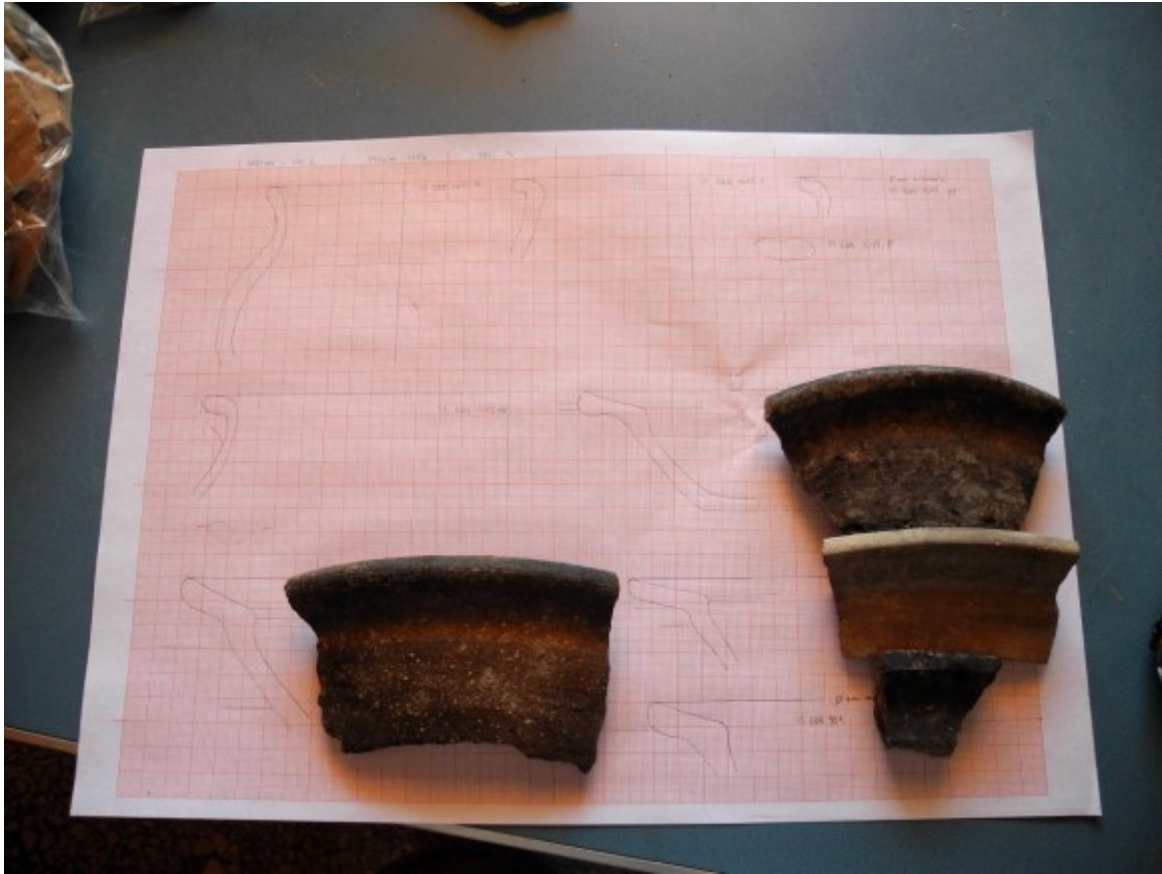


# ARCHAEOLOGY IS ADVENTURE – EVEN WHEN YOU END UP IN THE OFFICE

June 29, 2012 Stefano Costa Day of Archaeology 2012, Finds, Italy, Museum Archaeology, Roman Ancient Greece, archaeological site, archaeologist, Archaeology, Athens, Crete, France, Genoa, Gortyn, Heraklion Prefecture, Italy, Liguria, Ministry of Culture in Italy, Minoan civilization, museum assistant, Nino Lamboglia, Poor Alessandro, Rome, Science

People like to think about the life of archaeologists as a very adventurous endeavour. They are right, except that in my experience it has mainly to do with extreme logistics, rather than dark dungeons and holy relics.

Two weeks ago, I had started thinking about what to write in my Day of Archaeology post. I was already in Gortyna, Crete, to study ceramic finds for my PhD. I spent my days in a sunny and dusty storage building, classifying and drawing late Roman and early Byzantine potsherds. Something very normal. No adventure involved, but still I was in Crete, one of the most amazing places I have ever been. Every day looked the same, with the exception of Sunday (afternoon). Occasional excitement for a few cooking pots, a painted jug. “Fun” counting and weighing sherds one by one, trying to develop new ways to assess depositional history. Not so different from what they told us [last year from Knossos](#), just one hour of driving from Gortyna.



*4th to 5th century cooking pots – The Day of Archaeology I had imagined before THE call*

Then, on Tuesday 19th June 2012, ten days ago, I got a phone call. THE phone call. The phone call that turns my life upside down. And my 29th June 2012, Day of Archaeology, became totally different from what I had imagined.

I was being **hired as museum assistant** at the Ministry of Culture in Italy. A permanent position. *Il posto fisso*, as we say in Italy. If you think of Italian bureaucracy as a slow and inefficient monster, you have to adjust your views, drastically. I was asked to be in Rome in a few days to sign the contract. I had to leave Crete in less than 24 hours. Pack half of my stuff, and leave the other half there, together with my car and tons of potsherds waiting to be studied.

Poor **Alessandro**, who was with me in Gortyna, moved to Athens instead of spending two weeks alone in the Mesara. I am lucky, and I have some good friends in Rome. I spent 5 days in Rome waiting to sign the contract. I went to two **international conferences**, visited the Soprintendenza office where **ArcheoFOSS** took place only two weeks ago, attended the Baptism of a friends' baby and met *many* friends. That's the adventurous everyday life of an archaeologist in Rome.

On Monday 25th June, I signed the contract at the magnificent Ministry headquarters palace. And I took a train from Rome to Genoa on the same day. On Tuesday, I did my first working day, at the office of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Liguria, waiting to move to my

destination: the archaeological site of *Albintimilium*, close to France. The place where Nino Lamboglia started his pioneering study of (Late) Roman pottery more than 60 years ago.



*Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Liguria, Palazzo Reale, Genova*

And so comes my Day of Archaeology. At the office, making phone calls to organise my stay in the *Riviera di Ponente*, speaking with new colleagues, taking instructions on the tasks I will be doing next week, joining the trade union and above all trying to get an idea of what is happening to my life on the day of my 29th birthday.



**Stefano Costa**

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Day of Archaeology this year is on my birthday [ur1.ca/98bvz](http://ur1.ca/98bvz)  
#dayofarch

10:34 - 13 May 2012 · Amsterdam, The Netherlands



**Day of Archaeology**

Day of Archaeology: a crowd sourced view of public archaeology.

[dayofarchaeology.com](http://dayofarchaeology.com)



See Stefano Costa's other Tweets



In my 10 years doing archaeology, I've seen that you never know what is going to happen and you have to be always prepared to change strategy to follow your path. It is true, archaeology is adventure, and you cannot turn it off.