Melbourne Book Launch of Dr Claudia Sagona’s latest book,

*The Archaeology of Malta from the Neolithic through the Roman Period.*

On Tuesday 17\textsuperscript{th} May 2016 the MHA and MCCV hosted the Melbourne book launch of Professor Claudia Sagona’s latest book, *The Archaeology of Malta from the Neolithic through the Roman Period.* About 55 people attended an excellent lecture and social gathering afterwards.
Dr Sagona spoke on current and future directions of Maltese Archaeology. She outlined the vast number of ancient archaeological sites in Malta. For example, 8 megalithic temples are well known but 34 megalithic sites have been identified on the Maltese islands! New archaeological finds are continually being discovered but many are threatened by urban growth and developments.
The archaeology of Malta is being re-interpreted in the light of recent findings. Rather than the sudden collapse of different civilisations, as previously thought, evidence suggests a gradual assimilation of new arrivals into the existing culture. Stone objects not found on the island have been matched to those in other countries, indicating trade and interaction with neighbours, not only Sicily but as far away as the Levant. The megalithic ‘temples’ may have been used for everyday activities, later as burial sites. Some were deliberately filled in or demolished.

Dr Sagona mentioned two projects. FRAGSUS examines fragility and sustainability of human societies within the restricted environment of Malta. In the Ancient Cisterns Project little remote-controlled robotic machines are placed into wells and cisterns to perform laser scans and map underground water storages. Some date back to the Bronze Age and may have had multiple uses over time.
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By Charles Gatt
Tuesday, 24 May 2016

After the talk, Mr Joseph Borg, MHA President, officially launched Dr Sagona's book. She then presented a copy to Mr Victor Borg, MCCV President, who donated it to the Council's Library.

Photo: Lewis Zammit
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Dr Sagona's book, *The Archaeology of Malta from the Neolithic through the Roman Period* describes the initial settlers, the Megalithic period, the Bronze Age, Phoenician settlements, and the Romans. Available through Cambridge University Press, it is a thorough and unique interpretation of the vast archaeological evidence from the early days of human settlement in the Maltese islands.

After many interesting questions, answers, and discussions, light refreshments were served. The pastizzi in particular were enjoyed by our visitors from the University. The MHA thanks the MCCV and all those individuals who provided food and drink, especially Desiree Blythe (Laurie Spiteri's daughter and Robert's mother) for her excellent sandwiches. An extra special thank you goes to Frances Bonnici and those who took time out to serve our guests. It was a most interesting and informative evening and thoroughly enjoyed by all.