

## Flora of “U Briantinu”, a satellite stack of Panarea Island, Aeolian Archipelago (Sicily, Italy)

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### ABSTRACT

This present study provides a list of flora species encountered during a visit to “U Briantinu” one of the satellite stacks of Panarea Island in the Aeolian archipelago (Sicily, Italy).

### KEY WORDS

Flora; U Briantinu stack or Scoglio Brigantino; Aeolian Archipelago.

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## INTRODUCTION

The authors have been for the past decade or so visiting small islands, islets and stacks around the Mediterranean to collect data on the insular biodiversity of such sites also including the study of these micro habitats and generally in comparison to close by or satellite main islands. Such studies have been intensely carried out in works like Sciberras & Sciberras (2010). ‘U Briantinu Stack’ or as commonly known by the locals as ‘Scoglio Brigantino’ is an interesting location which is quite inaccessible to visitors. Its geomorphology is simply stunning in being such a narrow vertical cliff face stack.

Slightly tilted to the south, thus facing north, the stack has a length of approximately 32 meters from west to east/east to west and a width no more than a maximum of 5 meters from north to south/south to north. It is estimated to be about 12-15 meters high from the sea level to the highest part and 28 meters away from the closest land excluding 2 rocks which do not support terrestrial life. It is situated in a pocket beach known as ‘Cala Junco’.

Close by is a popular archeological site known as the prehistoric village that dates back to the Bronze Age (XIV - XIII century B.C.) No past literature

is available for this stack at least regarding that of natural history (P. Lo Cascio personal communication). From a geological point of view, the volcanic rock of the stack formed during the 4<sup>th</sup> Tyrrhenian eruptive epoch, roughly 124,000 to 118,000 years ago. Composition of the rock is ‘andesitico - dacitica calcalalina’ and high in potassium (Calanchi et al., 2007).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors visited the stack on 28.IX.2011. They swam to the site and circulated the bottom of the stack to take rough measurements of the stack by 50 ft measuring tape. These measurements were later compared with Google earth and thus the rough measurements above were produced. Attempt was made to climb the stack but the top of the stack is practically inaccessible at least from sea or to amateur climbers.

From every spot that climbing was succeeded, numerous images were taken by a water proof camera (Fuji fine Pix Z33 wp) to photograph habitats and wildlife. To have a better image of all the stack the authors walked all the mainland coast of Panarea island that circulate the stack and photographic



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Figures. 1-3. “U Briantinu” a satellite stacks of Panarea Island (Aeolian Archipelago, Sicily, Italy).

shots of all parts of the stack were taken with a zoom of 560 mm by a camera (Canon powershot Sx10) so identification was carried out both visual and from images.

## RESULTS

The following 9 species of macrophytic flora were recorded:

*Helichrysum litoreum* Guss. (Compositae)  
*Centaurea aeolica* Lojac. (Asteraceae)  
*Dianthus rupicola* subsp. *aeolicus* (Lojac.) Brullo & Miniss. (Caryophyllaceae)  
*Hyoseris taurina* Martinoli (Asteraceae)  
*Dactylis glomerata* L. (Poaceae)  
*Limbardia crithmoides* (L.) Dumont (Asteraceae)  
*Erica arborea* L. (Ericaceae)  
*Pistacia lentiscus* L. (Anacardiaceae)  
*Daucus rupestris* Guss. (Apiaceae)

The dominant species on top of the stack seem to be *Helichrysum litoreum*, *Dactylis glomerata* and *Centaurea aeolica*, while dominant species on cliff side are *Limbardia crithmoides* and *Daucus rupestris*. Counting the specimens was virtually impossible as such parts of site were only presented by images.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is interesting to note that while the mentioned species are dominant on the stack, the nearby mainland area known as Milazzese was noted to be dominated entirely by *Cistus monsepiensis* L., (Cistaceae) accompanied to a much lesser extent by *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Erica arborea* and *Calycotome infesta* Guss. (Fabaceae).

Although no terrestrial fauna survey took place during visit a specimen of *Lespisma* sp. (Thysanura Lespismatidae) was noted but could not be collected for further identification. Same goes for a specimen of Formicidae sp., and Lepidoptera *Colias crocea* (Geoffroy, 1785), *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 175), *Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Pieridae) and *Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Nymphalidae) were all noted feeding on *Limbar-*

*dia crithmoides*. The site was also checked for any typical herpetofaunal activity but from the limitation encountered during climbing it was not possible to speculate well the site; however the authors were informed that no herpetofauna are known from the stack (P. Lo Cascio personal communication).

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