

# MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT IN ARCHAIC SICILY: ON PHOENICIAN POTTERY FINDINGS FROM RITUAL CONTEXTS OF GREEK SETTLEMENTS

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*Abstract:* The Phoenician pottery findings from Greek settlements constitute a significant source of data to understand cultural interactions in Archaic Sicily, whose investigation in the past was strongly suggested by major scholars and was systematized for the first time only in 2014. This extensive study was conducted within the framework of a contextual analysis, which gave to the material recorded an added value and new research insights. Nevertheless, within the set of contexts previously analysed, those related to the ritual sphere acquire a specific value, as they well express the ontological primacy of material engagement. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyse cultural interactions between Phoenicians and Greeks in Sicily through an update and a new understanding about Phoenician pottery findings from ritual contexts, also by taking into account new important discoveries.

*Keywords:* Archaic Sicily; Phoenicians; Greeks; Cultural Interactions; Ritual Contexts; Material Culture; Pottery Vessels

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sicily can be considered one of the best observatories in the central Mediterranean for the cultural interactions between Phoenicians and Greeks, whose socio-political intersection and relationship is in itself an “in-escapable” topic to understand the articulated world of this island during the Archaic period.<sup>1</sup> In fact, from the first half of the 8th century BCE onward, the island became the scene of a new series of colonial encounters,<sup>2</sup> involving at the same time new groups of colonizers and local communities: a peculiar colonial *middle ground*,<sup>3</sup> strongly characterised by “mixed hybrid material culture”<sup>4</sup> (FIG. 1). For these reasons, I carried out an extensive review and study completed in 2014 of the rather rich body of Phoenician pottery findings from Greek colonial settlements of Archaic Sicily that had been prominently mentioned in previous studies.<sup>5</sup>

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1 See Moscati 1984-1985, p.1.

2 On the methodological approach to this issue see, among others, Dietler 1995; Gosden 2004; Stein 2005; Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez 2005; van Dommelen 2002 and 2006.

3 For the application of White’s ethnohistorical concept of “middle ground” (see White 1991) as a place and as a “social metaphor” representing a mutual process between systems of values of the colonial world of Sicily and, more generically, of the ancient Mediterranean, see Gosden 2004, pp. 30-33; Malkin 2004, pp. 357-362 and Malkin 2005, pp. 250-252.

4 With this expression C.M. Antonaccio indicates the complex of findings in colonial settlements, strongly characterized by a variety of provenances and cultural origins, whose meanings are connected to social interactions and involving people and objects, which can be expressed through the association, presence or, sometimes, absence of some shape, see Antonaccio 2004. Moreover, on hybridity and material culture, see van Dommelen 2005.

5 This paper is based on my doctoral dissertation: see Sciortino 2014. The research started as a Ph.D. project at the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, Spain), directed by María Eugenia Aubet Semmler, and it can be considered the first explicit study of the issue concerning Phoenician items from Greek settlements and – to a lesser extent – indigenous sites of Sicily. The study is still in progress as it will include the study of those materials already mentioned from sites previously analysed – especially for Naxos, Syracuse and Gela – and materials from the Phoenician and Punic sites of Sicily. I was allowed to work on the findings from ancient excavations from Zankle, Syracuse and Megara Hyblaea thanks to the Soprintendenza ai BB.CC.AA. of Messina and to the Soprintendenza ai BB.CC.AA of Syracuse, but especially to their directors, most of whom were directly involved in the excavations where the items



FIG. 1. Map of Archaic Sicily (after Vassallo 2005, fig. 1).

the colonial encounters, although it is the material culture that can become the key to understanding something unmaterial. Furthermore, those contexts shaped by ritual actions – which leave their traces – attest to specific polysemic assemblages, whose engagement takes place through gestures, such as practices of libations, sacrifices or specific offerings, and vessel shapes. These contexts, in fact, are rich in pottery, as it constitutes a fundamental element of votive action in which documented vessel shapes may have been a “ritual tool” of libation practices, a votive object or offerings to the deities.<sup>9</sup>

For all these reasons, it seems important to focus on the ritual contexts of the Greek settlements in Sicily documenting Phoenician pottery findings: they express a specific material engagement, as products of actions, repeated according to norms and collective behaviours, as well as of socially embedded cross-cultural experiences characterised by their *metaplasticity*.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, within the overall categories of contexts documenting Phoenician pottery outlined in the previous research<sup>11</sup> the ritual ones represent a fundamental piece to understand cultural interactions within practices of ritual consumption, whose performances could be outlined by the analysis of the repertoires.

Today, these findings appear to be even more significant in the light of recent discoveries from the main sanctuary of Selinus<sup>6</sup> yet another crucial context as it is well known how sanctuaries played a specific role in cultural contacts – especially in cultural mixed areas – as meeting places of different communities where “foreigners” were involved and trading deals were sealed under the favour and auspices of the gods.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, the sacred sphere, with its heterogeneous ritual features,<sup>8</sup> constitutes a further expression of the social complexity of

were found, such as Dr. Maria Bacci, Dr. Gabriella Tigano, Dr. Maria Mastelloni, Dr. Paola Pelagatti, Dr. Maria Ciurcina and Dr. Beatrice Basile. Moreover, all the staff of Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum, where a high number of this findings is guarded, was generous and very kind, especially Dr. Angela Maria Manenti. I am also very thankful to the French Mission of Megara Hyblaea and in particular to Prof. Michel Gras and Prof. Henri Tréziny, who I remember with esteem and gratitude.

6 On new data from Selinus, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020.

7 About religious cross-cultural contexts see Demetriou 2017; Villing 2019 on Naukratis; see Camassa 2006 for an overview in the Aegean islands; on Selinus, see Antonetti – De Vido 2006 and Marconi – Tardo – Trombi 2015, p. 332. Finally, on this issue among the mixed populations in western Sicily, see Spatafora 2014.

8 On the concept of “ritual” as connected to actions or activities not always related to religion, see Bell 1992, pp. 3-6; Bradley 2005, pp. 27-33.

9 See Denti 2013, pp. 15-18 and Brück 2007, pp. 281-283.

10 On material engagement and its interest in the effects and consequences that things have on human ways of thinking or its pragmatic effect (and thus agency), see Malafouris 2013, p. 139 and Fabietti 2014, chapter 6.

11 For an overview, see Sciortino 2014. See also note 5 and the next paragraph (2).

## 2. PHOENICIAN FINDINGS: THE CORPUS OF DATA

The heterogeneous *corpus* of data from Greek settlements and – to a lesser extent – indigenous sites of Sicily has benefitted from a new impetus for its interpretation through its inclusion within the contextual framework, which has expressed all its potential value by integrating the analysis levels to determine a broader perspective of study: not only through the classification of the provenances, but also through the “codification” of the typologies of archaeological contexts. This approach is the most formally correct for the analysis of the data (Phoenician pottery<sup>12</sup> and the associated materials) but also allows analysing the material record, taking into account local implications within the evaluation of historical phenomena.<sup>13</sup>

In this sense, the corpus of Phoenician data<sup>14</sup> represents an empiric support to understand cultural dynamics within Archaic Sicily. In fact, those items from such heterogeneous contexts of Greek settlements suggests a wide web of relationships well expressed within the hybrid material culture recorded there, although direct evidence to confirm a Semitic presence is still lacking.<sup>15</sup>

The corpus organically collects all the findings only mentioned in bibliography and those unpublished from all the contexts from Greek settlements<sup>16</sup> which documented the presence of both Phoenician materials proper, namely Red Slip ware and in some cases of its local adaptations.<sup>17</sup> Within the archaeological indicator of the Phoenician pottery previously analysed, the shapes documented are prominently lamps and plates, but also sporadically bowls, neck-ridge jugs, mushroom jugs<sup>18</sup> and a variant of this shape.

Two other classes of materials were addenda to this *corpus*: the first, though having diverse origins, mainly Egyptian or Egyptianising, has a deep cultural engagement with Phoenician culture or is mediated by it. These include scarabs, amulets, faience oil flasks, faience statuettes, and ivory plaques dated between the 9th and the 6th century BCE; they come from ritual contexts such as tombs – including indigenous contexts – or votive deposits of some of the most important shrines of female cults in Sicily, being items related to a specific group or genre connected prominently to the sphere of maternal health and to the protection

12 Despite a clear lack of detailed information about the stratigraphic evidence of these pottery findings, the study of these led to the identification of items “Phoenician” proper and a production defined “of Phoenician type”, which are adaptations of Phoenician shapes probably made locally.

13 On the contextual approach, see Hodder 1992, pp. 118-146. Of course, the analysis of each context and their functional interpretation depend on variables, such as stratigraphic data, the typological variety of the materials, the quantitative and qualitative heterogeneity of datasets and, finally, the publishing level of each context, mainly dedicated to Greek imports.

14 The definition of “Phoenician” for the materials analysed refers to a chronological framework dated between the 8th and the first half of the 6th century BCE.

15 In this sense, a paradigmatic site is Zankle (Messina), probably involved within the phenomena of circulation and interrelation between Levantines and Greek Euboeans, a network, also documented at Pithekoussai and Carthage, and defined “histoire imbriquée” by M. Gras; see Gras 2002, pp. 188-190; Albanese Procelli 2008, pp. 465-466; Spatafora – Sciortino 2015, pp. 225-227. Moreover, a sector of the archaic settlement, namely Block 224, has been cautiously interpreted as an *emporium* for the nature of its findings; it documents, together with Greek imports, a considerable body of Phoenician pottery fragments, see Bacci 1978; Bacci 2002, p. 26; Sciortino 2014, pp. 54-58, fig. 2.8.

16 The sites attesting Phoenician pottery and amphorae that have been at the centre of previous research are: Naxos, Zankle (Messina) Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea, Gela, Himera, Mylai, Selinous and Camarina.

17 For a rather complete bibliography, see Sciortino 2014. Nevertheless, an update of data included in the previous research is necessary in the light of the new published studies. It includes a variant of a mushroom juglet from the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea (see Duda – Gras, forthcoming, fig. Z 130, 3 ext. 14), at Selinus an oil-bottle from the Malophoros sanctuary (see Orsingher 2010, p. 42, note 71) and new data from the Temple R area discussed further below, which also include Greek productions of Phoenician shapes, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020. Finally, Himera’s necropolis documents a feeding bottle found in a Greek amphora and dated to the second half of the sixth century BCE, see Bartoloni 2020, p. 76. This item is a *hapax* with no parallels in the Greek repertoire but rather with a more archaic Red Slip specimen from Sulky’s necropolis (dated between the 8th-7th century BCE), see Bartoloni 2014, p. 15, fig. 3.

18 From Block 224 in Zankle (Messina), within the set of Phoenician pottery, the archaeologists who excavated the area indicate a fragment of mushroom lip jug (see Bacci 2002, p. 27, note 61), which unfortunately is not among the materials authentically analysed.



FIG. 2. Scarabs from Syracuse contexts and kneeling double flute player from the Malophoros sanctuary of Selinunte (after Guzzardi 1991 p. 947, fig. 3 and Tusa 1986).

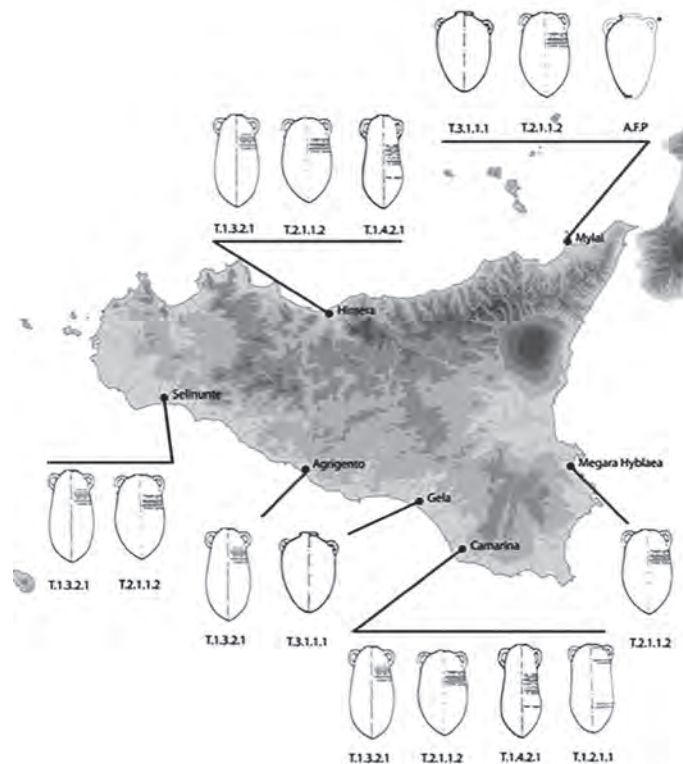


FIG. 3. Map of the distribution of the amphora's type from Greek contexts during the archaic period (after Sciortino 2014, not to scale).

of children until the afterlife. Particularly, these findings testify to an imagery shaped by oriental traditions, apparently “translated” through the Phoenician and Punic magic and symbolic filter. In this sense, they represent a *cultural medium*, whose presence in sacred spaces fits into an image of ritualism mediated by Phoenician culture and assimilated within the “Greek symbolic system” (FIG. 2), constituting a further piece in the development of the religion of the *polis*, particularly the most “popular” one.<sup>19</sup>

The second includes Phoenician and Punic types of archaic transport amphorae, dated between the 7th and the beginning of the first half of 6th century BCE. They come mainly from burial contexts:<sup>20</sup> in

19 These items come from the Athenaion and the Ionian temple in Syracuse, the Temple G in Megara Hyblaea, the sanctuary of Bitalemi in Gela, the Malophoros sanctuary in Selinus and the “temenos of Athena” in the upper city of Himera: for a complete bibliography, see Sciortino 2014, pp. 216-226. On the value of these items as cultural medium, see Whitley 1991, pp. 344-345; Sossau 2015, p. 27.

20 The amphorae have been found in Mylai, Megara Hyblaea, Camarina, Gela, Akragas, Selinus and Himera, where a rich corpus of Phoenician and Punic transport amphorae is documented. Particularly, the complete published amphorae from Himera's necropolis includes all the documented types, as well as the production areas of the amphorae which are documented giving a wider overview of the centres implied in trading networks with this colony during the archaic period (such as Morya, Soluntum, Carthage, or types totally absent in the Sicilian colonial world, such as the ones from the area of the Strait of Gibraltar, dated between the mid-7th and the 6th century BCE), see Vassallo 1999 and Bechtold – Vassallo 2018, pp. 15-45; this recent study strongly increases the corpus and its value. Finally, a portion of transport amphorae comes from urban areas, such as from Block 224 in Zankle (Messina) – see Sciortino 2014, pp. 54-58, fig. 2.8 – from the Block 3 of the habitat of Himera – see Portale – Allegro 2008, tav. LXIX, 172 – or from the Temple R area in Selinus, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 263-269 and pp. 271-275.



fact, the majority of the items are attested in Greek necropolises (FIG. 3) and they obviously testify trading networks as well as to the secondary use of these vessels as coffins.<sup>21</sup> In fact, as funerary containers, these amphorae were employed to differentiate the deposition of children, according to the rite of the *enchytrismos*, which suggests a private and personal choice to contain and protect the remains of loved ones.

### 3. PHOENICIAN POTTERY WITHIN RITUAL SPACES: THE CASE OF SYRACUSE

Within the ritual contexts of Greek settlements in Sicily attesting Phoenician pottery findings, surely the ones from Syracuse are particularly emblematic, as the definition of the cultic area here seems to be strongly connected to the colony's very *ktisis*.<sup>22</sup>

First of all, Syracuse is the only Greek settlement expressly mentioned in relation to a situation of cohabitation with Semitic peoples, although according to a late historiographic source – Diodorus Siculus – reporting events of the 4th century BCE. In fact, the historian in providing an account of Dionysius' expedition against the Punic settlements in western Sicily offers indirect evidence of this dimension of cultural interactions within the Greek centres of Sicily at that time. He first describes the dramatic situation of those who he alternatively names “Phoenicians/Carthaginians” living in Syracuse – and also in other Sikeliot centres – who were deprived of their belongings (Diod. XIV 46,1-2). Later, talking about the conquest of Motya, he mentions the temples venerated by the Greeks of this island as refuges for its inhabitants during the violent final attack by the tyrant's troops (Diod. XIV 53,2).<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, and even more remarkable, this centre features the highest number of documented ritual contexts – namely seven – attesting Phoenician pottery, whose location is concentrated within the so-called “sacred quadrilateral” of Ortigia, the *Násos*, constituting the heart of the most important Doric colony in Sicily<sup>24</sup> (FIGS. 4-5).

It is well known that since its foundation the central part of Ortigia featured a sacred dimension: in fact, this acropolis documents the settlement's first *hierón*, as this is where the spaces took on political and religious values for the *polis* over the centuries through a continuity of use.<sup>25</sup> Here, traces of the sanctuary connected to this ancient devotion – dated to the 8th century BCE – are a dice altar (containing inside the ancient *bomós* of the foundation) and a votive deposit.<sup>26</sup> These data suggest that the colony's oldest official cult and its votive complex, whose *eschara* (the sacred heart) was placed in the epicentre of the acropolis, probably had been consecrated with a solemn foundational act to determine the political *ktisis* of the polis.

21 On the interpretation of these items from non-Phoenician sites, see Ciasca 1985, p. 32 and Gras 1985, pp. 287-323. Moreover, in Pithekoussai *enchytrismo*i and funerary equipment which appear strongly connected to Eastern groups buried in the necropolis have been documented, see Buchner 1982, p. 293; Docter 2000, pp. 137-139.

22 The lack of archaeological data about the inner articulation of the *teméne* is today added to the issue of the lack of “visibility” of the ancient sacred remains, as the site has been subject to a continuous occupation.

23 According to I. Malkin, this source, despite its high chronology, shows a picture of hybrid cultural situation, stressing how the temples of the island were “revered by the Greeks”, see Malkin 2005, p. 250.

24 Veronese 2006, p. 291. Moreover, Ortigia has always been dedicated to the public space, both civic and religious, as well as to use as a settlement, as documented by the proto-archaic houses dated to the last quarter of 8th century BCE, see Pelagatti 1978, pp. 119-133.

25 This is perfectly expressed by the Doric temple – a symbol of the spheres of religion and power – placed on the ancient sacred area and which can be considered the most important in Sicily, wanted by Gelon with great determination to remember the victory against the Carthaginians at Himera in 480 BCE, see Voza 1999, p. 7.

26 During the 1912 excavations in Via Minerva Paolo Orsi found several objects around the ancient archaic dice altar. He considered these findings as belonging to the votive deposit placed around the most ancient place of worship of the entire *témenos*, whose foundations on the rocks document the perimeter of the *oikos*, enclosed by small pits for sacrificial rituals (*thysiai*), attesting also the famous *Pothnia Theron* vessel, see Orsi 1918, col. 736.



FIG. 4. Ortigia, urban plan (after Voza 1999).

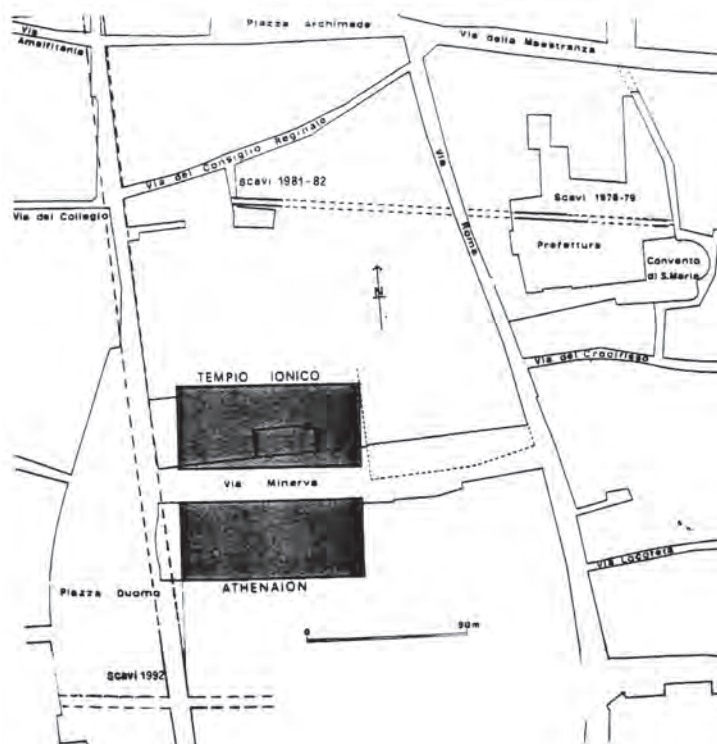


FIG. 5. Ortigia excavations areas (after Pelagatti 1982, fig. 1).

In this sense, this area was deeply connected to the identity of the new settlement – as religious and civic finalities overlapped – representing the highest symbolic expression of the polyad religion.<sup>27</sup> A solemn sacrality spanned the centuries as the area records the settlement's oldest elements of worship, documented by the extraordinary stratigraphy of the Athenaion area, and for these reasons the attestations of Phoenician Red Slip pottery acquires an added value.

Among the materials connected to the sacred deposit of this sanctuary – dated between the last quarter of the 8th and the end of the 6th century BCE – together with the fine ware – mainly Corinthian, Eastern Greek and Etruscan (TAB. 1) – there is a Phoenician Red Slip plate,<sup>28</sup> with an almost complete profile. Here the documented shapes are mostly connected to wine consumption, such as Corinthian conical *oinochoai* and kraters, *kotylai* and *Thapsos* cups, and a Corinthian *kyathos*, as well as Etruscan *kantharoi*, or vessels for personal and cosmetic use, such as Corinthian *pixydes* and globular aryballoi and alabastra, together with symbolic or liturgic vases, such as a local *kalathos*, or storage vessels, such as two Panathenaic amphorae, and finally offerings such as miniature vessels and loom weights.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, within the *temenos* of this sanctuary – in Piazza Duomo – the area featuring the oldest form of cult before monumentalisation, the several archaeological findings include well 1, dated between the

27 Paolo Orsi, who excavated this area, connected the sanctuary to Athena for elements such as miniature shields – indicative of Athena Promachos – from the votive deposit, see Orsi 1918, coll. 395-398.

28 Dr. Elena Piccolo kindly showed me a fragment of a Red Slip plate belonging to this context during my latest visit to the Paolo Orsi Museum – at the end of 2019 – and, although it was not possible to analyse it that time, its presence in this context is very remarkable and it will be included in my upcoming study.

29 See Orsi 1918 and Voza 1999.

Table 1	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Eastern-Greek	Etruscan	Laconian	"Western"
Sacred deposit of the Athenaion's area Last quarter of the 8 <sup>th</sup> -end of the 6 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Dining	■	■					■
	Pouring		■					
	Drinking		■			■		
	Cooking							
	Storage	■		■				
	Lighting							
	Personal use				■			■
	Liturgic		■					■

TAB. 1. Vessel categories and productions from the sacred deposit of the Athenaion.

Table 2	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Eastern-Greek	Etruscan	Laconian	"Western"
Well 1 ca. Middle 7 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Dining	■						■
	Pouring						■	
	Drinking		■		■	■		■
	Cooking							
	Storage	■						
	Lighting							
	Personal use		■	■	■			
	Liturgic							■

TAB. 2. Vessel categories and productions from the Well 1 of Piazza Duomo.

mid-7th-6th century BCE, which suggests its use as a deposit of the sanctuary's votive objects.<sup>30</sup> Here, the findings are above all composed of fine wares, prominently for wine consumption, and in particular drinking vessels, whose origins are mainly Eastern Greek, such as Ionian and Rhodian cups or Chian chalices (TAB. 2). Pouring vessels are prominently Laconian and western productions, while the storage vessels are Corinthian, Attic, Etruscan, Phoenician and Punic productions. This context records also vessels for cosmetic and personal use, such as *pyxides* and alabstra of Eastern bucchero and a western *kalathos*, a shape generally associated with liturgic use. Furthermore, well 1 is the context recording the highest number of dining vessels such as an Etruscan plate, a lid, a western *lekane* and five rim fragments of Red Slip plates.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, no entire specimen survives.

The first rim fragment is made of light red clay (10R7/6) with small inclusions of limestone and gold mica (FIG. 6.1). The fragment features a large rim, 6.4 cm wide, and a sharp carination on the outside, which runs below the break formed by the rim on the inside. The inner surface is covered by Red Slip (10R 5/8) and painted white lines cover the incisions previously made: one along the border rim edge and a couple before the basin. The specimen shows morphological affinities with the P2 type of the Peserico classification, attested in Phoenician sites of the central Mediterranean, particularly Carthage.<sup>32</sup>

30 This area has revealed findings dating back to the Neolithic, see Voza 1993-1994, pp. 1281-1287; Voza 1999, p. 14; Voza 2000; Ciurcina – Amato 1999, p. 37, fig. 10; Veronese 2006, p. 312.

31 Inv. no 97132 and 97133. See Ciurcina – Amato 1999, p. 37, figs. 1,10. Sciortino 2014, pp. 90-92, fig. 3.10. Although the figure of this publication shows at least five rim fragments of Red Slip plates and in the article there is also a reference to fragments of Phoenician and Punic amphorae, during my study visit to the Paolo Orsi Museum the only fragments available to study (as the only ones exhibited in the case named Piazza Duomo) belonged to two plates.

32 See Peserico 1999, pp. 129-130; Bechtold 2007, p. 337, fig. 152, n. 2018. Moreover, the sharp carination feature appears also on a Red Slip specimen from La Fonteta dated between 720 and 670 BCE, see González Prats 2011, p. 596, n. 35608, fig. 15.

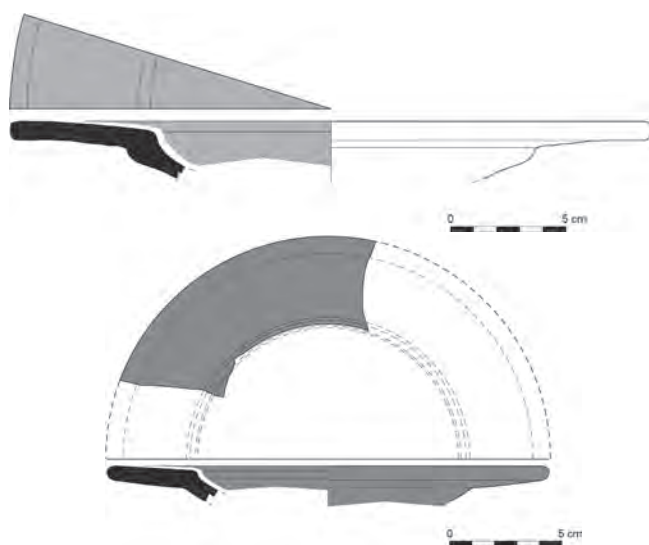


FIG. 6. 1-2: Plates from Well 1 (author's drawing).

struction of the Ionian temple.<sup>35</sup> The findings from this area – dated between the 8th and the 7th century BCE – attest prominently Corinthian drinking vessels, such as *Thapsos* cups, together with vessels for personal and cosmetic use, such as *pixys*, but the liturgic vessels – such as *kyathoi* and *kalathoi* – of western production are particularly noteworthy (TAB. 3).

Here a Phoenician Red Slip plate was found: it is made of light red clay (10R7/6) with small limestone inclusions and has been recomposed from two pieces.<sup>36</sup> This specimen features a large, slanting rim, 3.5 cm wide, a smooth outline and a concave base. Its inner surface is covered by red-brown Red Slip (10R 5/6) and

The second rim fragment is made of pale red clay (10R 6/3) with a compact grey core and small inclusions of limestone and golden mica and is composed of two pieces later restored (FIG. 6.2). The rim is 4 cm wide and follows the opening of the deep basin. Its surface is covered by red-brown Red Slip (10R 5/6). This specimen too has painted white lines along incisions previously made: one along the border rim and three before the basin. This fragment can be attributed to central Mediterranean production as it shows morphological affinities with a Carthaginian specimen, from the inhabited settlement,<sup>33</sup> but also with a type attested at the necropolis of Motya.<sup>34</sup>

Another context is attested within the northern area of the Athenaiion, where four Proto-archaic houses were sealed by the construction

	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Eastern-Greek	Etruscan	Laconian	"Western"
Northern area of Athenaiion 8 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Dining	■	■					■
	Pouring		■					
	Drinking		■					
	Cooking							■
	Storage			■				
	Lighting							
	Personal use	■						
	Liturgic							■

TAB. 3. Vessel categories and productions from the Northern area of the Athenaiion.

33 For the specimen from Carthage, dated to the first half of the 7th century BCE, see Vegas 1999a, p. 73, fig. d and Vegas 1999b, pp. 136-138, fig. 25 1.

34 The plate from Motya, is dated within the first half of the 7th century BCE, see Tusa 1978, p. 41, tomb n. 109, tav. XXVIII,2; Spanò Giammellaro 2000, p. 326, fig. 56; Bartoloni 2010, p. 59, fig. 1. Finally, this specimen is very similar for its morphology to an import from Carthage found at La Peña Negra IIA, included in the K group, whose imports spread along the Alicante coast are dated between the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 6th century BCE, see González Prats 1999, p. 128, fig. 6, 8240.

35 The presence of liturgic vessels in this area liminal to the sacred *temenos* and following the monumental building of the 6th century BCE, the Ionian temple, have suggested firstly to interpret the houses as belonging to the priests, see Pelagatti 1973, pp. 73-74 and Pelagatti 1976-1977, p. 548. However, the archaeologists have also hypothesized a ritual destination of the area for the nature of the findings, connected to a votive deposit later destroyed by the new temple.

36 See Sciortino 2014, pp. 84-87, fig. 3.6.



also features an incision – whose white decoration has disappeared – near the outer edge of the rim and a couple before the basin. The plate for some specific features, such as the inclination of the short and thick rim and its coarse Red Slip, seems a local production, although it presents vaguely morphological affinities with some specimens of the Carthage-type P2 group<sup>37</sup> for the outline and the base with specimens from the Iberian Peninsula from the end of the 8th and the first half of the 7th century BCE.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, this plate, which can be dated approximately to the 7th century BCE, has a couple of suspension holes near the edge of the rim, which is a feature well attested within the group of Phoenician-type plates from Greek settlements in Sicily (FIG. 7).<sup>39</sup>

The Cassa di Risparmio area, close to Piazza Archimede, is a context interpreted as being at the borders of a *temenos*, and was considered by the archaeologist who found it as being generically part of a *favissa*, dated between the 8th and the 7th centuries BCE.<sup>40</sup> Here closed shapes of the Proto Corinthian, such as trefoil *oinochoai*, as well as open votive shapes locally made, or drinking vessels and tableware of different origins, have been documented (TAB. 4).

The pottery assemblage recorded in the archaeological reports comprises three fragments of Phoenician pottery: two rims of plates<sup>41</sup> and a lamp.<sup>42</sup> The fragment of the Phoenician plate has a 4.5 cm rim and features tiny limestone inclusions (FIG. 8.1); its inner surface is covered by a red Red Slip (10R 4/6 Munsell) of good manufacture and its morphology has similarities with Carthaginian specimens belonging to the P1 group.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the context attests also a fragmentary double-spouted lamp, as confirmed by the photogrammetric survey, although just one of the spouts and the edge of the rim and part of the convex base, typical of Phoenician lamps, is documented (FIG. 8.2). Its morphological study has revealed a diameter of 17 cm; such large dimensions are generally connected to a greater archaicity of this shape in the Mediterranean;<sup>44</sup> the

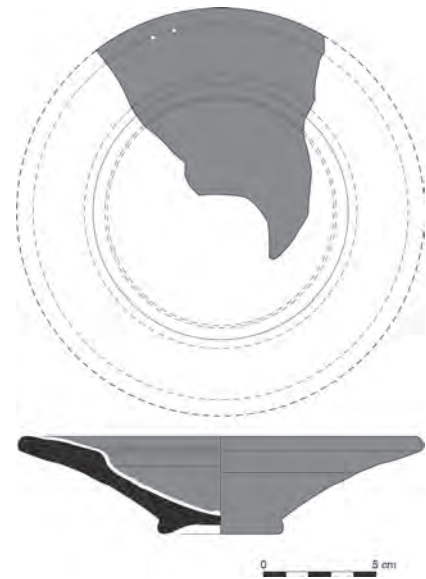


FIG. 7. Plate from the Northern area of the Athenaion (author's drawing).

Table 4	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Argive	Euboean-Cycladic	Laconian	"Western"
Cassa di Risparmio 8th-6th century BCE	Dining	■	■					
	Pouring				■			
	Drinking					■		
	Cooking							
	Storage		■	■		■		
	Lighting	■						
	Personal use							■
	Liturgic							■

TAB. 4. Vessel categories and productions from the Cassa di Risparmio.

37 Peserico 1999, pp. 129-130; Bechtold 2007, p. 276, fig. 109, n. 1609 and 1611.

38 See for La Fonteta, González Prats 2011, p. 596, n. 53662, fig. 15.

39 On this feature attested in local adaptations of Phoenician plates, see the discussion further below in notes 104, 105 and 107.

40 It was tentatively connected to the cult of Demeter and Kore for the finding of a fragment of a *pinax* representing both deities, see Gentili 1973, pp. 4-8, note 15. On the context, see Pelagatti 1978, pp. 130-132, fig. 8.

41 Only a plate was available from this area at the museum and so here included. See Sciortino 2014, pp. 93-95, fig. 3.11.

42 See Sciortino 2014, pp. 93-95, fig. 3.11. The specimen shows affinities with the classification of M. Vegas, 86.1-86.2, dated between the end of the 8th and the 7th century BCE, see Vegas 1999b, pp. 216-217.

43 See Bechtold 2007, p. 274, fig. 108, 1606.

44 Also, Etruscan contexts attest this specific feature, see Botto 2010, p. 165, fig. 2.

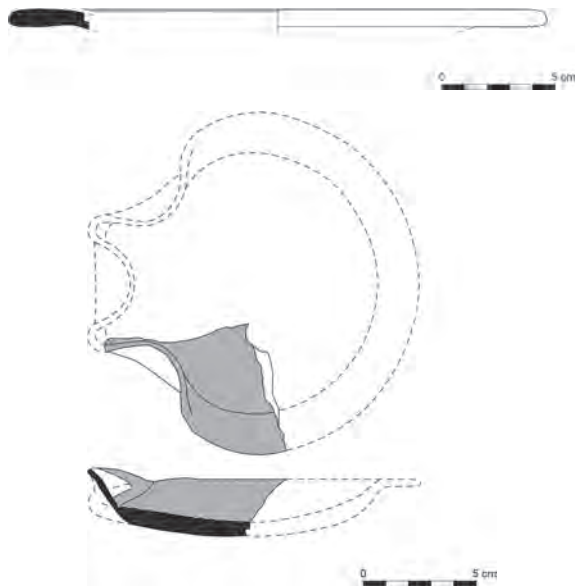


FIG. 8. 1-2: Plate and lamp from Cassa di Risparmio (author's drawing).

engraved decoration featuring a pattern of triangles, whose characteristics and provenance suggest a ritual destination of the context, have been found (TAB. 5).<sup>46</sup>

A fragment of a Phoenician plate made of Reddish clay (5YR7/6) with small inclusions was found here (FIG. 9); it has a rim of 5.7 cm and its reconstructed diameter is 28 cm; the inner surface is covered by good quality Red Slip (10R 4/8 Munsell). Its outline, with a wide diameter and basin, shows affinities with specimens of the Carthage P2 type of the middle 7th century BCE.<sup>47</sup>

The last two ritual contexts from Syracuse are located in the Prefettura area, where well 11 and the test trench B- SU.351,<sup>48</sup> both excavated in different moments, feature finds of Phoenician pottery. Well 11 seems

fragment has limestone inclusions in its break and is noteworthy for its surface treatment, as it is covered with Red Slip of very good manufacture and an intense red colour (10 R 4/8 Munsell) spread with a stick. This specimen shows affinities with shapes 86.1 – 86.2 of the classification made by M. Vegas, dated between the end of the 8th and the end of the 7th century BCE.<sup>45</sup>

Apparently connected to a ritual space is also the Credito Italiano area, in Via dell'Apollonion, in the North of Ortigia, where three structures were found on the sides of the main street, whose findings and stratigraphy dated it to around the 7th century BCE. The vessels for personal use, such as the Corinthian conical *lekythoi* with flat bottom and a large Proto Corinthian *pyxis*, are also remarkable. Moreover, an important type of drinking vessels, such as a large Late Geometric cup (Ithaca R4 type), and Argive pottery, such as a handmade juglet and an Argive *kalathos* with

Table 5	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Argive	Euboean-Cycladic	Laconian	"Western"
Credito Italiano's area ca. 7 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Dining	■	■					
	Pouring				■			
	Drinking							
	Cooking							
	Storage							
	Lighting	■						
	Personal use		■					
	Liturgic				■			

TAB. 5. Vessel categories and productions from the Credito Italiano.

45 See Vegas 1999b, pp. 216-217. The type is attested in tombs from the hill of Junon, see also Deneauve 1969, p. 25, lamp 10, pls. IV and XVII.

46 Pelagatti 1978, p. 131.

47 See Sciortino 2014, pp. 96-97, fig. 3.12. Bechtold 2007, p. 276, fig. 109, 1608.

48 The Phoenician fragments of plates from these contexts were part of the research and are still being studied by Dr. Gabriella Ancona, member of the Soprintendenza ai BB.CC.AA. di Siracusa, see Ancona 2001-2002, p. 804 and Ancona – Bruno – Messina 2012, pp. 529-530, fig. 7.

to be part of a group of wells, well excavated in the rock for water supply, apparently not connected to the houses of the ancient neighbourhood north of *stenopós* 13.<sup>49</sup> The findings of its filling dated the context approximately between the 7th and the early 6th century BCE. Here the fine wares are conspicuous: the documented drinking vessels include Ionian cups, two *kantharoi* in Etruscan bucchero, and a *phiale mesómphalos* of Ionian bucchero. Moreover, the pouring vessels comprise two Corinthian *oinochoai*, one broad bottomed and one conical; finally, *Wild Goat Style* dining vessels are documented together with two fragments of Phoenician Red Slip plates. A double spouted lamp also belongs to this production (TAB. 6). F. Fouilland argues that the fragmentary state of these fine wares – prominently imported – suggests that this context was a secondary depot, created in another sacred space and used since 700 BCE, but sealed during the 6th century in another part of the ancient city.<sup>50</sup>

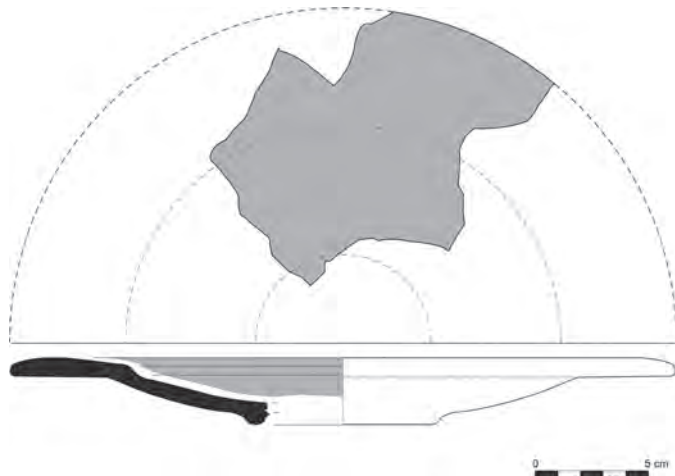


FIG. 9. Plate from Credito Italiano (author's drawing).

Table 6	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Eastern-Greek	Etruscan	Laconian	"Western"
Well 11 Prefettura area  ca. 7 <sup>th</sup> - early 6 <sup>th</sup> century BCE	Dining	■			■			
	Pouring		■					
	Drinking				■	■		
	Cooking							
	Storage				■			
	Lighting	■						
	Personal use	■				■		
	Liturgic				■			

TAB. 6. Vessel categories and productions from the Well 11- Prefettura area.

The only shapes of Phoenician pottery attested are two plates and a lamp. The first fragment of a plate, which presents small sparkling quartz and limestone inclusions in the crack, has a 4.2 cm rim and a surface treatment in Red Slip in the inner part (10R 5/8 Munsell); its morphology seems to belong to the Carthage P2 type and also finds parallels in specimens from Motya dated to the end of the 7th century BCE (FIG. 10.1).<sup>51</sup>

The second specimen is a fragment of rim of plate quite extroverted, whose width is 4,5 cm (FIG. 10.2). Its inner surface presents traces of a treatment in Red Slip (10R 4/8 Munsell). Its coarser production and its morphological features, vaguely similar to some specimens from the Iberian Peninsula, include it in the group of Phoenician-type plates found in Greek settlements.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the fragment of a double-spouted lamp, as the photogrammetric survey also confirmed, features a flat basin and attest traces of burning (FIG. 10.3). Its surface treatment is an intense Red Slip (10R 5/8 Munsell), which has partially vanished, but its morphological features bear affinities with specimens

49 Pelagatti 1980-1981, pp. 707-711 and 1982, p. 121.

50 Fouilland 2000, pp. 115-116.

51 See Bechtold 2007, p. 276, fig. 109, n. 1610; Nigro 2010, p. 37, fig. 39.

52 See for the parallel at La Fonteta, dated between the 720-670 BCE, see González Prats 2011, p. 595, n. 20256, fig. 7.

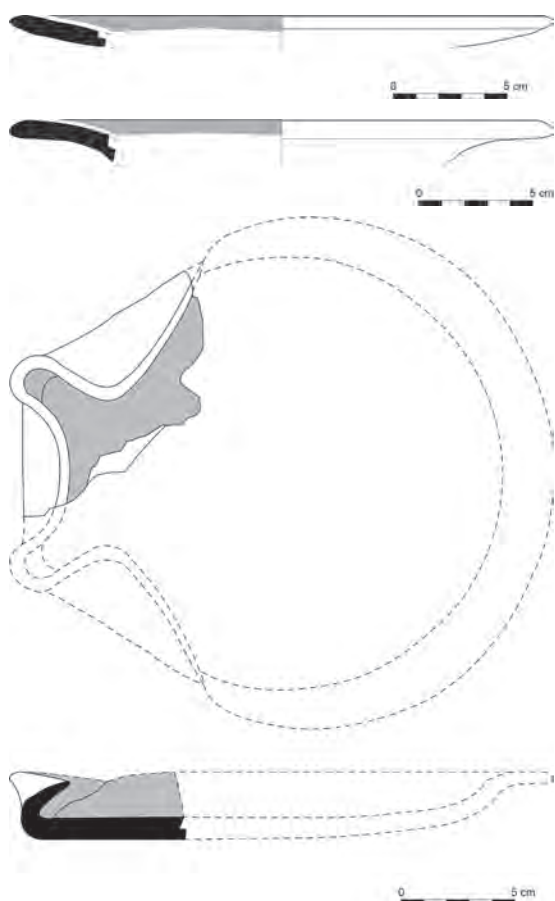


FIG. 10. 1-3: Plates and lamp from Well 11 – Prefettura’s area (author’s drawing).

of double-spouted lamps from Sa Caleta, Ibiza, from the late 7th century BCE, although our lamp has a wider diameter of 18 cm and its bottom is flat and not slightly convex, as usual.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, in the same area – excavated in 2001 – a meaningful context is test trench B (SU. 351), dated to the last quarter of the 7th century BCE. It has been interpreted as a deposit for vessels after their use, and then intentionally broken and finally buried, as it was perfectly sealed. In fact, the context records prominently fine wares, mostly imported, from eastern Greece (TAB. 7).<sup>54</sup> The findings are mainly drinking vessels, such as Ionian cups (A1 type and two of B1 type), a rare Chian chalice, two Corinthian *kotylai* and Sikeliot cups, as well as vessels to pour or store liquids such as trefoil *oinochoai* or SOS amphorae. Here the eating and dining vessels are also noteworthy, such as fragments of plates of *Wild-goat style*, and finally five fragments of Phoenician plates with a wide rim, covered with Red Slip and a white, overpainted line, in the inner surface.<sup>55</sup>

It is important to stress that the deposit may have been part of the sanctuary where the use of such fine tableware can be explained for its ritual use within a polyad institution.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, this context shows several affinities with Well 1 of Piazza Duomo – a deposit for the votive objects of the Athenaion sanctuary attesting Phoenician pottery – not only chronologically

Table 7	Vessel categories	Phoenician	Corinthian	Attic	Eastern-Greek	Etruscan	Laconian	“Western”
Test trench B (SU. 351) Prefettura area last quarter of the 7 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Dining	■			■			
	Pouring		■					
	Drinking		■		■			■
	Cooking							
	Storage			■				
	Lighting							
	Personal use							
	Liturgic							

TAB. 7. Vessel categories and productions from the Test trench B (SU.351) – Prefettura area.

53 See Ramón Torres 1999, p. 210, fig. 13; Ramón Torres 2010, p. 251, fig. 7.

54 Ancona – Bruno – Messina 2012, p. 525.

55 It seems noteworthy that one plate presents a graphited letter “alpha” on the rim, see Ancona – Bruno – Messina 2012, pp. 529-530, fig. 7. These items are the only ones from Syracuse that have not been examined by autoptic analysis, together with the plate from the layers of the sacred deposit of the Athenaion.

56 As suggested by the archaeologists who worked there, the Prefettura’s courtyard is very close to the sacred area of Piazza Duomo, see Ancona – Bruno – Messina 2012, p. 532.



(end of the 7th century BCE), but also for the association of East Greek vessels – a kind of pottery that was more expensive and aristocratic than Corinthian pottery.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. AN OVERVIEW OF RITUAL CONTEXTS FROM GREEK SETTLEMENTS ATTESTING PHOENICIAN POTTERY: ARCHAEOLOGICAL CATEGORIES, ASPECTS OF THE RITUAL, VESSELS

As stated above for Syracuse, ritual contexts attesting Phoenician pottery – except in rare cases – show common elements, such as the location of the contexts within relevant spaces of the urban plan hierarchy and the great archaicity of the majority of the contexts, sometimes connected with the very first stages of colonial religion and its symbolic dimension.<sup>58</sup>

However, it is hard to archaeologically identify the specific “categories” of these contexts,<sup>59</sup> although they can be generically intended as cultic spaces used as deposits, as they describe practices and liturgies through the heterogeneous nature of their assemblages.

This common trait involves at the same time all the categories identified within the framework of this study, as these are foundation or votive deposits, pits, wells, offering layers or part of the votive depositions, such as remains of a ritual, mainly accumulations or rubbish, all of them intentional.

For the purpose of future research, it seems worth presenting an overview of the different types of contexts documented, according to their archaeological “morphologies”, but also taking into account the categories of attested pottery findings associated with some specific Phoenician shapes.

In fact, the nature of this data reveals a complex system of consumption spaces, where there is a deep connection between spaces, actors, sacral gestures, and objects.

Archaeologically, these elements are well expressed through the more generical category of the “votive deposit”,<sup>60</sup> an assemblage of materials with a huge potential in reconstructing ritual practices, as it records elements of human actions, including objects and organic remains,<sup>61</sup> whose accumulation is purely intentional and usually made close to a sacred area;<sup>62</sup> this data could unveil some ritual aspects suggesting the organization of cult.<sup>63</sup>

In this sense – although a further differentiation can be made – this main archaeological category could generically include all the ritual contexts from Greek settlements of Archaic Sicily attesting Phoenician and Phoenician-type pottery findings listed below (TAB. 8).

Surely, some of them appear connected to the very early stages of the life of these settlements, such as those contexts probably involved in the colonial foundational act and its performance, such as, for example, the sacred deposit of the Athenaion area in Syracuse<sup>64</sup> together with the offering layers under the

57 This statement was suggested by Paolo Orsi (see Orsi 1918) about the findings from the sacred area of Via Minerva, also dated to the end of the 7th century BCE.

58 On this topic, see De Polignac 1999.

59 For example, the stratigraphic complexity of digging a well and its interpretation according to its findings is well known, see Lippolis – Parisi 2012, pp. 424-427.

60 For a methodological approach dedicated to this issue, see Parisi 2017; see also Zeggio 2016 on the methodology and taxonomy of the terms employed to describe the votive contexts from Rome.

61 Ritual contexts generally attest also biological remains, such as animal bones, or burned traces of perishable materials, which can guide the interpretations. Unfortunately, these data from ancient excavations have often gone lost, as in the case of several of the contexts analysed. New data come from the Phoenician and Punic world, at Pani Loriga, where an interesting study has been held about the foundation deposits and alimentary rituals through the residual analysis, see Botto *et al.* 2021.

62 See Parisi 2010, p. 455.

63 On this issue, related to the ritual context in Iron Age Portugal, see Gomes 2012.

64 See above notes 28 and 29, table 1.

Archaeological context	Category	Specific features	Ritual aspects	Phoenician and Punic shapes	Chronology	Bibliography
Naxos. Bothros B SU78/255 and 266	Bothros	Anthropic hypogean structure	Animal sacrifice and meal consumption (are attested biological remains and animal bones)	Red Slip type plates	End of the 8th-end of the 7th/early 6th century BCE	Lentini 2009a: pp. 30-32 fig.40; Lentini pp. 2009b, p. 524, fig. 279; Lentini 2011, p. 532; Lentini 2012, p. 169, fig. 3; Sciortino 2014, pp. 46-48.
Naxos. La Musa's property (area B)	Votive deposit	Offering layer deposit	Offering deposition	Phoenician type plate, probably local manufactured	7th-first half of the 6th century BCE	Ciurcina 1984-1985, p. 422, n. 63, fig. 141; Sciortino 2014, pp. 49-51, fig. 2.5.
Zancle Block Z	Mound	Offering layer	Animal sacrifice, meal consumption and combustion traces	Red Slip plates and bowls	End of the 8th and the early 7th century BCE	Bacci <i>et al.</i> 2012, p. 931 note 2 and p. 940 fig. 6; Sciortino 2014, pp. 66-69, fig. 2.13; Spatafora – Sciortino 2015, pp. 228-229.
Zancle Block 158- well 31, SU. 32	Well	Bothros or votive dumping	Libation and meal consumption?	Bottom of a probably local Phoenician type plate (inv. no. 8797)	7th-6th century BCE	Bacci 1999a, p. 86; Sciortino 2014.
Zancle Block 158- well 45, SU. 48	Well	Bothros or votive dumping	Libation and meal consumption?	Phoenician type plate with painted motifs inspired in Euboean decorative repertoire (inv. no. 8833)	7th-6th century BCE	Bacci 1999a, p. 86; Bacci 1999b, p. 94; Bacci 2002, p. 26 n. 55; Bacci 2008, p. 40; Sciortino 2014.
Syracuse. Athenaion's votive deposit	Foundation deposit	Votive deposit of the sanctuary	Libation and meal consumption?	Red Slip plate	Last quarter of the 8th-end of the 6th century BCE	Visual survey at the Paolo Orsi Museum.
Syracuse. Well 1 Athenaion's	Well	Votive deposit connected to the main sanctuary	Libation and meal consumption?	Red Slip plates	ca. middle 7th-6th century BCE	See Ciurcina – Amato 1999, p. 37, figs. 1, 10; Sciortino 2014, pp. 90-92, fig. 3.10.
Syracuse. Northern area Athenaion		Within the cell of the temple		Phoenician type plate	8th-7th century BCE	Sciortino 2014, pp. 84-87, fig. 3.6.
Syracuse. Cassa di Risparmio	Favissa?	Pit/well within the temenos	Burning of essences and perfumes?	Phoenician lamp and plates	8th-6th century BCE	Pelagatti 1978, pp. 130-132, fig. 8. Gentili 1973, p. 4-8, note 15. Sciortino 2014, pp. 93-95, fig. 3.11.
Syracuse. Credito Italiano	Votive deposit?			Phoenician plate	ca. 7th century BCE	Pelagatti 1978, p.31; Sciortino 2014, pp.96-97, fig.3.12.
Syracuse. Prefettura area. Well 11-	Well	Secondary deposit	Libation and meal consumption?	Phoenician plates and lamp	ca. 7th-early 6th century BCE	Pelagatti 1982, p. 121; Fouilland 2000, pp. 115-116; Sciortino 2014, pp. 98-100, fig. 3.13.
Syracuse. Prefettura area Test trench B (US.351)	Well	Votive deposit connected to the main sanctuary	Libation and meal consumption?	Red Slip plates	Last quarter of the 7th-century BCE	Ancona – Bruno – Messina 2012, pp. 529-530. fig. 7.

Megara Hyblaea. deposit N (sounding D15)	Votive deposit		Libation and meal consumption?	Fragments of Phoenician plain ware lamps (one double-spouted)	Second quarter of the 7th-early 6th century BCE	Sciortino 2014, pp. 120-122, fig.3.21.
Gela. Predio Sola. Stratum I	Votive deposit	Offering layer		Phoenician type one-spouted lamps	Last third of the 7th and the first quarter of the 6th century BCE	Orlandini 1963, p. 48, pl. 13; Ismaelli 2011, p. 151, pp. 154-160, ns. 490-612, pls. 27-30; Sciortino 2014, pp. 145-147.
Gela. Bitalemi. stratum 5	Votive deposit	Intentional burial of votive offerings and remains of meals	Libation and meal consumption?	Plain-ware juglet	7th-6th centuries BCE	Orlandini 2003, pp. 507-513; Ingoglia 2006, p. 25, pl. 8, 2; Sciortino 2014.
Selinus Temple R Trench Q SU.234	Foundation deposit	Area in the middle of the naos	Faunal remains and intentional burial of votive offerings (weapons, loom weights and fine and plain ware)	Phoenician type one-spouted lamp (SEL 43295)	First quarter of the 6th century BCE	Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 257-258, fig.13.
Selinus Temple R. Trench L SU 20 and SU 22	Votive deposit	Upper level (SU 22) and levelling layer (SU 20) of the early structure	Animal sacrifice (sheep/goat/deer/piglet) and wine consumption	Bichrome ware fragments of a probable domestic amphorae (SEL 46135)	8th-middle/ third quarter of the 7th century BCE	Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 257-258, fig. 13.
Selinunte. Temple R. Trench C SU2	Votive deposit?	Assemblage of a large amount of sanctuary materials		Black painted fragment (SEL 32298)	Phase V	Orsingher-Bechtold-Marconi 2020, pp. 251-253, fig. 9.
Selinunte. Temple R. Trench E SU2	Votive deposit?	Assemblage of a large amount of sanctuary materials		Greek-Type askos of Punic Production (SEL 32928)	ca. 6th-4th century BCE	Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 254-255, fig. 10.
Selinunte. Temple R. Trench P	Votive deposit	Temple's adyton		Bowl, tripod bowl and Phoenician and Punic amphorae fragments	Late 7th-6th century BCE	Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 263-264, figs. 14-16.
Selinunte. Malophoros sanctuary.	“Scarto Gabrici”			Phoenician type one-spouted lamps	6th century BCE	Hermanns 2004, p. 83, 229: SL 19615; 231 f. nos. SL 20332/1. SL 20332/2. SL 20333 pls. 14, 17.18.
Selinunte. Malophoros	1956's excavations			<i>Oil bottle</i>	7th-6th century BCE?	Orsingher 2010, p. 42, note 71.

TAB. 8. Categories of ritual contexts attested (8th-6th century BCE).

mound sealed by archaic buildings (A and B) of Block Z in Zankle (Messina).<sup>65</sup> While in Selinus there is documented evidence of the foundation deposit of Temple R,<sup>66</sup> whose area was probably destined early on to the cult by the Greek settlers and used over the centuries.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, votive deposits are, of course, the ones from Syracuse, such as well 1 in Piazza Duomo<sup>68</sup> and test trench B (US.351) of the Prefettura area,<sup>69</sup> all of them strictly connected to the main sanctuary of the Doric colony. In Naxos, a Greek colony of Sicily<sup>70</sup> of great symbolic value, are documented the urban *bothros* B<sup>71</sup> and the sacred deposit on the La Musa property,<sup>72</sup> placed in an important extra-urban sacred area, over the Santa Venera stream. While Megara Hyblaea features deposit N (sounding D15)<sup>73</sup> and, at least, in Gela two votive deposits from the sanctuaries of Predio Sola<sup>74</sup> and Bitalemi<sup>75</sup> are attested. Finally, Temple R area of Selinus attests further

65 This context is dated between the end of the 8th and the early 7th century BCE. Here around 10 fragments of Red Slip plates and bowls (included carinated), some of them containing the remains of a meal and burnt bones, have been documented, see Bacci *et al.* 2010 and 2012, p. 931, note 2 and p. 940, fig. 6; Sciortino 2014, pp. 66-70, fig. 2.13 and Spatafora – Sciortino 2015, pp. 228-229.

66 This context records a Phoenician-type one-spouted lamp dated to the first quarter of the 6th century BCE; see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 257-259, figg. 12-13. Moreover, in this work A. Orsingher stresses the importance of the presence of a lighting tool placed along the wall within a sacred foundation deposit, suggesting how this practice was very common in the Phoenician Levant and West – see Sussman 2007, pp. 43, 51, and Orsingher 2018, p. 57, n. 81 with references – and also recently attested within intercultural sacred places, such as at Pyrgi (see below note 101) – whereas it appears rarely and lately documented in Greek sanctuaries in Sicily; see Hermanns 2004, pp. 112-115, tab. 7.

67 This is confirmed, for example, by the meaningful findings of the entire area, attesting also faunal remains of animal sacrifice; particularly the ones from Trench L (SU 20 and SU 22) document Phoenician and Punic pottery of Carthaginian production found associated to the early stages of the structure, such as fragments of bichrome ware, probably a domestic amphora – dated between the 8th and the middle or the third quarter of the 7th century BCE – whose so high archaicity has been explained through the intrinsic value of these vessels and their being handed down from one generation to another; see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 237-248, fig. 2.1-3. Moreover, this area – Trench C (SU2) – documents Phoenician and Punic pottery from other centres, such as a supposed black-painted neck-ridge jug whose production can be related to the workshops of Motya and dated at the end of the 7th century BCE. Finally, Trench E (SU 0 and SU 2) attests a painted Greek-type *askos* probably produced on the same island and dated to the first half of the 5th century BCE, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 250-256, fig. 9.1 and fig. 10.

68 See above notes 30 and 31, table 2.

69 See above notes 54 and 55, table 7.

70 On the altar of Apollo Archegetes as a hub of a composite colonial identity, see Malkin 1986 and 2007.

71 This is an anthropic hypogeal structure dated between the end of the 8th and the end of the 7th-early 6th century BCE, where ashes and remains of animal bones were found mixed with fine tableware – prominently open shapes – such as Thapsos *skyphoi* or Euboean type kraters. SU. 78/255 and SU. 78/266 attest three fragments of Phoenician type Red Slip plates; see Lentini 2009a, pp. 30-32, fig.40; Lentini 2009b, p. 524, fig. 279; Lentini 2011, p. 532; Lentini 2012, p. 169, fig. 3; Sciortino 2014, p. 46-48.

72 This context is dated between the 7th and the first half of the 6th century BCE and documents prominently imported fine ware for wine and – to a lesser extent – for food consumption, together with some shapes typically attested within sanctuaries. This deposit attests the rim fragment of a Phoenician-type plate, probably locally made, see Ciurcina 1984-1985, p. 422, n. 63, fig. 141; Sciortino 2014, pp. 49-51, fig. 2.5.

73 This context documents a local plate with incision and pouring vessels, one of them of Argive production, drinking vessels such as Ionian cups, vessels for personal use, such as Proto Corinthian *aryballoi* and Ionian bucchero alabastro, together with scarabs and ivory adornments, see De Polignac 1999, p. 212; Germanà Bozza 2010, p. 4. Moreover, three fragments of plain-ware lamps were found here: two of Phoenician type with burned traces on the spout, and a double-spouted Phoenician one, see Sciortino 2014, pp. 120-122, fig. 3.21.

74 In his study, T. Ismaelli has interpreted Predio Sola as an urban sanctuary dedicated to Demeter, as it close to the supposed *heroon* Antiphemos the founder of Gela, see Ismaelli 2011, p. 17. Moreover, here the layer of offerings, the so-called Stratum I, dated approximately between the last third of the 7th and the first quarter of the 6th century BCE, records the presence of 164 Phoenician type plain-ware lamps. These lamps of Phoenician tradition, of rather archaic types, well documented in the Levant and sporadically in the West, were probably locally manufactured, see Orlandini 1963, p. 48, pl. 13; Ismaelli 2011, pp. 151, 154-160, nn. 490-612, pls. 27-30; Sciortino 2014, pp. 145-147.

75 The so-called stratum 5 – dated to the 7th-6th centuries BCE – attests a plain-ware mushroom juglet of Phoenician tradition (inv. 23642), see Orlandini 2003, pp. 507-513; Ingoglia 2006, p. 25, pl. 8,2; Sciortino 2014, p. 148, fig. 4.5.



votive deposits, located within its innermost shrine, the *adyton*, and dated between the late 7th and the 6th century BCE.<sup>76</sup>

Further categories attesting Phoenician pottery are documented in Syracuse: the first one is well 11 of the Prefettura area, which has been interpreted as a secondary depot, probably created and used in another sacred space (8th-6th century BCE) and moved to another part of the ancient city.<sup>77</sup> The second is the context of the Cassa di Risparmio<sup>78</sup> – whose findings were interpreted as belonging to the *favissa* by G. V. Gentili, the archaeologist who excavated it. However, it seems that this is a case in which this term seems generically used as votive deposit, not only for its “shape”, generally an anthropic hypogeal structure, but also for its location outside the inner parts of the sanctuary, but always within of its sacred *temenos*.

Other ritual contexts attesting Phoenician pottery findings, characterised by uncertain interpretative data – less clear in terms of their “archaeological morphology” – are the Northern area of the Athenaion,<sup>79</sup> Credito Italiano<sup>80</sup> and, finally, wells 31<sup>81</sup> and 45<sup>82</sup> from Block 158 in Zankle (Messina), which apparently are part of a group of 16 *bothroi* within the urban plan, dated between the proto-archaic and the archaic period, probably excavated originally as a source of water and after their use as a dump, although the large amount of fine wares and of entire items, such as several *kylikes*, have led archaeologists to hypothesise that these were votive dumps.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, also Selinus attests two further ritual contexts, included in the latter group as they both unfortunately lack of stratigraphic data, although they are connected to the Malophoros sanctuary.<sup>84</sup>

All the contexts indicated above appear to have been used for ritual purposes, at times with a reasonable prudence on the part of archaeologists, as their interpretation is closely linked to their material expression in terms of findings. The latter are difficult to differentiate, as a ritual context does not document only *ex-voto*<sup>85</sup> – gifts for a grace, objects or containers of a perishable gift – but also architectural items connected to changes in the sanctuary, vessels, and utensils for rituals (sacrifices, libations, community meals) or simply objects of the sanctuary’s staff and the daily life within it. However, these material associations express the anthropological dimension of the votive phenomenon, and their specific ritual aspects. In fact, their pottery assemblages – whether the result of offerings or utensils for the ritual – represent traces of ancient

76 Thirty Phoenician and Punic amphorae fragments (from Carthage, Soluntum, Motya and Malta), two fragments of tableware (a rim of a large bowl of Carthaginian “red painted ware” and a fragment of a rim and body of a tripod bowl of unidentified provenance) were found in Trench P, corresponding to the temple’s *adyton*, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 263-264, figs. 14-16.

77 See above notes 49-53, table 6.

78 See above notes 40-45, table 4.

79 See above notes 35-39, table 3.

80 See above notes 46 and 47, table 5.

81 Well 31 SU. 32 – dated between the 7th and the 6th century BCE – attests prominently drinking (*kotylai* and Proto-Corinthian, Ionian, Vroulià and Zankle type cups), and dining vessels for food presentation or consumption (fragments of plates with parallels in Pithekoussai specimens and of *lekanai*), together with cooking vessels. Finally, the bottom of a Phoenician-type plate, probably locally made, has been documented (VLF/70, n. inv. 8997), see Bacci 1999, p. 86.

82 Well 45 SU. 48 – dated between the 7th and the 6th century BCE – attests a noteworthy Phoenician type plate, shaped and slipped in the “Phoenician way” – probably locally made – whose motifs seem inspired by the Euboean decorative repertoire, see Bacci 1999, p. 94 VLF/111; Bacci 2002, p. 26, n. 55.

83 Bacci Spigo 1993-1994, p. 932.

84 Phoenician type one-spouted lamps, similar to the one from the foundation deposit of temple R, are attested from the so-called “Scarto Gabrici”, see Hermanns 2004, p. 229, n. SL 19615; p. 231 f., nn. SL 20332/1. SL 20332/2. SL 20333, pls. 14, 17, 18, as also A. Orsingher stresses in his study, see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, p. 258, n. 218. Moreover, an *oil bottle* found during the excavations of 1956 in the sanctuary also seems to have been documented, see Orsingher 2010, p. 42, note 71.

85 On the difference in the economic and production system between the *ex-voto* for “destination” and for “transformation”, see Morel 1989-1990, pp. 514-515 with bibliographic references.

ceremonies, such as meal consumption, libations, animal sacrifices, offering depositions, and the burning of essences as the most common.<sup>86</sup>

After examining these contexts, the Phoenician pottery shapes<sup>87</sup> documented in ritual contexts from Greek settlements are quite remarkable. Surely, all these vessels were found in their last context of use, suggesting how these vessels could have been involved in different forms of ritual performed. Nevertheless, it can be affirmed that Phoenician pottery from ritual contexts from Greek settlements is mainly composed of lighting vessels (one-spouted and double-spouted lamps) as Phoenician and Phoenician-type lighting vessels are the most numerous groups attested within the ritual contexts analysed, probably according to the symbolic function of light and its cultic use through lamps.<sup>88</sup> Their artificial light was instrumental to the ongoing rituals and their morphological features suggest that they were placed on a basement or in the ground and their use is often indicated by traces of burning on the spouts of several specimens.

Phoenician lighting vessels from Greek settlements can be divided into two main groups: plain-ware one-spouted lamps – often made locally – whose shape is inspired by Levantine models, and one or two-spouted Red Slip lamps.<sup>89</sup>

The first group<sup>90</sup> includes different types of lamps, according to their specific morphological features (trefoil, saucer or shell-shaped), with different kinds of rims and bases. Despite its earlier Levantine origin, this group is very common as indicated by its wide chronology and spread across the Mediterranean.<sup>91</sup> The lamps of this group, often considered to be made locally, are widely attested in Gela, probably employed during the rituals of the earliest phase of the votive deposit of Predio Sola.<sup>92</sup> Here, the many lamps found appear to have been produced locally as suggested by the specimens found from the pottery dumps of Via Dalmazia and Via Bonanno.<sup>93</sup> Also the specimen from the foundation deposit of Temple R<sup>94</sup> – not considered to have been made locally, but whose origin is placed in Gela – and the ones from the sanctuary of Malophoros in Selinus can be included in this first group.<sup>95</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that the plain-ware lamps inspired by Levantine models are attested not only in Greek settlements alongside other Phoenician vessels, but also within ritual contexts characterised by a peculiar condition of *in-betweenness*, such as the Predio Sola and Malophoros sanctuaries in Sicily, and the Gravisca<sup>96</sup> and Pyrgi<sup>97</sup> sanctuaries on the Italian peninsula, where locally made lamps of this type are also documented.

86 See on this issue Lippolis – Parisi 2012, pp. 424-427.

87 The contexts analysed in my previous research have revealed the frequent attestation of the same shapes, prominently lamps and plates and occasionally bowls and juglets.

88 On this topic, see Hermans 2004, pp. 20-26 and Ismaelli 2011, p. 212.

89 Among the specimens documented in the previous research plain-ware two-spouted lamps are rare: the only Phoenician specimen attested is from Megara Hyblaea (Structure 24,4), see Sciortino 2014, pp. 110-120, fig. 3.22.

90 These lamps have their prototype in the Levant, where they are attested until the 5th century BCE. See Amiran 1969, pp. 291-292, pl. 100, nn. 2-11; Anderson 1988, pp. 228-229, pl. 20; Bussière 1989, p. 43; Ben Jerbania 2008, p. 15, note 1.

91 See the specimens close to the types 3 and 22A of the Athenian Agorà, see Howland 1958, p. 7, pl. 1,29, pp. 52-53, pl. 7,32-35.

92 The one-spouted lamps in Gela are dated between the 7th and the first quarter of the 6th century BCE and are considered a local production whose shape is inspired by the Phoenician repertoire, see Ismaelli 2011, p. 133; Sciortino 2014, p. 150.

93 See Orlandini 1963, p. 48, fig. 17; Albanese Procelli 2006, p. 122, fig. 7; Sciortino 2014, pp. 151-152. Finally, two fragments of rims belonging to two specimens of lamps presenting burned traces were found in the pottery dump from via Bonanno, see Ingolia 2013, p. 213, fig. 16.

94 See Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, pp. 257-258, fig. 13.

95 See above note 84. Moreover, another specimen of this type – described as “a so-called Syrian-Palestinian lamp” – probably was attested within the sanctuary dedicated to the chthonic deities in Akragas; see De Miro 1969, p. 8; see Sciortino 2014, p. 150.

96 See Boitani 1971, p. 264, figs. 82, 85, nn. 780, 866, 3367; Galli 2004, pp. 17, 27-29, tav. I; Sciortino 2014, p. 150.

97 The specimens from this sanctuary are late archaic, see Baglione *et al.* 2017, p. 171, note 55.

On the other hand, the shell-shaped two-spouted Red Slip lamp can be considered the most typical Phoenician lighting vessel, as one-spouted lamps were progressively replaced in the western Mediterranean by two-spouted lamps, whose shape seems to have been developed between the 9th and the 8th century BCE and the first specimens are dated between the second half of the 8th and the second third of the 7th century BCE.<sup>98</sup> Ritual contexts of Greek settlements documenting their presence are the ones in Syracuse (well 11 of the Prefettura and Cassa di Risparmio area<sup>99</sup>) and Megara Hyblaea (Sounding 15 Deposit N).<sup>100</sup> This group too is attested in ritual contexts of cross-cultural religious places and characterised by a peculiar condition of *in-betweenness*, as also attested at Pyrgi, within the ceremonial and public part of the sanctuary.<sup>101</sup>

Moreover, ritual contexts are often part of sanctuaries, as these were also places for feasting, as a cult is generally expressed through sacrifices, libations and meals with the associated pottery. So, the documentation from these contexts of Phoenician findings is composed prominently of plates and, in a few cases, bowls, jugs, tripod bowls, and domestic and transport amphorae comes as no surprise, as new data from Selinus broadens the range of attested shapes.

These Phoenician shapes, belonging to the main group of tableware, as serving, processing and storage vessels, seem to confirm the importance of food and wine consumption during ritual ceremonies also attested within these contexts.

Furthermore, the vessel used for serving and consuming food, the plate, is the second Phoenician shape most attested in almost all Greek settlements and related ritual contexts, except in Selinus, Gela, and Himera. With a diachronic morphological history from East to West,<sup>102</sup> where the plate featured a short rim and a wide basin, from the 7th century BCE this vessel saw an increase in the size of its rim and a progressive decrease in that of its basin. Its use is connected with the consumption of semi-solid food, whose slip decoration also had a functional purpose to protect against the juices of the meals.<sup>103</sup> It is particularly noteworthy that in the contexts recorded numerous Phoenician-type plates<sup>104</sup> are documented. These are considered to be made locally and inspired by the Phoenician repertoire in terms of morphology and main decoration patterns. In this sense, Phoenician-type plates, like the so-called “Phoenician *skyphoi*”,<sup>105</sup> which are well known in the literature, seem to bear signs of the contamination of pottery repertoires.<sup>106</sup> Within the colonial world, with its hybrid material culture, local adaptations of pottery are well attested<sup>107</sup> and interpreted as the product of intense cultural contacts, characterised by pervasive mutual exchanges in different spheres. Indeed, the Phoenician-type plate is well known at an emblematic site of ancient colonial movements, Pithekous-

98 See Bartoloni 1996, p. 85.

99 See above notes 48, 49 and 39.

100 See above note 72.

101 Here, in the “porticoed building”, five Carthaginian lamps were found. Three of these lamps – featured by huge dimensions which suggest archaicity – were found in a primary position along the perimeter wall of the main room of the building, see Baglione *et al.* 2017, p. 159, pp. 170-171, figs. 17, 18 a-b; see Michetti 2020, pp. 111-114, figs. 8-9. Moreover, these lamps attest a different degree of use, with very scarce trace in two specimens, probably employed in a single cultic act.

102 For an overview of the sequential and chronological connection of the West specimens of plates with the metropolitan specimens, see Núñez Calvo 2017.

103 See Campanella 2008, p. 168; Sciortino 2014, pp. 193-194.

104 These allegedly local productions – as no submitted to archaeometric analysis – are frequently attested, for example, in Naxos and Zankle (Messina), see above notes 71, 72 and 82, but also in Syracuse, see above note 36.

105 On the phenomena of adaptation of Greek models through the imitations of Greek *skyphoi* and *kotylai*, the so-called “Phoenician *skyphoi*”, see Tusa 1972, p. 80; Briese – Docter 1998, pp. 188-191, fig. 14-18; Núñez Calvo 1999, pp. 138-143; Tronchetti 2000, p. 347; Domínguez Monedero 2003; Sciortino 2019.

106 As N. Coldstream wrote, «in earlier times, the Greeks occasionally imitated Levantine shapes; now it is the Phoenician potters who borrows Greek ideas», see Coldstream 1968, p. 388.

107 On the adaptation phenomenon, see Graells *et al.* 2014; Garbati – Pedrazzi 2019, pp. 47-48.



FIG. 11. Phoenician type plate from Zankle (Messina) – block 158, well 45 (after Bacci 1999, p. 94, n. VLF/111).

even some specimens from the Etruscan world, show more common features, such as a painted decoration matching approximately the Euboean decorative patterns of the Late Geometric<sup>110</sup> or the presence of two holes near the edge of the rim: both features characterised a plate from block 158 (well 45) in Zankle (Messina) (FIG. 11).<sup>111</sup> The latter feature appears to be even more suggestive as Greek ritual places, such as necropolises or sanctuaries, commonly provide evidence of objects with a dedicative function presenting holes enabling them to be held, such as terracotta *protomai*<sup>112</sup> or, sometimes, plates.<sup>113</sup> This practice can be ascribed to a dedicatory ritual of the Hellenic world, which entailed the transport of the objects to be hung by the worshipper within the sacred space which had to be characterised by a density of items and images creating a visual dialogue for worshippers.<sup>114</sup>

sai, but also in the Etruscan world.<sup>108</sup> The little island of the Gulf of Naples bears evidence that during the second generation of colonizers plates for eating began to appear in quantities unparalleled in the Greek world from the levels corresponding to the necropolis and inhabited settlement, while during the colony's first generation, eating vessels were less numerous than pouring and drinking vessels, such as *oinochoai* and *skyphoi*.<sup>109</sup>

Here, in fact, together with the imported specimens of the last quarter of the 8th century BCE, G. Buchner also documented a local production of plates having a Phoenician shape, often decorated with the Red Slip technique, but coarser than the Phoenician originals; the latter is a feature also documented in a rather large group of specimens from Greek settlements in Sicily. Moreover, local adaptations of Phoenician plates from these sites, the ones from Pithekoussai and

108 See Nizzo – ten Kortenaar 2010, pp. 59-60.

109 See Buchner 1982, p. 106, fig. 6 d-f and p. 283 and following fig.11.

110 See Buchner 1981, pp. 268-270; Buchner – Ridgway 1993, T. 258, tav. 99; Nizzo 2007, tav. 11. A fragment of a plate of this type comes from the sounding 7 at Bir Massouda – Carthage – see Maraoui Telmini 2014, pp. 74. For the Etruscan world, such as specimens from the Banditaccia necropolis, see Nizzo – ten Kortenaar 2010, p. 65, fig.33. On the plate from Block 158 of Zankle (Messina) – well 45 – see Bacci 1999, p. 94, n. VLF/111.

111 Holes on Phoenician type plates from ritual contexts are attested in Zankle (Messina) – well 45 and on the Red Slip plate from the Northern area of the Athenaion, see above fig. 7 notes 36-37-38. In Pithekoussai, plates with Phoenician shape and holes close to the edge of the rim are attested within the ritual contexts from the necropolis. See Buchner – Ridgway 1993, T. 137, Pls. 49-50; T. 151, pl. 57; T. 191, pl. 86; T. 258, pl. 99; T. 263, T.590, pl. 171; T. 536, pl. 158. Two holes are also attested on a tripod bowl with geometric decoration from T. 545, p. 161; Docter 2000, fig. 7b; b-c. I am also grateful to Giuseppe Garbati who indicated to me a specimen from Pani Loriga, from SU 24 (room 1A), which is dated according to the parallels between the mid-6th and the 5th century BCE, whose context appears connected with ritual actions, see Arizza – Garbati – Pedrazzi 2021, p. 76, fig. 25 and p. 91.

112 On this issue for the Greek terracotta *protomai* interpreted as the worshipper making the dedication, see Huysecom Haxi – Muller 2007, pp. 242-243; Ismaelli 2020, pp. 19-25.

113 On the occurrence of this feature on Greek plates connected to a dedicatory and decorative function, already noticed by Lawrence 1962, p. 187 n. 12, A. Orsingher rejects this “nailing hypothesis” connected to these Phoenician type plates as he documented the presence of holes on plates and bowls from the Tophet sanctuary of Motya, where this explanation does not seem feasible. On the contrary, he considers these holes as an adaptation made on these items for travellers to be «carried on the flanks of pack animals»; see Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, p. 261, note 140.

114 See Ismaelli 2020, p. 24.



In this sense, Phoenician type plates with two holes at Greek places of worship – where the dedicatory ritual of some specific objects was usual – suggests a high degree of hybridity, well expressed through the adaptation phenomenon of a shape borrowed from another repertory, but also through the manipulation of these items for a specific worship purpose, such as the adaptation for the dedicatory ritual. So, this feature could be interpreted as further evidence of this colonial cultural *middle ground*, where practices and behaviours appear to be mixed.

Finally, Phoenician type plates appear somehow to be indicators of cultural contacts. The proposal of A. Rathije who are argued that Etruscan plates imitating Red Slip *ware* could have been connected to practices of consuming specific foods with a “social function” is quite suggestive. These practices are believed to have been connected in particular to the consumption of meat during the banquets and ceremonies of the élite groups.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, the adoption of local adaptation of “foreign” pottery firstly for use in ceremonies and only later for domestic purposes it is anthropologically well documented.<sup>116</sup>

Surely, new data recently discovered and published from Selinus expand the evidence of documented Phoenician shapes, some of which connected to the preparation of wine, such as a supposed neck-ridge jug<sup>117</sup> and a tripod bowl.<sup>118</sup> The latter is a shape generally considered to be used for pounding spices for the wine according to eastern traditions, while others vessels documented in the Megarian colony, such as the bichrome domestic amphorae, could have been votive or worship utensils for offerings, as also suggested by their early dating.<sup>119</sup>

The last group of Phoenician vessel shapes from ritual contexts in Greek settlements are those functionally connected to a cosmetic and personal use, for body care, as these were containers for perfumed unguents and essences. Their shapes feature a morphology adapted to the slow pouring of liquid, typical of unguents, which were often used in religious or funerary rituals<sup>120</sup> and therefore had a ritual function. Perfumes not only were believed to summon the deity through a multi-sensory experience but they also activated memory physically and socially through the senses, as they emphasized the relation between the individuals performing rituals, connecting them together and with the deities.<sup>121</sup> As regards Greek ritual contexts,<sup>122</sup> an *oil bottle* was found at the Malophoros sanctuary in Selinus<sup>123</sup> and a plain-ware juglet in the votive deposit of Bitalemi in Gela;<sup>124</sup> both specimens can be considered as votive offerings or as containers for perfumed unguents employed during the rituals.

115 See Rathije 1991, pp. 1165-1167.

116 See Marshall – Maas 1997, p. 286.

117 See Orsingher – Marconi – Bechtold 2020, pp. 251-253, fig. 9.1. On the functional interpretation of this shape as connected with the preparation of wine instead of containers for perfumed unguents, see Núñez Calvo 2017, p. 177.

118 See Orsingher – Marconi – Bechtold 2020, pp. 264- 268, fig. 16.9.10. About the function of the tripod bowls and their connection to the wine consumption, see Botto 2000 and 2009, p. 166.

119 About the datation of this shape and its eventual purposes, a shape which also seems sporadically used within Phoenician sanctuaries, see above note 67.

120 Within the Phoenician funerary world, a shape highly attested and supposedly associated with this function seems to be the mushroom-lip jug, see Sciortino 2020. Moreover, there seems to be a Red Slip mushroom jug fragment from Zankle (Messina), Block 224, within all the contexts analysed in the previous research. See above note 17 and recently, another attestation from the Megara Hyblaea necropolis, see above note 18.

121 See Hamilakis 2005, p. 11; Ismaelli 2020, p. 10; Sciortino 2020, pp. 1194-1195.

122 A further ritual context, although not connected with sacred areas, is the tomb of the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea attesting a variant of a mushroom juglet, see Duday – Gras forthcoming fig. Z 130, 3 ext. 14.

123 See Orsingher 2010, p. 42, note 71, but its exact type is not known.

124 Inv. 23645. See Peserico 1996, p. 190, n. VR1; Ingoglia 2006, p. 25, fig. 29, pl. 8; Sciortino 2014, pp. 141-144, fig. 4.5.



FIG. 12. Phoenician jug (after Ingoglia 2006, p. 25, fig. 29).

Though lacking a specific contextual and graphic reference for the *oil bottle* specimen from the Malophoros, the flask is a typical Phoenician shape,<sup>125</sup> very common from East to West across the Mediterranean, where they appear to be connected to the Phoenician maritime cargoes of amphorae since the mid-8th to the last quarter of the 6th century BCE, a century in which there seems to have been a shift in the unguent trade.<sup>126</sup> The so-called *oil bottle*,<sup>127</sup> with its small size, the typical bulging neck and globular body, was probably a personal vessel for body care to carry, similar for finalities and design to the Corinthian *aryballos*.<sup>128</sup>

On the other hand, the plain-ware mushroom lip juglet documented at the Bitalemi sanctuary in Gela features a slightly everted-squared rim and a flat base and belongs to the Phoenician pottery tradition: it has been documented in the Levant – with strict parallels at the Northern cemetery of Achziv<sup>129</sup> – and in Cyprus.<sup>130</sup> According to A. Peserico, this juglet can be considered a variant of the mushroom lip jug locally produced and inspired by Rhodian models<sup>131</sup> (FIG. 12). Its shape actually seems to be mediated by the Rhodian productions, confirming Gela's close ties with the Eastern Mediterranean, as amply documented by the literary sources on its foundation and even more so by the material culture.<sup>132</sup> In fact, the Greek colony on the south-eastern coast of Sicily was co-founded in 689

BCE by Rhodes, an island where a Phoenician mercantile community established its hub around 700 BCE as part of an extensive trade network.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, during the 7th century BCE Rhodes became also famous for its unguent factories and pottery workshops,<sup>134</sup> playing a leading role in the pottery trade between the East and the West.<sup>135</sup>

Nevertheless, Gela is the Greek settlement with the highest number of closed shapes for cosmetic use connected to the Phoenician ceramic repertoire, though apparently mediated just through Rhodes, where a

125 The name to this shape was given by W. Culican (1970), but its Mediterranean typology and the western centres of production were studied by J. Ramón Torres (1982). Recently, this shape has been studied through its attestations from East to West by A. Orsingher (2010).

126 Bartoloni 1990, p. 47.

127 For a summary on the main issues about this shape, see Orsingher 2010, pp. 37-38, note 22 with references.

128 Although the most accepted interpretation is about the cosmetic use of the *oil bottle*, another interpretation about its function was connected to the domestic sphere, as a container for the oil used to fill the lamps, see Ramón Torres 1982, pp. 21-25; Bisi 1970, p. 31.

129 Some specimens are attested within the family Tomb 1 and are ascribed to the group of the “funnel-shaped” rim jugs, where the flat base is a feature which suggests a dating in the late 7th century BCE, see Mazar 2004, p. 44, fig. 11, 1.

130 See Bikai 1987, p. 24, nn. 278, 286, 288, 296, pl. 13. Moreover, A. Orsingher (see below note 131) emphasizes its peculiar development in Cyprus, being attested there both in sacred and funerary contexts, see Bikai 1981, p. 27, n. 65, pl. XXII.

131 Also M. Martelli (see Martelli 1973, p. 3, tav. 33, 1-4) considers this specimen and the others from Gela locally manufactured. On this issue see Peserico 1996, p. 123 and Sciortino 2014, p. 152; Orsingher – Bechtold – Marconi 2020, p. 260, note 132 with bibliographic references.

132 On the corpus of eastern imports, see Panvini – Sole 2005, p. 50, pl. 14b.c; Germanà Bozza 2010, p. 6, fig. 4; Ingoglia 2006, p. 25, pl. 8, 27, 28, 29. On the literary testimony, see THUC. VI, 4, 3.

133 On Rhodes' links with the Levantine littoral and the transformation of this island into a commercial hub of the Aegean, becoming a meeting point for traders, mediating the innovation from the East, see Bourogiannis 2013, pp. 152-173.

134 On local perfume production involving the local population and Levantine immigrants, see Jones 1993, pp. 293-303; D'Acunto 2017, p. 465.

135 On the importance of the sanctuaries of Ialysos, Lindos and Kamiros for Phoenician mobility, see Bourogiannis 2013, p. 173.

Levantine connection has been suggested.<sup>136</sup> In this sense, it seems even more relevant that Gela documents from funerary contexts of the settlement findings such as two neck-ridge jugs, with a flat rim on a long neck and a ridge at the centre and a globular body with narrow ring base, whose origins seem to be part of this Levantine connection.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, despite the limited number of findings, what emerges is that all the Phoenician pottery shapes documented from these contexts appear to have a *ritualized* potential<sup>138</sup> as they can be connected with different aspects of religious ceremonies: not only those related to feasting, but also the most symbolic ones, involving the sensorial sphere or personal devotion expressed through offerings.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The main issues related to Phoenician pottery findings from ritual contexts of Greek settlements in archaic Sicily are inevitably connected to the framework of cultural contacts within the colonial sacred dimension and its features. These involve prominently the management of the space within a settlement, as the Greeks perceived and mapped it in order to move within it.<sup>139</sup> In this sense, the definition of cultic spaces was an essential arena where to project and reflect socio-cultural identities and aspirations.<sup>140</sup> This organization of space included not only the sanctuaries<sup>141</sup> – urban or extra-urban<sup>142</sup> – but also those city areas involved in older ritual phenomena before monumentalisation, or those dedicated to host a wide range of ritual performances,<sup>143</sup> either practiced regularly or sporadically.

In this regard, the archaeological record consisting of fauna or plant residues and mainly of pottery is extremely valuable, as the materiality became transcendental through the very material engagement. Vessels from ritual contexts – where the domestic and sacred sphere often overlap<sup>144</sup> – can be interpreted as ritual tools or as *ex voto*, although those implied in the rituals became votive themselves<sup>145</sup> within their final context of use.

The fluid ritual dimension of the colonial world with its rich variety of worship practices and different ceremonial forms could also explain the different presence of Phoenician and Phoenician type pottery shapes documented; these represent, first of all, intentional depositions of daily objects becoming sacred by

136 See Peserico 1996, pp. 114, 190, n. VR1.

137 The two tombs of the necropolis of Gela attesting these vessels are Tomb 1 from the Predio La Paglia (see Orsi 1906, p. 211, fig. 168; Fiorentini – De Miro 1984, p. 79, fig. 37) and tomb 164 from the Borgo, see Orsi 1906, p. 107, fig. 73. These two specimens were considered by A. Peserico as “aryballic variants” of the mushroom jug; see Peserico 1996, p. 35 and Sciortino 2014, p. 152.

138 See Bradley 2005, p. 108.

139 See Sciortino 2012, p. 95.

140 In fact, the religious manifestations had a leading role in the establishment of contacts and in the identitarian projection, see Morgan 1997; Torelli 1999, pp. 24-26.

141 Sanctuaries, in fact, were subject to a manipulation of the space as the architectonical framework and outline were related to cultic and political purposes see Bermejo Tirado 2008, p. 84.

142 The role of sanctuaries appears deeply relevant within the colonial framework, as they were not only polyfunctional according to their economic, politic, identitarian, and religious and metaphysical dimensions, but also according to their polysemy as, for example, extra-urban sanctuaries appeared to be an extension of the emporic dimension of cultural contacts by sharing religious spaces and recording a hybrid material culture, characterised by a heterogeneity of shapes and productions.

143 On the concept of performance related to the interpretation of some activities within a social framework recognized by a group or community, see Bell 1992, pp. 37-46.

144 As Bradley assesses, within traditional societies the links between the domestic sphere and ritual one are very narrow, as several domestic items could have been useful to also have a ritual function on some special occasions or in ceremonies, see Bradley 2005, p. 108.

145 See Lippolis – Parisi 2012, p. 430. Vessels used as a tool during the ritual are called *hierà* in Greek, because they were dedicated to the deity and were no longer usable, such as the fragmented ones, see Denti 2013, p. 18.

performing rituals. By looking at the most documented Phoenician shapes – lamps and plates – these are difficult to be considered as exports to be related merely to commercial activities and they seem to be associated to personal belongings.<sup>146</sup>

Particularly, within the Greek repertoire of the contexts analysed, the Phoenician plate with a wide rim does not find a sharp correspondence.<sup>147</sup> This ascertainment has been the leading argument of the functional hypothesis of my dissertation, supported not only by the rare findings of Greek plates from the contexts analysed,<sup>148</sup> but also suggested by the presence – together with Phoenician plates – of Phoenician type plates that were probably local adaptations of this shape.<sup>149</sup> However, the Phoenician type plate cannot be considered a merely functional integration of the repertoire, but as a concrete product of cultural contacts.<sup>150</sup> These pottery vessels found in these contexts have to be included within the broader framework of ancient colonial movements, as the latter influenced the anthropological behaviours of people in the use of objects, particularly the vessels connected with eating practices, as food culture can be intended as a *biocultural phenomenon*.<sup>151</sup> These vessels can be considered social markers of the relationships and involvement of newcomers or the emerging of new habits belonging to different eating and drinking traditions.<sup>152</sup>

Indeed, it is a matter of fact that the Phoenicians and Greeks had been sharing routes and commercial ventures since the 10th century BCE around the Mediterranean, being reciprocally consumers of products.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, along these shared routes Phoenician and Greek sanctuaries and places of worship had played mutually a crucial role in establishing relations across the Mediterranean, but also in the projection of identities, as also confirmed by their heterogeneous archaeological assemblages.<sup>154</sup>

In this sense, Sicily – the only Mediterranean area where foundations belonging to both cultural origins within the same insular territory have been recorded – can boast a particularly favourable situation for cultural contacts<sup>155</sup> since the end of the 8th and the mid-6th century BCE. This time span also includes an earlier Carthaginian connection with Sicily, before the Malco expedition:<sup>156</sup> in fact, a high percentage of Red Slip items from the Greek settlements previously analysed – and the new ones from Selinus that have been

146 See Ciasca 1987, p. 12, note 38, and Germanà Bozza 2010, p. 8. In this sense, the contextual approach demonstrates his deep connection with the so called “biography of the objects”; on the application of this concept on archaeological contexts and their meanings, see Gosden – Marshall 1999, p. 177.

147 See Sciortino forthcoming a; Sciortino 2014, pp. 194 and 200; Campanella 2008, p. 13.

148 The scarcity of plates and of shapes such as *lekanai* is common to all the contexts analysed, except in some cases from Zankle (Messina), where Rhodian plates or East Greek *lekanai* are attested.

149 These probably local productions could be totally confirmed after archaeometric analysis of this pottery set of data, as they seem represent the evidence of the pervasiveness of these cultural contacts.

150 See Sciortino 2014, p. 196.

151 See Garnsey 1999; Sciortino 2014, p. 194.

152 On these issues Bats 1992, p. 407; Curià Barnés 2000, p. 125; Delgado – Ferrer 2007; Sciortino forthcoming a.

153 Docter – Niemeyer 1994, p. 103; Crieelard 2012, pp. 141-144.

154 For an overview on the presence of no Greeks within the sanctuaries of the Mediterranean and Magna Grecia, see the volume dedicated to this issue Naso 2006. Among other examples of “intercultural sanctuaries” see, for example, the Heraion of Samos or the Athenaion of Lindoi (see Coldstream 1977, pp. 226 and 267; Bonnet 1996, pp. 195-196; Antonetti – De Vido 2006); the Greek sanctuary of Kommos (see Bikai 2000; Shaw 1989 and 2000) or the *tophet* of Carthage and its presumed foundation deposit – the so called “Chapelle Cintas” – whose pottery assemblage has been the subject of a long debate among scholars as testimony of cohabitation between different ethnic groups in the early stages of the settlement, see Orsingher 2018, p. 52.

155 See Bondi 2001, p. 380; Hodos 2006, p. 89. This situation does not find parallels in other areas of the colonial West, as in Magna Grecia, for example, except for Pithekoussai, Greek settlements attest only *Aegyptiaca* from ritual contexts, such as the necropolis or sanctuaries, where there appears to be a connection to female cults within “popular religion” in a condition of *in-betweenness*, such as in Locri, see Capriotti Vittozzi 2011, p. 112.

156 See Spatafora 2018; See Sciortino 2014, pp. 72, 112.

analysed archaeometrically – seem to confirm this.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, new data from Himera on the production of the amphorae and their provenance have revealed Carthage’s major involvement since the second half of the 7th and the 6th century BCE through its agricultural products.<sup>158</sup>

Nevertheless, the data previously presented show a higher percentage of findings dated during the 7th century – the middle or second half of the 7th century BCE – that is almost a century later than the birth of most of the first colonial foundations, a century in which the Greeks and Phoenicians shared the same territory and the same commercial routes or places of interests and, probably, their interactions involved also sacred areas.

In this sense, the data previously analysed could suggest some form of involvement within ritual performances and ceremonies of Phoenicians, as occasional residents, travellers, merchants, seafarers or, more generically, foreigners.

Moreover, what seems even more remarkable is the highly “official” nature of some contexts, such as the most iconic sanctuaries of the Greek colonies, not only the ones dedicated to the polyad and Olympic cults, but also the chthonian ones, characterised by an *in-between* condition, embracing both spheres of the religious imagery. So, for example, Syracuse documents ritual contexts prominently connected with the polyad representation of the Doric colony, while Gela the ones connected with Demetra and chthonian cults. However, Selinus features findings from polyad and chthonian ritual spaces, as the data from Malophoros area – located near the “boundaries” with the Phoenician and Punic territories<sup>159</sup> – and more recently from the main urban sanctuary, as new findings from the area of Temple R indicate.

All these data could shed new light for the study of the religion and votive behaviours within a framework of cross-cultural contacts: they represent a further testimony of that *religious convergence* characterising the ancient Mediterranean<sup>160</sup> that seems even more evident in Sicily. An island where the sharing of religious spaces for deities is documented as testified by the emblematic *temenos* of Ashtart/Aphrodite/Venus<sup>161</sup> of Eryx, the goddess worshipped by the local native peoples as well as by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. In this sense, I would like to conclude this work by looking at the significant findings from Motya, where discoveries in the sacred area of the Kothon,<sup>162</sup> together with the documentation of several elements of Greek tradition,<sup>163</sup> seem to outline a meaningful case of *religious convergence* reminding us the later testimony by Diodorus (XIV 53) mentioned above about the temples venerated by the Greeks of this island which during its dramatic siege became refuges for its inhabitants. These data from the little island of the Stagnone lagoon appear all of them related to the presence of a multicultural population,<sup>164</sup> particularly since the 5th century BCE; undoubtedly, this framework of close connections

157 The data set from the main sanctuary of Selinus documents prominently imports from the North African metropolis. Moreover, despite the different chronological framework, the presence of two drinking bowls and a small cooking pot, probably of Carthaginian production and dated to the 5th century BCE, from Trenches G and M of Temple R of Selinus, is noteworthy in this regard. According to B. Bechtold, these residual materials should have been related to ritual actions performed by Carthaginians (from Carthage?), see Orsingher – Marconi – Bechtold 2020, pp. 275-277.

158 See Bechtold – Vassallo 2018, pp. 47-48.

159 See on this topic Sfameni Gasparro 2008.

160 See Blakely – Collins 2019, p. 2.

161 On the “network of Ashtart” and its crucial nature for colonial and commercial relations beyond the male “cross-figure” of Melqart/Herakles, see Bonnet – Bricault 2016.

162 See the case of the Laconian aryballos from the Kothon sacred area – dated to the first-second half of the 6th century BCE (see Guizzi 2012 – or the attestations of the 5th century, see Spagnoli 2013 and 2019, and Nigro 2019). Moreover, the first attestation could reveal an earlier participation of the Hellenic community in the cult of the local deity; on this issue, see De Simone 2016.

163 See Sciortino forthcoming b.

164 On data suggesting a cohabitation on the island and a deep connection with Selinus, see three Greek funerary epigraphs on local stone from the necropolis of Birgi, one of them surely dated to the 6th century BCE (see Ampolo 2012, pp. 27-28 and



over the centuries with the Greek world through the Sikeliot settlements will contribute to the development of a typically Sicilian Punic culture.<sup>165</sup>

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165 See Bondi 2005, p.22.

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