

# BIAGIO PACE, THE WHITAKERS AND THE FIRST STEPS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION IN MOTYA

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*Abstract:* During his early archaeological investigations in Motya, Joseph Isaac Whitaker has sought the scientific collaboration of the young Biagio Pace. To both these scholars is due the beginning of modern research on the island and, in some respect, a new perspective in the study of Phoenician and Punic Sicily. In the first part of the paper, the phases of the relationship between Pace and the Whitaker family are retraced. The second part is devoted to Pace's ideas, theories and assumptions about Phoenician colonization in the Mediterranean, with a special attention to the ideological and political elements involved in his historical reconstruction. In the Appendix, an excerpt of Biagio Pace's Memoires, still unpublished, is edited with an English translation.

*Keywords:* Biagio Pace; Joseph Whitaker; Motya; Phoenician Colonization in Sicily; History of Sicilian Archaeology.

The history of modern scientific research in Motya<sup>1</sup> opens with a short paper, published in the Italian periodical *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*, written by a young Sicilian archaeologist, in his early twenties. It is a provisional interpretation of the first archaeological surveys lead by Joseph Whitaker between 1906 and 1914, and the author is Biagio Pace, set to become, in just a few years, one of the most representative figures of Italian archaeology in the first half of the XX century (FIGS. 1-7).

## 1. BIAGIO PACE AND THE WHITAKERS

The first meeting of Biagio Pace and the Whitaker family dates back to 1914.

Pace had just come home from Greece, where he had attended the Italian Archaeological School of Athens (*Scuola Archeologica Italiana ad Atene*) for two years, under the guidance of Luigi Pernier and Roberto Paribeni. He already had published several papers<sup>2</sup> and two monographs,<sup>3</sup> and he had an extensive field digging

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1 For the previous studies, see the *history of research* by Isserlin – Du Plat Taylor 1974, pp. 3-16, in many respects still valid.

2 More than ten articles, about various subjects concerning classical philology, Sicilian history and archaeology and many contributions about the archaeological excavations directed by the Italian Archaeological School of Athens in Rhodes, Gortyna, Patmos and Asia Minor.

3 *Contributi camarinesi*, in 1908 and *I Barbari e i Bizantini in Sicilia* in 1911.



FIG. 1. Motya. Biagio Pace and the Whitakers portrayed in front of the Palazzina Whitaker's entrance. From the left, standing: Giuseppe Lipari Cascio, Giuseppe Whitaker and other guests (Biagio Pace is the second last); sitting Antonino di Giorgio and Tina Whitaker; sitting on the ground: Delia Whitaker (*Fondazione Whitaker Archive*).

experience, which he gained in Sicily in the first place (on the site of Camarina, with Paolo Orsi),<sup>4</sup> and later in Crete, Rhodes and Asia Minor (as a student of the Italian School of Athens, under Paribeni's supervision).<sup>5</sup>

A visit to Motya (FIG. 3) was the setting for the encounter between Biagio Pace and Joseph Isaac Spadafora Whitaker. The visit was organized for archaeologist Antonio Taramelli and Thomas Ashby, Director of the British School in Rome, who were both travelling through Sicily

at that time. Pip Whitaker (that is what he called himself) had just finished his ninth excavation campaign and he was getting ready to publish a volume with the results of his first investigations on the island.<sup>6</sup> With this visit, Whitaker was trying to gain credibility in the eyes of a group of well-known specialists, in view of his recent disagreements with Ettore Gabrici, the new Director of the Archaeological Museum of Palermo and the new Commissioner (Sovrintendente) for the excavations in Western Sicily. The former Commissioner was Antonio Salinas, with whom Whitaker had always had a very good relation and a fruitful scientific collaboration.<sup>7</sup> Gabrici's arrival was a real misfortune for the continuation of the archaeological investigation in Motya. As the new Commissioner he recognized the potential of the site and claimed the supervision of the excavation should be given to Italian archaeologists.<sup>8</sup>

The young Biagio Pace took part in the visit alongside Taramelli and Ashby. On the basis of his own archaeological experience in the Levant, he quickly realized the importance of Whitaker's discoveries, which might have shed a new light on the chronology of early Phoenician colonization in the West Mediterranean. After lengthy discussions, Whitaker and Ashby asked Pace to write an essay that would provide an

4 The place of Paolo Orsi in Pace's scientific training is remarkable, not only for his insight into Sicilian Prehistory but also as a model of "militant archaeology". About the relationship between Biagio Pace and Paolo Orsi cfr. Caputo 1955, p. 84; Arias 1955-1956, pp. 5-7; Rizza 1971, p. 346; Giammellaro 2012, p. 392; Palermo 2012, pp. 4-6.

5 About Pace's attendance in the Scuola Archeologica Italiana ad Atene cfr. Giammellaro 2016, p. 238 e Palermo 2012, p. 6.

6 In 1920 Whitaker published a short paper about Motya in the *Journal Man* (Whitaker 1920). The book came out in 1921, with the title *Motya, a Phoenician Colony in Sicily* (Whitaker 1921). In the following pages I will refer to the Italian translation of this volume, edited in Palermo in 1991 by E. Niceta Palmeri (Whitaker 1991), with three interesting appendixes. In one of them (Giuffrida 1991) several documents and correspondence related to the excavation campaign in Motya by Oxford University, lead by J.B. Isserlin in 1955, are published for the first time.

7 Accounts of such relationship are in the records of many archaeologists who used to work in Motya at that time, for instance, B. Pace (cfr. *infra* Appendix) and V. Tusa (Tusa 1981b, pp. 15-16). In this sense, a document from the *Fondazione Whitaker's Archives* seems to be especially interesting. It is a letter written by G. Lipari Cascio to Whitaker, dated June 27 1908, which shows the degree of Salinas' involvement not only in the conduct of the excavation, but also in the process of musealization of the most significant remains. For example, it seems that Salinas himself suggested that the monumental sculptural group of the two lions biting a bull be placed in front of the entrance of the island Museum. Cfr. Acquaro – Savio 2004, pp. 25-27.

8 Over this matter, cfr. Trevelyan 1972, pp. 371-372, 406; see also Appendix. With the 1914 campaign, the first stage of Whitaker's investigations in Motya was concluded, because of Gabrici's obstructionism and as a consequence of the beginning of World War I. The second phase of Whitaker's research (1923-1927) was illustrated by Falsone 1995.

interpretation of the remains. This is the short paper mentioned above, which is one of his best works, according to the author himself.<sup>9</sup>

The scientific exchange with Pip Whitaker quickly became a genuine friendship. Pace began to get involved with the Whitaker's family even beyond the narrow context of archaeology. He started to hang out with Pip's two daughters, Delia e Norina, in the highest society circles<sup>10</sup> and he found Pip's wife Tina (born Scalia Anichini) to be a knowledgeable speaker on various themes of modern and contemporary history but also a deep, personal acquaintance, that he himself describes as «a mother-like support».<sup>11</sup> Biagio Pace depicts Tina Whitaker as a multi-talented, eclectic woman who had many different interests,<sup>12</sup> with «a vigorous, manly ingenuity and a first-class political disposition».<sup>13</sup> In fact, it is not difficult to imagine how much Tina's strong attitude toward "militant policies" aroused the young archaeologist's admiration, especially in view of the ideas she expressed publicly about Mussolini. *I.e.* the famous *Manifesto* she wrote for the political elections in 1924, which she addressed «to the Sicilian people from an Anonymus (that is me, Tina Whitaker)».<sup>14</sup> In this writing, while comparing the "fascist revolution" to the Bolshevik Revolution Mrs Whitaker praised Mussolini because «he understood that taking down rich people means taking down on labour». Thus, she wished for the *Duce* to have more time, so that he would complete his political project.<sup>15</sup>

This initial support of the Whitakers to Italian fascism undoubtedly strengthened the friendship between Pace and the British family; in all likelihood, Pace himself acted as a *trait d'union* between the General Antonino di Giorgio (who had married Norina Whitaker in 1921) and the leaders of Sicilian fascist party.<sup>16</sup>

FIG. 2. Tina Whitaker's letter to Biagio Pace, December 4th 1947 (Pace Family Archive, Series V, vol. V, fasc. 5).

9 Cfr. *infra*, Appendix. The visit to Motya is perhaps documented in FIG. 3: in the Fondazione Whitaker Archive, the photo is dated, not precisely, between 1910 and 1915.

10 Cfr. *infra*, Appendix and Tusa 1981a, pp. 9-10.

11 «Di tipo materno»: cfr. *infra*, Appendix. It was Biagio Pace who supported the Italian translation of Tina Whitaker's book *Sicily and England*, published in 1948 by Società Editrice Siciliana in Mazara del Vallo, with a preface written by Pace himself: cfr. *infra*. In Pace's Family Archive (Series V, vol. V, fasc. 5) there is a letter by Tina Whitaker, documenting the discussions between Pace and the Anglo-Sicilian aristocratic woman about this publication (FIG. 2). About the translation of *Sicily and England*, cfr. Trevelyan 1972, pp. 439 and 447; Lentini 2012, pp. XXXIII-XLVIII, with the interesting correspondance between Pace and Tina Whitaker.

12 Among other things, she also had a passion for music, especially for *bel canto*, which earned her the admiration of Richard Wagner. About these aspects of Tina Whitaker's personality, see Giglio 1995.

13 «Un ingegno di vigore maschile, un temperamento politico di prim'ordine»: cfr. *infra*, Appendix.

14 «Al Popolo Siciliano da un anonimo (che sono io Tina Whitaker)». About Tina's *Manifesto*, cfr. Trevelyan 1972, p. 392.

15 About the political views of Tina and Joseph Whitaker cfr. Riccobono 1995, pp. 314-315 and, more recently, Alibrandi 2015, pp. 99-105 and *passim*.

16 Pace himself was one of the most prominent figures of Sicilian fascism, despite his lack of interest in the political feuds and clashes between currents within the party: cfr. De Stefani 1995, pp. 107-110. About the relationship between Pace and Di Giorgio, cfr. Trevelyan 1972, pp. 391-392.



FIG. 3. Motya, in front of the Magazzini Enologici. From the right: B. Pace, J. Whitaker, G. Lipari Cascio, T. Ashby and A. Taramelli (?) [between 1910 and 1915] (*Fondazione Whitaker Archive*).

The acquired kinship with Antonino Di Giorgio was going to decisively shape the Whitakers' position towards Mussolini's policies. This position continued to fluctuate, in conjunction with Di Giorgio's hits and misses in the eyes of the upper echelons of the fascist military apparatus. The Whitakers' change of attitude, however, did not affect their relationship with Pace in any way. That remained close throughout the whole course of WWII. For instance, after Pip Whitaker died in 1936, in his *Memoires* Pace claims to have demanded and obtained from Mussolini that the three women be kept safe and unperturbed.<sup>17</sup>

But the serenity of Tina, Delia and Norina was undermined on 19th November 1941, when Manfred Pedicini, the son of Audrey Whitaker, was arrested on suspicion of relations with anti-fascist groups.<sup>18</sup> In mentioning this incident, Pace takes the opportunity to emphasize Tina Whitaker's consistency and steadfastness. She resolved to break relations with the young boy, because she firmly believed that «a gentleman should not break the laws of hospitality in a country whose regime had been so generous with his mother and his grandmother, both British».<sup>19</sup>

Far from being the reason for grudges, political differences seemed to be rather an interesting subject for Pace's passionate debates with Norina. According to his *Memoirs* those debates «used to close with an asthma attack faked by my beloved interlocutor».<sup>20</sup>

Even after the war, Pace and the Whitaker women maintained a strong and frequent relationship. After extended pleas, in 1948 the Italian translation of Tina Whitaker's book, *Sicilia e Inghilterra* was published, edited by Pace (FIG. 2). In the *Preface* to the book, he recollects the reasons of their long friendship, while expressing an admiration for the family. According to Biagio Pace, the Whitakers managed to combine their sense of belonging to the British nation with a passionate love for Sicily.

«L'accogliente Villa Malfitano di Palermo parve al mio animo, volto ad un nazionalismo cui non ho mai rinunciato, un esempio ammirabile del come si possa pervenire alla concomitanza delle passioni politiche dei vari paesi. Quella fedeltà a caratteristiche mentali e formali, tipica degli inglesi, in qualunque parte del mondo essi risiedano, si completa nei Whitaker nel più schietto amore per la nostra terra. L'una e l'altro mostrano la medesima tenacia di ciò che è nutrito da profonde radici».<sup>21</sup>

17 Cfr. *infra*, Appendix.

18 On the whole affair cfr. Trevelyan 1972, pp. 424-430.

19 From Tina Whitaker's diary, Rome, 12th May 1942, mentioned by Trevelyan 1972; cfr. Appendix.

20 Cfr. *infra*, Appendix.

21 Pace 1948, pp. 5-6.

«The homely Villa Malfitano appeared to my soul (which was addressed towards a nationalism I still have not abandoned) as an admirable example of how the conjunction of different countries' political passions can be achieved. In the Whitakers, that loyalty to mental and formal traits that is typical of the British (wherever they may live) is completed by a genuine love for our land. This loyalty and this love are as tenacious as everything that is nourished by deep roots».

Pace kept visiting the island of Motya until the end of his life. There are reports of a site tour he conducted on the 15th May 1950, in the company of Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Pietro Griffo, Vincenzo and Aldina Tusa and a group of students from the Scuola Superiore di Archeologia of the University of Rome.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, Biagio Pace himself should be given the credit for the idea of creating a Foundation, that aimed to preserve and carry Pip Whitaker's legacy forward. This included the archaeological field research and the preservation of Motya's natural and cultural heritage. The involvement and the interventions of Pace in this matter are widely documented in Delia Whitaker's correspondance but mostly in the memories – written and oral – of Vincenzo Tusa.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. BIAGIO PACE, MOTYA EXCAVATIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF PHOENICIAN AND PUNIC PRESENCE IN SICILY

The 1915 essay mentioned above is but the first of several studies Biagio Pace dedicated to the Phoenician and Punic civilization in the Mediterranean.<sup>24</sup>

The results of Whitaker's excavations in Motya raised new questions and offered the scientific community new data and perspectives, especially on the ground of archaeological comparison. Until then the other Phoenico-Punic sites in the Mediterranean, with Carthage above all, had been interpreted with an internal point of view, or worse with a Greek-centred one. Now, thanks to the extraordinary Motyan discoveries, it was possible to conduct a comprehensive study of the Phoenician and Punic colonial phenomenon as a whole. Biagio Pace – on the strength of his own exceptional knowledge of all the historical and archaeological documentation, and basing on his extensive experience in Sicily as well as in Northern Africa – became the champion of this kind of “comparative” studies; on more than one occasion he stressed the need to move away from a classicistic approach, in favour of a “pan-Mediterranean” view.<sup>25</sup>

22 A colourful description of this visit can be found in Scardino 1976 (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7); cfr. also Tusa 1981a, pp. 9-10.

23 Tusa 1981a e Tusa 1981b, *passim*.

24 Pace 1915; Pace 1919; Pace 1921; Pace 1925; Pace 1931; Pace 1935-1949, *passim* and especially vol. I, pp. 222-235 and vol. III, pp. 627-673.

25 The author thus remarks the status of research on mutual influences between Africa and Sicily regarding the types of tombs in respective necropolises: «L'indubbia constatazione delle influenze di tipi sepolcrali punici non ancora rilevata né a Lilibeo né in altre località siciliane, è di non lieve importanza, perché ci assicura che la ricerca dei rapporti tra la Sicilia e la vicinissima regione cartaginese e dei reciproci influssi nel campo monumentale, non ancora tentata dagli studiosi per amore delle abituali e più facili indagini nel campo puramente ellenico, costituisce uno dei problemi più interessanti ed uno studio dei più proficui per la nostra archeologia. Perché se la potente superiorità dell'arte greca livellò molte apparenze, e fece diventare quasi assolutamente greche le città puniche della Sicilia soprattutto nella loro monetazione, abbiamo nei testi molti documenti della peculiarità della vita antica, nella Sicilia occidentale, paese di specialissime condizioni geografiche ed etnografiche, che aspettano di essere lumeggiati ed integrati dall'esame di antichi e nuovi materiali archeologici messi in giusta luce» [«The undeniable influence of Punic burial types – still not discovered in Lilybaeum or in any other Sicilian location – really is important, because it assures us that the search for relations and mutual influence between Sicily and the nearby Carthaginian region, especially in the field of monumental architecture (still not attempted by scholars for the sake of their usual and easier investigation only within the hellenic field) is actually one of the most interesting issues and one of the most productive questions for our archaeology. If, on one side, the massive superiority of Greek art has levelled many appearances and turned all Punic Sicilian cities into Greek ones (especially in their coinage), on the other side



FIG. 4. Visit to Motya: B. Pace with a group of students from the Scuola Superiore di Archeologia of the University of Rome on the boat to Motya (May 15th 1950). In the center, Aldina and Vincenzo Tusa; on the right B. Pace (*Fondazione Whitaker Archive*).



FIG. 5. Visita to Motya: B. Pace with the students from the Scuola Superiore di Archeologia of the University of Rome (May 15th 1950). Group photo in front of the Museum's entrance (*Fondazione Whitaker Archive*).

Pace's interest in Phoenician and Punic civilization focuses on three main themes.

The first is related to the times and the ways of colonisation – a question already faced by all the Italian and foreign scholars who had studied ancient Sicily before him.<sup>26</sup>

Between the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, the chronology of Phoenician colonial expansion was a crucial issue aiming to reconstruct the most ancient European history. The problem was not merely historiographical, but rather deeply ideological: the ethnic identity of Europe should be depicted as non-Semitic, so the academic community had been trying to minimize the role of the Phoenicians in the archaic history of Mediterranean.

Adolf Holm and Edward Freeman, in their extensive works on ancient Sicily, had overcome the problem, by acknowledging that the Phoenician colonisation was prior to the Greek one (as indeed reported by ancient classic sources). According to these authors, "Aryan superiority" was irrespective of whoever arrived first. A little later, Italian scholars (albeit their weak arguments) toiled to build a historical picture that would portray the Greeks as the first real island "civilizers" while the Semitic element (notably Phoenician) would be pushed into a marginal position, not just in chronological terms but also from a cultural and anthropological point of view.

As a result of the new discoveries in Motya, Biagio Pace was able to reassess the whole issue. Through a careful examination of Whitaker's findings in their archaeological context, he advanced a new hypothesis, that reconciled the textual data from ancient sources with the archaeological data from field research in Sicily and Northern Africa. On the basis of Julius Beloch's studies, Pace rejected Gsell's theory that Phoenicians arrived in Western Sicily along the Southern coast of the island, from Pachino to Lilybaion. If that was the case – he argued – it would have been a navigation on the high seas, which is inconceivable at that time. Pace therefore preferred to assume a coastal navigation from the Northern African seashore, with a consequent lowering of the chronology. With respect to Thucydides' statement – which depicts Sicily as entirely surrounded by Phoenician

we have copious ancient text evidence of the uniqueness of ancient life in Western Sicily. This is a region with peculiar geographical and ethnographical conditions, and these conditions are waiting to be highlighted through to a thorough review of old and new materials, which shall be examined under a new light»: Pace 1919, pp. 85-86 e Pace 1925, coll. 179-180.

<sup>26</sup> I am mainly referring to Adolf Holm, Edward Augustus Freeman, Ettore Pais, Julius Beloch and Emanuele Ciaceri. About the issue of Phoenician presence in Sicily as seen in the works of these authors, cfr. Giammellaro 2005 and Giammellaro 2013.

DATE.	NAME.	ADDRESS.	DATE.	NAME.	ADDRESS.
5 Maggio 1950	Visto 7i Andri dei professori e membri della Scuola Superiore di Archeologia presso l'Università di Roma -	Roma		Vittorio J. di ...	Palermo
	Biagio Pace			Officina Tusa	"
	Giulio Di ...			Giuglietta	"
	Adolfo ...			Mario Bassi	"
	Giuseppe ...			Pierluigi ...	"
	Giuseppe ...			Ignazio Rosario	"
	Maria ...			Santa Maria ...	Giornale di Sicilia
	Maria ...			Emilia Pedace	Palermo
	Mario ...		18-16.5.1950	Mario ...	(Dopo 20 anni di as)
	Maria ...		" "	Debra Whitaker	(Dopo 2 anni)
	Maria ...		18.7.50	Emilia	Sant'Andrea (Cagliari)
	Maria ...		17.7.50	Emilia	Palermo

FIGS. 6-7. Motya. Attendance register, May 15th 1950 (Fondazione Whitaker Archive).

installations – Pace established a strict dichotomy in the nature of the colonial settlements, as trading colonies (the Phoenician ones) and “territorial” colonies (the Greek ones and the Roman ones even more).<sup>27</sup>

This kind of “territorial colonization” is the exact opposite to the contemporary British colonial model, which was seen by all the other European nations as a mere act of exploitation, without no aim to civilize. This is an idea that Pace underlines more than once:

«Occorre in proposito notare che i primitivi stabilimenti Fenici d'occidente altro non potevano essere [...] che degli scali marittimi lungo la grande traversata, agenzie commerciali, uffici di corrispondenza per acquisto o collocamento di merci. Poche persone viventi in seno a villaggi indigeni, riunite se mai in

<sup>27</sup> The matter is actually more complex than it appears at first sight. Already at the time of its African colonial adventures, nationalist liberal Italy used the myth of ancient Rome to support and legitimize its expansionist policy in the Mediterranean; during the fascist period, ancient Roman imperialism became a real ideological banner of Mussolini's foreign policy; regime propaganda, endorsed by the authoritative interventions of historians and archaeologists even beyond academic circles, spread an image of Roman colonization as the most extensive work of civilization throughout the whole of antiquity, even better than the Greek *apoikiai* model. In other words, the Greek way of colonizing was considered as an intermediate stage between the negative model of Phoenician colonies (based on trade and exploitation and completely independent of the motherland) and the positive model of Roman colonization (based on civilization and managed as a direct emanation of the motherland). About this matter cfr. Cagnetta 1979, *passim*. Such a misrepresentation of Phoenician colonization as a phenomenon of mere economic exploitation – although pruned of any ideological waste – has come down all the way to the present. Even one of the fathers of modern Phoenico-Punic archaeology, Sabatino Moscati, used to define Phoenician colonies in Sicily as “self-sufficient monads” (cfr. Moscati 1984-1985, p. 16). For a reconsideration of the whole matter cfr. Spanò Giammellaro 2000, that offers a more balanced view: she assumes that Phoenicians in Sicily had to maintain close relations with the indigenous people and have a slight but significant interest in the *chora* of their settlements.

quartieri speciali con privilegi di diritto e di fatto, ma senza sovranità territoriale, simili a coloni moderni, secondo l'accezione che diamo alla parola quando la riferiamo ad un nucleo di cittadini di un paese, stanziati in località straniera [...]. Questo tipo di colonia dobbiamo immaginare che esistesse anche nell'antichità, là dove il fatto coloniale, prescindendo da possessi territoriali, mirava al puro esercizio del commercio. È facile comprendere come di questi stabilimenti si siano facilmente perdute le tracce, non rilevabili per nulla dall'indagine archeologica; [...] E si comprende anche come abbiano dovuto cedere e ritirarsi, senza resistenza alcuna, davanti al progredire della colonizzazione dei Greci, i quali apparivano desiderosi di stabilire un dominio politico e territoriale. I nuovi padroni non erano più, come gli indigeni, dei clienti. Commercianti essi stessi, i Greci non lasciavano posto all'attività commerciale di altri forestieri. È forse la prima volta che viene documentato nella storia il conflitto tra l'attività coloniale di forma puramente economica e quella di diretto dominio, conflitto nel quale era ovvio dovesse prevalere quest'ultima.

A questi Fenici, agenti di commercio in Sicilia, deve essere avvenuto quel che tante volte in seguito hanno sofferto quei loro affini e discendenti, che tenevano il campo in città dell'Oriente, e da queste hanno dovuto sloggiare al sopraggiungere di un nuovo stato, dominatore e concorrente».<sup>28</sup>

«First of all, it should be noted that the first Western Phoenician settlements could not be anything but seaports along the way: commercial agencies, correspondent offices in buying or selling goods. There were a handful of people who lived in indigenous villages, all but gathered in special neighbourhoods, who had legal and factual privileges, yet no territorial sovereignty. They were just like modern colonists, and I apply the same meaning of the word we would give today when referring to a group of expatriates of a country who are settled abroad. [...] Let us imagine this – even in antiquity there was such a type of colony whereby colonial activities were purely aimed at commerce, regardless of territorial ownership. It is easy to understand how it is possible that all traces of these settlements have been lost. They are indeed undetectable by archaeological survey [...]. And we can understand why these commercial settlements had to bow down and withdraw, concurrently with the advance of the Greek people, who were eager to establish a political and territorial dominance. Unlike indigenous people, the new rulers were no longer clients – the Greeks were traders themselves, and they would not leave room for any commercial foreigner-led activity. In history, this is maybe the first documented case of conflict between a merely economical colonization and a colonial activity aimed to a direct dominion. It is obvious that the latter would prevail over the former. These Phoenician salesmen may have experienced the same that happened to their own offspring and descendants, who would later rule in the Eastern cities – they had to move out upon the rise of a new competing and dominant State».

This is clearly a value judgment, and such judgments are not rare in Pace's work, not only with regards to geopolitical matters but also concerning the "artistic civilization".

And so we come to the second topic of interest focused by Pace in relation with Phoenico-Punic culture, which is decisively enlightened by the discoveries of Motya: I am referring to the issue of the Phoenicians' artistic attitudes and skills, which our author considers to be missing, or at best fleeting.

Pace had already described Phoenician art as a «pure imitation of the artistic expression of the different people with which Phoenicians came into direct contact» in his 1915 essay.<sup>29</sup> Ten years later, in another eminent academic journal, he further deepened this matter, by starting precisely with the archaeological discoveries in the archaic necropolis of Motya. In his opinion, these remains did not possess «any artistic peculiarity from which their Phoenician origin could be detected»;<sup>30</sup> the oriental tradition – says Pace – can

28 Pace 1925, col. 150; Pace 1944, p. 97; Pace 1935, vol. I, pp. 231-233. About the juxtaposition of the Phoenicians and the British in Italian historiography of the 20th Century, cfr. Giammellaro 2019, *passim*.

29 «Un puro riflesso di quella dei popoli con cui venivano in contatto»: Pace 1915, p. 455, note 1.

30 «Alcun carattere artistico che possa rilevarne comunque l'origine fenicia»: Pace 1925, col. 153.



be found more in the figure patterns and in the content than in the “sense of form”, and the only typical Phoenician markings are the religious symbols of the stelae:

«È vero che tale assenza di caratteri è dovuta anche alla vicinanza di una civiltà artistica di superiorità potente, come la greca, la quale rapidamente si espande anche nel territorio fenicio della Sicilia. Ma questo mirabile processo di conquista culturale non potrebbe spiegarsi senza una scarsa resistenza delle caratteristiche fenicie.

Se queste sono le condizioni dei secoli e dei luoghi nei quali più s’affermava la potenza civile dei Fenici, come Mozia [...], non potremo giudicare altrimenti pei secoli anteriori e, tanto più, in località nelle quali la loro presenza era soltanto determinata da ragioni di commerci.

È intuitivo che altra cosa è essere commercianti, altra industriali ed artigiani; i Fenici furono ottimi commercianti, e poco o niente industriali e artigiani».<sup>31</sup>

«It is true that this lack of character is also due to the proximity of a powerful, superior civilization such as the Greek one, which tends to rapidly expand into the Phoenician territory of Sicily. But this admirable process of cultural conquest cannot be explained without assuming a weak resistance held by those Phoenician features. If these mutual relationships can be found in times and places where Phoenician civil power was so strong, like in Motya [...], we have to assume that the same thing happened in previous centuries, and in places where a Phoenician presence was determined only by commercial reasons. It is obvious that one thing is to be traders, and quite another industrialists and craftsmen – Phoenicians were excellent traders, hardly industrialists and craftsmen».

According to Pace, in the whole material culture that came from Sicilian and Northern African Phoenician sites, there are only three “artistic” features whose origin can be traced back to the Middle East: the aeolian capital,<sup>32</sup> the so-called “pier-and-rubble” technique<sup>33</sup> and the red slip ware, which nowadays are not considered “artistic features” but rather “technological solutions”.

Perhaps not by chance, the last problem where Pace’s focus lies, is the controversial and infamous Semitic ritual of child sacrifice.

In this respect, the archaeological finds from Motya enabled Pace to make a comparison between the Sicilian and the Carthaginian context, while stating the powerful superiority of the Greek not only from an artistic point of view but also on civil, moral and religious ground.

During the 1919 excavations in an area west of the Necropolis, Whitaker discovered some stelae with funerary vases containing bones of birds, small rodents, dogs and cats, and few rare samples of child skeletons. Two years later, in 1921, a similar shrine was found in Carthage, not far from the village of Salambò. Here the cinerary urns mainly contained the remains of newborn children.<sup>34</sup>

These two important discoveries provided proof that even in the Western Mediterranean the «ancient and horrible Syro-Palestinian ritual of the first born’s sacrifice» had been performed.<sup>35</sup>

Through a cross-reference between Motyan and Carthaginian pottery, Pace was able to give the Salambò archaeologists his own contribution to establish the date of the Carthaginian urns; however, the “substantial”<sup>36</sup>

31 Pace 1925, col. 153; Pace 1935, vol. I, p. 234.

32 Pace 1925, col. 162.

33 Pace 1925, coll. 162-163.

34 Pace 1925, coll. 155-161.

35 «Il vecchio ed orribile rito siro-palestinese del sacrificio del primo nato, che i Cartaginesi praticavano certamente»: Pace 1925, col. 157.

36 Pace 1925, col. 160.

difference in content between the Motyan cinerary vessels and the Cathaginian ones needed to be clarified;<sup>37</sup> Pace tried to resolve the problem by stressing the role of the Greek civilization in Sicily. On the basis of ancient literary sources, he suggested that after the victory at Himera in 480 BCE, the Syracusan king Gelon imposed the abolition of human sacrifices on Motyan people, while including this «humanitarian clause»<sup>38</sup> in all peace treaties.

Pace's attitude towards Phoenician and Punic civilization in Sicily was not immune to ideological and racial bias, as indeed with nearly all previous scholars.

Nevertheless, Biagio Pace should be given credit for having first drawn the attention of the scientific community to an invaluable historical heritage. While giving academic dignity to Sicilian Phoenicians, he gave a decisive contribution to the scientific training of plenty of young archaeologists, who have since been devoting their activities to this very heritage.

#### APPENDIX<sup>39</sup>

##### *Excerpt from Biagio Pace's Memorie, pp. 69-73*<sup>40</sup>

«In Italia un interessante argomento nuovo mi si offriva, con lo studio degli scavi di Mozia, il quale mi dava agio di portare la mia attenzione su un coefficiente generalmente trascurato dell'antica civiltà siceliota, quello dovuto all'intervento cartaginese; considerazione che ha costituito un aspetto nuovo della mia interpretazione dell'antica civiltà dell'Isola.

La colonia fenicia di Mozia era stata riconosciuta già dal Cluverio nell'isoletta di S. Pantaleo, nel cosiddetto "Stagnone" di Marsala. I suoi avanzi archeologici erano superficialmente noti, quando negli anni del secondo decennio del secolo trovavano il loro Schliemann nel comm. Giuseppe Whitaker: questi apparteneva ad una nota famiglia inglese, fissata in Sicilia nell'età napoleonica, richiamata da un congiunto, quel Beniamino Ingham, che era stato uno dei primi ad avvalorare il vino di Marsala. Giuseppe Whitaker era un tipo classico d'inglese, che aveva saputo conservare le caratteristiche nazionali, pur essendo un appassionato siciliano. I suoi primi interessi scientifici furono rivolti alle scienze naturali; raccolse un museo – destinandolo per testamento all'Università di Palermo – compì lunghi viaggi in Africa, e scrisse un'opera sugli uccelli della Tunisia che fa testo.<sup>41</sup> Nella sua vecchiaia si volse all'archeologia e, riscattata l'isoletta di S. Pantaleo da una ventina di piccoli proprietari, iniziò la sua esplorazione, creando sul posto un decoroso museo. Quando tornai dalla Grecia egli attendeva al completamento degli scavi e alla loro illustrazione, che diede poi materia ad un suo eccellente volume.<sup>42</sup> Lo incontrai in occasione di un viaggio a Palermo dell'archeologo Antonio Taramelli, il noto esploratore della Sardegna, e venni invitato a visitare le scoperte. M'era compagno il dott. Thomas Ashby, allora Direttore della Scuola britannica di Roma.

La morte del Salinas, amico dell'Whitaker, aveva interrotto una proficua collaborazione; il nuovo Soprintendente agli scavi, prof. Ettore Gabrici, ignaro d'uomini e d'ambiente, dominato da mentalità gretta, aveva concepito ridicoli sospetti su "questo inglese che faceva scavi", ed inaugurato una politica di diffidenza e ostruzionismo.

37 Today this discrepancy can be easily explained, assuming that the archaeological research in the Motyan *tofet* was at that time still at its first stage.

38 Pace 1925, col. 160. Cfr. Pace 1921, p. 15.

39 Here I present a document from the Archivio Pace Gravina, stored at the residence of Pace's family, in Caltagirone (Palermo, Sicily). I wish to thank Pace's family, and especially prof. Giacomo Pace, for liberally providing me Biagio Pace's personal papers in the VII Series of the Archive, which are still totally unpublished.

40 Typewritten proof reviewed by the author, who makes several corrections in his own handwriting; he also points with notes in the margin the need to move up above or below some sections of the text. I provide the transcription (and, at the end, an english translation), according to the author's adjustments.

41 It is the book *The birds of Tunisia*, published in London in 1905: Whitaker 1905. About this matter, cfr. Quatriglio 1995, *passim*.

42 Whitaker 1921.

La mia conoscenza degli scavi del Levante, gli insegnamenti di Pernier, mi diedero la possibilità di veder chiaro in quello che pareva un groviglio di avanzi incomprensibili. Lo scavo offriva tutto un complesso di problemi nuovi. Le necropoli consentivano risultati definitivi per la cronologia della colonizzazione fenicia in Occidente.<sup>43</sup> Al termine di lunghe discussioni Whitaker ed Ashby mi chiesero di dare un saggio delle mie interpretazioni e deduzioni. Le poche pagine delle Notizie degli scavi, nelle quali delineai le idee fondamentali suggeritemi dagli scavi di Mozia, sono fra le cose migliori che io abbia prodotto.<sup>44</sup> Quelle mie idee, accolte subito dallo Gsell, nella sua Storia antica dell’Africa del nord,<sup>45</sup> sono ormai acquisite nel campo dell’archeologia del Mediterraneo; qualche riserva di Luigi Pareti, in una mediocre rimasticazione dei miei articoli, non è altro che il tentativo di dar un qualche aspetto di novità ad uno scritto che, onestamente, avrebbe potuto essere nulla più che una recensione espositiva.<sup>46</sup> Ma i quattro quinti dell’opera di questo erudito sono di tal natura. Il mio articolo richiamò anche l’attenzione su Mozia del Dir. Gen. delle Belle Arti, Corrado Ricci, il quale mi diede mano libera perché le nuove ricerche avessero luogo non ostante Gabrici.<sup>47</sup> La consuetudine con Giuseppe Whitaker per ragioni di studio, si trasformò ben presto in amicizia cordiale con l’intera famiglia. La signora Tina, nata Scalia Anichini, ingegno di vigore maschile, temperamento politico di prim’ordine – ne ho scritto nella prefazione alla edizione italiana del suo libro Sicilia e Inghilterra – con un cuore italiano di figlia di patrioti, divenne per me un sostegno di tipo materno; con le “ragazze”, Norina e Delia, stringemmo un’amicizia calorosa e sincera, che ha resistito al tempo e agli eventi. Le settimane di maggio annualmente trascorse a Mozia, i garden party a Villa Malfitano, gli incontri frequentissimi in riunioni e balli, nei comitati più o meno mondani, e le belle gite, si colorano nel mio ricordo dei riflessi della più gioiosa giovinezza.

Agli amici Whitaker debbo soprattutto la conoscenza dello spirito inglese. Come in ogni luogo e in ogni tempo – forza di quel popolo maledetto – quella famiglia residente in Sicilia da un secolo e mezzo italiana di sangue, era rimasta integralmente inglese. Per molto tempo fu facile per essa una sintesi tra il fanatismo per il paese di origine, e l’amore per l’Italia, ospite generosa. Con la guerra del ’40-43 la situazione mutò. Ma non ebbi a dolermi d’aver mantenuto l’amicizia, né di aver ottenuto da Mussolini, per tramite di Buffarini<sup>48</sup> e di Bocchini,<sup>49</sup> che non fossero disturbate le tre donne – il vecchio commendatore era morto nel [spazio vuoto nel dattiloscritto]<sup>50</sup> – perché non ascoltai mai da loro una parola che non fosse corretta; magari in ogni casa d’Italia si fosse pensato e parlato come presso i Whitaker! Era in essi come un doloroso stupore per l’amicizia fra i due Paesi infranta; ma un rispetto assoluto del mio fervore d’italiano combattente. Quando un loro pronipote, figliuolo di un generale italiano, si macchiò d’intelligenza col nemico, in quella fangosa atmosfera di tradimento creata dall’antifascismo, la signora Tina ne fu indignata: né quando, dopo l’infuato armistizio, il giovinello divenne eroe per il suo tradimento, la vecchia signora volle mai vederlo; il suo sangue di figliuola di artieri del Risorgimento italiano, ribolliva di sdegno.<sup>51</sup> Nondimeno è al contatto con questa eccezionale famiglia che ho potuto capire veramente cosa sia la convinzione messianica che ha costruito la politica di grandezza dell’Inghilterra; quel trovar lecito, giusto e nobile tutto ciò che riguarda il proprio paese, illecita, ingiusta e indegna la medesima cosa, ove riguardi gli altri; quell’atteggiamento che da

43 In the typescript, this sentence is a few lines above. However the author, with a handwritten note, indicates to put it at this point of the text.

44 The author refers here to the essay mentioned at the beginning, *Prime note sugli scavi di Mozia*: Pace 1915.

45 It is Stéphane Gsell’s majestic work *Histoire ancienne de l’Afrique du Nord*: Gsell 1920.

46 The author probably refers to the short paper by Pareti 1934.

47 This sentence is entirely handwritten.

48 Guido Buffarini Guidi was Sottosegretario agli Interni (Undersecretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) between 1933 and 1943.

49 Arturo Bocchini was the Chief of Police from 1926 to 1940.

50 J. Whitaker had died in 1936, at the age of 86.

51 The author refers here to the story of Manfred Pedicini Whitaker; cfr. *supra*.

lontano sembra ipocrisia, e da vicino si scorge essere una deformazione mentale, che induce con spontaneità e convinzione gli inglesi a quel loro abominevole modo di pensare e di agire. Nessuno vorrà trovar strano che io traessi siffatti insegnamenti da una cara amicizia; era questione di temperamento critico. Le mie discussioni in proposito con la signora Norina, la più inglese dei Whitaker nonostante il suo aspetto italiano, finivano sempre con un accenno ad un attacco d'asma della mia cara interlocutrice».

«In Italy I was offered a new, interesting subject, with the study of Motya excavation, which allowed me to focus my attention on a component generally underestimated in Siceliot civilization: the Carthaginian contribution. This very consideration has been a new aspect of my own interpretation of the ancient civilization in the island.

The Phoenician colony of Motya had been identified by Philipp Clüver as the small island of San Pantaleo, in the so-called “Stagnone” of Marsala. Its archaeological remains were already superficially known, when found their Schliemann in the Comm. Joseph Whitaker; he belonged to a well-known British family, who had settled in Sicily during the Napoleonic Age, on the initiative of a relative: the famous Benjamin Ingham, who first understood the value of Marsala wine.

Joseph Whitaker was the typical Englishman, who would keep to the peculiarities of his own nation, despite being a passionate Sicilian. He first turned his scientific interests to natural sciences; he set up a museum (which he left, in his will, to the University of Palermo), he made long journeys in Africa and he wrote a monograph about Tunisian birds which is still exemplary. In his old age, he devoted himself to archaeology: after he acquired the small island of San Pantaleo from about twenty smallholders, he began his archaeological exploration and created a noteworthy museum on site.

When I came back from Greece, he was completing the excavations and he was going to publish a book (which later turned out to be an excellent one). I met him during a trip in Palermo with Antonio Taramelli, the well-known explorer of Sardinia, and I was invited to see the discoveries. Doctor Thomas Ashby, who was at that time the Director of the British School in Rome, was my companion in that visit.

With Salinas' death, a productive cooperation had ended; the new Commissioner for the excavations, Professor Ettore Gabrici, a narrow-minded individual who was completely unfamiliar with human and environmental factors, had started to get unreasonably suspicious about “this Englishman who makes excavations”, and begun a policy of mistrust and obstruction.

Thanks to my field experience in the Levant and to the teachings of Pernier, I was able to shed some light on a tangle of remains seemingly unintelligible. The excavation presented an intricate set of new problems. The necropoleis led to conclusive results about the chronology of Phoenician colonization in the West. After lengthy discussions, Whitaker and Ashby asked me to give an essay of my interpretations and deductions. The few pages in *Notizie degli Scavi* where I presented my ideas about Motya excavations are among the best things I have ever written. Those ideas of mine were welcomed by Gsell in his *Ancient History of Northern Africa* and are nowadays well-established in the field of Mediterranean archaeology. Luigi Pareti expressed some reservations, in a poor imitation of my articles: but his paper is a failed attempt to say something new, and it could have been nothing but a simple review. However, four-fifths of this scholar's writings are of such kind. My paper also called the attention of Corrado Ricci, General Director of Fine Arts, about Motya – he gave me free rein to carry forward the research, despite Gabrici. My association with Joseph Whitaker, the product of our research and study, turned into a true friendship with the whole family. Mrs Tina, born Scalia Anichini had a vigorous, manly ingenuity and a first-class political disposition, as I wrote about her in the Preface of her book *Sicily and England's* Italian edition. She had a patriot's daughter's heart, and she gave me mother-like support. I built a warm friendship with the two “girls”, Norina and Delia: and this relationship survived the decades and the events. The May weeks usually spent in Motya, the garden parties at Villa Malfitano, the frequent meetings and the balls, all these memories bear for me the taste of joyful youth.

I especially owe to my Whitaker friends the knowledge of English wit. As it always is, anytime and anywhere with the bloody English, that family – who had been living in Sicily for a century, all of them being half Italian by now – still remained stubbornly British. For a long time, it was easy for them to swing between fanaticism for their home country and a love for Italy, their generous host. With the 1940-1943 War, the situation changed. But I didn't regret keeping my friendship with the Whitakers: indeed, I asked Mussolini through Buffarini and Bocchini, that the three women should not be disturbed – old Joseph had died in [*empty space in the typewritten text*] – because I never heard anything unfair from them. If only every house in Italy would reason and speak the way the Whitakers did! They were painfully surprised that the friendship between the two countries had been broken, but I felt genuinely respected by them in my Italian soldier's pride. When a great-greatson of theirs, the son of an Italian general, was blamed of complicity with the enemy – in that muddy atmosphere of treason that was created by anti-fascism – Mrs Tina was really outraged; and after the unfortunate armistice, when the young boy became a hero because of his treason, the old lady refused to meet him anymore – she really was the daughter of the Italian Risorgimento's sappers, and her blood was boiling over with indignation.

Coming into contact with this outstanding family, I truly understood the messianic conviction upon which the English policy of greatness was built – they regard everything about their people as legitimate, right and worthy and, on the contrary, they consider the same thing illegitimate, wrong and unworthy if it is done by any other people. That attitude that could be mistaken for hypocrisy from afar, but if you look closely it's nothing but a mental distortion. On this basis Englishmen are spontaneously and firmly led to act and think in such an abominable way. It isn't strange that I have learnt this lesson from a close friendship; it is a matter of critical attitude. My arguments about that with Mrs. Norina – who was, despite her Italian appearance, the most British of the Whitakers – used to close with an asthma attack faked by my beloved interlocutor».

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