - 5300 B.C. in calibrated chronology. Six radiocarbon dates are now available and many more charcoal samples are being dated in the laboratories of University of California, University of Rome and in Monaco. Obsidian blades, flint tools, and pottery exhibited in this show derive from the habitation sites and from graves. The mass burial of sacrificed individuals contained vases, long flint blades, and two beautifully ornamented bone pendants.

The excavation revealed human bones of 137 individuals. Taxonomically they qualify as "archaic mediterranean" with dolichocran skulls and are median tall. Several skulls had been split by several cuts and marks of post mortem trepanation were observed.

The climatic conditions of the palaeolithic and the neolithic sites will be indicated by carbonized wood analysis and animal bone analysis now pending.

#6
The neolithic Scaloria is the key site for the understanding of the Southeast Italy Neolithic, i.e., the life style of early agricultural communities in the Tavoliere plain. Its significance lies in multidisciplinary research - analyses of human and animal bones, wood samples, the radiocarbon dating, and the neutron activity method for climatological determinations. The exquisite painted pottery, bone and shell ornaments, and quantities of flint and obsidian tools serve as the witnesses for the existence of a rich and unique civilization in the 6th millennium B.C..

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