

Name of the MSC Fellow: Catriona Brogan

Nationality: British

Host organization: University of Malta (Department of Classics and Archaeology)

Country of the Host: Malta

Project Acronym: MaltaPot

Project start and end date: 01-06-2018- 31-05-2020

Type of MSC action, H2020: IF



Your story:

Project objectives and research field:

The project will examine the earliest ceramic phases to determine what they can tell us about early Maltese ceramic production techniques. The main objectives of the project are to sample local clay deposits, to obtain a greater understanding of possible clay sources, and also to carry out an archaeometric evaluation of the fabrics of the different phases to compare their ceramic technologies.

Tell us why your topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:

MaltaPot will help to advance our understanding of Maltese prehistoric pottery beyond the traditional typological approach. Through sampling work, the project will help to enhance our understanding of potential clay sources used by the prehistoric population and how they used their natural landscape. The application of archaeometric analysis will improve our knowledge of the earliest ceramic technologies on the Maltese islands and help to identify possible cultural contacts/affinities with the wider Central Mediterranean region through the ceramic record.

What are the benefits of participating in a MSC action?

The MSC has allowed me to develop new scientific skills and analytical techniques. These skills have provided me with a more focused approach to my career and helped me to develop a specialism within my chosen subject - providing me with a good platform to embark on further archaeological research projects. It has also given me experience of running my own project and provided me with invaluable experience for applying for grants.

The results of MaltaPot are important as they will help us to gain an understanding of the early Maltese technology and culture and Malta's place within a wider Central Mediterranean context. Through the creation of a reference collection, the MaltaPot project will also facilitate further research in this particular area.

Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?

My application was relatively straight forward and I did not encounter any major challenges. I have previously submitted a proposal for MaltaPot in 2016, which although being scored well and receiving the H2020 Seal of Excellence, just missed out on funding. I was able to write a stronger proposal by following the feedback from the MSC evaluators and my supervisors and the Research Support Services team at the University of Malta. The supervisor from my previous post also assisted in my application as did the European Research Development team at Queen's University Belfast.

Why did you choose a widening country as a Host? What was the reason that convinced you? What is making you professionally happy here?

I chose Malta as my Host country as I had previously been involved in the ERC funded Fragsus Project studying the early Maltese environment. It was through this project that I saw the opportunity to apply a more scientific approach to the study of early ceramic record. I already had established links with my host institution (UOM) and the partner institutions (Heritage Malta and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage) so it was a natural development of my research interests. I have received a lot of support from the various institutions involved and they are keen to help with all aspects of the project.

Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/ tips can you give them?

I would recommend that others apply as this is an excellent way to pursue your individual research interests within the security of the H2020 framework. In order to write a successful application I think that it is important to have clear aims and objectives and to be realistic about the scope of your research (don't take on too

much). Avail of the research support services and anyone else who will assist- especially those at your host institution.