Breaking Boundaries

A study of socio-cultural identities in Archaic and Classical western Sicily



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This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
who always believed in me - even when I did my best to confuse them,
and to my sister Alba,
who even came to Sicily with me to see what I was on about.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the burial practices of western Sicilian settlements during the late Archaic and Classical periods, incorporating comparative epigraphic evidence. Specifically, it explores the processes of creation and assertion of socio-cultural identities among migrant and indigenous communities, rather than focusing solely on their pre-defined outcomes. The prioritisation of ethnicity in the definition of collective identities in this region and period continues to influence the ways the agents and dynamics of contact are conceptualised. Such 'ethnic labelling' is not only unwarranted in view of the available evidence, but also obfuscates our understanding of other types of identities and historical processes. To challenge these existing frameworks and heuristic models, this thesis analyses the burial evidence from Palermo, Monte Castellazzo di Poggioreale, Monte d'Oro di Montelepre, Himera and Solunto, and draws on comparative epigraphic evidence from the curse tablets and Meilichios *horoi* of Selinunte, and the tophet of Mozia. By examining the markers and features used by western Sicilian communities to assert and negotiate their social identities, this thesis reveals the complex ways in which social hierarchies, economic drivers, historical circumstances and regional intervisibility shaped funerary and epigraphic practices. This thesis argues that patterns (and discontinuities) in these practices were not imposed by predefined ethnic rationales, but were rather selected by local communities in response to their unique context of social mobility, polity interaction and regional connectivity.

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In Sicily, they say that eternal love lasts for two years.
Fortunately, I am not Sicilian.
- Louis de Bernières

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Italy without Sicily leaves no impression on the soul,
for Sicily is the key to everything.

— J. W. Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, 1816-1817

In Sicilia non importa far male o far bene: il peccato che noi siciliani non perdoniamo mai è semplicemente quello di 'fare'. Siamo vecchi, Chevalley, vecchissimi. Sono venticinque secoli almeno che portiamo sulle spalle il peso di magnifiche civiltà eterogenee, tutte venute da fuori, nessuna germogliata da noi stessi, nessuna a cui noi abbiamo dato il 'la'; noi siamo dei bianchi quanto lo è lei Chevalley, e quanto la regina d'Inghilterra; eppure da duemilacinquecento anni siamo colonia. Non lo dico per lagnarmi: è colpa nostra. Ma siamo stanchi e svuotati lo stesso.

— G. Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo*, 1958

To an old Sicilian hand, as I believe myself to be,
this is a Mediterranean island where the majority of public happenings
are seen in one way or another to be bizarre.

— N. Lewis, *In Sicily*, 2007

Introduction

This thesis is a study of the burial practices of western Sicilian settlements between the late Archaic and Classical periods, incorporating comparative evidence of selected epigraphic practices. The prioritisation of ethnicity in the definition of collective identities in this region and period continues to influence the ways the agents and dynamics of contact are conceptualised. This ethnic labelling of collective identities is not only unwarranted in view of the available evidence, but it also obfuscates our understanding of other types of identities. In this thesis, I challenge these existing frameworks and heuristic models, focusing instead on the processes rather than on the pre-defined outcomes of identity assertion. I examine how sub-groups and individuals constructed their practices and identities through the careful selection of salient features, asserting their status and group affiliation within a context of social mobility and competition. I show how the coexistence of different vocabularies of material culture - the mortuary and epigraphic variability observed in the evidence - were defined less by ethnic rationales and more by historical circumstances, socio-economic drivers, regional interconnectedness and intervisibility. These patterns of practice are not to be understood in terms of monolithic cultural imperialism imposed top-down, but as the product of social hierarchies signifying the existence of smaller, exclusive groups and their relations with wider communities of practice.

The thesis is structured in four parts. In Part One, I define the geographical and historical parameters of the region under consideration, and survey the interpretative models currently available and commonly applied to western Sicily. I propose to set aside the excessive and misguided focus upon assumed ethnic identities which continues to characterise western Sicilian studies. I then expound in detail the sources and methods adopted in this thesis to detect potential identity markers – beyond the ethnic ones. In Part Two, I focus on the burial practices of four western Sicilian necropoleis in use between the Archaic and Classical periods: Manico di Quarara (Montelepre), Monte Castellazzo (Poggioreale), Palermo and Solunto. I examine how differences and similarities in burial practices could be consciously resorted to, expressing social differentiations. In Part Three, I examine the epigraphic evidence of the tophet markers from Mozia, the curse tablets from Selinunte, and the Meilichios markers in Selinunte. I show that the strategic use of writing and the textual choices found in these practices were embedded within the distinctive historical contexts and the social requisites of the people involved. Finally, in Part Four, I reflect on my findings and their significance in the context of writing a social history of western Sicily.

As means of an introduction to the social identities I will uncover in this thesis, I adopt as heuristic comparison the definition proposed by the modern historian Tony Judt in *The Memory Chalet* (2010), in the chapter *Edge People*. Judt, reflecting upon on his overlapping ethnic, religious, linguistic, academic, and political identities, concludes that he is rooted in diverse and even conflicting heritages. Precisely for this reason, he prefers to reject overly strict identity labels, and notes how 'we know enough of ideological and political movements to be wary of exclusive solidarity in all its forms'.[1] Instead, Judt prefers the

[1] Judt 2010: 205.

'edge': 'the place where countries, communities, allegiances, affinities, and roots bump uncomfortably up against one another'.[2] He offers an example by calling on the memory of the great cosmopolitan cities (Sarajevo, Alexandria, Salonica, Uzhhorod, and others), which he notes had until recently brought together multiple communities and languages — 'often mutually antagonistic, occasionally clashing, but somehow coexisting'.[3]

Just as the communities of western Sicily carved out their identities on the edge of blanket labels, we too should aim for methods and approaches on the edge of etic classifications, and redress the labels commonly applied to people and processes of the Mediterranean world. Only then will it become apparent, as this thesis will show, that identities in western Sicily are worth studying not in spite of their complex, localised and situational nature in the burial and epigraphical record, but precisely because of it. To quote again Judt, 'If you are born at intersecting margins and ... are at liberty to remain there, it seems to me a decidedly advantageous perch'.[4]

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[2] Judt 2010: 205.
[3] Judt 2010: 207.

Part One

Pushing boundaries

Introduction to Part One

Part One of this thesis sets out the methodological groundwork of my research into the collective identities of the communities settled in western Sicily between the late Archaic and Classical periods. In Chapter 1, I will explain the geographical and historical contours of the area under consideration. I will make a case for the definability of western Sicily as a region distinct from the rest of the island owing to its natural and man-made state of interconnectedness. I will also justify my choice of time frame: between c. 550 BCE and 350 BCE urban settlements and exchange networks had fully developed across the island and beyond, as intra-*polis* competition and changing balances of power in Sicily and across the Mediterranean led up to the increasing formalisation of Carthaginian hegemony over western Sicily in the late 4th century BCE. The investigation of this historical watershed is conducive to tracing patterns of change and persistence in the practices of the communities settled in this region as they responded to changing local contexts.

In Chapter 2, I will investigate what interpretative models currently exist for western Sicily, whence they originate, and what their weaknesses are. I survey the contributions offered by Postcolonial theories to studies of western Sicilian agents and dynamics, and discuss how they have been instrumental in emancipating the study of this region from outdated colonialist and Hellenocentric perspectives. However, I will stress how existing heuristic frameworks still advance assumptions concerning the identities of the groups

involved, applying blanket ethnic labels to processes, groups and assemblages without attempting to pick apart local specificities. I will argue that this situation has led to the obfuscation of the multiple identities to which groups or individuals could have ascribed and been ascribed.

In Chapter 3, I will define in detail the sources and methods adopted in this study to detect potential markers of identities other than the assumed ethnically based ones. Specifically, dynamics of a social, economic and historical nature, as well as notions of intervisibility, interconnectedness and peer-polity interaction could have been more meaningful drivers in the definition of collective identities than broad cultural groupings. I will suggest that a new analysis of the burial evidence of certain key sites in western Sicily could reveal whether patterns in the material culture could be equated to wider regional patterns in collective identities. I also identify in the epigraphic evidence a useful comparison for testing my findings from the burial record, as written culture can also work as a proxy for the processes of identity negotiation taking place within and between settlements.

1.

An island within an island

Introduction

Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean (25,711 km^2), and throughout its history it has been shaped by conquest, settlement, commerce, and cultures (fig. 1, 2, 3). The tag 'crossroads of the Mediterranean', cliché as it may be, remains eminently applicable to Sicily, whose strategic position within the ancient (and modern) routes of movement and trade by sea created favourable conditions for the island to be influenced by a mix of cultures and networks unfolding at a local, regional and Mediterranean-wide level (fig. 4).[5] But the island's coherence only stands up to scrutiny at a superficial level of study, as ancient Sicily has rarely been treated by scholarship as a geographical unity:[6] hard regional divides

[5] See Braudel 1972, 2001. On Sicilian prehistory: Orsi 1895, 1899; Bernabò Brea 1957; Tusa 1983a; Leighton 1996b, 1999. On Hellenistic Sicily: Prag 2009b; Prag – Quinn 2013; Braccesi – Millino 2000. On Roman Sicily: Wilson 1990; Campagna 2003; Prag 2004, 2009a, 2009b; Pfuntner 2019. On Sicilian history under the Normans, see Norwich 1967. On modern Sicily: Verga 1881; Sciascia 1952; Dolci 1956; Tomasi di Lampedusa 1958; Ayala - Fitzjohn 2013. A series of exhibitions on Sicily and the Mediterranean were held recently: Lyons et al. 2013 (at the J. P. Getty Museum); Burgersdijk – Calis 2015 (at the Allard Pierson Museum and the Ashmolean Museum); Booms – Higgs 2016 (at the British Museum).

[6] Few comprehensive histories of Sicily exist, the most notable being Finley – Mack Smith 1968. Ancient Sicily was treated as a unified region in the earliest studies of the island up until the end of

characterise the study of this island's ancient history up until the Roman conquest.[7] Local, national and international historical events have shaped the study of Sicily (such as colonialism, World Wars, fascism, nationalism, the *Questione Meridionale*), and the island's modern fragmentation into archaeological Soprintendenze maintains to a certain extent these divisions.[8]

But ancient historical considerations underpin this situation as well: Sicily was politically and culturally non-homogeneous over the Archaic and Classical period, and resembled a patchwork of individual polities exercising control over their *chora* and key communication routes. What could be loosely defined as 'political boundaries' were only established in the 4th century BCE between the Carthaginian and Syracusan spheres of influence.[9] As a result, most studies follow a clear-cut distinction of focus between western or eastern Sicily (or smaller subdivisions).[10] The east is traditionally conceived of as the point of arrival of the earliest movements of permanent settlement abroad originating from Greece in the late 8th century BCE, and it is where Greek presence is most evident and widespread.[11] This is also the part of the island where the archaeological *facies* of the 'Sikel' ethnicity has traditionally

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the Second World War, the most influential studies being Holm 1870-98; Beloch 1886; Freeman 1891-94; Pais 1894; Pace 1935-49. After the War, refer to Pareti 1959; Roussel 1970; Sjøqvist 1973; Gabba – Vallet 1980; Coarelli – Torelli 1984; Asheri 1988; Holloway 1991; Braccesi – Millino 2000; De Angelis 2016.

[7] De Angelis 2016: 3. On the geography of Sicily: Adamesteanu 1963; Manni 1981; Belvedere 2010, 2015.

[8] For an outline of the main developments in historical research, refer to De Angelis 2016: 4-25.

[9] De Vincenzo 2013.

[10] La Genière - Tusa 1993; De Angelis 1996; Delgado - Ferrer 2007; Spatafora 2009a, 2016; Spatafora - Vassallo 2010; Malkin 2011; Balco 2012 among others all speak of 'Sicilia Occidentale'. Shepherd 1995; Antonaccio 2004; Fitzjohn 2007b, 2011; Giangiulio 2010a; Alfieri - Struffolino 2014; Camera 2016 among others focus on sites in 'Sicilia Orientale'. This 'split Sicily' trend can also be found in the publications of collected studies such as Berlinzani 2020. In recent years only De Angelis 2016 could be seen as an exception to this trend, but his focus on 'Greek Sicily' raises another set of questions (soon to be addressed).

[11] Antonaccio 2005: 97; Tribulato 2012a: 23.

been identified (at sites such as Morgantina, Mendolito and Centuripe),[12] whereas the 'Sikans' have been located in the south-west of the island (at sites such as S. Angelo Muxaro). The conventional border between these two native groups is situated roughly along the Salso river, but the existence of clear divergences in the archaeological and linguistic assemblages of these two areas remain unproven.[13] As for the west of Sicily, in this region the Levantine migratory movements came to settle, founding Palermo, Mozia and Solunto at the end of the 8th century BCE,[14] and it is where Greek settlers founded Himera and Selinunte in the second half of the 7th century. These migrant groups soon came in contact with the pre-existing populations who had been living in this region, traditionally identified as another unitary ethnic group known as the 'Elymians'.

Owing to the coexistence of autochthonous and migrant communities, western Sicily has traditionally been considered a privileged laboratory for observing the diverse processes and outcomes of the interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the ancient world.[15] In focusing on western Sicily, in this thesis I too am accepting the notion of a 'split Sicily'. However, my choice is underpinned by the state of connectivity engendered by the particular geophysical makeup of western Sicily, which under certain historical circumstances allowed for a heightened interaction between the indigenous and migrant groups settled in this region. I will now explore this geographical and historical context, while contextualising western Sicily in the late Archaic and Classical periods within the wider Mediterranean and Sicilian setting. I will make observations about the state of natural and

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[12] Bernabò Brea 1957: 137, 169–70; Leighton 1999: 188. Regarding the (now obsolete) notion that the Sikels were an invading group from peninsular Italy, see Bernabò Brea 1957: 137; Leighton 1999: 216.
[13] Albanese Procelli 2003: 24; Tribulato 2012a: 24.
[14] Thuc. VI.2-5. On the controversy regarding the period of arrival of the Levantine settlers, see Tribulato 2012a: 14-15; Aubet 2001: 199; De Angelis 2003b: 115.
[15] E.g. Ampolo 2012a: 37-38; Balco 2012: 4; Tribulato 2012a: 27.

man-made connectedness which knitted western Sicily into a dense fabric of communication and exchange networks, and I will describe the geographical and historical circumstances which shaped the dynamics of interaction between migrant and indigenous communities in western Sicily between the late Archaic and Classical periods. The intent of this section is to propose western Sicily as an 'island within an island', in the sense borrowed from Horden and Purcell: 'Islands are places of strikingly enhanced exposure to interaction, and are central to the history of the Mediterranean ... But what is required of the Mediterranean historian is the ability to recognise, in places that are not literal islands, the insular quality of being 'in the swim' of communications'.[16]

1.1. The geographical setting

Sicily's geomorphological landscape is notoriously varied, and is usually divided into three sub-regions (fig. 2).[17] The first sub-region is the mountainous spinal cord of the island, comprising the Peloritani, Nebrodi, Madonie and the Monti di Palermo running east to west and acting as a natural barrier between the northern coastal and internal settlements.[18] The Eleuterio, Imera Settentrionale, Torto and San Leonardo rivers gouge through the Monti di Palermo and the Madonie before flowing into the Tyrrhenian Sea, their valleys creating scenic natural routes of travel and communication between the western Sicilian hinterland and the Tyrrhenian coast. The aforementioned mountain ranges are interspersed with fertile coastal plains, which have attracted human settlement since the most ancient times: the Piana di Partinico, the Conca d'Oro, Piana di Buonfornello and the Piana di Milazzo. As

[16] Horden - Purcell 2000: 76.
[17] Regarding the geographical morphology of Sicily, see Manni 1981; Di Stefano 1988-1989; Wilson 1990: 1-10; Leighton 1999: 11-50; Procelli 2003: 13-17; Balco 2012: 20-30; De Angelis 2016: 65-66.
[18] De Angelis 2016: 65.

the mountain ranges level out to the west, the landscape morphs into the second Sicilian sub-region of valleys and hills stretching between Marsala and the Salso River, halfway down the southern coast of Sicily. Only the Monti Sicani interrupt the sequence of clay, sand and limestone hills, plains and isolated plateaus (such as Rocca Busambra and the Rocca di Erice). The Moroccan soil of these north-westerly plains is incredibly fertile, but this is also the sub-region which receives the least rainfall, accounting for the parched and barren central Sicilian terrain.[19] Three important rivers traverse this sub-region, flowing southwards into the Mediterranean: the two branches of the Belice (the Belice Destro and Sinistro, rising from the Piana degli Albanesi and Rocca Busambra respectively)[20] merge nearby Poggioreale and then flow into the sea by Selinunte; the Platani flows into the Mediterranean at the site of Heraclea Minoa; and the Salso river (or Imera Meridionale: at 144 km, the longest river in Sicily) at Licata. The final sub-region comprises the low and eroded limestone plateaus of the Monti Iblei in the south-easternmost corner of Sicily, and the fertile Piana di Catania just North of the Iblei. This plain, the most extensive of southern Italy (430 km^2), is traversed by the Simeto river (the second-longest river in Sicily) and commanded from the North by the bulk of Etna:[21] at around 3326 m a.s.l., Etna is the highest peak in Italy below the Alps and one of the most active volcanoes in the world.

Given its singular geological landscape, Sicily's main corridors of ancient communication (other than sea-travel) tend to retrace the environmental features outlined above, as do the modern *strade statali, superstrade* and railways, which overlap with the ancient paths

[19] De Angelis 2016: 65-66.
[20] The correct pronunciation of the river is 'Belìce', and not 'Bélice', which is a mispronunciation by the (northern Italian) journalists sent to report on the aftermath of the tragic earthquake which struck the Belice Valley in 1968.
[21] De Angelis 2016: 66.

and roads - often obliterating our knowledge of the ancient road network (although lack of fieldwork plays a role in the uneven knowledge of ancient connectivity).[22] Most of what we know about the Sicilian road network is based on post-Hellenistic literary sources (fig. 6),[23] as the epigraphic evidence is scarce and other cartographic material is even later in date (the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* and the *Tabula Peutingeriana*).[24] Literary sources do not provide much detail on actual itineraries: what road might Dionysus have taken from Syracuse to Mozia with infantry 80,000-strong, cavalry and war machines (Diod. Sic. XIV.47.4-6)? Diodorus only mentions the points of departure and arrival,[25] but the fact that this kind of long-distance movement and in such numbers was conceivable does suggest that a suitable road network could have existed – although the details of the exact itineraries escape us.[26] For a clearer idea of what routes might have been available and viable, one must return to the actual lay of the land.

Most long- or medium-distance inland travel could have taken place across a system of *trazzere* (fig. 5).[27] The Simeto, Platani and Belice rivers were also important navigable routes linking coastal and inland settlements.[28] The only extended east-west route crossing Sicily is the road from Syracuse to Selinunte, passing through the vast Pian di Catania to

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[22] The ancient connectivity remains easily traceable in the modern Sicilian road network, where the main east-west artery remains the Catania-Enna-Caltanissetta A19, which then makes its way up to Buonfornello (by the site of Himera), and reaches Palermo along the E90. The E90 then proceeds to Castelvetrano (by Selinunte) and Mazara del Vallo, passing just by Segesta, Monte Polizzo, Halkyai, and Monte Finestrelle. A similar overlap can be noticed in the modern Sicilian network of smaller roads: the SS118 Palermo-Agrigento, the SS189 and SS285 Agrigento-Termini Imerese, and the SS113 Trapani-Palermo.

[23] Uggeri 2004: 29-82 and Verbrugghe 1976: 12.

[24] With the exceptions of *I.Sicily* 1038 = *IG* XIV 217 and *I.Sicily* 610 = *CIL* 12 2877.

[25] See also Diod. Sic. XIV.53.5, XIII.75.2.

[26] Verbrugghe 1976: 17 notes that there is no evidence for road building for this period, so it is unlikely that armies might have built roads for future use as they marched.

[27] Verbrugghe 1976: 12-13; Uggeri 2004: 13.

[28] Wilson 1990: 11 and Uggeri 2004: 13-14 have ruled out the possibility of river travel on a large scale due to water capacity and river length.

Akrae, Casmenae, possibly making a diversion to Kamarina, before making for the coast towards Gela, Agrigento and Eraclea Minoa. This itinerary might follow and reflect Syracuse's expansion inland during the 5th century BCE, and it also retraces the course of the Roman *via Selinuntina*.[29] The existence of this route is documented by literary sources reporting on the 4th – 3rd century conflicts involving the settlements along this road,[30] and by a Hellenistic inscription from Akrai (*I.Sicily* 1038 = *IG* XIV 217) mentioning 'a gate to Selinunte' (lines 45 and 49-50). Aerial photography also retraced the Gela-Agrigento section of this road, following the Geloan expansion in the South of Sicily.[31] A second long-distance east-westerly road is documented running from Palermo to Syracuse and emerging on the Tyrrhenian coast at Himera, before proceeding along the coast through Termini Imerese, Solunto and Palermo: sections of this road might have been used in the Sikel ambush (Thuc. VII.32) and by Hermocrates and his army after following the course of the Himera Settentrionale river valley (Diod. Sic. XIII.75.2). This river flows into the Tyrrhenian at Buonfornello, where the modern A20 motorway joins the A19 (the latter motorway retraces the Catania-Palermo route precisely). It is unclear whether another possible long-distance road might have connected the Tyrrhenian cities with Messina, hugging the coastline owing to the Madonie, Nebrodi and Peloritani mountain ranges.[32] Himilcon's army seems to have sailed to Messana (Diod. Sic. XIV.56.2), but it is otherwise hard to imagine what route Dionysius and Agathocles might have taken when engaged in military action along this

[29] Verbrugghe 1976: 37-38.
[30] Thuc. VI.65.1; Diod. Sic. XIII.86.5, XIII.89.3, XIII.108.2, XIV.47.6, XVI.9.4-6; Corn. Nep. *Dion.* V.3.
[31] Orlandini 1962; Adamesteanu 1963: 42-48; Verbrugghe 1976: 32.
[32] Before the mid-3rd century, it seems that Himera and Messana were orographically isolated (Verbrugghe 1976: 34-35).

northern coast (Diod. Sic. XIV.78.7, XX.56.3-4), as no other route cutting through the Nebrodi could have permitted the passing of armies.[33]

Having reviewed the main roads traversing Sicily latitudinally, I move on to the long-distance longitudinal roads in the island. These are rare in the east owing to the unsurpassable mountain ranges - and Etna: the road from Messana to Syracuse (Hdt. VII.54; Thuc. VI.65.1; Diod. Sic. XIV.103.1-2),[34] which then continued further South as the *via Helorina* (Thuc. VI.66.3, VI.70.4, VII.80.5), ran in fact along the shoreline. In central Sicily, the Salso-Imera Meridionale effectively connects the Sicilian hinterland directly with the southern coast. But in western Sicily, the state of long-distance north-south connectivity is quite different: great river valleys undercut the Madonie, the Monti Sicani and the Monti di Palermo and flow into the Mediterranean and the Tyrrhenian seas. It is through such key passages crossing Sicily coast to coast that Agrigento was linked to Palermo following the course of the Platani into the Sicilian hinterland and then proceeding through a system of valleys and crossings to Palermo, as documented by the single milestone of C. Aurelius Cotta dating to 252 BCE.[35] Himera was also connected to the hinterland through the Imera Settentrionale (or the Torto valley):[36] this might have been the route Theron's army took in 484/483 BCE to reach Himera from Agrigento, up the Platani river valley towards Santo Stefano Quisquina, and into the Torto valley at Castronuovo. The importance of this particular communication artery connecting the Mediterranean to the Tyrrhenian continued even after the destruction of Himera in 409 BCE, as the Carthaginians founded Termini

[33] Wilson 1990: 10, but contrast Cic. *Verr.* III.83.192 who mentions a road from Halaesa to Enna.
[34] Archaeological traces of cart and hoof tracks can be found near the Scala dei Greci in northern Syracuse (Verbrugghe 1976: 30).
[35] Verbrugghe 1976: 18-19; Prag 2006a: 735.
[36] Verbrugghe 1976: 41-42; Uggeri 2004: 18.

Imerese (398 BCE, Diod. Sic. XIII.79.8) close to ruined Himera. The other key communication route in western Sicily is the road following the course of the Belice river from Selinunte to the Piana di Partinico, passing Entella, Poggioreale and Monte Iato: this could have been the route taken by Hasdrubal's army as it marched from Selinunte to Palermo across the 'rough country around Selinunte' (Diod. Sic. XXIII.21). This system of river valleys plays a crucial role in connecting the settlements of the western Sicilian hinterland: the Belice river valley had been dotted with small settlements since prehistoric times.

My excursus on Sicily's landscape has traced a situation of natural and artificial regional connectivity, and singled out an area of particular density of such routes and connectedness in the western part of the island, effectively connecting the Mediterranean and Tyrrhenian seas as well as all the hinterland settlements. This situation could not be fully replicated in eastern Sicily, where the local orography made only coastal routes and the crossing of the Piana di Catania possible. I therefore propose western Sicily as a coherent and definable region due to its natural and artificial corridors of internal communication. As will become clearer in the discussion of the material evidence of western Sicilian sites along the routes so far discussed, this regional connectivity heavily influenced the histories and societies of these settlements, and played a key role in shaping the identities of the communities living along these communication and exchange routes.[37] This state of increased regional connectivity brings me to define western Sicily as an 'island within an island' worthy of selective focus in this thesis: I adopt as artificial confine for this research the road running between the two Greek settlements of Selinunte and Himera, which

[37] In recent years the scholarly conception of settlement landscape ('paesaggio insediativo', Belvedere 2010: 3-6) has shifted from notions of dominance and independence (common in the centre-periphery interpretation) to interconnectedness and inter-visibility. On this point, see also Fitzjohn 2007c.

connected two different seas and a diverse settlement landscape through the key communication network of the Belice river valley.

The complexity of Sicily's natural and man-made mainland communication routes is matched by the web of contacts the island maintained with the wider Mediterranean context. Sicily had played a key role in Mediterranean commercial routes since the second millennium BCE, engaging in the Mycenean trade routes of the Late Bronze Age and establishing early contacts with Euboea, the Levant, Cyprus and Malta.[38] While eastern Sicily communicated with Calabria, the Adriatic, Crete and the Aegean, the west looked towards Africa, Malta, Pantelleria, Sardinia, and Iberia (fig. 4).[39] Strabo VI.2 declares that from Lilybaeum it was possible, on a clear day, to count the ships moored in the harbour of Carthage. This may merely be a flight of fantasy, but the connection between the two locations is anything but imaginary. Arnaud has mapped the navigation routes documented in Roman times between western Sicily and the rest of the Mediterranean: a dense network emerges, connecting the island to Carthage, Cape Bon (Watan el-kibli), Aspis (Kelibia), Marettimo in the Egadi, Pantelleria (Cossyra), Malta (Melita), Cagliari (Caralis).[40]

This picture of trans-Mediterranean connectivity is also supported by the archaeological evidence: the analysis of 3,099 Punic *amphorae* used for *enchytrismos* burials in the eastern and western necropoleis of Himera dating between the second half of the 7th and the end of 5th centuries BCE has shown that this site functioned as an important node in the route between North Africa and Sardinia.[41] The 3rd, 4th and 5th releases of the *FACEM*

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[38] Vagnetti 1983: 174; Leighton 1999: 180; Tribulato 2012a: 11-14.
[39] Albanese Procelli 2003: 13.
[40] Arnaud 2005: 158, 162, 188-189. Arnaud's sources are primarily literary, mainly Pseudo Scylax, Strabo and Pliny. On ancient Mediterranean trade routes, see also Bietti Sestieri 1997: 396–398; Barker - Rasmussen 1998: 139–140; Bondì 2001; Bondì - Vallozza 2005; Bechtold 2007; Anello - Martínez-Pinna 2009; Bondì 2009; Acquaro et al. 2010; Nigro 2010; Bonnet 2014b.
[41] Bechtold - Vassallo 2018.

Project have also traced a dense web of commercial contacts with Carthage, Sardinia, and Campania.[42] These trans-Mediterranean connections were subject to change and development: for instance, Greek imports of drinking wares and transport *amphorae* increased over the 7th century across western Sicilian hinterland sites,[43] but by the end of the 6th century local productions and typologies had made their way into the repertoire.[44] Similarly, at Carthage the imports of Greek transport *amphorae* were substituted in the mid-6th century by the demand for fine-wares and transport *amphorae* imported from central Tyrrhenian Italy, western Sicily, and North Africa.[45] These changes in commercial contacts are guided and shaped by shifts in intra-community consumption habits and interactions, and are entwined with the historical circumstances and the local contexts which engender their development.[46] It is to the historical framing of western Sicily that my discussion now turns.

1.2. The historical setting

Starting in the late 8th century BCE, groups of Greek and Levantine origin, attracted by the island's resources and central position within Mediterranean trade networks, founded permanent polities across the island (which in turn often settled daughter-foundations). The settlement initiatives between c. 735 and 580 BCE are commonly referred to as the ancient 'colonisation' of Sicily.[47] From the late 8th century therefore, there came to coexist several

[42] Bechtold 2007, 2012, 2015a, 2013, 2018; Bechtold - Vassallo 2018.
[43] Bechtold 2015b.
[44] On transport *amphorae*, Bechtold 2015b.
[45] Bechtold 2013.
[46] Walsh 2014; Vassallo 2015.
[47] Thuc. VI.3–5. On the so-called colonisation of Sicily by Greek and Levantine settlers, see Freeman 1891; van Compernolle 1959; Woodhead 1962; Boardman 1964; Graham 1964; Miller 1970; Sjøqvist 1973; Manni 1976; Nenci – Vallet 1977-2013; Hans 1983; Pugliese Carratelli 1985; Malkin 1987; Asheri 1988; Domínguez 1989; Descœudres 1990; Acquaro et al. 1993; Malkin 1998; Lomas 2004; Hurst – Owen 2005; Mertens 2006; Tsetskhladze 2006; Garland 2014.

migrant and indigenous communities on the island. In western Sicily, Levantine settlers founded Palermo, Mozia, Lilybaeum and Solunto[48] alongside the Greek foundations of Himera and Selinunte.[49] These polities were in contact with the indigenous groups which had inhabited inland hilltop centres since the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods:[50] Eryx, Entella and Segesta were some of the largest cities,[51] but dozens of smaller villages dotted the hills and mountaintops of western Sicily (fig. 1).[52]

By the mid-6th century, all *ex-novo* foundations had been completed,[53] the second wave of migratory movements from Greece and the Levant to western Sicily had subsided,[54] and Sicily was fully integrated within the Mediterranean network of movement of goods and people, especially with the African, Italian and Greek markets. By the end of this 'second phase' of urban foundations in western Sicily, the interactions among Sicilian polities had cemented into established trade, communication and cultural networks:[55] with urbanisation at its peak, the first Sicilian coinage was minted in the second half of the 6th century. But

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[48] Thuc. VI.2.6. Pànormus ('Ziz' in Punic, Πάνορμος in Greek, modern Palermo) was founded on the north coast in the early 7th century BCE. Mozia (possibly 'Motye' in Punic, Μοτύα or Μοτύη in Greek, modern San Pantaleo) is a small island off the western coast which was settled at the end of the 8th century BCE. When Mozia was destroyed in 397 BCE by Dionysius I, Carthaginian settlers founded Lilybaeum at the site of modern Marsala. Solunto ('Kapara' in Punic, Σολόεις or Σολοῦς in Greek, modern Sòlanto) was founded in the early 7th century BCE. Refer to Tusa 1983; Acquaro et al. 1993; Di Stefano 1993a; Bondì – Dolce 2010; Bonnet 2004, 2009, 2014.

[49] Himera (Ἰμέρα) was founded on the northern coast of Sicily in c.649 BCE by Zankle and a clan of Syracuse exiles (Thuc. VI.5.1). Selinunte, or Selinous (Σελινοῦς, modern Selinunte) was founded by Megara Hyblaea on the south-western coast in 651 (Diod. Sic. XIII.59.4) or 628 BCE (Thuc. VI.4.2, preferred date). Vassallo 2005; Tusa 2010; Iannucci et al. 2015; Vassallo 2018.

[50] Tusa 1983; Leighton 1996b, 1999: 11–146; De Angelis 2003b: 9; Fitzjohn 2007c.

[51] Thuc. VI.2.3. Segesta, or Egesta (Ἔγεστα) was settled on Monte Barbaro; Erice, or Eryx (Ἔρυξ) is located on the summit of Monte Erice. Entella (Ἔντελλα) is located on Rocca di Entella. Tusa 1991; De Vido 1997; Albanese Procelli 2003.

[52] Di Stefano 1990; Di Stefano 1993b; Leighton 1996b, 1999; Albanese Procelli 2003; Spatafora – Vassallo 2002; Vassallo 2007.

[53] Except for Lilybaeum, founded after the destruction of Mozia in 397 BCE. De Angelis 2016: 49-50, 66-74.

[54] Garland 2014.

[55] Urquhart 2009, 2010; Balco 2012; Ward 2018.

this was also a period of socio-political turmoil and warfare:[56] Carthage and Athens' claims to territorial hegemony over this region began to be expressed more aggressively during the 5th century. Disputes arose between the western Sicilian settlements for control of strategic communication routes, Mediterranean and Tyrrhenian trade networks, and precious natural resources. As a result, the socio-political make-up of many settlements was altered, reinforced, or annihilated. After the failure of the Athenian expedition in 413 BCE, the Carthaginians' second expedition to Sicily (409 – 405 BCE) led to the destruction of Himera in 409 BCE, while Selinunte passed under Carthaginian control in 409 BCE (Agrigento and Gela were also razed). Many settlements in the western Sicilian hinterland were also destroyed or disappeared at this time.[57] The treaty of 405 BCE established Carthaginian control over the western part of the island, but in 398 BCE Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, waged another war against Carthage, destroying Mozia and Solunto (397 BCE). A new treaty put a stop to the fighting in 374 BCE, establishing the Belice river as the limit to Carthage's political and economic hegemony over western Sicily. Over the course of the 5th century, these processes that would eventually give rise to the formalisation of the Carthaginian *eparcheia* over western Sicily in the late 4th century BCE.[58]

It is during the late Archaic and Classical periods therefore that the earliest dynamics of trans-Mediterranean contact, a web of interactions which had been first threaded with the arrival of the Mycenaean traders in the Middle Bronze Age, matured into new modes of interplay, rooted in altered historical, geographical and social contexts.[59] Certain key moments of this rapidly changing historical landscape were captured by the historical

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[56] Asheri 1988; De Vincenzo 2013.
[57] Vassallo 2000.
[58] Souza 2014.
[59] Antonaccio 2005: 97. For an overview of Bronze and Iron Age Sicily, see De Angelis 2016: 33-48.

writings of Greek authors. Thucydides dedicated Chapters 2 - 5 of Book VI to the so-called 'Sicilian Archaeology', outlining the history of the island (the Athenian military expedition to Sicily in 415 - 413 BCE and its disastrous fate is expounded in Thuc. VI - VII). Alongside the literary sources, the western Sicilian epigraphic and material evidence under detailed discussion in this thesis also attests processes of change, adaptation, selection, abandonment and endurance in this period.

The late Archaic and Classical periods constitute a privileged viewpoint for investigating how the historical processes outlined above left their mark on the identities of the communities caught up in these events.[60] I will study almost two centuries of funerary and epigraphic evidence (some known and studied for decades, other freshly excavated or now in need of reappraisal), investigating how practices and assemblages were adapted and altered to local contexts and historical circumstances. I am not suggesting that such processes of interaction ceased entirely in the late 4th century BCE. However, the increasing formalisation of the Carthaginian hegemony over western Sicily give rise to altogether different dynamics from the second half of the 4th century: the rise of a single political authority constitutes a separate socio-historical moment, which lies beyond the scope of this thesis.[61] I now proceed to examine past and current approaches to the agents and processes active

[60] Antonaccio 2001: 125. Iron Age and Hellenistic Sicily have also been the focus of a renewed season of research, e.g., Leighton 1999; Kolb - Tusa 2001; Hodos 2006, 2009, 2010b, 2010c; Dench 2007; Fitzjohn 2007b; Prag – Quinn 2013; Prag 2013a, 2013b, 2019.

[61] In this thesis I will not be addressing the notion of a 'Sicilian identity' (Sicilians calling themselves Sicilian in antiquity). This issue has been examined in depth by Antonaccio 2001, Harrison 2000 and Prag 2009b with reference to the differentiation between the *Sikeliotai* (the Greek settlers in Sicily) and the *Sikelioi* (the native Sikels) (Thuc. VI.34) which was engendered by the conflicts between the Greek settled *poleis* and Carthage in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, Syracuse's war with Athens in the late 5th century, and corporate self-promotion in Panhellenic sanctuaries such as Olympia. These dynamics become clear in 4th century eastern Sicily (where the ethnic group of the Sikels was believed to be settled, Sammartano 1998; Leighton 1999: 215-217; Albanese Procelli 2003), and the distinction broke down gradually (Diod.Sic.V.6.5 with Prag 2013b) until it was completely invisible in the Latin term '*Siculus'*.

in the region and period. I will review whence these approaches originate, what their weaknesses might be, and where lays the scope for methodological improvement.

2.

Group identities in Sicilian studies

Introduction

Over the last 50 years, the relation between the historical record and collective identities in multicultural contexts has gained increasing relevance in current approaches to the ancient world.[62] This growing scholarly trend was a welcome development within the scope of Sicilian studies (among many others): since the 19th century scholars had envisaged the indigenous Mediterranean communities coming into contact with Greek immigrants as unquestioningly adopting Greek cultural practices and unproblematically accepting the ideological notions accompanying Greek material assemblages. This process of unidirectional adoption, or 'Hellenization', was understood as engendered by the process of Greek permanent settlement abroad, or 'colonisation' movements, which brought together groups commonly defined in broad ethnic terms as the 'Greeks' (the colonisers) and the 'others' (the colonised) – the Levantine element often being left out altogether.

[62] See Baitinger – Hodos 2016: 16 with bibliography.

The notions of 'colonisation' and 'Hellenization', like that of 'ethnicity' in an essentialist sense, have all been critically reassessed over recent decades, and new interpretative perspectives are now available, borrowed especially from Postcolonial theories. In this Chapter, I will show that certain interpretative frameworks, particularly those enforcing blanket labels upon the agents, processes and evidence from this region, still cast a long shadow on the study of collective identities in the written and material record of western Sicily.[63] I will provide examples of these enduring yet unsatisfactory approaches to identifying identities in western Sicily in very recent scholarship, and call for a profound reappraisal of the terms, methodology and labels applied to this region and its processes.

2.1. Sicily after Colonialism

The 'colonisation' of Sicily is a common albeit inaccurate definition of the process by which groups of settlers from Greece and the Levant migrated permanently to Sicily (as well as to other areas of the Mediterranean and Europe) during the 8th - 6th centuries BCE.[64] The main reason for distrusting the term is that the 19th century classical scholarship which first formulated and studied the wider process of (especially) Greek permanent settlement abroad was deeply embedded in the contemporary circumstances of the British, French, Dutch, German and Italian colonisations. Imperialist bias and political agendas have historically influenced the terminology,[65] assumptions and interpretations concerning the

[63] Luraghi 1994; Millino 2000; De Angelis 2016.

[64] The first contacts between Greek and Levantine migrant communities and Sicily had already commenced in the 10th century (Malkin 1998; Papadopoulos 2001; Antonaccio 2005), and movements of permanent settlement abroad did not cease in the 6th century (Zuchtriegel 2017). However, given the scope and focus of the present work, the so-called *Grande Colonizzazione* is given priority in this discussion.

[65] See especially Freeman 1891 (Shepherd 2005a, 2005c for critique) and Dunbabin 1948 (De Angelis 1998 and Trigger 1989 for critique).

cultural contacts between indigenous and immigrant groups in the ancient Mediterranean (Sicily included),[66] eventually establishing the discourse of ancient colonisation as an authentic sub-narrative within ancient history.[67]

Discussions of the Greek colonisation in Sicily are emblematic of this trend. The literature-driven, grand-narrative of colonisation enforced a mono-directional 'Hellenization' model upon the interpretation of the interactions between settlers and other indigenous or migrant communities, creating highly problematic labels for the people, processes and evidence they are meant to describe ('Hellenised', 'colonisers', 'colonised').[68] Following the Hellenising acculturation model, the superiority of the (Greek) colonists was imposed over the passive and subaltern colonised, the latter being on the receiving end of the Greek 'cultural package', whereas the Phoenician element was largely ignored within the colonial equation.[69] This interpretation, which may be summarised by John Boardman's statement 'In the west the Greeks had nothing to learn, much to teach',[70] was to endure with few variations up until the '80s,[71] when the Hellenization model and the colonialist dynamics were both critically called into question by scholars of the Postcolonial era.

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[66] On the so-called colonisation of Sicily by Greek and Levantine settlers, see van Compernolle 1959; Woodhead 1962; Boardman 1964; Graham 1964; Miller 1970; Sjøqvist 1973; Manni 1976; Nenci – Vallet 1977-2013; Pugliese Carratelli 1985; Malkin 1987; Asheri 1988; Domínguez 1989; Descœudres 1990; Acquaro et al. 1993; Malkin 1998; Lomas 2004; Hurst – Owen 2005; Mertens 2006; Tsetskhladze 2006; Garland 2014.

[67] On the perception of Greek colonisation as a 'subplot' in the main narrative of Greek Archaic and Classical culture, see Antonaccio 2005 and van Dommelen 2012a: 394. On the colonisation of Sicily, refer also to Tomasi di Lampedusa 1958: 161.

[68] 'Hellenization', understood as the diffusion of Greek culture in terms of cultural imperialism (see Bowersock 1990). See also Baitinger – Hodos 2016: 16-18. Any library catalogue search for 'Sicily' in the ancient historiy and archaeology section will reveal how scholarship largely interprets 'Sicily' as 'Greek Sicily'. This attitude is true from Dunbabin's 'The western Greeks' 1948, to Bernabò Brea's 'Sicily before the Greeks' 1957, to De Angelis' 'Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily' 2017.

[69] Cf. However Pais 1894; Pace: 1935, vol 1: 90, who criticised these (largely Anglo-Saxon) approaches as being overly focussed on colony – mother city relationships, or being too textually-driven.

[70] Boardman 1964: 203, also in the reprint 1999: 190.

[71] The colonialist bias and Hellenism model is especially evident in the work by Freeman 1891: 5-6, 11-12, 21; Dunbabin 1948: vi-vii, 1957: 5; Woodhead 1962: 17. Cf. Holm 1870-1898: 75. Dunbabin

Postcolonialism cannot be defined as a single entity. It is a literary theory, an activist political project, an ethical perspective, a collection of literary writings, a cultural analysis, and a critical framework for exploring the histories of colonialism and neo-colonialism.[72] Its applicability to any field of research with epistemic links to imperialism and perception of Otherness guaranteed its interdisciplinary outlook, for it stood at the crossroads of debates upon race, literature, economics, gender, politics and language.[73] Postcolonialism was the product of a changing post-World War Two world, as much as it was grounded in an increasingly globalised reality.[74] One of its flagship causes was to challenge, problematise and supersede the western binary-construed perspectives enforced through the politics, rhetoric, and violence of colonial domination. To do so, it examined the modes and strategies of 'representation of otherness', and criticises the distortion and stereotyping tactics which had guaranteed western dominance and Oriental subservience.[75] Postcolonialism gave a voice to previously ignored people by promoting the subaltern to the subject of indigenous theories and naming the dominated an agent of history in their full right.[76] A natural consequence of the deconstruction of binary oppositions and one of Postcolonialism's hallmarks was the

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and Boardman however pioneered a focus on the archaeological evidence of Greek colonisation in Sicily, rather than a solely textually driven approach. See De Angelis 2016: 4-25.

[72] As a specific field of studies, Postcolonialism may be traced back to the late 1970s from Fanon 1961, Said 1978 and Rushdie 1981 but many of its canonical texts and frameworks come a decade or more later (See the works of Bhabha 1994; Williams - Chrisman 1994; Ashcroft 1998; Gandhi 1998; Spivak 1999; Chakrabarty 2000; Young 2003).

[73] Ashcroft et al. 1989.

[74] A world which witnessed the decolonisation processes of the major empires (the British, Spanish, and French empires most notably), the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s, the 1980s oil glut, nationalist insurgencies (in Cuba, Vietnam, Bolivia for instance), the 'creation' of the Third and Fourth Worlds, among other historical events and processes (Young 2003). See McLuhan 1962; Appadurai 1986; Watson 1997; Steger 2009; Behdad 2005.

[75] Said 1978; Bhabha 1994. Said's focus on the 'Oriental' was then applied to other oppressed colonised people in other geographical locations as well.

[76] Ashcroft et al. 1989; Weaver 2007; Bignall 2010.

promotion of ambivalence, acceptance of alterity or marginality, and a denouncement of cultural hegemony or canonical assumptions.

Postcolonialism was received by classical scholarship as an accessible strategy, an analytical tool, an expanded theory of cultural encounters for dealing with issues concerning cultural diversity and power relations.[77] Postcolonial studies were to lastingly alter the perception and interpretation of colonisation in Sicily and the ancient world: the concepts of élite and subaltern, centre and periphery, coloniser and colonised, marginalised and connected, self and others have since been radically re-evaluated, and this change in perspective has left a deep and lasting mark on the way Archaic and Classical Sicily is studied as a whole.[78] A growing sense of unease with ancient colonisation's implied equation with modern colonisation began to surface in the 1980s, and the very applicability of the term 'colonisation' to the process of settlement in Sicily was contested.[79] New frameworks for understanding cultural contact among western Sicilian communities started to emphasise the processes of accommodation, confrontation, and creation arising from the permanent settlement of Greeks and Levantine immigrants and their interactions with the indigenous Sicilian

[77] Chronologically: Lyons - Papadopulos 2002; Gosden 2004; Malkin 2004, 2011; Hurst - Owen 2005; Hodos 2006; Shepherd 2005b, 2009; van Dommelen - Knapp 2010; van Dommelen 2012a.

[78] On the general methodological re-evaluation of ancient colonisation, see Descoeudres – Trendall 1990; van Dommelen 1997, 2002, 2011; Lyons - Papadopoulos 2002; Gosden 2004; Malkin 2004; Hurst – Owen 2005; Dietler 2010; Tsetskhladze 2006, 2008; Fitzjohn 2007a; Lombardo – Frisone 2009; Pappa 2013; Zuchtriegel 2017.

[79] Graham 1964 and Morel 1984 were among the first scholars to begin deconstructing the colonialist assumptions dominating scholarship on Greek colonisation. Osborne 1998 (for the Greek world) and Niemeyer 1990 (regarding Phoenician settlements and expansions) refused to use the term 'colonisation' at all. More recently, the term 'colonialism' and its derivatives have been reinstated owing to their potential for fostering wider dialogues across space and time (e.g. van Dommelen 2002, 2012b). Scholars have also attempted to rehabilitate the term by means of strict definitions within introductory chapters (e.g. Hodos 2006: 19-22); while others have preferred to coin new or adapt existing terminology (e.g. De Angelis 2010: 20-21).

communities.[80] The mono-directional process of Hellenization was contested, and scholars began to move away from the dualism of colonial encounters, emphasising instead the creative processes visible in material culture, and focusing on local processes and social interaction on a regional level.[81]

There are many examples of these new directions of study. Albanese Procelli has examined in detail the artefacts, practices and other forms of expression of identity used by the Elymians, Sikans and Sikels,[82] and proposed the autonomy of these identity groups from any mono-directional Greek influence.[83] Similarly, Hodos has interpreted the contacts between immigrants and natives from an explicitly Sicilian perspective, and has suggested that Greek cultural influence did not impact the indigenous populations in such a transformational way as had previously been believed. Instead, strategic selection and conscious appropriations guided the indigenous peoples' behaviour.[84] A growing interest in terminology has also emerged in recent studies:[85] Spatafora has discussed the 'archaeology of encounters' taking place in western Sicily, and stressed the importance of local contexts and practices (inhabitation patterns, construction techniques, urban settlement organisation, cult and burial practices).[86] After examining the material evidence of several indigenous settlements, she concludes that identities dissolve into 'hybridities', which can still be tested

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[80] Hartog 1988; Malkin 2004; Sommer 2012: 236; van Dommelen 2012a; Cusumano 1994; Albanese Procelli 2003; De Angelis 2003a; Leighton 2000.
[81] Descoeudres - Trendall 1990; Shepherd 1995; Gosden 2004; Antonaccio 2005; De Vido 2000: xiii; Antonetti - De Vido 2006b: 144 n. 14, 146; Dietler 2010.
[82] See for example Albanese Procelli 2003: 227: 'È pericoloso considerare la presenza di oggetti di produzione greca, se non associata ad altri 'segni' probanti, come sintomo di acculturazione. [...] Allo stesso modo, la presenza di importazioni greche anche precoci non sta a significare necessariamente cambiamenti di stili di vita'.
[83] Albanese Procelli 2003, 2010. Trombi 1993, 2003, 2015 has also published a specialised collection of indigenous material from western Sicily (Agrigento, Himera, Gela and Selinunte).
[84] Hodos 2000, 2005, 2006: 129-133.
[85] See also Cusumano 2009.
[86] Spatafora 2010d. See also Spatafora – Vassallo 2002.

for evidence of an indigenous sense of belonging and, *in tandem*, of integration.[87] Finally, a 'Postcolonial awareness' may also be observed in the last thirty years of conference proceedings, specialised journals, edited volumes and doctoral theses focusing on dynamics of contact in ancient Sicily.[88]

It was not only the agency of indigenous populations to be brought to the fore: once the Hellenising and the equally damaging Orientalist bias had been denounced,[89] the Phoenician element was also re-evaluated as a central element within the cultural exchange networks unfolding in Sicily.[90] Archaeological evidence emerging from Mozia, the excavations of the Palermo necropolis and the discovery of the archaic settlement at Solunto has profoundly complicated our understanding of 'Phoenician' settlements.[91] A renewed interest in Phoenician history and the construction of Punic identities in the western Mediterranean has emerged,[92] and has been reinforced by landmark exhibitions of Phoenician artefacts (such as the 1988 exhibition *I Fenici* in Palazzo Grassi in Venice and the 2019 *Carthago* exhibition in the Colosseum), and driven by an exponential increase in the study and excavation of Phoenician *necnon* Punic archaeological sites (as emerges clearly in the Sicilian *Archaeological Reports* of 1996-2000 and 2001-2005).[93] Recent scholarship by Quinn and van Dommelen has revolutionised the study of the evidence for and the conception of 'Phoenician' identity across the Mediterranean.[94] In sum, over the last thirty years scholarship

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[87] Spatafora 2010d.
[88] Smith – Serrati 2000; Angeli Bertinelli - Donati 2006; Anello - Martínez-Pinna 2009; Ulf 2009; De Angelis 2010; Giangiulio 2010a; Urquhart 2010; Modrall 2011; Alfieri – Struffolino 2014; Bérard 2014; Baitinger 2016.
[89] See especially Said 1978.
[90] Niemeyer 1982, 1990; Moscati 1988; Vella 1996, 2014; Aubet 2001; Bondì 2014; van Dommelen 1997, 2014; Quinn 2017.
[91] Vassallo 2019.
[92] Quinn - Vella 2014.
[93] De Angelis 2001; Modrall 2011: 7-8.
[94] van Dommelen 2014; Quinn 2017.

regarding the cultural contacts taking place in Sicily between Greek and Levantine migrant and indigenous communities has undergone a profound and welcome change in perspective,[95] and archaeological discoveries have supported the new approaches to understanding the western Sicilian dynamics of contact.

2.2. Sicily after Postcolonialism

Postcolonial theories certainly reminded scholars that there is no single mode or outcome of initiatives of permanent settlement abroad,[96] and returned agency to the indigenes by recognising how they actively incorporated foreign elements on their own terms.[97] Nevertheless, these theories concealed methodological weaknesses of their own.[98] Could the terms and processes describing modern colonialisms apply to the Mediterranean world in the first millennium BCE?[99] Could Postcolonial theories, developed to discuss modern literary evidence for colonialism, compensate for their lack of focus on the material record?[100] Could terminological accuracy be pursued when terms and concepts borrowed from other

[95] A precursor of this attitude may be identified in the first *Atti del Convegno di Taranto* of 1961, which focussed on Greek and Italic people in Magna Grecia. See also Ciaceri 1894, 1911, 1927; Cusumano 1994. For discussion, see Gosden 2004: 82-113; Hodos 2000, 2005, 2006; De Angelis 2010; Urquhart 2010; Spatafora 2010d, 2012 a, 2012b, 2014a; Modrall 2011; Balco 2012).
[96] de la Genière 1978; Antonaccio 2001: 126.
[97] Domìnguez 1989; Shepherd 1999; Antonaccio 2001.
[98] Malkin 2004; Hurst - Owen 2005; De Angelis 2009: 49–54; Dietler 2010. The critiques advanced against Postcolonialism in the field of archaeology and ancient history were not entirely dissimilar to those put forward by critics of Postcolonial theory *tout court* (Gupta - Ferguson 1992; Shohat 1992; Weaver 2007). In particular, the a-historical, universalising, depoliticising effects of the post-colonial and the problematic applicability of the term were discussed by Shohat's 1992 pioneering critique.
[99] Gosden 2004: 3; Purcell 2005: 133. The relevance of most postmodernist theories to specific periods of time (post-WW2) and specific places (Third and Fourth World countries) and specific discourses (western rhetoric rather than actual rehabilitation of former colonies) was seen as problematic by even the Postcolonial thinkers and activists themselves (hence the coinage of the term post-colonialism to indicate the frameworks applied to the specific temporal lapse between World War II and the present day).
[100] van Dommelen - Rowlands 2012.

academic fields (sometimes laden with their own ideological agendas) were applied to specific ancient cultural phenomena?[101] The lack of so-called 'archaeological operationalisation' of novel concepts brought forward by Postcolonialism (such as hybridity, creolisation, acculturation) hindered some of these terms from acquiring an operational value when applied to archaeological contexts, thus reducing them to mere metaphors or circuitous descriptions.[102] Some of the most contentious terminological and conceptual frameworks applied to western Sicily by recent scholarship are the notions of 'middle ground', 'hybridity', and 'globalisation'.

The concept of 'middle ground' was first discussed with regard to the Mediterranean world by Malkin,[103] who was inspired by White's 1991 work on the Pays d'en Haut in North America. The notion has since been widely used to understand spaces and dynamics of cultural contact, as it brings to the fore notions of agency and self-determination of indigenous communities in a situation of inter-group contact.[104] It also avoids misleading polarisations such as Greek - barbarian or colonised – coloniser, suggesting instead a situation of equality and mediation among communities in contact,[105] while stressing the often creative outcomes of cultural encounters resulting from the adaptation of adopted customs.[106] However, Antonaccio has noted that the middle ground (as originally theorised by White in 1991) cannot be applied wholesale to the entire experience of Greek settlement abroad and

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[101] van Pelt 2013: 2.
[102] Giangiulio 2010a: 13-14; Stockhammer et al. 2012: 48. Terminological borrowing (or 'word-magic', Finley 1976) is not a viable long-term solution, for the risk is either of founding scholarly 'fashions', or constantly coining and justifying new terms (for example, see Stockhammer 2013 for 'entanglement').
[103] Malkin 1998, 2002.
[104] See Bhabha's 1994 conceptualisation of 'third space' as a metaphorical location for creativity similar to the middle ground.
[105] van Dommelen 2002. See Malkin 2011 for a discussion of the western Sicilian Middle ground.
[106] Malkin 2002 emphasises processes of adaptation taking place among the communities of coastal Campania to pattern Greek - Italian encounters of the 10th century.

their interactions with indigenous groups: White's original theorisation of the middle ground was actually built upon *misunderstanding* among communities, and truly unique conditions had contributed to the creation of a middle ground in the North American Upper Countries.[107]

Middle grounds are closely linked to the concept of 'hybridity',[108] one of the most exploited exports of Postcolonialism in the field of ancient history and archaeology. Hybridity has been defined as the outcome of the interaction taking place within a colonial situation in which structures of power have been in some way introduced, either playing out in the actual colonial context or retrospectively interpreted as such.[109] Power, asymmetry, sociocultural relations and exchanges between agents (at least one of which is displaced from its geographic origin) are the lowest common denominators in the Postcolonial discourse on hybridity. The hybrid, in its loosest sense, is an object, a context or an agent which cannot be ascribed to any pre-existing categorisation available.[110] Unlike the middle ground, which is built upon the constructive misunderstanding of another group's cultural practices, hybridity involves the intentional absorption of another group's cultural identities. Despite the concept's theoretical versatility, hybridity's value as a tool for describing the outcomes of cultural interaction has often been called into question, one of the main reasons being that the notion implies an underlying purity of two perceived entities pre-existing up until

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[107] Antonaccio 2013: 241-242. See also Giangiulio 2010b.
[108] Antonaccio 2003, 2005, 2009.
[109] The concept was introduced to Postcolonial theories primarily by the work of Homi Bhabha. Bhabha politically defines hybridity as 'the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects' (Bhabha 1994: 112). The colonial hybrid finds itself rooted in the ambivalent 'third space' which Leela Gandhi has interpreted as site of 'communication, negotiation and, by implication, translation. It is in this indeterminate zone... where anti-colonial politics first begins to articulate its agenda' (Gandhi 1998: 130-131).
[110] Stockhammer 2013: 12.

the moment of contact. In this sense, hybridity becomes a third, artificial, unclassifiable category 'in-between' other categories regarded as 'pure', and essentially presupposes a situation of interaction between entities which were originally isolated from each other. Racism, generalisations and xenophobia let themselves in through the back door of the discipline whose guiding principle has been that of denying any discourse of oppositional purity-impurity.[111] To complicate matters further, hybridity may be only retrospectively meaningful, especially when used as a tool to interpret ancient contexts: how groups and individuals of the past actually perceived and constructed the identities we today consider hybrid could have been a response to the subjective agenda and the local context (in both geographical and historical terms) of the agent(s) in question. Retrospective labelling can be misleading, and interactions rarely give rise to a homogeneous blend of cultures. Space must be made for invention, self-representation and the value of differing heritages.[112]

Another highly successful Postcolonial model is that of 'Glocalisation', which uses globalisation as a framework for understanding the state of interconnectedness of the ancient Mediterranean.[113] When applied to the study of identities in 'colonial' contexts, the glocal model is capable of 'emphasizing not only the articulation of identity of the colonised but also that of the identity of regional colonisers in contrast to previously held mono-cultural concepts, each as part of the paradoxical phenomenon of the globalization process'.[114] The

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[111] Stockhammer 2013: 12-13 calls this impasse 'the double bias of the hybrid'.
[112] van Dommelen 1997; Malkin 2002; Gosden 2004; Antonaccio 2005; Hodos 2010a.
[113] First suggested by Witcher 2000; see also Hodos 2009, 2010a; Kistler 2012; Baitinger - Hodos 2016. Globalization 'does not suggest a unified world society or culture, but rather comprises sets of practices or bodies of knowledge that transgress cultural or national ideas and are shared between those interacting at the global level. At the same time, however, these commonly understood global traits also serve to highlight differences between those cultures that engage with them, for the global commonalities concurrently provoke the sharper delineation of boundaries between the involved groups' (Featherstone 1995: 114).
[114] Hodos 2009: 222.

applicability of the 'paradox of globalisation' to the ancient Mediterranean does seem appealing and has yielded very interesting results,[115] However, it has been accused of flattening the discussion of local contexts and specificities due to its explicit preference of global phenomena over local contexts.[116]

So, 'can Classicists creatively and constructively contribute to the discourses with which they engage, rather than simply consume the approaches formulated for and in other times and places?'.[117] The question posed by Antonaccio is a legitimate one: despite the notions of middle ground, hybridity and the glocal offering much needed alternatives to the stereotyped and mono-directional Hellenization process and its colonial context,[118] these notions have methodological pitfalls of their own. Indeed, all three perspectives acknowledge alterity, but they equally assume that these heterogenous situations may only arise using homogeneous cultural groups as a premise.[119] Postcolonial perspectives appear therefore to have failed to offer viable and unproblematic alternatives to the previous set of biased labels ('Hellenised', 'colonised'), and have instead imposed a set of new labels ('middle ground', 'hybrid', 'glocal') upon already contentious ancient situations. Indeed, both colonialist and postcolonialist labels for western Sicily partake in what has been defined as 'colonial dualism': while acknowledging the plurality and diversity of agents, processes and outcomes, both still assume homogeneous, pure, and essentially defined ethnic groups as the basic ingredients of cultural interaction. As a result, an authentic, undiluted 'Greek', 'Phoenician' and 'indigenous-Elymian' identity is still taken to be the point of departure of any

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[115] See Hodos 2006 especially.
[116] Morris 2003, Ward 2018. The same critique has been advanced to the use of 'network theory' to the ancient world, see Malkin 2011; Knappett 2005, 2011.
[117] Antonaccio 2013.
[118] Antonaccio 2005; Baitinger - Hodos 2016.
[119] Crielaard - Burgers 2011: 86-87; Zuchtriegel 2017.

interaction, be the result the Hellenised or the hybrid. Ethnicity may no longer be considered an essentialist quality of groups, but the use of blanket ethnic labels still remains. How useful are these ethnically assumed groupings, and what information do they offer concerning the way people on the ground felt about and presented their identities? I will now review in detail the assumption which sees ethnicity at the basis of group identity formation, the theoretical discussions whence this interpretative model arose, and its current impact on Sicilian scholarship.

2.3. Sicily in progress

Ethnicity is arguably the identity which has received the most extensive scholarly attention.[120] Ethnicity first made its way into 20th century archaeological discourse through the influence of work done in the social sciences, literary studies, history and anthropology.[121] Once the concept had been purged of earlier racialist and essentialist conceptions which linked it to presumed biological descent (e.g. race, nation, environmental determinism),[122] new discussions could commence, examining the role of ethnic boundaries, the creation of imagined communities, the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism, the existence of certain indications of the existence of ethnic groups, the relation between trade and ethnicity, and more generally the interplay of emic and etic components in the construction of ethnicity.

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[120] van Dommelen 1997, 2002; Diaz-Andreu 2005; Insoll 2007.
[121] E.g. Eriksen 1993; Bhabha 1994; Jones 1997: 61.
[122] Barth 1969; Bourdieu 1977; Anderson 1983; Peet 1985; Smith 1986; Gellner 1987; Hobsbawm 1990; Aker et al. 2010; Fabietti 2013.

These debates directly aligned with the Postcolonial narratives outlined earlier,[123] and the study of ancient ethnic identities began to move away from the 'culture-history' paradigms and the 'pots equals people' cultural axiom (both developed in the early 20th century).[124] With notions of self-definition emerging in the late 20th century, the changeable and multifaceted nature of identities came to the fore as well:[125] Along with these new theoretical advances, the thorny question of how to define ethnicity archaeologically, and the problematic determination of essential elements pinning down ethnic identities in the archaeological record also emerged. In the context of the history of the ancient Mediterranean world, the issue of the archaeological visibility of ethnicity emerged most clearly in the work of Hall and Jones.[126]

Jones' publication established a theoretical link between material culture and social identity, thus overcoming the essentialist 'pots equals people' interpretation of the cultural-historical approach. Jones also warned that archaeologists should be wary of assuming that degrees of difference and similarity in material culture could be used as straightforward evidence of identity, interaction, or other dynamics.[127] Hall's work constituted an overdue analysis of the development of ancient Greek identity, observed across a wide range of evidence (literary, archaeological, linguistic, anthropological). Writing as a historian, Hall argued that it was impossible to define ethnicity exclusively based on archaeological signalling and without the guidance of literary sources.[128] He suggested that only the concepts of

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[123] Sherratt 2005: 25-26; Mac Sweeney 2009: 102-104 for discussion.
[124] E.g. Childe 1929. For discussion, see Hall 1997: 129, 2002: 19-22; Jones 1997; Antonaccio 2005: 102, 2009: 33; Diaz-Andreu 2005; Sherratt 2005: 25-26; Watkins 2008; Hodos 2009.
[125] Barth 1969; Bourdieu 1977; Anderson 1983; Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1996; Sherratt 2005: 30-32
[126] Jones 1997; Hall 1997, 2002. See Müller 2014 for an overview of recent discussions of the traceability of ethnic identities in archaeological evidence.
[127] Jones 1997.
[128] Hall 1997, 2002, 2007.

descent and ancestral territory (factual or fictitious) worked as *criteria* for ethnic identity, and accounts of these were to be found in the literary sources. He duly added that archaeological evidence could not be dismissed altogether, as it could still offer distinguishing - not determining - *indicia* (such as language and religion).[129]

Jones and Hall's publications were followed by the landmark collection of studies edited by Malkin, Derks and Roymans, Dougherty and Kurke, and Lomas.[130] Soon a multitude of specialised studies on ancient ethnic identities flooded the field, significantly advancing our understanding of the way ancient ethnicities were constructed, the relationship between ethnicity and material culture; and how ethnicity could be traced under different circumstances and within different assemblages of evidence.[131] Adopting a more compromising approach than Hall's, Morgan has attempted to strike a balance between emic and etic interpretations in the identification of ethnicity, 'acknowledging the different perspectives they offer without assuming either to be true'.[132] She suggests that *ethne* (regional identities construed by peoples) could be observed by combining archaeological and historical sources, and by paying attention to the ways material culture was used by ethnic groups to signal ethnic boundaries already defined by literary constructs.[133] Antonaccio followed up on this idea, proposing the concept of 'ethnic resonance' embedded within pottery functions as key

[129] Some of Hall's early arguments are still open to debate, e.g. his downplaying of the role of archaeology in tracing ethnicity and his excessive trust in the written record. Cf. Lomas 2004; Morgan 2009: 18-20. For discussion, see Antonaccio 2001, 2005; Lucy 2005; Shepherd 2005b.
[130] Derks - Roymans 2009; Dougherty - Kurke 2003; Lomas 2004; Malkin 2001, 2014; Dommelen - Knapp 2010
[131] Most significantly: Antonaccio 2009, 2010; Baitinger - Hodos 2016; Burmeister - Müller 2006; Dietler 2010; Dommelen - Knapp 2010; Fitzjohn 2011; Gruen 2011; Hales - Hodos 2010; Isaac 2004; Mac Sweeney 2009; Morgan 1999, 2009; Mullen 2013; Prag 2006b; Luraghi 2008; Sassine 2014; Sherratt 2005; Xella 2014.
[132] Morgan 1999.
[133] Morgan 2001, 2003.

to tracing identities.[134] She argued against Hall's restrictive outlook: 'Ethnicity is not reducible to descent and language, though these are often important'.[135]

Certain contributions have also discussed the evidence from Sicily specifically. Shepherd has studied the emergence of regional group identities expressed through burial practices in eastern Sicily, moving away from the traditionally conceived Hellenic ones.[136] Antonaccio has focussed on the interplay of colonisation and ethnicity playing out in Sicily by examining the pottery assemblages of eastern and central Sicilian settlements.[137] Lomas has edited a volume dealing specifically with the identity of the Greek 'colonists' in the western Mediterranean – Sicily included;[138] and Malkin has examined how notions of ethnicity changed before and after the arrival of the Greeks in Italy, emphasising the role of myths in the written, spoken and iconographic form in the construction of ethnic identities.[139]

Another fruitful line of discussion emerging from modern discussions of ancient ethnicity has been the scholarly reassessment of the ancient agendas underlying ethnic statements, especially when asserted in literary sources.[140] For example, Bonnet has suggested that Thucydides' discussion of the Phoenician arrival in Sicily served as the staging of a 'colonial memory', aimed at to contextualising the historical circumstances surrounding the decline of the Athenian empire in the post-Periclean context.[141] Bonnet emphasises that the Greek literary sources (Thucydides *in primis*) were informed by historical contingencies unfolding at the time of writing, influencing narratives and projecting the socio-political

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[134] Antonaccio 2001.
[135] Antonaccio 2001: 124-125.
[136] Shepherd 1993, 1995, 2005b.
[137] Antonaccio 2001, 2005.
[138] Lomas 2003.
[139] Malkin 1998.
[140] On this point, see Gruen 1993, 2011; Isaac 2004; Sherratt 2005; Bonnet 2009; Martin 2017; Quinn 2018. See also on the self-fashioning of a collective memory Luraghi 2003, 2008, 2009.
[141] Bonnet 2009. On the literary evidence, see also Ampolo 2012a; Sammartano 2015.

requisites and priorities of the present upon the past. What informs Thucydides' description of the origins of Phoenician presence in Sicily would therefore appear to be the present. Traditional literary accounts have thus been reinterpreted and contextualised within the historical setting whence they developed.[142]

In the face of these scholarly advances, ethnic groups and boundaries have increasingly been acknowledged as etic categories applied to putative groups which may or may not have identified with these names, the geographical applicability of such names being uncertain and, above all, whose correspondence to archaeological *facies* is debatable. As stated by Bonnet, 'by using them, we collapse realities and geographical scales which ought to be differentiated to grasp the wide range of options in cultural behaviour'.[143] Most recently for example, Quinn has advanced the theory that 'Phoenicians' as a collective category did not exist, for they never acted or perceived themselves as a collectivity above the level of the family or settlement.[144] This discourse advances earlier debates such as Ulf's suggestion that no such thing as a 'pre-existing primordial Greek ethnic identity' existed (but rather that it took shape gradually starting in the Archaic period).[145] It increasingly seems to be the case that 'some of the best known 'peoples' of Antiquity may not actually have been peoples at all'.[146] Among other notorious cases of ethnic deconstruction are the 'Punics', the 'Philistines', the 'Minoans' and 'Mycenaeans', the 'Celts', and even the 'barbarians'.[147]

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[142] See also work by Malkin 2001, 2007, 2011 on the formulation of Greek ethnicity in a colonial context.
[143] Bonnet 2014a: 283.
[144] Quinn 2018. See also Bonnet 2004; Prag 2006b; Sommer 2010; Vella 2014; Xella 2014. All similarly argue against the existence of a historically definable or self-aware Phoenician ethnicity.
[145] Ulf 1996. See also Hall 1997; Morgan 2001; McInerney 2001; Siapkas 2003; Martin 2017; Quinn 2018: xviii.
[146] Quinn 2018: xxi. See also Sherratt 2005: 26.
[147] On the 'Phoenicians', see for e.g. Bondì 2014; Quinn 2018. On the 'Punics', Prag 2006b, 2014; Quinn - Vella 2014. On the 'Philistines', Sherratt 2005; Faust - Lev-Tov 2011. On the 'Minoans',

Scholarship has clearly come a long way from essentialist notions of ethnicity, and the understanding of identity as a fluid, social, subjective fact of history, actively and strategically constructed and negotiated by communities, is now widely accepted in the field of ancient history and archaeology.[148] Ethnicity is now recognised as one of many perspectives on reality, rather than a 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.[149] Moreover, ethnic identity is recognised as not the only identity a group or individual may subscribe to, for other identities might be prioritised:[150] age, sex, social mobility, gender, kinship, wealth, religion, personal names, language, political orientation, status, profession – these and other identity categories were available to groups and individuals in western Sicily and resorted to depending on priorities, contexts and choices.

Despite the methodological advances in the study of ancient identities, I would argue that some aspects of this debate have failed to leave their mark on current discussions of western Sicily.[151] An overly narrow ethnic focus has historically characterised (and continues to do so) the study of indigenous and immigrant communities settled in this region, leading to the definition of cultural groups and their interactions, as well as of the archaeological evidence, in ethnically connotated terms ('Greek', 'Phoenician', 'Elymian'). Ethnic assumptions have enforced an overly rigid frame upon the situational identities created and negotiated in western Sicily, perpetuating colonialist and stereotyped narratives and extending the meaning of ethnicity to encompass all possible identities. This *modus operandi* has

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'Mycenaeans', 'Celts' Minamikawa 2004; Mullen 2013: 6-8. On the 'barbarians', Hartog 1988; Hall 1989.

[148] Barth 1969; Hall 1992, 1995, 2002; Morgan 2003; Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Insoll 2007; Szamalek 2014; McKinerney 2014.

[149] Muller 2014: 16.

[150] Mac Sweeney 2009; Szamalek 2014: 60.

[151] But see Ampolo 2012a: 39: 'la trasformazione della concezione di ellenismo da quella a base etnica verso una prevalentemente culturale è ben nota ed ha accompagnato anche l'ellenizzazione delle genti non greche di Sicilia'.

impaired receptivity to other identities buried in the evidence: ethnically labelling people and practices obfuscates the bigger picture, the deeper motivations and all the exceptions and deviations from this interpretative model.

Examples of how broad ethnic groupings are still assumed as the starting point of current discussions on the agents and processes in this region are not particularly arduous to identify: many use the labels in their very titles. For instance, Braccesi - Millino's 2000 overview of *La Sicilia Greca* explicitly follows in the footsteps of Finley's landmark study of ancient Sicily (some thirty years earlier), and does not make a single reference to indigenous archaeological sites. Holloway's first paperback edition of his 1991 comprehensive introduction to the 'Archaeology of Ancient Sicily' still opens in the year 2000 with the controversial statement: 'to most of us ancient Sicily means Greek Sicily'.[152] Smith and Serrati's 2000 volume on the history of ancient Sicily dedicates no specific discussion to the Phoenician-Punic element settled in Sicily (but dedicates the entirety of Part One to 'Sicily and Colonisation' and Part Two to 'Greek settlements in Sicily'),[153] while Bonacasa et al.'s 2002 study dedicates only a startingly small proportion of chapters to the discussion of the Carthaginian presence in western Sicily (despite the book covering the archaeological evidence for Sicily '*dei due Dionisi*').[154] This trend persists right up to very recent years: the very titles of De Angelis' 2016 publication *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily: A Social and Economic History* and Jonasch's 2020 edited volume *The Fight for Greek Sicily: Society, Politics, and Landscape* both declare a distinctively Hellenocentric focus.[155]

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[152] Holloway 2000: 43.
[153] See especially Smith's chapter: 2-14 and Part Two: 73-109. Part Three is dedicated to 'The coming of the Romans'.
[154] Modrall 2011: 7.
[155] See Prag 2019 for a critical review of this work, but also cf. De Angelis 2001: 145.

I argue that the social rationales underlying the construction and presentation of group identities in western Sicily (as elsewhere) were far more complex than might be signified by broad assumptions on the prevailing ethnic identity of an ancient settlement or community. The classic example of the disconnect between ethnic assumptions and archaeological evidence is that of Segesta: ancient literary sources (Thucydides VI.2 *in primis*) name it as an Elymian city, hostile to Greek Selinunte, but on amicable terms with Punic Carthage. However, the archaeological evidence tells a different story. Carthaginian imports or Punic-style wares or objects are inconspicuous at Segesta, whose landscape appears instead to be conspicuously dominated by the famous 5th century BCE Doric temple (fig. 7). Segesta offers a good example of the mismatch between the archaeological and literary record: in this case, the material evidence tells a more sophisticated story than ethnic labels do.[156]

Another example of how current heuristic frameworks can cast unviable assumptions and a certain degree of confusion in the understanding of ancient situations is offered by the indigenous site of Monte d'Oro di Montelepre, one of the case studies considered in Part Two of this thesis. Monte d'Oro was an indigenous Sicilian settlement,[157] and has been tentatively identified by scholars with the ancient Hykkara.[158] Thucydides attributed

[156] Shepherd 2014a: 119.
[157] E.g. Vassallo et al. 2016: 33.
[158] Giustolisi 1973; Di Stefano - Mannino 1983: 83; Di Stefano 1988-1989; Greco 1993: 199; Di Leonardo 2010: 21; Ferreri 2012: 251; Spatafora 2012b: 63; Cucco et al. 2017: 15. Giustolisi 1973: 45-47 identified Hykkara as the nearby town of Carini, and believes that Monte d'Oro was under the influence of Hykkara until 415 BCE (when Hykkara was conquered by the Athenians), then it passed under the influence of Segesta, and after the mid-4th century it became a Carthaginian stronghold (on the basis of the Punic coin finds on the mountain, and the sudden destruction of the site around the mid III century BCE, possibly after the Carthaginian defeat in the First Punic War). Hykkara is also mentioned by the *Itinerarium Antonini* in reference to the main node of communication Partinico-Palermo, which Monte d'Oro in fact overlooks (Giustolisi 1973; Di Stefano – Mannino 1983: 83; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249-250; Greco 1993: 199).

Hykkara to the Sikans,[159] but the definitive attribution of this site to a Sikan or an Elymian ethnic group continues to puzzle scholars.[160] This is largely due to the irreconcilability of the archaeological, epigraphic and literary sources:[161] Thucydides' account is in fact in open contradiction with what is today conventionally conceived as the geographical extent of the 'Elymian territory', which includes Monte d'Oro.[162] What is more, the pottery discovered at this site (particularly in its necropolis in Manico di Quarara) seems to conform to traditional patterns attested across 'Elymian' settlements. However, the pottery and the burial types found in Manico di Quarara are actually common to the entire western and central Sicilian region, and appear to follow not so much ethnic categorisations (Elymian or Sikan), but larger, trans-regional and intra-regional patterns of practice, strongly influenced by historical context, social priorities and geographical proximity to communication and trade routes. It would seem that socio-historical drivers and not ethnicity are responsible for this ancient situation, and these will be considered in detail in Part Two of this thesis.

The material evidence is often the target of these labelling approaches: specifically, the interpretation of the burial record is often used to support ethnic assumptions concerning the group identity of buried groups and individuals. Burial culture is commonly acknowledged as a valuable source of information regarding the different values, customs and belief systems of communities coming in contact.[163] In theory, one would hope that the

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[159] πόλισμα Σικανικὸν. Thuc. VI.62.3.
[160] E.g. Giustolisi 1973: 46; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 247; Greco 1993: 199; Tribulato 2017: 117. On the concept of a 'specifico elimo', see Nenci 1988-1989: 25. Various positions on this issue have been maintained by Anello 1998; Tusa 1988-1989; Spatafora 1996; De Vido 1997; Spatafora 2003a.
[161] E.g. Anello 2003: 38. See Tusa 1970: 248-249 on the Elymian facies of the painted indigenous wares similar to that discovered at Segesta; see the publication of the abecedary by Cucco et al. 2017: 12; Tribulato 2017; Albanese Procelli 2003 on the Elymian alphabet; Ampolo 2012a: 17, 32-33 on the literary sources. Ferreri 2012 and Di Leonardo 2010 opt for a more cautious approach and do not specify ethnic identifications.
[162] Nenci 1988-1989: 25.
[163] Shennan 1989; Hodos 2005: 107; Baitinger - Hodos 2016: 15.

archaeology of death and burial could directly enable the reconstruction of the perception, creation and evolution of identities predicated on changes or persistences in practice (often linked to processes of inter and intra-community contact). In practice, attempting to anchor an actor's perception and construction of their subjective identity within an object or linked to a practice may only be achieved with a large amount of supporting evidence. This situation is a rare occurrence in the ancient world, and often the piecemeal material record is all that remains to go on.[164] This realisation has not hindered scholars from assuming an inflexible ethnic basis for the choices of burial and grave goods attested in Sicily up to recent years, as I will show now with two exemplary cases.

After examining the bioarchaeology of classical Kamarina in her 2015 study, Sulosky Weaver notes that certain funerary customs (flexed bodies and multiple inhumations) attested in a sample of burials from the Passo Marinaro necropolis could be locally derived, thereby 'suggesting that some of the Passo Marinaro individuals might have identified themselves as native non-Greek Sicilians'.[165] Might other social rationales be guiding the decisions of the community burying the deceased? Other recent works of scholarship also use the burial record to single out assumed ethnic identities, such as Spatafora's 2012 sweeping overview of Sicilian necropoleis. Despite stating at the offset of her discussion that she will be discussing identities 'declinate non tanto sotto il profilo etnico, quanto da un punto di vista più squisitamente culturale',[166] it is to ethnic assumptions that the discussion appears to consistently fall back on. For example, with reference to certain tomb types found in the archaic necropolis of Solunto, Spatafora remarks that the simple trench tombs 'proprio per

[164] Sherratt 2005.
[165] Sulosky Weaver 2015: 225-226.
[166] Spatafora 2012b: 59-60.

le caratteristiche di giacitura, potrebbe ipoteticamente indicare la presenza di individui di etnia locale', whereas the *cappuccina* and *enchytrismos* tomb 'possono verosimilmente attribuirsi a un gruppo di Greci insediato nella comunità'.[167] Moreover, the agency of the indigenous communities is limited to passive imitation of Greek practices: she refers to 'le capacità mimetiche delle popolazioni indigene'.[168] Other examples are available, and will be taken up in Part Two with specific reference to the material assemblages under consideration.[169]

Language is also often recognised as an explicit component and an expression of identity.[170] Onomastics are the typical example of ethnic interpretations prevailing over other possible explanations for naming choices. Ancient onomastics are crucial to the understanding of society and political ideology of ancient cultures (*l'histoire par les noms*), as names offer precious amounts and types of information concerning the named individual and their *milieu*. The identities embedded in a name are varied: gender, age, profession, filiation, tribe, political affiliation, social status, origin.[171] The information relating to historical processes inferred from personal names is just as varied: migration movement, religious change, linguistic contact and so forth. One of the most difficult and controversial aspects of the study of ancient onomastics is the use of names to determine the ethnic composition of settlements and regions: names can work as indicators of origins (for naming patterns can

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[167] Spatafora 2012b: 65.
[168] Spatafora 2012b: 68. Scholars writing in more recent years about the burial practices of western Sicilian sites do tend to repeat the data from earlier studies, thus appropriating outmoded views for lack of alternatives or more recent revaluations of the entire published and unpublished material.
[169] Albanese Procelli 2003, in her key study on indigenous people across archaic Sicily, makes a direct connection between burials and ethnic groups when she notes that 'a livello di identità etnica, la differenza sostanziale degli abitanti di alcuni centri interni della Sicilia arcaica è arguibile con chiarezza nel caso di necropoli caratterizzare esclusivamente da tombe di tipo greco' (2003: 175).
[170] Adams 2003; Crystal 2000: 40.
[171] Mullen 2013: 122-123.

be localised), but they can also be unreliable as ethnic identifiers (for other factors are in play in naming choices).[172] Moreover, one cannot make assumptions about the named or naming individual's actual awareness of the socio-cultural, ethnic, religious and political implications in the choice of a name.[173]

Nonetheless, most discussions of epigraphic evidence for names in western Sicily are guided by ethnic assumptions. One of the most notable examples is Bettarini's 2005 leading discussion of curse tablets from Selinunte: the commentary of each text is dominated by discussions of the ethnic origin of the names mentioned in the curses.[174] This focus is not uncalled for *per se* (names are the most common element to appear in this class of texts), but it does lead Bettarini to assume 'la profonda mistione etnica della città, documentata [...] dalla presenza di nomi probabilmente anellenici'.[175] Whereas Selinunte's curse record certainly does attest a diversity of naming origins, it is less clear whether this situation is dependent on Greeks, Phoenicians and Elymians living in Selinunte and abiding by their own naming traditions. The interesting addition of the hypochoristic female name Σελινώ (based on the phytonym and used in the identical form as the toponym and hydronym of Selinunte)[176] to the Selinuntine naming repertoire in the 5th century would appear to attest the onomastic vivacity of this settlement, which was developing in more locally coherent– and less ethnically determinable - directions. On a connected point, the diversification of naming patterns in Selinunte actually persists in later periods as well, a situation unparalleled in eastern Sicily:[177] a simplistic Hellenization model cannot account for this persistence.

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[172] Parker 2013: 6-8.
[173] Sartre 2007: 200.
[174] See Bettarini 2005: 112-121.
[175] Bettarini 2005: XI.
[176] See Fraser 2000 on ethnics as personal names.
[177] Tribulato 2015: 37.

Nevertheless, in his 2012 chapter on language contact in Sicilian onomastics, Meiser remarks that 'the indigenous peoples appear only to have had a choice to be marginalized or to assimilate to the Greek way of life'.[178]

To conclude the *pars destruens* of this thesis and its critique of broad cultural groupings, so far I have argued that the unproblematic use of ethnic labels by modern scholars (knowingly, unwittingly, or simply as a matter of convenience) tells us little about the identities being directly negotiated by the labelled communities themselves, and results in the obfuscation of wider ranges of possible identities. Current scholarship's continued application of blanket ethnic labels to the western Sicilian *milieu* has ultimately diverted attention from the process to the outcome of collective identity creation and negotiation.[179] So moving on to the *pars construens* of my thesis' argument, the ways in which the material and textual evidence could have been set up by people to articulate their identities in response to complex social rationales and beyond ethnic labelsis a theme which is yet to be fully addressed by studies on this region. Parts Two and Three of this thesis are intended as a contribution to filling this gap in scholarship. Precisely how I propose to trace ancient identities in the available evidence is addressed in the next Chapter. I will argue that the burial record offers a unique and invaluable perspective not only for the identification of identities, but also for the study of how the interplay between communities influenced individual and group identities in the *longue durée*.

[178] Meiser 2012: 149. See also Johnson 2020.
[179] Morgan 2009: 24.

3.

Identifying identities

Introduction

There appear to be three ways for me to tackle the traceability of collective identities in the Sicilian archaeological evidence - without erring into blanket ethnic labelling with a Hellenocentric twist. The first is a *tabula rasa* approach: ignore all previously defined labels, including those suggested by the ancient sources, and begin the analysis of potential identity markers afresh. I find this approach to be excessively drastic. This thesis critiques the broad cultural groupings still assumed by scholarship without a more thorough investigation of the other possible identities and rationales underlying ancient situations. What this thesis does not do is exclude *a priori* the possibility of ethnic identities as a factor at play in ancient situations of inter-community interaction. Moreover, this approach risks ignoring the information embedded in the ethnic constructs of ancient literary sources (e.g., the role of stereotyping mentalities in the creation and use of ancient labels).[180]

[180] See Luraghi 2008.

The second approach is more targeted, as it directs all efforts to challenge existing ethnic categorisations and critically deconstructing them by examining the precise contexts and mentalities whence these ethnic categorisations arose. However, this approach overlooks the fact that ethnic identities are but one of many different tiers and types of identities which a group or individual might have subscribed to. Other identities, of a social, linguistic, onomastic, political, religious, or of gender or age-related nature (among the many other available) might go unnoticed in such a targeted approach to ethnic identifications, and one might miss how identities were signalled and observed through the strategic manipulation of the evidence to maximise intelligibility.

The third approach requires going back to the evidence, but instead of looking for predefined ethnic identities, it *breaks down the boundaries* between broad identifications of cultural groups. It searches for patterns of practice in the archaeological record, it contextualises these patterns, and investigates the socio-cultural drivers, mentalities and circumstances which might have led groups and individuals to strategically adopt and showcase certain aspects of their identities. This approach does not cast aside ethnicity as a viable possibility of identity visible in the evidence, but it does avoid operating based on predefined, assumed, blanket labels of ethnic identity.

This thesis operates in accordance with the third theoretical framework just introduced: it goes back to the material evidence from late Archaic and Classical western Sicily to search for potential markers of collective identities of a socio-cultural nature. The term 'identity' encompasses all possible affinities, affiliations, experiences, and

(self-)identifications available to an individual or group within a specific *milieu*.[181] As for ethnic identities, these are but one tier among many identities and identifications available to individuals and communities (local, religious, national, social, occupational, political, gender, age etc.).[182] This outlook by no means discredits or distrusts ethnicity *tout court* as an existing category. However, this cautious standpoint does not make any assumptions at the offset, as there are cases when the evidence is simply not available or clear enough to make definitive assertions on the existence of ethnic identities in this place and period. Instead, the ancient (and modern!) creation, prioritisation and negotiation of certain identities over others should be understood as an essentially self-conscious and situational strategy, embedded within social, cultural and historical contexts.[183]

Indeed, identities are liable to change, overlap and confrontation, as agents could consciously and selectively switch between identities, to emphasize specific aspects of their sense of self. All these decisions are profoundly influenced by historical events and geographical situations. The location of identities within a specific historical, geographical, social context is key, as it situates in time, space and society the individual or communal sense of self and collectivity.[184] It also allows us to detect the social, cultural, political or economic factors which drive groups to display and negotiate their identities in different ways, at different times, in different places, and through different types of evidence – on the edge of clear-cut identifications.

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[181] On the even broader concepts of cultural identity and culture, whose discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis, refer to Graves-Brown et al. 1996; Dench 1995; Shennan 1989; Dougherty - Kurke 2003; Antonaccio 2004, 2009; Gruen 2011.
[182] Antonaccio 2009.
[183] Bourdieu 1977; Pappa 2013: 40; Spatafora 2014a; Garbati - Pedrazzi 2016.
[184] Knapp - van Dommelen 2010; van Dommelen 2014.

3.1. Identities in death

The main focus of this thesis will be the burial evidence, meaning the funeral rituals, the grave types and the grave goods adopted by a settlement's communities to honour the dead. As already shown in the examples discussed in Chapter 2, the Sicilian burial record is still frequently addressed as a stage for interaction between ethnically labelled communities (Greeks, Phoenicians, and the Elymians) and as a testbed for Hellenization in action (the assimilation of Greek practices by non-Greek groups).[185] Moreover, whereas the adoption of cultural traits from the Greek incomers by the indigenous communities is discussed at length by scholars, only limited attempts have been made to contextualise these processes within a wider and more complex set of historical networks and inter-group dynamics.[186] Part Two of this thesis will investigate how collective identities were negotiated, differentiated and localised, by means of a new analysis of the burial evidence of western Sicily over an extended timeframe. Burial has often been considered primary evidence for statements of identity: as shown by Parker Pearson's maxim in the archaeology of death and burial, 'it is a strange paradox that the physical remains of the dead are most likely to reveal information about the life of an individual, and not about their death'.[187] The relevance of the burial to statements of identity can be summarised in the following two key observations.

First and foremost, burial is about *dead* people. A dead human body is not simply a biological entity, liable to decay and destruction, but a cultural one as well:[188] burials offer

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[185] E.g. Martin et al. 1980: 355-396; Frisone 1992; Holloway 2000.
[186] One example is Vassallo 2000, who historically contextualises the crisis attested by the discontinuation or reduction of material remains from the indigenous settlements and necropoleis in western Sicily during the 5th century.
[187] Parker Pearson 1999: 3.
[188] Chapman et al. 1981. On the social construction of liminality and its relevance to death rituals, see van Gennep 1909; Hertz 1905; Huntington - Metcalf 1991; Parker Pearson 1993; Barley 1995; Hofmann 2016: 257-258.

material evidence for the meaning and expression of a community's cultural reactions to death and ideas about the afterlife.[189] For this reason, the archaeology of death also considers the abstract world of cosmological beliefs concerning the afterlife and rites of passage, which are the result of humans coming into contact with death and the dead body, as well as of the social and emotional problem of learning to cope with death.[190] The way a community treats its dead is significant, and burial customs are embedded in local and inherited traditions and mentalities at a collective level. But burial practices are not immutable or fossilised: they too are subject to change. Social differentiation, local contexts, historical events, interactions with other communities and their own burial customs, all these factors come to influence the burial record.

But burial is also about *living* people, as 'the dead do not bury themselves'.[191] Secondly therefore, burial articulates the lived experience of both the deceased and of living mourners. This means that the graves and cemeteries are the set stage for conscious ritual action, making the material remains and ritual choices associated with these spaces the intentional traces of the identities of the living (projected upon the treatment of the dead). Burial could be understood as a set of commemorative technologies asserting and involving socio-political organisation and differentiation, kinship bonds, health and demography, belief systems, emotions, material culture, prescriptive behaviour, status differentiation, financial means

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[189] On religious beliefs in relation to death practices see especially Hertz 1905; van Gennep 1909; Bloch - Parry 1982; Barley 1995; Parker Pearson 1999; Tarlow - Stutz 2013.

[190] On the social dimension and reflection of death and mortuary practices, Hertz 1905; van Gennep 1909; Hocart 1927; O'Shea 1984; Huntington - Metcalf 1991; Clark 1993; Frisone 1994; Hamilakis 1998, 2014; Seale 1998; Parker Pearson 1999: 5, 32; Preston 1999: 134; Hayden 2009; Taylor 2011: 91-92. However, the archaeological treatments of death in relation to beliefs are beyond the scope of this thesis, therefore I will not be considering the literary attitudes towards death and its representation (Vermeule 1979), nor the burial symbolism as evidence for afterlife beliefs and funerary ideology (see Vernant 1982; Morris 1987, 1992).

[191] Parker Pearson 1999: 3.

and memories.[192] This renders burial a significant act at both a collective and an individual level, and it offers varied and complex information concerning the communities involved in burial practices, their mentalities and their socio-cultural context.

So how is one to read potential markers of identity off material culture? This is a problematic undertaking for four main reasons.[193] Firstly, objects may express identity, but rarely form the basis of identity.[194] Secondly, agents can alter material culture, without necessarily changing their identities as well (other reasons may determine changes in material culture).[195] Thirdly, shared material culture does not necessarily equate to shared identity. Fourthly, mixed material culture does not necessarily equate to mixed identity. The classic example of these maxims is that widely distributed pottery styles do not necessarily imply a stylistic and symbolic homogeneity, nor do mixed pots imply mixed people:[196] instead, 'pots are *for* people'. This take on the culture-historical maxim 'pots equals people'[197] brings back under the spotlight the questions 'where, how, why and by whom' was the evidence used, instead of focusing exclusively on decontextualized objects and essentialised labels.

In an ideal scenario, from the intersection of the evidence for 'the body as material' (the preserved skeleton) and 'the body and material' (the human body in its funerary context),[198] one would expect to reconstruct the identikit of the deceased and their community,

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[192] On the anthropology and sociology of death, see especially Saxe 1970; Binford 1971; Brown 1981; O'Shea 1984; Chapman 1987; Voutsaki 1995: 57; Clark 1993; Parker Pearson 1993: 203-205; Frisone 1994; Byrd - Monahan 1995; Chase 1996; Preston 1999: 134; Chesson 2001: 1; Spatafora – Vassallo 2010: 13-15; Taylor 2011: 91-92; Hofmann 2016.
[193] Szmalek 2014: 61.
[194] Hall 1997: 182; Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005: 87; Szamalek 2014: 61.
[195] See Hodos 2000: 43.
[196] Malkin 2014: 288.
[197] See Sherratt 2005: 26.
[198] Brandt 2017, outlining the principles of Body Theory.

including kinship ties and socio-political organisation, the role of gender and age, statements of ownership and wealth, the tension between foreignness and sense of belonging, matters of religion and mentality (such as liminality, pollution, taboo and purification).[199] But the archaeology of death and burial is seldom straightforward, and ideal scenarios are a chimaera: a grave is not a Pompeii in which past societies are fossilized.[200] In the case of burials in western Sicily between 550 - 350 BCE, it has not always been possible for excavators to conduct scientific analyses (such as osteology, DNA, C14 and stable isotope analysis) on human biological remains;[201] and the graves have often been catastrophically looted, making their interpretation impossible.[202]

Pioneering frameworks have been elaborated within the field of the archaeology of death and burial to tackle the difficulties in correlating patterns in burial customs with the cultural practices of local communities.[203] Processual (or New) Archaeology was founded in North America in the 1960s by Lewis Binford and his students, as a reaction to culture-history paradigms.[204] The so-called 'Saxe-Binford approach' was inspired by early 20th century work on the anthropology and sociology of death,[205] and focussed upon human burial practices to identify patterns which could be correlated with social structures and the organisation of past societies (such as the visibility of status and power in the burial record,

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[199] Brandt 2017.

[200] On the 'Pompeii premise', see Schiffer 1985 (pace Binford 1971). See also Ucko 1969; Parker Pearson 1999; Tarlow - Stutz 2013.

[201] I will therefore be unable to discuss in depth the results of the analyses of human remains (biological age, sex, health, and diet of the deceased, as well as demographic data such as mortality rates and life expectancy.), as the number of complete cemetery skeletal data published for the chosen period and sites is too small to integrate with other archaeological information.

[202] As is the case for the necropoleis of Monte d'Oro and Solunto especially, as will be discussed below.

[203] Discussed in the following pages. Refer to Parker Pearson 1999 and Nizzo 2015.

[204] Binford 1968, 1971; Ucko 1969; Brown 1971; Watson et al. 1971; O'Shea 1984. The movement was empowered by the slogan 'Archaeology is anthropology, or it is nothing' (Willey - Phillips 1958).

[205] Hertz 1905; van Gennep 1909; Durkheim 1912. Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1983; Derrida 1996.

and role theory as an explanation of an individual's persona within their social group)[206] by means of especially elaborated sets of exploratory methodologies and vast amounts of cross-cultural burial data.[207] However, New Archaeology did not account for either variation among or change within societies,[208] nor did it accept that patterns in burial practice might not necessarily exclusively reflect patterns in society. Other cultural dynamics (such as the role of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, politics etc.), all embedded within a historical and geographical *milieu*, must also be considered.[209]

During the 1980s and 1990s the critique of New Archaeology was led by a new Post-processualist, neo-Marxist, structuralist movement, which preferred to interpret archaeology as a social science.[210] The post-processualists emphasised the inherently subjective nature of archaeology, and highlighted how human agency (as opposed to society-driven changes) was responsible for guiding the course of history. The Post-processualists therefore maintained the focus on the study of death within its social context, but were specifically interested in social relationships and dynamics of power, discrimination and inequality as expressed through mortuary practices.[211] These theoretical and methodological debates were

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[206] E.g. Zipf's 1949 effort - expenditure principle.

[207] 'Other things being equal, the heterogeneity in mortuary practice which is characteristic of a single sociocultural unit would vary directly with the complexity of the status hierarchy, as well as the complexity of the overall organization of the society regarding membership units and other forms of sodalities' (Binford 1971: 14–15). See also Saxe 1970; Binford 1971; Brown 1971; O'Shea 1984. For discussion, see Chesson 2001; Chapman 2013: 49-49; Tarlow - Stutz 2013: 8.

[208] Goldstein 1981; Tilley 1982

[209] Hodder 1985.

[210] Chapman et al. 1981; Parker Pearson 1982; Hodder 1985; Roberts et al. 1989; Renfrew 1994; Hodder 1999; Parker Pearson 1999; Hodder - Hutson 2003; Miller - Tilley 1984. Cf. Earle 1987.

[211] See Chesson 2001; Chapman 2013: 53; Tarlow - Stutz 2013: 8. Post-processualist interest in social and political factors, but without the pretence of aspiring to objective results, was conducive to the rise of the sub-disciplines of indigenous (Watkins 2001; Atalay 2006) and feminist archaeology (Conkey - Spector 1984; Sørensen - Sofaer 2013): both voiced the Postcolonial empowerment of groups and identities whose existence and importance had been ignored or downplayed by modern archaeology. These perspectives ultimately led to the unmasking of ethnicity as a self-ascribed identity (Shennan 1978).

soon to influence the archaeology and ancient history of the Mediterranean world. The key example is Morris' 1987 work on the emergence of the early Greek *polis* as observed through burial evidence between 1100 - 500 BCE.[212] Morris explained the higher number of burials in 750-700 BCE Athens as due to the synchronous development of the *polis*, arguing that the right of a 'formal burial' formed the basis for the creation of a corporate community of citizens.[213] Despite the critiques advanced to his approaches and finds, one of Morris' major contributions was to inspire the disciplines of ancient history and archaeology to collaborate in the interpretation of burial evidence, instead of treating Greek burial practices as unrelated to socio-historical dynamics.[214]

The refinement of methodological approaches and the advancement of theoretical frameworks for studying the relations between ancient societies and mortuary practices is still developing. New directions of study focus on the organisation of kinship through burial and ritual,[215] the traceability of funerary ritual action in the material and literary record,[216] the relationship between living societies, cemeteries and burial customs,[217] popular attitudes toward death, the dying, and the dead,[218] the archaeology of gender as reflected through burial customs,[219] the tension between drinking and dying as embodied by the funerary banquet.[220] The updated focus is evident in the topics covered by recent collections of

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[212] His approach and arguments had been shaped by Renfrew's 'cognitive-processual archaeology' movement (Renfrew 1985, 1994). Cf. Insoll 2011.
[213] D'Agostino 1996: 449. But scholars rejected the idea of 'citizen cemeteries', and Morris' radical use of archaeological evidence was also contested (Patterson 2006. Cf. Morris 1992, 1998).
[214] E.g. on Greek burial customs, rituals and festivals see Kurtz - Boardman 1971; Alexiou 1974; Parke 1977; D'Agostino 1996. On the ancient conceptualisation of death and the underworld Rohde 1925; Vermeule 1979; Hopkins 1983; Bremmer 1987.
[215] Humphreys 1980; Antonaccio 1995.
[216] Morris 1995; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995.
[217] Houby-Nielsen 1995; Branigan 1998; Pearce et al. 2001.
[218] Garland 2001.
[219] E.g. Herring - Lomas 2009.
[220] Draycott - Stamatopoulou 2016.

articles and handbooks regarding the archaeology of death and burial.[221] Burial case studies from all periods and places of ancient Mediterranean history have also been re-evaluated for evidence of the creation and negotiation of identities,[222] and one of the key theoretical steps introduced by such new archaeological ways of thinking is the understanding that the funerary remains of a community may not support statements of ethnic distinguishability.[223]

What methodological takeaways might then be borrowed for this thesis? Firstly, burials, in all their ritual and material aspects, were created by living people to honour, memorialise and preserve the body and the identities of the deceased, but also as a palimpsest for their own identities. This means that it is methodologically incorrect to presume to attribute a deceased individual to an ethnic identity on the basis of an 'identikit approach' comprising the objects they was buried with and the ritual by which they were buried: ethnic labelling of burials and grave goods cannot account for the fact that burials are artificial constructs.[224] If burial works as a planned and constructed space and event, it might not constitute a direct reflection of the identity of the deceased (and it might be misleading to assume so), but rather that of the individuals or groups carrying out the burial.[225] The main takeaway is that the manipulation of practices could be the mirror of a specific, idealised identity the collectivity involved in the burial activity wished to convey. I will therefore approach the

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[221] Meyers et al. 2007; Insoll 2011; Tarlow - Stutz 2013; Roland et al. 2015; Alexandridou et al. 2017.
[222] For instance, burial practices in Morgantina were discussed by Lyons 1996, 2000 and Antonaccio 2004; in Knossos by Preston 1999; in Messenia and the Argolid by Voutsaki 1998; in Aghia Photia by Wilson et al. 1998; in Halos by Georganas 2002; in Athens by Patterson 2006; in Roman Syria by de Jong 2017.
[223] This will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs. Refer to Jones 1997; Shennan 1989; Shepherd 1995, 2013b, 2014a; Preston 1999; Antonaccio 2001, 2004; Saripanidi 2017.
[224] Hodder 1982: 143. It is in fact a common occurrence to find in the same tomb a variety of artefacts or rituals usually attributed respectively to the Greek or the indigenous tradition, which seriously stump any ethnic interpretation based upon a direct association between categories of object and assumed ethnic groups (one such example is Manico di Quarara, one of the necropoleis studied in Part Two).
[225] Pader 1982: 56-60; Shanks - Tilley 1982; Parker Pearson 1993: 203-204; Voutsaki 1995.

archaeological evidence looking for potential markers of this conscious and strategic fashioning of burial to convey a community's identities.

Secondly, burial practices might not be the result of a single shared set of beliefs and practices, and may not present any single or consistent pattern in burial behaviour. Variability remains one of the hallmarks of the study of ancient burials,[226] engendered by the coexistence of diverse beliefs and changing socio-historical circumstances. Variation in burial record may be driven by dynamics of contact between communities, by the assertion of hierarchies within a socially stratified polity, or even by rupture and dissent from a predominant normative behaviour. I will therefore be looking out for variations in the burial evidence as a reflection of these socially, economically, culturally or politically driven processes – but without attempting to simplify complex situations into a scenario where one set of beliefs and practices forcibly overcomes others (as a Hellenization model would suggest). Instead of trying to generalise at all costs over variability, I maintain that it is preferable to embrace the diversity, and allow for patterns and differences to coexist in the evidence. These patterns are telling of other equally significant behaviours, practices and processes – which in turn may be consequent upon the definition and display of forms of social differentiation far more nuanced than 'one size fits all' ethnic identities.

Thirdly, the four necropoleis I investigate in Part Two have been chosen because of their potential for highlighting dynamics of intervisibility, interconnectedness and competitive emulation. The necropolis of Monte d'Oro di Montelepre at Manico di Quarara lies in the uplands commanding the Partinico Plain, strategically placed along the route connecting the Conca d'Oro to the Partinico Plain. Two excavation campaigns (1968, 1989) have

[226] For examples, see Chase 1996 and Parker Pearson 1999.

revealed a group of c. 25 tombs at this site, dating to the 6th - 5th century BCE, which display a variety of rituals and a conspicuous quantity of grave goods. The necropolis of Monte Castellazzo di Poggioreale is situated halfway up the Belice Valley, in close connection with the hinterland settlements and with Selinunte on the coast. Monte Castellazzo's main necropoleis in Contrada Madonna del Carmelo (dating the 6th - 5th century BCE) were excavated in 1967-1970 but never fully published, although interviews with locals and casual findings from the area are of help in reconstructing an overview of the diverse burial practices at this site. Solunto occupies a strategic position on the Tyrrhenian coast, in close contact (through river valleys) with the inland and coastal settlements. Its Hellenistic necropoleis were thoroughly excavated by the Soprintendenza (1968-1972), but emergency excavations in 2009 revealed a new sector of the archaic cemetery comprising 35 tombs dating to the 6th - 5th century BCE whose burial rituals differ greatly from the previously known mortuary repertoire. Just along the coast from Solunto, the necropolis of Palermo has undergone recent systematic excavation (2004), and the section of the necropolis corresponding to Caserma Tuköry in Corso Calatafimi represents a valid sample of burials in terms of chronology, grave type and burial custom. 150 tombs have been excavated here (amounting to 20% of the total number of the Palermo necropolis), with a total number of 225 individuals buried between the 7th - 3rd centuries BCE.

In my selection of case studies, I have chosen sites which have been published to comparable levels: where evidence has not been published exhaustively, other classes of material evidence recovered at these sites is adduced to inform this study. Parallels are also traced with the necropoleis of Himera and Selinunte, the two main Greek-settled cities on the Tyrrhenian and Mediterranean coasts of Sicily. Connecting and comparing the patterns of practice of these two settlements with those observed in my four main case studies is of

great value, as it enables me to shed further light on the factors (social, historical, religious, political, cultural, economic) driving certain sites to adopt or abandon certain customs. I also hope to highlight processes of social levelling and differentiation in the evidence.

My choice of case studies also enables a diachronic study of the evidence. This is key to identifying patterns of change and persistence in assemblages and practices between sites. Moreover, the discussion of these sites will be grounded in a thorough analysis of the different degrees and types of connectivity (roads, trade, natural features) which link these sites to other settlements, routes and resources. I have struck a balance between inland settlements, which are expected to be more inward-looking and conservative, and the larger coastal sites, which are expected to display greater variation in their ritual and grave goods choices.

The final point I wish to make in this methodological overview of the burial evidence examined by this thesis is that, to truly interpret identity markers in the burial culture, it is necessary to compare these patterns with other cultural practices beyond the scope of the mortuary sphere. For this reason, I will test my findings from the burial evidence on another class of evidence: that of epigraphy. I believe that by tracing patterns across the mortuary and epigraphic evidence for western Sicily on a large scale, across different sites, and attesting different behaviours and broader historical circumstances, it is possible to uncover trans-regional processes, corridors of interaction and connectivity in greater detail than through a single assemblage of evidence.[227]

[227] See MacSweeney 2011.

3.2. Identities in writing

Part Three of this thesis will therefore examine the written cultures of certain key sites in western Sicily during the late Archaic and Classical periods. As already discussed in Chapter 3, language and the written word are often recognised as an explicit component and expression of identity, making language choices and their relationship to identity a worthwhile case study and a valid proxy for testing the insights uncovered in the burial evidence.[228] The link between written language and identity has a long history of scholarly discussion, which began in the social sciences in the second half of the last century and was in fact grounded in the discussion of ethnicity.[229] Despite ancient historians and archaeologists now recognising that written cultures can offer a privileged emic viewpoint for tracing identities,[230] no extended discussion of the interplay between language and identity in the ancient world exists,[231] and Herodotus' statement in VIII.144 is often quoted *in lieu* of a deeper analysis. Whereas language could certainly have played an important role in literate Antiquity in defining distinctiveness and refining self-perception, it does not then follow that language was necessarily taken as a basis nor as a fixed component for a community to identify and be identified.[232] Instead, written languages and identities are entwined in modes and outcomes which cannot be pinned down in any definitive sense. If a particular language cannot alone suffice to define an identity, then looking at the bigger picture and embedding language within a medium, a message and a context may be more insightful.

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[228] Adams 2003; Crystal 2000: 40.
[229] Barth 1969; Bourdieu 1977; Keyes 1981; Saville-Troike 1982; Cohen 1985; Haarman 1986; Smith 1986; Gellner 1987; Shennan 1989; Hall 1997; Faust 2006; Anson 2009; Gat – Yakobson 2013. On how differences between spoken dialects and written alphabets were perceived as marker of ethnic difference and as a way to express such a difference, Luraghi 2010.
[230] Derks - Roymans 2009: 4. See also Fabietti 2013: 73-75; Melchiorri 2016b: 150.
[231] Mullen 2013: 14-15. But see Luraghi 2010.
[232] MacDonald 1998; Wallace - Hadrill 2008: 77, 85.

Such an approach enables a heightened receptivity to the use of written language and not just to the language used.

The linguistic evidence available in western Sicily for the period under discussion is exclusively epigraphic. In fact, except for Thucydides, no coeval literary evidence for this period and place exists. Epigraphy, a conscious material instantiation of the use of language, is being increasingly recognised as a powerful vehicle for the expression of cultural identity and 'a medium for individual or collective self-representation'.[233] This is not only because inscriptions preserve information relating to language choice. The epigraphic document is crucially both a material object deployed within a specific context, and an inscribed text with a specific function: inscriptions could thus have been consciously used to signal significant aspects of individual and group identities under particular historical circumstances and within a complex network of references to the document's function.[234] The relationship between languages and identities is no longer perceived as the only possible identity marker, but rather the *use of* language in epigraphic documents could be interpreted as a signalling of identities in the written record. In fact, the concept of 'epigraphic culture',[235] brought to the fore by MacMullen's 1982 fundamental article on the epigraphic habit in the Roman empire,[236] has evolved to focus on the contextualised role of writing in ancient societies, investigating for instance how local contexts shaped the nature of the texts, on the interplay between the act of writing and self-representation, and on the archaeological dimension of epigraphic material.[237]

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[233] Schuler 2012: 63. See also Woolf 1996: 39; Prag 2006b on this point.
[234] Schuler 2012: 64-65; Mullen 2013: 53-94.
[235] Prag 2002: 15.
[236] See also Meyer 1990, 1993; Woolf 1996; Hedrick 1999; Lloris 2014.
[237] E.g. Susini 1982; Eck 1984; Humphrey 1991; Bowman – Woolf 1994; Woolf 1996; Cooley 2002; Corbier 2006; Liddel – Low 2013; Prag 2013a, 2013b; Lloris 2014.

Scholars have profitably examined the ways the epigraphic evidence may be used to negotiate identities – and how these identities are interpreted by others: a successful example is Hope's study of the tombstones of the gladiators at Nîmes.[238] The common perception of gladiators swung between popular heroes and despised outsiders. Gladiators fought and died in the amphitheatre and were buried in the Nîmes cemetery, where inscribed funerary monuments were set up to commemorate them. These funerary documents reference the origins and careers of the gladiators, as well as several personal details relating to their professional performance and that of their brothers in arms. It appears therefore that the gladiators were embracing their ambivalent line of work, emphasising the glory and camaraderie the fights involved (the very aspects that swayed popular opinion in their favour), while at the same time not attempting to obfuscate or sugar-coat their lowly social status. But Hope has also studied how these documents adopt formulaic textual elements common to the funerary inscriptions of other displaced individuals, such as soldiers, slaves, freedmen and the *seviri augustales*.[239] By so doing, the gladiators were openly declaring their affiliation to an identity group characterised by marginality and exclusion from wider social groups (precisely what influenced negatively popular opinion), while still asserting their professional pre-eminence within their social group (for instance, *CIL* XII 3324 mentions that the owner appeared 37 times in the arena, outstripping his fellow gladiators). The example of the gladiator's tombstones in Nîmes shows how multiple overlapping identities could be consciously expressed in the epigraphic document through strategic textual choices, which could have signalled and negotiated potentially salient social aspects of the deceased's identities.

[238] Hope 1998.
[239] Hope 1998.

In Part Three of my thesis therefore, I examine the epigraphic evidence from western Sicily for cases of deliberate adoption and adaptation of certain textual choices to better respond to the socio-cultural requisites and priorities of the communities, individuals and institutions, and the purposes the inscribed document is set up to absolve.[240] Commonalities or differences in patterns of practice could be indicative of the convergences and overlaps taking place between and within groups or individuals: using the mindful use of text as a potential marker, I propose to observe how collective identities in western Sicily could be performed, hinted, adopted, discarded, altered and played out. I will study three epigraphic assemblages: the tophet markers from Mozia, the *defixiones* for Selinunte and the markers from the Meilichios sacred areas in Selinunte. All three written practices are linked to localised phenomena, both in time (c. 550 - 350 BCE) and in place (Mozia, Selinunte). They therefore represent unparalleled resources in quantity and quality - given the information they offer on the epigraphic habit and on the ritual practices associated with them. Moreover, all three case studies have never been studied jointly, but they have been exhaustively examined by scholarship in terms of their linguistic or ritual peculiarities. The potential of these written practices to express collective identities patterned by specific historical circumstances and social priorities has only recently begun to be explored.

The aim of Part Three is to test whether the collective identities uncovered in Part Two of the thesis are upheld, challenged or complicated by the comparison with the epigraphic record. I will be comparing not only the outcomes of identity negotiation, but also the processes by which these identities are defined by communities. The methodological guidelines set out in my overview of the mortuary record will therefore also be applied to

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[240] Thomas 2009: 37.

my study of the epigraphic record: I will pay attention to intentional and strategic textual choices which might convey salient aspects of a community's identities, exploring how these choices could work as potential markers of group solidarity and membership, as well as social disjunction and marginalisation. I will also trace the diachronic and geographical evolution of epigraphic practices, appreciating their full diversity and contextualising them within the social, economic, cultural and historical drivers which may have influenced the communities writing texts. I am particularly interested in any changes these senses of identity might have undergone pursuant to socio-historical events within the settlement and the wider region. To this end, I will also be examining patterns in the wider epigraphic practice of Mozia, Selinunte, western Sicily, and beyond.

Part Two

Buried boundaries

Introduction to Part Two

The aim of Part Two is, firstly, to explore how burial culture was consciously set up in processes of collective identity negotiation and assertion as a potential marker of group solidarity and membership, status claims, social mobility and differentiation. Secondly, to investigate how these identities worked in the late Archaic and Classical western Sicilian *milieu*, and to ascertain whether the evidence may indicate that ethnic membership was felt as a priority in this process, or whether alternative interpretations 'on the edge' of broad labels could be more appropriate, operating on the wider socio-cultural stage of western Sicily. In fact, I will go on to show that the western Sicilian burial practices reflect the distinctive historical contexts whence they were created, and that conscious strategies of adoption and selection, preservation and repudiation were operating among communities in response to different socio-political conditions and priorities. I will argue that internal socio-political developments among settlements, as well as interactions among peer settlements, came to define regional patterns of practice, whose hallmark was mortuary variability. In other words, boundaries were defined less by ethnic rationales and more by socio-historical drivers, by competitive emulation and differentiation, by notions of interconnectedness and intervisibility.

In recent years, the Sicilian burial record has undergone a momentous re-evaluation, informed by new methodological approaches in the field of the archaeology of identities

(discussed in Chapter 3). However, many of the western Sicilian necropoleis have yet to be the focus of such novel perspectives, despite their urgent need for re-assessment.[241] In fact, despite the considerable widening of scope and refinement in theory witnessed in this field, the prevailing approach to the burial record of western Sicily in the late Archaic and Classical periods remains centred on the compiling of detailed inventories of grave goods and burial typologies, which are then often organised into ethnically defined categories and often understood as products of Hellenization processes, without attempting to investigate the contexts, the driving forces, and the diverse outcomes of burial situations.

The lack of updated scholarly work on western Sicilian burial practices is also due to the survival state of the burial record and the lack of exhaustive publications of the necropoleis. Tragically, cemeteries across Sicily have been looted over the centuries, with a peak in illegal activities coinciding with the past seventy years. The interviews I conducted with locals and scholars only confirmed that modern Sicily's socio-political situation is largely responsible for this state of events, but the connivance of authorities (and sometimes even of academics) has affected the country's archaeological heritage all the more devastatingly.[242]

The absence in western Sicily of major Greek settlements such as Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea, Gela, Agrigento, Morgantina and others (with the exception of Selinunte and Himera) is also partly responsible for earlier scholars' heightened interest in the eastern and

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[241] In terms of general overviews of the burial practices of a region or ethnicity in Sicily (as opposed to specialised publications of single necropoleis), the reference work remains Martin et al. 1980: 355-396 (albeit heavily outdated). Spanò Giammellaro stands out as a true pioneer for her studies on the burial practices of the Levantine diasporic settlements in western Sicily (e.g. Spanò Giammellaro 2004. See also Aubet 2001; Delgado – Ferrer 2011). Holloway 2000 adopts a more ethnically bounded and colonially minded approach (his overview of ancient Sicilian burial practices does not go beyond 'Greek Sicily'); whereas Frisone 1992 focuses solely on 'Elymian burial practices'. More recent overviews will be considered in the next paragraphs.

[242] Examples will be discussed with reference to specific case studies.

central Sicilian regions, leaving western Sicilian data largely unpublished. These eastern sites were exhaustively excavated in the past century (especially by Orsi), and offer large quantities of data for archaeologists to base new theories on, driving the re-evaluation of the Sicilian burial record. Until quite recently therefore, western Sicily was left out of most archaeological studies of the island's necropoleis. Excavations in the east have also been slow to make their mark on the archaeological scholarship focusing on western Sicilian necropoleis. One could find oneself in the perplexing situation of dealing with newly published studies of regional burial patterns in western Sicily, whose authors appear to be entirely oblivious to the avant-garde studies of their colleagues working in the east.[243] In order to trace an updated overview of the scholarly situation, I will now survey some of the most recent contributions to the study of Sicilian mortuary practices to date.[244]

In 1993, Shepherd's doctoral thesis placed the first brick in the new tradition of studies on mortuary archaeology in Sicily (and the Mediterranean). It would lead to a pervasive reassessment of what was known of Sicilian burial practices, how they were to be addressed - and how they should no longer be addressed.[245] She examined the burial record of Syracuse and Megara Hyblaea (as well as Gela, Selinunte, Kamarina and Agrigento) in the 8th - 6th centuries BCE, and demonstrated that local contexts, historical circumstances and peer-polity interactions shaped the burial customs of these settlements and not, as had previously been assumed, the burial culture of mother-cities.[246] Shepherd was one of the first scholars to begin deconstructing the assumption of slavish emulation of the homeland prototypes

[243] Spatafora – Vassallo 2010 is such an example. Cf. Valentino 2017: 132.
[244] See Baitinger – Hodos 2016.
[245] See also the expansion of her work in Shepherd 1995, 2000, 2005, 2013a, 2013b, 2014.
[246] Shepherd 1995: 70-71.

and traditions by the colonial offshoots in eastern Sicily.[247] The conscious selection of burial customs and the importance of local contexts as an explanation for regional variations was also the theme in Burkhardt's 2016 work on the sites of Gela and Agrigento in the 7th - 5th centuries BCE. He concluded that mortuary variation was due to the coexistence within the same settlement of different communities, as well as the presence of social hierarchies and the competition between neighbouring settlements, all of which are reflected in the urban structure, coinage, military-political actions and the burial evidence of these two cities.[248]

Albanese Procelli's 2003 study on the material culture of the Elymians, Sikels and Sikans led to a pervasive re-evaluation of the indigenous communities of Sicily. She examined the evidence of pottery, burials, urban development, writing habits, food and drink consumption of dozens of sites, and asserted the agency of the indigenous communities over changes in these practices, which she tracked over the centuries until the arrival of the settlers from Greece. She downplayed the effects this event had on the Sicilian indigenous cultures – despite the fact that she adopted in the very title of her study the ethnographic labels assigned to the Sicilian communities by the Greeks. The reevaluation of the impact of the arrival of Greek settlers on local populations was continued by Hodos' analysis of the selective behaviour guiding the adoption of drinking and pouring vessels manufactured in the Greek tradition in proto-historic and Iron Age eastern Sicily.[249] The importance of local contexts was once again brought to the fore, and attention was paid to the reasons why

[247] See also Graham 1964, and Shepherd 2000, 2005, 2013a, 2013b.
[248] See also Hofmann 2016.
[249] Hodos 2000, 2005, 2006: 89-157. Hodos also promoted an approach to the changing communities in Sicily and the central Mediterranean inspired by Globalisation models and theories (Hodos 2009, 2010a, 2010c).

certain communities adopted specific forms, whereas other groups apparently showed no interest in them.[250]

The persistence of specific indigenous wares and the creation of hybrid assemblages and forms in Morgantina's material record was interpreted by Antonaccio as telling of processes of selection, appropriation, and response to altered social dynamics.[251] Her extensive excavations of Morgantina led her to envisage a hybrid environment, forged by the interaction between indigenous and diasporic Greek communities in the 6th - 3rd century BCE.[252] Her discussions on the use of material culture in defining and reflecting ethnic identities have already been expounded in Chapter 2, but it is worth reiterating here that her hybrid perspective gave agency back to the indigenous communities, which had usually been on the receiving end of a colonialist Hellenization process in the scholarly tradition. The interplay between change and permanence of practices was picked up by Öhlinger's 2016 work on 8th - 5th century BCE indigenous community change in central Sicilian sites, which she examined with reference to ritual practices (including mortuary rituals). She envisaged a creative tension between 'old world' and 'new world' (*alias* the situation pre- and post-arrival of the Greek settlers), which led to the preservation of certain cultic features and the updating of others.[253]

These innovative approaches to the funerary cultures of (largely eastern and central) Sicily, have begun to leave their mark on the ways the burial assemblages of western Sicily are studied. For instance, Spatafora's 2012 comparative article on a dataset of Sicilian

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[250] Concerning the selection and rejection of Greek cultural features, as opposed to the strenuous maintenance of Sicilian traditions, see Shepherd 2013b; Leighton 1999: 254; Hodos 2000.
[251] Antonaccio 2001, 2003, 2009.
[252] Antonaccio 2003, 2004, 2015.
[253] Öhlinger 2016: 111-115.

necropoleis opens with a call to scholars to focus on cultural identities rather than ethnic ones when approaching the western Sicilian burial record.[254] However, Spatafora fails to follow this premise throughout the entirety of her discussion of the necropoleis: burial rituals are again used to single out ethnic identities, and the indigenous communities' agency is limited to a passive imitation.[255] This example shows how, even when scholars are expertly attempting to revolutionise the interpretative frameworks applied to the discipline, escaping the snare of common ethnic assumptions still proves particularly difficult.

One of the most important and updated studies of western Sicilian burial practices to date is Spatafora – Vassallo 2010. This is an extremely valuable scholarly work, structured as a succinct overview of independently analysed case studies each focusing on a particular necropolis. I would note however that it still overemphasises the impact that the Greek settlers had on indigenous communities, who appear to have had no choice but assimilate Greek cultural traits or face extinction.[256] As for the burial practices of the settlements of diasporic Levantine origin, these seem to develop in a vacuum, as their burial practices 'manifestano chiaramente di aderire ... a forme in uso in tutto l'occidente fenicio' (before eventually coming into continuative contact with the Greek colonial world in the mid-6th century).[257] Despite an evident disparity in focus (the recently excavated necropolis of Himera receives considerable attention)[258] and the slightly outmoded interpretations noted above, this work remains a crucial contribution to the study of the burial culture of the region. It is one of the rare studies to address the burial assemblages of smaller sites or less

[254] Spatafora 2012b: 59-60.
[255] Spatafora 2012b: 65.
[256] For instance, the perpetuation or discontinuation of burial rituals is attributed to the 'assimilazione di pratiche e rituali estranei al patrimonio originario di consuetudini e credenze'. Spatafora – Vassallo 2010: 18.
[257] Spatafora – Vassallo 2010: 17-18.
[258] Vassallo 2018.

known excavations (despite the considerable methodological and technical difficulties this entails), and it has inspired and informed the choice of my case studies, to which I now turn.

4.

Manico di Quarara

4.1. The site

The necropolis of Manico di Quarara occupies the chalky north-eastern slopes of Cozzo Grotta Bianca (606 m a.s.l.) between the modern-day towns of Carini and Montelepre. The necropolis' toponym 'Manico di Quarara' might allude to the archaeological finds that have been legally and illegally made over the decades in this area: on one of my visits to the site, it was explained to me that, in Sicilian dialect, *quarara* is a large copper pot with two distinctive wide handles, *manici*, used for cooking *ricotta* and other cheese. The site has traditionally been associated with the nearby settlement to the south-east of the necropolis on the summit of the small mountain Monte d'Oro (601 m a.s.l., overlooking modern Montelepre).[259] Monte d'Oro and Cozzo Grotta Bianca are part of the final stretch of the Monti di Palermo, the mountain range overlooking the Gulf of Castellammare and separating the Conca d'Oro from the Piana di Partinico (fig. 8).[260] Several underground streams rise in the

[259] IGM 1:25.000, F. 249 III NE.
[260] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 248; Greco 1993: 199; Di Leonardo 2010: 21; Ferreri 2012: 251. On other small-sized indigenous settlements in the area nearby Palermo, see Di Stefano 1988-1989.

mountains around Monte d'Oro (I was shown two ancient wells in the Piano Gallina nearby the necropolis), and flow into the Nocella river in the Partinico plain.[261] It has been suggested that at the mouth of the Nocella was an *emporion* (near modern-day S. Cataldo).[262] The settlement on the summit of Monte d'Oro occupied a strategic elevated position, naturally defended by the steep mountain slopes. It dominated the Piana di Partinico, overlooking the natural corridor leading inland to the upper Belice river valley (fig. 9, 10).[263] It also commanded the Valico Alvano heading westwards down the SP40 to Carini (4 km away) and the Conca d'Oro (Palermo is c. 30 km away from Montelepre).[264] Monte d'Oro and its necropolis were therefore connected with the inland sites of Monte Iato, Monte Maranfusa and Segesta, with the coastal sites of Palermo, Solunto and Himera, and even with Selinunte at the mouth of the Belice. From the summit of Monte d'Oro, I could see Monte Barbaro (above Segesta) to the west and Castellaccio di Sàgana to the south (fig. 11).

Over 1,400 artefacts have been discovered in the area of the necropolis and the settlement, although neither the settlement on Monte d'Oro nor the necropolis of Manico di

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[261] Giustolisi 1973. 50; Ferreri 2012: 251; Cucco et al. 2017: 15.
[262] Ferreri 2012: 254.
[263] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 247; Greco 1993: 199; Di Stefano 1998b: 56; Di Stefano 1999: 228; Cucco et al. 2017: 15. The same settlement pattern is common to many other small indigenous sites of the Conca d'Oro and Piana di Partinico (Di Stefano 1998b: 56). The sites of Monte d'Oro, Erice, Segesta, Monte Bonifato and Castellaccio di Sagana are all mutually visible (Cucco et al. 2017: 15).
[264] Giustolisi 1973: 45; Greco 1993: 199; Ferreri 2012: 251. The Valico Alvano is now largely occupied by the Mafioso-owned Impastato and Pastorelli quarries. These quarries were granted controversial construction permits by the Soprintendenza (despite the area being a known archaeological site), and their activity (as well as the planned construction of a sports field and several illegal cement structures in front of the necropolis and at the foot of Monte d'Oro) are responsible for the destruction of various archaeological finds (including a stone sarcophagus, some kilns, the foundations of some circular huts, and various architectural elements such as limestone columns). I thank Dr. Filingeri for this information.

Quarara have been excavated in full.[265] Finds by the Soprintendenza in the 1960s and by Giustolisi in 1973 attest that the settlement's life spanned between the 6th and the 3rd centuries BCE,[266] while the necropolis was in use between the mid-6th century and end of the 4th - early 3rd century BCE,[267] with most of the material dating to the second half of the 6th century and the first half of the 5th century BCE (coinciding with the height of the settlement's development).[268] Between the 4th - 3rd centuries BCE the settlement of Monte d'Oro seems to have abruptly ceased to exist, possibly violently destroyed due to events connected to the First Punic War.[269]

The first archaeological finds from Monte d'Oro date 1856,[270] and might be responsible for the site's current toponym ('mountain of gold').[271] These finds initiated the long tradition of illegal excavations and looting of artefacts from the site, which eventually brought to light certain wall structures on the slopes of Monte d'Oro:[272] the urban remains (which seem

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[265] Giustolisi's finds from the settlement and from public or private collections consisted in *arule*, coins, pottery, votive statuettes, kilns and metal-ware, all of which were published in 1973: 47-72. The continuous illegal excavations of the area have led to the dispersion of artefacts into the houses of Montelepre and as far as collections in other continents. The surviving artefacts are displayed at the Archaeological Museum of Palermo 'Antonio Salinas' and the Torre Ventimiglia museum of Montelepre, although a number of artefacts remain in the private possession of the locals. The slopes of Monte d'Oro are still strewn with pottery fragments. I thank a number of anonymous eyewitnesses for this information.

[266] Giustolisi 1973. 25, 45; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Di Leonardo 2010: 21.

[267] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Di Leonardo 2010: 22; Ferreri 2012; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.

[268] Greco 1993: 199; Di Stefano 1998b: 61; Di Stefano 1999: 228; Di Leonardo 2010: 22. I have already outlined in Chapter 3 how Monte d'Oro is a good example of the irreconcilability of the archaeological, epigraphic and literary sources.

[269] Giustolisi 1973: 45, 47; Di Stefano 1999: 228; Greco 1993: 199, 201; Di Leonardo 2010: 23; Ferreri 2012: 251 note 7; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.

[270] Amico 1855: 161-162, note 1: 'A mezzo miglio nel colle denominato Montedoro ritrovansi scavando dei vasi e delle monete antiche'.

[271] The site was known as 'Monte Formaggio' in the XVI century, but the name 'Mons Aureus' was coined in the end of the XVII century pursuant to the discovery of a 'tesoro' in the area, which brought to the imposition of a *vincolo regio* on the mountain and its treasures. Filingeri 2010: 14, note 26.

[272] The finds were published by Giustolisi 1973. Here Giustolisi also published the sporadic archaeological artefacts from the settlement which were collected in the *Antiquarium* of Terrasini. Di Stefano

to have developed over terraces along the mountainside)[273] consist in a road running north to south, some house walls (whose remains I saw have been vandalized), and a number of potsherds (incised, painted, glazed) still strewn across the mountainside (fig. 13).[274] The necropolis of Manico di Quarara was only partially excavated in 1968 and in 1989 by the *Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia Occidentale*.[275] The first excavation was directed by Mannino, the assistant of Soprintendente Tusa. It was (supposedly) intended as an attempt to salvage the area from the illegal excavations.[276] 15 rock-cut chamber tombs were discovered in this excavation (11 tombs had already been illegally excavated and looted; 4 were discovered *ex novo*), but only 8 tombs could be excavated completely (of which only 3 had not already been looted) (fig. 16).[277] Tomb XVI was discovered by clandestine excavators soon after the 1968 excavation, and was completely ransacked, raising the total

1988-1989: 249; Greco 1993: 199; Tullio 1992: 334; Cucco et al. 2017: 15-16. The foundations of these walls are still partially visible.

[273] Greco 1993: 199.

[274] Giustolisi 1973: 46; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Greco 1993: 199; Tullio 1992: 334. I have been personally informed of the discovery (and disappearance) of great numbers of silver coins with a dog as the reverse-type legend (typical of the coins of Eryx and Segesta), loom weights (some of which inscribed), and millstones in igneous rock from the western slopes of Monte d'Oro. I thank Dr. Filingeri for this information.

[275] Tusa 1970: 248-249; Giustolisi 1973: 46; Di Stefano - Mannino 1983; Tullio 1992: 334; Di Leonardo 2010: 21-22.

[276] My interviews with locals revealed how, in truth, the 1968 excavations only exacerbated the systematic looting of the site. The official excavation neglected to fully publish the finds and failed to safeguard the archaeological site and materials before, during, and after the excavation season. After 1968, no security measures were taken to protect the site, permits were issued for the construction of two quarries and other illegal buildings in bewildering proximity to the archaeological area, and the reforestation of Cozzo Grotta Bianca was also authorised. The dig itself was conducted in an unorthodox manner, as the most prized material disappeared either directly on site or *en route* to the Archaeological Museum in Palermo (witnesses recall the disappearance of inscribed potsherds, gold artefacts, large *lekythoi*, and countless painted vases, the absence of which is also attested by the photographic records from the Soprintendenza storerooms). I thank the anonymous eyewitnesses for this information. Vittorio Giustolisi's book series '*Sicilia Archeologica che Scompare*' offers a more direct censure of the individuals, activities and authorities responsible.

[277] Cucco et al. 2017: 16.

number of rock-cut tombs to 16.[278] Mannino's 1968 excavations were never fully published,[279] but Ferreri recently studied and published some of the excavation documentation in his doctoral thesis, focusing particularly on the rich findings of tomb XII (fig. 15).[280]

In 1989 work continued on the necropolis under the direction of Greco. What was meant to be a new excavation season had to settle for conducting an archaeological survey of the 16 tombs already accounted for in 1968, along with a few additional probes.[281] In fact, over the 20 year-long gap between the two excavations, the area had undergone significant change: tree roots (a complete reforestation of the S. Venera mountainside had since been controversially authorised, compare fig. 12, 17 and 18),[282] and clandestine excavators had gravely damaged the archaeological site. Various fragments of *pithoi* from *enchytrismos* burials and flat tiles *a listello* from *cappuccina* burials were found strewn across the entire necropolis.[283] Greco's finds were partially and concisely published soon after the excavation had ended.[284] Excavations have since ceased, but the looting continues (despite some official measures to safeguard the site).[285]

Today, the site bears shockingly few similarities with the photographs taken during Mannino's excavation 50 years ago, and the quality of the surviving artefacts is underwhelming (compare fig. 19 and 20). In 2015 a few cardboard boxes containing a stash of

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[278] Ferreri 2012: 251 note 5.
[279] Tusa 1970: 248-249 briefly mentions the excavations conducted in the necropolis in passing, while presenting two graffiti on pots discovered in Manico di Quarara.
[280] Ferreri 2006-2007; Ferreri 2012.
[281] Greco 1993: 196-202; Wilson 1995: 114-115; Di Leonardo 2010: 22; Ferreri 2012: 251.
[282] Greco 1993: 199; Cucco et al. 2017: 16. The reforestation not only hindered official archaeological efforts, but also encouraged illegal activities (which had incessantly continued in the shade of the trees).
[283] Greco 1993: 199.
[284] Di Stefano 1988-1989.
[285] Cucco et al. 2017: 15. Some inhabitants of Montelepre have requested that the Soprintendenza erect a protective fence around the necropolis area, but lack of funds and bureaucratic inefficiency have thwarted their best attempts (I thank Dr. Lupo for this information).

looted archaeological material were abandoned in front of the house of Dr Filingeri, the local doctor and historiographer, who had been actively encouraging the locals to return some looted artefacts. The finds were subsequently handed over to the Soprintendenza by the Carabinieri of Montelepre (fig. 23, 24). Given the good state of preservation of the artefacts, it is thought that these finds were illegally excavated in the necropolis of Manico di Quarara.[286] They date from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods.[287]

4.2. Burial record

The only burial ritual attested in this necropolis is that of inhumation.[288] Four different tomb typologies are attested in the Manico di Quarara necropolis: *grotticella* (rock-cut chamber), *cappuccina*, *enchytrismos*, and trench graves.[289] The best-preserved graves are the artificial rock-cut chamber tombs containing multiple inhumations (fig. 21).[290] This type of grave for collective inhumations has several parallels in the Belice valley and beyond.[291] These tombs are usually oriented towards Monte d'Oro and cluster in an area at the foot of the mountainside of Cozzo Grotta Bianca. The chambers have a rectangular (the most common shape), semi-circular (tomb XIV) or elliptical (tomb XII) layout, preceded by a short *dromos* partially carved in the rock (small niches seem to have also been cut in the rock immediately outside the tomb chamber's entrance) (fig. 14). For instance, in tomb XII

[286] Vassallo et al. 2016: 33-34; Cucco et al. 2017; Vassallo et al. 2018a: 37-38.
[287] Cucco et al. 2017: 1.
[288] Ferreri 2006-2007: 50.
[289] This grave variation is quite unusual, and has direct parallels only with Monte Bubbonia. Ferreri 2006-2007: 39.
[290] Di Stefano 1988-1989; Di Stefano 1999; Ferreri 2012; Di Leonardo 2010.
[291] Di Stefano 1998b: 61; Di Stefano 1999: 228. On Grammichele, Albanese Procelli 1992; on Monte Finocchito, Frasca 1981; on Pantalica, Orsi 1912; on Polizzello, Palermo 1981 and De Miro 1988; on Marianopoli, Fiorentini 1984-1985; on Morgantina, Lyons 1996; on Poggioreale, Falsone – Mannino 1997; on the Bronze Age use of rock-cut chamber tombs, Mannino – Spatafora 1995.

the elliptical burial chamber (c. 5m deep, 1,40m high) is preceded by a short *dromos* partially carved in the rock, and little stone drywalls are built on either side of the entrance.[292] Tomb XIV has a quasi-monumental finish to the grave architecture (fig. 19): a stone drywall façade (1,65m high) with a trapezoidal entrance precedes the semi-circular chamber (4,60m wide) (this tomb has been almost completely destroyed by illegal excavations).[293]

The entrance to the tombs was sealed off by a small pile of stones (tombs XII and XIV) or flat tiles (tombs III and XIII).[294] The chamber tombs contained multiple and stratified inhumation burials, with an average of 20 burials per tomb.[295] One notable case is tomb XIV, which contained 58 inhumations (fig. 21).[296] It is impossible to assign specific grave goods to a single inhumation within these collective burials (given the high number of skeletons), to ascertain the original orientation of the human remains,[297] or to conduct osteological analyses on the human remains (the bones have either been lost or no analysis has been conducted so far).[298] Ferreri has suggested that some of the bodies were interred within wooden sarcophagi, as large metal and bronze nails and handles were found in tombs XII and III (these finds are however quite rare, so it could not have been a common practice).[299] Some pottery has been recovered in the *dromoi*, especially plates and *oinochoai* of indigenous production, possibly used for votive offerings or ritualistic meals.[300]

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[292] Ferreri 2012: 251.
[293] Mannino defines the *recinto* as similar to a *prothyron*, which might have originally been covered. See Ferreri 2012: 251 note 11 for bibliography and parallels; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[294] Ferreri 2012: 251; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[295] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Ferreri 2012: 251.
[296] The bodies might have been moved to make space for new inhumations. Mannino, the excavator of this tomb in 1968, recalled that the skulls found in this tomb were positioned around the perimeter of the chamber. Ferreri 2012: 252 and note 16.
[297] The human remains and grave goods had been disturbed, either in historical period by the addition of new inhumations or funerary rituals, or by modern-day looting. Ferreri 2012: 252 note 22.
[298] Ferreri 2012: 252 note 15.
[299] Ferreri 2012: 252 note 17.
[300] Ferreri 2012: 251-252, notes 12, 13, 14; Cucco et al. 2017: 16.

Other types of graves attested in Manico di Quarara are the single inhumation tombs: *cappuccina*, *enchytrismos* and trench burials. The (legal) excavation of these burials has been sporadic, so it is possible to only summarise the information available for these graves. These burials are scattered throughout the entire necropolis area, which develops to the north and south of the small road build by the Guardia Forestale: the remains of *pithoi* and *solenes* from *enchytrismos* and *cappuccina* tombs are found in this area.[301] It appears that the *cappuccina* tombs were found grouped in an area nearby the rock-cut chamber tombs.[302] The *enchytrismos* burials in Manico di Quarara in particular are made within large *pithoi* decorated with painted geometric motifs, such as horizontal, vertical or wavy bands on the body of the pot and horizontal bands on the neck of the pot.[303] In one of the rock-cut trench tombs a *pithos* (perhaps the remains of an *enchytrismos* burial) and a small ceramic deposit of modest quality was discovered, but no additional details on this discovery exist.[304]

Inhumation:	
Rock cut tombs	16
Trench tombs	remains
Cappuccina tombs	at least 2
Enchytrismos	remains

Manico di Quarara's grave types have been traditionally understood as ethnically definable, as have the tombs' occupants:[305] the chamber tombs are taken to be of indigenous burial tradition,[306] while the other three grave types are in the Greek burial tradition.[307]

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[301] Greco 1993: 199, 201.
[302] Ferreri 2006-2007: 49.
[303] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Greco 1993: 201; Albanese Procelli 2003: 171.
[304] Greco 1993; Ferreri 2006-2007: 49-50.
[305] Di Leonardo 2010: 22.
[306] Di Stefano - Mannino 1983; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Greco 1993: 199; Frisone 1992: 303; Tullio 1992: 334; Greco 1993: 199; Di Stefano 1999: 228. These have been examined in detail by Ferreri 2012.
[307] These have been examined in detail by Di Stefano 1988-1989: 249; Greco 1993: 199-201.

But as discussed in Chapter 3, equating grave types and ethnic extractions of the tomb occupant(s) and the people doing the burying should not be automatic. The main scholarly discussions of this site have nevertheless (cautiously) suggested the possibility that Greek settlers at the site introduced the new grave types. For example, Di Leonardo hypothesises the 'presenza di residenti greci nel centro abitato' linked to the acquisition of Greek burial customs by the local population.[308] Albanese Procelli also envisages the presence of Greek residents at the site: 'la possibilità che tali pratiche [the burials] siano state introdotte da Greci residenti è accresciuta dalla considerazione che soltanto questi ultimi possono aver fatto da tramite per l'alfabetizzazione degli indigeni del luogo'.[309] Spatafora notes how the coexistence of diverse burial rituals suggests the existence of 'processi di integrazione tra Greci e indigeni' since the 7th century, and adds that 'non è tuttavia da escludere la presenza di Greci all'interno di alcuni insediamenti indigeni'.[310] Spatafora goes on to suggest, with specific reference to Manico di Quarara, that 'l'evidenza archeologica sembra indicare, quindi, sia attraverso i materiali che attraverso l'accoglimento di riti e pratiche funerarie, l'esistenza di una comunità che si caratterizza in un primo momento per una probabile pacifica convivenza di diversi nuclei etnici ma che ben presto conosce un'accelerazione di quei processi di ibridazione ben evidenti ormai agli inizi del V sec. a.C.'.[311]

Rather than envisaging an ethnically distinct or a marginalised demographic situation where the Greeks stuck to their own burial systems and the indigenous communities to theirs, I want to explore whether the state of the burial evidence may have been driven by other social factors, which might in turn reflect more complex local situations. This approach

[308] Di Leonardo 2010: 23.
[309] Albanese Procelli 2003: 171.
[310] Spatafora - Vassallo 2010: 19-20.
[311] Spatafora - Vassallo 2012: 64.

would disprove the validity and applicability of blanket 'Hellenization' processes to situations where external burial traditions were imported and adopted by the local population. The term 'Hellenization' does not wholly explain the variety of modes and outcomes which the adoption and adaptation of foreign cultural traits involved - which are far from predictable or acquiescent. It becomes imperative at this point to account for the local dimension within which communities of practice were operating, while tracking patterns of change over time in the site in question and at other interconnected and inter-visible sites.

4.3. Mortuary variability

Rock-cut chamber tombs intended for multiple inhumations are a typically indigenous Sicilian burial practice, in use since the Bronze Age.[312] At Manico di Quarara, the use of this grave type persisted until the early 4th century BCE, and coexisted alongside other burial solutions (*cappuccina*, trench, *enchytrismos*) introduced during the mid-6th century BCE.[313] This continuity in practice is striking: given the range of alternative burial options, the preference for the chamber tombs seems significant. Cutting a tomb out of the bedrock is an expensive, time consuming and practically demanding manufacturing process, especially in the case of those with particularly sizeable burial chambers and a *dromos*. No Prehistoric material has been found in these tombs, so one cannot rule out completely the possibility that the tombs might have been created *ex novo* in the mid-6th century BCE.[314] It seems more likely however, based on parallels with other Sicilian sites (Butera,

[312] See Monte Finestrelle, Mokarta, Pantalica, Monte Finocchito, Polizzello and Caltabellotta for parallels. Frisone 1992; Shepherd 2005a: 118. On the indigenous funerary architecture of western Sicily, see Frisone 1992: 299-313; Falsone - Mannino 1997: 613-642.
[313] Vassallo 2000; Ferreri 2006-2007: 36.
[314] Ferreri 2006-2007: 30-31.

Morgantina, Polizzello, Valle Oscura di Marianopoli),[315] that the Bronze Age tombs were being reused – and continued to be reused. Who were then the people being buried in these specific tombs? I want to test whether a prestige factor could have been at play in the choice, (possibly) creation, maintenance and persevering use of this tomb type. I will examine these tombs and their grave goods for clues supporting the hypothesis that this burial typology was reserved for a particular social section of Monte d'Oro society, a distinct social group to whom statements of wealth and assertion of status were a priority.

To begin, the grave goods of the chamber tombs do indeed suggest that social differentiation was being emphasised in death.[316] The grave goods of the chamber tombs XII and XIV are especially rich and varied (fig. 22):[317] they include bronze strigils, a sifter with handles in the shape of a swan's head, a grater (which Tamburello compares to the graters found in the necropolis of Palermo),[318] decorated band-cups and lip-cups imported from Attica (tombs XII and XIII, fragments found in other tombs), a lamina with an embossed lotus flower or wheel motif (tomb XII), iron weapons (axes *a occhiello* in tombs XIII and XIV, knives, a spearhead *a cannone* in tomb XII), objects for personal ornament and hygiene (razors, fibulae, small knives, imported luxury goods such as glass necklaces), Laconian column *kraters* (tomb XIV), fragments of Attic black-figure *kraters* (found in various tombs), and black-figure *skyphoi* and *lekythoi* (found in tombs XII and XIII).[319] The overall impression is that in this necropolis the majority of wealth was concentrated in the chamber tombs rather than in the trench and cappuccina tombs. However, the latter tombs have

[315] Albanese Procelli 2003: 164-175.
[316] Di Leonardo 2010: 23; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[317] Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[318] Tamburello 1992.
[319] Greco 1993: 201; Ferreri 2006-2007: 33-35; Di Leonardo 2010: 22-23; Ferreri 2012: 252; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.

been gravely damaged and looted, so it is impossible to ascertain this possibility with certainty.

What is instead evident in relation to burial expenditure is the architectural monumentalisation visible in the chamber tombs, such as the aforementioned drywall façade and trapezoidal entrance of tomb XIV (fig. 19). Architecturally enriching tombs became increasingly common over the course of the Archaic period in Sicily, possibly an emulative response to the influence of the newly settled cities by Greek migrants: the practice can be seen in eastern Sicilian sites such as Ramacca, Morgantina and Cozzo Matrice.[320] The presence of architectural embellishments and the use of high-quality objects found in significant numbers within the chamber tombs suggest that the grave occupants could afford such expenditure in death, and might have been part of local élite groups, asserting their status through the display of disposable wealth in a funerary context.[321] The possibility that these burials might have been a prerogative of distinct groups of people is also suggested by the fact that the tombs were reserved for multiple burials. As summarised by Shepherd, 'multiple burials, or even conspicuous grave grouping, can carry connotations of the family vault, of ancestry and exclusive membership: single burial, on the other hand, places greater emphasis on the individual and at the same time undermines and relationship with another group apart from the community in general'.[322]

In fact, the necropolis layout does show that certain tombs were being set apart from the other deceased and their graves (fig. 16). Status visibility and demarcation were also physically being achieved by the disposition of the tombs within the funerary landscape: the

[320] Albanese Procelli 2003: 164.
[321] Ferreri 2012: 252; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[322] Shepherd 1993: 105. Cf. Morris 1987: 184-185.

south-facing rock-cut chamber tombs (especially those with a quasi-monumental façade) would have been visible from the settlement atop Monte d'Oro, as well as from the road passing through the Valico Alvano (today's Strada Provinciale 40 from Montelepre to Carini) leading around the western side of Monte d'Oro along the course of a seasonal stream (today the tombs are obliterated from view by trees, fig. 12). Some of these tombs also appear to cluster in small groups (tombs IX and X, tombs IV and XV, tombs XII, III and XIII, tombs II and I), while the other tombs (VIII, V, VI, VII, D.I, XIV) seem to have been physically set apart from the other groups of chamber graves (fig. 17).[323] The setting apart and the clustering of tombs could be interpreted as statements of separation or affiliation, and the creation of an exclusive group which could possibly correspond to a family plot (although other explanations exist). The collective inhumations within chamber tombs could in fact belong to family groups who wished to emphasise lines of descent, or they could be the 'VIP burial' of individuals and kinship groups deemed worthy of a 'special' burial in this particular type of tomb.[324]

My examination of the burial data so far suggests that the coexistence of burial rituals could be the result of conscious choices and strategic preferences, guided by socio-cultural considerations such as wealth display and social competition – not necessarily only by the deceased's ethnicity. In order to further investigate this hypothesis, it is necessary to examine the other types of graves attested at Manico di Quarara as well. The *cappuccina*, trench and *enchytrismos* tombs are found spread across the entire mountainside throughout the period of use of the necropolis (whereas the rock-cut graves concentrate in one specific area

[323] Ferreri 2012: 254.
[324] Cf. Frisone 1992: 306.

below the modern road of the Guardia Forestale).[325] The trench, *enchytrismos* and *cappuccina* tombs all tend towards a simpler and unembellished style with demure grave goods. These graves might therefore have been used by a less wealthy or less high-ranking section of the Monte d'Oro population, although other considerations such as personal choice or the intention to counter-distinguish the users of these tomb from those in the chamber tombs, could have played a role. As stated earlier, the state of preservation of these tombs (which have been looted and heavily damaged) also impedes direct observations of wealth display in these tombs.

It is worth noting however that lower quality and quantity of grave goods from these types of tombs is actually a distinctive a trait across other 5th century BCE necropoleis. For instance, in Selinunte's Buffa necropolis 1,268 graves have been excavated: 514 cremations and 754 inhumations. Of these graves, 207 cremations and 172 inhumations were found without grave goods.[326] Isler also reports that 'le nombre d'offrandes, quasi exclusivement en céramique, qui accompagnait le mort, n'est en général pas élevé, de 1 à 4 objets au Timpone Nero, de 1 à 3 objets à la Gaggera'.[327] At the Gaggera necropolis of Selinunte, 25% of the 6th century tombs had no grave goods, 27% of tombs had one object as grave goods, 20% had two objects.[328] At Himera's Buonfornello necropolis, only 36% of tombs included grave goods, which mostly consisted of between one to three objects.[329] It seems therefore that these Greek-style tomb typologies were typically associated with grave goods of lower

[325] This conglomeration of chamber tombs might be due to the particular geological make-up of the area: the chalky bedrock only comes to the surface at an angle in this area.
[326] Meola 1996-1998.
[327] Isler 1994: 165-168.
[328] Kustermann Graf 2002: 29.
[329] Spatafora - Vassallo 2010: 69.

quality and quantity, and that this custom was imported in communities such as Monte d'Oro.

The similarities with the mortuary practices of nearby Himera and Selinunte do not cease here. Single-inhumation grave typologies, of the type found at Manico di Quarara by the *cappuccina*, trench and *enchytrismos* burials are well attested in the necropoleis of Selinunte and Himera. To begin with the evidence from Selinunte (fig. 67), and taking as a sample of reference the 218 tombs from the Manicalunga – Contrada Gaggera necropolis, between the first half of the 6th century (60 tombs) and over the 5th century BCE (140 tombs) we find attested inhumations in trench graves, in *cappuccina* graves or *sarcophagi*, *enchytrismoi* burials, as well as primary cremations in trench graves and secondary cremations frequently in *pithoi*, *hydriai* and *amphorae*.[330] The general impression is that of incoherence guiding the choice of burial type and ritual in this necropolis, which in this settlement has been generally attributed to personal choice.[331]

	First ½ 6th century BCE burials	**5th century BCE burials**
Trench	17 inhumations, 3 primary cremations, 11 secondary cremations, 15 indeterminable	58 inhumations, 36 primary cremations, 16 indeterminable, 9 secondary cremations
Sarcophagus	5 inhumations	1 inhumation
Enchytrismos	1 inhumation	None.
Cappuccina	None.	2 inhumations
Grotticella	None.	1 inhumation
Cassa	1 inhumation	None.
Pozzo	1 secondary cremations, 6 indeterminable	9 secondary cremation, 8 indeterminable
Total:	60	140

[330] Kustermann Graf 2002: 24-29, 35-40.
[331] Kustermann Graf 2002: 49-51.

As for Himera (fig. 62), and taking as a sample of reference the 9,547 tombs from the newly excavated Western necropolis dating between the 6th and the 5th centuries BCE, both inhumation and cremation rituals are attested.[332] Inhumations (a total of 8,421 tombs) are made in trench, *cappuccina* and *enchytrismos* tombs or within burial receptacles such as sarcophagi or wooden coffins. Cremations (1,126 tombs in total) are made within trench tombs (primary cremations) or urns deposited in small trenches (secondary cremations).[333]

Inhumations:	8,421	
Enchytrismos		3,144
Trench tombs		3,387
Cappuccina tombs		1,565
A cassa		313
Cremations:	1,126	
Primary		1,024
Secondary		102

The only grave typology to go unattested in the Greek foundations of Himera and Selinunte is the rock-cut chamber tomb. It seems possible that the use of *enchytrismos*, trench and *cappuccina* graves could have been adopted over the course of the mid-6th century BCE precisely from settlements such as Himera and Selinunte, where these grave typologies are found in contemporary periods (note in fact the peak in trench tombs in the 5th century in Selinunte). Another interesting fact is that the *enchytrismos* burials at Manico di Quarara were made in large *pithoi* with painted decorations: this locally produced pottery style is well attested in the Belice valley (it has been found in the settlement in Monte Maranfusa) as well as in the Buonfornello and Pestavecchia necropoleis of Himera.[334]

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[332] Vassallo – Valentino 2012: 53.
[333] Vassallo – Valentino 2012: 53-54.
[334] Ferreri 2006-2007: 49; Valentino 2017: 129.

Given Monte d'Oro's strategic position along the Belice river valley, which physically connects the hinterland settlement with Selinunte and the coastline leading to Himera, a mutual exposure to the funerary cultures of these settlements seems possible. The existence of a corridor of interaction, running between Monte d'Oro, Himera and Selinunte, seems increasingly likely: it was through this corridor that a high degree of interconnection and intervisibility became possible, making products and practices not only available, but sought after. In light of these observations, the choice to perpetuate the practice of multiple inhumations within rock-cut tombs by certain social groups in Manico di Quarara becomes especially significant, as it could represent an intentional declaration of adherence to an internally recognized custom. The tomb choice could then have been recognisable to the wider community as the specific prerogative of an élite by means of physical and ideological *indicia* (the monumentalisation, the richness of grave goods, their visibility and clustering), but also on ideological grounds (the possibility of burying multiple corpses belonging to the social group in question, the reuse of a traditional burial typology). I find that the preference for this particular burial ritual over the other available customs introduced by Selinunte and Himera could be understood as an assertion of a social group's intention to define itself with a distinct and distinctive collective identity: I link this mortuary variability, understood as 'the number and extent of archaeologically visible variations in burial patterns',[335] to socio-political developments unfolding internally within the settlement – not externally imposed.

The analysis of the grave goods adds more depth, complexity and context to the situation I have proposed for Monte d'Oro. Indeed, the mortuary variability discussed so

[335] Shepherd 1993: 7.

far is not only passed through the variety of grave types attested in this necropolis: alongside their preference for traditional grave types, the same élite groups seemed equally keen on including new Greek-style wares and luxury items among their grave goods. Specifically, the grave goods of tomb XII are unique compared to the other chamber graves, due to the quantity and variety of pottery discovered in this tomb: 80% of the finds in this tomb consist of Greek imports, whereas 20% are classified as indigenous.[336] The black-glaze pottery finds, which amount to 40% of the finds of tomb XII, consist of Attic imports and locally produced cups, a *plemochoe* with lid, a laconic *skyphos*, *patere*, and a rare *mike* with ionic style band decoration.[337] In the early 5th century BCE the Attic pottery includes lamps, *skyphoi*, *kylikes*, and finely decorated *lekythoi*. The occupants of this tomb appear to be using Greek-style pottery as a statement of wealth and status, choosing these wares as grave goods over the indigenous ones.

It is interesting to note that it was over the course of the 6th century that the use of significant numbers of high-quality objects associated with the chamber tombs, as well as the presence of architectural embellishments, were first attested. Greek imports began to be used at Monte d'Oro in the second half of the 6th century, increasing between 525 and 475 BCE. This could be linked to an increase in communications and contacts with the coast: imported Attic pottery and black-glaze painted local pottery are the most common pottery types, while indigenous pottery decreased in quantity and formal variation especially in the

[336] Mannino notes that these Laconian type craters were found upside down as if to safeguard them from breakages (given the recurrent opening of the tombs), whereas the indigenous wares were deposited somewhat haphazardly (Ferreri 2012: 252). The presence of Laconian pottery imports is a particularly noteworthy factor, as the biggest markets for Laconian black-glaze were Gela, Himera, Megara Hyblaea, Selinunte, Syracuse and Catania (Pelagatti 1990, 128– 30).

[337] Corinthian wares and cups of the Iato K480 type are very rare (the latter is attested in tomb XIV and by fragments in other tomb *dromoi*).

second half of the 5th century BCE.[338] This shift from indigenous material to Greek imported or Greek-style goods could suggest that the latter material was being selected as a meaningful status symbol – and hoarded by the same groups who shunned Greek-style burials in favour of their local traditions.

But starting in the second half of the 5th century BCE, the situation was to change: the quantity of finds decreases (although new Greek-style pottery shapes, some finely decorated, are introduced), and tomb XII was only sporadically used in the first half of the 4th century BCE.[339] The latest finds consist in black-glazed low-quality *skyphoi* and miniature unguent containers attested in the necropoleis of Levantine settlers in the central and western Mediterranean of this period. The drop in presence of high-quality goods in the late 5th century BCE could be linked to a decrease in commercial contacts between Greeks and indigenous communities in the second half of the 5th century BCE, owing to a crisis in the economic and political balances felt across the exchange and communication networks across the region.[340] This changed situation is detectable in the wider necropolis of Manico di Quarara as well: despite the rock-cut chamber tombs being in use until the late 4th and early 3rd century BCE (shown by the finds from tomb XII),[341] by the late 5th century BCE the *cappuccina* and *enchytrismoi* tomb types had increased, just as they had in the Manicalunga necropolis in Selinunte between the 6th and the 5th century. At Manico di Quarara, Greco recorded a trench tomb situated in proximity to the entrance of tomb VII,[342] whereas Ferreri notes that a burial (of unspecified typology) was made inside the *dromos* floor of

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[338] Ferreri 2006-2007: 33-36.
[339] The grave goods of a trench tomb nearby tomb VII also date to the second half of the 4th century BCE (Greco 1993: 201).
[340] Di Stefano 1988-1989: 250; Greco 1993: 199; Di Leonardo 2010: 22-23.
[341] Ferreri 2006-2007: 150-151.
[342] Greco 1993: 201.

tomb XII.[343] Unfortunately, the complete absence of known (let alone published) material records from the urban settlements on Monte d'Oro means that the archaeological data from the necropolis in this period cannot be further contextualised within the settlement's history.

To sum up my findings from the examination of the graves and grave goods of Manico di Quarara and their contextualisation within wider patterns of mortuary practice in western Sicily: mortuary variability in this site seems to be the product of socially-driven and locally negotiated responses to the situation of heightened connectedness between the 6th and the early 5th century BCE. I have observed burial hierarchies, patterns in wealth consumption, and the effects that connected markets and communication networks could have on a small, inland site such as Monte d'Oro. The processes examined so far and the variability emerging from the mortuary practices cannot be dismissed as a straightforward product of the Greek acculturation of the local élite: the grave goods may be in predominantly Greek stylistic tradition, but the chamber tombs where the deceased are laid to rest along with their elaborate funerary assemblage are decidedly not. The examination of the grave goods from tomb XII (despite it being a lone sample of an archaeological situation now largely lost to us) strengthens the hypothesis of a heterogeneous willingness to import wares and practices adopted from specific outlets (primarily Himera and Selinunte).[344] In a first stage, the growing demand for the Greek pottery shapes and styles meant that these objects were being recognised as luxury goods, which made them covetable by an élite asserting its status in the funerary sphere. Moreover, these imported Attic objects of prestige seem to

[343] Ferreri 2012: 254.
[344] Ferreri 2012: 254.

have been selected rather than adopted wholesale.[345] Rather than a sweeping absorption of Greek-style pottery for local consumption within a funerary context, the selective adoption of certain pottery shapes and styles seems to have happened very much on the Monte d'Oro's communities' own terms. In fact, the imported wares in question are mostly linked to the ritual drinking sphere: a preference for drinking and pouring vessels and the socio-cultural practices related to the use of such vessels was also being asserted.[346]

I suggest that the same elective mentality could be seen as underlying this sub-group's choice to persist in using the rock-cut chamber tomb, rather than adopting the other available burial receptacles attested in the site. The local élite was consciously selecting the grave typology that was best suited to its priorities and requisites. Social hierarchies were reiterated by burial hierarchies, and social interaction of a competitive kind was reaffirmed by the display of wealth within the chamber tombs. At a later stage however, the growing preference for tomb typologies attested in Himera and Selinunte during the mid-6th and 5th century BCE could be explained as an increased willingness to import the funerary cultures of these two settlements. This situation could possibly have been fuelled by a crisis amongst the local élites, attested by the decrease in quality of grave goods and gradual abandonment of these ancestral chamber tombs from collective inhumation seen taking place from the late 5th century BCE, as historical events filtered out or cut off Monte d'Oro from the movement of goods and people in which it had previously partaken.

It appears therefore that the ethnic attribution of burial type should not be felt as a priority in the study of this necropolis, as the example of the chamber tombs shows that

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[345] Ferreri 2012: 254. This situation is also attested in tomb 31 of Montagna di Marzo (Albanese Procelli 2003: 238).
[346] Antonaccio 2001: 129-130; Dietler 2010.

other factors guided this grave choice and the preference in certain grave goods. On one hand in fact, the élite had selected a burial strategy which allowed for a more emphatic exhibition of wealth and status through the grave disposition, its ability to accommodate the skeletal remains of extended groups built around kinship or other socio-cultural bonds, as well as to enclose rich and copious grave goods. On the other hand, from the mid-5th century BCE new communities of practice sought to import Selinunte and Himera's funerary traditions more intensively, as the élites possibly went into decline and previous social priorities were no longer felt as meaningful to funerary behaviour. Blanket labels such as 'Hellenization', the generalised adoption of Greek material culture, are too broad to be truly capable of conveying meaning and complexity, when applied to the mortuary variability buried in Manico di Quarara. Instead, I have shown how the grave typologies and grave goods attested in Manico di Quarara document the existence of a network of goods, people, practices, and ideas between Monte d'Oro and the coastal settlements of Selinunte and Himera. My next question is then whether other hinterland sites might also be included in this network.

4.4. Regional connectivities

I now want to investigate to what degree might Manico di Quarara have been an isolated example within the wider funerary culture of western Sicily, or whether the situation seen at Monte d'Oro could have been symptomatic of a more widespread situation. I will contextualise this settlement's local responses to the internal socio-economic transformations discussed so far within broader regional dynamics, using the mortuary evidence as a proxy. Were other inland sites also acting in accordance with similar pressures and priorities? Were they too subject to analogous historical circumstances? What degree of homogeneity or

differentiation could we expect in western Sicily, as seen from the material cultures in funerary contexts? I want to extend the role of connectivity and intervisibility currently examined with regard to mutual interactions between Selinunte, Himera and Monte d'Oro to other sites of the Sicilian hinterland. As mentioned in my introduction to the site, Monte d'Oro and its necropolis are placed in a highly strategic location in terms of control over and accessibility to trade routes: the peak had in its sights the route heading inland southwards along the upper Belice valley past hinterland indigenous settlements and down to Selinunte, as well as the passage westwards towards the Conca d'Oro, Palermo, Solunto and Himera further afield.

The clearest clues of this process may be found in the cardboard boxes surrendered to the Carabinieri in 2015 (fig. 23, 24). This stash of artefacts has enabled archaeologists to update their knowledge of the Manico di Quarara necropolis especially in the 5th century BCE, the period to which the majority of the objects recovered has been dated, and which also coincides with the most intense period of use of the necropolis. Most of the material recovered consists of small or medium-sized artefacts (cups, *skyphoi*, lamps, *lekythoi*, *gutti*, jugs), including black glazed red-figure vases of local and imported products. There are also common wares and vases of indigenous production (including a *hydria* with painted bands and spirals). What is of particular interest here is that many of the locally produced wares have parallels in other western Sicilian sites, such as an *amphora* with an echinus shaped foot (well attested from the late 4th century BCE in the Greek settlements of the central Mediterranean);[347] locally produced and undecorated pouring vessels and cups (the jug and *lekythos* from Manico di Quarara are very similar to those found in the Selinunte necropoleis

[347] On the shape, *Locri* IV, Tav. LXII, n. 199; Scibona 2001: 69, n. cat. VSM/66.

since the early 5th century BCE and from Palermo in the late 6th century BCE);[348] black-glaze Attic type and Corinthian type *skyphoi* (all produced in western Sicilian workshops and found in western Sicilian funerary contexts between the 5th and 4th centuries BCE);[349] small tankards, an type B Attic *skyphos*, a *patera* and a stemless plate (all with parallels in Himera in the late 5th century BCE).[350] The painted indigenous pottery attested also has direct local parallels: a *hydria* similar to material found at Montagnola di Marineo, and a bowl resembling finds at Monte Maranfusa.[351] Both wares might have been produced in centres along the Belice and Eleuterio valleys.[352] As for the imported material, this consists of a black-glaze Attic type *skyphos*, a black-glaze jug, an *askos*, two *lekythoi*, and a lamp.[353] The grey coloured pottery with incised and impressed types of geometric decoration (lozenges, triangles, circles, zigzags) commonly associated with archaic indigenous style pottery, is a rare find among the Manico di Quarara grave goods.[354] Pottery with painted geometric decorations occurs much more frequently, as attested by decorated plates and bowls (which are very common), *hydriai* and *oinochoai* (less common).[355] The painted geometric decoration is in fact similar to other indigenous wares from the Palermo hinterland and the Belice valley, especially with the painted pottery excavated in Monte Iato, Monte Maranfusa, and Segesta.[356]

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[348] For Selinunte, Meola 1996-1998: 137-138, T. 182, n. 4, tav. 156; Meola 1996-1998: 138, T. 183, n. 2; Meola 1996-1998: 427-428, T. 605, n. 2, tav. 8. For Palermo, Di Stefano 2009b: 77, NI 30069.
[349] Tardo 1997: 87-88.
[350] Vassallo et al. 2016: 34; Cucco et al. 2017: 3-11; Vassallo et al. 2018a: 37-38.
[351] Monte Maranfusa, Termini 2003: 234; Montagnola di Marineo, Ferreri 2012: 252.
[352] Cucco et al. 2017: 3-11.
[353] Cucco et al. 2017: 3-11.
[354] Greco 1993: 201; Spatafora 2002b: 4; Ferreri 2012: 252; Cucco et al. 2017: 16.
[355] Di Stefano 1999: 228. See Vassallo 1996 on the typology and diffusion of this type of cup.
[356] Tusa 1970: 248-249; Greco 1993: 200-201; Tullio 1992: 335; Di Stefano 1999: 228; Di Leonardo 2010: 22.

The main impression given by this informative sample is that Greek-style wares seem to have been exceptionally fashionable in this necropolis (a hypothesis also confirmed by the grave goods discovered *in situ* and already discussed above with reference to tomb XII). Cucco's analysis of the looted material revealed that 82% of finds were produced by Sicilian workshops imitating Attic shapes and styles; the imported Attic wares represented 12% of the finds, whereas 6% were of indigenous tradition.[357] The gradual exclusion of indigenous incised wares in favour of Greek-style or Greek imported pottery witnessed in this sample is not an isolated occurrence within the regional patterns of pottery distribution. Evidence from Monte Maranfusa also suggests that in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE the most common pottery type was the painted indigenous one, whereas incised local pottery had already fallen out of fashion by the mid-6th century BCE.[358] At Entella too, the majority of the pottery dating to the 6th - 5th centuries is the indigenous painted type, which coexists with Greek imported pottery (especially Ionic B2 type cups).[359] Also at Montagna dei Cavalli, despite the hiatus attested by the almost total lack of archaeological material dating to the 5th century BCE, the 6th century BCE material consists of archaic indigenous pottery (incised and painted) alongside Greek imported wares (Corinthian pottery and Ionic B1 type cups).[360] The important harbours of Palermo and Solunto, Himera and Selinunte could have been flooding the market with Greek-style pottery, which dictated the fashion in pottery shapes and decorative techniques (painted rather than incised) and the resulting supply-and-demand mechanism might have squeezed the indigenous-style wares out of the market. The material culture of Monte d'Oro and its necropolis would appear to be fully situated

[357] For a detailed catalogue, refer to Cucco et al. 2017: 3-11.
[358] Vassallo 2000.
[359] Nenci 1991: 36.
[360] Vassallo 1991: 124-125.

within the patterns of pottery consumption common to many western Sicilian settlements in the 6th and 5th centuries. This situation suggests not only Monte d'Oro's assimilation within the trade and connectivity networks flowing down the Belice valley and up the Sicilian coastline to the Conca d'Oro, but it also shows how other hinterland sites were also enmeshed in this regional network.[361]

What is more, the existence of regional patterns such as the ones engendered by the pottery distribution across the hinterland and coastal sites of western Sicily may also be observed within the burial practices of these settlements. In fact, the persistence of particular indigenous tomb typologies alongside the introduction of Greek burial practices is not only attested in Manico di Quarara, but also in other western and central Sicilian sites. At Butera, during the mid-7th and 6th centuries new burial practices such as *enchytrismos* tombs and cremation rituals (tombs nos. 138, 138) were introduced alongside the local practice of inhumations within rectangular chamber tombs - which underwent an architectural monumentalisation process (similarly to the chamber-tombs at Manico di Quarara).[362] More specifically, the most ancient phase of the Butera necropolis in Piano della Fiera, dating from the 8th to the first quarter of the 7th century, exclusively comprises multiple inhumations within chamber tombs (bronze grave goods are also very common). In the second phase of the necropolis from the mid-7th century to the early 6th century, *enchytrismos* burials for children, secondary cremations for adults, and trench tomb inhumations are all newly introduced.[363] Also at Polizzello di Mussomeli during the later phases of use of the necropolis,

[361] Networks discussed by Vassallo 2000: 994.
[362] Albanese Procelli 2003: 234. Albanese Procelli explains these occurrences as down to 'una presenza diretta di coloni greci nel sito, che dovettero unirsi a gruppi di aristocratici locali, che li assimilarono' (2003: 23).
[363]Adamesteanu 1958; Albanese Procelli 2003: 168-171.

rectangular chamber tombs for multiple inhumations (e.g. tombs nos. 5, 17, 25) coexist with trench tombs and *enchytrismos* burials in *pithoi*, which are actually placed outside the entrance of the chamber tombs (as observed in the later phases of use at Manico di Quarara).[364] At Balate di Marianopoli during the 6th century BCE, the Bronze and Iron age custom of burying the dead in natural rock cavities and caves coexists with trench tombs – located however in a spatially distinct area of this necropolis (tomb clustering and separation is another feature shared with Manico di Quarara's necropolis layout).[365] At Monte Bubbonia, Monte Adranone, Entella (necropolis B) and Sabucina, chamber tombs are also found beside trench tombs, *enchytrismoi*, *cappuccina* tombs, and cremations.[366]

What seems to be taking shape in western Sicily is a situation of connected markets, availability of imports, and communication networks linking settlements and making the sharing and exchanging of ideas, practices and goods possible. The general impression is that of a piecemeal patchwork of burial evidence across the region, where mortuary variability acts as the common denominator of western Sicilian necropoleis. If one refrains from labelling this situation as the result of 'Hellenization' processes or as the outcome of coexisting Greek residents alongside indigenous locals, then other kinds of collective identities, as well as the priorities and contexts engendering these identities, might begin to emerge. In fact, the phenomena of connectivity and regionalisation seem to have given rise to local

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[364] De Miro 1988; Albanese Procelli 2003: 171-173.

[365] Frisone 1992: 305; Albanese Procelli 2003: 173-174; Spatafora - Vassallo 2010: 19-20. Albanese Procelli adds that 'a una distinzione topografica delle tombe delle due componenti etniche della popolazione (greca e indigena) sembra corrispondere in età arcaica (metà del VII-metà del V secolo) un divario socio-economico, rilevabile anche dai materiali, dai quali risulterebbe una certa inaccessibilità dell'elemento indigeno ai raffinati prodotti di importazione dalla Grecia, riservati alle dediche votive nell'area sacra dell'acropoli' (2003: 174). Spatafora notes that the trench tombs from Balate di Marianopoli might have been reserved 'probabilmente, a gruppi di Greci insediati nel centro indigeno' (2010: 20).

[366] Frisone 1992: 305; Albanese Procelli 2003: 164-175; Spatafora - Vassallo 2010: 19-20.

situations of social stratification and differentiation, of the kind examined in the mortuary variability of sites such as Manico di Quarara. Socio-economic processes prompted change and persistence in wealth consumption and burial habits as much as within a settlement's internal developments and social fabric.

At Manico di Quarara during the 6th and 5th centuries, high-status individuals could have been asserting in death their belonging to a particular social group through wealth display and attachment to traditional tomb typologies. The ethnic labelling of practices, goods and people does not help understand this situation of social differentiation: this was a competitive and socially mobile environment, in which élite groups (based around kinship ties, group solidarity or other affinities) jostled for space and visibility (both inside and outside the tombs) through the display of wealth and access to a specific burial ritual. If the cardboard box finds do belong to Manico di Quarara, and specifically to the chamber tombs (which is likely, given the similarities between this assemblage and the materials recovered in the tombs), then the finds would suggest that the people buried in these tombs had been part of a social group capable of integrating itself within this connected landscape and accumulating wealth in its hands – as well as in its tombs: mortuary hierarchies in death thus correspond to social hierarchies in life.

The adoption of coherent burial systems, built around the continuous use of a distinctive grave typology and the selection of grave goods which declared the deceased's involvement in the trade networks this settlement was at the heart of, may then be interpreted as an attempt to create and assert an independent and cohesive social identity for these élite groups across western Sicily, as well as in Manico di Quarara. Specifically, the monumental character of the rock-cut chamber tombs, their conspicuous placement, and their capability to accommodate multiple inhumations of group members could have been selected precisely

because it best suited the competitive social arena of 6th and 5th century BCE Monte d'Oro. In short, this was a moment of internal transformation of ideas, practices and goods for the communities of western Sicily.

But this situation was not to remain unaltered: new socio-historical circumstances were to upset the balance of power and eventually led to the abandonment of the élite grave type. Monte d'Oro seems not to have been struck by the 5th century BCE crisis which determined the sudden demise or disappearance of many western Sicilian settlements: the continuity of use of tomb XII throughout the 5th century BCE is convincing evidence for this.[367] However, during the 4th century BCE a change is attested in this necropolis: as stated earlier, the rock-cut chamber tombs are gradually abandoned, and the quality of their grave goods drastically decreases, whereas other grave typologies are favoured, such as *cappuccina, enchytrismos* and trench tombs.[368] This altered situation could be read as evidence supporting a progressive abandonment of the chamber tombs in favour of other burial types. The increase in these tomb typologies during the late 5th century BCE, and their physical takeover of the chamber tombs (the tomb dug in the *dromos* or proximity of tombs XII and VII), suggests that the earlier social and economic balance of power had been disrupted or altered.

Ferreri suggests that Monte d'Oro had in this period passed under Carthaginian rule, attracted perhaps by the strategic position of the settlement,[369] and Punic bronze coins have in fact been found dating to this period.[370] The 5th century BCE was a turbulent time for

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[367] Ferreri 2012: 254. See Vassallo 2000: 983-1008.
[368] Ferreri 2012: 254 note 60; Cucco et al. 2017: 18.
[369] Settlements positioned along strategic routes of communication along the coast and heading inland came under the direct attention of the Carthaginians after 341 BCE. This also explains why these settlements which had come under the influence of the Punic *eparcheia* did not survive the First Punic War. Di Stefano 1988-1989: 258.
[370] Giustolisi 1973: 64-66.

western Sicily, marked by the battle of Himera in 480 BCE and the Carthaginian takeover of the island in 409 BCE.[371] Vassallo has traced in detail the impact of the historical vicissitudes on the life of the indigenous hinterland settlements.[372] At sites such as Monte Polizzo, Monte Bonifato, Montagnoli, Montagna dei Cavalli, Monte Maranfusa, and Polizzello no archaeological evidence from the 5th century BCE is attested; whereas the sites of Segesta, Entella, Monte Iato, Colle Madore and others life continued, but the urban vitality of the town was much reduced.[373]

This 'second' region-wide historical pattern suggests that the conditions which had nurtured the preceding urban and commercial vitality of these sites was no longer possible within the updated circumstances.[374] Vassallo suggests that Selinunte and Agrigento's policy of administration and control over the communication and trade networks crisscrossing the Sicilian hinterland became more pervasive and invasive over the 5th century. In fact, between 480 and 409 BCE the Greek coastal cities of western Sicily do indeed attest an increased display of wealth and grandeur.[375] This altered policy and bellicose events in Sicily may have upset the trans- and intra-regional balance of networks which Monte d'Oro had also been part of: the progressive abandonment of the chamber tomb meant that this grave type

[371] Vassallo 2000: 983.
[372] Vassallo 2000.
[373] Life in the sites of Monte Adranone, Montagna Vecchia, Monte Porcara and Montagna Vecchia proceeded apparently uninterrupted. However, in the case of Monte Adranone, this site was resettled by the Selinuntines in the 6th century and was a fortified outpost for Selinunte until the late 5th century (Fiorentini 1995).
[374] I find that Vassallo's interpretation of the 5th century crisis ethnically polarises too strongly the community dynamics disrupted by these historical events. He suggests that the crisis might not have entailed the depopulation and abandonment of the Sicilian hinterland, but rather a different administrative set-up enforced by Selinunte and Agrigento over this area, its commercial networks, and its settlements ('Agrigento e Selinunte si trovarono ad imporre una sorta di controllo forte dei centri di questa parte dell'isola, la cui varia composizione etnica, tra Sicani, Elimi e Punici, non poteva ormai che rappresentare una forte e costante minaccia agli interessi greci'). Vassallo 2000: 998.
[375] Vassallo 2000: 983, 994-995, 997.

was no longer recognised as useful for isolating élite subgroups, given the altered historical context. The élites could have fallen prey to the new balance of power within western and central Sicily, as the commercial networks which had provided them with the wealth they then had displayed in their collective tombs collapsed or altered - as did the élites themselves.

5.

Monte Castellazzo di Poggioreale

5.1. The site

Monte Castellazzo is a small peak (615 m a.s.l.) in the province of Trapani which overlooks the ghost town of Poggioreale (fig. 28, 29, 30).[376] The remains of an ancient settlement have been discovered on the mountain's summit,[377] and a necropolis is located on a small plain in Contrada Madonna del Carmelo (also known as Madonna del Carmine) on the mountain's eastern slopes (fig. 39).[378] The entirety of Monte Castellazzo has been confiscated by the *Soprintendenza Archeologica* to salvage the site from further agricultural activity (the mountain used to be called 'Monte delle Rose'); but this provision has not been effective against the looting of the site, nor the regular scorching of farmland by local farmers

[376] These abandoned ruins are all that remain of the old town of Poggioreale, founded in 1642 and destroyed in 1968 by the catastrophic Belìce earthquake.
[377] IGM 1:25.000, F. 258 III NO. The local toponyms of 'Castellazzo' (the mountain's summit) and 'Portella d'Abità' (the mountain's only accessible south-western slopes) allude to the existence of an ancient settlement in this location (Tusa 1957: 90).
[378] Today the necropolis is for the most part occupied by vineyards, except for one section under the protection of the Soprintendenza. Bronze Age tombs have been discovered in the nearby Contrada Pioppo in Località Ulina (which are very similar to those found at Monte Finestrelle). Falsone 1992; Mannino – Falsone 1997.

(as occurred on one of my visits). Monte Castellazzo's topography is that of a natural fortress.[379] The only accessible side of the mountainside is where the plateau inclines to the south-west (this is where the 'South gate' of the centre was discovered), as all the other slopes are quite steep (fig. 35).[380] The inhabited area must have spread across the summit of Castellazzo. The remains of four parallel roads stretch in a north-southerly direction over terraces leading down from the summit (fig. 32).[381]

Monte Castellazzo is part of the eastern stretch of the Monti di Gibellina, which act as a watershed between the Belice and Fiume Freddo, and therefore between Selinunte's *chora* (at the mouth of the Belice) and Segesta's area of influence (Fiume Freddo flows through the Piana di Alcamo and into the Golfo di Castellammare).[382] Several small settlements have also been discovered in this area.[383] The strategic value of Monte Castellazzo's position cannot be underestimated: from its summit, I could see both the Tyrrhenian and the Mediterranean seas. Segesta, Eryx, Monte Maranfusa, Monte Adranone, Monte Finestrelle, Castellazzo di S. Ninfa are also all visible from the peak (fig. 36, 37, 38).[384] From its elevated position, Monte Castellazzo commanded the natural communication route that heads northwards towards Castellammare del Golfo, Segesta and the Conca d'Oro, and

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[379] This is a settlement strategy quite common in indigenous Iron Age hilltop settlements (e.g. Monte d'Oro, Monte Polizzo, Montagnola di Marineo, Montagna dei Cavalli): Adamesteanu 1962: 203; Falsone 1988: 303; Falsone 1992: 309; Leighton 1996a: 102; Albanese Procelli 2003: 36; Giglio et al. 2012: 240.

[380] Falsone - Leonard 1978: 38-39; Falsone - Leonard. 1980-1981: 934; Falsone 1992: 309; Giglio et al. 2012: 240.

[381] Adamesteanu 1962: 203. The settlement was aerially photographed by IRTA in 1955, and these photographs aided Adamesteanu in his identification of the settlements' urban and extra-urban road networks.

[382] Tusa 1957: 90; Falsone 1988: 303-304; Falsone 1992: 309; Falsone – Mannino 1997: 613-614; Anello 2003: 37, 45; Giglio et al. 2012: 239-240.

[383] Alimena, Cusumano, Catauli-Ulina, Monte Finestrelle, Monte Maranfusa. Tusa 1957: 91; 1976-1977: 659; Falsone 1976: 63, 1976-1977: 789-792; Spatafora 1996.

[384] One can also clearly see the dip in the Belice valley just beyond which lays Selinunte.

southwards towards Selinunte (fig. 35). This route has been recognised as a key 'via di penetrazione' for Selinunte into the fertile western Sicilian hinterland, and a crucial strategic point during the wars between Segesta and Selinunte during the 5th century BCE.[385] Farming, hunting and fishing would have been the main activities in this settlement, as attested by the finds of millstones, animal bones and seashells.[386]

The archaeological excavations of the site have concluded that the settlement was intermittently inhabited from the 14th or 13th centuries BCE until the Arab-Norman period in the 12th century CE.[387] The site of Castellazzo has been traditionally interpreted as an Elymian settlement,[388] but scholars have been unable to identify which Elymian city it might have originally been. No literary reference to this site exists, and despite the recovery of several (unpublished) coins (from Agrigento, Gela and Selinunte) from this site dating to the 5th - early 4th centuries BCE, the settlement does not appear to have its own mint.[389] Di Giovanni has suggested an identification with the ancient city of Elima,[390] Tusa briefly supported the possibility that the site was with Entella,[391] and Adamesteanu believed the

[385] Adamesteanu 1962: 203; Tusa 1962; Canzanella 1992: 157 note 41; Giglio et al. 2012: 240.
[386] Ferla et al. 1984; Falsone 1992: 309; Spatafora 1993: 165- 171.
[387] Regarding the periodisation of the site, see Falsone - Leonard 1980-1981: 934-935; Falsone 1988: 305; Falsone 1992: 309-310; Spanò Giammellaro 1993: 159; Spatafora 1993: 165; Giglio et al. 2012: 241-242. The phases relating to the late-Archaic and early Classical periods will be considered shortly.
[388] Di Giovanni 1876; Tusa 1957: 90; Tusa 1972-1973: 406; Falsone - Leonard 1978: 39; Tusa 1980: 58; Falsone - Leonard 1980-1981: 932; Tusa 1988-1989: 13; Falsone 1992: 308; Anello 2003: 46; Giglio et al. 2012: 239, 247. Cf. Adamesteanu 1962: 205.
[389] Falsone 1992: 308.
[390] Di Giovanni 1876. Ingoglia 1915 and Aloisio 1956 also supported the Elima identification.
[391] Tusa 1957: 90, 1958: 157-158.

site could have been Halkyai.[392] All these hypotheses have been debunked or remain unproven, and the ancient name of this site is still unknown.[393]

When Tusa first visited the site in 1957, he found some Corinthian and indigenous painted and incised pottery shards on the ground, dating to the early 6th century BCE and quite similar to finds discovered in Segesta and other western Sicilian sites.[394] Tusa interpreted these findings as evidence that the archaic site had been inhabited by indigenous peoples, and had been Hellenised in the early 6th century BCE (on the basis of parallels with other sites of the western Sicilian hinterland in this same period).[395] He understood this as evidence that the process of Hellenization of these sites had begun much earlier than previously imagined (in the 6th century BCE rather than *circa* a century later).[396] Tusa returned to Monte Castellazzo to conduct the first excavations of the site in 1967, which continued in 1969-1970.[397] These digs focussed on the residential area and the necropolis, but were never fully published.[398] Tusa's excavations discovered some inhabited 6th - 5th century structures: the 'casa del muro a telaio' (fig. 33) and the 'sacred area' (a building with multiple rooms of unknown function).[399] 'Elymian-style' wares (similar to those discovered in Segesta), Etruscan bucchero, and imported Greek (Laconian and Attic black-figure)

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[392] Adamesteanu 1962: 204-205, 1966. This identification was proposed owing to the settlement's central role in the area's communication network. Adamesteanu also adduced Thucydides VII.32.1 as evidence, where the site of Halkyai is attributed to the Sikels. This however contradicted the main ethnic interpretation of the site as Elymian (in the heart of what is conventionally understood as Elymian territory). Adamesteanu therefore proposed the following solution: 'quindi il centro di Castellazzo, pur compreso nell'area elima, può essere considerato abitato da Siculi' (Adamesteanu 1962: 205). See also Adamesteanu 1966.
[393] Falsone 1992: 308; Giglio et al. 2012: 240.
[394] Tusa 1957: 89-90.
[395] Tusa 1957: 91.
[396] Tusa 1957: 92.
[397] Tusa 1968-1969, 1972a, 1972c, 1972-1973.
[398] Tusa 1968-1969: 454; Holloway 1971: 80; Tusa 1972c: 58; Falsone - Leonard 1978: 39; Falsone 1992: 310-311.
[399] Tusa 1968-1969: 454; Giglio et al. 2012: 240.

material were also discovered.[400] The finds from this excavation proved to be archaeologically contradictory at the time of their discovery: the 'muro a telaio' was considered typically 'Punic', while the incised pottery fragments 'Elymian'. To make matters more confusing for the archaeologists at the time, an inscription in Greek dedicated to Herakles was discovered nearby (the inscription will be discussed in detail shortly).[401] Despite the impasse, Tusa insisted on identifying Castellazzo as an Elymian settlement that had been deeply Hellenised.[402]

Seven systematic excavations then took place in 1976-1982, jointly directed by Leonard Jr. of the University of Missouri-Columbia and Falsone of the University of Palermo (with the help of a group of local volunteers).[403] The 1976-1982 excavations focussed on three sectors of the city (Campo I, II, III). In Campo I a large oval hut and Thapsos-style pottery (Middle Bronze Age, 14th - 13th centuries) were discovered.[404] Built over these remains was a large rectangular-shaped building of the late Archaic period (second half of 6th - early 5th century BCE).[405] In Campo II the South gate was discovered, which had been destroyed by a fire in the first half of the 5th century BCE, only to be very briefly reoccupied at the end of the century before being definitively abandoned (fig. 34).[406] Campo

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[400] Ross Holloway 1971: 80. The finds were only published in Tusa 1972c, 1972-1973.
[401] Tusa 1968-1969: 454. The Corinthian wares found in the necropolis and the settlement in 1967-1969 are published only in Tusa 1968-1969: 454, 1972-1973: 406.
[402] Tusa 1972-1973: 406.
[403] Notably, a new excavation method inspired by near-eastern excavations was put into practice. These innovations in documentation process and excavation techniques were known as the 'metodo del Belìce', and were applied for the first time in Sicily. It was afterwards applied to Mozia, Monte Maranfusa and Marineo, Falsone 1976: 61-66, 1976-1977: 790; Tusa 1976-1977: 659; Falsone - Leonard 1978: 41; Falsone – Leonard 1980: 109; Giglio et al. 2012: 240-241.
[404] Falsone - Leonard 1979: 59-67; Falsone 1988: 306.
[405] Falsone - Leonard 1978: 47-52; Falsone – Leonard 1980: 110; Falsone 1988: 306. For parallels for the huts, see Nicoletti - Tusa 2012: 210.
[406] Falsone - Leonard 1978: 41-47; Falsone - Leonard 1979: 67-76; Falsone – Leonard 1980: 110-111; Falsone - Leonard 1980-1981: 934-935; Falsone 1988: 306-308; Giglio et al. 2012: 241.

III revealed a protohistoric settlement consisting of huts, paved courtyards with fireplaces, and indigenous pottery decorated with incised and painted geometric motifs and imported Greek wares, (Corinthian, Ionian) as well as locally produced pottery dating between the end of the 7th and the first half of the 6th century BCE.[407]

In 2008 the excavations recommenced, directed by Sconzo of the *Soprintendenza of Trapani* and the University of Palermo.[408] This time, efforts focussed on Campo IV (the 'città bassa') and Campo V (the 'città alta'). Residential structures, as well as wares pre- and post-dating the first Greek contacts were discovered during these excavations.[409] Within Campo IV (Area 13) a rectangular building with three rooms and a road passing next to it was discovered. Within room B was buried a foundation deposit containing loom weights, bronze *lamellae*, nails, metal object fragments, miniaturistic vases (*kantharoi*, single-handle cups, *kotyliskoi* painted in late-Corinthian style),[410] and small figurative clay objects.[411] The discovery of other ceramic wares (Attic, Selinuntine, Corinthian pottery and ionic B2 type cups) allowed to date the building to the second half of the 6th century BCE.[412] In Campo V, a large rectangular-shaped 5th or 6th century BCE building with 'muri a telaio' came to light.[413] The 2009 excavation (directed again by Sconzo) focussed on Campo IV and tried to ascertain and refine the chronology of the structures discovered in past excavations.[414] In Area 13 a few additional finds of indigenous pottery with incised decorative motifs were

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[407] Falsone – Leonard 1980: 111; Falsone – Leonard 1980-1981: 935-937; Giglio et al. 2012: 241. The pottery finds (especially the Corinthian wares) from the 1978-1979 excavations of Campo III are published in Fresina 1993.
[408] Giglio et al. 2012: 239.
[409] Giglio et al. 2012: 239, 243.
[410] These vases are very similar to the votive deposits from Selinunte (Giglio et al. 2012: 245).
[411] Giglio et al. 2012: 244-245.
[412] Giglio et al. 2012: 245. Other finds from the street outside the building allowed to fix a *terminus ante quem* in the late 5th century BCE.
[413] Giglio et al. 2012: 239. The finds from the Campo V have not been fully published yet.
[414] Giglio et al. 2012: 239.

found and dated to the Archaic period. In Area 12 the foundations of a circular layout hut, millstones, indigenous painted and incised pottery (similar to that found on nearby Monte Maranfusa), along with proto-Corinthian sub-geometric pottery (which could however be a local imitation of the Greek original) dating to the end of the 7th and early 6th century BCE were discovered.[415]

5.2. Burial record

The necropolis of Monte Castellazzo has never been fully published, nor fully explored. In fact, its total size is still unknown. The first reference to the existence of a necropolis in the Madonna del Carmelo area is by Aloisio 1956, which I will quote in full as it bears testimony of the lost richness of this necropolis. 'Qui si sono scoperte tombe e vasi tipici del protocorinzio ed ellenico, e dei periodi più lontani ancora: patere, ampolle a collo stretto, istoriate col pavone, con la cerva, dai colori finissimi e vivi, lucidi, chiari, a fondo giallognolo, di colore nero ebano... vasi unguentari, sugli stessi tipi, anfore conformi, anche piccolissime e di più grandi a collo largo, decorate da ornato di diversi colori... frammenti di idoletti di terracotta, Cerere (Afrodite) e Proserpina tanto coltivate in Sicilia, piccole teste di animali (cani) in terra cotta [...]. Sul monte (lato est nord-est proprio di recente sotto lo scavo, a motivo agricolo, si sono scoperti quasi allineati numerosi *tholos*: la caratteristica presenza di tombe a volta sotterranea coperte a mo' di cupola e tombe a cassa di pietra, coperte da un'unica lastra'.

[415] Giglio et al. 2012: 246. Indigenous pottery was also discovered nearby, attesting a period when contacts between Greeks and indigenous communities had not yet begun (Phase B). On the millstones, see Spatafora 1993: 165- 171.

The only excavations of Monte Castellazzo's necropolis began in 1967 and continued in 1969-1970, both under the direction of Tusa (fig. 39).[416] The finds were never fully published, apart from some brief reports: the lack of publications precludes any detailed analysis of the burials, but a summary can still be offered.[417] These excavations revealed a dozen tombs of the 6th century BCE (fig. 40). The attested burial types are inhumations in monolithic sarcophagi, trench tombs (some covered by squared-off slabs of tuff stone, of the type built into the walls of Poggioreale's ghost town, fig. 31), as well as secondary cremations within Corinthian *pithoi* or Laconian craters then deposited directly in the ground.[418] The grave goods consisted of many imported wares, such as Corinthian and Etruscan bucchero vases, or locally produced wares.[419] Tomb VII (of unspecified burial ritual, belonging to an infant) contained Corinthian *aryballoi* and *kotiliskoi* dating to the mid-6th century BCE; tomb IX (unspecified tomb type) also contained Corinthian *aryballoi*, a *kotyle* and a *kotiliskos*; the inhumation burial VII contained a bucchero *kantharos* of the mid-6th century BCE; the secondary cremation burial of the late 6th century BCE used as a receptacle for the ashes a Laconian crater, and also included a black-figure *lekythos*.[420] One tomb in particular, accidentally discovered in 1971 contained high-quality wares dating to the 6th century BCE:[421] a Corinthian *alabastron*, a bronze *aryballos*, and a bronze *phiale mesomphalos* chiselled with animal and plant motifs (fig. 41).[422]

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[416] Tusa 1968-1969, 1972c, 1972-1973.
[417] Tusa 1968-1969, 1972c, 1972-1973; Spatafora 2010c: 27-30.
[418] Tusa 1968-1969: 454, 1972c: 58; Falsone - Leonard 1978: 39; Falsone 1992: 310-311; Spatafora 2010c: 27-28, 2012: 63.
[419] Falsone 1992: 310.
[420] Spatafora 2010c: 30. The presence of Laconian pottery in Monte Castellazzo further strengthens the hypothesis that there were strong commercial connections with Selinunte, which was one of the main markets for this type of pottery in Sicily (Pelagatti 1990, 128– 30)
[421] Di Stefano 1972: 244; Falsone - Leonard 1978: 39; Falsone 1992: 311.
[422] Spatafora 2010c: 28-29. Spatafora 2010c: 27-28 and 2012b: 63 believes the *phiale* to be the work of a Greek artisan.

Inhumation:
Monolithic sarcophagi
Trench tombs
Cremation:
Secondary
A total of c.12

The coexistence of inhumation and cremation rituals represents an interesting variation on the burial rituals in use at Manico di Quarara. To quote the sample of 218 tombs from the Manicalunga – Contrada Gaggera necropolis of Selinunte, in use between the first half of the 6th century (60 tombs) and over the 5th century (140 tombs) BCE, there are attested the rituals of inhumation in trench graves, in *cappuccina* graves or *sarcophagi*, *enchytrismoi* burials, as well as primary cremations in trench graves and secondary cremations frequently in *pithoi*, *hydriai* and *amphorae*.[423] Tusa and Frisone also noted the similarities between Monte Castellazzo and the Bagliazzo necropolis in Selinunte, to which I add Selinunte's Buffa necropolis as well (out of 1,268 graves, 514 are cremations and 754 inhumations).[424] Cremation burials in hinterland indigenous sites began to appear in the early 6th century, when they began to coexist alongside indigenous funerary practices. At Butera for example, during the 7th and 6th centuries new burial practices such as *enchytrismos* tombs and cremation rituals were introduced alongside the local practice of inhumations within rectangular chamber tombs.[425] At Sabucina chamber tombs are also found beside trench tombs, *enchytrismoi*, *cappuccina* tombs and cremations.[426] The same process of

[423] Kustermann Graf 2002: 24-29, 35-40.
[424] Frisone 1992: 305.
[425] Adamesteanu 1958; Albanese Procelli 2003: 168-171.
[426] Albanese Procelli 2003: 168-171.

introduction of burial practices foreign to the local tradition has already been investigated regarding the Manico di Quarara necropolis. However, here is where the first important differences between these two sites emerge.

The only known rock-cut chamber tombs similar to those of Manico di Quarara are found in the nearby località Ulina and date to the Bronze Age (fig. 39b).[427] These tombs, similar to those found nearby at Monte Finestrelle, had already fallen out of use in the late Archaic period, which suggests that different socio-cultural dynamics from those examined in Manico di Quarara (which I have linked to the persistence in use of the rock-cut chamber tombs) were at play in Monte Castellazzo. Unfortunately, given the scarcity of published information from the burials, it is impossible to trace the adoption of specific and quantifiable Selinuntine funeral typologies in the necropolis of Monte Castellazzo (as was instead possible to a certain degree with Manico di Quarara). However (and unlike Monte d'Oro), a clearer viewpoint on the patterns of change and persistence involving this site can be achieved by observing other types of available archaeological evidence. By observing the material remains from the settlement and its epigraphic evidence, it is possible to situate the scarce necropolis data within the cultural and historical context of this area, tracing an outline of the indigenous society before and after its coming into contact with Selinunte.

5.3. Competitive social interactions

The funeral typologies of Monte Castellazzo are not the only evidence for these communities actively and selectively importing Selinunte's goods and practices within the funerary sphere since a very early stage.[428] Monte Castellazzo's strategic position within the

[427] Falsone 1992; Falsone - Mannino 1997; Albanese Procelli 2003: 75-86.
[428] Falsone - Leonard 1980-1981: 937.

internal communication routes is key to understanding how the histories of this indigenous settlement and Selinunte came to intertwine. Archaeological evidence for the first contacts between these two communities is first attested around 625 BCE (Phase C). It is in this period that the settlement underwent important cityscape changes: the quasi-circular huts with external paved courtyards and hearths typical of the indigenous tradition and attested between 625 - 550 BCE (Phase C1)[429] were supplanted by rectangular buildings with multiple rooms in Greek-style architecture (starting in 550 - 470 BCE, Phase C2).[430] Construction techniques improved, the urban road network was developed, and the South gate was built. It is in this period that the settlement achieved its maximum expansion.[431] To contextualise this urban restructuring within a wider regional framework, the same process can be seen taking place at the nearby sites of Monte Maranfusa and Monte Iato. Castello della Pietra, Montagnoli and Monte Polizzo also attest urban restructuring initiatives in this period.[432]

It is also around 625 - 550 BCE that increasingly large quantities of imported goods (Corinthian pottery, Ionic B1-type Ionic cups, Etruscan bucchero vases) and local produce from the Greek-settled cities (white clay pots from Selinunte, wares painted in Megarese style) begin to be discovered at Monte Castellazzo alongside the geometric-style incised, stamped and painted indigenous-style pottery and other locally manufactured utensils.[433] This trend matches the pattern previously investigated with regard to the regional network of pottery consumption common to western and central Sicily: the majority of the wares

[429] Hodos 2006; Spatafora 2003a: 96.
[430] Tusa 1980: 59; Falsone 1992: 309; Spanò Giammellaro 1993: 159; Spatafora 1996: 198; Giglio et al. 2012: 242.
[431] Falsone 1992: 309; Giglio et al. 2012: 242.
[432] Vassallo 2000.
[433] Tusa 1980: 59; Falsone 1992; Fresina 1993; Spanò Giammellaro 1993; Campisi 2003; Spatafora 2003a: 96; Giglio et al. 2012: 247.

found in indigenous settlements active in the 6th century BCE were gradually but ever-increasingly supplanted by Greek-style or Greek-imported wares, which cast the indigenous incised pottery style decidedly out of fashion. At Castellazzo too, the attestations of wares decorated in this style drop in the late Archaic phase, in parallel with a spike in imported or Greek-style goods. These observations support the hypothesis that the shift in domestic architecture, construction techniques, objects and burial habits at Monte Castellazzo might be attributed to the early contacts this settlement had with nearby Selinunte has been attributed to the influence of the Selinuntine settlers.[434]

The growth, trade and urbanisation processes seen at Castellazzo did not last long: Phase C ended suddenly and violently around 480/470 BCE: the South gate was burnt down and the settlement abandoned for around half a century. These destructive events have been linked to the 5th century BCE conflict between Selinunte and Segesta.[435] I have already discussed the demise or contraction of urban life of many indigenous settlements during the 5th century BCE: the archaeological evidence from sites such as Monte Maranfusa, Entella, Montagnola di Marineo, Monte Iato, Marianopoli and many others drops or disappears entirely starting in the early 5th century BCE.[436] Monte Castellazzo is included among the sites which were entirely abandoned.[437] Between 410 - 370 BCE (Phase D) the city was briefly re-occupied, possibly as a consequence of the destruction of Selinunte in 409 BCE.[438] However, the material remains for this period are not as rich in quantity and quality as earlier in the 5th and 6th centuries, suggesting that this re-occupation was probably made

[434] Falsone 1992: 309; Giglio et al. 2012: 242.
[435] Falsone 1992: 309; Vassallo 2000: 986; Giglio et al. 2012: 242.
[436] Vassallo 2000.
[437] Vassallo 2000.
[438] Falsone 1992: 309.

by soldiers, mercenaries or refugees.[439] The city was then definitively abandoned in the early 4th century BCE during Dionysius' I wars against Carthage.

To sum up, the evidence from the settlement, specifically from the urban layout and the pottery evidence, suggests that the local inhabitants of Monte Castellazzo had made deep and important changes to their everyday customs and society.[440] Decisive evidence for a hierarchically stratified indigenous society (such as the one reconstructed in Monte d'Oro) is unfortunately lacking. The finds from the tomb discovered accidentally in 1971 do though suggest that rich grave goods were in use in certain tombs, possibility pointing to the existence of élite groups such as the ones identified in Manico di Quarara. However, such isolated evidence is indecisive. But other observations suggest the existence of profound differences between Monte Castellazzo and Monte d'Oro and their respective necropoleis.

At Manico di Quarara, Greek-style wares probably imported from Selinunte and Himera were adopted within a funerary context because they responded to and conveyed a restricted social group's requisites and priorities, such as statements of wealth, status assertion and a sense of belonging to this distinct social identity. The choice of grave goods was the outcome of a conscious selection process: drinking wares and particularly refined pottery goods were chosen over the local, poorer wares. This selective behaviour could also be traced in the persistence in use of rock-cut chamber tombs, an indigenous burial type which coexisted seemingly unproblematically with other burial typologies in Manico di Quarara, which had also possibly been imported from Selinunte and Himera (the *cappuccina*, *enchytrismos*, trench graves). These two settlements were well connected to Monte d'Oro via the Belice valley communication routes, allowing Monte d'Oro to control and benefit from a network

[439] Falsone 1992: 309.
[440] Falsone 1992: 309, 311.

of people and goods in motion. The wealth channelled by this 'connectedness' could have been directly translated in the social development in a hierarchical sense at Monte d'Oro, and consequently to monumental, expensive and visibly striking chamber tombs best suited to the élites' requisites for the afterlife – a burial hierarchy. The fact that these tombs could also accommodate multiple burials, thus strengthening the associative power of the dominant élite, must also have been felt as particularly well suited to this group's identity. This pattern of selection and persistence is not only attested in Manico di Quarara: I have shown how the coexistence of different burial typologies is also observable across other western and central Sicilian inland indigenous settlements.

But in Monte Castellazzo di Poggioreale, the situation is quite different. Admittedly, the parallel between these two sites is not quite balanced: evidence from the urban settlement is lacking from Monte d'Oro, whereas the necropolis has been excavated to a more or less satisfactory informative level – the very opposite may be said for Monte Castellazzo and the Madonna del Carmelo cemetery. However, the material culture of Monte Castellazzo does not overall attest any particular persistence of indigenous stylistic, mortuary or architectural traits: instead, it reflects pervasive conformity to the Selinuntine funerary tradition, pottery typology and urban landscaping. This does not mean that Castellazzo was surrendering any form of self-identity, nor that it had been assimilated entirely by Selinunte – another victim of Hellenization. Castellazzo's more pronounced (or more visible) receptivity to practices and objects *à la Selinunte* was the product of conscious decisions, selections and local processes as much as Monte d'Oro's choices were too. Different socio-historical circumstances could have accounted for the divergences between these sites. It is possible that the communities inhabiting Monte Castellazzo might not have felt the need to define themselves in a socially exclusive sense because the grounds for status assertions, wealth visibility and

selective persistence of certain practices might simply not have been available to them. Indeed, for Castellazzo the geographical proximity to and visibility with Selinunte is key. The precocious expansion in the early 6th century BCE of Selinunte's sphere of commercial and cultural influence up the Belice valley must have altered the pre-existing indigenous power structures in a more pervasive way than when it eventually reached sites such as Monte d'Oro. This situation left very little or no space for Monte Castellazzo to assert and define itself in a distinctive manner, autonomously selecting elements to adopt and adapt to its own tastes and social priorities. There might not even have been space to establish élites such as those attested in the necropolis of Manico di Quarara, due to the capillary and pervasive control Selinunte could have exercised on this *chora*. At Castellazzo therefore the interaction with peer settlements along the Belice valley can be traced in the burial and wider archaeological evidence from this site, where social interactions could also be engendered by the natural lay of the western Sicilian land.

This control was only to increase: the 5th century BCE historical vicissitudes led Greek sites such as Agrigento and Selinunte to tighten their grasp over their *chora*, which eventually brought on the extinction or impoverishment of a multitude of indigenous sites. Monte Castellazzo was in fact one of the first to succumb: in 480/470 the site had been abandoned. This is also precisely the period in which Selinunte and Himera's burial practices become more visible and frequent in the Manico di Quarara necropolis. The rock-cut chamber tombs fall out of use in the early 4th century BCE, but the grave goods found within them had already dropped in quality around the 5th century BCE. This could suggest that Monte d'Oro's privileged position within the communication and trade networks discussed above had somehow been compromised or altered, leading to the possible disappearance of the previously visible élite groups.

The attraction to modes *à la Selinunte* or *à la Himera* in settlements up and down the Belice valley is understandable: during the 6th and 5th centuries, Selinunte and Himera were building magnificent temples, they acted as important nodes in the trade networks of the central Mediterranean, and demonstrated a marked social vitality. To use a comparison from the modern world, one could buy a Dolce & Gabbana evening dress to express one's financial means, to declare one's engagement with the wider cultural associations of Italian *prêt-à-porter*, and because of a personal preference for the brand's Sicilian-inspired prints. Fashion choices are meant to be displayed arguably as much as burial choices: burial typologies were an excellent showcase for an individual or a group's socio-cultural priorities and requisites (as has previously been argued with regard to the visibility of rock-cut chamber tombs and wealthy grave goods). But to return to the Dolce & Gabbana comparison, the purchase of the dress does not necessarily entail that the buyer is Italian. Whether the Selinunte-style grave users were actual Selinuntines who had settled and died in Monte d'Oro, whether they were locals excluded from élite circles but still eager to show their receptiveness to extra-settlement habits, or whether other considerations or priorities dictated their burial behaviours, this cannot be said for sure.

It is possible to define the communities of Monte Castellazzo and Monte d'Oro in greater detail? The epigraphic evidence might be of aid. In 1958 of a Greek inscription written in Doric dialect and archaic Selinuntine alphabet was discovered in Mandra di Mezzo - Case Messere, about 3 km south of Castellazzo and 700 m from the Belice river, at an important crossroads for cultic or military defence purposes (fig. 42).[441] The inscription records a dedication to Herakles by one Aristylos, and has been interpreted as proof of the

[441] *I.Sicily* 1471 = *IGDS* 84. Guarducci 1959: 272-275; Manni Piraino 1959: 162,164; Falsone 1992: 307.

diffusion of Herakles' cult in the Selinuntine hinterland.[442] Manni Piraino suggested that the inscription was part of the *temenos* entrance to an open-air sanctuary dedicated to Herakles,[443] and has dated the inscription to just before 580 BCE, as it was around the early 6th century BCE that the Selinuntine expansion towards Poggioreale began.[444] This epigraphic document is highly informative of the profound level of assimilation that the communities of Monte Castellazzo had accepted: the stone's unmistakable proximity to the site of Castellazzo suggests that Greek religious ideology had also penetrated the Belice valley by 580 BCE, perhaps even in the form of a place of cult dedicated to Herakles. This is precisely the period in which the new urban landscaping of Castellazzo took place, and when the peak in Greek-style pottery imports could be traced at this site. The inscription's use of Selinuntine alphabet and Doric dialect also suggests that the indigenous hinterland of the lower Belice valley was exposed to an alphabetisation process moulded on the Selinuntine alphabetic variety. Despite the inscription having not been found exactly within the settlement of Castellazzo, its pertinence to the diverse set of practices being imported by this indigenous centre given its proximity to Selinunte is highly probable. It strengthens and embodies the notion of intervisibility between settlements, a physical manifestation of the different types of interactions possible among naturally interconnected settlements.

This is not however the only epigraphic attestation from Monte Castellazzo: in 1980 an indigenous language graffito in the Greek alphabet was discovered inscribed on the neck of a Greek transport *amphora* found near the South gate.[445] The inscription reads TIAIEM

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[442] Manni Piraino 1959: 162, 164. She does not entirely exclude that the stone might have rolled down the (gentle) slopes of Castellazzo. Very few other archaeological finds have been made in this area.
[443] Manni Piraino 1959: 162, 164.
[444] Manni Piraino 1959: 171. Spatafora notes how Herakles also appears in Colle Madore (Spatafora 2012a: 101-109).
[445] Falsone 1988: 311-312; Calascibetta 1990: 20; Falsone 1992: 308.

(Calascibetta integrates an iota so that the inscription reads ɛμι, common in other non-Greek inscriptions)[446], and has been dated to the early 5th century BCE on palaeographical grounds.[447] The text appears to be an 'iscrizione parlante' expressing ownership, of the type well attested in Selinunte and Segesta,[448] written in an indigenous language but adopting the Greek alphabet as form of written expression. This is a highly notable fact: that an indigenous language was still being used in the 5th century BCE at Castellazzo (were the dating of the graffito to be accurate) is an important testimony of how the indigenous communities were not adopting wholesale a Selinuntine 'cultural package', but were still marking out areas of autonomy well into the 5th century BCE. At the same time, the use of the Greek alphabet to express this language in written form does confirm that Monte Castellazzo was readily using tools permuted from Selinunte - including their alphabet.

A similar situation can be seen taking place at Monte d'Oro, where four epigraphic documents have been discovered within or connected to the necropolis. All four inscriptions consist of graffiti on pottery written in an indigenous language in the Greek alphabet of the Selinuntine variety.[449] The first is a graffito traced on the external part of the foot of a black-glazed locally produced 'type C' *kylix*. It was discovered in tomb XIII (containing inhumations dating to the second half of the 6th to the first half of the 5th centuries BCE) during the 1968 excavations. The *kylix* has been dated to the end of the 6th century BCE. The inscription reads ATAITϒKAIEMI (fig. 27),[450] and has been interpreted as an 'iscrizione parlante' expressing possession: a name of indigenous onomastic tradition in the

[446] Such as the non-Greek graffiti found at Segesta, to which this inscription bears close similarities. Calascibetta 1990: 20-21.
[447] Calascibetta 1990: 20.
[448] Agostiniani 1983.
[449] Tusa 1970: 248-249; Agostiniani 1977 n. 319 and 283; Cucco et al. 2017: 13; Tribulato 2017: 119.
[450] *IAS* n. 319; Tusa 1970: 248-249; Giustolisi 1973: 47; Ampolo 2012a: 32-33.

dative, followed by the Greek verb 'to be'. The second graffito was also found in the necropolis from an unspecified tomb during the 1968 excavations, and is traced on the inside of the foot of a black-glaze cup dating to the late 5th century BCE. The inscription reads ΙΙΙΝΑΣ (fig. 26).[451] The third graffito was discovered in tomb XII on the bottom of a large black-glaze, high-quality, Attic *skyphos* dating to the first quarter of the 5th century BCE. The inscription reads ΚΥΤΕΝΗΟΥ.[452] The last graffito consists of an abecedary (the first four letters of the alphabet) traced on the late- archaic black-glaze 'C type' *kylix* (probably of local production) (fig. 25).[453] It was found out of context as it was part of the assemblages of artefacts surrendered to the Carabinieri in 2015, but probably came from the necropolis. Palaeographic observations reveal the writer to have adopted the Selinuntine alphabet,[454] and the graffito to have been written in the first half of the 5th century BCE.[455] Tribulato believes this to be a writing exercise of an individual belonging to the indigenous community, given its burial context.[456] Tribulato explains the abecedary as an acculturation marker, evidence of the linguistic Hellenization of the indigenous communities which commenced in the 6th century BCE and is thought to have been completed by the end of the 5th century BCE.[457] However, I wish to propose a more nuanced interpretation.

The epigraphic documentation so far examined from this site sits in the period of maximum visibility of the élites, whose successful involvement in the trade routes and

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[451] *IAS* n. 283; Tusa 1970: 248-249; Ampolo 2012a: 32-33.
[452] Ferreri 2012: 253. Ferreri notes that this graffito has no parallels among the Segestan graffiti from Monte Barbaro, the largest known assemblage of graffiti in the Elymian language on potsherds (Agostiniani 1977).
[453] Tribulato 2017; Cucco et al. 2017. On the other two other Sicilian abecedaries (Mozia and Montagna di Marzo), see Tribulato 2017: 119-120.
[454] Especially given the 'reverse ny' beta, characteristic of the Elymian script. Cucco et al. 2017: 12; Tribulato 2017: 118-119.
[455] Tribulato 2017: 117; Cucco et al. 2017: 12-13.
[456] Tribulato 2017: 118.
[457] Tribulato 2017: 120.

connectivity networks of the Belice valley and the Conca d'Oro was beginning to pay off by the mid-6th century. The use of writing is usually perceived by scholarship as contributing to the social prestige expressed around and within the chamber tombs.[458] Perhaps the use of writing was also a way for the élites to further facilitate their involvement in the trade networks which brought such diversely attested goods to Monte d'Oro. The display of writing as an additional way of displaying élite status is also attested in Balate di Marianopoli and Montagna di Marzo, where a similar situation is documented by the finding of epigraphic documents (an abecedary at Montagna di Marzo) within rich tombs.[459] At Manico di Quarara, all four graffiti are incised on high-quality prestige goods (black-glazed *skyphos* and *kylikes*), and at least three were found within the chamber tombs: the inscriptions could have been as organic to status statements as the other grave goods and the tombs they were deposited in, making them a possible élite phenomenon.[460]

What is more, as in the case of the graffito from Monte Castellazzo, the use of the Greek alphabet as a writing tool expressing an indigenous language further supports the impression of widespread variability in the wider western Sicilian region already, attested in the mortuary assemblages in the previous Chapter. The use of a Greek alphabet, possibly adopted from the nearby settlements of Selinunte or Himera, to write an indigenous language could be seen as the epigraphic counterpart of the use of Greek-style goods, architecture and graves at Monte Castellazzo, just as the display of imported Greek-style goods within indigenous style rock-cut tombs was at Manico di Quarara. Moreover, the epigraphic documents from Manico di Quarara and Monte Castellazzo share an important

[458] Ferreri 2012: 254; Tribulato 2017: 120.
[459] Albanese Procelli 2003: 238, 242; Ferreri 2012: 256 n. 56–57.
[460] Ferreri 2012: 254.

commonality: they all attest links to the Selinuntine alphabetic variety, in the reverse *nu* beta of Selinunte in KYTENHOY, the Greek verb 'to be' expressing possession in ATAITYKAIEMI and TIAIEM, and the archaic Selinuntine alphabet and Doric dialect in which the Herakles dedication is written. This reveals another regional distribution, that of the alphabetisation process which unites Monte Castellazzo and Manico di Quarara, despite the underlying differences between these two settlements discussed above.

But once the socio-cultural context which had given rise to the stratification of Monte d'Oro's society had subsided, so did the need to use writing to assert status and means: the epigraphic evidence from this site does not proceed after the 5th century BCE. In truth, after the 5th century BCE no epigraphic record in any language whatsoever is found in Manico di Quarara, and this sudden drop matches the island-wide disappearance of (the already limited evidence for) indigenous scripts during the 5th century BCE. As discussed above, the end of the 5th century BCE coincides with the gradual dissipation of the élite groups and with a historically turbulent period for western Sicily, marked by the battle of Himera in 480 BCE and the Carthaginian takeover of Selinunte in 409 BCE.[461]

In these two case studies I have studied how local idiosyncrasies fit into a regional pattern of widespread mortuary variability, which reflected the priorities, circumstances, drivers and changes involving single settlements and wider networks of interaction. At Manico di Quarara, I have studied how burial choices reflected the socio-political organisation unfolding internally within the settlement. I have connected these developments to region-wide processes and networks, and observed them in the wealth display, selective persistence and burial hierarchies traceable in this necropolis. At Monte Castellazzo, I have

[461] Vassallo 2000: 983.

focussed on how the settlement's interaction with Selinunte and other peer communities came to guide the burial and wider archaeological evidence of this site. For both sites, I have been able to connect attested practices to wider regional patterns, using parallels from other hinterland settlements. Variability has emerged as the hallmark of the western Sicilian burial practices in the late Archaic and Classical periods, born of the local circumstances, changes in wealth consumption and social developments operating within each community of practice.

In fact, the differential adoption and adaptation of practices otherwise attested in the nearby connected settlements of Himera and Selinunte has not only been traced in the funerary record, but also across a variety of classes of evidence and through comparisons with other peer settlements within the region of western and central Sicily. My analysis has emphasised the trans- and intra-regional patterns of practice evident in the funerary sphere, but also in the epigraphic, architectural, social, economic structures of western Sicily. Changes and persistences in these patterns have revealed telling attitudes of different communities to their local surroundings and bigger historical events or power balances. I have argued that change, selection, and continuity in use of burial habits and goods could translate into expressions of social identity, specifically status assertions and the hierarchical stratification of civic life. I have also emphasised how distinct and intentional choices in burial were made on the basis of social priorities and on the choice to emulate or adopt practices *à la Selinunte* (rather than 'Greek for the love of Greek'), driven by competitive socio-political circumstances.

The adoption of new practices, as well as the persisting use of traditional ones, has been consistently understood as a significant marker of collective identities being asserted and negotiated. It is ultimately this mortuary variability to have been the common

denominator at play in a regional sense: the homogeneity of western Sicily is engendered by the variability in practices at a local level. I have avoided interpreting this situation as the product of coexisting ethnicities, and have shown how the use of Hellenization as an explanation for these circumstances and processes is limited, given the diversity of outcomes I have observed. The distinct demarcations of the 'Greek' and 'Elymian' ethnic characterisation of communities and practices have therefore been blurred. Rather than ethnic identities at play, I find that social interactions and social competition taking place among peer polities could explain the local variability and regional conformity homogeneity. The physical landscape of western Sicily also played a key part in facilitating the intervisibility and interconnection between sites, making the processes of competitive emulation possible. I now move to a comparison with two other necropoleis, Palermo and Solunto, to investigate the relationship between social structures and burial culture, between collective identities and patterns of practices in the mortuary record.

6.

Palermo

6.1. The site

The ancient settlement of Palermo was founded on a 1 km long spit of land, a limestone plateau (30 m a.s.l.) between the rivers Papireto and Kemonia jutting into the Tyrrhenian Sea (fig. 46).[462] The settlement's position is highly strategic: behind the city lies the fertile Conca d'Oro, surrounded by the Monti di Palermo.[463] Along the coastline to the west lays the Piana di Partinico, Solunto and Himera to the east. The important pass of Portella della Paglia leads southwards to the Piana degli Albanesi, Monte Iato and the Belice valley. North of Palermo is Monte Pellegrino, and beyond that, the Tyrrhenian Sea.[464] Thucydides attests that the *emporion* of Palermo was founded by the Levantine settlers who had also founded Mozia and Solunto during the 8th and 7th century BCE (the most ancient remains

[462] On the topography and urban archaeology of Palermo, see Giustolisi 1988; Belvedere 1998: 71-78; Tamburello 1998a: 79-84; Di Stefano: 1998a: 92-104; Spatafora 2003b: 1175–1188, 2005, 2007: 22-24, 2009; Di Stefano 2006: 15-19. For literary references, see Cass. Dio VIII.14.4; Diod. Sic. XXIII.18.4; Polyb. I.38.7-8.
[463] Di Stefano 1998b: 51-56, 56-61, 1998c: 223-233, 2006: 11.
[464] Di Stefano 1999: 227, 2006: 15, 2009b: 15; Spatafora 2007: 20-21.

from Palermo date to the end of the 7th century BCE).[465] The literary sources also confirm that Palermo and Carthage were allies in 480 BCE, and that Palermo feuded with Hermocrates and the Greek settlements in 409 BCE.[466] In 374 BCE a political and economic balance was struck, with Carthage asserting its control over the entire central-western area of Sicily.[467] The city was eventually conquered by the Romans in the mid-3rd century BCE.[468] The lack of other historical sources regarding Palermo has been compensated for by the finds from the necropolis, which occupied a large area west of the settlement and was in use between the end of the 7th and the early 3rd century BCE,[469] achieving its maximum expansion between the end of the 6th and the 5th century BCE.[470]

The full extent of the necropolis is yet unknown, and the continuous occupation of Palermo over the millennia makes it impossible to conduct a full excavation of the area. Since 1746, about 800 tombs have been discovered.[471] The necropolis of Palermo stretches across today's Piazza Indipendenza, Corso Calatafimi, Corso Pisani, Via Cuba, Via Cappuccini and Via Pindemonte (fig. 43).[472] The archaic nucleus of the necropolis probably expanded concentrically in all directions until it came to touch the city walls (discovered in Piazza Indipendenza).[473] During the Roman period, another area was chosen for the necropoleis (trans-Kemonia). The first tombs were found during the construction of the Real

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[465] Thuc. VI.2.4. On the history of the settlement, refer to Tamburello 1966b: 234-239, 1971: 81-96; Bisi 1967: 61-65; Tusa 1972-1973: 32-47; Moscati 1972-1973: 23-31; Anello 1998: 40-55; Di Stefano 2006: 11-13; Spatafora 2009b: 279-280.
[466] Diod. Sic. XI.1.5; XI.2.1, XIII.63.4.
[467] Spatafora 2002b: 3, 2007: 20-21. On Palermo's key role in the *eparcheia*, see also Polyb. I.38.7. On the capture of the city by the Romans, see Diod. Sic. XIII.18.3-5.
[468] Spatafora 2013: 137.
[469] Spatafora 2009b: 279, 2010b: 41.
[470] Spatafora 2010b: 33.
[471] Spatafora 2010b: 33.
[472] Tamburello 1998b: 107-118.
[473] Spatafora 2010b: 34.

Albergo dei Poveri in 1746, of the Educandato Maria Adelaide in 1784, and of the Caserma della Cavalleria in 1834. The finds consisted of rock-cut hypogea tombs containing stone sarcophagi and terracotta urns with grave goods such as small vases and objects.[474] Emergency excavations and casual findings of similar tombs and grave goods were to follow over the years in the Minneci property (1849), in front of Palazzo d'Orleans (1856), in the courtyard of the church of Santa Teresa (1883), in the Cuba area (1887-1888). Corso Calatafimi began to reveal tombs in 1890, and casual finds due to construction work in the area continued until 1912. New tombs were found in the nearby Corso Pisani and Via Cappuccini between 1914 and 1924.[475] In 1928 in the courtyard of Caserma Tuköry 12 chamber tombs preceded by a *dromos*, one urn and two cinerary *amphorae* were discovered, and more finds were made in 1953-1954.[476] Discoveries continued in the area between Piazza Indipendenza, Via Cuba, Vivai Gitto, Via Pindemonte, Corso Calatafimi, Corso Pisani, Via Cappuccini – Denisinni through official excavations between 1948 and 1989.[477] In 1989, 1996-1997 and 2000-2005 the necropolis section found below Caserma Tuköry was excavated thoroughly, revealing tombs and a road running NW-SE across the entire necropolis.[478] The road was 3 metres wide (6 Punic cubits) and 30 metres long (as much as has been possible to excavate), attesting that the urban organization was also extended to the city of the dead.[479] Further

[474] On the finds of the 1700s – early 1800s: Lo Faso Pietrasanta 1834; Gabrici 1941: 261-271; Tamburello 1998b: 107-118; Di Stefano 2006: 20-21, 2009b: 9, 15.
[475] On the finds of the 1800s – early 1900s: Salinas 1895: 216; De Gregorio 1921: 9-10, 1924, 1928: 1-5; Gabrici 1941: 261-271; Tamburello 1968a: 302-320, 1998b: 107-118; Di Stefano 2006: 20-21.
[476] Marconi 1928: 482-489; Gabrici 1941: 261-271.
[477] Select publications of overviews of the finds from the necropolis between 1965 and 2000 (for a full list, see Tamburello 1998b: 127-195): Tamburello 1965: 293-301, 1966a: 288-297, 1967: 354-378, 1968b: 243-271, 1968-1969: 458-460, 1969: 277-315, 1972-1973: 432-434, 1973: 19-24, 1974: 152-161, 1976-1977: 775-778; Scovazzo – Castellana 1981: 127-138; Scovazzo et al. 1988; Tusa 1984-1985: 539-610; Di Stefano 1988-1989: 596-605, 1993: 297-316, 2000: 437-449.
[478] Spatafora 2013: 140.
[479] Di Stefano 2006: 24; Spatafora 2010b: 33, 2014b: 446-447.

emergency excavations were carried out in 2011-2012 by the Soprintendenza between Piazza Indipendenza and Corso Calatafimi (due to the restoration work on Palazzetto Orlando and a residential building, and the collapse of a section of road due to an underlying cavity in front of the Presidenza della Regione in Piazza Indipendenza).[480]

The 1989 excavations of the Caserma Tuköry along Corso Calatafimi (belonging to the *Nucleo radio-mobile della Legione Carabinieri di Palermo*) revealed a c. 1000 m^2 section of the necropolis, and the site was made a museum in 1998.[481] These tombs belong to the period between the early 6th and the mid-3rd century BCE, and correspond to the highest concentration of tombs in the necropolis.[482] The tombs in this area were unearthed during casual finds in 1887,[483] Marconi's aforementioned 1928 excavation (12 tombs),[484] and excavations in 1989 (43 tombs),[485] 1996-1997 (35 tombs),[486] and 2000-2005 (72 tombs).[487] This brings the total number of tombs discovered in this area of the necropolis to over 150, which corresponds to c. 20% of all finds of the necropolis.[488] The necropolis of Caserma Tuköry is the best published and best-preserved section of the necropolis, and attests the entire spectrum of burial rites and grave goods found across the entire Palermo necropolis:[489] this case study focuses on these tombs. 155 burials were discovered in this area, containing the

[480] Aleo Nero et al. 2012; Vassallo et al. 2016.
[481] Di Stefano 1993-1994: 1097-1101, 2000b: 437-449, 2006: 23-24, 2009b: 9, 15; Tamburello 1998b: 107-118.
[482] Di Stefano 1998c: 246, 2000b: 437.
[483] De Gregorio 1928: 1-5; Di Stefano 2000b: 437, 2006: 23.
[484] Marconi 1928: 482-489. The 12 tombs are however excluded from the total count of tombs from the Tuköry area as they pertain to an area of the Caserma as a warehouse has since been built over the site (Tamburello 1998b: 108).
[485] Di Stefano 1993b: 287-316; 1993-1994: 1097-1101, 1998c: 246-263.
[486] Di Stefano 2000b: 437-449.
[487] Spatafora 2014b.
[488] Spatafora 2013: 137, 2014b: 445-446.
[489] Di Stefano 1998c: 246, 1999: 231, 2006: 21, 2009a: 282, 2009b: 15.

remains of 224 people (of which 64 were infants and 9 teenagers, in line with the mortality rates expected in this period) (fig. 47).[490]

6.2. Burial record

The earliest tombs found in this necropolis date to the end of the 7th century BCE: different grave typologies (chamber tombs with an access *dromos*, trench tombs, *enchytrismos*, burials in cinerary urns) and different burial rituals (primary and secondary cremation, inhumation) are attested (fig. 44; 45).[491] The primary cremation of the deceased in a rectangular or elliptical trench dug in the ground and clad in clay is attested from the late 7th to the end of the 4th century BCE.[492] 23 primary cremations have been dated to the most Archaic period: they are all reserved for a single adult.[493] Only tomb 67, dating to the first half of the 6th century BCE, contained an infant.[494] Tomb 66 for instance contains the cremated remains of an adult man with an iron dagger, two spearheads, rings and archaic 'Punic-style' pottery. The cups and *skyphoi* included in the grave as goods are found upside down in most cases and are not damaged by the fire: this suggests that they were added after the cremation ritual.[495]

Secondary cremation is rarely used in the Archaic period.[496] For example, tomb 65 is a rock-cut trench tomb containing a locally produced white *olla* as a cinerary urn for the ashes of an adult. The grave goods consist of an Etruscan *oinochoe*, an *alabastron*, a cup,

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[490] Spatafora 2014b.
[491] Di Stefano 2000b, 2009a: 282-283, 2012: 34-36.
[492] Tombs 7, 8, 10, 11, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 44, 45, 48, 51, 64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 75, 76, 80. Di Stefano 2006: 26, 2009b: 21; Spatafora 2010b: 23-39.
[493] Di Stefano 2006: 27.
[494] Di Stefano 2009b: 21
[495] Di Stefano 2000a: 119-121, 2000b: 437-438, 2006: 25.
[496] Tombs 65, 77.

bucchero ware, an Attic *lekane*, and a locally produced trilobe *oinochoae*.[497] Tomb 77 contains the cremated remains of an adult, whose grave goods consist of 'Punic-style' libation vases and cups, halved ostrich eggs with small bronze handles, and locally produced bowls.[498] Secondary cremation becomes very common in the 4th - 3rd centuries, when it came to substituting primary cremation entirely (which ceases to be attested by the end of the 6th century BCE).[499] The terracotta cinerary urns were deposited in shallow dug-out trenches and date to the 4th and 3rd centuries.[500] They contained the remains of a single body, adult or infant, and are never accompanied by grave good offerings (apart from the objects of personal ornamentation found among the ashes).[501] Burnt remains of small animals have also been found mixed with the human ashes in the 4th century BCE secondary cremation graves.[502] The urns themselves pertained to a repetitive repertoire (*amphorae*, jugs, *olle*), and were usually locally produced pots.[503] In certain areas of the necropolis the *ustrina*, the remains of cremation rituals, are found.

Between the second half of the 6th and the 5th century BCE, the most common burial type is the single inhumation within a stone sarcophagus deposited in a rock-cut chamber tomb.[504] This tomb typology is attested between the late 7th and the 3rd century BCE. The chamber is rectangular, cut out of the bedrock, and accessed via a tight *dromos* with steps (fig. 48; 49).[505] The entrance was sealed off with stone slabs and marked with a *cippus* or

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[497] Di Stefano 2000a: 117-118, 2006: 25-26, 2009b: 21.
[498] Di Stefano 2009b: 21.
[499] Di Stefano 2006: 25, 2009b: 9, 21.
[500] Spatafora 2007: 24.
[501] As is the case in tomb 135, where a small bronze ring was found among the ashes preserved in a Punic-style *amphora*, and tomb 109, where three amulets were found among the ashes.
[502] Di Stefano 2009b: 9.
[503] Di Stefano 2009b: 9.
[504] Tomb 85. Di Stefano 2009b: 9.
[505] Di Stefano 2006: 25, 2009b: 9.

small altar. The chamber generally contained a single monolithic sarcophagus covered in *solenes* or slabs of stone,[506] but sometimes within the same chamber tomb one can find *enchyrismos* burials and cinerary urns (in the 4th and 3rd century BCE) deposited on the chamber floor or the *dromos* steps,[507] or trench tombs dug in the floor of the chamber and covered with *solenes* or *kalypteres* (fig. 50, 51).[508]

In fact, the chamber tombs were used almost exclusively for single inhumations between the late 7th and first half of the 6th century BCE, but from the mid-6th and throughout the 5th century the chambers were used for multiple inhumations.[509] Tomb 50 is a good example: it was used continuously from the mid-5th to the first half of the 4th century BCE for inhumation and cremation burials. Grave goods (apart from objects for personal ornamentation) were deposited outside the sarcophagus. In most cases, the chamber tombs were used for extended periods and are assumed to have been reserved for the use of a family or kinship group. In the 5th - 4th centuries the chamber tomb with multiple inhumations became the most commonly attested tomb type: no new chamber tomb seems to have been created after the 4th century BCE.

Regarding child burials, *enchytrismos* burials are the minority in this necropolis, despite it being a common burial typology in other Sicilian settlements.[510] From the last quarter of the 6th century BCE, single inhumations of infants in a stone sarcophagus deposited in shallow rock-cut trench tombs (sometimes clad in stone slabs)[511] become increasingly common.[512] The single inhumations of (generally) children or teenagers in trench tombs

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[506] Tomb 85.
[507] Di Stefano 2009b: 9.
[508] Tomb 93 is of the latter type.
[509] The sarcophagus in tomb 80 contains the skeletons of 8 individuals.
[510] Tombs 84, 86, 88, 103, 109. Di Stefano 2006: 35-37.
[511] Tombs 96, 101.
[512] Di Stefano 2006: 27.

containing a stone sarcophagus are attested in the Archaic period by 15 tombs:[513] Tomb 1 is a small sarcophagus made of slabs of stone containing the skeleton of a 5-year-old girl, whose grave goods consisted of a Corinthian *aryballos*, a miniature achromic cup, a necklace pendant and dining pottery.[514] Tomb 63 is the tomb of a small boy deposited within a small sarcophagus inserted in the trench tomb, and accompanied by miniaturistic pottery and 29 amulets.[515] There are also exceptions: tomb 17 contains two inhumations (an adult and a child), as does tomb 73 (two adult females).[516] The grave goods of these archaic burials include high-quality local and imported goods, such as toys, amulets, pottery for personal grooming, and local or imported pottery for food and drinking consumption.[517] The pottery for preserving essences is deposited around the head of the deceased, the drinking and dining equipment around the hands. Outside the sarcophagus are also deposited transport *amphorae* containing liquids.[518]

Inhumation: 72	
Chamber tombs	39
Trench tombs	20
Sarcophagi	23
Enchytrismoi	13
Cremation: 45	
Primary	30
Secondary	15

The most common grave goods consist of pottery for food and drink consumption, and *amphorae* (fig. 48, 50). The pottery shapes in the mid-6th and 5th centuries pertain to

[513] E.g. tombs 98, 100. Di Stefano 2006: 27.
[514] Di Stefano 1998c: 246-247, 255, 2006: 29.
[515] Di Stefano 2006: 29.
[516] Perhaps this double burial is due to the particular circumstances of the women's death, as these types of burial are usually reserved to single inhumations (Di Stefano 2006: 29).
[517] Di Stefano 2009b: 21.
[518] Di Stefano 2006: 29-30.

the so-called 'Phoenician-Punic tradition', or are locally produced and imported from Greece (Corinth, Attica). During the 4th and 3rd centuries, vases locally produced in western Sicily become predominant. It appears that the pottery was selected specifically for the funerary ritual carried out at the moment of the burial.[519] Some objects of personal ornament such as amulets and jewels have been found (albeit not in great number),[520] as well as other objects such as ostrich eggs, miniature altars, mirrors, seashell containers, secateurs. Indeed, no tomb of the Palermo necropolis stands out owing to the richness or variety of its grave goods. The 'Punic-style' pottery shapes pertain to the everyday use,[521] and are widely spread across the Mediterranean.[522]

The most archaic grave goods assemblages distinguish themselves from the later goods owing to their higher quality and variation. A larger number of imported material is found, which attests Palermo's integration within the Tyrrhenian commercial routes and the movements of people and products in the Conca d'Oro.[523] For instance, they contain Corinthian pottery (*aryballoi*, *alabastra*, *amphoriskoi*, *kotylai*, *oinochoai*) and some Etruscan buccheto.[524] Tomb 46, the 'tomba della signora' (among the most ancient examples of single inhumation in a chamber tomb) belonged to an adult woman, and contained a Corinthian *amphoriskos* for perfumes put next to the deceased's head, pottery dedicated to personal grooming, as well as locally produced pottery for drinking and dining.[525] Black-glazed

[519] See the pottery finds from tomb 90 (2 *amphorae*, 2 *skyphoi*, 3 jugs, 2 plates, 1 Attic cup, 1 lamp, 1 cooking pots),
[520] Tomb 63 contained a necklace with 14 amulets; tomb 82 contained bronze earrings, a silver ring and a silver pendant. On the Palermo necropolis jewellery and amulet finds, see Bisi 1966; Spanò Giammellaro 1995; Di Stefano 2006: 37-41.
[521] Di Stefano 2006: 37.
[522] Di Stefano 2009b: 26-31.
[523] Di Stefano 2009b: 9-10.
[524] Allegro 1998: 267; Di Stefano 2006: 33.
[525] Di Stefano 2000a: 122-123, 2006: 30-31.

pottery, very common for food and drink consumption, is mostly locally produced and imitates Attic shapes.[526] The majority of Attic imports attested in the necropolis peak between the late 6th and the early 5th century BCE.[527] The number of luxury Corinthian, Etruscan and eastern Mediterranean imports are few, and the repertoire of shapes and uses is repetitive.[528] It is rare, for instance, to find Attic red-figure pottery, whereas black-glazed Attic imports or local imitations are more common.[529] The situation seems not to have been altered greatly by the events surrounding the Carthaginian defeat at Himera in 480 BCE.[530]

I will now proceed to the discussion of the archaic necropolis of Solunto directly, as the joint and comparative analysis of these two necropoleis most effectively illustrates the peculiarities and contexts of their respective burial cultures.

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[526] Di Stefano 1998 et al.: 280-293, 2006: 43.
[527] Di Stefano 2006: 34-35.
[528] Di Stefano 2009b: 9.
[529] Di Stefano 2009b: 10. Tomb 91 contained a fine Attic black-figure *oinochoe* depicting the fight between Peleus and Thetis.
[530] Di Stefano 2009b: 10.

7.

Solunto

7.1. The site

The archaic settlement of Solunto is located in the Comune di S. Flavia on the S. Cristoforo plain (30 m a.s.l.) of the Sòlanto promontory, between the Porticello cove, the seaside of Casteldaccia, and Capo Zafferano (the promontory marking the southernmost edge of the Conca d'Oro).[531] The necropolis occupies the località Campofranco and Olivetano (fig. 52).[532] The site's strategic location rests on its proximity to other major settlements along the western Sicilian coast (Himera is 35 km to the east, Palermo is 20 km to the north-west), as well as on the access to the Sicilian hinterland through the river valleys of the Casteldaccia and the Cefalà-Eleuterio, which connect Solunto with the indigenous sites of Monte Porcara, Pizzo Cannita, and Montagnola di Marineo (Makella).[533]

[531] IGM 1:25.000 F. 250 III NO, SO.
[532] Villa 1993: 215; Greco 1993-1994: 1165, 2000a: 1319-1320, 2009: 287; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[533] On the site's topography and connectivity, see especially Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994: 11-40; Greco 1993-1994: 1165-1176, 1997a: 97-111, 2000a: 1319-1320, 2005a: 668, 2009: 287-288; Di Stefano 1999; Spatafora 2002a; Calascibetta 2010: 53.

Solunto is located within the trade and travel routes of the northern Mediterranean and Carthage, Sardinia, Etruria; as well as within the corridors of trade and communication heading south to the fertile Sicilian hinterland and its rich natural resources.[534] In fact, the stretch of coastline between Palermo and Cefalù is dotted with river valleys leading inland: the Eleuterio, the Torto, the San Leonardo, and the Imera Settentrionale.[535] Solunto was one of the settlements founded by Levantine migrant communities in Sicily between the 8th and the 7th centuries according to Thucydides.[536] The 5th and 4th century BCE events impacted Solunto heavily. Its closest neighbour Himera was destroyed in 409 BCE, and because of its allegiance with Carthage in 397 BCE Solunto itself was destroyed and its lands devastated by Dionysius I.[537] It was subsequently re-founded on Monte Catalfano (fig. 53). Notably, in the indigenous sites closest to Solunto, Monte Porcara, Montagnola di Marineo and Pizzo Cannita, life carried on seemingly uninterrupted by the events which had brought the demise or reduction of other indigenous settlements along the Torto, San Leonardo, Imera Meridionale and Settentrionale.[538]

The discovery of the archaic - classical necropolis of Solunto, in use from the early 6th century BCE, played a very important role in the identification of the archaic city - which has been a complex archaeological challenge.[539] For many decades, only the Hellenistic Solunto was known to archaeologists. The excavators soon realised that the settlement on

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[534] Di Stefano 1999: 223-224; Greco 2005a: 668-669, 2009: 288.
[535] Vassallo 2008: 193.
[536] Thuc. VI.2.6.
[537] Diod. Sic. XIV.48.4, XIV.48.5, XIV.78.7. Di Leonardo 2007: 25-26. See Greco 2005b: 4-5 on the literary tradition regarding Solunto.
[538] Vassallo 2008: 197-198; Cucco 2015.
[539] On the problematic identification of the ancient site of Solunto, see Cluverius 1619; Gabrici 1959; Tusa 1963, 1971b, 1971c, 1972-1973; Giustolisi 1970, 1972; Tamburello 1970; Manni 1971; Fatta 1982; Villa 1983, 2005; Greco 1993-1994,1997, 2000a: 1319-1320, 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994: 11.

Monte Catalfano originally identified as Solunto could not be the city mentioned by Thucydides VI, 2,6 as no finds predating the first half of the 4th century BCE were to be found (only a few finds predate the 2nd century BCE).[540] However, in an area east of the Hellenistic necropolis, several tombs containing Greek- and Punic-style pottery dating to the 6th and 5th centuries BCE (black-figure *kylikes*, Corinthian pottery) were discovered, and it was suggested that these tombs belonged the archaic Solunto.[541] The 1983 and 1992 excavations of an industrial area containing late 5th century BCE pottery furnaces (similar to those on Mozia) and other artisan equipment dating at the earliest to the end of the 7th century and up until the late 6th century BCE confirmed that this industrial quarter belonged to the archaic - classical settlement.[542] Excavations carried out between 1992 and 1997 confirmed that archaic Solunto was to be found in modern-day contrada S. Cristoforo,[543] due to the find of archaic imported material dating to the end of 7th and the early 6th century BCE (such as Greek and Etruscan fine-wares), and to the discovery of Enolitic tombs used as disposal ditches in the Hellenistic and Roman period (SAS I and III) which also contained Greek and Phoenician-imported pottery pertaining to ritual, funerary, and domestic use and dating to the end of the 7th – early 6th century BCE.[544]

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[540] Refer to Portale 2006 regarding the Hellenistic Solunto (which is not the focus of the present discussion). See also Salinas 1872: 66-67, 1884; Tusa 1972-1973: 37-38.
[541] Tusa 1972-1973: 37-38.
[542] Villa 1983: 151-157, 2005: 469; Greco 1993-1994: 1167-1173, 1997-1998: 624-632, 2009: 288-289; Calascibetta 2010: 53.
[543] Greco 1997a, 1997-1998: 624-625.
[544] Greco 1993-1994, 1997-1998: 624-625 and 633-642, 2000b: 682-692, 2005a: 674, 2009: 288-290; Calascibetta 2010: 53. Some *cippi-trono* were also discovered in these pits, and have been interpreted as belonging to a tophet dating to the 5th - 4th century BCE. However, because they were not found in their original location, this hypothesis cannot be fully supported (Greco 1997-1998: 624-625). For a catalogue of finds from this area, refer to Greco 2009: 288-290.

The knowledge of the tombs and grave goods of the necropoleis of Solunto is partial, as the majority of the excavations have never been fully published.[545] The archaic - classical necropolis was largely discovered because of the construction of S. Flavia railway station in 1872, when a small number of chamber tombs with *dromoi* dug in the limestone rock surface were revealed.[546] These finds aided in the identification of the archaic - classical necropolis (whereas the urban remains of the settlement still remain to be clearly identified).[547] Over 500 tombs have been excavated in the archaic - classical and Hellenistic necropoleis: about 220 tombs, most already looted or damaged, were discovered during early excavations by Salinas and Cavallari between 1872 and 1914,[548] 200 archaic - classical tombs (again, mostly looted) were excavated in 1968-1972 by Tusa and in 1980-1983 by Villa,[549] 71 tombs were discovered in 1992-1993 by Greco.[550] More recently, in 2005 and 2006 an emergency excavation in the sewers of Via Consolare beside the railway line discovered 5 tombs,[551] and 35 other graves were excavated by Calascibetta in 2009 (fig. 54, 55).[552] These final finds are highly interesting because they attest burial rituals and grave types which had not been previously attested in this necropolis (discussed later).

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[545] Salinas 1872: 66-67, 1884: 42; Cavallari 1875: 1-10; Giustolisi 1970: 144-165, 1972: 52-57; Tusa 1971c: 33-48; Villa 1983: 151-157; Calascibetta 2009: 634. It is possible that a proto-archaic necropolis was located on the coast in front of the Solanto promontory (Greco 1997b: 895)
[546] Salinas 1872: 66-67; Cavallari 1875.
[547] Tusa 1971c; Villa 1983, 1993; Greco 1997-1998: 621-623.
[548] Salinas 1872; Cavallari 1875; Tusa 1971c: 33; Villa 1993: 216, 2005: 470.
[549] Tusa 1971c: 34-40; Giustolisi 1970: 162, 1972: 54-57; Villa 1983: 151-154, 1993: 215-218.
[550] The excavations of the archaic city are published in Greco 1993-1994, 1997a, 1997-1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2005: 670-675; Greco et al. 1997; Tardo 2005; Termini 2005. The excavations of the necropolis are published in Greco 1993-1994, 1997, 2000, 2005a; Villa 1993; Greco et al. 1997; Calascibetta 2010
[551] Calascibetta 2009: 634.
[552] Calascibetta 2010.

7.2. Burial record

There are no specific figures published for the archaic necropolis of Solunto yet, but some general analyses and statements may still be advanced. The most common tomb types in the archaic necropoleis of Solunto are the rock-cut square or rectangular chamber tombs, eastward facing, with a *dromos* with 3 or 4 steps and sealed off with a stone slab. These tombs were reserved for inhumations (fig. 58): the chamber usually contains the burial recess with raised headrest cut out of the southern wall, and a small verge on the southern side of the *dromos* for offerings or ritual practices. This verge was typically reused for later inhumations. In fact, the chamber tombs were reused until the Hellenistic period for multiple inhumations.[553] Compared to the north-African, Sardinian and Palermo graves, the *dromoi* from Solunto are wide and regular. Even the burial chamber in Solunto is wider than its Palermitan counterpart, and never contains monolithic sarcophagi (as instead do some chamber tombs in Palermo).[554] The verge in the *dromos* is also unique to the Solunto tombs, and unattested in Palermo, Sardinia or Carthage.[555] The chamber tombs become the prevailing grave typology in the late 6th century and throughout the 5th century BCE.[556]

Other grave types attested in the Solunto necropolis are the rock-cut trench ('cassa') tombs, also reserved for inhumations. These grave types are attested since the early 6th century and throughout the 5th century BCE.[557] These tombs are generally eastward facing, but do not display any particular placement order,[558] and some have been arranged in pairs within a funerary *temenos* obtained by a perimeter step cut in the rock surrounding the

[553] Greco 1995: 93, 1997b: 890, 2000a: 1321, 2009: 287; Di Stefano 1999: 225; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[554] Greco 2000a: 1321.
[555] Di Stefano 1999: 232; Greco 2000a: 1321.
[556] Greco 1995: 93-95, 2000a: 1321.
[557] Greco 1995: 93, 1997b: 890, 2000a: 1322; Di Stefano 1999: 225; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[558] Calascibetta 2009: 633.

burials.[559] Some of these rock-cut trench tombs have a side niche dug in the trench, where the grave goods were deposited alongside the deceased:[560] this side-niche has no parallels in other Sicilian necropoleis. An example if this typology is tomb 17 dating to the mid-6th century BCE (owing to the finds of an archaic trilobe jug), but it also contained Hellenistic unguent vessels due to its continuous reuse.[561] From the mid-4th century BCE the tombs appear to change orientation: no longer east-facing, but north-facing. Tomb 63 a rock-cut trench tomb containing two child burials with burial goods deposited outside the tomb (a black-glazed Sicilian *skyphos* and an Agora 23B type lamp). The reuse of older tombs peaks in this period (perhaps due to space constraints): tomb 30 is a trench tomb dug in the first step of the dromos of tomb 2.[562] During the Hellenistic period (4th - 3rd century BCE) *enchytrismos* tombs in *amphorae* (Ramon 7.2 type, dating to the 3rd century BCE, or with an *echinus* rim, common between the 4th and 3rd centuries) deposited in the *dromos* of some chamber tombs become increasingly common.[563]

All these tombs are generally reserved for single inhumation, which is the most common burial type attested in the archaic necropolis of Solunto. Tomb 10 contains an inhumation within a rock-cut trench grave and covered with two slabs of stone. It dates to the end of the 6th – early 5th century BCE.[564] It contained 2 amulets, a silver ring and necklace, glass necklace beads (all of which are common in the necropoleis of settlements founded by Levantine settlers across the Mediterranean in the 6th century BCE), a Iato K480 type cup (regionally produced during the 6th century BCE and common in a wide variety of western

[559] Greco 1997b: 893, 2000a: 1322.
[560] Greco 1997b: 894-895, 2009: 287; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[561] Greco 1997b: 893, 2000a: 1323-1324. Similar grave goods are found in tombs 36 and 44.
[562] Greco 1997b: 890, 2000a: 1323-1324, 2009: 287; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[563] Greco 2000a: 1324.
[564] Greco 1997b: 890; Tardo – Termini 2009: 426-429.

Sicilian settlements), a horse-shaped *askos* (typically Levantine) and single-handle *olla* for cooking (also typically Levantine).[565] The image of an inhumation-only necropolis has however been complicated by the finding of 5 primary cremation burials dating to the 4th - 3rd centuries during the 2005-2006 excavations (until then, only one secondary cremation in a 4th century BCE *stamnos* in tomb 148 had been found).[566] Moreover, excavations in 2009 revealed a set of 35 graves dating from the early 6th century to the first half of the 5th century BCE, which documented so far unattested grave typologies for both inhumation and cremation burials. The burial rituals included trench tombs dug in the earth (some clad or covered by stone slabs), as well as *cappuccina* and *enchytrismos* tombs (fig. 57). The discovery of 11 primary cremations in a trench tomb dating to the early 6th century BCE is highly interesting, as it attests the coexistence of the two burial typologies in the funerary repertoire of late archaic Solunto.

Inhumation:	**24**	
Enchytrismos		3
Trench tomb		23
Cappuccina tomb		2
A cassa		7
Cremation:	**11**	
Primary		11

The burial goods found in the chamber tombs correspond with the finds from the necropolis of Palermo: western Greek and Punic-style transport *amphorae* (similar to the Ramon 1.4.5.1 and 4.2 types attested in Palermo, Himera and Lipari),[567] fragments of black-figure attic *kylikes*, C type cups, 19B type lamps (fig. 59).[568] The goods typically include

[565] Greco 1997b: 890, 2000a: 1321; Tardo – Termini 2009: 426-429.
[566] Greco 1997b: 890; Calascibetta 2009: 633.
[567] Greco 1995: 93.
[568] Greco 1995: 93, 1997b: 893, 2000a: 1323-1324.

monochrome plates, small *ollae*, *thymiateria*, amulets, and necklace beads in the Punic style, as well as Attic imports (a stemmed plate with a Phoenician-language inscription was found in tomb 106).[569] Locally produced black-glazed pottery for food consumption was particularly common as grave goods in all tomb types,[570] which suggests that food offerings or funerary banquet practices took place at the moment of burial. In tomb 81 dating to the 6th century BCE an Ionic B2 type cup, a Corinthian *quatrefoil aryballos* and a bronze spearhead were found. Trilobe jugs with geometric painted motifs are also common, and are also attested in the archaic necropolis of Palermo.

However, Palermo was not Solunto's only commercial interlocutor: the burial goods found in Solunto attest the existence of economic exchanges with Himera.[571] The excavations of the eastern necropolis of Himera (containing over 3,000 burials) has revealed a large number (860) of *enchytrismoi* burials made in transport *amphorae* (fig. 61), of which 62 (8%) are of Punic-style production (especially Ramon 1.4.5.1 and 11.2.1.3 types) and date from the second half of the 7th to the end of the 5th century BCE. Other Ramon *amphorae* were discovered in the 409 BCE destruction layer of Himera. These *amphora* types are attested across southern Spain, Carthage and Sardinia. Conversely, in the Solunto necropolis, several Iato K480 cups and black-glazed Sicilian pottery have been found dating from the end of the 6th to the early 5th century BCE: both types often attested and produced in Himera.[572] Furthermore, two Phoenician-language graffiti have been found inscribed on western Greek style *amphorae* of the late-archaic period and used as *enchytrismos* cinerary

[569] Greco 2000a: 1321-1322.
[570] Calascibetta 2009: 635.
[571] Vassallo 2008: 193-194.
[572] Vassallo 2008: 195-195.

urns in the Pestavecchia necropolis of Himera: the name YTNB'L, and an aleph.[573] It is also interesting to note the existence of a late archaic western Greek-style *amphora* with a Phoenician-language inscription reading 'client of the lioness', found at Colle Madore.[574]

The grave goods suggest that Solunto was producing, exporting and importing pottery since the end of the 7th or early 6th century BCE especially to and from the Tyrrhenian area, which attests this polity's hold on the commercial routes heading inland and seawards. From the 6th century BCE the contacts with Himera intensified.[575] However, the imported Greek goods do not appear to be flooding the Solunto necropolis: Tardo's analysis of the Greek pottery imports found during the 1993-1997 excavations reveal that only 29.75% of recovered goods were Greek imported products, and 93% of these finds consisted of a limited repertoire of black-glazed pottery.[576] The variation of imported pottery shapes attested in Solunto is also rather restricted in the late Archaic period. For instance, Attic drinking vessels or banqueting equipment are common, but large mixing vases are not, despite being widespread in Sardinian necropoleis.[577] This situation is very different from the one is attested in Himera, where a large variety of pottery shapes and styles were imported especially during the Archaic period. Grave goods of a non-ceramic nature are also a rare find in the Solunto necropolis: only a few amulets and jewels, one strigil and three spearheads have been found.[578]

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[573] De Simone 2012a: 85.
[574] De Simone 1999; Vassallo 2008: 195.
[575] Di Stefano 1999: 231-233; Greco 2005a: 675, 2009: 290.
[576] Tardo 1997: 75.
[577] Di Stefano 1999: 231-233.
[578] Calascibetta 2009: 636.

7.3. Interactive social competition

The most obvious shared pattern of burial practice in Palermo and Solunto is the reuse of graves over an extended number of years. This practice is visible at both sites in the grave typologies requiring a heightened expenditure of financial means and physical effort. In fact, the tombs subject to re-use are exclusively the rock-cut chamber and trench tombs, as well as the monolithic sarcophagi (in the Palermo necropolis). This pattern of practice has already been identified in the Manico di Quarara cemetery, where the use of the rock-cut chamber tombs reused continuously for collective inhumations had suggested that the choice of tomb type (featuring a large, conspicuous, and monumentalised chamber) reflected the social priorities of defined groups, to whom funerary expenditure was a way to display status and wealth. It is tempting to envisage a strategy taking place in the tombs of Palermo and Solunto, where specific grave typologies (rock-cut chamber and trench tombs) were reserved for the burials of distinct social groups over extended periods of time.

I also suggest that 'VIP' burials do not only rely on the display of elaborate grave types to assert their social and cohesive identity: just as in the case of Manico di Quarara, the chamber tombs in Palermo appear to be arranged along and parallel to the road which crosses this necropolis section. In Solunto the remains of a road have also been found,[579] leading from the archaic necropolis to the settlement on Monte Catalfano – however, the precise arrangement of the tombs in relation to this road is yet to be investigated. In Solunto however, there are cases in which sets of single graves are physically linked - and marked off from other graves – by means of a *temenos* made of slabs of rock. The marking of some of these tombs with a *cippo* or small altar could also have been functional to the

[579] Calascibetta 2009: 633.

identification of these tombs over the years, when the time came to open the chamber and add a newly deceased member of the social circle. The funerary landscape was also therefore being capitalised upon to achieve maximum visibility of social status, cohesion and wealth.

In Solunto, the reuse of tombs could also be linked to a more symbolic strategy: I believe that after the destruction of the archaic settlement and the founding of the Hellenistic city on Monte Catalfano, the persistent reuse of some of the archaic tombs might be connected to the desire to forge an enduring link with what the necropoleis had come to represent: a link with the past, with a world which the 397 BCE destruction of the site had violently terminated. The road connecting the necropolis to the Hellenistic city might be a trace of this connection between the old and the new settlement.[580] The monumental tombs therefore functioned as a mnemonic device as well, bringing together social identities and history in the funerary landscape, as well as asserting membership of a specific social group through élite burial types. The social groups using these tombs could have belonged to the higher echelons of society – or at least to the wealthier sectors. Both the use of 'expensive' grave typologies and the reservation of such graves for the exclusive use of one sector of the populations were ways of displaying status.

In fact, the grave goods found in the 'VIP' rock-cut trench and chamber tombs also attest a display of wealth: it is in these tombs that the richest grave goods are found, especially in the earliest years of use of the necropoleis. This supports the idea that Palermo and Solunto were reaping the benefits of their successful insertion within trans-Sicilian and trans-Tyrrhenian commercial routes, and this involvement in connected markets also guided the social competition and interaction among different social groups in these settlements. A

[580] Greco 2000a: 1325.

recent study by Bechtold and Vassallo has shown how the distribution of Punic-style vessels across central, western and northern Sicily (along the Platani, Imera Settentrionale and Salso-Imera river valleys), added to the presence of imported transport *amphorae* (and what they contained) from all over the Mediterranean, as well as of imported high-quality ceramics from Greece and its settlements abroad, were symptomatic of widespread wealth during the mid-6th and early 5th centuries. Quantitative analyses show that during the Archaic – Classical phase, Solunto appears to have been the main distribution centre of Punic-style *amphorae*, whereas from the 4th century Palermo became the main trade centre pursuant to Solunto's destruction. In fact, Vassallo and Bechtold's recent study has shown how, out of a test set of 75 late-7th century Punic-style *amphorae* found in Himera, the vessels appear to have been imported equally from Carthage, Solunto and Mozia.[581] In the early 5th century, Solunto appears to have been in charge of the trade networks bringing Punic-style *amphorae* to hinterland sites such as Monte Porcara, Pizzo Cannita and Monte Iato. In Himera too, over 40% of 5th century *amphorae* appear to have been Soluntine, especially those containing fish products (followed by Sardinian and Iberian products), whereas Carthaginian, Palermitan and Motyan products drop in quantity.[582]

The injection of the wealth in their societies could have aided the crystallisation of Palermitan and Soluntine societies into stratified groups, as they had in Manico di Quarara, Monte Castellazzo and the other western Sicilian hinterland settlements examined earlier. Greek imports, weapons and items of jewellery are indeed prominent in these tombs. However, these imported goods do not display the variety attested by the assemblages of Manico di Quarara and Monte Castellazzo. In fact, it would appear that an intentional selection is

[581] Vassallo - Bechtold 2020: 8-12.
[582] Vassallo - Bechtold 2020: 8-12.

being made regarding which forms of the available Greek-style repertoire to adopt. None of the large vases pertaining to the sympotic sphere are found, instead pottery relating to the consumption of food and drink is more common. Red-figure Attic imports are rather rare, despite this category being in the highest demand across the Mediterranean. Thus, a selection of pottery shapes is clearly in place, but it is operating according to priorities and with outcomes which are almost entirely different from the selections attested in the imported pottery repertoire of Manico di Quarara.

This observation actually fits into a more general discourse regarding the grave goods of Palermo and Solunto: with the exception of the late Archaic period, the grave goods assemblages are homogeneous, repetitive and not strikingly elaborate. No assemblage such as the one found accidentally in 1971 in the Madonna del Carmelo necropolis (a Corinthian *alabastron*, a bronze *aryballos*, and a bronze *phiale mesomphalos* chiselled with animal and plant motifs, all dating to the 6th century BCE) has emerged. Instead, the selectively imported goods coexist with pottery repertoires typically pertaining to the Punic style (trilobe mouth jugs and expanded lip bottles), especially between the end of the 7th – the first decades of the 6th century BCE. The coexistence could be due to a lack of specific pottery shapes of the Greek stylistic repertoire which could fulfil a specific function absolved by traditional Punic style pottery types. In fact, it appears that function prevails over fashion in this context, the function being the funerary banquet taking place during the funeral rites. The majority of grave goods pertain to the sphere of food and drink consumption, and remains of small animals have been found in the graves or mixed with the ashes of those cremated. The funerary banquet could be interpreted as another way of asserting community cohesion, while honouring the memory of the dead.

Another interesting observation concerns the correlation between grave typologies and status claims on behalf of kinship groups, which did not appear to apply to distinctions in funerary ritual. In fact, whereas in Solunto the only archaic cremations attested are found in dug out trench tombs, in Palermo during the same period we find in primary cremations in the dug-out trench tombs 65, 66 and 77 (discussed above) the cremated remains of adults with rich grave goods, including metal weapons, objects for personal ornament, imported pottery and ostrich eggs. In Palermo, cremations within cinerary urns were also commonly deposited within monumental chamber tombs. It is not possible therefore to correlate with any certainty the adoption of the cremation or inhumation ritual with wealth or social status, nor to any specific grave typology (linking for example the use of dug out trench tombs for cremations with less wealthy social groups, or at least with defined social groups who were uninvolved in the demonstration of élite status through burial). The reason why these more 'demure' trench tombs containing cremations were not reused for continuous burials over the years could simply lie in the fact that, as addressed above, this tomb typology did not befit the preferences of kinship groups, and thereby once again connecting grave typologies rather than burial rituals to status assertions.

Despite the difficulties in correlating grave typologies with burial rites, the coexistence of cremation and inhumation burials as well as the grave typologies have traditionally been understood as ethnically definable. Firstly, the distinctions in grave typologies have been used to argue for the presence of different ethnic groups. This is the case of the two *cappuccina* tombs found in the latest 2009 excavations at Solunto: Calascibetta has suggested that this tomb typology, 'del tutto estraneo all'orizzonte funerario punico, ma ampiamente utilizzato nelle aree di civiltà greca ... inducono a ipotizzare una frequentazione dell'area

funeraria ... da parte di un nucleo di residenti di cultura greca'.[583] But a discussed in Part One, equating grave type and ethnic extraction of the occupant and of the people who buried them should not be automatic. Secondly, the presence of certain grave typologies has guided assumptions regarding the extent of the influence of cultural groups defined along ethnic lines and operating at a supra-regional level. For instance, Spatafora states that 'le necropoli fenicie di Palermo e Solunto manifestano chiaramente di aderire, sia sotto il profilo tipologico che per quanto riguarda la ritualità della morte, a forme in uso in tutto l'orizzonte fenicio, anche se, già alla metà del VI secolo a.C., cominciano a evidenziarsi frequenti e intensi contatti con il mondo greco coloniale'.[584] More specifically, with reference to the burial rituals attested in Palermo, Spatafora hypothesises that 'sulla base ... dell'evidenza di altri insediamenti fenici siciliani, Mozia in particolare, e di molte necropoli fenicie occidentali, è plausibile ritenere che il rito dell'incinerazione fosse quello originariamente utilizzato dai primi coloni fenici che raggiunsero l'isola, rispecchiandone l'originaria ideologia funeraria'.[585] These interpretations are guided by the prioritisation of 'Punic' practices across the Mediterranean as a consistent and concrete cultural group: the 'saldo legame con la tradizione semitica'[586] attributed to the burial traditions of sites such as Solunto and Palermo develops as a quasi-counterpart of 'Hellenization'. These broad definitions do not fully explain the diverse processes of adoption, adaptation and coexistence of external burial practices within a pre-existing tradition, nor do they account for the regional setting acting as a stage for interactions.

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[583] Calascibetta 2012.
[584] Spatafora - Vassallo 2010: 17-18.
[585] Spatafora 2010b: 40.
[586] Spatafora 2010b: 40.

What I now intend to investigate is how applicable is the label 'Punic' to these processes, and whether we have to look first and foremost to Carthage and the Levant when interpreting the patterns of practice visible in the western Sicilian necropoleis. I will examine to what degree the burial rituals of Palermo and Solunto might have been embedded in this 'Punic macrocosm', as suggested by some interpretations, or whether they developed a certain distinctiveness and in relative isolation from the burials attested in Levantine settled centres in north Africa and Sardinia. I will use the early coexistence of cremations and inhumations in the necropoleis of Palermo and Solunto as a marker for clues concerning the distinctiveness of these two settlements from a broad 'Punic' funerary culture, and embed their selectively adopted and adapted practices within the socio-cultural context of western Sicily.

The coexistence of cremation and inhumation rituals found in the earliest stages of both Palermo and Solunto is not attested in the archaic necropoleis of Levantine settlements in the western Mediterranean. In the mainland Levant, starting in the 10th century BCE the burial practices had switched from inhumation to cremation, as is illustrated by the early cremation cemetery in Tyre.[587] The two burial practices coexisted in Carthage,[588] where several necropoleis have been discovered, in use between the late 8th - mid-2nd centuries. They were situated along the slopes of the Byrsa, Juno, Odeon, Bordj-Djedid, and Sainte Monique hills, and in the Dermech, Douïmès, and Dahar-el-Morali plains.[589] In Carthage, the predominant burial rituals during the archaic stages of use of the necropoleis (8th - 6th century BCE) were inhumations and secondary cremation.[590] This fluctuation is

[587] Markoe 2000: 140-142.
[588] Bartoloni 1981; Markoe 2000: 140-142.
[589] Bénichou-Safar 1982: 61-170, 239-247 on the cemeteries of Carthage.
[590] Markoe 2000: 139-140.

exemplified by Lancel's excavations from 1982 on the south-west slopes of the Byrsa hill, which revealed an important section of the archaic necropolis. The c. 30 excavated tombs date between the late 8th and the mid-7th century BCE, and are equally split between inhumations (between 10 and 29 graves) and cremations (10 - 29 tombs).[591]

However, in other Levantine settlements in the west cremation was the predominant ritual. Mozia was founded one century before Palermo, and the funerary rituals of its archaic necropolis match those attested in Carthage and the Levant during the Iron-Age: over 200 (unpublished) tombs were discovered in 1907 by Whitaker on the northern side of the island, mainly dating to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE. The overwhelming majority of burials consisted in secondary cremations within jars and stone cysts (fig. 66), while the first inhumations on Mozia are attested by around 20 late 6th – early 5th century burials (of which 7 were buried in stone sarcophagi deposited outside the cemetery walls). More recent excavations have revealed a total of 190 new tombs in the Mozia necropolis: 15 were excavated by Ciasca, 11 by Cintas and Jully, 1 by Isserlin, 1 by Falsone and 162 by Tusa: once again, the overwhelming majority of funerary rituals (178) was cremation, while only 12 inhumations (including 5 child inhumations in *enchytrismoi*) were found. These tombs are all to be dated between the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 6th centuries BCE.[592] This situation is also attested by the Monte Sirai necropoleis in south-western Sardinia, excavated in 1963-1966, 1980 and 2005-2010. Three sections of cemeteries were excavated: the 'parking area', the 'southern sector' and the 'hypogeum sector', revealing a total of 72 tombs dating from the late 7th to the second half of the 4th century BCE.[593] The southern sector is where

[591] Lancel 1979; Bénichou-Safar 1982: 63.
[592] Tusa 2012: 50-59.
[593] Guirguis 2011: 293-301.

the most ancient tombs were discovered (late 7th to the second half of the 6th century BCE), of which the majority were primary cremations (62) and only 8 were trench inhumations.[594]

Archaic necropoleis	**Carthage**	**Mozia**	**M. Sirai**
Inhumation	10-29	178	62
Cremation	10-29	12	8
total	30	190	72

But starting in the 6th century BCE, the predominant burial form gradually transitioned again from cremation to inhumation across all Levantine settlements in the Mediterranean.[595] In Sardinia, the predominant burial practice from the second half of the 7th to the end of the 6th century BCE was cremation. However, in the early 6th century BCE inhumation and cremation coexisted for almost a century, until inhumation became the most commonly attested practice (from the late 6th to the mid-4th century BCE).[596] At Monte Sirai, from the end of the 6th century (after the Carthaginian conquest of the settlement), inhumations began to appear in hypogeal chamber tombs.[597] In fact, the newly excavated section of the southern necropolis in 2005-2007 attests the existence of 5 primary cremations, 5 secondary cremations and 11 inhumations.[598] The same shift from cremation to inhumation is attested in Bitia: all 50 graves from the archaic necropolis dating from the late 7th to the late 6th century BCE feature primary and secondary cremation rituals, but from the end of the 6th to the first quarter of the 5th century the 14 discovered tombs all attest inhumation rituals.[599] Mozia's mainland necropolis at Birgi also undergoes a similar

[594] Bartoloni 2000: 135-136.
[595] Markoe 2000: 139-142; Spanò Giammellaro 2004; Calascibetta 2009: 634. Investigating the reasons for this shift is beyond the scope of the present work.
[596] Guirguis 2017: 293-301.
[597] Piga et al. 2015.
[598] Guirguis 2011: 3.
[599] Bartoloni 1996: 56-57.

shift from the second half of the 6th century: the 140 excavated tombs show a clear trend over the course of the 6th century BCE from cremation to inhumation rituals.[600]

In Palermo and Solunto, the coexistence of burial practices is attested since the earliest stages of the necropoleis' use (the late 7th century in Palermo, the early 6th century BCE in Solunto). Palermo's evidence predates the shift from cremation to inhumation attested in the other western Levantine settlements in the second half of the 6th century in sites such as Mozia, Birgi, Bitia and Monte Sirai. Indeed, Palermo and Solunto's burial traditions appear to be distinct from those of their peer settlements in the western Mediterranean. Admittedly, at Carthage the contemporary use of inhumation and cremation rituals could suggest that Palermo and Solunto were subject to a stronger influence from Carthage, but this possibility doesn't stand given the fact that the other western Levantine settlements did not conform to Carthage's burial traditions: why indeed should only Palermo and Solunto be the beneficiaries of Carthaginian influence? The notions that Palermo and Solunto partook in a '*koiné* punicizzante',[601] conforming to practices in use across the 'Punic Mediterranean and which ultimately originated from a 'tradizione semitica' (as the abovementioned studies would have it), appears to be unfounded. Is 'Punic' really the only possible explanation for this situation?

I find it preferable to envisage Palermo as reflecting a different situation altogether, not yet influenced by Carthage's dominance as a cultural 'trendsetter' in funerary tradition. The evidence from Solunto is admittedly slightly later in date: the earliest cases of primary cremation in dugout trenches and inhumations in rock-cut trench tombs date to the early 6th century BCE (but the burial evidence from the settlement is patchier compared to the

[600] Tusa 2012: 43-44.
[601] Morel 1988: 145-147.

burial record of Palermo). Because the two burial typologies appear in these two settlements for the first time almost at the same time, and there is no evidence of early switches from one type to the other (as is instead attested in the other western Levantine settlements of this period), the surprisingly early coexistence of burial rituals attested in late 7th – early 6th century BCE Palermo and Solunto could therefore be suggested as influenced by processes less connected to the trans-Mediterranean transitions from cremation and inhumation and more to a socio-cultural process taking place at an intra-regional (rather than supra-regional level).

I argue that the coexistence of inhumation and cremation could in fact be interpreted as a local development within the western Sicilian ambit. In Himera, the closest large-scale city to Palermo and Solunto, out of the 9,547 tombs excavated in the western Buonfornello necropolis (which represents a good sample of the other Himera necropoleis, as the mortuary habit reflects the finds from the other cemeteries, fig. 62), 12% (1,126 tombs) as reserved for primary cremations in trench tombs, and 88% for inhumations (8,421 tombs) (fig. 63, 64, 65).[602] These tombs have been dated to the entire span of the city's life, from the second half of the 7th century to the late 5th century BCE: the earliest primary cremations therefore are contemporaneous with the earliest ones attested in Palermo and Solunto.

The coexistence of cremation and inhumation rituals is in no way unique to Himera: in the Galera-Bagliazzo necropolis of Selinunte cremation represents 11,3-14% of all burials,[603] and in the Buffa necropoleis 40% of burials.[604] At the archaic Manicalunga necropolis at Gaggera hill (fig. 67), 40% of burials are inhumations and 25% are cremations; whereas

[602] Vassallo – Valentino 2010: 68, 2012: 53-59.
[603] Pelagatti - Vallet 1979: 367-368; Kustermann Graf 2002: 50-51.
[604] Meola 1996-1998, I: 4.

in its 5th century graves, 43.5% of burials are inhumations and 38.5% are cremations.[605] As for the evidence from the indigenous settlements spread across the western Sicilian hinterland: at Monte Castellazzo, Butera, Monte Bubbonia, Monte Adranone, Entella (necropolis B) and Sabucina, the contemporary use of cremation and inhumation is also attested (as discussed at length above in Chapters 6 and 7).[606]

I would therefore argue that Palermo and Solunto could have also partaken of this locally defined and connected ritual environment. That mutual influence might have been exerted among Palermo, Solunto, Himera and the indigenous hinterland – engendered by the physical lay of the land and corridors of intervisibility and interaction such as the Belice valley, the San Leonardo, Eleuterio and Imera Settentrionale valleys, and the Conca d'Oro - has already been examined with regard to the existence of material (pottery) and epigraphic (graffiti on *amphorae*) evidence, which attest the exchanges and movement of goods and people between thee polities. In fact, I have already noted how the 2009 excavations in Campofranco revealed two *cappuccina* tombs dating to the early 5th century BCE,[607] a grave typology attested in the western necropolis of Himera in 19% of cases (1,565 tombs), dating from the late 6th century to the entire 5th century BCE.[608]

I maintain that these kinds of 'burial interactions' are by no means limited to the settlements of Greek or Levantine origin: a recent 2014 excavation on Monte Falcone (an indigenous settlement located in the western Sicilian hinterland between Himera and Solunto at the watershed between the S. Leonardo and Milicia rivers) has also revealed the coexistence of the two funerary rituals under discussion, as well as other noteworthy details

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[605] Kustermann Graf 2002: 50-51.
[606] Frisone 1992: 305; Albanese Procelli 2003; Spatafora 2010b: 19-20.
[607] Calascibetta 2012.
[608] Vassallo – Valentino 2012: 53-59.

which I now review.[609] The settlement was founded in the early 6th century BCE, and around the second half of the 6th century BCE fragments of Greek and Phoenician-Punic imported pottery (C6 type cups and Ramon 1.4.5.1./4.2.2.6 type *amphorae*) attest interactions between this settlement and the cities of Palermo, Solunto and Himera along the coast.[610] The excavations of the 6th - late 5th century BCE necropolis have yielded 15 graves attesting both cremation and inhumation rituals. The grave typologies include one monumental rock-cut chamber tomb, rock-cut trench tombs covered with *solenes* (common in Himera from the late 6th century BCE), inhumations between *kalypteres*, *enchytrismos* (one of which had been made in a Ramon 5.4.4.2 type *amphora* dating to the 5th century BCE), *cappuccina*, trench tombs dug in the earth, and a primary cremation in a dugout pit (similar to those attested in Palermo, Solunto, and Himera). The rock-cut chamber tomb is similar to those already examined in Manico di Quarara (fig. 60): it contains the inhumations of about 20 individuals, rich grave goods (black-glazed, red-figure, achromic pottery and fragments of a Punic *amphora*, rings, scythes and daggers, bone-carved and metal objects, necklace beads and a pendent, a fibula) and was in use between the late 6th and the end of the 5th century BCE. In its *dromos* were found a cremation grave and one of the *enchytrismos* graves.

I believe that the coexistence of grave typologies and burial rituals in Monte Falcone is additional evidence of the processes of interaction between different burial traditions resulting in mortuary variability, as well as of the selective adoption of certain practices and objects deemed congenial to a specific socio-cultural context. On the basis of these trans-regional parallels, it is possible to suggest that the coexistence of burial rituals in Palermo and Solunto, at least for the earliest periods, might be less of a case of overlap with the

[609] Belvedere et al. 2016.
[610] Belvedere et al. 2016: 2.

supra-regional patterns of the 'Punic' world, and more a case of the outcome of the mix of different burial traditions which the different communities inhabiting western Sicily were exposed to. I therefore suggest that in this case, the dialectic relationship between funerary cultures should not be seen as playing out between Solunto or Palermo and the supra-regional, trans-Mediterranean Punic world, but should rather be envisaged as a conversation taking place right in the local context of western Sicily.

Palermo and Solunto did not duplicate the burial methods of their Levantine migrant counterparts across the Mediterranean. The burial culture, but also the epigraphic and material record more generally, were being actively selected and used to express identity communities of similarity and difference at the same time. New and inherited burial traditions came to coexist through the competitive interaction among peer communities. The mortuary variability was the outcome not of enduring and ghettoised ethnic allegiance asserted through burial and within the cemeteries, but instead was a marker of different socio-cultural processes, such as social mobility, élite status, kinship or family groups, the movement of people and goods, the successful integration within economic networks and communication routes. This situation even led to differences in the burial practices of sites otherwise believed to be quite similar: for example, the archaic rock-cut trench tomb with side niche grave typology common in Solunto is instead entirely unattested in Palermo.

Conclusive remarks to Part Two

In this Part, I have examined the burial record of four necropoleis, and contextualised this information within wider regional patterns and differences across Sicily and the Mediterranean. This study was not intended as an exhaustive analysis of the cemeteries and grave goods of every western Sicilian settlement, although I have been able to survey the evidence of a large number of sites as heuristic comparisons for the arguments advanced in these Chapters. A detailed analysis would have been unattainable - given the state of the evidence, and repetitive - given that better excavated and published necropoleis such as Himera are already the object of much scholarly attention. Instead, Part Two of this thesis has aimed to identify and trace commonalities and differences, change and persistence in the burial evidence, which might challenge what have long been assumed to be ethnic distinctions, Hellenising processes and Punic cultural homogeneity guiding the state of the burial evidence for this region. Specifically, I have focussed on how burials could work as the medium for conveying several socio-cultural messages, expressed by patterns in the burial practice.

One of the observed patterns across all four necropoleis under consideration has been that of mortuary differentiation through the assertion of status: the choice of grave typologies and grave goods could have been a way for certain social groups linked via blood, solidarity or kinship to assert their identities and status through burial. In all four

necropoleis, I have seen how certain social groups chose to conform to certain burial rituals as a way of asserting their belonging to and solidarity with a distinct collective identity. Given these premises, the adoption of new rituals was a process as deliberate as it was significant. Burial expenditure, the persistence of mortuary traditions and reuse of graves, as well as changes in burial economy and rituals (or even the total abandonment of certain burial practices in favour of other options) could be interpreted as markers of a competitive or weakening social environment, engendered by historically motivated increases or decreases in connectivity between these sites. Both differences and similarities in burial practice therefore seem to have been consciously resorted to express social priorities, where variability and differentiation in life are extended to death in a final assertion of identity.

In fact, the second pattern to have emerged from my analysis has been how the interconnected and intervisible nature of the sites examined favoured the availability, desirability and emulation of goods and practices in the mortuary sphere at a regional level. The existence of corridors of interaction such as the Conca d'Oro and the Belice river valley were instrumental to the movement of people, practices and objects, and the strategic positioning of a settlement along these arteries crisscrossing the entire western Sicilian region could make all the difference between isolation and integration. This is especially true for the hinterland indigenous settlements, which maintained an 'outward-looking' attitude towards the innovations and options available in the nearby interconnected sites of Selinunte and Himera – which were equally maintaining an 'inward-looking' gaze up and down the river valleys, coasts and plains of western Sicily to peer settlements. Crucially, each community reacted differently to the arrival and the aftermath of migrant communities to western Sicily, and these local responses are attested in the variety of coexisting vocabularies of material culture which I have defined as mortuary variability. This is especially visible in

the differential attitude to innovations and imports from Selinunte attested at Monte d'Oro and Monte Castellazzo. However, imports of goods and adoptions of practices did not completely supersede traditional forms: this is clear in the persistence of certain burial typologies such as the chamber tomb in Manico di Quarara as it better articulated a community's social priorities, just as the Greek alphabet was adopted as a tool for expressing an indigenous language. A different trend may be observed in the coastal settlements of Palermo and Solunto: despite their proximity to the sea and far-reaching commercial routes, I have seen how there two sites maintained a distinctly 'inward-looking' policy with regard to the adoption of new practices. Instead of conforming to the burial habits of other western Levantine settlements, the inhabitants of these settlements looked to the western Sicilian landscape and its burial cultures, while enforcing a strict selection of goods and practices best suited to their social priorities.

In fact, the existence of clear selection criteria underlying the adoption or rejection, the persistence or change in practices is a second pattern common to all four necropoleis. The communities of practice were selecting and adapting objects and rituals based on their functions, their desirability, and the specific ends they were reserved for to better respond to updated socio-cultural priorities and settings. This third pattern of strategic selection and competitive emulation is clear in the preference for certain forms of drinking or dining equipment in the Greek style in the necropoleis of Manico di Quarara, Palermo and Solunto: local communities chose from the styles and practices available and retained what best suited their collective identity's requisites and priorities. This was no random, inevitable or unconditional acculturation process: selection, coexistence and adaptation were at work. But historical, economic and political forces also played a role in these processes, leading to different outcomes in the social and burial hierarchies of these sites: at Manico di Quarara,

the internal development of the settlement's social and political life came to direct the funerary behaviour of the local élite; at Monte Castellazzo it was the interactions with Selinunte and other peers which accounted for the mortuary variability and changes in the settlement's architectural makeup.

Finally, and related to the points made above, I have also shown that variability on a local level is matched by homogeneity on a regional level: indeed, I have extended the concept of collective social identity definition as operating not only among sub-groups within individual settlements, but also on the broader stage and the larger scale of the western Sicilian necropoleis, engendered by competitive emulation, social interaction, interconnection and intervisibility among peer polities. This situation ultimately makes distinct ethnic identities arduous to distinguish within the burial evidence. Ultimately, the applicability of supra-regional cultural groups or processes predicated along ethnic boundaries ('Punic', 'Greek', 'Hellenization') to explain patterns in practice cannot account for the choices of local communities. The ethnic identities of the individuals buried in the necropoleis of Palermo, Solunto, Monte Castellazzo and Manico di Quarara are always blurred, and very little - or non-conclusive evidence concerning ethnic mixture in the settlements and the cemeteries of this sites comes to light. This could be correlated once again to the selection, context and social priorities expressed through burial assemblages: the communities using these necropoleis might simply have had other aims and priorities on their minds. This patchwork of different patterns, which transcends the ethnic distinctions attested by the literary sources and cannot be simply attributed to unidirectional processes such as Hellenization or Punic cultural coherence, stands instead to evoke far more complex interactions between communities than those suggested by envisaging ethnic differentiations in life - and beyond.

To conclude, I have stressed how the burial record is the product of a unique alignment of selection, historical settings and social priorities of western Sicilian communities. Patterns of preservation and change of burial customs were important ways to construct and represent individual and group identities, including group solidarity and status assertion. Regionally specific trends tend to emerge in this situation, a regionalism that transcends the ethnic distinctions enforced by literary sources. Instead of explaining local differentiation in mortuary variability as the product of coexisting Greek, Elymians and Phoenicians-Punics within a settlement and regional unity as owing to a sweeping 'Hellenization' process or a Punic cultural homogeneity, I have interpreted both as the outcomes of 'peer-polity interactions',[611] whereby the patterns and differences in burial were engendered by the relationships of these polities on a regional scale. This process happened on the terms of the different communities of practice, and my four case studies and parallel comparisons have shown how different contexts and different priorities translated into different local responses in the burial and wider archaeological cultures of these sites. This situation has therefore less to do with ethnic distinguishability of grave typologies, of grave goods and their beneficiaries, and more to do with status-based identities. In other words, the patterns and differences in burial practice on a local level could be explained as reflections of region-wide processes of peer-polity interactions, in which burial was used as a dynamic and versatile medium in a context of settlement and contact among migrant and indigenous communities, to express the social identities of the dead and the living.

In Part Three of this thesis, I will test whether similar observations can be applied to the epigraphic evidence. The general view is that written practices could expound people's

[611] Renfrew 1986: 7-8. See Shepherd 1993: 75-76.

identities more directly, especially those of an ethnic nature. This assumption is at odds with the findings I have discussed in Part Two in relation to the burial record. It is now necessary to re-examine the epigraphic evidence to ascertain the validity of these ethnic assumptions, to test the evidence for epigraphic variability, to study the socio-economic factors driving major changes in epigraphic practices, and to assess the existence of regional patterns of practice.

Part Three

Written boundaries

Introduction to Part Three

In Part Three, I examine the written evidence of certain key sites in western Sicily during the late Archaic and Classical periods, focusing on three epigraphic datasets. The case studies in question are the tophet markers from Mozia, the curse tablets from Selinunte, and the Meilichios sanctuary markers from Selinunte. The historical, ritual and archaeological context of each case study is examined, and comparisons are sought with the epigraphic evidence of other sites and periods as well. I will argue that potential markers of collective identities could be traced in the written practices here examined: these markers consist of patterns or differences emerging from the construction and adaptation of a community's epigraphic habits, and are expressed through conscious and strategic textual choices. These choices are contextualised within the broader socio-political and historical *milieu* of western Sicily, and used to reconstruct the social priorities and cultural requisites of distinct communities of epigraphic practices.

The Sicilian epigraphic record has traditionally been addressed as evidence of interactions between ethnically labelled communities and of Hellenization processes, using literary sources to validate these assumptions - despite the fundamental differences between literary and epigraphic sources.[612] Perhaps the most emblematic example of this process is the way

[612] Luraghi 2010.

the literary evidence has been used (and to some extent continues to be used) to support the existence of the Elymian ethnic group, bending epigraphic evidence to fit this ethnic assumption. As mentioned earlier, Greek literary sources split the Sicilian *barbaroi* into three groups, the Sikels, Sikans and the Elymians, often entwining local histories with mythical narratives of wandering heroes and city foundations.[613] The autochthonous Sicilian communities left no written record of their origins, nor of their perception of the origins of the Greek and Levantine settlers. The resulting unevenness in the emic and etic evidence has not discouraged scholars, who have largely continued to read the material and epigraphic remains of the indigenous communities often exclusively along the lines of Greek narratives – mythical or otherwise.[614] This situation deserves a closer look.

The common portrayal of the Elymians, based largely on Thucydides VI.2-5, is that they were a non-Greek people settled in the western part of Sicily. The main Elymian cities are identified with Eryx, Segesta and Entella, and other smaller hilltop settlements in the Sicilian hinterland.[615] The scholarly interest in the Elymians as a definable ethnicity was renewed by the discovery of the deposit of Elymian graffiti on the slopes of Monte Barbaro near Segesta during excavations between the 1950s and 1980s. The discovery rekindled the debate surrounding the Elymian *ethnos* among academics and in numerous *Convegni* and *Giornate di Studi* which continues to this day.[616] The majority of these discussions focussed on definitions of Elymian territory, religion, pottery wares, and language, but to do so (sometimes merely as a matter of convention) is to uncritically accept as undisputed the

[613] Antonaccio 2001, 2004; Shepherd 2005c, 2014.
[614] Antonaccio 2001: 124; Shepherd 2005c.
[615] Sammartano 1998; De Vido 2006.
[616] Vincenzo Tusa above all; Nenci et al. 1990; De Vido 1997; Albanese Procelli 2003; Spatafora - Vassallo 2002; Kolb – Speakman 2005; De Vido 2006; Spatafora 2010d, 2014c; Marchesini 2012.

ethnic definability of an Elymian identity, and therefore to apply a categorisation which is not entirely warranted by the existing evidence.[617]

Did the 'Elymians' recognise themselves as an ethnic identity, one distinct from the Sikels and the Sikans? Distinguishing which perspective might be an etic interpretation and which a historical reality is extremely complex, and there is a clear tendency in modern and current scholarship to refrain from making such distinctions. Nevertheless, boundaries of a cultural, geographical and political nature are drawn, and the distinctive characteristics of the linguistic, social and biological makeup of these people continue to be hotly debated. As in the case of burial evidence in Part Two, I argue that it is unsatisfactory and unreliable to simply *assume* that the group identities of western Sicily were ethnic in nature and that approaching the material and epigraphic evidence for markers of a predefined identity risks circularity and bias. I now exemplify this argument with an overview of the ways emic and etic evidence has been used by recent scholarship to define and differentiate a distinctive Elymian identity.

The first author to mention the Elymians is Antiochus of Syracuse (*FGrH* 555 T 3). His passage appears indirectly in Pausanias (X.2.3) and refers to the alliance between the Phoenicians and Elymians against the Liparians. The theory of a Trojan origin is first offered explicitly by Thucydides (VI.2.3), who often refers to Antiochus in his work on the archaeology of Sicily.[618] After the fall of Troy, Thucydides claims, some Trojans escaped to Sicily by sea to settle next to the Sikans, and were collectively called 'Elymians'. They were

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[617] See Leighton 1999; Albanese Procelli 2003; and Balco 2012 for a summary of the archaeological protohistory of western Sicily's inhabitation. See Hodos 2006 for an updated interpretation of the archaeological origin of the Elymians.

[618] On the literary relation between Thucydides and Antiochus and on Thucydides' narrative ends, see Morgan 1999: 88-89.

later joined by a group of lost Phoceans who were also returning from Troy. Thucydides adds that their cities were 'Eryx' and 'Egesta'. He then goes on to refer in passing to an alliance between Phoenicians and Elymians (VI.2.6). The Elymian cities will reappear throughout Thucydides' work, as they were to play an important role in the historical events surrounding the Athenian expedition to Sicily – as for the Elymians as a defined collectivity, they are never mentioned again.

Hellanicus of Lesbos (*FGrH* 4 F 79b), another 5th century BCE author quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* I.22.3) offers a different interpretation of the Elymians' ethnogenesis: they were of Italic origin, driven out of their country by the Oenotrians.[619] Hellanicus' hypothesis is traditionally opposed to Thucydides' version (these two authors are attributed with the 'invention' of the two main conjectures concerning the Elymian origin). Dionysius of Halicarnassus proposes a different theory altogether (*Ant. Rom.* I.22.4), partially inspired by Philistus of Syracuse (*FGrH* 556 F 46) who had himself attributed a Ligurian origin to the Elymians: Dionysius suggests that Trojan refugees settled in Sicily had adopted the name 'Elymians' in honour of their leader Elymus (*Ant. Rom.* I.53.1).[620] But another author, Pseudo-Scylax, distinguishes between Elymians and Trojans (he also mentions the Sikans, the Sikels and the Phoenicians) while enumerating the 'barbarian *ethne'* of Sicily (Ps.-Scyl. XIII.1). The distinction between Elymians and Trojans may be connected to the specification made by Thuc. VI.2.3, but it may also be the case that

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[619] Hellanicus does not mention the Sikans, as the historical context he observes is that of 6th century Sicily, when the Elymians were indistinguishable from the Sikans due to their reaching the apex of their territorial expansion (van Compernolle 1950-1951: 216).

[620] Cf. Vergil (*Aen.* V.387-484). Dionysius then goes on to say that the Trojans had assisted the Elymians in founding their cities in Sicily (*Ant. Rom.* I.63.2). This appears to be a contradiction: were the Trojans called Elymians in Sicily, or did the Trojans upon their arrival in Sicily assist the Elymians in founding cities? The option involving the Trojans as external helpers could be due to a misunderstanding of Thuc. VI.2.3.

Pseudo-Scylax was following Hellanicus' narrative instead of Thucydides'. Finally, Pausanias (V.25.6,) also referring to the barbarian *ethne* of Sicily, lists the Sikans, the Sikels and the Phrygians (instead of the Elymians!), specifying that the latter hailed from the Troad.[621] Despite the differing purposes and interests of these ancient authors,[622] the theme shared by all these narratives is that of displacement, long-distance travel and mythical undertones – as is common in accounts of ancient ethnogenesis.[623]

Evidence of a more historically grounded Elymian involvement in real-world politics is found in an epigraphic text. *IG* I³ 12, dating c. 418/7 - 416/5 BCE, is one of three fragments of a marble *stelai* from the Athenian acropolis recording the Athenian treaties with the cities of Egesta and Halkyai. In line 3, the word Ἐλύμοις has been very tentatively restored by epigraphists, the full phrase being: [καὶ *h*αλι]κυαίοις Ἐλ[ύμοις φιλίαν καὶ χσυμμαχίαν εἶναι κατὰ χσυ]-.[624] Egesta (or Segesta) is traditionally understood as an Elymian settlement (after Thuc. VI.2.3), which played a decisive role in the Athenian expedition of Sicily in 415-413 BCE (Thuc. VI.6.2): in fact, Thucydides reports that the Egestans reminded the Athenians of this very alliance in 415 BCE (Thuc. VI.6.2). Halkyai however was a settlement south of Egesta identified by Thucydides as Sikel (Thuc. VII.32.1)! It therefore remains uncertain whether this inscription, a contemporary official document possibly referring directly to the Elymians, could actually represent the recognition of the Elymian ethnicity in an official diplomatic text other than literary sources.

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[621] Other literary sources, both Greek and Latin, discussing the ethnogenesis of the Elymians. Lycophron of Chalcis (*Alexandra* 951-977), Apollodorus of Athens (*FGrH* 244 F 167 in Strab. *Geogr.* VI.1.3), Strabo (*Geogr.* VI.1.3 and VI.2.5), Vergil (*Aen.* V.387-484 et al.), Nonnus of Panopolis (XIII.311) and others, who add mythological elements to the origins of the Elymians and their cities.
[622] For an overview, see Nenci et al. 1990: 10; De Vido 1997: 43-44, 98-114. See also Bonnet 2009.
[623] Garland 2014.
[624] *IG* I³ 12. Cf. Mattingly 1999: 119 (who also restores Ἐλ[ύμοις). *Contra* Cataldi 1997: 320; whereas Rhodes-Osborne 2017: 394 add a question mark after the restoration.

Moving on to other evidence for the existence of the Elymians, language is often assumed as emic proof for an Elymian ethnicity. Evidence of an indigenous language written in the Greek alphabet and believed to belong to the Indo-European group is attested in western Sicily, and it has been accordingly associated with the Elymian ethnicity.[625] The evidence is limited and comprises exclusively of potsherd graffiti (the majority of which are from Grotta Vanella on Monte Barbaro) and coin legends (from Segesta and Eryx), which in total amount to c. 400 texts.[626] Despite the scarcity of evidence (which mostly consist of symbols, personal names and laconic statements of ownership scratched on potsherds), attempts have been made to isolate certain distinctive features of the Elymian language: Marchesini, for instance, has serialised Elymian alphabetic forms to isolate this language from other non-Greek alphabetic varieties (Sikel and Sikan).[627]

But there is a problem at the heart of this approach: epigraphical texts and alphabetic varieties are assigned to the Elymians (as they are to the Sikans or the Sikels)[628] on the basis of assumed geographical borders inferred from the literary tradition, and the linguistic evidence is forcibly interpreted in these terms. This assumption has hindered the appreciation of linguistic phenomena shared across the non-Greek epigraphic evidence: for instance, the ε(ι)μι + dative (-αι) formulation to express possession is found across the entire island's non-Greek inscriptions.[629] This situation would appear to support a wider definition of the

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[625] Agostiniani 1988; Calascibetta 1990. See Marchesini 2012: 96-97 for an updated *status quaestionis* on the language group definition.

[626] Regarding Elymian language graffiti, refer to Agostiniani 1977; De Cesare – Serra 2012. For discussion of the Elymian coin legends, see Agostiniani 1977: 102-104, 123-143.

[627] Marchesini: 2012: 114. Marchesini's approach to the use of Greek alphabetic forms in non-Greek languages across Sicily has been critiqued by Agostiniani 2012: 139 and Tribulato 2015: 63-65.

[628] Challenges to the long-held linguistic differentiation between Elymian, Sikel and Sikan languages have been advanced by Albanese Procelli 2003: 219-225; Tribulato 2012a: 77, 2015; Poccetti 2012: 51-55.

[629] Poccetti 2012: 77-85; Prag 2020 forthcoming.

'Elymian language' - or rather a more drastic re-evaluation of all linguistic boundaries across Sicily.[630] This seems to be yet another case where the literary tradition has played an overly emphatic role in the conceptualisation and study of the western Sicilian communities, this time with regard to the linguistic analysis. The linguistic-geographical barriers and oppositions between Greek and non-Greek (*anellenico*) remain (as does the use of oppositional terms).[631]

But if one dares to move away from the notion of a rigidly defined 'Elymian language', it is then possible to discern different strategies of socio-linguistic identity assertion and negotiation, using the written evidence as a proxy. For example, coin legends are excellent diachronic markers of language change linked to historical circumstances,[632] and the coin legends from Eryx and Segesta have been examined since the 19th century.[633] These cities minted coins bearing legends in an indigenous idiom and Greek script as early as the first decades of the 5th century BCE, which is notable in itself because the use of coinage in Sicily was an imported practice originating from Greece, locally adopted for cultural and economic reasons (in fact, all early coin legends are in Greek: see those of Mozia, Palermo and Eryx).[634] Segesta was the first indigenous Sicilian settlement to mint coins starting in c. 490/70 BCE with several legends: ΣΕΓΕΣΤΑΖΙΒ, ΣΕΓΕΣΤΑΖΙΒΕΜΙ, ΣΕΓΕΣΤΑΖΙΑ, ΣΕΓΕΣΤΑΖΙΕ (fig. 69). Eryx emulated the use of legends, once again written in an indigenous language and Greek script (ΙΡΥΚΑΖΙΒ or ΕΡΥΚΑΖΙΒ) but only around c. 410 BCE, whereas its

630 Prag 2010.
631 See Agostiniani 1977, a key work on the '*Iscrizioni anelleniche di Sicilia*'.
632 Simkin 2012: 162-163 for discussion.
633 Kinch 1888; Conway 1933; Schmoll 1958.
634 Simkin 2012: 176, 182.

earlier issues dating c. 480/60 BCE employ the Greek-language legend EPϒKINON (fig. 68). [635]

This intriguing switch could be interpreted as evidence of Eryx slipping from the sphere of influence of Theron's Agrigento,[636] which had inspired or imposed the use of Greek-language legends paired with Greek-inspired numismatic iconographies, to display instead a different socio-cultural affiliation expressed by its choice of language and following Segesta's example.[637] Simkin believes that Eryx's early legends in Greek are symptomatic of the adoption of a 'Greek cultural package' owing to its prestige.[638] However, this situation was not to last beyond the end of the 5th century: at this time, Segesta's legends featured the Greek genitive plural (Σ)ΕΓΕΣΤΑΙΟΝ or (Σ)ΕΓΕΣΤΑΙΩΝ; [639] Eryx passed under Carthaginian rule for most of the 4th century, and its coin legends switched from Greek to Punic.[640]

I find that the switches between choices of language (Greek to indigenous, indigenous to Greek) could be symptomatic of different socio-cultural conditions. Language – or rather, the *choice* of language, could be interpreted as a means for these two cities of the western Sicilian hinterland to actively distinguish themselves from the influence of neighbouring Greek settlements in response to new historical processes, whereby the numismatic evidence

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635 Rizzo 1946: 283; Jenkins 1966; Hurter 2008; Simkin 2012: 176-179; Leeck 2018: 5-6. See also Frey-Kupper 2003. On Siculo-Punic coinage in Sicily see Prag 2010.
636 Leeck 2018: 6.
637 Willi 2008: 43-44; Simkin 2012: 176.
638 Simkin 2012: 182-183.
639 Buceti lists samples of early coins from Segesta with Elymian legend from c. 480- 421 BCE, coins with bilingual Greek-Elymian legend c. 420-400 BCE, and coins with Greek legend restart around 400 BCE (2010: 373-391). See also Hurter 2008.
640 Buceti lists samples of early coins from Eryx with Greek legend from c. 490-420 BCE, coins with Elymian legend c. 420-413 BCE, and again coins with Greek legend c. 412-398 BCE (2010: 97-105). See also Hurter 2008.

works as a marker of these newfound situational identities.[641] In fact, it is tempting to associate the 'code-switching' phenomena now analysed, on one hand, with the Carthaginian incursions into western Sicily at this date, on the other hand, with the events surrounding Ducetius' revolt which took place in this period.[642]

Undeniably, the lack of positive evidence for the existence of a standalone, self-identifying category of 'Elymians' does not necessarily mean that there were no Elymians. What I do find problematic is that the majority of scholarly discussions concerned with the Elymian ethnogenesis consistently assume the historical definability of this ethnicity as a given starting point, and then proceeds to examine what practices and archaeological remains might have expressed this ethnic identity (these are key aspects in the so-called *questione elima*).[643] For example, in her monograph dedicated to the study of the Elymians (and interestingly entitled *Gli Elimi: Storie di Contatto e di Rappresentazione*) De Vido states 'che però le fonti antiche riconoscano una popolazione indigena distinta e distinguibile e che ne siano detti nome generale, profilo di città e alcune importanti vicende storiche assicura dell'esistenza nella percezione greca di un popolo diverso da Sicani, Fenici e Siculi'.[644] The key element in this statement is the 'esistenza nella percezione greca', which acknowledges the eminently Greek nature of the etic sources entwining the Elymian ethnogenesis with mythical origins. What De Vido fails however to address is whether and to what extent might the etic literary perception actually reflect the historical existence of the Elymians as an ethnicity.

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641 Kraay 1988: 444 sees coinage as proof of the norm that 'a Greek city.... took every opportunity to distinguish itself from a neighbour only a few miles away'. On linguistic boundaries as articulating separate ethnic identities in the Greek world in the Archaic period, refer to Luraghi 2010.
642 Willi 2008: 43-44.
643 Nenci et al. 1990: 21.
644 De Vido 1997: 304.

A humorous *addendum* to this discussion is offered by Giuseppe Nenci, as he recollects the occasion when a colleague asked him 'Ma gli Elimi sono esistiti o sono una invenzione di Vincenzo Tusa?'[645] History does not record his answer, but it is to the Elymians that the eminent Tusa dedicated a considerable amount of scholarly work, particularly to the so-called Elymian archaeological *facies*.[646] Such was Tusa's certainty in the archaeological distinguishability of the Elymian *ethnos* that Hans Peter Isler asked him during a discussion at the 1990 *seminario di studi* on all matters Elymian (*Atti Elimi*) 'se ci può precisare quei caratteri di decorazione e di policromia nella ceramica dipinta che ci permetterebbero di distinguerla come tipicamente elima'.[647] That particular discussion was closed by van Compernolle, who discerningly added that neither linguistic nor archaeological evidence may necessarily imply ethnic belonging (he then added a joking but poignant comment: were an archaeologist of the year 3,000 to excavate van Compernolle's homeland, they could only conclude that the Belgians had emigrated from east Asia in the late 2nd millennium due to the sheer amount of material evidence from Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vietnam). Van Compernolle's remark was perhaps prophetic, for excavation work in western Sicily soon after this *repartee* confirmed that archaeological evidence alone was insufficient to prove an Elymian distinctiveness: pottery with *decorazione incisa o impressa*, traditionally taken as an 'Elymian marker' as it was a type common in the area traditionally held as Elymian territory has actually been traced across the entirety of Sicily.[648]

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[645] Nenci et al. 1990: 21.
[646] First suggested by Marconi 1950: 82. See Day et al. 1998: 139-140 for a critique of this methodology.
[647] Nenci et al. 1990: 101 *(Interventi)*.
[648] Nenci et al. 1990: 24-26; Spatafora 1996: 155; Antonaccio 2004, 2015. The discovery of new types of evidence has also advanced the academic debate. Nenci 1999: 213-214.

Over the last two decades, Italian scholarship concerned with the *questione elima* has advanced in new directions. It is impossible to overstate the importance of initiatives such as Giuseppe Nenci's periodical *seminari di studi* at Pisa focussed on the 'area Elima', which have been instrumental to advancing the archaeological interpretation of the geographical area commonly associated with the Elymians.[649] There has also been an increasing interest in the processes and outcomes of interactions among the Greeks and Elymians.[650] Scholars have examined how the Elymians might have fashioned their identities in response to Greek and Punic presence and activity in the area,[651] how intermarriage and hiring of external labour might have also contributed to this situation,[652] and the reasons why the Greek authors would have wished to weave the indigenous peoples of Sicily within their own mythical narratives of kinship and descent (such as a Trojan origin).[653] Hybridity and other Postcolonial theories have also been instrumental to the 'refocusing' of the western Sicilian indigenous peoples.[654]

But the assumed existence of an Elymian *ethnos* still gives rise to many an impasse in the study of the historical record. For example, the Elymians, Sikans and Sikels described by Thucydides (Thuc. VI.2-5) as three distinct indigenous Sicilian populations are actually impossible to distinguish archaeologically and linguistically in the 5th century BCE evidence,

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649 The conference proceedings are usually abbreviated as *Atti Elimi*.
650 E.g., De Vido 1997: 338; Spatafora 2010d: 25; Ampolo 2012a: 20-21, 37-38. See also Marchesini 2012 for a multi-ethnic approach to the Elymian alphabet.
651 For example, De Vido 1997: 337–338 discusses the unique Elymian territorial organisation into a system she defines as 'poleizzato'. See also Thompson 1999: 263, 462-73; Hall 2002: Chapter 3; Shepherd 2005c, 2013.
652 On mixed marriages and hospitality: Malkin 1998, 2002; Shepherd 1999; Antonaccio 2001. On exiles, merchants and artisans: Ampolo 2012a: 33-35.
653 Antonaccio 2009: 32-53.
654 On the Postcolonial notions of 'entanglement' and 'cultural hybridity' and their aid to understanding the indigenous Sicilians of western Sicily: Balco 2012, 2019; Tribulato 2012b; Shepherd 2014a.

despite this being precisely the period when Thucydides wrote his account, and when the Sikel federation under the command of Ducetius was formed.[655] It would be expected that at precisely this historical moment a clear Sikel ethnic presence might be definable in the archaeological evidence, and yet it is untraceable - at least, in the material record. Back in 2012, Ampolo had wished that 'Solo un cambiamento di prospettiva ci aiuterà a comprendere le realtà concrete che affiorano anche dai testi e ancor più dai documenti epigrafici e archeologici'.[656] But this overdue 'cambio di prospettiva' is yet to leave its mark on the ways western Sicilian communities, indigenous or immigrant, are conceptualised today.

The question is now, in what political, social and cultural landscape can we couch the identities of indigenous people of western Sicily? The aim of Part Three is to test whether the social identities uncovered in Part Two of the thesis are upheld, challenged or complicated by the comparison with the epigraphic record. I have singled out three epigraphic case studies which I find especially emblematic of the assertion of collective identities through different media, messages and purposes (see Part One for a full explanation of my case study choices): they are the Mozia tophet markers, the Selinunte *defixiones* and Meilichios markers. I will be comparing these three assemblages for evidence not only concerning outcomes of identity negotiation, but also the processes by which the collective identities of communities of practice were defined through their epigraphic practices. The methodological guidelines set out in my overview of the mortuary record will therefore also be applied to my study of the epigraphic record.

I will pay particular attention to intentional and strategic textual choices which might have conveyed salient aspects of a community's social identities, working as potential

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[655] Shepherd 2014a: 119; Prag 2013b.
[656] Ampolo 2012a: 37-38.

markers of group solidarity and membership, as well as of social disjunction and marginalisation. I will also trace the diachronic and geographical evolution of epigraphic practices, appreciating their full diversity and contextualising them within the social, economic, cultural and historical drivers. I am particularly interested in any changes these senses of identity might have undergone pursuant to socio-historical events occurring within the settlement, the wider region of western Sicily, and other useful *comparanda* in the ancient Mediterranean.

8.

The tophet markers of Mozia

Introduction

'Tophet' is a name conventionally given to an open-air urban cremation sanctuary found from the mid-8th century BCE in certain central Mediterranean settlements founded by Levantine migrant communities.[657] Archaeological evidence attests that the tophet was built either at the same time or soon after the founding of the settlements.[658] The sanctuary is marked off clearly by a modest *temenos* and located in the vicinity of the residential centre of the settlement. Based on the evidence available, it is impossible to ascertain with certainty whether the tophet was dedicated to a specific god. The dedicatory inscriptions often found in tophets are in fact addressed to different divinities, but the god to whom the majority of dedications are made (alone or with Tinnit) is Baʿal Hamon.[659] A tophet typically and distinctively features a field of interred pottery urns (often spread over multiple

[657] If an emic term (or terms) for this place existed, it has not survived. The current name is borrowed from the Biblical Hebrew sources, see Xella 2013c: 260, note 2. Concerning the terminological debate, see Bernardini 2005: 60; Bonnet 2011: 374; D'Andrea 2014a: 20, note 13; Quinn 2018: 93-94.
[658] Bonnet 2011: 373, 378; Quinn 2013: 29. The earliest tophets (founded in 770-750 BCE) were those of Carthage (see Bénichou-Safar 2004), Mozia (see later) and Sulky (see Melchiorri 2016a).
[659] Bonnet 2011: 379, note 27.

stratigraphic layers) containing the cremated remains of infants and animals (sometimes both).[660] These urns may be accompanied by votive material (connected to ritual activities)[661] and stone votive markers (some bearing iconographical reliefs, and sometimes inscribed with a votive text).[662] The relationship between the urns and the markers is unclear. Whereas the urns cannot be moved or removed from the sanctuary, the stone markers may be repositioned or even reused.[663] Sometimes, cultic architecture and possibly the remains of cremation pyres have been found associated with certain tophet enclosures.[664]

All tophets excavated in the Mediterranean appear within a limited area of Phoenician-speaking migrant settlements.[665] The lack of evidence so far for similar sanctuaries in the Levant makes it a ritual phenomenon typical of the Levantine migrants settled in the central Mediterranean.[666] The spheres of community life the tophet institution appeals to and relies upon are diverse: it brought together customs and concepts relating to death and life, gods and humans, family and individuals, kinship and ritual.[667] The tophet could have fostered all kinds of community interactions playing out between the groups and individuals of a settlement, which could have been conducive to the construction, conveyance, and

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[660] See Smith et al. 2013.
[661] Jewels, amulets, miniature vases and coins can be found mixed with the ashes (D'Andrea 2018a: 12, note 31, 33). Other artefacts (masks, lamps, small statues) and votive markers may also be found in the tophet (D'Andrea 2014a: 21, note 35; D'Andrea 2018a: 16 with notes).
[662] The use of markers in the Levant is connected to burial cemeteries and not as souvenirs of a votive dedication. The votive inscriptions appearing on some tophet markers distinguish tophets from necropoleis, as eschatological funerary inscriptions are different in genre and iconography. Bonnet 2011: 379; Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 162-168; Xella 2013c: 268; Xella et al. 2013a: 5; D'Andrea 2018a: 22, 105-106.
[663] Xella 2013c: 262.
[664] Morstadt 2014: 96-97; D'Andrea 2018a: 12, note 26.
[665] Tophets pre-dating the 2nd century BCE are found in north Africa (Carthage and Hadrumetum), Sicily (Mozia), Sardinia (Sulky, Tharros, Bitia, Nora, Cagliari and Monte Sirai), and possibly Malta (Rabat). Refer to Quinn 2018: 93 for a map.
[666] For updated overviews of the known tophets, see D'Andrea - Giardino 2011; D'Andrea 2014a: 17-32; D'Andrea 2018a and 2018b (with references to the specific publications of each site).
[667] Quinn 2011: 390.

conservation of collective identities. The tophet could therefore offer a privileged viewpoint onto the ways people chose to assert their identities. Furthermore, the archaeological, textual and historical evidence for the tophet suggests that it was an institution deeply embedded in the particular context and choices of the communities whence it arose.[668] In fact, recent scholarship has increasingly focussed on understanding the tophet at a community level, addressing how certain aspects of the archaeology of the tophet ritual relate to the construction of collective identities.[669]

For many years, studies of the tophet have grappled with a methodological bias which can be summarised in the words of Amadasi Guzzo: 'è infatti particolarmente arduo riuscire ad ammettere che popoli a noi relativamente vicini, sia nel tempo, sia nello spazio, abbiano regolarmente praticato riti che non ci appaiono giustificabili: limitare il sacrificio dei bambini a casi eccezionali, se non eliminarlo completamente, appare perciò come uno sgravio di coscienza'.[670] Indeed, until the 1980s most interpretations of the practice closely followed the accounts preserved by the Graeco-Roman literary sources,[671] which portrayed the tophet as a place for the ritualised killing of infants.[672] By the 1980s however, most scholars were downplaying or denying the sacrificial aspect of the ritual, dismissing the literary sources as etic propaganda and agreeing instead upon the burial nature of the remains of stillborn or naturally perished children, or suggesting that infant exposure might have been used as a

[668] Quinn 2011: 390, 2013: 29.
[669] Bonnet 2011; Quinn 2011; Xella 2013b; D'Andrea 2014a; Campus 2013; Melchiorri 2016b; D'Andrea 2018b; Quinn 2018.
[670] Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 189-190.
[671] For an overview of the literary sources, see Shelby Brown 1991; Aubet 2001: 246-250; Xella 2013c: 264; Stavrakopoulou 2004; Garnard et al. 2013; Xella et al. 2013a: 4-5; D'Andrea 2014a: 20, note 13 and 16; D'Andrea 2018a: Appendix 1 and 2.
[672] E.g. Moscati 1966; Fevrier 1960.

mechanism for regulating population growth.[673] But the scientific analysis of the osteological remains[674] and demographic studies of mortality in the ancient world demonstrated how it was simply impossible for this practice to be a mechanism of population control, or merely due to natural child mortality.[675] No clear-cut solution seemed available: the tophet stood at the crossroads as either a singular sanctuary or a peculiar necropolis.[676]

A turning point in this stalemate is marked by the twin contributions of Bonnet 2011 and Quinn 2011. The two scholars did not attempt to solve the impasse of the tophet as a place for child burial or child sacrifice, but they discussed the tophet's potential for assertions of the identities of cultural groups from the Levant settled in the central Mediterranean.[677] Instead of deciphering its rituals, scholars now attempt to understand the tophet at a community level.[678] Because of this, heightened attention has been dedicated to the local dimension of these sanctuaries,[679] as well as to the 'cross-Mediterranean' scope of the tophet.[680] For instance, the possible reasons why tophets are found only in a limited number of central Mediterranean settlements, the role played by Carthage in the diffusion of the tophet practices,[681] and a cultic differentiation between the 'Circle of Carthage', the 'Circle of the Strait' and the 'Circle of the Tophet' are all research questions that have variously

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673 E.g. Brelich 1967; Simonetti 1983; Bénichou-Safar 2004, Moscati - Ribichini 1991; Gras et al. 2000. For a detailed discussion of both sides of the argument, see Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 161-167; D'Andrea 2018a: 59-98.

674 See Xella et al. 2013a: 2-4; Melchiorri 2013: 223-258; D'Andrea 2018a: 17-22 for an overview of the osteological analyses. Cf. Bartoloni 2016: 5 and D'Andrea 2018a: 16 rightly highlight how all estimates of total urn numbers remain approximate and provisional.

675 Stager - Wolff 1984; Xella 2010: 268; Schwartz et al. 2010, 2012; Garnand et al. 2013.

676 Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 351; Xella 2013a: iv; Xella 2013c: 266-267.

677 Bonnet 2011: 373.

678 For an updated *status quaestionis*, refer to Xella et al. 2013a; Xella 2013a; Campus 2013: 141, 143; Melchiorri 2016b; D'Andrea 2018a: 99-117; Quinn 2018: 91-112.

679 Bonnet 2011: 374-375.

680 E.g. Quinn 2013: 3; Xella et al. 2013a: 7-8; D'Andrea 2018a.

681 E.g. Aubet 2001: 255. Cf. D'Andrea - Giardino 2011.

been addressed.[682] Tophet archaeology has also been analysed in search of cultural and cultic elements of continuity, innovation, and experimentation between the migrant communities and their Levantine homelands.[683]

These are only a few of the many new lines of enquiry which have reinvigorated the study of the tophet in the ancient Mediterranean in the last decade.[684] Whatever actually took place within the tophet, it involved a communal moment of institutionalised practice, closely linked to the settlement's status, activities and social texture. This Chapter seeks to contribute to the recent re-evaluation of the role of tophets in the social and religious life of central Mediterranean settlements. It will focus on the role the tophet of Mozia played in marking communities of practice, defining collective identities and how its ritual activities changed in response to social factors and historical dynamics. The focus of this Chapter are the votive texts inscribed on markers in the tophet. Despite making up a small minority of all votive material found in this sacred area, the inscriptions and their wider context of use raise interesting questions concerning trans-Mediterranean socio-economic dynamics, literacy and display of writing, and the collective behaviours and identities of communities of ritual practice.

The inscriptions of the Mozia tophet markers are yet to be addressed as evidence for the socio-cultural context whence their use arose: this contribution aims, therefore, to advance and complement current understandings of the collective identities on Mozia using the tophet inscriptions as a privileged viewpoint. In line with the aims and objectives of this thesis as a whole, this Chapter also seeks to challenge ethnic assumptions concerning the

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[682] D'Andrea - Giardino 2011: 133-140 has revisited the theory of 'commercial' vs. 'urban-agricultural' Levantine settlements in the central and western Mediterranean.
[683] Bonnet 2011; Quinn 2018.
[684] Xella 2013a: iv.

tophet: Quinn's aforementioned 2011 article stated that 'Tophets do not act as markers for 'Punicity' or any other specific, bounded ethnic or cultural group, for individual dedicators or the community as a whole'.[685] It is time for the tophet of Mozia to be reappraised as evidence for local community identities playing out on a sacred space linked to a settlement's life. In this case study, I will be focusing on the mindful use and display of epigraphic text as a window onto the construction and conveyance of collective identities, tracking how ritual practice in the tophet and especially the significance and use of the inscribed markers changed in time and in other settlements from the 6th century BCE, in response to socio-economic drivers, social hierarchies and interactions with other polities in Sicily and the Mediterranean.

8.1. The tophet of Mozia

The tophet of Mozia is one of the most effectively excavated, exhaustively studied and extensively published tophets (fig. 71, 72).[686] It was in use from the third quarter of the 8th century up until the late 4th or early 3rd century. The tophet is found on the northern coast of the island, near the necropolis and the industrial quarters. It was built upon a natural rocky outcrop which was expanded in height and width over four centuries of activity to house the ritual depositions accumulating over the years (fig. 73). The area was marked off by a *temenos*, which expanded in time along with the tophet. The spatial

[685] Quinn 2011: 403.

[686] The tophet of Mozia was first excavated by Joseph Whitaker in 1919 (Whitaker 1921: 257-260), then by the Soprintendenza di Palermo and the University of Rome La Sapienza under the direction of Ciasca, Falsone, and Nigro. Ciasca published the archaeological reports of the digs in *Mozia* I - IX between 1963 and 1978 (see also Ciasca 1992, 1996, 2002). For more recent excavation reports, refer to Nigro 2013, 2018. In my archaeological overview of the Mozia tophet, I refer especially to Ciasca 1992, 1996; Bernardini 2005; D'Andrea 2018a; Nigro 2018.

organisation and articulation of the tophet, the presence of markers, the arrangement of the urns and of the cultic buildings (including the *temenos*) set this sacred space apart from the coeval necropolis of Mozia.[687] About 800 pottery urns containing the cremated remains of infants and animals (mostly of the type *ovis* or *capra*)[688] and 1,195 votive markers (the latter in use between 6th and first quarter of 5th century, and of which 40 are inscribed) were discovered on site.[689]

The relationship between urns and markers is difficult to establish,[690] and the complex archaeological situation of the Mozia tophet has obfuscated the reconstruction of the original relationship between urn and marker.[691] The reason why more markers than urns have been discovered at this site may lie in the higher risk of perishability of the urns compared to the markers, as part of the latter were preserved in the new containment wall T2 during the first enlargement of the tophet.[692] However, it may also be the case that markers could be erected in the tophet as unrelated to an urn, or in different (or repeated) moments in time.[693]

In its most Archaic stages (end 8th - early 7th centuries), the tophet contained only a few urns (phase VII), with no apparent formalisation of pottery shapes nor techniques, nor any homogeneity in the types of offerings (human and animal). This has been interpreted as the 'experimental' phase of a new, innovative ritual whose practicalities were still fluid and undefined.[694] By the 7th century, the presence of urns increased (phase VI) and the

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[687] Bernardini 2005: 60.
[688] The majority were deceased by 6 months of age. D'Andrea 2018a: 20, note 95. A total of about 750 urns from Mozia's tophet have been analysed. For a complete resumé of the osteological analyses, refer to Melchiorri 2013; Lauria et al. 2017.
[689] Refer to Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.
[690] D'Andrea 2014a: 21; D'Andrea 2018a: 13, 14, note 59, 60, 64.
[691] Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 192-193.
[692] D'Andrea 2018a: 16. For an overview of the ceramic findings at the Mozia tophet, see Orsingher 2013, 2018 with references.
[693] Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 192; D'Andrea 2014a: 21.
[694] Bernardini 2005: 60.

tophet began its progressive expansion. Starting in the mid-6th century (phase V), a standardisation of pottery shapes and techniques can be detected, accompanied by the introduction of stone markers associated with the urns. There then follows, in the second half of the 6th century, a complete reorganisation of the tophet space. The *temenos* was widened, and cultic architecture ('sacello A') was erected.[695] The new layout (phase IV) ventured eastwards, expanding the tophet area. The urns from previous periods were covered in earth to make space for a new layer of urns. As for the stone markers, they were reused to build the earth fill containment wall (T2) of the tophet.[696]

It would appear then that the earlier 'experimental' phase was supplanted over time by precise and calculated ritual specifications. By the end of the 6th century (phase III) older markers were still being used as building materials for the terracing wall which would house a further tophet expansion (phase II). However, the use of new tophet markers gradually began to decrease in the early 5th century, until they completely disappeared by the mid-5th century.[697] In its final stages (5th - 3rd century, phase II and I) animal offerings once again became the prevalent type of offering.[698] The fall of Mozia at the hand of Dionysius of Syracuse in 397 BCE marked a period of crisis for the tophet and its community. However, cultic life did continue (documented by the spatial expansion and increase of offerings in phase I).[699]

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[695] Ribichini 2002: 425-440.
[696] Bartoloni 2016: 4 has emphasised how this did not constitute a sacrilegious act, as the markers were piled up within the sacred space of the *peribolos* - thus their sacred significance was not revoked nor tarnished. See also Bernardini 2005: 64-65.
[697] Ciasca 1992: 132, 135.
[698] Following D'Andrea 2014a: 22 table 1.2, out of 792 urns 150 contained human remains, 338 animal remains, 53 the remains of animals and humans mixed together, while the contents of 251 urns was impossible to determine.
[699] Ciasca 1992: 139. On the (unverified) possibility of a tophet at Lilybaeum, Di Stefano 1993a: 39-40; Bisi 1967: 50-51.

A total of 1,195 tophet markers have been recovered at Mozia (fig. 74, 75),[700] whose period of highest use coincided with the second half of the 6th century and the early 5th century (phases IV - III).[701] The practice of inscribing texts on the markers corresponds chronologically with the use of the votive tophet markers (attested in phases V - III).[702] Of these markers, 40 (3.4%) bear an inscription:[703] the votive nature of the tophet inscriptions is a common feature of all other known Mediterranean tophets.[704]

No. 18. Ed. Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.

L'DN BʿL ḤM / N ʾŠ NDR ḤṀ / LKT BN ʿḂDY

To the lord Baʿal Hamon, (this is what) ḤṀ LKT son of ʿḂDY dedicated.

The Mozia texts were dated based on palaeography and archaeological stratigraphy. The latter was particularly arduous to establish for the early excavators owing to the two major rearrangements of the tophet area, which caused the markers to be moved to locations other than their original one.[705] The texts are generally traced upon the base or lower part of the sandstone markers (beneath the iconographic reliefs when present) and on the right-hand side of the frame surrounding the marker's iconographic relief (sometimes the writing continues along the left-hand side of the marker).[706]

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[700] Moscati – Uberti 1981 collect 1,185 markers. New (inscriptionless) markers have since emerged and been published by D'Andrea 2014b (9 markers in total) and De Simone 2012b (1 marker).
[701] Moscati – Uberti 1981: 57-59; Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 192; Campus 2013: 145-146, note 58.
[702] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 13-14.
[703] For the inscriptions' publication, refer to Amadasi Guzzo 1967, 1986a, 1986b, 1990a, 2007-2008; Bernardini 2005; Amadasi Guzzo – Zamora Lopez 2013; De Simone 2013a, 2013b; D'Andrea 2014a; Campus 2016. The marker numbering adopted in this discussion follows Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.
[704] Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 167-168 for a comparison with Punic funerary inscriptions. Whereas in the earliest phases of the tophet the votive aspect was not explicit, this becomes clearlwith the appearance of the inscriptions on the stone markers at the end of 7th century (D'Andrea 2018a: 119).
[705] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 13 note 9.
[706] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 13.

For phase V (first half of 6th century) only two texts are known (nos. 14 and 36).[707] 20 texts have been dated to phase IV, and for phase III a total of 18. It is possible that, originally, a larger number of inscriptions might have existed, but the texts were lost either due to conservation issues,[708] or because some texts were executed using paint, whose traces did not survive.[709] There does in fact exist a small number of surviving markers where the texts are not inscribed, but painted on the stone surface:[710] this is the case of the two earliest texts from phase V, which were painted in red on the stone.[711] Paint could be used either to trace the inscription,[712] or just to highlight the incised text.[713] But text is not the only element to appear on the markers: these votive monuments have either unworked surfaces (Moscati – Uberti 1981 nos. 1 - 67), minimally worked surfaces (nos. 68 - 255) or bear an iconographic relief of varying degrees of complexity (nos. 256 - 1010).[714]

The iconographic repertoire appearing on the makers is enigmatic: D'Andrea believes that the images have a symbolic significance with an apotropaic, propitiatory, protective or simply decorative meaning.[715] Moscati - Uberti and Amadasi Guzzo note the richness of the figurative repertoire, the originality and autonomy of figurations, and the range of

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[707] Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 193.
[708] *Mozia* IV: 96.
[709] Regarding the possibility that certain inscriptions were painted rather than inscribed, Moscati - Uberti 1981: 23. It could be argued then that perhaps certain markers bearing no text at all originally had a painted inscription which did not survive through the centuries. However, it would then be difficult to explain then why the several painted texts which were preserved in similar conditions did survive, as did the paint of some on the iconographic reliefs (e.g. no. 13).
[710] Pisano – Travaglini 2003: 153-156.
[711] Nos. 14, 36.
[712] Nos. 6, 13, 27.
[713] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 13. Nos. 11, 21-25, 27-31.
[714] On the stylistic and iconographic peculiarities of the Mozia tophet markers, Moscati – Uberti 1981; D'Andrea – Giardino 2013 with images. Cf. Quinn 2011 and Quinn 2013: 34-38, who has comparatively discussed various tophets' marker iconographic styles to redefine the reach of Carthage's influence upon other Mediterranean tophets.
[715] D'Andrea 2018a: 22

alterations and elaborations on Levantine themes appearing on the Mozia markers.[716] No clear allusion to the nature and details of the rituals and their connection to infants and animals (at least for the tophet under consideration) is made by the votive markers' iconographies. No direct correlation between iconographies and texts can be traced for the inscribed markers from Mozia,[717] although it has been noted that the inscribed markers tend to be associated with aniconic iconographies, instead of anthropomorphic ones.[718] The markers with an iconographic relief and an inscription are nos. 1, 3, 6-11, 13, 17, 20-30, 32, 33, 39, 40.[719]

The Mozia inscriptions are exclusively written in the Phoenician language, and represent the largest number of texts written in this language in the 6th century.[720] The richness of the tophet dataset emerges with clarity when considering the paucity of Phoenician-language epigraphic evidence discovered in Sicily for this Archaic – Classical period. The texts comparable to the tophet inscriptions in genre and period are three inscribed markers from Lilybaeum (*ICO Sic.* 4, 5, 10) (4th - 3rd century); a dedicatory inscription (3rd - 2nd century) from Palermo to Tinnit and Baʿal Hamon (*ICO Sic.* 9);[721] a dedication to the Astarte of Eryx (*CIS* I, 135) (now lost); and the 'Stele di Hanno' from Marsala which bears an iconographic scene including the 'symbol of Tinnit' (*KAI* 63).

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[716] Moscati - Uberti 1981: 39-56 and Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 50. On the similarity between the themes and techniques of Levantine art and the Mozia markers, see Moscati - Uberti 1981: 61-71; Quinn 2018: 105.

[717] See Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 50 for a catalogue of the iconographies associated with each inscription.

[718] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 52.

[719] Amadasi Guzzo 1986a. 13. The reliefs on nos. 2, 15, 16, 18, 19, 31, 37 are *a tutto tondo.* Nos. 4, 5 are inscribed on the empty relief area of the marker. The relief of no. 12 is not preserved. Nos. 35 and 38's reliefs consist in an empty aedicule. No. 14 represents a betyl, and the text is inscribed on the betyl's surface.

[720] On Phoenician-language inscriptions in Sicily, see especially Amadasi Guzzo 1990a, 1999, 2007-2008; De Simone 1999, 2010a, 2013b.

[721] Cf. De Simone 1997a: 447-450 on the unlikely possibility that this inscription may be evidence for the existence of a Panormite tophet.

Inscriptions are also quite rare on Mozia: in addition to the tophet markers, the only other known inscriptions are 2 5th century funerary texts from the necropolis (in the simple form 'tomb of' + name; in *MO.*2 the patronymic is stated, in *ICO, Sic.* 3 the deceased's profession); one dedication *MO.*1 'to the Lady Astarte' (end 6th – early 5th century) probably pertaining to the sanctuary complex; two dedications 'to the Lady', one found in the Cappidazzu area (*MO.*3, 4th century), the other in the 'tempio di Astarte' area (discussed later); a rare find of a pentelic marble base fragment *MO.*4 (4th century); a Greek *alfabetario* (fig. 77);[722] what seems to be a Greek dedication to Astarte/Aphrodite 'αγλ[αια]' (discussed later); and a few ceramic fragments inscribed with personal names or initials. All these inscriptions overlap in dating with the Mozia tophet inscriptions, documenting the use (albeit not widespread) of inscriptions in Mozia in this period. However, given the paucity of evidence and diversity of genres, it is impossible to ascertain with certainty the general level of literacy (understood here as the ability to read and/or write) of these Phoenician-speaking migrant communities settled on Mozia.

8.2. To write or not to write

The delay between the Mozia tophet foundation (mid-8th century) and the adoption of stone markers (early 6th century) should be contextualised further. A similar pattern can in fact be observed in the two other archaic tophets, Carthage and Sulky, where the foundation of the tophet's ritual space precedes by over a century the first dedication of tophet markers (plate 1).[723] These two tophets were also founded in the mid-8th century. The

[722] Falsone – Calascibetta 1991.

[723] On the tophet of Sulky: Moscati 1986; Bartoloni 1989; Bartoloni 2009: 57-99, 159-165, 236-241; Melchiorri 2009; Unali 2015: 42-47. On the tophet of Carthage: Cintas 1948; Bartoloni 1976; Stager – Wolff 1984; Bénichou-Safar 1988, 2004; D'Andrea 2014a, 2016; Bartoloni 2017. The iconographic

earliest dedications of votive tophet markers (inscribed and uninscribed) are attested across all three sanctuaries within the span of less than a century: in Carthage markers first appear in the mid-7th century,[724] in Sulky in the late 7th - early 6th century, in Mozia in the early 6th century.[725] What prompted people on Mozia (as well as in Sulky and Carthage) to dedicate markers at the tophet at this specific point in time?

To begin, the historical and archaeological context of Mozia offers clues and a backdrop for the adoption of the markers. In Mozia, the early 6th century marks the beginning of a large-scale reorganisation of the settlement, owing to the city's demographic growth.[726] Public infrastructure and other monumental constructions were developed on the island.[727] Firstly, the road connecting the island to the mainland was strengthened, an undertaking involving the construction of canals and involving the entire 'Stagnone' area. This mile-long road crossed the entire island in a North-South direction before continuing across the Stagnone di Marsala to the mainland at Birgi. Harbours were expanded in the North, South and west of the island. The island's defensive walls were also built in this period, with towers and grand entrances. Sacred areas were also developed in the North and South of the island, and cultic architecture acquired a monumental finish: the so-called 'tempio del Kothon' and its sacred pool were also built in this period, while the 'tempio di Astarte' and the tempio del 'Cappidazzu' were rebuilt on a more grand style and massive scale. For example, the Cappiddazzu temple was split into three sacred areas, while the *temenos* of the tempio del

repertoires of these tophets have received more attention than their epigraphic aspects: no publication focusing exclusively on the inscriptions exists for the tophets of Sulky and Carthage. I have collected the epigraphic data from the publications of the *stelae* in Bartoloni 1986 for Sulky (with additional information from Amadasi Guzzo 1967, 1990a) and Bartoloni 1976 for archaic Carthage (with additional information from Bénichou-Safar 2004).

[724] D'Andrea - Giardino 2013: 7, fig. 3; Bénichou-Safar 2004.

[725] Barreca 1986: 315-318; Moscati 1986.

[726] Ciasca 2002: 128, 130; Bernardini 2005: 59.

[727] Ciasca 2002: 128, 130; Bernardini 2005: 59; Nigro 2015a, 2018.

Kothon delimited around 2 hectares of sacred land (fig. 78). Private housing also seems to have been developed in a monumental style, as attested by the 'Casa del sacello domestico' and the 'Casa del corno di Tritone' in the D area of the island, the 'Casa del pozzo quadrato' in the B area.

Mozia's 6th century urban development has usually been studied from the perspective of the sacred architecture (the Kothon temple, the Cappidazzu temple),[728] but the tophet is also to be included within the wider renovation program the settlement underwent. The archaeological evidence indeed suggests that in the 6th century the tophet evolved from an 'experimental' phase (when the ritual practice was left largely unstandardized and small-scale) to the institutionalisation and articulation of its ritual behaviour and architecture. The tophet's sacred area evolved from a field with few urns and a lack of standardisation in pottery shapes or votive offerings (late 8th – 7th century) (fig. 76), to an organised and expanded sacred space, housing an increased number of urns which were uniform in shapes and techniques (early 6th – 5th century).[729] The quality of the limestone markers increased, and the repertoire of the iconographic reliefs expanded and was homogenised.[730] Cultic architecture was also introduced, such as the 'Sacello T6' and 'Edificio T5', reflecting the novel institutionalised dimension of the tophet.[731] The range of dedications widened to include terracotta masks, lamps and amulets, while the burnt offerings in the urns diversified to include the cremated remains of *bos-taurus, sus*, *mollusca* and *aves* types - but incinerated

[728] E.g. Nigro 2015a, 2018.
[729] Bernardini 2005: 60.
[730] See Moscati - Uberti 1981.
[731] Bernardini 2005: 62-63.

human remains became for the first time the prevalent type of offering.[732] This is the period when the use of markers is first attested in the tophet.

The development of the tophet should not only be associated with the demographic development of the settlement, but also with the wider acceptance, approval, and development of the tophet rituals in wider community, which the tophet must have been accruing over the years since its foundation. The adoption of the markers could therefore be envisaged as an organic part of this codification of practice, culminating in the 6th century and the communal decision to upgrade the tophet space. Collective decisions at a wider settlement level had marked the history of the tophet sanctuary since the very beginnings of its cultic life. From its earliest phases of life, the tophet had been linked to the settlement and urbanisation phases of Mozia:[733] the choice to set aside a specific sacred place was made at the settlement's offset. The physical act of 'setting apart' this sacred area by means of a *temenos* could entail that a community had wilfully agreed to do so, and it might also have been administered by some kind of authority.[734] Furthermore, the sanctuary was established on top of remains of prehistoric burial dating back to the 15th – 14th centuries BCE.[735] This location strategy ensured that the tophet inherited the significance of this elected place, but it did so almost obstreperously, physically substituting the older remains with a new ritual practice. As noted by D'Andrea, this double gesture of appropriation and legacy could have worked as 'strumento di 'legittimazione locale''.[736] The tophet was then used incessantly

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[732] On child remains at Mozia, see Ciasca 1992: 141-144; Bernardini 2005: 59-60; Lauria et al. 2017; D'Andrea 2014a: 21-22.
[733] Such is the case for other tophets as well (D'Andrea - Giardino 2011: 137-138). On the development of settlements around both the built-up area and the tophet, see Melchiorri 2016.
[734] Bernardini 2005: 59; Quinn 2011: 390.
[735] Nigro 2013: 40, Tab. 1. Ciasca 1992: 116. This situation is similar to the Tharros tophet, where the founding of the tophet atop of an abandoned Nuragic village has been interpreted as a dual strategy of obliteration and continuation (see Quinn 2018: 98).
[736] D'Andrea 2018a: 101.

(unlike the nearby *necropolis*), even after a major disruption such as the one occurring in 397 BCE.[737] Its maintenance and expansion during the 6th century must have been periodically taken care of by a wide community of practice.

The high level of collaboration and administration marking the tophet's cultic life shows that tophet-goers cannot have been an insignificant minority, but that the wider settlement was at least aware of, indifferent to or participated actively in the practice. The visual impact of the tophet, conveyed by the packed urn field and the crowded stone markers, must have been quite powerful.[738] The markers, especially within their newly expanded and monumentalised *temenos*, could have worked as a display of the extended participation the ritual practice had gathered, as a visual affirmation of this innovative cult's validity, and as an assertion of its place within the ritual life of the community. These acts of civic cooperation for the institutionalisation and regulation of the tophet area bear witness to the existence of a ritual community actively defining and maintaining a cohesive practice for itself.

But the people on Mozia were not operating in a vacuum. In fact, the increasing popularity of the tophet rituals among settlement inhabitants, the monumentalisation of cultic structures, paired with the standardisation of sanctuary offerings alongside the introduction of votive markers may be observed in the other two archaic tophets of Carthage and Sulky as well. During the first two phases of tophet use (800 - 550 BCE) at Carthage, the few markers retrieved are roughly worked and anepigraphic. In phase 3 however (550 - 300 BCE), a wider variety of shapes and an increased quality of stone-working is attested, and votive texts first appear inscribed on the markers. The construction of two roads, stone

[737] Melchiorri 2014: 159.
[738] Oggiano – Xella 2009.

altars with recesses for depositing the urns, and the use of *temenoi* around the sanctuary area and enclosing certain urn assemblages is also attested in this same period at Carthage.[739] As for Sulky, its stratigraphy is notoriously difficult; but it would seem that the markers (absent from phase A of the tophet) first appeared in the early 6th century,[740] a time when *temenoi* and terraces were built to widen and mark off the tophet area more clearly from the urban settlement, and an increase in quality of the marker carvings is also visible.[741]

In light of these comparative observations, I would suggest that the novel tophet practice had been maturing over the decades in these central Mediterranean settlements, until the widening of the basis of approval and participation in its cultic activity led the communities of practice involved to reassess their ritual priorities, and require the introduction of new cultic specifications - such as the markers. The tophet, in other words, was growing, developing, and changing at the same pace as the Levantine settlements in the central Mediterranean, a pattern of practice which transcends regional boundaries and might instead be symptomatic of widespread socio-cultural drivers.

Indeed, in the 6th century Mozia was at the height of its commercial power, at the strategic heart of long-distance sea travel across the Mediterranean. The urbanistic overhaul of the settlement, the development of the tophet cultic area and activities, and the introduction of the markers should in fact be contextualised within Mozia's geographically central and increasingly important role in shipping routes commercial activities, an international harbour between Spain, Sardinia, mainland Sicily and Italy, Africa, Greece and the Levant.

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739 Bénichou-Safar 2004: 65-99.
740 Barreca 1986: 315-318; Moscati 1986: 81-82.
741 Barreca 1986; D'Andrea – Giardino 2011: 14.

Archaeological evidence supports that Mozia was maintaining cultural and economic contacts within and outside western Sicily. In the sacred area of the Kothon and the aristocratic housing of the 'Area D' excavators have discovered red-figure Attic craters, Etruscan bucchero, pottery from mainland Sicily, Cyprus and Sardinia, and high quantities of Carthaginian red-slip ceramics.[742] One large fragmented red-figure Attic crater was discovered in the 'tempio delle acque sacre' (temple C11-C7, 550 - 397/6 BCE), decorated with a sympotic scene: above one of the symposiasts the name ΑΛΚΙΜΕΔΩΝ can just be read.[743] In the 'Casa del pozzo quadrato' in the B area numerous Greek-imported *amphorae* were discovered alongside a mass of black-glaze Attic pottery and a terracotta *arula* reproducing a winged sphynx.[744] Other terracotta protomes and *arulae* (along with their stamps) also discovered in this area have been interpreted as stylistically Sicilian and iconographically Levantine. Mozia's accentuated international character is attested by two inscriptions found in different but closely neighbouring votive deposits from the 'tempio di Astarte' (temple C6-C4, 550 - 397/6 BCE).[745] The first is a c. 5 line-long text inscribed on the shell of a tortoise, the last line reading ⌊L R⌋BT ('the lady'), understood as an epithet of Astarte at Mozia (also attested by *MO*.3 found in the Cappidazzu area). The second text, found only a few metres away, is inscribed on the foot of an Attic cup and reads αγλ⌊αια⌋, also interpreted as an epithet for Astarte/Aphrodite on Mozia.[746]

But I find one of the most notable observations regarding Mozia's receptiveness to external influences in its material culture owing to its position in trans-Mediterranean trade

[742] Nigro 2015a: 233-234.
[743] Nigro 2018: 273.
[744] Nigro 2018: 273.
[745] Nigro 2015a: 240-241.
[746] Nigro 2015a: 240 note 41.

to be found in the tophet itself: the presence of Greek pottery imports and Sicilian-style ceramic votives reach 17% in the 6th century, whereas a century earlier they made up for 2,1% of all ceramics found in this sacred site.[747] Specifically, the more archaic urns consisted of 'vasetti d'impasto' (fig. 79), cylindrical neck *amphorae* usually 1/3 smaller than normal, but between the late 7th and the 6th century the use of Corinthian pottery increases dramatically.[748] This is a particularly notable fact, as the tophet is traditionally conceived as an essentially inward-looking Punic cult practice rooted in tradition and impermeable to external influences in cultic features. However, it would seem that the tophet was as steeped in the socio-economic changes brought on by Mozia's flourishing within trans-Mediterranean commerce routes - and their cultural implications on civic and religious life on Mozia (fig. 70).

Mozia's increased connectedness with international shipping routes and its interaction with the cities of the wider Mediterranean not only impacted the physical makeup of the settlement, but it could have influenced the social texture of the settlement as well. The movement and channelling of products and people through Mozia's harbour could have injected the amount of wealth needed for the city's administration to implement the architectural and urbanistic overhaul discussed so far in detail, and could therefore have led to an increasingly hierarchical development of society on Mozia. The changes in wealth consumption on an individual scale are attested by the aristocratic housing in the areas B and D of the island: the 'Casa del sacello domestico', 'Casa del corno di Tritone' and the 'Casa del pozzo quadrato' are the cases in question.

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[747] Bondì 1989: 169.
[748] Nigro 2018: 258.

The display of wealth and social hierarchies could have been extended to the tophet as well, translating in a possible ritual hierarchy. This situation could therefore be adduced to explain the appearance of votive markers. Firstly, in the context of this programme of monumentalisation, expansion and development of the tophet ritual institution, the choice to use stone markers in the tophet could have been perceived by certain members of the ritual community as conferring additional value on the votive action. The marker's physical presence then commemorated and continuously reaffirmed the fulfilled vow. The stone markers could have worked as a physical memorialisation of the dedicator's gratitude to the gods: to quote McLuhan, the medium could truly be functioning as the message.[749] The step from uninscribed to inscribed markers could then have been a brief one, for the act of dedicating an inscribed votive marker in the tophet could also be fuelling the prestige to the dedicators. Scholars have shown that the practice of writing could be understood as increasing the efficacy of previous oral customs by offering 'immortality through permanence', thus offering an 'added value' to an otherwise unspecified or exclusively oral statement.[750] The display of text could have been perceived as functional to the commemoration of the votive action, as it guaranteed permanence in writing (what the marker achieved with its physical presence only) to the religious and ritualised exchange between human and god. In other words, writing conferred an added value to the votive marker, augmenting its value, its significance and even its potency.[751]

The existence of a social prestige factor at play in the pairing of writing to marker dedication could therefore explain why so few markers on average were inscribed with text.

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[749] McLuhan 1962.
[750] Thomas 1992: 62.
[751] Stoddart - Whitley 1988; Lomas 2011.

In fact, since the adoption of inscribed markers in the 6th century, one cannot speak of an epigraphic 'boom', neither in Mozia nor in the other archaic tophets. In Mozia, out of 1,195 markers, 40 are inscribed. Out of 1,575 markers in Sulky, only between 6 - 13 markers are inscribed.[752] Similarly in Carthage, out of over 6,000 inscribed markers only about 10 predate the 4th century.[753] Why were the inscribed markers such a small proportion compared to their uninscribed counterparts? The possibility that some inscriptions might have been lost over the centuries (especially if painted) could account for this discrepancy.[754] The literacy levels of the artisans carving markers in their workshops could also have hindered them from offering to inscribe votive messages as a commonly offered service, just as the literacy levels of those commissioning a marker could have also been a factor at play. However, a further possible explanation for the discrepancy between written and uninscribed markers could be that those who could and did commission a votive text to add to their marker were a small minority, who felt that the carving of their name on the marker in a publicly visible and ritually significant place was a social priority.

It has been suggested by De Simone with reference to funerary *stelai* in the Phoenician tradition, that the 'ownership of writing' could be seen as the cultural heritage of a select number of individuals within a settlement, and was otherwise foreign to the domestic and

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[752] D'Andrea 2014a: 20 'almeno 6', Melchiorri 2016a: 275-276 '13'. I have personally counted 12 in Bartoloni 1986, *ICO,* Sard; *CIS* 1; and Amadasi Guzzo 1990a (see Appendix), including the votive inscription on a gold lamella (8th – 7th century) published in Amadasi Guzzo 1967: 121 (no. 38). The total number of markers is from Bartoloni 1986: Prefazione. The dating is from D'Andrea 2014a: 20 table 1.1.

[753] Bénichou-Safar 2004: 188 counts 10,000 markers (inscribed and uninscribed) in total. Data from D'Andrea - Giardino 2013: 7, fig. 3 and D'Andrea 2014a: 331 table 11.1. The total number of markers and inscriptions is an estimate, see Amadasi Guzzo 2015: 143-144 (quoting Bénichou-Safar 2004). I count 9 archaic inscriptions in total (nos. 29, 123, 124, 140, 147, 169, 337, 450, 608) from Bartoloni 1976 (who collects 629 archaic markers). Shelby Brown 1991 has collected 612 late archaic markers. *CIS* I collects 4,500 inscriptions from all periods. Unfortunately, no further statistical data can be provided.

[754] Cf. Moscati – Uberti 1981: 23.

quotidian affairs of most of society.[755] As examined earlier, it is likely that literacy levels on Mozia were relatively low, given the very limited quantity of epigraphic material enumerated above. It is compelling to envisage that in the tophet too the use of writing could be the potential 'cultural prerogative' of a select social group, and the limited use of writing (not only in the tophet, but across Mozia as illustrated above by the scarcity of epigraphic evidence) as therefore not exclusively down to widespread illiteracy, but instead as also related to more complex dynamics linked to social status (and potentially financial means too). This is an interesting perspective because it sets up the tophet epigraphic practice as a hallowed and prized - possibly even ensconced and reserved - rarity.

So far I have argued that writing could have been perceived as a prestige technology, concentrated in the hands of a wealthy élite whose social standing had benefitted from Mozia's 6th century 'renaissance', partaking actively in shipping routes, channeling of goods from across the Mediterranean, and renewing its urban, religious, and socio-political makeup. The actual technology itself may have been wielded by non-élite professionals such as artisans, potters, scribes or other specialized workers, but the choice and commission of inscriptions on objects reserved for specific votive purposes and ritual spaces appear to have been a prerogative of the élite, especially when writing was a recent addition to the cultural landscape of Mozia.[756]

The question 'why write?' could then be answered in different ways: because writing guaranteed visibility to the person whose name was inscribed, because it conferred a certain social prestige to the name in the eyes of those who saw or read it, because it guaranteed added efficacy and memorialisation to the votive action, and because it was the exclusive

[755] De Simone 2018: 98.
[756] Stoddart - Whitley 1988; Lomas 2011.

prerogative of a particular social group which may have achieved pre-eminence in the aforementioned period of transformation and expansion not only of the tophet, but of the entire civic life of Mozia during the 6th century. Writing in archaic Mozia could have therefore been used to stoke social competition among tophet goers and reinforcing collective identities within a social as well as ritual hierarchy. Indeed, the statistics from Carthage do suggest that inscribed markers became a common feature and an established practice of the tophet's ritual life, with 6,000 inscribed markers attested in total until the 2nd century BCE. A similar trend cannot be observed on Mozia: the settlement's destruction in 397 BCE makes it impossible to observe the evolution of the epigraphic practice over the following centuries.

8.3. To write and what to write

So far I have discussed the adoption of markers in the tophet within the context of a wider set of socio-economic changes impacting the urban, political and religious makeup of Mozia. I have examined how some of these changes were engendered by interactions with agents from outside Mozia, visible in the remarkable increase in Greek-style pottery in the tophet's ritual activities. I have also connected these changes to the use of writing as a prestige technology, possibly in the hands of an élite subgroup on Mozia. I now want to focus on the actual votive texts, and investigate whether the observations made so far also extend to the formulaic nature of these texts. The specificities of the Mozia texts have mostly been discussed in the terms set by their definitive publication in 1986 by Amadasi Guzzo.[757] Indeed, most work on this class of material has focussed on the uniformity of the

[757] With corrections in Amadasi Guzzo 2015.

formulaic schema of the 40 texts,[758] a perception intensified by the consistency in the (votive) nature of this class of material.[759] The Mozia tophet formularies have been branded as 'ripetitivi e stereotipi' owing to the constant repetition of basic formulaic elements, where the only variation is given by their addition or subtraction, rather than by their creative combination or alteration.[760] I have summarised all possible formulaic solutions attested in the Mozia inscriptions (plate 2), where it emerges clearly that the names of the god and the human dedicator are the two most common elements mentioned in the votive formula.[761] The reason why the dedicator was grateful to the god was never stated, but it is generally accepted that the urns appearing (often) alongside the markers were somehow related to the vows and offerings in response to requests granted by the god.[762] One might expect that, in a very loose sense, the vows could have concerned situations of crisis or risk run by the individual, his/her family, and possibly by the entire society.[763] The inscriptions from Mozia refer to a pact, a contract[764] of reciprocity between the god and the human dedicator, where the term 'MLK'[765] refers to something which has been 'sent'[766] to the god in exchange for the past or expected successful outcome of a votive request.[767]

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[758] Refer to Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 45-58; 1986b: 193-195, 1990: 56; De Simone 2013b: 14; D'Andrea 2014a: 22. For an etymological analysis, Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 352-356.
[759] See Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 47-49, 58.
[760] Amadasi Guzzo 2015: 139.
[761] At Mozia, Baʿal Hamon is the only divine dedicatee. Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 193; De Simone 1999: 205.
[762] D'Andrea 2014a: 20, 22.
[763] Xella 2013c: 270-273.
[764] Bonnet 2011: 383.
[765] Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 163-164.
[766] On this etymology, the scholarly opinion is unanimous. See Xella 2013c: 269; Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 345.
[767] D'Andrea 2018a: 119. See Xella 2013c: 270 a comparison with divine favours received (and therefore of fulfilled vows) and divine favours expected (and unconditional vows pre-emptively fulfilled).

But the notable absentees in the votive inscriptions are actually the dead infants. The offering takes up a secondary position in the text, and is referred to with the terms MTNT,[768] NṢB,[769] or MLKT,[770] never specifying the exact nature of the tophet offering. In this contractual relationship between gods and men, the cremated infants and animals are truly treated as objects or 'merchandise'.[771] The cursory reference to the offering in the votive formula reinforces therefore the impression that the tophet was a place for living adults, and their business with the gods.[772] And yet, the importance of these depositions cannot be underestimated, as proved by the physical treatment the tophet urn undergoes through the centuries. As previously stated, during the enlargement and rebuilding of the tophet the urns stayed in their place, whereas the markers were piled up to build a containment wall (within the sacred *temenos*, however).[773]

Women are also absent from the archaic inscriptions of Mediterranean tophets. This is surprising: given the sanctuary's relatedness to infants and the cycle of life and death, one would expect traces of female presence or involvement in the archaeology and epigraphy of the tophet. [774] Female figures are found exclusively in the iconography of the markers of Mozia:[775] among the inscribed makers bearing human iconography, 8 represent a female

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[768] Nos. 11 - 14, 16, 19 - 23, 26, 28, 29, 32, 35, 36, 39.
[769] Nos. 3, 4(?).
[770] Nos. 7, 24, 31. In no. 31 the object is accompanied by BʿL. MLKT is possibly a dialectal or the feminine form of MLK: the terms are exclusively attested in the tophet sanctuaries. On the proposed meaning of this word, refer to Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 200-204; Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 349, 354-355; Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2012-2013: 169-170; D'Andrea 2014: 22, 2018: 30.
[771] Bonnet 2011: 384; D'Andrea 2014a: 22.
[772] Campus 2013: 147.
[773] Amadasi Guzzo 2007-2008: 356.
[774] Female names are rare in the Phoenician-language epigraphy of Archaic and Classical Sicily. Note however the existence of the female name GRT on a graffito from Solunto (tomb 106, late 6th – early 5th century). De Simone 1997b: 109-110.
[775] Moscati – Uberti 1981; Modeo 2013.

figure,[776] 6 a male figure, and 2 additional cases are uncertain.[777] The female figure possibly stands for the ritual's connections to the spheres of fertility, rebirth, infancy and death. This is not an uncommon iconographic feature in the archaic tophets: [778] at Carthage, 13 out of 28 human iconographic markers are certainly female;[779] whereas at Sulky the female figures outnumber the male 264 to 24.[780] However, when it comes to textual references to a female figure, none exist. In Carthage as well, women are entirely absent from the archaic tophet inscriptions. Instead, they appear in the Hellenistic period as dedicators, either offering alone, or with a male companion (father, brother, husband), or with another woman.[781] In Mozia, this is never the case.

The only inference of what could be understood as family groups referred to in the epigraphic texts is one case where two brothers are mentioned as dedicators in no. 22:[782] ŠLM and BʿLḤNN sons of K... Scholars have proposed to restore the patronymic appearing in this inscription to KLB' (as only a few Phoenician names begin with K).[783] There is in fact another case of an individual named BʿLḤNN making an offering alone (no. 30), and his patronymic is KLB' (but this time with no lacunae). It is tempting to imagine that this individual made one offering with his brother, and on another occasion by himself (there

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[776] Nos. 1, 7, 10, 17, 27, 32, 39, 40.
[777] Nos. 2?, 3, 9?, 15, 23, 28, 33, 37.
[778] For a comparison with the iconographic choices of the Mozia, Sulky and Carthage tophets, see Moscati 1986: 85-99; D'Andrea – Giardino 2013: 8-12; Quinn 2018: 91-112.
[779] Bartoloni 1976.
[780] Barreca 1986: 131; Bartoloni 1986: 24, 1989: 97; Moscati 1986: 55-74.
[781] Amadasi Guzzo 1988 has calculated that, out of 3,747 inscriptions collected in *CIS* I (178-3245 and 5260-5940), 406 of the dedications were made by women. What is more, in some cases the female dedicators refer to a female genealogy. For a full list, see Amadasi Guzzo 1988: 144 note 7. E.g. *CIS* I 5702, 382, 383, 385, 386, 4596. On a related note, from the 5th century onward a considerable number of Carthaginian tophet offerings are explicitly dedicated to both Baʿal and the goddess Tinnit. From the 4th century, Tinnit begins to be invoked in first position, before Baʿal. Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 170.
[782] No. 26. Guarneri 2004: 115. Amadasi Guzzo 1990a: 58 has identified a 'svista del lapicida'.
[783] Amadasi Guzzo 1986b: 205.

remains the possibility however that these may be different people with the same name making their own separate offerings). However, the impression that some votive dedications might have been repeatedly made by members of a family group is further supported by the inscriptions nos. 1, 3 and 4: in all three texts the dedicator's father's name is ḤNN (but only in text no. 1 is the dedicator's name ʿBD- mentioned). Most importantly, in texts 1 and 4 the grandfather's name ḤQM is also mentioned, aiding in the identification of family ties. If the same BD- were to have made the dedication in all three texts, then a case of multiple offerings being made by the same member of a family is attested (although it might also be the case that the dedicator could be a brother of BD-). These are the only occasions in which what could be interpreted as family groups become visible in the tophet evidence.

Whereas the specifics of the rituals, the offerings, and the nature of the vow for which the dedicator has erected the marker are left largely undefined, the personal names of the dedicators are always stated.[784]

No. 8. Ed. Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.

ʾṘṠTʾ BN ḤMLKTʾ

ṘṠTʾ son of ḤMLKT.

It is an accepted notion that the writing of names reinforces the process of memorialisation and stokes social competition.[785] By inscribing their name and genealogy on the marker, individuals could strengthen their personal association with the votive act. No other personal or social information is offered on the specific dedicators, such as social standing, political role, profession etc. The profession of an individual dedicator is declared only in

[784] Bonnet 2009: 29-39 on the onomastics of Mozia.
[785] Thomas 1992: 60-61.

inscription no.16 (BD'LM HYṢR, meaning 'BD'LM the potter).[786] The fact that a potter could make an offering (although this is a *unicum* in the corpus) might suggest that the socially regulated access to writing technology could have been more nuanced and complex. It is surprising that a potter actually reappears in the corpus of inscribed documents from Mozia. Inscription *CIS* 1, 137 (*ICO*, Sic. 3; Amadasi Guzzo 1990a no. 27) is the funerary monument inscribed with QBR MT / R HYṢR, 'the tomb of MT R, the potter'. A widespread silence on social roles is characteristic of funerary inscriptions from Mozia as well, and the potter's appearance is once again an exception.

I have already mentioned how the actual production of writing could have been the prerogative of a non-élite subgroup of professionals whom texts were commissioned for instance for inscription on votive markers. It could be tempting to imagine that the potter was making an offering himself at the tophet and chose to include his name and defining profession as well on the marker, thus mimicking the ritual and epigraphic choices of the élite. However, elements to support this hypothesis or indeed to explain this apparent *hapax* in the Mozia tophet material are unfortunately lacking. But as noted by Lomas (with reference to inscribed votives of Southeast Italy), even if the writing 'was done by people of lower social status, it is also likely that the élite, as commissioners of inscriptions, retained control, at least in the Archaic period, of what was written and which objects were inscribed.'[787]

Indeed, over time, as the practice proliferated or was extended to a wider social circle, it became necessary for the persons dedicating the tophet markers to distinguish themselves by means of more detailed statements concerning their social, political or personal position:

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[786] Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 199-200.
[787] Lomas 2011: 312.

names alone were no longer enough. This development is not attested in the tophet of Mozia, as the settlement was in fact destroyed in 397 BCE. However, the mentioning of political and social roles begins to appear in later tophet epigraphy, as can clearly be noticed in the tophet of Carthage starting in the Hellenistic period:[788] sufetes, rab, priests, craftsmen, foreigners, aristocrats, slaves are mentioned.[789] Statements on profession were instead absent from the archaic inscriptions of Carthage, and were also lacking in the tophet of Sulky. The tophet inscriptions at Mozia also attest a marked insistence on ancestry links.

No. 24. Ed. Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.

L'DN LBʿL ḤMN MLKT ʾŠ <Ṅ> / ẎTṄ ʿBDMLQRT BN BDGD / BN ʾŠMNʿZR BN ʿBD / MSKR K ŠMʿ QL DBRY

To the lord Baʿal Hamon, (this is the) MLKT that ʿBDMLQRT son of BDGD son of ʾŠMNʿZR son of ʿBD MSKR gave, for he has listened to the voice of his words.

Lists of descent appear in all inscriptions except for one certain case and two uncertain ones (nos. 12?, 14?, 34). The salience of descent within the votive formula is evident not only in numbers but from the very fact that, at its simplest, the votive formula can boil down to the dedicator's name and his descent (Type V in nos. 8-10, 40). The patrilineal descent is traced up to the father (nos. 2?, 3?, 6?, 8, 9?, 10?, 17?, 18, 20?, 23, 27, 30, 31, 33?, 35, 38?, 40); to the grandfather (nos. 1, 4?, 5, 20?, 28, 29, 32, 33?, 39); and to the great-grandfather (nos. 18, 20?, 24). Genealogical constructions are common in Phoenician-language inscriptions, documented for instance in the Iron Age funerary stele from the necropoleis of Tyre al-Bass (10th - 6th century BCE), Tell el-Burak (mid-7th to mid-6th centuries

[788] Amadasi Guzzo 1988: 144; Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora Lopez 2013: 170.
[789] See Ruiz Cabrero 2008 for a full study of political, administrative and social functions occurring in the tophet.

BCE) and Sidon Dakerman (early 6th century BCE), Khaldé (9th century BCE).[790] The mentioning of kinship ties passed through statements of descent, although a common feature in the votive habits of the ancient Mediterranean world,[791] could also have worked to add definability to the élite subgroup whose socio-cultural prerogative it was to write texts on the tophet markers.

Having reviewed the single elements occurring in the tophet's votive formulae, I now want to focus on the formula's structure, which consists of a standardised succession of the formulaic elements discussed singularly above: the divine dedicatee in the first position, the offering in second place, the dedicator and his ancestry last. This formulation was something of a novelty in the Phoenician-language votive epigraphic habit, as noted by Amadasi Guzzo 1990b. Starting in the early 6th century, almost all Phoenician-language votive texts from the central Mediterranean undergo a change in formulaic structure: the name of the god to whom the dedication is made takes up the first position, followed by what is dedicated, the verb and finally the name of the person making a votive offering (possibly accompanied by additional accessory elements).[792] This formulaic pattern is the one observed in the Mozia texts, where the god takes up the first position in all inscriptions except for no. 37 (Type IV) and the three inscriptions in which only the name of the dedicator and his descent are specified (Type V). In the older Levantine votive inscriptions' pre-votive shift, the name of the god appeared in the last position of the dedication, whereas the object dedicated took

[790] Dixon 2013: 75-80.
[791] On memory in the ancient world (with a focus on Greece), see Finley 1965; Alcock 2002; Loraux 2002; Ma 2006; Clarke 2008; Luraghi 2008.
[792] Amadasi Guzzo 1990b: 838-840. E.g. *KAI* 61 A (Malta), 63 (Lilybaeum), 86 (Carthage).

up the first position (plausibly, to emphasise the value of the offering), followed by the verb and the name of the dedicator.[793]

This shift is particularly visible in the epigraphic evidence from the tophet inscriptions of the central Mediterranean migrant communities, whereas the previous structure persists in votive texts from the Levant and Cyprus.[794] In the majority of texts from Levantine settlements in the central Mediterranean, the god's name takes up the pre-eminent first position (the god's name BʿL ḤMN 'Baʿal Hamon' is preceded by preposition L- 'to' and title ʾDN 'Lord'),[795] followed by the object dedicated (MTNT, MLKT, MLK, NṢB, or simply indicated with the relative pronoun ʾŠ), the verb of dedication (YTN, ŠYM, PʿL, NDR)[796] and the name of the dedicator (sometimes followed by the reason for the gift: K ŠM̊ʿ QL DBRY).[797] This is particularly relevant to the present discussion, as the Mozia tophet votive inscriptions are the first texts in which this structural change can be detected.

Amadasi Guzzo correlates the change in votive epigraphic habit to an evolution in religious ideology, which led to a greater emphasis being put on the divine figure among the communities engaging with the tophet rituals.[798] The similarity of this formulaic setup with the Greek votive habit is striking, and it is tempting to correlate Mozia's choice of votive formula with an exposure to the Greek votive epigraphic habit. Lazzarini has shown how archaic Greek votive inscriptions emphasise the hierarchical superiority of the god to whom the dedication is made.[799] The use of the verb ἀνατίθημι, 'to offer up' (where the stress is

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[793] Amadasi Guzzo 1990b: 833. E.g. *KAI* 6 (Biblos).
[794] Amadasi Guzzo 1990b: 841.
[795] See exceptions Amadasi Guzzo 1986a: 45. Nos. 18, 27, 30 do not have the preposition L- preceding B'L, no. 30 does not have L- before B'L nor ʾDN.
[796] NDR appears in nos. 1, 3, 6, 11(?)-14, 16, 18-23, 26-31, 34-36, 38, 39. YTN appears only in nos. 24, 33 (?), 37. Both verbs seem to have been used contemporaneously in the inscriptions.
[797] Nos. 2, 23, 24, 29.
[798] Amadasi Guzzo 1990a: 25.
[799] Lazzarini 1989-1990.

on the difference in ranking position between human and god) is the case in point. Amadasi Guzzo 1990b also notes how in archaic Greek dedicatory inscriptions, the name of the god often takes up the first position. Indeed, in the Mozia inscriptions Baʿal Hamon's name in first position confers almost a declamatory quality upon the votive statement, and the positioning of the human dedicator's name at the end of the votive declaration also linguistically emphasises his submission to the god.

This hypothesis of a Greek stylistic influence upon the votive formula in Mozia's tophet is strengthened by Mozia's geographical proximity to - and growing commercial relations with the Greek migrants settled in western Sicily and the Greek merchants trading with Mozia during the 6th century BCE.[800] I have already discussed above how Mozia's increasingly international interactions and growing involvement in shipping routes led to a profound change in the urban, ritual and social makeup of Mozia throughout the 6th century, and how the influx of wealth could have contributed to defining the settlement's social life in a more hierarchical sense at this time. Perhaps then, just as Greek-style pottery was imported in increasing numbers in the tophet (as well as other elements of material culture linked to Sicilian settlements appearing in Mozia's wider archaeological landscape), so was the votive formulaic scheme borrowed from Greek-language practices.

A Greek abecedary inscribed on a pottery ostracon dating to the first half of the 5th century BCE has been found on Mozia,[801] and palaeographic analysis has revealed a mixture of Greek alphabetic varieties: Chalcidic and Selinuntine.[802] Although I do not presume that this single epigraphic document is sufficient evidence to prove a direct influence of the Greek

[800] Nigro – Spagnoli 2017.
[801] Falsone - Calascibetta 1991.
[802] Falsone - Calascibetta 1991: 696-698.

epigraphic habit upon the Mozia one (and the scarcity of textual evidence in indeed any language from Mozia impedes further investigation), it does support the hypothesis that the Greek language was a possible – if not common occurrence on Mozia. The existence of Greek-language epigraphic documents on the island has already been discussed above, to which I add a number of imported *amphorae* with incised or painted Greek letters also discovered in the same area as this abecedary (Zone K).[803]

Once again, the implications of this observation relate to the way the tophet is traditionally conceived: an inward-looking, closed and conservative Punic practice. The possibility that the nearby settlements in mainland Sicily such as Selinunte and Himera might have played a role in defining Mozia's votive formula is strengthened by the fact that the other archaic settlements of Carthage and Sulky do not adopt the new formula with Mozia's 'enthusiasm', and a degree of epigraphic variability can indeed be traced between these three settlements.[804] It seems that the most ancient Sulky inscriptions (nos. 1, 2) attest the use of both the 'old' and the 'new' votive formulae (no. 1 dating to the 8th - 6th century has the god Baʿal in the first position, no. 2 dating to the 6th century has NṢB 'marker' in the first position). At Carthage too, in the most archaic inscriptions either the offering (NṢB, MLKT, ʾŠ, nos. 2, 3, 9) or the god (nos. 4, 5, 8) can appear in the first position, also attesting the coexistence of both formulaic options. Were the hypothesis of a Greek influence over the shift in votive formula to be founded, then Mozia would have been in a more 'receptive' geographical and cultural position (compared to other settlements) to adapt the traditional votive formulaic form to the Greek-inspired one.

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[803] Falsone - Calascibetta 1991: 692.
[804] See Appendix 1 and 2.

8.4. Ritual definition

In light of the observations and arguments I have made so far in this Chapter, I would conclusively propose that it is not wholly accurate to define the votive texts of the tophets (as well as the wider changes in ritual, urban and social makeup of settlements such as Mozia) as part of a homogeneous Punic culture, nor as the result of Hellenising processes. Indeed, social and cultural drivers may be able to account for this situation better than ethnic labels for practices and processes as Greek or Punic. The tophet in fact doesn't lend itself to such easy categorisations: the increased interactions with the Sicilian polities during the 6th century could have led the groups who held a prerogative over the use of writing to adjust the traditional formulaic schema to the Greek-language models. This might have been perceived as better fitting their votive requirements, as it too conferred special visibility to the social circles using writing to assert their position on the ritual and civic stage of Mozia, memorialised the ritual action, and contributed to the definition of a new practice in constant development. But it is not possible to label this epigraphic formulation as entirely revolutionary either: as noted by Amadasi Guzzo, the votive formularies in their essential constitutive formulaic elements do actually remain stable despite the shift in positioning. She explains this as down to, on one hand, religion's tendency to conservatism, but also as intrinsic to the traditional nature of the formularies themselves: 'ideologie diverse rispetto al passato si manifestano usando gli schemi tradizionali, modificati in singoli elementi'.[805]

Indeed, the combination of Levantine tradition and externally driven innovation is a common feature of the tophet practice as a whole. To summarise, this was a new practice

[805] Amadasi Guzzo 1990b: 842.

(so far unattested in the Levant), proposing new ritual solutions (the dedication of the ashes of infants and animals to a god), using a new votive formula (the word order of the formulaic elements is altered), displaying distinctiveness from other archaic tophets (Carthage and Suky), and periodically subject to reorganisation (the site was expanded and renewed). On the other hand, the use of traditional iconographies on the markers persisted (following Levantine stylistic models). The god Ba'al Hamon is part of the traditional Levantine pantheon, and despite its reformulation the votive formula did not introduce any new textual elements alien to the traditional votives. The result is an experimental and innovative practice, in the constant process of ritual definition by its users, who were keen to assert their visibility and communal sense of belonging to a ritual practice which appeared to be widening its basis of participation in the 6th century BCE. The use of writing could have been used by certain individuals to assert their social distinctiveness from the wider community of practice.

As also concluded by Quinn 2011 in reference to the tophet of Carthage, the evidence from the tophets should be used to prioritise the identification of local community identities at a settlement or sanctuary level. 'Tophets do not act as markers for 'Punicity' or any other specific, bounded ethnic or cultural group, for individual dedicators or for the community as a whole'.[806] I therefore argue that the communities of epigraphic practice were not simply adopting practices wholesale, but carefully selecting and adapting the epigraphic forms that were most conducive to their ritual aims and meaningful to their collectivity. This even resulted in variations between Levantine settlements in different regions: in this Archaic – Classical period, no regulating authority had standardising influence over all

[806] Quinn 2011: 403.

different manifestations of the tophet practice, and as seen above the experimental solutions of this practice in its early stages across the tophets of Sulky, Carthage and Mozia are at their most visible.

To conclude, one of my main arguments in this Chapter was that social distinctions might be responsible for the overall rarity of writing in the tophet, these social groups could have constituted a subset of the wider community of practice, from which they may have been setting themselves apart. I have observed this behaviour firstly in the limited use of writing in the tophet, which appears to have been perceived as an élite technology, used for writing votive texts, to assert social hierarchy and stoke competition, and ultimately asserting collective social identities of the selected few who used writing in the tophet, clearly stating their names and ancestry. Writing was used and valued as a vehicle of power, the power bestowed upon the votive offering, thus increasing its potency to the eyes of the god Ba'al Hamon; and the power to 'see and be seen' by other members of the Mozia élite (and possibly to also be recognisable to the non-élite).

This conclusion not only feeds into the aim of my thesis as a whole, but is also intended as a contribution to the argument made by Bonnet and Quinn regarding the inadequateness of using the tophet as a marker of a distinctively Punic ethnic identity.[807] From this perspective, one is more receptive to different kinds of collective identities being forged: composite, cohesive and complex modes of aggregation rooted more in social contexts and historical processes than in etic categories. I have analysed the ways individuals identified themselves by name and descent, how the entire community identified in the participation to a collective and increasingly 'popular' practice to reconnect to its past, and how the

[807] Bonnet 2011: 373; Quinn 2011: 390-391.

choice to erect markers, to fit some with an inscription, and to elaborate a specific votive formulation for this practice also contributed to the definition of the novel tophet practice and the ritual communities engaged in its cultic activity.

9.

The curse tablets of Selinunte

Introduction

Curse tablets (*defixiones* or κατάδεσμοι) are texts inscribed on one or both sides of thin lead sheets (fig. 80, 81).[808] The tablets were folded or rolled up and sometimes pierced by a nail (a case of 'sympathetic magic').[809] The purpose of curse tablets is to affect the well-being, actions, and fortunes of a person or persons against their will, by wishing upon them adversity or hardship.[810] This is achieved by invoking a supernatural force to influence or undermine the adversary in will and sometimes in bodily functions.[811] *Defixiones* have in

[808] Jameson et al. 1993: 125; Curbera 1999: 159; Collins 2008: 67-69. For an introduction to curses in the ancient world, refer to Graf 1997: 118-174; Collins 2008: 64-103; Piranomonte – Marco Simòn 2012; Canzobre et al. 2018. See especially Crippa – De Simon 2009 and Curbera 1999 on the Selinunte curses. On the symbolic affinity between lead and curses, see Graf 1997: 132-133; Curbera 1999: 160; Gordon 2015: 154-156. Lead alloys (and other materials) may also be used, Eidinow 2007: 140. On other lead documents from Sicily, see Curbera 1999: 161; Crippa – De Simon 2009: 96.

[809] Graf 1997: 120, 134-135. For example, a group of 40 *defixiones* has been recently found folded and nailed to the ground above a tomb in the western necropolis of Himera (yet to be published). Vassallo 2017: 172.

[810] A tablet can be addressed to one or many targets. Alternatively, many tablets found in the same context can be addressed to the same person.

[811] Faraone 1991: 8 has convincingly argued that *defixiones* aimed to inhibit rather than destroy the victim. Collins 2008: 78-88 on cursed body parts.

fact been ascribed by scholars to the magical sphere due to their aggressive contents, whose purpose it was to harness the powers of the supernatural to perform an individual's will.[812] Curses could be visualised as an 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' self-help strategy: an action perceived by an agent as malign and damaging was punished by means of an equally malign and damaging response.[813] From an anthropological perspective, Assmann has proposed that cursing has the potential to defuse social tensions by resorting to 'extended connective justice':[814] when legal institutions fail (as in the case of covert crimes or improper law enforcement), metaphysical forces alternative to the existing socio-political institutions are called upon through a curse to bring about the punitive consequences of an illicit action.[815]

It is almost impossible to ascertain whether *defixiones* were written by the individual concerned or by commissioned professionals, as tablets mentioning explicitly the name of the curser are rare.[816] Making a lead *lamella* and writing a name onto its surface was not a demanding business, and cases of near-illiteracy and clumsy script could suggest that curses were written personally.[817] There are however also instances of aesthetic care being dedicated to the writing process: the clearest example is the partitioning of the lists of cursed

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[812] For a general introduction to magic, see Evans-Pritchard 1937; Thomas 1971; Tambiah 1990; Cunningham 1999; Ciraolo – Seidel 2002; Collins 2008: 1-28. On magic in the ancient world, see especially Graf 1997; Luck 1985: 3-60; Faraone 1991; Versnel 1991: 177-196; Gager 1992; Graf 1997: 29-42; Graf 1997; Ankarloo – Clark 1999; Jordan et al. 1999; Dickie 2001: 18-46; Parker 2005: 116: 135; Collins 2008: 27- 63; Gordon 2012, 2013; Stratton 2015.

[813] Gordon 2013: 269; Stratton 2015: 84.

[814] Assmann 1992: 151; Faraone 1999: 102; Ogden 1999: 44.

[815] Faraone 1999: 113 believes that reference in the Erinyes' chorus (addressed to Orestes) in *Eumenides* v. 306 proves that verbal cursing spells were an organic – yet unofficial - part of the Athenian legal system from its very infancy.

[816] See especially Parker 2005: 121-122. Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 364b – 365a. On magicians and ritual expertise, see Thomas 1971: 177-192; Graf 1997: 20-60; Burkert 1992: Chapter 2; Graf 1997: 29-42; Dickie 2001; Frankfurter 2002: 159-178.

[817] Faraone 1991: 4; Collins 2008: 65.

persons' names by means of separation lines. The evidence is conflicting: either professional experts took care of the inscribing process (and possibly the accompanying ritual) and held a respected authority on the practice, or there was a widespread and democratic 'culture of cursing' of which the entire and unspecialised population was aware.[818] Because of their contents and contexts, curses offer valuable insight into the social life and relationships of common people within an aggressive and unlicensed context. This particular epigraphic record singularly accesses an emic perspective, as curses reveal details of people's personal fears, troubles, angsts and their ways of dealing with risk which is otherwise unrecorded by other material or literary sources.[819]

Written cursing in Greek is first documented in Sicily (plate 3).[820] Specifically, the oldest *defixiones* hail from Selinunte, Gela and Agrigento, and date to c. 550 BCE at the earliest. As Curbera warns, this does not necessarily entail that the practice was invented in Sicily, and identifying the reasons for this survival record is troublesome.[821] The birth of written curses in late 6th century Sicily has been correlated by certain scholars with the onset and diffusion of rhetoric and western Pythagoreanism on the island during roughly the same period (just as the large number of curses from Attica dating to the late 5th – 4th

[818] Gordon 2013: 268 believes that this is a late development correlated with the spread of Graeco-Egyptian techniques and models.
[819] Eidinow 2007.
[820] I refer to specific Sicilian curses using their *ISicDef* ID. *ISicDef* is a digital database of Sicilian curses written in Greek, which I have compiled for the purposes of this thesis and is available at http://*defixiones*.ic3man.gr/. A concordance table with references to the main publications of these texts is available (plates 5-6). *Defixiones* written in Latin are not included in the collection of 68 curses from Sicily (whereas Greek curses, mixed language *defixiones*, ones with the Greek transliteration of a Latin term, and ones mentioning Latin names are included in the corpus). On curses in the Latin west, see Kropp 2010: 357-380; Faraone - Kropp 2010: 381-398.
[821] Curbera 1999: 159; Graf 1997: 173-174. It could be the case that curses were written on perishable material (wood, wax, papyrus) before the adoption of a metal support. Their loss may have altered the survival record (Faraone 1991: 7). Lead is a by-product of silver, but no silver mines are attested in Sicily. Isotopic analysis of the curses is yet to be conducted for more information on this matter.

century has been associated with the Athenian propensity for lawsuits developing in the same time frame).[822] The growing agonistic context in Sicily (and then in Athens) might have prompted an increase in both lawsuits and, perhaps as a direct consequence, in cursing (many curses from the ancient world are judicial in nature, i.e. the people cursed were adversaries in a court case).[823] However, I find this argument to be overly speculative given the unevenness in the survival record: accidents of survival and excavations may be solely responsible for this situation.

A total of 68 curses in Greek from Sicily have been published over the last fifty years, rivalling only Attica in number of finds.[824] The practice of *defixio* writing is attested in Sicily between 550 BCE and 200 CE, but *defixiones* were not uniformly distributed in time and place across the entirety of Sicily: out of 68 published Greek cursing texts, 49 can be dated to the late Archaic - Classical period (550 - 350 BCE) (fig. 82).[825] Until very recently the majority of these early curse texts were found in Selinunte: new excavations in the western necropolis of Himera have revealed a total of 61 curses, which are yet to be published.[826] The 37 late archaic – classical curses from Selinunte were written exclusively in

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[822] On rhetoric, see Eidinow 2007: 142. On western Pythagoreanism, see Graf 1997: 173-174. On the parallel with the increase in lawsuits in Athens, see Crippa – De Simon 2009: 95.

[823] Curbera 1999: 159. *ISicDef* 3, 11, 15, 25, 28, 64, 68 could be judicial curses. On the agonistic context of cursing, see Faraone 1991.

[824] Bouffier 2010: 89. Eidinow 2007: 141 counts over 1,600 curses (the majority in Greek) from across the Graeco-Roman world, dating to the late 6th century BCE - 8th century CE.

[825] The dating of the curses follows that attributed by the main editors of Sicilian curse collections and mainly on palaeographical grounds. These are: *SGD* (1985); *IGDS* (1989); *IGASMG* (1989); López Jimeno (1991); Curbera (1999); *NGTC* (2000); Bettarini (2005a); *OCR* (2007). The dating proposals of these editors have not been challenged by subsequent studies or further corpora. On the difficulties dating this material, Curbera 1999: 159.

[826] Vassallo 2017: 172, 2018: 10; Brugnone et al. 2020. A further assemblage of 54 curses has been discovered in very recent years in the western Himera necropolis (I thank Dr. Stefano Vassallo and Dr. Francesca Spatafora for this information). These tablets are in the process of restoration and publication, but their approximate number will be considered in my discussion of curses in numbers, thus raising the total count of Sicilian *defixiones* so far discovered to circa 122 (Figure 1). Because the contents of the Himera curses are still unknown (except for *ISicDef* 41, which may not even be a curse), it is on the Selinunte material that I focus.

Greek, and were discovered in three places (plate 4):[827] the Buffa necropolis (in the Cottone river gorge between Manuzza hill and the eastern hill), the Manuzza hill (site of the oldest Selinuntine necropolis, in use from the 7th century to 409 BCE), and the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros (on the western Gaggera hill).[828] Other tablets have no certain archaeological context and are classified as 'probably from Selinunte',[829] or were rediscovered by Bettarini in the boxes preserved in the 'A. Salinas' Museum of Palermo and labelled *dai depositi di Selinunte*. All these curses have been dated by their editors on palaeographical grounds within the time range 550 - 350 BCE.

The corpus of 37 curses from Selinunte represents a unique resource in numbers and textual peculiarities.[830] These texts form the largest assemblage of surviving curses from a Sicilian settlement alongside the still unpublished curse cache from Himera (fig. 84, 85). Most studies discussing curses from Selinunte offer an exclusively linguistic analysis: the Selinuntine corpus is after all the most valuable source of information concerning the Megarese dialect and Selinuntine onomastics, whereas the 'magical' aspects of the texts have only been recently discussed by Crippa – De Simon.[831] The only existing in-depth and contextual discussion of Sicilian curses is by Curbera, who does not focus excessively on the Selinuntine material, while Bettarini has published a linguistically focussed analysis of most

[827] Curbera 1999: 160.
[828] Kotansky - Curbera 2004: 681, note 2; Jameson et al. 1993: 126-127.
[829] See especially those published by Rocca 2009, 2012 and those preserved in the 'J. P. Getty' Museum.
[830] Selinunte is one of the western Sicilian settlements to have preserved the largest number of late 7th - late 5th century inscriptions (about 68 texts on stone, the 37 *defixiones*, the *Lex Sacra I.Sicily 1087 = IG XIV 268 = SEG* 59 1119, and a noteworthy number of inscribed or painted texts on ceramic), Brugnone 2006: 45. Of the 37 curses from Selinunte, Bettarini 2005a: 34-40 tentatively dates 3 of these (*ISicDef* 48, 49, 50) to the first quarter of the 3rd century. However, the dating as well as the very nature of these texts is still disputed.
[831] Curbera 1999: 164-165; Bettarini 2005a: ix, 2015; Curbera 2009: 105-110; Crippa – De Simon 2009.

of the Selinunte material.[832] Despite several scholarly attempts, the Selinunte curses have never been collected in a single, updated and comprehensive corpus.[833] To obviate this situation, for the purposes of this thesis I have created a new digital corpus of all published Greek-language Sicilian curse tablets. *ISicDef* enables a flexible typological study of *defixiones* and their textual peculiarities, so that further questions may be posed about this class of objects.[834] The references I will make throughout this study to specific *defixiones* and behavioural patterns visible in the existing corpus of evidence have emerged through the data plotting from the *ISicDef* corpus.[835]

Recent scholarship on these texts increasingly tends to focus on certain aspects of the Selinunte curses to support assumptions regarding the social, ethnic and epigraphic makeup of this polity. Firstly, there is a tendency among scholars (especially when publishing new inscriptions) to project thematic groupings and stylistic variations pertaining to the curses of different chronological and geographical parameters (especially classical Athens) upon the Sicilian material. For example, newly published curses are often assigned to the category of judicial curses based exclusively on the presence of personal names (assumed to be opponents in a trial) in the curse, even if no type of judicial language (e.g. the mentioning of

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[832] Curbera 1999; Bettarini 2005a.

[833] The following are collections of curses from the ancient world and Sicily which include Selinuntine material: *SGD* (1985); *IGDS* (1989); *IGASMG* (1989); López Jimeno (1991); Manganaro (1997;)Curbera (1999); *NGTC* (2000); Bettarini (2005a); *OCR* (2007). Smaller sets of curses from Selinunte have been published by Brugnone 1976; Arena 1986; Manganaro 1997 and 2003 (although probably not from Selinunte, see Bettarini 2005b); Kotansky - Curbera 2004; Bettarini 2005b; Rocca 2009. See also Jameson et al. 1993: 125-131.

[834] *ISicDef* is a relational database in MySQL built with Cake PHP and PHPMyAdmin for the purposes of the present study. The data was parsed using Tableau Public. Two curses have not been included in *ISicDef*. They are: *ed. pr.* Manganaro no. XIII, 1997: 330 (Dubois no. XIII, 1999: 711; Curbera no. 11, 1999: 176) and *ed. pr.* Manganaro no. XIV 1997: 331 (Dubois no. XIV, 1999: 711; Curbera no. 10, 1999: 176). Despite the texts of these two curses being relatively clear, neither their dates (no. XIV is believed to be imperial by Dubois) nor their find-spots (they are believed to be from Kamarina) are stated by the editors.

[835] Sommerschield 2019.

sundikoi found instead in *ISicDef* 3, 11, 15, 25, 28, 64, 68) is attested.[836] This approach loses sight of the textual specificities of Selinunte's local cursing tradition, and fails to consider the wider epigraphic context of the city and the general epigraphic landscape of cursing across Sicily.

Secondly, the curses have been interpreted as proof of civic unrest dominating the city's life: for example, Iannucci and Muccioli recent edited monograph on the city regard Selinunte's record rates in cursing as evidence that the population was particularly affected by social and civic unrest.[837] Selinunte's 'restlessness' has also often been correlated with the (in)famous *Lex Sacra* also discovered in Selinunte and its references to purification from blood-crimes.[838] Most recently (2020), Johnson has linked the ethnic diversity attested by the onomastic variety found in the Selinunte curse texts to social tension. He concludes his study by casting a dubious parallel between ancient and modern multi-ethnic cities: 'this knowledge [ethnic diversity in Selinunte] can serve to undercut popular notions of mono-ethnic Greek poleis, it also demonstrates that, even if in a somewhat different form, we must take caution in assuming that the multi-ethnic city-states of the ancient Greek world were devoid of the problems that arise in multi-ethnic cities of our own time'.[839]

Can Selinunte's civic unrest be veritably attributed to inter-ethnic strife? And do the *defixiones* offer enough decisive evidence for this process taking place? What role did *defixiones* play in the socio-cultural contexts of cursers and cursed? In Part One of this thesis I have already discussed in detail with specific reference to the Selinunte *defixiones* that it is questionable to directly equate ethnicity to onomastic identity. I therefore find it highly

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[836] E.g. Johnson 2020: 111-112; Brugnone et al. 2020: 59.
[837] Iannucci et al. 2015.
[838] Jameson et al. 1993; Bouffier 2015; Antonetti 2018.
[839] Johnson 2020: 117.

problematic to infer that the existence of ethnically diverse onomastic traditions reflects multi-ethnic conflict in the city. Instead, in the next sections I will argue in favour of a definition of the Selinunte curse tablets as a local epigraphic practice to be examined on its own terms and embedded within the western Sicilian context. I will show how the curse texts can reveal details concerning the interplay between the epigraphic literacies attested in Selinunte and across Sicily, thus hinting to a greater degree of social dynamism and civic interaction than signified by inter-ethnic conflict. I will support my argument with the textual analysis of the *defixiones*, their inclusion in the wider epigraphic culture of Selinunte and Sicily as a whole in the Archaic – Classical periods, and conclusively suggest that the civic strife marking the historical vicissitudes of the city could be attributed to social rather than ethnic tensions.

9.1. Cursing in Sicily and Selinunte

I will begin this study by putting the Selinunte curses in context: the data analysis enabled by the *ISicDef* corpus allows me to make the following observations regarding the distribution of curses across Sicily. *Defixiones* in Sicily are most commonly written by people living in urban, especially coastal, settlements founded by Greek migrants, and are deposited in funerary or sanctuary contexts: known find-spots include the necropoleis of Selinunte (plate 4), of Kamarina (*ISicDef* 1, 2, 13, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28), Messana (*ISicDef* 31), Lilybaeum (*ISicDef* 29, 32, 65, 66), Gela (*ISicDef* 18) and Himera (the c. 60 new curses); while a total of 13 *defixiones* were discovered at the Malophoros sanctuary of Selinunte

(*ISicDef* 6, 10-12, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 25, 43, 57, 58).[840] Given this trend in findspots, it is striking that in centres such as Syracuse, Megara Hyblaea and Catania not a single curse has been discovered (especially considering Orsi's excavations in the necropoleis of Syracuse). No *defixio* has emerged from the hinterland sites settled by indigenous Sicilian communities, such as Entella, Eryx and Segesta.[841] Similarly, no curses have been found in the sites settled by Levantine migrant communities, Mozia and Solunto (it is disputed whether the one curse found in the Palermo area may be attributed with certainty to this area).[842] However, the other Levantine settlement Lilybaeum has yielded four curses.

This pattern raises the question of what historical factors might underlie the distribution of curses and their concentration in the west of Sicily during the late Archaic and Classical periods, and a number of observations can at this point be advanced by plotting the data in *ISicDef.* Between the Archaic and Classical period, Selinunte and Himera were the most thriving centre of production of *defixiones,* followed by Kamarina (8 cursing texts), Gela (2 curses) and Agrigento (2 curses). The following centuries are marked by a general and widespread drop in curse writing, and the earlier cursing centres are substituted by new ones: Selinunte ceases *defixio* writing, while Lilybaeum commences. It is tempting to correlate this situation to the fact that in c. 250 BCE the entire population of Selinunte was transferred to Lilybaeum by the Carthaginians.[843] The absence of curses from Lilybaeum

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[840] Two lead tablets written in Latin and dating to the Hellenistic - Roman period were discovered in 2000-2001 at the site of the *Thesmophorion* of Contrada Petraro, outside the city walls of Entella. Ampolo - Erdas 2016: 295-297.

[841] Two lead tablets written in Latin and dating to the Hellenistic - Roman period were discovered in the *Thesmophorion* of Contrada Petraro. Ampolo - Erdas 2016: 295-297.

[842] The curse was discovered amongst terracotta fragments of the Virzi Collection and is presumably from the Palermo region (*SGD* no. 111 and Curbera 1999: 181). Manganaro 1977 no. 4 supports the Palermo location, whereas *IGDS* no. 176 suggests Terravecchia di Cuti. This find is included in my maps as from 'Palermo?'.

[843] Diod. Sic. XXIV.1.1.

between its foundation around 397 BCE (by the survivors of Mozia, where no curses have been recovered) and c. 250 BCE could then possibly be explained: the practice had not yet been 'exported' to this settlement. However, there exist less 'traumatic' ways in which the practice of cursing might have been transferred from one settlement to another, involving the movement of people and ideas through trade, marriage, political or social circumstances, travel and the like.

But if the practice of cursing could be transferred between settlements, then it is noteworthy that mother-cities such as Megara Hyblaea and Syracuse have not yielded any curses, whereas *defixiones* have been recovered in their respective daughter-cities Selinunte and Kamarina. This situation may be due to a lack of targeted excavations (especially in the case of Megara Hyblaea) or may be correlated to the fact that cursing on lead had not yet been 'invented' prior to Selinunte's foundation in 651/628 BCE (Megara Hyblaea was destroyed in 483 BCE), and that the practice of cursing on lead was an innovation that might have originated in Selinunte (the curses from the new Himera cache appear to date to the 5th century BCE).[844]

It is important to state at this point that a 'positive bias' may hinder our understanding of the wider context of Greek and Sicilian cursing. Selinunte and Himera have produced the highest number of curses, but both sites have admittedly been the continuous object of systematic formal (and clandestine) archaeological attention, and this situation has not repeated itself for the necropoleis of other Sicilian settlements of the Archaic - Classical periods. The apparent richness of curses from these two sites, and the relative lack of curses from elsewhere in archaic Sicily could simply be down to an accident of survival. But

[844] Curbera 1999: 160; Vassallo 2017: 172, 2018: 10; Brugnone et al. 2020: 48.

historical motivations could also influence the survival of evidence. Indeed, attempts have been made to associate Selinunte's record of cursing evidence with the city's historical vicissitudes.[845] The history of Selinunte - and indeed of wider Sicily in the late Archaic - Classical period was particularly animated, and socio-political events could explain patterns in the rise and fall of curse evidence, as has already been proposed for Selinunte and Lilybaeum.[846] Continuous or interrupted occupation of settlements, forced or voluntary migrations of peoples, mass enslavements, the movement of mercenaries, destructions, new foundations, abandonments and re-occupations of settlements must have heavily impacted civic life in the west.

The survival record of Selinunte's curses may be only fortuitous, and might not necessarily reflect a particularly animated and restless situation uniquely peculiar to Selinunte, in which individuals systematically resorted to curses in an attempt to restore social well-being.[847] The recent discovery of the c. 54 curses from Himera supports the hypothesis that Selinunte was not a lone exception in its cursing culture, and that the same or similar social vivacity and vicissitudes could have characterised other western Sicilian settlements. While it is not yet possible to discuss the Selinunte and Himera material jointly in order to further debunk notions of a Selinuntine unicity in cursing and social vivacity *cum* strife, it is possible to study the Selinunte material for clues which might shed light upon the social circumstances leading to the phenomenon of early written cursing in western Sicily. Instead of inferring that Selinunte was the city which cursed the most and from the earliest age

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[845] Iannucci et al. 2015: 9-30; Johnson 2020.
[846] Faraone 1991; Anello 2000: 108-109 on the political, cultural and commercial vivacity of Selinunte and Himera in the 5th century.
[847] Iannucci et al. 2015: 12; Jameson et al. 1993: 131. The new evidence from Himera also seems to discredit the thought of an 'ultra-aggressive' Selinunte.

compared to all other Sicilian settlements, I find it preferable to examine Selinunte's *defixio* evidence not from the perspective of its supposed exceptionalism (which has been contradicted by Himera's recent finds), but because of the richness and variety of its corpus lends itself particularly well to an analysis of the textual choices enacted by the people writing the curses, which might be validated, contradicted or complicated in the future by Himera's finds.

Moreover, this approach sets out to appraise the Selinuntine material on its own Sicilian terms, rather than dependant on assumptions deriving from other cursing habits distant in time and space from the material currently under analysis. Indeed, existing discussions of the Selinuntine curses tend to interpret the texts on the basis of some of the traditional interpretative models are usually applied by scholars to other cursing habits in the ancient Mediterranean (e.g. Athenian cursing material).[848] Traditionally, ancient curses have been categorised based on their genre and on the basic spell formulae employed. However, the Selinunte curses seem not to abide by these two interpretative models.

Firstly, the five cursing 'genres', first established by Audollent and expanded by Faraone and Versnel, offer a good sense of the possible reasons for which a curse could be written.[849] Following Audollent, the curse categories are: 1) *iudiciariae et in inimicos conscriptae*; 2) *in fures, calumniatores et maledicos conversae*; 3) *amatoriae*; 4) *in agitatores et venatores immissae*; 5) *causa defixionis obscura*). However, in the case of the Selinunte material, any association between the language of curses and these genres is impossible because the reason for which the curse is written is never explicitly stated, making

[848] See especially Faraone 1991; Versnel 1991; Eidinow – Taylor 2010.
[849] Audollent 1904; Faraone 1991; Versnel 1991. Versnel 1991 added the 'prayers for justice' category, which are prayers to a god (or gods) to punish a (mostly unknown) person who has wronged the writer of the curse. These categories have been challenged by Eidinow 2007: 139-155.

pigeonholing impossible. Even in the cases where an explicit mention of terms linked to judicial contexts appears (*ISicDef* 3, 11, 12, 15, 64, 68) there is no clear guarantee that these curses automatically fall within the category of judicial curses.[850] Moreover, this rigid genre taxonomy does no justice to the nuanced reasons and fluid contexts which could have prompted someone to curse another human being in such a ritualised manner.[851] And yet, new publications of cursing texts from Sicily still tend to interpret their finds on the basis of these models, considering for instance simple lists of names as a clear indication of a judicial curse tablet.[852]

Secondly, Faraone has identified a schema of basic spell formulae: 1) a simple binding verb + target(s); 2) appealing to the god(s) to perform or witness the binding; 3) the use of persuasive analogies to change the victim. But once again, the Selinunte material does not strictly adhere to these formulaic patterns.[853] Firstly, the direct binding formula never appears in the typical 'binding verb + target' form common to Attic curses: in the Selinunte material neither the verb nor the target may appear at all; additional verbs (*ISicDef* 11, 12, 55, 25, 9), formulae (*ISicDef* 4, 9, 12, 14, 21, 25, 43, 67, 68) and accessory information (47) may instead be included. Secondly, the 'prayer formulae' (the explicit invocations of divine power) also common to the Attic curses only appear in two texts from Selinunte (*ISicDef* 14, 43). Furthermore, these two cases are not in the traditional form of an appeal to the gods to intervene, but the invocation appears within a heading in 43 and within a 'magical chant' in 14.[854] Finally, the '*similia similibus*' formula (the use of analogical and sympathetic

[850] Curbera 1999: 169.
[851] Eidinow 2007: 154-155; Eidinow 2012: 14.
[852] E.g. Johnson 2020: 111-112; Brugnone et al. 2020: 59.
[853] Faraone 1991. However, as Eidinow 2007: 144 has pointed out, these formulae are not chronologically sequential.
[854] Versnel 1991: 61.

magic to render a change in the victim) is never explicitly used in the Selinunte corpus, setting it once again apart from the Attic cursing tradition. The Selinunte curses therefore follow textual patterns unlike other cursing traditions, developing their own linguistic peculiarities. Because these are such archaic documents, and are the first attested instance of written curses in the ancient world, it is worth appraising these texts for their singularity rather than for their consistency with other (later) cursing traditions, and focus on the context whence this new written practice might have arisen.

Scholars have suggested that written cursing probably originated from an oral habit.[855] However, as Eidinow has emphasised, the appearance of written curses does not necessarily entail that the oral component of the practice died out: it could have remained an organic part of the ritual creation and deposition of the curse.[856] Indeed, the fact that the early curses from Sicily are in a simple list form might be taken as evidence that the written practice was still in a transitional phase and that the binding verb and accessory expressions were uttered aloud (possibly during the writing and/or deposition of the curse).[857] Gradually, and possibly following the spread of literacy in the Classical period,[858] more written formulae were added to the written tablet. I find that the early use of the binding verb γράφω + compounds in Sicily could be seen as a clue for this oral to written transition (*ISicDef* 11, 12, 14, 58, 55, and 67).[859] It may be the case that, by alluding to the very act of writing, curse writers were acknowledging the novelty of the form the practice had

[855] Faraone 1991: 4; Eidinow 2007: 141.
[856] Eidinow 2007: 141. This is supported by the existence of ritual prescriptions including oral incantations found in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (e.g. *PGM* IV. 296-466)
[857] Eidinow 2007: 144.
[858] Faraone 1991: 5.
[859] All these curses date to the 5th century: 11, 12, 14 are from the Malophoros Sanctuary, 55, 67 from the 'depositi di Selinunte'. This particular verb appears almost exclusively in Sicilian cursing evidence.

taken.[860] The choice to write a curse could have been perceived by those involved as more efficacious compared to its oral counterpart: writing could have been understood as playing a decisive role in emphasising the forcefulness of the cursing action, as memorialisation through writing enhanced the curse's efficacy.

Other textual elements present in the early curses from Selinunte also suggest that oral cursing could have been a fully established practice before its transposition to the written form (and it is plausible that oral and written cursing might have coexisted). For example, *ISicDef* 5 and 9 were found in the Buffa necropolis and both date to the early 5th century. *ISicDef* 5 is a list curse: the 3 names are in a single column and the letters are well spaced for better distribution over the entire writing surface.

ISicDef 5 Ed. Bettarini 2005a

Ϙυλίχα

Ξενοκλεῆς

Γλαυκίας

ISicDef 9 instead is addressed to a single person (Χάμις) and the cursing verb is (quite exceptionally) ἐπέχω, meaning 'to lead'. The person is led to νόσου ῥοπά, which has been taken as meaning 'the critical stage of the illness'.[861] This is a unique cursing formula, as the more common target γλώσσα is not mentioned here. Then follows the expression ἐπ'ἀτελείᾳ.[862]

ISicDef 9 Ed. Bettarini 2005a

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[860] Cf. Faraone 1991: 5, note 2. Gordon 1999: 255 has noted how in columnar lists the writer combines the increased readability with an increased awareness of visual effect the column-layout, whereas writers with lower literacy tend to simply write in a list in a continuous-layout.
[861] Bettarini 2005a: 88.
[862] Regarding ἀτελεία, Kotansky – Curbera 2004: 688-689.

Χάμις ἐπέχο¯

κα<ὶ> νόσο¯ ῥοπᾶι

ἐπ' ἀτελείαι *ho-*

τ̣[ι] κα[..]ε̣[..]ο̣ντι.

I have chosen these two texts to show that the fact that the early lists of personal names with no accessory elements are contemporary in use to more articulated texts could mean that oral cursing must have been a complex, well-formed and well-established practice before coexisting alongside the written form.[863] It is also possible that people's varying degrees of writing proficiency influenced the decision to write a 'more simple' list of names, as opposed to a 'more complex' cursing text with additional textual elements. However, it is in curses in the seemingly simpler list form that greater attention to visual and graphic gimmicks can be detected, more so than in many of the seemingly more idiomatic curses. For instance, *ISicDef* 56 has lines tracing the divisions between the columns of listed names, and the letters in *ISicDef* 43 are also tabulated (as they are in the above-examined case of *ISicDef* 5) so as to achieve a *stoichedon*-like graphic effect. In *ISicDef* 5, 6, 10, 52?, 53, 54, and 56 the names are neatly organised into columns.

The choice to write a curse rather than performing it orally had its repercussions: writing invoked permanence and guaranteed efficacy.[864] This effect could also be augmented by the use of performative utterances. For example, in *ISicDef* 3, 4, 11, 12, 14, 55, 67 and 68 the repetition of certain textual expressions (e.g. the repeated invocation of the tongue,

[863] There is the possibility that the lead curses were preceded by (or chronologically associated with) a cursing practice on another type of support, which did not survive until modern times owing to the perishability of the material (wood, bone, papyrus, etc.).

[864] 'The physical act of writing becomes part of the ritual process of binding', Eidinow – Taylor 2010: 45.

the deeds or the fortunes of the cursed people in *ISicDef* 3, 4, 11, 14) seems to enhance the forcefulness of the underlying cursing message. In the case of *ISicDef* 67 in particular, the binding verb καταγράφω and the expression καὶ αὐτον καὶ ἀτέλειαν are repeated 28 times and wrapped around the names of each person cursed. In fact, the intentional repetition of elements could also hark back to an oral phase in which curses could have been proclaimed aloud, and the use of repetitive chanting could then have been transposed into the written form as a performative utterance conveying additional assertiveness to the curse. But the practice of written cursing was more than the written transposition of oral curses. The adoption of the written form to express an aggressive content, as well as the adoption of graphic gimmicks suggests that the newly created communities of written cursing practice were receptive to the ways documents were being inscribed on a wider scale.

To identify these inferences, and place the Selinuntine cursing practice within its context of creation, I will now attempt to place the emergence of cursing in the written form starting in 550 BCE within the broader epigraphic context. Prag has examined the distribution of lapidary inscriptions across Sicily in all languages between the 7th century BCE and the 7th century CE, an analysis supplemented by a study contextualising Agrigento's epigraphy specifically within the wider Sicilian diachronic and geographic epigraphic habit.[865] His mapping of the distribution of lapidary epigraphy from Sicily illustrates how, in the Archaic period, the epigraphic material seems to concentrate in Greek and Phoenician urban centres. Documents are rare in the island's northern half and across the hinterland (with the exception of the south-eastern tip of Sicily). Dominating the epigraphic landscape in this period are Selinunte (for Greek-language texts) and Mozia (Phoenician-language

[865] Prag 2002, 2018.

texts).[866] Funerary and votive texts are especially well represented categories in this period and in these sites, and are for the most part inscribed upon local stone.

From the 4th century BCE however, this epigraphic landscape changes completely. A slump is visible in the evidence of this century, and is followed by a marked increase in inscribed lapidary documents across the following centuries. It is tempting to correlate the drop in epigraphic production with the social unrest and political upheaval Sicily experienced in the 4th – 3rd century, including population relocation, wars, movement of mercenaries and so forth, which would impact the communities engaged in the curse-writing practice. The clearest example of this impact would be the conquest of Selinunte by the Carthaginians in 409 BCE.[867] With the advent of the Hellenistic and Roman Republican period, 'epigraphic culture becomes an island-wide phenomenon':[868] the types of epigraphic documents attested diversify, as do the types of stone support used (imported stone becomes common).

The lead cursing evidence aligns well with the distribution patterns of lapidary evidence just outlined. Between the Archaic and Classical period, Selinunte and Himera were the most thriving centre of production of *defixiones*. Kamarina has produced 8 cursing texts, while Gela and Agrigento only two texts each.[869] This epigraphic pattern matches the one traced in the wider epigraphic culture of this period: Greek-language curses concentrate in Greek-founded settlements along the coast. The pattern is completed by the inclusion of Himera's unpublished curse cache. By the end of the Classic period and the start of the

[866] Once the 54 new curses from Himera's necropolis are published, Himera too will be included among the most epigraphically active settlements.
[867] See Souza 2014; cf. Prag 2002: 23.
[868] Prag 2018: 29.
[869] The epigraphic isolation of Agrigento has been examined by Prag 2018.

Hellenistic period, the notorious cut-off in epigraphic evidence takes place (as clearly visualised in Prag's graphs).[870] Selinunte's latest curses (*ISicDef* 48 and the identical *ISicDef* 49 and *ISicDef* 50) date to the late 4th century (but their dating and even their identification as curses is highly controversial);[871] after this point around 250 BCE the city was abandoned and all inhabitants forcefully relocated by the Carthaginians to Lilybaeum.[872]

It is tantalising to note that, at the watershed between two distinct epigraphic seasons, the first curses appear in Lilybaeum around 250 - 200 BCE. As noted earlier, the practice may have been 'exported' by the forcefully relocated Selinuntines to a place where cursing was entirely unattested until then. During the Hellenistic and Roman Republican periods, curses start to appear in new settlements, such as *ISicDef* 33-38 from Morgantina[873] and *ISicDef* 30 from Phintias (all these curses contain Latin names and terms written in the Greek and Latin alphabets). The use of curses persists in Lilybaeum (*ISicDef* 29, 32, 65, containing names attributed to the Phoenician onomastic tradition written in the Greek alphabet) and Kamarina (*ISicDef* 28). In the first two centuries of the Common Era, Greek-language curses have only been found in Centuripae (*ISicDef* 39) and Messana (*ISicDef* 31, 40, 42).

The curse production after the 4th century watershed does not match earlier numbers, but other emerging patterns of practice can be detected. Firstly, the practice of cursing on lead is extended to new settlements across the island. Secondly, the practice becomes more

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[870] Prag 2002: 22.

[871] *ISicDef* 48 is too fragmentary (traces of possibly two names can be made out) to offer any compelling evidence to consider it a curse (apart from the fact that it is inscribed on a lead support), and 49 and 50 only read the word 'PEEPϒXΘ', which is of entirely unknown interpretation (were it a *vox magica*, then it could possibly be considered a curse, but no parallels have been found in the *defixio* material from the rest of Sicily).

[872] Diod. Sic. XXIV.1.1; cf. Stabo VI.2.6. Bettarini 2005a: xi; Jameson et al. 1993: 121-123.

[873] *ISicDef* 33-38. The names appearing on these tablets are Latin (*ISicDef* 35, 36, 37, 38), as terms such as 'liberta' appear as well (*ISicDef* 33, 34).

creative in terms of textual formulation, graphic layout, and adoption of other cursing media. For example, a greater formal attention to the curse's internal articulation is detected: direct invocations to the gods begin to appear, magical symbols and targets alternative to the traditional 'binding of the tongue' begin to emerge. During the Roman period, the south-east of Sicily also witnesses a growth in other types of magical documents, such as amulets, Greek magical papyri, and love-magic incantations.[874] This pattern of practice could be correlated with the parallel diversification in genre and inscribed media noted by Prag in the post-4th century epigraphic landscape of Sicily.[875] Greek-language curses are eventually supplanted in Sicily by Latin-language texts (e.g. *ISicDef* 32 from Lilybaeum). Cursing on lead in Greek disappears in Sicily after the 2nd century CE, although curiously enough the same does not apply to the Attic cursing tradition, as the latter increases exponentially after the 1st – 2nd century CE.[876]

Given the state of the surviving evidence, its problematic dating and assignment of an original location, as well as the ancient historical and the modern archaeological 'positive bias' I have warned of above, only partial conclusions may be drawn from a collective overview of the entirety of the Sicilian cursing evidence. However, its mapping upon the lapidary epigraphic pattern does offer food for thought. This discussion has illustrated how cursing developed as a written practice in parallel with the development of the epigraphic culture of western Sicily (with regard to the late Archaic and Classical periods), and of Sicily as a whole during the Hellenistic age and beyond. The observations and parallels I have drawn between the cursing habit and the wider Sicilian epigraphic one suggest that

[874] Dickie 2001.
[875] Prag 2018: 30.
[876] Curbera 1999: 159.

the people cursing had clear and accessible models to inspire the novel written form that the cursing practice had assumed. I argue that the development of written cursing must be firmly situated within the development and distribution of epigraphic culture in Sicily, making for a coherent and unitary epigraphic landscape which is made up, on a macroscopic scale, of diverse epigraphic practices, languages, genres, media and contexts, as well as socio-historical circumstances.

In the next sections, I test the complex sets of inferences, references and interactions taking place between curses and the wider epigraphic practice of Selinunte. I aim to glean more details concerning their social and civic backdrop, which has been recently interpreted in terms of multi-ethnic struggles,[877] but which I find to be related to unrest and dynamics of a social nature unfolding in archaic and classical Selinunte. In order to shed light upon the textual choices and social priorities of their writers, I propose to interpret these texts along the lines of three notions: violence, power and authority. These concepts are borrowed from Hannah Arendt's 1970 essay *On Violence*.[878] I believe her theorisation to be especially insightful in the examination of the Selinunte curses, as her definitions of power, violence and authority show interesting theoretical overlaps with the mentalities possibly underlying the early cursing practice in Selinunte.

9.2. Power, violence and authority

In a nutshell, Arendt defines *power* as the free human ability to consensually act in concert as a group of equals. It cannot be 'the property of an individual', but instead it

[877] E.g. Iannucci et al. 2015; Johnson 2020.
[878] See also her definitions of 'force' and 'strength', which are not included in the present discussion. Arendt 1970: 44-45.

belongs to a group.[879] The group is therefore whence the power originates: as soon as the groups disbands, power to act in unison ceases to exist as well. *Violence* is essentially instrumental in nature, and uses force to increase its strength. Whereas violence could be justified, it can never truly be legitimate. Indeed, 'power and violence are opposites; where one rules absolutely, the other is absent'.[880] Whereas power could be destroyed by violence, it cannot be created by violence. This is because violence destroys the power to act in unison. As for *authority*, the most elusive of the three phenomena, it is the 'unquestioning recognition by those who are asked to obey', built on respect, consent, legitimacy, prestige, and tradition.[881] Authority occurs almost as an event: it is not something that can be made or created, but is both a power-to and a power-over (examples are the asymmetrical relationship between parent and child, teacher and student) which could be vested in offices, institutions or people. It is a central element of balance, but may also be undermined and dispelled. Finally, authority may authorise and support power, but it may equally discredit and diminish it. The relevance of an Arendtian interpretation of curses which I am about to propose emerges with clarity when it is predicated upon the textual choices made by the people writing curses, of which I offer specific examples as the discussion proceeds. Most importantly, it is the concept of authority which best illustrates how Selinuntine society and the practice of cursing came together to express individual and communal social priorities and cultural requisites.

To begin with, I suggest that the Selinunte *defixiones* naturally represent the violent element of this comparative equation. Aggressive, malicious, based on an individual's

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[879] Arendt 1970: 44. See also 1970: 176.
[880] Arendt 1970: 56. See also 1970: 46, 52.
[881] Arendt 1970: 45.

initiative and actions, aimed at increasing personal strength: curses defuse tensions in a socially unacceptable and ethically objectionable way. For example, curses mentioning *sundikoi* or *xenoi sundikoi* (*ISicDef* 3, 11, 15, 25, 28, 64, 68) could be referring to a judicial context: it is possible that the curse writers hoped to obtain an unfair advantage and influence the normal course of justice to their favour. From the perspective of textual evidence for violence in the curses, the 'textual treatment' of the personal names of those cursed could be seen as an act of violence against these very names in their 'material' form. The act of naming people explicitly and unequivocally (which is a key element in these texts, which at their most essential wish evil upon a specific named person/persons), was a way of ensuring the success of the cursing action. Naming is so important that, to return to the example of *ISicDef* 14, a list of names of those cursed (with a few last-minute additions) is included at the ending of the more idiomatic body of the *defixio*, almost as a kind of resumé, to reiterate the point.

ISicDef 14 Ed. Bettarini 2005a

[Ἀ]πελον τὸν Λυκίνō κα{κα}ταγράφō πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν
[θ]εὸν τὰν ψυχὰν αὐτõ καὶ τὰν δύνασιν καὶ Λυκῖνον
τὸν *h*άλō *h*υιὸν καὶ τὸν ἀδελφεὸν αὐτõ · καὶ αὐτὸν
πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεὸν τὸν Ναύερο<ν> τὸν *h*άλō *h*υιὸν
καὶ Βοτυλον τὸν Ταμίραντος καὶ τὸς *h*υιὸς καὶ Σαριν
καὶ Ἄπελον καὶ Ῥõμιν τὸν Καιλίō{ν} πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰ<ν> θε-
ὸν καὶ τὸς *h*υιὸς καὶ Σαριν τὸν Πυρ(ρ)ίνō καὶ Πύρ(ρ)ον
τὸν Πύρ(ρ)ō{ν} πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεόν· καὶ τὸς Ῥοτύ-
λō *h*υιὸς τõ Πύρ(ρ)ō πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεὸν καὶ
δύνασιν καὶ γλόσ(σ)ας· Πλακίταν τὸν Ναννελαίō

καὶ *h*άλον τὸν Πυκελεί<ō> ἐγὸ τὰν ψυχὰν καταγρά-

φō πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεὸν καὶ δύνασιν αὐτõ[ν]·

Καδοσιν τὸν Ματυλαίō καὶ Ἐκοτιν τὸν Μάγọ̄ν<ος>

ἐνκαταγρά{ο}φō πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεὸν τὰ<ν> ψυχὰν

αὐτõν· τὸν Φο<ί>νικος *h*υιὸν τõ Καιλίō καταγράφō

πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν θεόν. Ἄπελος Λυκίνō, Λυκῖνος Πύρ(ρ)ō,

Ναν(ν)ελαιος, Ἐϙοτις Μάγōνος, *h*αλος Πυκελείō{ν}, Ῥõμις Καιλ-

ίō{ν}, Ἄπελος *h*ο Φοίνιϙος, Τιτ(τ)ελος Φοίνιϙος, Ἀτ(τ)ος Ναυεριάδα,

Τιτ(τ)ελος Ναν(ν)ελαίō{ν}, Σαρις Ῥόμιος.

But the curses are not satisfied by simply 'naming and shaming', they appropriate the 'onomastic identities' of the people cursed in additional ways, analogically and symbolically distorting them for magical purposes.[882] In *ISicDef* 22 the letters of three names might have been intentionally scrambled: ΙΠΘΟΝ for Πίθον, ΓΟΡΙΓΑΣ for Γοργίας, ΑΚΡΙΟΚΟΙ for Ἀκροικώι.[883] Not just names, but the entire *ductus* of the text could be altered: for example, in *ISicDef* 44 and 46 the *ductus* is sinistrose, but the letters are traced in a dextrose sense, whereas in 22 the opposite happens.[884] Most interestingly, in *ISicDef* 21 the *ductus* is dextrose but only the anthroponyms are sinistrose, with the letters regularly written in a dextrose sense. These are most probably cases where a visual reinforcement of the curse is being sought by means of a graphic gimmick for magical purposes.[885] The analogical and

[882] A figurative rendition of the distortion is also explicitly given by the use of the verb ἀπεστραμ(μ)ένα referred to γλώσσα in *ISicDef* 11 and 12.
[883] The inversion of letters is attested in *ISicDef* 21, 26, 44, 46, 54(?).
[884] The *ductus* is also spiralling in *ISicDef* 11 and 12.
[885] Other 'magical' symbols may appear in *ISicDef* 25, 47, 49, 50, 55, 63 (mainly or the διπλῆ and παράγραφος kind). It is possible that the use of magical symbols such as the διπλῆ and the παράγραφος might also have been a borrowing from public epigraphy (rather than having exclusively 'magical'

symbolical distortion of the spelling of names and the *ductus* seen in *ISicDef* 11, 12, 21, 22, 44, 46 and 54(?), and the abbreviation of the name in *ISicDef* 6 could all be tentatively interpreted as violent means for violent ends. It is not just the names that are textually violated, but the curses explicitly call for aggressive actions on the physical self of the people cursed. The most common target in the Selinunte curses in the tongue of the victim, which is referred to in γλῶσσα, appearing in *ISicDef* 3, 11, 12, 14, 15, 45(?), 55, 61(?) and 63.

Let us return to Arendt's three terms, and move on to consider the notion of 'power' in the curse texts. The violence at the heart of the workings of *defixiones* could be interpreted as challenging the power of Selinuntine society and its institutions. Following Arendt's terms, I propose that power is embodied in the community's joint effort (supported by institutions) to regulate and censor such deviations from the normal enforcement of justice. Power can be challenged by violence (and even destroyed). However, violence cannot create power: for the same reason, the curses may challenge the city's institutions, but they cannot hope to create new ones (nor, in the case of curses specifically, could they subvert them completely). Power does not condone this violence: the curses are in fact socially unaccepted and surreptitious ('unlicensed') and society's indisposition towards this practice is stated in both literary and epigraphic evidence. Plato (*Leg.* 932e-933e) believes the state should resort to capital punishment against those who professionally use spells (καταδέσις) to harm others.[886] Similarly, the 'Dirae Teiae' (*SEG* 31 984)[887] (themselves falling under the genre of public curses) threaten the man who practices black magic, as he endangers the city life of Teos. Society's disapproval of religious practices perceived as threatening to civic

functions): they guided the reader's gaze as in public legal documents. Crippa – De Simon 2009: 99-100.

[886] Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 364b – 365a

[887] Ma 2012: 142.

life did however have its limits (no official legislation against magic has been recovered), for curse tablets hardly posed a realistic threat to society (violence cannot create power).[888]

No such legislation nor literary references to the way society dealt with the unlicensed behaviour of cursing exist for Sicily. However, there are clues that suggest that this was a practice which was not approved of by Selinuntine society. The depositing of curses in spaces often associated with chthonian powers, where they could not be easily retrieved, and the anonymity of these texts denotes a surreptitious practice. In fact, all the texts are anonymous (from what could be gleaned from the available evidence), which supports the idea that cursing was not a publicly accepted nor openly promoted practice:[889] mystery, anonymity and secrecy were its hallmarks, and are reflected in the choice and use of language, material support, and placement. Tablets mentioning explicitly the name of the curser are rare (in Selinunte we only have the case of *ISicDef* 47 ὑπὲρ Εὖρις, although it is uncertain whether Εὖρις was the beneficiary or the writer of the curse).

Moreover, in Selinunte, *defixiones* were placed in tombs and sanctuaries.[890] The placement of curses is by no means random. By depositing a curse in a necropolis, it is possible that a link to chthonian powers was being sought,[891] as the miasma corrupting the dead could be seen as guaranteeing the efficacy of the curses.[892] Conversely, the placing of curse tablets in sacred spaces such as sanctuaries could have been a way of augmenting the assertiveness of the text due to the physical proximity to the supernatural. [893] For example, in

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[888] See especially Parker 2005: 133-135.
[889] See Plat. *Leg.* 933b1-4. Versnel 1991: 62-63; Faraone 1991: 17; Gordon 1999: 247-248; Eidinow 2007: 140, 152.
[890] Graf 1997: 127; Faraone 1991: 3.
[891] Faraone 1991: 3-32; Curbera 1997; Iles Johnston 1999; Gordon 1999: 250; Collins 2008: 69-73; Vassallo 2017: 172.
[892] See Faraone 1991: 3-32; Jameson et al. 1993: 131; Curbera 1999: 160. On purity and pollution, see Douglas 1966: 94-113; Parker 1983.
[893] Faraone 1991: 9-10.

Selinunte the goddess Demeter Malophoros, to whom the sanctuary where many curses were found is dedicated, was linked to the Underworld.[894] It must be noted that the deposition of curses in this period (6th – 4th century) in a sanctuary setting is unique to the Malophoros sanctuary.[895] The desecration of sacred spaces such as sanctuaries or cemeteries with the objectionable act of curse deposition is an attitude that the city's institutions would have condemned.[896] But it must at this point be noted that the placement of a curse in the Malophoros sanctuary was still an acknowledgement of the sacred status of this space to the wider community, as one of the (licensed) religious cornerstones of collective civic life. But even as the curse acknowledged this fact, it also attempted to hijack the sacred collective meaning by imposing its aggressive significance on this place, almost polluting it.

The infestation of sacred places by a surreptitious practice leads me to the final notion in my Arendtian interpretation of curses: that of authority. Authority is the asymmetrical relation of acceptance and compliance, founded on the recognition of others and involving notions of trust and legitimacy. Authority is capable of supporting power, embodied by the social institutions and the epigraphic practices vesting this power with authority (but it also has the potential to discredit it).[897] To the writers of curses therefore, authority could have been perceived as vested in the licensed and official epigraphic writings attested in Selinunte and the wider Sicilian context. This could be interpreted as a way of enhancing the efficacy of an unlicensed practice: borrowing authority meant that certain textual stratagems

[894] Faraone 1991: 17; Versnel 1991: 64; Gager 1992: 12-13; Graf 1997: 127; Ogden 1999: 44.
[895] Crippa – De Simon 2009: 94-95.
[896] Parker 2005: 124.
[897] The outcome of power divested of authority is authoritarianism. See Arendt 1951.

pertaining to the licensed inscriptions in Selinunte could have been transposed and adapted by *defixio* writers for the unlicensed and surreptitious cursing practice.[898]

For example, the depositing of curses in a place associated with the communal social life of the city could have conferred a degree of officiality and legitimacy on an otherwise covert and unlicensed practice. As Arendt has argued, authority depends on the recognition of others: this is the condition for the existence of authority. The people writing the curses hoped to borrow the authority vested in public spaces such as sanctuaries, in order to both undermine that authority by distorting its aims and contexts (a place of cult being tarnished by an unlicensed practice), and at the same time endow their curse with an additional, recognised force (the sanctuary was a communal, official space of the city). This process of authority borrowing, becomes especially evident in certain textual choices found in the Selinunte curses (summarised in plate 7), which I now examine in detail.

9.3. Public means, private ends

The existence of certain intertextual borrowings between the curses and other epigraphic genres has been noted by several scholars, with regard to the Sicilian material specifically.[899] Most of these discussions are centred around the use of lists of names in curses as a possible intertextual cross-reference to official lists of names set up for public view in the *polis*. Before discussing the evidence for listing in curses and in Sicilian epigraphy at large, I intend to discuss other textual instances where I believe the same strategy ('authority borrowing' after Arendt) could be at work. A first textual instance where the curse

[898] Gordon 1999.
[899] Faraone 1991: 4; Curbera 1999: 166; Gordon 1999: 252-253; Poccetti 2004: 647; Bettarini 2005: 4; Bouffier 2010: 90; Brugnone et al. 2020: 97.

writers could have adapted certain elements of the epigraphic culture of the *polis* to enhance their curse's efficacy and power is the invocation of a god at the beginning of the curse. An explicit appeal to the gods may be understood as conferring force and legitimacy on the cursing text.[900] In the Selinunte material, two occurrences of this behaviour are found:[901] in both instances the divine figure may be identified with Persephone owing to her association to Demeter Malophoros (in whose sanctuary these curses were recovered). In *ISicDef* 14 the god appears in the formula πὰρ τὰν ἁγνὰν ϑεόν (repeated 7 times), whereas in *ISicDef* 43 the curse opens with the header ϑεά (a name too rare to be the anthroponym of the person cursed).[902] *ISicDef* 43 could be compared to public documents which invoke one or more gods in the opening formula (such as *I.Sicily* 1087 = *IG* XIV 268), and the graphic layout of ϑεά in a central position could also be interpreted as conferring a degree of officiality upon the text. In *ISicDef* 64 a similar situation might be taking place with the header Θ : K (*sic*),[903] below which a line has been traced to physically set it apart from the rest of the text.[904] A dividing line is also traced between the main body of the curse and its final section in *ISicDef* 14. A Sicilian 5th century parallel for texts beginning with an invocation to the god could be found in the lead *lamella* (of unknown provenance) registering a contract, which begins with Θε⌋ὸς Τύχα.[905]

On a related point (albeit not strictly related to textual choices), the very use of lead as writing support may be down to the fact that it was a quite cheap and common material,

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[900] Gordon 1999: 250.
[901] Though it becomes a much wider practice in later curses (e.g. *ISicDef* 35-38 from Morgantina; *ISicDef* 29 from Lilybaeum).
[902] Moreover, Thea does not deserve to be cursed.
[903] Whether the two letters and the colon between them are an abbreviation of the kind seen in later Roman times (e.g. in DM) cannot be said with certainty.
[904] See e.g. *I.Sicily* 840 = *IG* XIV 23, *I.Sicily* 845 = *IG* XIV 28 from Syracuse for parallels.
[905] Manganaro 1977. The text was discovered among the terracotta fragments of the Virzi collection in the Palermo area, along with *defixio ISicDef* 7. See also *ISicDef* 19 for a curse opening with Τύχα.

used most notably for more 'official' and 'licensed' literacies (contracts, epistles, commercial transactions, military records, etc.). For an interesting example of this (albeit not from Selinunte), I refer to the opisthographic lead tablet *ISicDef* 19 possibly from Gela (dating c. 470 BCE): the *recto* bears a financial document, while the *verso* a curse against the *choregoi*. Interestingly, the curse also refers to ο τος <ο> βόλιμος (= οὗτος <ὁ> βόλιμος) in line 12,[906] meaning 'lead', but signifying metonymically the tablet. This is significant because Apellis is named as both the guarantor for the transaction (the selling of cattle) on the *recto* and the writer of the curse on the *verso* (which is in favour of Eunikos): this means that Apellis himself (or someone on his behalf), was intentionally responsible for the textual decisions found in both inscriptions. Certain textual choices suggest that in this text too the creative take on authority was taking place: the text opens with the ceremonious invocation Τύχα, and uses the verb ἀπογράφω meaning 'to write off, to enter in a list or inventory' (an echo of the language of chancellery). The curse is therefore usurping the authority of an official document such as a contract by adopting an authoritative language. Even the physical proximity to a licensed financial epigraphic document on the *recto* of the same lamella could be tentatively interpreted in this light. However, the distinction in alphabetic script between the two texts is telling of the differential treatment reserved for these different types of documents, given their antithetic goals. In fact, the financial transaction is written in the 'blue alphabet' (typical of official chancery documents), whereas the curse in the earlier and less official 'red alphabet'.[907] Though not in such an exemplary fashion as this Gela curse, the Selinunte material also attests these authoritative borrowings: the use of the verb 'γράφω', a verb which appears in compound forms in 6 curses and is by far the

[906] Eckerman 2005: 186. This is also found in *ISicDef* 66 from Lilybaeum ll.5 and 7.
[907] Kirkhoff 1887; Brugnone 2006.

most common cursing verb in the Sicilian (and Selinuntine)[908] evidence, maintains an official connotation, as it means 'to register'.[909]

It is however the use of lists of names which I argue is the most emblematic example of the creative take on authority on behalf of the people writing curses in Selinunte. Lists are one of the most common textual characteristics of these cursing texts:[910] the only cases of texts where names do not appear either might not truly be *defixiones* (*ISicDef* 48, 49, 50) or are too fragmentary for the names to be clearly recognisable as such - though most probably are (*ISicDef* 16, 17, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57, 61, 62). The use of lists in curses has been analysed in detail by scholars.[911] Thomas' 1992 work has focussed specifically on the role of lists in ancient Greek society. She studied how the creation of written laws and the public affixing of lists of public officials in communal spaces starting in the 7th century deeply influenced the communities' literacy.[912] Lists, added to the public positioning, the visual impact of the textual layout, the increased legibility (e.g. the use of *stoichedon* starting in the 5th century) and the public naming of individuals by their name, patronymic and demotic, must have all left a mark on the community's perception of the power of the written word.

As examined earlier, the presentation of lists of names was also graphically enhanced in the curses, following the models borrowed from official inscriptions to enhance legibility and textual organisation (something apparently unnecessary for a curse, which was not intended to be read!). For instance, *ISicDef* 56 has lines tracing the divisions between the

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[908] In Selinunte: *ISicDef* 11, 12, 14, 55, 58 and 67.
[909] Versnel 2015: 457.
[910] Lists appear in *ISicDef* 5, 6, 10, the final lines of 14, 21, 22, 44, 46, 52?, 53, 54, 56, 57?, 62?, 63; in cases 5, 6, 10, 52?, 53, 54, 56 the names are organised into columns.
[911] Curbera 1999: 165-167; Gordon 1999: 239-277.
[912] Thomas 1992: 65-67.

columns, and the letters in *ISicDef* 5 and 43 are tabulated in a *stoichedon*-like graphic effect. In *ISicDef* 5, 6, 10, 52?, 53, 54, and 56 the names are organised into columns. The Sicilian epigraphic evidence for the use of lists in public inscriptions from the Archaic – Classical periods is not vast (as mentioned earlier, a drop in epigraphic production is characteristic of the 4th century).[913] The examples collected in Dubois 1989 and 2008, Arena 1989, 2002 and 2005, Manni Piraino 1973, Manganaro 2003 do however attest the use of lists of names in both public and private licensed epigraphic practice. Some examples are *I.Sicily* 3345 = *SEG* 56 1095 from Phintias (3rd century, on limestone), *SEG* 54 925 from Leontinoi (c. 450/400 BCE, on bronze), *I.Sicily* 3342 = *SEG* 49 1312 from Morgantina (undated, on bronze), *SEG* 47 1463 from Syracuse (3rd or 2nd century, on lead), *SEG* 60 1011 from Leontinoi (c. 400 BCE, on bronze), *I.Sicily* 828 = *IG* XIV 8 from Syracuse (2nd century). Most recently, two texts from Himera's new cache of curses have been preliminarily published by Brugnone and Calascibetta, and these too appear to be tabulated lists of personal names.[914] The adoption of lists and of graphic expedients commonly found in public documents further support the hypothesis that the communities of cursing practice were receptive to a wider epigraphic habit and its own rules and strategies, in order to achieve its communicative potential and maximise its efficacy.

Additional graphic elements appearing in the Selinunte curse corpus could also play a role in borrowing the authority of licensed epigraphic practices. In *ISicDef* 6 the names of those cursed are abbreviated (e.g. *hε̄ραχλ* for *hε̄ραχλείδας*): this is curious because there was enough space on the writing surface to write the extended version of all the names. For some reason or convention however, the abbreviated forms were preferred. This could be

[913] Prag 2002, 2018.
[914] Brugnone et al. 2020.

interpreted as a metaphorical allusion to the sticky end of the person cursed, or as inspired by the use of abbreviating names in public documents (such as catalogues and inventories). The latter use is attested in the abbreviations of the tribal divisions in the lead contract *SEG* 34 940 from Kamarina (4th - 3rd century), in the abbreviations of the demotics of the names of soldiers or new citizens in *SEG* 47 1463 from Syracuse (3rd or 2nd century), and personal names and other military organisational information are also found abbreviated on the *ghiande missili* studied by Manganaro 2000b.[915]

I want to focus on one particular official inscription to give a final example supporting my argument, *I.Sicily* 1087 = *IG* XIV 268 (fig. 83) from Selinunte (475 - 450 BCE) recording a votive offering dedicated by the people of Selinunte after having won a victory.[916] The inscription is written on a limestone block and was discovered at the site of temple G. The text opens with the line [δι]ὰ τὸς θεὸς τό[σ]δε νικῶντι τοὶ Σελινόν[τιοι], and continues with a list of the names of the gods (ll. 2-6) to whom the Selinuntines owe their victory (in the form διά + god's name, all listed in *scriptio continua*). At the end of the inscription, a decree orders that a votive gift worth 60 talents and with the names of the gods inscribed upon it (with Zeus' name first) be consecrated in a sign of gratitude. We are therefore dealing with two listing instances within an official document in a public setting: the list of gods enumerated in the votive inscription, and the list of gods to be inscribed on the gold votive gift. The gods listed are all known members of the Selinuntine pantheon: Zeus, Ares, Herakles, Apollo, Poseidon, the Dioskouroi, Athena, Malophoros (Demeter) and Pasikrateia (Persephone). Holloway 1988 has even suggested that these deities are the same ones portrayed on

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[915] See also Brugnone 2011.

[916] *IGDS* 78; *IGLPalermo* 49; *IGASMG* I² 53. Calder 1963, 1964; Holloway 1988; Keyser 1988; Manganaro 1995.

the metopes of temple C.[917] Lists of names could therefore be understood as an integral part of the official epigraphic habit of Selinunte. Epigraphic parallels from other parts of Sicily strengthen this impression: for instance, the over 150 'contrats de vente' from Kamarina (mid-5th century) schematically list the name, patronymic and phratry of the guarantors on the *recto* and *verso* of the small lead tablets.[918] The Entella and Nakone decrees (mid - 3rd century) all feature a header listing the names of the archons or *hieromnamones* ('sacred rememberers').[919] Manganaro has also published two mid-5th century business contracts of unknown provenance in western Sicily, which feature lists of names and opening invocations to the gods, both elements found in the Sicilian curse texts.[920]

The same situation, albeit on a different scale, is attested in Athens. Here, lists were some of the most visible and common public democratic documents to crowd the *polis*' public spaces: there were lists of demes, list of public benefactors, of deserters, of those tried for homicide or attempted tyranny, and lists of public debtors.[921] Faraone and Gordon have in fact discussed that a 'side effect' of the spread of democratic literacy in Athens was that the writing of curses was majorly influenced by these civic documents.[922] By mimicking the textual choices of public documents, the individuals writing the cursing text were setting themselves in the wake of a great and prominent democratic tradition and hoped to borrow the legitimation of the great civic documents of the city's social and political life to solve their own private social and political disputes.[923]

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[917] Holloway 1988: 179-180.
[918] Cordano 1992. Contracts have also been found in Syracuse (4th – 3rd century) *SEG* 47 1463, and Morgantina (2nd century) *SEG* 4 62.
[919] Ampolo – Parra 2001.
[920] Manganaro 1977.
[921] Gordon 1999: 256.
[922] Faraone 1991: 4; Gordon 1999: 252-253.
[923] Gordon 1999: 257.

The lack of large quantities of public epigraphic documents from Selinunte means that the same phenomenon of 'democratic literacy' could not be wholly sustained for Selinunte:[924] the gap in 4th century epigraphic evidence contributes to this discrepancy in quantity of evidence between the two sites. However, *I.Sicily* 1087 = *IG* XIV 268 has shown that lists of names in public places did exist in classical Selinunte, and were an integral part of the official epigraphic habit of the city, and there exist numerous additional epigraphic examples from Selinunte which also attest the listing of names. 68 Selinuntine texts, mainly funerary (37, of which one is post-409 BCE) and dedicatory (27, of which 2 are post-409 BCE), are found in the *I.Sicily* corpus. These inscriptions naturally feature personal names owing to their genres (votive dedications and grave markers), but the fact that these texts were publicly viewable strengthens the hypothesis that the people writing the curse texts were aware of or possibly even inspired by the wider epigraphic culture of the *polis* and the power over social life that it commanded (in the case of official inscriptions), and could have been mimicking these licensed textual choices when writing their maledictions.

But it wasn't just official, public epigraphy to have influenced the language of curses: Eidinow has noted similarities in the emotional content and context of curse tablets and lead letters, both texts written by people intending to limit the risks and damages brought on by a situation of crisis. She notes how the language of curses and letter writing echoes that of business arrangements, using as an example the use common in both genres of using compound forms of γράφω ('I register'), a verb used in public legal and business documents as well as curses; as well as the peculiar use of consigning victims πρὸς or παρά certain gods (already seen in *ISicDef* 14 'πὰρ τὰν *h*αγνὰν ϑεόν') meaning 'in the presence of' and also

[924] On Sicilian tyrannies, refer to Luraghi 1994.

reminiscent of legal or business transactions found in contracts and letters.[925] These parallels show how the interactions between public and private literacy could have been more pervasive than previously assumed, and that the intertextual interplay between epigraphic genres and domains could lead to highly interesting and creative textual solutions, particularly with regard to a relatively young practice such as written cursing in Sicily. The ability to increase the authority, power and effectiveness of a curse was drawn from other documents whose assertiveness was evident in the social and civic life of Selinunte and elsewhere in Sicily.

The patterns of practice I have examined so far were to change with the 4th century, when the number of curses written in Sicilian cities appears to have dropped dramatically. As I have already discussed earlier, the 4th century slump is mirrored by the epigraphic habit of the entire island: war, destruction, migrations and reconstructions characterise this period. When inscriptions begin to reappear after this break, they acquire a very different form (both textual and physical) from the earlier 5th century documents. A greater diversification in genre and a higher quality of support and textual layout marks the island-wide epigraphic production after the 4th century, and a similar development has been detected in the Sicilian curses after the 4th century watershed. Selinunte and Himera cease to produce curses (as indeed civic life ceased in both settlements pursuant to their conquest and destruction), and the 'next generation' of curses are very different texts from the archaic and classical maledictions, and feature certain elements that were utterly unattested in earlier known curses.

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[925] Eidinow 2010: 43-44.

For example, in *ISicDef* 66 (late 3rd century) for Lilybaeum, the cursing verb καταγράφω has changed to καταδέω (the most common cursing verb in Attic *defixiones*), the gods invoked are named explicitly (Persephone, the Titans, the abominating dead, Demeter), the judicial context may be inferred more clearly ('so that he [Zopyrion] will be unable to speak in opposition'), the binding formula is more elaborate ('I bind him down in lead, him and his mind and his soul'), the material support is mentioned explicitly ('I bind her down in lead') almost as if the choice of material also played a part in the magical incantation. This is a very different text from the archaic curses, and is another example of how the cursing practice had altered in parallel with the wider lapidary epigraphic culture of the island, once again suggesting a stronger link between the public and private epigraphic spheres.

ISicDef 66 Ed. Jordan 1997

Recto: καταδέω Ζωπυρίωνα τᾶσ Μυμβυρ παρὰ Φερσε

φόναι καὶ Τιτάνεσσι καταχθονίοις καὶ παρὰ

π[ρ]ιχομένοισι νεκύοις ν ἐσ τοὺσ ἀτελέστους καὶ παρ

ὰ [.]αρίαις Δάματρος παρ' ἀπευχομέ[ν]α[ις]ιν

καταδέω δέ νιν ἐμ βολίμωι α[ἴσθησιν ?]

αὐτοῦ καὶ ψυχήν αὐτοῦ ὡσ μὴ δύνα[ται - - -]ν

λαλιά[ν] καταδέω δέ νιν ἐμ βολί[μ]ωι σ[ωφρο]

[σ]ύν(αν) [α]ὐτάν καὶ νοῦν καὶ ψυ[χήν]

This curse however includes a final section which is reminiscent of the earlier cursing textual habits: a dextrorse list of 9 Latin names (the first part of the curse in Greek language was sinistrose), with no accessory elements. It would seem that, alongside the most recent innovations in 'cursing technology', old habits were hard to shake off.

9.4. Social strife

In this Chapter, I have examined how the people involved in the written cursing practice adapted it in ways that best responded to their aggressive ritual requisites, and embedded this practice in a game of references and intertextuality with the public and private writings of Sicily in this period. I have also suggested that the textual choices of the curses could be read as evidence for the interplay of violence, power and authority, notions which I have borrowed from Hannah Arendt's theoretical discussions. Thinking about authority in its Arendtian conception has allowed me to identify the meaningfulness of certain textual characteristics found in the curses, especially those intended to borrow the authority of socially accepted forms of public and private literacy to enhance the effectiveness of the cursing action.

In fact, the people writing these early curse texts were not simply adopting existing epigraphic models wholesale, but carefully selecting and originally adapting the available forms most conducive to the written cursing practice's violent aims – a competitive emulation of sorts. This intertextual interplay resembled the dynamic Bourdieu has called 'social magic': an individual's advantageous take on institutionalised behaviour to socially capitalise upon their own assigned identity, in ways and with outcomes that would otherwise be precluded to them.[926] The reliance on pre-existing normative behaviour from the private and public epigraphic sphere complements, defines and augments the 'aggressive magic' worked by the curses.

Moreover, this game of intertextuality has enabled me to situate the curses within the wider epigraphic habit of western Sicily, further debunking the notion of Selinunte's

[926] Bourdieu 1991; Ma 2012: 149.

exceptionality in curse numbers and in social restlessness. The new discoveries in Himera and the common textual aspects found in the curses of (especially) western Sicilian settlements during the Archaic and Classical periods also suggest the existence of region-wide patterns. The curses' snug fit within the Sicilian archaic lapidary epigraphic habit right up to the Hellenistic age strengthens this possibility. This situation appears to be distinct from presumed linguistic or ethnic distinctions. In fact, I have used the curses of Selinunte to talk about epigraphy in western Sicily, going beyond linguistically defined borders and genre-specific taxonomies, and have identified how the curses could be read as projections of the ways people conceived and perceived the textual world they inhabited, how they actively adapted the written practice of cursing in response to this textual world, and how the practice changed and died out in response to historical events.

This Chapter has therefore shown how the textual choices of the Selinunte curses reveal details of the epigraphical, linguistic and cultural experiences of people across archaic and classical western Sicily. The language models employed by people writing curse tablets suggest that their choices were influenced by a variety of civic and epigraphical practices, combined with creative processes and adapted to the private purposes of the cursing texts. Although the details of the lives and motivations of the cursers remain largely invisible to us, these documents do attest the concerns and resolutions of a civically disenfranchised section of society, which chose to take its fate in its own hands (possibly faced by the inefficiency of or inaccessibility to other licensed forms of justice) and sought to obtain a surreptitious advantage on their opponents by means of supernatural intervention. Curses are a result of and response to personal strife, a violent response that current civic powers do not condone, and which resorts to the authority vested in public and private literacy to increase the efficacy of its unlicensed means.

My analysis has shown that the *defixiones* do not pertain to the official, high-register licensed writings of a local aristocracy, despite efforts to borrow authority from licensed epigraphic practices. Nor are the curses, as noted by Eidinow, 'the voices of the *demos* mediated through the inscriptions of the *polis*':[927] this is a direct (and rare) form of communication. These conclusions fit in current understandings of the curse writers as belonging to a non-élite social group, usually invisible in the epigraphic evidence of western Sicily in such an active and vociferous role.[928] The private epigraphic practice of cursing does not call for the display of wealth or status (as have other written and burial practices earlier in this thesis), but it showcases the personal concerns, struggles and angsts of a different section of society, whose details still largely escape us.

As stated at the beginning of this Chapter, I have refrained from making assumptions concerning the ethnicity of the people cursing and cursed based on the onomastic evidence found in the curses. I have already discussed how problematic a direct equation between names and ethnicities can be in Part One of this thesis, and in this Chapter I chose to focus on lists of names as a marker of non-élite private literacy interacting with the official literacy of the civic élite. This discussion fits well with current understandings of Selinuntine society in the late Archaic and Classical periods,[929] split between an élite of wealthy landowners in charge of the official ritual, political and epigraphic expression of the city, and a large non-élite which is less visible in the archaeological and epigraphic evidence of the city's life, but which is nevertheless attested by the *defixiones*.

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[927] Eidinow 2010: 40.
[928] Eidinow 2010: 40; De Vido 2015: 58-59.
[929] De Vido 2015.

Rather than ethnic distinctions, the curses work as markers of a socially defined collective identity, whose contexts of literacy and personal circumstances of strife and restlessness are revealed by the curse texts. The texts do not include enough details for us to discern whether a class struggle was taking place in Selinunte, but most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, they allow us to make assumptions on inter-ethnic conflict arising from the coexistence of different ethnicities in Selinunte either.[930] The publication of further curse texts from Himera will further clarify Selinunte's perceived unicity in epigraphic, social and ethnic 'restlessness', whereas the next Chapter will shed more light on social tension and competition came to play out in Selinunte's historical vicissitudes.

[930] Iannucci et al. 2015; Johnson 2020.

10.

The Meilichios markers from Selinunte

Introduction

The Meilichios sacred area, the Malophoros sanctuary, the *Edificio Triolo Nord*, and the *Tempio M* constitute a hub of Selinunte's cultic activity on the western bank of the Modione river (fig. 87).[931] The stone monuments discovered in the area known as the *campo di stele* of the Meilichios sanctuary functioned as votive markers of sacrificial deposits (consisting of burnt or unburnt animal bones, small vases, terracotta votives and lamps) dedicated to the deity.[932] The area was in use between the 7th – early 6th century and the second half of the 5th century BCE. The cult epithet 'Meilichios' has been translated as 'who can, but needs to, be propitiated', and it has been primarily associated with Zeus in his chthonian form – threatening, but bestowing benefits (he was sometimes depicted as a snake).[933] Zeus Meilichios appears to have been the god of individuals and semi-familiar groups, from which

[931] Greco – Tardo 2012; Grotta 2010: Chapter 1.
[932] Gabrici 1927: 156-157; Tusa 1984b: 11-15; Grotta 2011: 27.
[933] Xen. *An.* VII.8.1–6. On Zeus Meilichios: Jameson et al. 1993: 81–102; Parker 2005: 424-426; Lalonde 2006.

he received private dedications, non-standard sacrifices (holocaust of whole victims, wineless libations).

The *campo di stele* of Selinunte is a *unicum* in the ritual history of Meilichios across the Mediterranean:[934] 16 markers (*horoi*) were inscribed with dedicatory texts to Meilichios, and an indefinite number of uninscribed markers (unwrought, 'informi') were also discovered in this area (fig. 86). The Meilichios cult is not attested in Megara (Selinunte's mother city), although Dunbabin believes that in Megara it functioned as a private cult, and that it developed into a public one in Megara Hyblaea or in Selinunte.[935] But the cultic activity around this sacred area is even more complex: other votive markers were discovered in the *recinto* area to the north-east of the *campo di stele*: circa 83 are anepigraphic figurative *stelai* and date from the 4th century onwards (fig. 88, 89).[936] The *stelai* carvings depict the head of a male divinity, often accompanied by the bust of a female counterpart, and sometimes even groups of four heads (two male and two female). It is unknown to which deity these *stelai* were dedicated.[937]

For many years, the discussion of the markers has been hindered by the flawed understanding of the archaeological stratigraphy of the site, which was only recently clarified by Grotta 2010. This study revealed the long-held ritual continuity between the mostly aniconic inscribed *horoi* of the 6th - 5th century and the figurative uninscribed *stelai* of the

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[934] Cusumano 1991: 33-36; Famà - Tusa 2000: 22-23; Grotta 2010: Chapter 7; Moscati Castelnuovo: 2011: 374.
[935] Manni 1975: 176; Dunbabin 1948: 304; Shepherd 1993: 167.
[936] For clarity's sake, I will henceforth refer to the 16 inscribed markers dating to the 6th - 5th centuries BCE discovered in the *campo di stele* as '*horoi*', and to the c. 83 post-4th century anepigraphic figurative markers discovered in the *recinto* as '*stelai*'. I will refer separately to the unwrought markers (cultic stones) discovered in the *campo di stele* along with the *horoi*. Cf. Grotta 2011: 20. I use Grotta's numbering of the inscriptions.
[937] De Simone 2010b: 186.

4th century as false,[938] and the *campo di stele* and the *recinto* as two chronologically and topographically distinct areas of worship within the Meilichios sacred area. At first (6th – 5th centuries BCE), small votive offerings and the inscribed and mostly aniconic *horoi* and unwrought markers (cultic stones) were offered to the god Meilichios in the *campo*. In a second phase (starting in the 4th century BCE) the iconic anepigraphic *stelai* were erected in the *recinto* to an unknown divinity (plate 8).[939] To understand the reason for this confusion, we must consider the archaeological exploration of this site and its material evidence.

10.1. The Meilichios sanctuary

Excavations in the Meilichios sacred area commenced in 1874 under the direction of Cavallari, and were continued during the 19th century by Patricolo and Salinas. Gabrici's excavations between 1915 and 1926 were the first to be published (fig. 94), but his patchy analysis of the site's stratigraphy and the incomplete publication of the excavation journals generated a string of controversial interpretations (only recently debunked).[940] In 1969 Tusa discovered the *campo di stele*. The epigraphic evidence from the Meilichios area has proven decisive for the reconstruction of the cult practice and, the nature of the deity venerated.[941] The evidence also reflects the historical vicissitudes of the city (in relation to the social changes brought about by the Carthaginian conquest of the city in 409 BCE).[942] However, the appraisal of this material and the sacred area has not been straightforward.[943] The

[938] Robu 2011: 207.
[939] Grotta 2010: 229-230.
[940] Moscati Castelnuovo: 2011: 373.
[941] Picard 1942-1943; Cusumano 1991 for an introduction to the cult of Zeus Meilichios. Grotta 2010: Chapter 7 and Grotta 2011: 21-26 on the epithet *Meilichios*. Vonderstein 2006 for an overview of the cults and sanctuaries of Zeus in Magna Graecia and Sicily.
[942] Antonetti - De Vido 2006a, 2006b.
[943] Discussed later.

complexities of the excavations, the incomplete state of the site publication (starting with Gabrici's 1927 *editio princeps*),[944] and the condition of the surviving evidence (spread across museums and countries)[945] has led to misunderstandings and insecure associations of evidence.

The main misconceptions regard, firstly, a proposed subordination or even annexation of the Meilichios area to the neighbouring Malophoros sanctuary (based on the spatial proximity of the two areas).[946] Secondly, the two distinct cultic areas (the *campo di stele* and the *recinto*) have been misinterpreted as joined and both dedicated to Meilichios.[947] Lastly, all votive markers, inscribed or not, iconographic or not, have been attributed to the *campo di stele* and interpreted as an instance of ritual continuity: according to this interpretation, votive markers were continuously dedicated from the early 6th century until well after the 409 BCE conquest of the city. Famà and Tusa's catalogue of the markers considers all the evidence together, because the ritual continuity between all these stone votives was considered an established fact.[948] It was Grotta who went back to the original excavation journals: he identified the inaccuracies in the early records and reinterpreted the material evidence and site stratigraphy.[949] His effort led to the re-evaluation of the entire complex.

The sacred area was part of the larger cultic Gaggera complex along the Modione river.[950] The Meilichios sacred area consists in the *recinto* (a square *temenos* containing a

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[944] Also Tusa 1984b, 1984c.
[945] Famà - Tusa 2000: 21-22; Antonetti - De Vido 2006a: 412-413, notes 8, 9 and 10; Grotta 2010: Chapter 7.
[946] Grotta 2010: 7-21 on the archaeology of the Malophoros sanctuary. On the relationship between the Malophoros and the Meilichios sanctuary complexes, see Sfameni Gasparro 2008: 109-115.
[947] Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 373-374.
[948] Famà – Tusa 2000: 33-57.
[949] Grotta 2010: 216.
[950] On the history of the excavations in the Gaggera area: Grotta 2010:1-6.

colonnaded portico, a *naïskos*,[951] several small *pozzetti,* and two altars) and the *campo di stele* on the sandy slope west of the *recinto* (clear of buildings, but featuring an altar *a tre betili*). 16 inscribed *horoi* (all aniconic except for no. 14) were found in the *campo*, along with unwrought stone markers and over 200 discrete votive deposits of ash, bones, pottery, and terracotta votives associated with the *horoi* were discovered beneath a thick layer of sand by Gabrici in 1915. The *campo* was established as a distinct cultic area for the deposition of votives and sacrificial activity.[952] The period of use of the *campo* has been dated, on the basis of the archaeological findings and the inscriptions,[953] to the late 7th or early 6th century and the second half of the 5th century BCE.

As for the *recinto* area, this occupies a physically distinct space (a c. 2m tall layer of landfill to the north-east of the *campo,* actually obliterating the eastern section of the *campo*). It can be dated to after the mid-5th century BCE based on the palaeographical dating of the most recent inscribed *horos* from the *campo.*[954] About 83 uninscribed figurative *stelai* (mostly bearing an anthropomorphic relief, consisting in a single, multiple or geminate human head) were discovered in the *recinto* in 1920 - not, as was widely believed based on a misreading of the excavation journals, in the *campo di stele.*[955] These *stelai* are not associated with any votive offerings, they are smaller than the inscribed *horoi,* and were not fixed in the sandy ground. The anepigraphic anthropomorphic *stelai* date from the 4th century onwards, and therefore after the fateful 409 BCE.

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[951] Dated to the 4th - 3rd century by Grotta 2010: 97-100.
[952] Tusa 1984b, 1984c; Grotta 2010: 77-78, 92-93, 258-259; Gaifman 2012: 200.
[953] Grotta 2010: 99.
[954] Grotta 2010: 99.
[955] Grotta 2011: 34.

In light of the recent update of the Meilichios sanctuary's spatial organisation and its distinct chronologies, I believe that there is now need for a reassessment of the votive markers and the role they played in the two distinct moments of ritual activity connected with this area. I am particularly interested in the effects that the 409 BCE watershed had on the communities of ritual practice in these two distinct moments of cultic activity. The divergences in internal and external aspects of the *horoi* and *stelai* do indeed suggest that a deep and meaningful change took place in the late 4th century BCE, whose immediate consequences were the cessation, development and innovation of the cultic activities associated with the *campo di stele* and the *recinto* areas. By analysing the patterns and differences between the use of *horoi* and *stelai*, I aim to shed new light on what the social priorities and cultic requisites of two distinct communities of practice could have been. I also want to investigate whether a degree of continuity is traceable between these two phases, detectable in the textual and a-textual choices expressed through the markers.

There is another reason why I believe that an extensive reassessment of the Meilichios evidence is in order. Previous studies on the *horoi* and *stelai* have focussed excessively on the ethnically labelled stylistic and linguistic choices attested by the *stelai* and *horoi* respectively. For example, the reference work for the study of the *stelai* Famà – Tusa classified the markers based on their iconographic typologies drawing strong distinctions between the ethnic attributions of the styles as to Greek, Punic and indigenous artisans, which were justified by means of iconographic parallels from Greece and Italy.[956] With regard to the indigenous craftsmanship, it is fair to say that the authors assumed a dismissive and paternalistic tone, and I quote their definition of the indigenous style *stelai* in full: 'un nutrito

[956] Famà – Tusa 2000: 84-89. The identification of some of the *stelai* as 'Punic' was first suggested by Di Vita 1961-1964: 249.

gruppo di stele, caratterizzato da una sorta di primitivismo esasperato, frutto di modestissimi scalpellini, difficilmente inquadrabile nell'ambito della produzione punica (e greca) popolare, è stato da noi ricondotto all'ambito indigeno. Si tratta di stele che talvolta compaiono come schegge impazzite nell'ambito della maggior parte dei tipi da noi individuati. Il termine 'indigeno', qui utilizzato per definire le più rozze e disorganiche stele del complesso votivo. Questo gruppo di stele sembra essere una sorta di indicatore ... del rapporto a Selinunte tra cultura egemone e cultura subalterna'.[957]

The presumed identification of stylistic differences among the *stelai* as indicative of ethnic coexistence in a strongly hierarchical and Hellenocentric perspective has excessively guided the study of this cultic area and its interpretation, despite the apparent inconsistencies emerging from this *modus operandi*.[958] Famà and Tusa themselves admitted the difficulties encountered in attributing the *stelai* to one of their categorisations (Greek, Punic, Indigenous),[959] and had to resort to mixed categories (Greek-Indigenous, Punic-Greek, etc.) to fit the evidence to their methodological premises.[960] In another influential study on the Meilichios markers, Antonietti - De Vido attempted a different approach, analysing the coexistence of citizens, non-citizens and foreigners in the Meilichios sanctuary.[961] They examined the Greek onomastics appearing in the inscribed *horoi* and the foreign or indigenous personal names appearing in the 12 *defixiones* from the *campo di stele* (see Chapter 5), and concluded that the documents discovered in the Meilichios sanctuary area suggested a situation of rooted and peaceful co-existence of various ethnic elements, drawing parallels with

[957] Famà – Tusa 2000: 23.
[958] 'In una grande città greca quale Selinunte ... questo gruppo di stele rozze e fortemente popolaresche, costituisce una nota discordante, certamente significativa, segno eloquente della vitale presenza di queste genti 'diverse' '. Famà – Tusa 2000: 83.
[959] Famà – Tusa 2000: 89.
[960] Famà – Tusa 2000: 32.
[961] Antonetti - De Vido 2006a.

other Sicilian multi-ethnic contexts (Eryx, Monte Iato, Segesta and Mozia). However, Grotta has since proved that the 12 *defixiones* had not originally been discovered in the *campo di stele,* but from the Malophoros sanctuary's *recinto*,[962] and that the inscribed *horoi* and the iconographic *stelai* represent different cultural, historical and social periods for Selinunte which must also be accounted for within this multi-ethnic view.

Rather than overly-focusing on the ethnic attributions of the markers and on direct equations between personal names and ethnic identities, I set out to explore and account for the discontinuity in ritual action after 409 BCE. I interpret the adoption of uninscribed iconic markers and the variations attested in the site's ritual activity as signifying a change in ritual actions and mentalities, while paying attention to aspects of continuity of practice and the different ways these continuities were expressed. As rightly stated by De Simone, 'una netta distinzione tra 'greco' e 'punico' nei contesti archeologici selinuntini sembra in realtà corrispondere ad una moderna esigenza di classificazione e appare assai sfuggente a causa di una visibile commistione 'culturale''.[963] What this 'visible cultural mix' might have been and how the *horoi* and *stelai* might help us define collective identities in Selinunte is precisely what I want to explore in this Chapter. I investigate the Meilichios votive markers for evidence of defined social groups involved in the ritual action connected to the dedication of the markers.

[962] Grotta 2010: 207.
[963] De Simone 2010b: 182.

10.2. The *horoi*: inscribing social groups

Ritual activity in the Meilichios area began in the second half of the 7th century.[964] No epigraphic documents have been recovered dating to this early period (despite the existence of archaic inscriptions from Selinunte's *polis* and *chora*).[965] The *horoi* inscriptions in the *campo* appear around the end of the 6th century and were in use until the end of the 5th century.[966] A total of 16 inscribed *horoi* have been recovered (fig. 90, 91, 92, 93).[967] The inscribed texts are votive, thus connoting these markers as votive monuments dedicated to a god. The material support on which the texts are inscribed varies between unworked and coarse tuff stone,[968] and crudely shaped blocks of various shapes and sizes.[969] The only inscribed iconic marker is no. 14 (in the shape of a herm, dating to the mid-5th century BCE) (fig. 93),[970] all other instances of inscribed markers are aniconic.[971] Three markers have traces of firing (a red hue on the base, possibly associated with the ritual activity attested by the findings of burnt ashes and bones).[972] Uninscribed, unwrought markers coexisted alongside the inscribed *horoi* in the *campo*, positioned around votive deposits.[973] Many of the unwrought markers consist of simple stones which are indistinguishable from

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964 Famà - Tusa 2000: 19; Antonetti - De Vido 2006a: 416.
965 Antonetti - De Vido 2006a: 413. See *IGLPalermo* 49-103.
966 Famà - Tusa 2000: 19; Grotta 2010: 46-47.
967 Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374.
968 Antonetti - De Vido 2006a: 419; also Famà - Tusa 2000: 21-22.
969 Grotta 2010: 46-47; Grotta 2011: 20. The *horoi* tend to be taller (108 - 53 cm) than the *stelai* (40 - 18 cm).
970 Famà - Tusa 2000: 36, note 11; Grotta 2011: 20-21. Despite the similarities of this *horos* with the anepigraphic figurative *stelai* due to the presence of a sculpted head, no. 14 cannot be included in this group: it was discovered in the *campo di stele* (not the *recinto*), the traces of firing suggest its association with votive deposits, and it is much larger in size than the *stelai*. Famà – Tusa 2000: 26, 68; Grotta 2011: 36.
971 Famà - Tusa 2000: 19.
972 Nos. 3, 6, 14. Grotta 2011: 27. This detail had been noted by Gabrici 1927: 156.
973 Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374. The exact stratigraphy is notoriously difficult to ascertain: Gabrici 1927: 156-157; Tusa 1984b: 11-15.

a regular rock, making their identification and quantification a difficult feat. Furthermore, many of these stones were not recovered *in situ*, as they had rolled down the slope of the Gaggera hill into the Modione river valley.[974] It would appear that these stones, however unassuming, were integral part of the ritual activity for Meilichios, and should thus be appraised.[975]

Indeed, the juxtaposition of inscribed and uninscribed material, as well as the catalysing function played by the use of writing as emphasising, fixating and memorialising a ritualised action, has already been investigated in my two previous case studies. The use of uninscribed markers alongside a smaller number of inscribed ones recalls the use already examined with regard to Mozia's tophet, and the strategic adoption of writing as a means to reaffirm a ritual action over time has also been encountered in the practice of inscribing cursing texts on lead rather than exclusively performing curses orally. The cultic stones of the Meilichios sanctuary could have been added over time to signal ritual continuity, or were used to mark a presence as a personal souvenir of one's participation in the ritual action. This might also have been the only means available to certain sections of the population to mark their acts of devotion to Meilichios, because their financial possibilities, social extraction or literacy levels did not enable them to erect an inscribed marker. The inscribed markers then work as a catalyst for cultic action and participation, and it is around these monuments that the cultic stones and other votive offerings congregate (as also suggested by the increased size and the traces of firing on the bases of some of the *horoi*).

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[974] Antonetti - De Vido 2006a: 414-415.

[975] Gaifman 2012: 131 'Rough rocks bring to the fore an unresolved tension between the human acts of designation, presentation, and representation and the singular natural object that was thought to have a unique connection with the divine'.

I now focus on the linguistic features of the inscribed *horoi* (plate 9). One could suspect that the 'full' dedicatory formula consisted in the theonym and the epiclesis, the verb of dedication, and the anthroponym of the person, persons or groups who dedicated the marker. This integral version occurs four times: nos. 3, 5, 6, 12. In these cases, the epiclesis Meilichios is expressed in the nominative, genitive or dative. In the other inscriptions, a shorter version is opted for, either in the form of epiclesis and anthroponym (4 occurrences: nos. 1, 4, 11, 14), of anthroponym and verb (1 occurrence: no. 7), or simply of a lone anthroponym (5 occurrences: nos. 2, 8, 9, 10, 13). In the latter cases, the anthroponym is expressed in either the genitive or the nominative. There are then two cases of uncertain content (nos. 15, 16). The constant element in all the texts is the existence of at least one personal name (personal or collective), which has been interpreted as that of the dedicator responsible for the votive act.[976] The epiclesis of the god to whom the votive dedication is made is the second most frequent element in the votive formula.

We have already dealt with a similar situation of the selective combination of formulaic elements in the votive inscriptions in the Mozia tophet, which I would like to propose as an original heuristic comparison, while acknowledging the important differences between these two datasets. To begin, legibility appears to be a greater priority in the Meilichios *horoi* than in the Mozia markers.[977] This is reflected in the execution of the text upon the writing surface: in the Meilichios *horoi*, the height of the characters ranges between 3 and 17 cm (depending on the size of the stone support) and the text occupies a prominent area of the stone's surface (it must be remembered that the *horoi* were partially buried in the sand to keep them upright).

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[976] Grotta 2010: 47.
[977] See also Gaifman 2012: 202-203.

A case in point is no. 9, bearing only the name 'ΛΥΨΟΦΡΟ | ΝΙΔΑ' (*boustrophedon*, over 2 lines), whose letter height fluctuates between 5-11 cm: the *horos* itself measures 108 x 52,4 cm, and the text is clearly legible. Another example suggesting greater attention paid to letter layout and overall quality of the marker is no. 14 (the only inscribed iconographic marker from the *campo*): the *ductus* is more regular than in the other inscriptions, and the text is arranged along the top part of the *horos* in an aesthetically pleasing graphic effect. Conversely, in the Mozia tophet, the texts were arranged for the most part around the base of the marker (only a few centimetres above the ground). Admittedly, certain letters of the tophet inscriptions were painted or retraced in paint (although this could be due to the friable quality of the limestone stone, which therefore made paint necessary for the execution of the inscription), but legibility does not seem to have been a primary concern in the tophet.[978] Added to these observations is the fact that the tophet markers seem to put greater emphasis on the cultic iconography than on the texts themselves, whereas in the Meilichios *horoi* the legibility of the text is all-important, and no iconographic relief occupies the writing surface: these were texts that were meant to be read (or at least seen).

Furthermore, the votive formula of the Meilichios *horoi* also presents points of contact with and differences from the Mozia tophet inscriptions (plate 2). Firstly, in both the Mozia and Meilichios votive formulae, the name of the dedicator (or dedicators) is the most frequently recurring element: in the Mozia corpus, the name of the dedicator is always present, in the Meilichios corpus it is absent only in two cases, which have been damaged to the point that the inscription is no longer legible (nos. 15, 16). This is not a surprising situation, given the votive genre of both corpora. Furthermore, as already examined in the case of the

[978] There is no positive evidence for the use of paint in the Meilichios *horoi* inscriptions, nor do there exist *comparanda* of painted inscriptions from Selinunte in this period.

tophet inscriptions, the writing of a name strengthens the personal association with the votive act, and reinforces the process of memorialisation.[979] Similarly, in the case of the *defixiones* from Selinunte, writing the name of the person cursed guarantees the efficacy of the cursing action.

Secondly, in the Mozia corpus the name of the god BʿL ḤMN is present in all but four inscriptions, it appears preceded by the epithet ʾDN in all but one case (no. 37), and it occupies the first place in the votive formula. In the Meilichios corpus, the genitive Διὸς is present only in one text (no. 3), whereas the epiclesis 'Meilichios' is relatively more common (eight texts), but it is not as pervasive as it is in the tophet inscriptions. The absence of patronymics within the *horoi* inscriptions is also a notable aspect, as it is instead an almost omnipresent element in the Mozia corpus (the only exceptions are nos. 12, 14, and 34).

Thirdly, no families nor groups of any other socio-political identity appear in the Mozia markers, and women in particular are entirely absent. Both females and defined social groups appear instead in the Meilichios corpus, most notably in the case of the *patria* of the daughters of Hermias and of Eukles (discussed presently). '*Patria*' is an explicit declaration of a social institution, and no such references are found in the Mozia tophet. No. 3 also mentions three dedicators (Pyrrias, Eumenidotos, and Pediarchos) for a single *horos*, whereas in Mozia no offering is stated as having been made by multiple people (only by single males).

As for the Meilichios *horoi*, it is noteworthy that this specific formulation with the dedicator's name in the genitive, the verb 'to be' (εἰμί or ἠμὶ), and the object in the nominative bears close resemblances to the formulae of funerary inscriptions, a number of which

[979] Cf. Grotta 2010: 51.

are attested in late Archaic and Classical Selinunte.[980] The votive formulation 'I am the Meilichios of so-and-so' (in nos. 5 and 6, whereas in nos. 1, 4, 11, 14 the verb is omitted) is indeed similar to the funerary formula 'I am the σαμα of so-and-so'. This is the case for instance of the tombstone inscription reading Ἐπιχάρμο εἰμὶ το̃ͅ Μνασανδρίδα, found in the Bagliazzo necropolis and dating 475 - 450 BCE.[981] 'Meilichios' could therefore stand to signify the presence of the god to whom the marker is dedicated or, in the case of the 'talking marker', the marker itself. The hue of ownership conveyed by this specific formulation (with the dedicator in the genitive and the Meilichios signifying the marker) is absent in the Mozia corpus, where the dedicatory verbs are NDR 'vowed/dedicated' and YTN 'given'. Instead, in the Meilichios corpus, the verb within the votive formula is εἰμί (in nos. 3, 5, 6 in the present indicative ἠμὶ; in no. 7 in the present indicative εἰμί) or ἵζω (in no. 12 in the middle aorist form *hέσατο*). The specific choice of verb confers a different quality on the dedication. Compare for instance the two following texts:

Meilichios *horos* no. 5. Ed. Grotta 2010

Λυκίσϙο ε̄- / μὶ Μιλίχιος.

I am the Milichios of Lukiskos.

Tophet marker no. 18. Ed. Amadasi Guzzo 1986a.

L'DN B'L ḤM / N 'Š NDR ḤṀ / LKT BN 'ḊDY

To the lord Ba'al Hamon, (this is what) ḤṀ LKT son of 'ḊDY dedicated.

Horos no. 5 sets itself up as an authentic 'oggetto parlante' (as do the funerary inscriptions from Selinunte), and emphatically declares the name of the dedicator (Lukiskos)

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[980] E.g. *IGDS* 70-77 (all under the section: '*Le nom du défunt est au génitif*'); *IGASMG* I² 16, 18, 20, 29. On this specific linguistic aspect, see Biondi 1992: 115; Arena 1997: 78.
[981] *IGASMG* I² 21.

in the opening position in the genitive case, followed by the verb (εἰμί) and the object dedicated (the Milichios). This specific formulation conveys a message more of possession than of dedication, and the particular phrasing and verb choices render the stone marker the quasi-personification or denote the presence of the god (ἔμὶ Μιλίχιος).[982] By contrast, on tophet marker no. 18 a more traditionally conceived formula commemorates the votive act, in line with the formulation of votive inscriptions with the god's name in the opening position.

My linguistic and formulaic analysis of the *horoi* texts leads me to believe that the Meilichios votive inscriptions portray a ritual practice which is private and exclusive: the elements most clearly (and legibly) emphasised by the texts, in terms of frequency and position in the votive text, are the personal name or the group affiliation of the dedicator. This has consequences for the formulation of the votive formula, which is constructed in order to accommodate this emphasis and to express an idea of ownership alongside the function of dedication. It is less a situation of 'Lykiskos dedicated [something] to Milichios', but more of 'I am the Milichios of Lykiskos' seen in no. 5, where the god (expressed in the form of an epiclesis, rarely in the form of a theonym) becomes the very personification of the votive offering itself. In the Mozia tophet inscriptions, the god's name appears at the very beginning of the votive formula (seen in no. 18: 'to the lord Baʿal Hamon, ḤṀ LKT son of ʿḂDY dedicated'), the end-result of the shift in votive formulae taking place in the early 6th century BCE texts of certain Levantine diaspora settlements assigning pre-eminence to the god instead of the dedicated offering. The textual choices traced within the Meilichios texts portray it as a practice accommodating personal devotion, where individual

[982] See also Gaifman 2012: 201-202.

or group visibility is perceived as a key element. This epigraphic situation has two main consequences, one for the basis of participation in and the other for the audience of this practice. In Selinunte, the Meilichios ritual appears to be rooted in a conception of private cult and personal devotion, signifying social difference and elective relationships based on institutions (e.g. no. 14, 'the *patria'*), family (e.g. no. 1, 'the Kleulidai'), or single individuals who do not need to specify their genealogy to be recognisable (e.g. no. 2, 'Eumaidas').

These groups and individuals express possession of the *horos,* but this possession might even be extended to include the entire practice of ritual dedications to Meilichios, given the uniformity of these patterns of practice across the entire corpus of *horoi.* As for the uninscribed and unwrought stones gathering around the *horoi*, these could have been placed by other participants in the cult, who did not perceive the explicit statement if their names as a cultic or social necessity (or actual possibility). They might even be interpreted as additional 'souvenirs' of the ritual action clustered around the *horoi*, dedicated in later stages of ritual activity to renew the act of devotion. A hierarchy seems therefore to be gradually materialising. But what might the social identities of the groups and individuals dedicating the markers might have been? Could their role in this particular aspect of the city's ritual life conceal clues on their social identities? I now examine in more detail what the emphasis on single names, family groups and private modes of association could have meant in Selinunte, and what types of collective identities might therefore have been negotiated by these communities of practices.

Scholarship has interpreted the groups referred to by the *horoi* of the *campo di stele* (e.g. nos. 1, 4, 14) as Selinuntine gentilitian groups to whom the Meilichios sacred area was

reserved for ritual practice during the 6th - 5th centuries BCE.[983] Moscati Castelnuovo has envisaged a ritual where élite families or fictive kinship groups erected the inscribed *horos*, accompanied by a small sacrifice and votive deposit, and re-enacted the ritual periodically by adding new uninscribed unwrought markers to the votive deposit.[984] The majority of scholarly hypotheses regarding the cult of Meilichios by gentilitian groups have been based upon parallels with similar ritual situations occurring in Mediterranean sanctuaries. Brugnone supported the interpretation of the *campo di stele* as a space for gentilitian cults, and suggested the *Boukopion* of Lindos as a parallel.[985] Graf, Bergquist and Jameson et al. proposed as a parallel the practice of dedicating *argoi lithoi*, inscribed blocks dedicated to Apollo Lykeios Nikaios at his sanctuary in Metaponto which worked as identifying place markers of where family groups carried out ritual activities.[986] Similar dedications are also found at the sanctuaries of Thera, Thasos and Kos,[987] and the sanctuary of Hera or Aphrodite in Naxos (Sicily).[988]

I must specify at this point that, despite the important information gleaned from parallels such as the sanctuary of Apollo *Lykeios* in Metaponto, one must also emphasise the differences between this space of cult and the *campo di stele* of Selinunte in terms of

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[983] Brugnone 1999: 11-26; Antonetti – De Vido 2006a, 2006b; Grotta 2010: 137-219; Grotta 2011: 22-24; Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374; Robu 2011; Cordano 2015. On φρατριά: Guarducci 1937: 5-102; Lambert 1993: 22-95. On the connection of women with the cult of Meilichios: Manni Piraino 1970: 274-275.

[984] Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374. Cf. Manni Piraino 1970: 268-294; Bergquist 1992: 41-47.

[985] Brugnone 1999: 23. The two votive inscriptions from the acropolis sanctuary of Montagna di Balate (Sicily) also attest the use of collective names (Manganaro 2000a).

[986] Graf 1987; Bergquist 1992; Jameson et al. 1993. On the similarities between the *campo di stele* of Selinunte and the sacred area of Apollo *Lykeios* Metaponto: Adamesteanu 1970: 307-324; Grotta 2011: 28-31.

[987] Bergquist 1992; Jameson et al. 1993: 77-79, 114-116.

[988] Bergquist 1992: 41-47.

scope, role, epigraphic data, and gods.[989] For instance, despite the similarities in the use of stone markers accompanied by small votive deposits and using similar votive formularies (when present), Apollo *Lykeios*' monumental sanctuary is positioned within the Metapontine city walls and is destined for public cult, whereas the *campo di stele* of Selinunte is apparently reserved for the personal devotion of family groups to a chthonic deity. The local context and idiosyncrasies of the Meilichios *horoi* must therefore be emphasised, as they offer insight into a short and self-contained reality, to which the above-mentioned parallels can only offer so much additional information. I will now examine the evidence for gentilitian groups operating in the Meilichios sanctuary.

The existence of gentilitian group activity in this sanctuary is not only based on the appearance of the 'Kleulidiai' of text no. 1 and the '...]kidi' of no. 4. In no. 14, Hermias and Eukleas belong to the same *patria* (as do their anonymous daughters). The interpretation of the exact meaning of the term *patria* is still a contentious issue:[990] Robu interprets the term as a fictitious kin group founded by a heroized ancestor.[991] He has also studied how the kinship groups of *patriai* and *gene* played an important role in the social hierarchies of the settlements founded abroad by Megara in the Black Sea and Sicily.[992] The evidence for Selinunte's social organisation is extremely meagre, therefore the attestation of the *patria* of Hermias and Eukleas is as significant as it is rare. The mention of the *patria* in Selinunte supports the existence of mixed gentilitian groups of men and women who conducted cultic

[989] Grotta 2010: 183-184; Grotta 2011: 33; Gaifman 2012: 206; Cordano 2015: 98-99. This caveat is also valid for the parallels between Selinunte and the sanctuaries of Lindos, Thera, Thasos, Kos, and Naxos.
[990] Refer to Grotta 2011. For parallels: Ps.-Arist. *Oec.* 1346b; Plat. *Leg.* 6.785a-b; *SEG* 48 1112. *Horos* no. 14 is the only attestation of the term in Selinunte, as well as the only existing attestation of the term in reference to women. Antonetti – De Vido 2006a: 429; Grotta 2011: 26.
[991] Robu 2009: 277–278.
[992] Robu 2009: 288.

and possibly institutional activities together.[993] The notion that the *horoi* attest the existence of defined social groups, possibly of élite extraction, is supported by other epigraphic evidence from Archaic – Classical Selinunte itself.[994] For instance, *ISicDef* 6 l. 4 mentions the abbreviated form *hε̄ρακλ* for *hε̄ρακλ*(είδας). Bettarini has argued that names ending in -ίδας and -ιάδας, quite frequent in Megara Hyblaea and Selinunte, could be used both as anthroponyms and gentilitian names.[995] This suggestion has led Cordano to interpret the names appearing in the *horoi* ending in -ίδας (nos. 2, 9) as metonymically gentilitian (see below for discussion).[996] Another attestation of gentilitian names and groups such as the *patria* of no. 14 is found in the *Lex Sacra*,[997] which repeatedly uses the adjective πατρῶιος,[998] and prescribes rites of purification and sacrifices to Ζεὺς Μειλίχιος ὁ ἐν Μύσϙο̄ (c. A, l. 9) and ἐν Εὐθυδάμο (c. A, l. 17). These two names have been interpreted in a locative sense, as the sacred spaces where the gentile groups descended from two local heroes or founders celebrated rituals and sacrifices to the god (and were possibly involved in contamination and cathartic procedures).[999] This is therefore a case in which single names could come possibly to signify a wider kinship group, and offers evidence of ritual activities being organised in connection with the Meilichios cult around kinship identities. The understanding of the *horoi* as part of the cultic activity of kinship groups has also been tentatively extended to the names of single individuals mentioned by the inscriptions (nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) by Cordano 2015. She suggests that the single personal names in the genitive

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[993] Jameson et al. 1993: 114-116.
[994] Robu 2011 and Cordano 2015: 100-101 for a discussion of the extra-Sicilian antecedents and parallels for this situation.
[995] Bettarini 2005a: 17. See *IGASMG* I: 95 for a list of common names.
[996] Cordano 2015: 98.
[997] *I.Sicily* 1087 = *IG* XIV 268 = *SEG* 59 1119.
[998] Robu 2011: 208.
[999] Jameson et al. 1993: 92-93.

might have belonged to the most senior family member or forefather who metonymically signified the whole family group (nos. 5, 6 ,7, 10, 11).[1000] She adds that in the case of no. 3 where three personal names are mentioned, these are either three illustrious ancestors belonging to the same family group, or three brothers.[1001]

The *horoi* texts do not offer enough evidence to assert the idea that single personal names, belonging perhaps to eponymous kin founders, metonymically stood for a family group, but the textual and a-textual characteristics thus far examined do support the existence of internally defined, publicly asserted social groups active in this sacred area in connection with the cultic activities.[1002] My examination of the deliberate use and display of epigraphic text and markers made by communities of practice has led me to interpret the Meilichios area not as an official sanctuary fulfilling civic or political roles within Selinunte, but as reserved for the ritual practice of defined social groups to a god whose connotations are linked to cathartic functions, purification rituals, the protection of the family group.[1003] The relevance of Meilichios to rites of purification is supported by the 5th century *Lex Sacra* from Selinunte, prescribing ritual purification from bloodshed committed against or in favour of a family.[1004] A local, coeval document therefore attests Meilichios' relevance to the family sphere and cathartic actions.

[1000] Cordano 2015: 98.
[1001] Cordano 2015: 98.
[1002] Jameson et al. 1993: 28; Cordano – Arena 1997: 426; Camassa 1999: 146; Grotta 2010: 229; Robertson 2010: 131-132; Cordano 2015: 98.
[1003] Picard 1942-1943; Cusumano 1991; Grotta 2010: 137-219. For extra-Sicilian epigraphic parallels referring to the rites of Meilichios, refer to the sacred calendar of Erchia (Jameson 1965) and Thorikos (Daux 1983).
[1004] *I.Sicily* 1087 = *IG* XIV 268 = *SEG* 59 1119. See Jameson et al. 1993; Dimartino 2015.

10.3. The *stelai:* social *rasura*?

The ritual landscape so far illustrated was to change dramatically at the end of the 5h century: the practice of dedicating inscribed markers disappeared, and was substituted by a different ritual habit involving the dedication of uninscribed *stelai*. This change could be linked to Carthage's siege and conquest of Selinunte in 409 BCE,[1005] which led to deep and lasting changes affecting the social and religious texture of the city (such as population replacement or the influx of new people in the pre-existing civic body). I want to investigate this shift, exploring what the significance of the new votive dedication of *stelai* as a ritual practice after 409 BCE might have been.

A change in cultic activity and participation after the settlement's conquest by Carthage is suggested by the changes and discontinuation of cultic activities taking place in the Meilichios sanctuary after 409 BCE. Firstly, ritual activity moved from the *campo di stele* to the *recinto* (the *campo* appears to have been covered up with a layer of sand).[1006] Secondly, certain aspects of the ritual dedications changed: votive deposits, cultic stones, and burnt remains of sacrifices are no longer to be found.[1007] Thirdly, the use of votive inscribed aniconic *horoi* was substituted by the use of iconic anepigraphic *stele singole, gemine*, or *multiple*. These *stelai* are smaller than the *horoi*, and not set in the ground.[1008] Who the carved heads might have belonged to remains an unresolved *vexata quaestio*.[1009] Di Vita acknowledged the cultic differences post-409 BCE, but nevertheless suggested that the male and female depictions carved on the *stelai* portrayed a Greek divine couple, Meilichios and

[1005] Diod. Sic. XIII.54-87.
[1006] Grotta 2010: 77-78, 92-93, 258-259.
[1007] Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374.
[1008] Moscati Castelnuovo 2011: 374.
[1009] De Simone 2010b: 186.

Pasikrateia (which he also identified as Pluto and Persephone).[1010] White attributed greater importance to the consequences that the 409 BCE conquest had on the city's cultic life, and affirmed that from the 4th century the *stelai* couple is to be identified as Ba'al Hamon and Tanit.[1011] Sfameni Gasparro, emphasising an interconnection between the Malophoros and the Meilichios sanctuaries, argued against the radical change in the 'facies religiosa di marca greca', suggesting instead that the *stelai* depicted Meilichios and Demeter.[1012] She also rejected Famà – Tusa's identification of the couple with Zeus and Hera.[1013] In this identification debate, even the divine nature of the *stelai* couple is disputed: for instance, Picard did not accept the divine identification of the heads on the *stelai*, and compares them instead with the *kolossoi* typology.[1014] Sfameni Gasparro also raises the question whether the *stelai* depictions pertain to a funerary rather than a divine sphere.[1015] Most recently, Stallsmith has proposed that these diminutive *stelai* might have been the objects of domestic cult.[1016]

Whoever these heads portrayed, the use of uninscribed *stelai* rather than *horoi* inscribed with Greek-language dedications and cultic stones must be contextualised within a wider set of changes taking place in Selinunte during this period. Indeed, there are other traces in Selinunte's material and textual evidence from the time which do suggest that the city's social make-up had undergone a major change. Regarding the urban archaeology of Selinunte post-Carthaginian conquest, a necropolis was situated on top of the old destroyed settlement on the Manuzza hill around the mid-4th century, while the old acropolis was

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[1010] Di Vita 1961-1964: 246.
[1011] White 1967: 351-352. So follows Tusa 1971a.
[1012] Sfameni Gasparro 2008: 111.
[1013] Sfameni Gasparro 2008: 112.
[1014] Picard 1942-1943 based on parallels with the *Lex Sacra* from Cirene (*SEG* 9 72).
[1015] Sfameni Gasparro 2008: 113, based on parallels with a funerary monument from Lilybaeum (Bisi 1971: 40).
[1016] Stallsmith 2019.

resettled with small houses built with the characteristically Punic building technique of 'muri a telaio'. These houses were also found in the area previously dedicated to the temples, as well as in the Marinella Heraion.[1017] New sacred areas were consecrated upon the acropolis to Levantine cultic deities. This is suggested by the finding of the sign of Tanit in the *pronaos* of temple A.[1018] The pottery evidence also changes to Punic-style productions.[1019] As for the epigraphic evidence, *cretule* inscribed with Phoenician-language writing were found in Temple C, and *amphora* stamps bearing Phoenician-language symbols and letters have also been found in the archaeological layers dating to the late 5th - 4th century.[1020] A Phoenician-language abecedary,[1021] as well as coins with the legend R'Š MLQRT dating to the second half of the 4th century have also been discovered.[1022] In terms of absence rather than presence, it must be remembered that this is precisely the period when the curse evidence from Selinunte disappears, as does in fact the use of *horoi* inscribed with Greek dedications.

This evidence supports the hypothesis that a deeply altered historical *milieu*, imposed more or less violently, could have impacted Selinunte's social make-up. I interpret the disappearance of the *horoi* and the change in ritual activities taking place in the Meilichios sanctuary as part of a wider phenomenon of transformation and substitution taking place in Selinunte during the 4th century. Moreover, the changes to cultic activity in the Meilichios sacred area correspond to changes in the ways people after 409 BCE experienced and perceived these rituals, and reflect a different socio-cultural context in Selinunte. This situation

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[1017] Antonetti – De Vido 2006a: 416; De Simone 2010b: 182-183; Chiarenza 2011; Marconi 2012: 22–23.
[1018] Tusa 1983a, 1983b; De Simone 2010a, 2010b.
[1019] Mertens 1997; Bechtold 2013.
[1020] Amadasi Guzzo 1999: 37-39; De Simone 1999: 210-211.
[1021] De Simone 2010b: 186-187.
[1022] Cutroni Tusa 1995.

could have no longer warranted the feasibility of the *horoi* dedication, and altered the ritual priorities of communities of practice. With Carthage's conquest of Selinunte, the existence of inscriptions conveying kinship identities was no longer possible – although it is impossible to ascertain whether an actual extinction of the kinship groups referred to by the *horoi* had taken place. Advertising, commemorating and celebrating the names of ancestral heroes or heroized ancestors was abandoned: the élite social groups previously operating in the private ritual context of the Meilichios sanctuary were no longer in action.

The archaeological record from Selinunte so far examined portrays a situation of profound change and discontinuity brought on by the Carthaginian conquest of the city. This is the change noted by some scholars as manifesting in the stylistic aspects of the *stelai*'s reliefs: the cruder, primitivistic iconic markers are interpreted as the work of an indigenous artisan, while the higher quality stone carving is seen as the art of a more accomplished Greek master. These ethnic assumptions however shed hardly any light upon the social dynamics taking place within the new Selinuntine context.[1023] Rather than making a qualitative judgement on the techniques and iconographic repertoires of the *stelai*, it is more productive, now that I have reviewed the discontinuities in practice in the Meilichios markers and ritual activities, to investigate whether any continuation did actually take place, and interpret it accordingly. The act of dedicating a stone marker within an area close to the one once occupied by the Meilichios rituals did persist in the new form of *stelai* dedications. This suggests that certain aspects of the previous votive practice were still perceived as meaningful and effective by the communities of ritual practice which frequented the Meilichios sanctuary post-409 BCE. What were the *stelai* signifying and communicating?

[1023] E.g. Famà - Tusa 2000: 23.

Gaifman has interpreted the use of wrought standing stones like the *stelai* and the *horoi* in the Meilichios sanctuary as part of a strategy common to aniconic standing stones in the ancient Greek world, by which the stones were used on the one hand to actively mark a space for worship, and on the other hand to denote the presence of the divinity in this location.[1024] That this notion was operative in the inscribed *horoi* has already been examined with reference to the conscious textual setup of the *horoi* inscriptions, which explicitly expressed the presence of the god as personified by the marker with wordings such as 'I am the Meilichios of so-and-so'. The accompanying personal names of defined groups and individuals also stressed the link between the divinity-marker and acts of personal devotion, as did the remains of offerings found in the *campo di stele*.[1025]

That a god-personification strategy was also active in the *stelai* post-409 BCE is attested by the fact that the markers were carved with the head or heads of what has been interpreted by scholars as divine figures. Following Gaifman, 'All these elements combined show that the inscription defines the stele as a monument that bridges the gap between the divinity, who is where the stele stands, and the worshipper'.[1026] Given the uncertainty surrounding the exact identification of the portrayed heads on the *stelai*, the absence of precise parallels from the ancient world, and the lack of epigraphic contextual data, it is impossible to ascertain whether the *stelai* might have pertained to a cult connected to the ritual spheres of household continuity and the preservation of family groups, as it had been at the time of the *horoi*. But the ritual action of personifying a god and setting apart a place of worship

[1024] Gaifman 2012: Chapter 5.
[1025] Gaifman 2012: 201.
[1026] Gaifman 2012: 202.

centred around the dedication of wrought stone markers seems to have been maintained from inscribed *horoi* to figurative *stelai*.

10.4. Selinuntine crossroads

In this Chapter I have examined two distinct moments of cultic activities taking place in the Meilichios sanctuary of Selinunte. The watershed consisted of a dramatic and disruptive moment of transformation and discontinuation for Selinunte: the conquest of the city by the Carthaginian forces in 409 BCE. I have first examined how the ritual activities connected to the use of dedicating inscribed *horoi*, votive offerings and unwrought stones to Meilichios in the *campo di stele* were shaped to best respond to the ritual priorities of distinct social groups of practice, which I have identified as members of a fictional or factual kinship group of possibly gentilitian social extraction. I have investigated how the social and ritual identities of the kinship groups dedicating inscribed *horoi* were expressed through the deliberate textual choices identified in the markers. These choices are geared to emphasising the name of the individual or collective dedicators, and worded to express a shade of possession and personification.

I then proceeded to examine the evidence for the abrupt change and the potentially imposed discontinuation in the socio-cultural texture of Selinunte pursuant to the Carthaginian conquest in 409 BCE. I traced in the archaeological and textual evidence traces of discontinuity and disruption and focussed on the changes taking place in the Meilichios sanctuary, specifically in the substitution of the practice of dedicating *horoi* in the *campo di stele* with the dedication of uninscribed iconographic *stelai* in the *recinto* area. I have examined the iconographic characteristics of these *stelai*, and connected this change in cultic activity with a deeper social change, possibly linked to the violent and imposed result of the

Carthaginian occupation of the city which no longer warranted (or allowed!) the expression of personal names and gentilitian groups in Greek-language dedications in the Meilichios sanctuary area.

The change in practice is best exemplified by the lone case of the inscribed herm no. 14 (fig. 93): this piece dates to just before the Carthaginian conquest of Selinunte, and the compresence of textual and iconographic aspects sets it on the boundary between the two practices. It marks the god's presence both physically with the carved herm of a bearded male god, and textually with the inscription's explicit declaration of being the Μιλίχιος of the *patria* of the daughters of Hermias and Eukleas. The following stage of cultic activity post-409 BCE will witness the shedding of the aura of exclusivity passed through the explicit epigraphic declarations of ownership made by gentilitian groups, while the divine presence embodied by the marker is accentuated by the carved reliefs. Moreover, the practice of dedicating *stelai* in the *recinto* multiplies and diversifies.

Indeed, the *stelai* are attested in a much higher number than the inscribed *horoi*, and their stylistic variety also suggests that the practice was now accessible to a wider (and perhaps therefore) less exclusive ritual community. The will to epigraphically define oneself or one's kinship group no longer appears to have been felt like a priority, or it was simply no longer warranted by the new civic makeup of Selinunte. The ritual changeover helps us understand what the civic situation in Selonunte pre-409 BCE might have been, and could possibly reflect an altered social situation in Selinunte's 'restless' socio-cultural history. The élite dedications pre-409 BCE reinforce the hypothesis that Selinunte's strife was fuelled less by ethnic tension and more by social competition, social hierarchies which were then distorted after the late 5th century. The patterns I have identified in the Meilichios markers from Selinunte have therefore revealed and reflected distinctive communities of practice

within the broader Selinunte community across periods of peace and war: before 409 BCE, these communities were built around and upon the assertion of status, group cohesion, and ancestral ties. After the Carthaginian conquest (in a context of possibly even imposed discontinuity of prior Selinuntine practice) the dissolution of previous social hierarchies and collective identities is signalled by the updated ritual priorities of the new communities of practice frequenting the Meilichios sanctuary post-409 BCE.

After this date, the use and display of writing were no longer employed to give visibility to the personal name and kinship group of the dedicator. Instead it is abandoned altogether, suggesting that the people once appropriating writing as their cultural prerogative were no longer in the position to do so. Participation in the dedicatory actions in the new sanctuary space of the *recinto* appears therefore to have been extended to a wider community of practice, whose identities are fuzzy and invisible to us (for lack of evidence), but whose cultural diversity is signified by the quantity and stylistic variety found in the iconographic *stelai* (and not necessarily in the stylistic quality).

Conclusive remarks to Part Three

In Part Three of this thesis, I have explored the political, social and cultural landscape within which western Sicilian communities set up their epigraphic practices. I have studied the mindful use and display of writing as a marker of communities constructing and displaying their ritual and social priorities in the Mozia tophet markers, the Selinunte *defixiones* and Meilichios markers. These priorities were dictated not necessarily by a standardising authority, but by the nature of the epigraphic texts as visible monuments, by the circumstances for the creation of the inscriptions, the audience to which the text is addressed, and the functions the text is called upon to carry out. I have also traced the evolution of these practices across time and place, investigating the social and economic drivers at the heart of region-wide processes impacting the civic life of Mozia and Selinunte, as well as of other settlements in Sicily and the Mediterranean. The aim was to test whether the collective social identities uncovered in Part Two of the thesis were maintained or challenged by the written record of certain key sites in western Sicily.

At Mozia, I found that the delay between the start of cultic activity at the tophet and the first dedications of votive markers could be linked to the social and economic development of the city in the 6th century BCE. The city witnessed unprecedented spending in urban and religious landscape. The tophet sacred area was expanded to accommodate increased participation in its rituals, and the votive offerings became standardised,

introducing for the first time the use of stone markers as part of the votive action. I have associated Mozia's flourishing with its successful insertion in the trade networks of the Mediterranean, especially with the Sicilian, Greek and Carthaginian markets. Archaeological evidence from the island indeed shows higher quantities of Greek imported material flooding the city's material culture. Mozia's increased wealth is also attested in private spending, suggesting that some individuals might have been the bigger social beneficiaries of Mozia's wealth.

The notion of a hierarchically stratified society emerging with greater clarity in Mozia during the 6th century led me to focus on the disparity between inscribed and uninscribed markers. I have suggested that in this case, social hierarchy might have corresponded to a ritual hierarchy, where only certain individuals could dedicate inscribed markers. Writing could therefore have been perceived by the tophet-goers as an élite technology, the cultural prerogative of a restricted group of people of higher status who wished to confer added value, visibility and power to their dedications. The dedicators' personal names and ancestry are in fact given greater visibility in writing, fuelling social competition and prestige. Indeed, the Mozia tophet inscriptions acquire a completely novel votive formulation, one attributing greater visibility to the relationship between the god and the human dedicator, following a formulaic model which could have been borrowed from the Greek votive habit. Evidence of increased interaction between Mozia and the western Sicilian settlements founded by Greeks such as Himera and Selinunte is indeed attested by a small number of inscriptions and a vast amount of pottery found on the island and dating to the 6th century.

It is in this aspect especially that Mozia demonstrates a divergence from the other archaic central Mediterranean tophets of Carthage and Sulky, which despite similarities in the timeline of tophet ritual activity (a delay in the adoption of votive markers, the

contextually small numbers of inscribed texts) appear not to have adopted the new votive formula found instead of Mozia. Mozia's unique proximity to and interaction with Greek-settled polities in western Sicily could therefore account for this divergence, which puts into question the notion of a homogeneous 'Punicity' found across Levantine settlements of the central Mediterranean, especially in matters typically perceived as the cornerstones of Punic culture such as the tophet. Indeed, the markers of the Mozia tophet do not seem to mark a distinctive ethnic or broad cultural group, but rather they signal the existence of polity interactions between Mozia and the western Sicilian and wider Mediterranean landscape, playing out on the social, economic, ritual and epigraphic stage of the tophet.

The lack of clear ethnic definability is also found in the Selinunte *defixio* material. Rather than signifying inter-ethnic strife, these texts refer to situations of personal contention and discord. The texts seem to pertain to the private literacy of a wider social class, the writings of a non-élite social group usually unattested in the Sicilian epigraphic record. Unlike the Mozia tophet inscriptions, the Selinunte curses did not use text to display wealth or status, but instead worked as the violent expedient, unlicensed by civic power, intended to bring an unfair advantage to the cursers. The language of the curses is also strategically manipulated in order to maximise the effectiveness of the malediction: to do so, the curse writers could have borrowed the social authority passed through the public and private literacy visible among the city's licensed practices, such as public documents and private contracts. The use of lists has been singled out as one of the most emblematic instances of this authority-borrowing strategy, and parallels have been sought with the official and private language of Selinunte's and western Sicily's epigraphic cultures. In fact, the people writing these early curse texts were not simply adopting existing epigraphic models wholesale, but carefully selecting and originally adapting the available forms most conducive to

the written cursing practice's violent aims – a competitive emulation of sorts, where intervisibility between different literacies played a crucial part in defining the new written practice of cursing.

Moreover, Selinunte was not unique in its cursing culture: new evidence from Himera would suggest that civic strife was a common feature of the western Sicilian urban life in the Archaic and Classical periods. The curses also fit well within the wider lapidary epigraphic culture of Sicily as a whole, following the early surge in inscriptions especially in coastal urban centres of the south and west of Sicily, before almost disappearing at the dawn of the Hellenistic age. Both cursing and lapidary epigraphy emerged as quite different practices after the widespread slump in inscribing in the 4th century. This situation appears therefore to be less justified by ethnic discord, and more by social tensions between Selinunte's wealthy élite in charge of the city's official literacy, and a civically disenfranchised non-élite visible in the curse texts. Indeed, the curses ultimately offer precious insight upon the ways people conceived and perceived the textual world they inhabited, how they adapted it to fit their ritual priorities, and how the practice changed or was extinguished as a result of the war, relocations and destruction of the 4th century.

Whereas the curses work as markers of a socially defined non-élite collective identity, its literacy and its discords, the Meilichios markers offer information concerning Selinunte's gentilitian groups. The ritual activities taking place within this sacred area appear to have been precluded to the city's wider collectivity, and were instead the ritual prerogative of small kinship groups. These people chose to prioritise the presentation of their social identities, whether individual names, a kinship group or an institution such as the *patria*, in writing, in a manner similar to what I have already examined taking place at the tophet of Mozia and its restricted group of inscribed markers. Once again therefore, the mindful use

and display of writing are bent to fit the social priorities of a distinct group, thus conferring prestige and exclusivity to the practice. These choices are geared to emphasising the name of the individual or collective dedicators, and worded to express a shade of possession and personification. The tophet and Meilichios rituals, despite being profoundly different in nature, could then have appealed to similar forms of religiosity, connected to the private and family sphere of the civic community, and perceived as an ideal stage for people to 'see and be seen' by the wider community as they engaged in acts of private cult. Once again therefore, social hierarchies and ritual hierarchies reflect each other, and writing is used as the cultural prerogative of a subgroup.

But a deep change in ritual action at the Meilichios sanctuary shows that a profound alteration in ritual actions and mentalities had occurred pursuant to the Carthaginian conquest of the city. Indeed, the use of inscribed *horoi* in the *campo di stele* was substituted by the dedication of uninscribed iconographic *stelai* in the *recinto* area. Other changes in Selinunte's urban and religious landscape have been attributed to this dramatic moment, where population influx or even substitution led to a different tradition of material culture. These historical events appear to have prompted or allowed wider participation in the ritual activities connected to this sacred area: a higher number of *stelai* are attested in this period, and the stylistic diversity (in terms of variability, not necessarily of quality) seen in these markers could indeed suggest that the practice was now accessible to a wider and less exclusive ritual community, where social definition in exclusive terms was no longer warranted or felt like a priority.

To conclude, the assertion and the perception of writing and wealth, of group cohesion and corporate allegiance, of individual status and ancestral ties, have all been common elements recurring in the case studies examined in Part Three. They show distinct

similarities with the conclusions drawn and the behavioural patterns observed in Part Two. In the next and final part of this thesis therefore, I will discuss in greater detail how the case studies in Parts Two and Three complement each other, bringing out the differences and similarities between the data and the interpretations so far examined. I will also return to the original aims of this thesis and examine what the evidence I have examined allows me to conclude about the collective identities in western Sicily.

Part Four

Edge people

Discussion

In the Introduction to this thesis, I had stated my intention to write a new history of western Sicily in the late Archaic and Classical periods, a history focusing on the processes of collective identity assertion and negotiation on a social stage. There is a need for such a history, for as I have shown in Part One of this thesis, the prioritisation of ethnicity in the definition of collective identities in this region and period continues to influence the ways the agents and dynamics of contact are conceptualised. The quasi-automatic ethnic labelling of collective identities is not only unwarranted by the available data, but it also obfuscates our understanding of other types of identity. A new history of western Sicily should shift its focus from the predefined outcomes to the *processes* of identity construction, and should examine the different social reasonings and rationales underlying the assertions and negotiations of collective identities. As a consequence, this history should be particularly receptive to patterns of change and persistence teased out across different assemblages of evidence: conformative behaviours are as significant and deliberate as breaks from traditional habits: both processes shed light upon a broad range of overlapping, 'edge' identities.

This history should also investigate what labels might then be possibly applied to the processes and outcomes emerging from a situation of cultural interaction and identity assertion. The corollary to this all-important question is what use might blanket ethnic labels be in capturing different, overlapping, discordant communities of practice. Just as the

concept of 'Romanization' has been problematised by recent scholarship promoting views from the margins of the Roman Empire, so should 'Hellenization' be unpacked and questioned when applied to diverse regional contexts such as western Sicily. The unproblematic use of such labels cannot capture 'big picture' social differentiations, nor the conscious strategies of identity negotiation taking place in local contexts. These are questions that apply well beyond the scope of western Sicily: this thesis has uncovered a coherent *diversity* of practices across the case studies examined in the region of western Sicily, which elude ethnic distinctions such as 'Greek', 'Phoenician' and 'Elymian'.

This is the history I have sought to capture in this thesis. In order to write this history, I chose to study the burial and epigraphic record for evidence of ways and hierarchies of belonging. Funerary culture is still addressed in Sicilian studies as a stage for interactions between ethnically labelled communities, often patterned by Hellenization processes. Moving away from these ethnic assumptions, I selected a number of sites found in this geographical area and active during this historical period, and examined how differences and similarities, changes and persistences in burial practice were consciously resorted to express social priorities. I chose to test my finds on certain epigraphic practices also attested in western Sicily between c. 550 and 350 BCE. Inscriptions are crucial evidence for understanding how communities used texts to represent and convey their identities, but the inscribed evidence from this region is still mostly studied in isolation from broader epigraphic patterns, and is often connected to strictly ethnic interpretations (of the cultic circumstances of the text's use, of the onomastic traditions appearing in the text, of stylistic and linguistic choices). I show that the conscious use of text and the textual choices found in certain epigraphic practices were embedded within the distinctive historical contexts whence they were created, and were adapted in response to the social requisites of the people involved.

In order to isolate the circumstances, practices and social contingencies under which collective identities become visible in the epigraphic and burial evidence, I paid particular attention to three different markers isolating dynamics of identity assertions and their outcomes. The markers were: patterns of selective and deliberate behaviour, patterns of change in these behaviours and practices, and patterns of peer-polity interaction. The first of these is important because identities are essentially performative and strategic: the sets of behaviours and practices expressing these identities are consciously chosen, negotiated, cast aside or maintained by people depending on historical circumstances or personal situations. This selective behaviour could be used to express solidarity and affiliation to certain identities, while also signifying the exclusion of others from this very subgroup. In fact, the collective identities I have found in the epigraphic and burial evidence are signalled by social interactions, emulation and competition, and relate *in primis* to social differentiation. Hierarchies of social belonging have in fact been the key finding of this thesis.

The second marker takes into account the fact that, within this deliberate staging of identities, change is as important as coherence and persistence in behaviours and practices. Changes in the burial and epigraphic record can be connected to geographical landscapes, historical circumstances, economic drivers and the social and civic structures of settled communities. For example, the movement from an unstratified society to a clearly socially differentiated one came to influence profoundly people's social priorities and requisites. Altered contexts and social contingencies would therefore explain changes in hierarchies of social belonging and people's collective identities, and the ways they sought to present themselves in their burial and epigraphic behaviours.

These changes weren't restricted to the internal development of isolated sites, but can instead be traced across most western Sicilian settlements. In fact, the third marker is linked

to western Sicily's increased interconnectedness, which had the consequence that processes of peer polity interaction played a part in the construction and expression of social identities. This region was in fact characterised by an increased natural and man-made state of connectivity, which increased the potential for interactions among settlements and engendered competitive emulation and differentiation among sites. Intervisibility occurs between settlements as it does between communities coexisting in the same settlement, increasing or exasperating social differentiations.

The history of western Sicily, as is visible in the burial and epigraphic assemblages I have examined in this thesis, is therefore a social history, which breaks down assumed ethnic boundaries and investigates the collective social identities of communities detectable in the markers outlined above. This social history of western Sicily is marked by two crucial historical phases, one trade-driven, the other politics-driven. The first phase took place between the mid-6th century and the mid 5th century BCE, when I have observed a boom in commercial activities, in the mobility of people and objects, in cultural exchanges, in availability of resources. In this period, settlements in western Sicily flourished, engaging in public spending, urban renovation, cultic expansion, import and export activities. Monte d'Oro di Montelepre, Monte Castellazzo di Poggioreale and other hinterland sites began importing record quantities of Greek-style or Greek-manufactured goods, selecting high-quality items from the available repertoire. The important harbours of Mozia, Palermo and Solunto set themselves up as primary redistribution centres within trans-Mediterranean trade routes, and their archaeological record has revealed increasing numbers of artefacts imported from Italy, Sardinia, Greece, the Levant and other Sicilian sites. Selinunte and Himera were also main players on the long-distance trade scene, importing products from across the central and eastern Mediterranean and acting as key nodes in the injection of these goods into

western Sicilian markets (the conflicts that culminated in the battle of Himera in 480 BCE did not seem to impact the city's involvement in long and short distance trade routes).

The successful insertion of these settlements into the commercial routes of the wider Mediterranean led to an inflow of wealth. Large-scale public spending was directed to the urban refurbishment of these cities: civic architecture was renovated and given a monumental finish, entire sanctuary complexes were expanded, private housing was overhauled with high-quality ornaments. For instance, we have seen how in Mozia the tophet sanctuary area was expanded to house increased cultic activity and the sacred area of the Kothon was built; while on Monte Castellazzo and other hinterland sites construction techniques were updated to the latest architectural technologies found in Selinunte and Himera. Wealth was also channelled in the hands of certain subgroups: private housing in Mozia's residential D Area also attests an increase in wealth consumption, as do the luxury grave goods amassed in the rock-cut chamber tombs of Manico di Quarara.

But this situation of widespread prosperity was cut short by the conflicts that gripped Sicily between the late 5th and the 4th century: a time of unrest, war, destruction, forced movement of people and profound changes in civic texture and social structures. Politically-motivated conflicts between Sicilian settlements (such as Segesta and Selinunte) and the increased involvement in Sicilian affairs of powerful players on the Mediterranean stage (Carthage and Athens) came to influence the fates of the settlements of western Sicily. Changes in wealth consumption and the interruption of existing trade networks are visible in the evidence, as some of the main purveyors and redistribution centres of imported goods were violently destroyed. Selinunte was conquered by the Carthaginians in 409 BCE, Himera was razed to the ground in 409 BCE, Mozia and Solunto in 397 BCE (further East, Agrigento fell in 406 BCE, Gela and Kamarina in 405 BCE). Numerous hinterland settlements

also succumbed to this crisis, with civic life either ceasing or witnessing an abrupt hiatus: the archaeological evidence from sites such as Monte Castellazzo, Monte Maranfusa, Entella, Montagnola di Marineo, Monte Iato, Marianopoli and many others drops or disappears entirely over the course of the 5th century BCE. These historical vicissitudes were to alter the social and political landscape of western Sicily with long-lasting effect, and eventually led to the increased formalisation of Carthaginian power over the western part of Sicily.

These two historical phases, corresponding to the expansion and the contraction of civic life, are visible in the epigraphic and burial evidence examined in this thesis. It is especially in the introduction of new practices, and in the cessation or profound alteration of material evidence that the full impact of the two historical moments outlined above becomes the clearest. Throughout the 6th century, new written practices were introduced in the Sicilian settlements, such as the cursing habit most visible in Selinunte and Himera from around 550 BCE. The use of votive markers is first attested in the tophet of Mozia and the *campo di stele* of the Meilichios sanctuary in Selinunte in the early and late 6th century, respectively. The mortuary evidence also undergoes an expansion in burial rituals, with the introduction of new tomb types (*cappuccina*, *enchytrismos*, cremation) alongside traditional graves (rock-cut trench tombs) in Manico di Quarara and several other hinterland sites during the mid-6th century. The tombs become richer, and high-quality grave goods are attested across all the examined necropoleis in this period.

But dramatic changes in the burial and written cultures are also visible: cursing ceases to be attested in Selinunte after the Carthaginian conquest of the city, and the use of inscribed *horoi* in the Meilichios sanctuary is replaced by the dedication of *stelai* with carved reliefs in the *recinto* area. I have interpreted this situation as owing to a drastic change in the social makeup of Selinunte post-409 BCE: the new circumstances did not allow for

previous ritual practices to continue undisturbed. The tophet on Mozia also gradually fell out of use after the settlement's destruction in 397 BCE, while the necropoleis of Solunto, Monte Castellazzo and Himera were all abandoned pursuant to the fall of their settlements to armed conflicts. At Manico di Quarara, the *enchytrismos*, trench and *cappuccina* tombs became increasingly common, until in the early 4th century they completely supplanted the rock-cut chamber tombs (which had endured throughout the 6th and 5th centuries).

The introduction of new practices, the extinction of old ones, and especially the coexistence of old and new has been traditionally interpreted along ethnic lines by much current scholarship. Ethnic identities are thus unquestioningly prioritised, leading to the interpretation of the coexistence of different practices as the coexistence of different ethnic groups, without paying attention to the more nuanced processes leading to these situations. 'Hellenization' is invoked as an explanation for the appearance of Greek-style goods or practices in indigenous necropoleis, and participation in a 'Punic *koinè*' is adduced as an explanation for similarities across Levantine settled cities in the central Mediterranean. These blanket labels hide the variability engendered by the coexistence of different vocabularies of practice.

Instead of calling on broad classifications and labels for agents and processes, my study of the social history of western Sicily has revealed the historical settings, the economic drivers, the social contexts and the geographic interconnectedness characterising and impacting this region and its practices. I have already identified the economic drivers which led to the increased consumption and display of wealth in the mid-6th century BCE. The economic flourishing of the settlements had social repercussions: certain subgroups were able to enrich themselves more than others, and from an unstratified social structure the settlements advanced to a more clearly socially differentiated civic texture. Moreover, the natural and man-made state of connectivity characterising the western part of Sicily, crisscrossed

by river valleys, plains and low mountain ranges, enabled connections between inland and coastal settlements. I have identified in the Belice river valley one of the key communication routes knitting together the western Sicilian landscape, linking the Tyrrhenian and the Mediterranean, and shown how sites such as Monte Castellazzo, Selinunte and Monte Maranfusa, Monte d'Oro, Erice and the Piana di Palermo, Solunto and Himera were all intervisible.

It is this unique state of geographical connectedness which engendered processes best characterised as peer-polity interactions in certain historical periods. In this thesis I have shown how peer-polity interactions led to a variety of outcomes, as each community reacted differently to the arrival and the aftermath of migrant communities to western Sicily, to the increased availability and accessibility to goods and practices. These local responses are attested in the variety of coexisting vocabularies of material culture which I have defined in this thesis as mortuary and epigraphic variability. It is a situation visible in the early attestation of both inhumation and cremation burial rituals in Solunto and Palermo, despite other Levantine settled centres of the 'Punic *koinè*' demonstrating diverging burial behaviours. The presence of both burial typologies, such as *cappuccina* tombs and rock-cut trench tombs in Solunto, has been connected to the closeness of Himera and the commercial relations subsisting between these two settlements (clear in the mutual pottery imports in both settlements). Monte Castellazzo's burial record also attests the existence of inhumation and cremation rituals, but at Manico di Quarara cremation rituals are absent. Castellazzo's proximity to Selinunte may have affected this divergence in practice, as it seems to have been more receptive to technologies '*à la Selinunte*', such as construction techniques and religious cults (attested by the stele mentioning the cult of Herakles discovered in Mandra di Mezzo). On Mozia, the tophet inscriptions acquire a novel votive formulation different

from the traditional Levantine votive habit, attested exclusively in this site and not consistent with the other archaic tophets of Carthage and Sulky. This formula gave greater visibility to the relationship between the god and the human dedicator, following a formulaic model which could have been borrowed from the Greek-language votive habit, as expressed in the practices of nearby communities such as Selinunte and Himera.

It seems therefore that the coexistence of different vocabularies of material culture was defined less by ethnic rationales and more by socio-historical drivers, by competitive emulation and differentiation, by local responses to regional interconnectedness and intervisibility. In fact, practices and goods were not simply being adopted wholesale and unproblematically, but instead they were being adapted to the tastes, requisites and priorities of the local communities. My study of the burial and epigraphic evidence has revealed that matters of a social nature were prioritised in the minds of the western Sicilians, and this is evident in the deliberate choices and strategic ways they set up their material culture, where mortuary and epigraphic variability correspond to social differentiation. In all four necropoleis examined, certain social groups appear to have favoured certain burial rituals over others as a way of asserting their belonging to and solidarity with a distinct collective identity. This is observed for example in the persisting use of chamber tombs in Manico di Quarara, despite the availability of *cappuccina* and trench tombs. Moreover, this choice is in no apparent contradiction with the preference for luxury Greek-style imports amassed in the chamber tombs. The rationale behind these choices is to be connected to the potential of certain burial practices to convey the status of the deceased and their belonging to distinct social groups.

Moreover, the choice of grave typologies and grave goods enabled certain social groups linked via blood, solidarity or kinship to assert their identities and status more effectively.

Manico di Quarara's chamber tombs were perceived as more impactful conveyors of social membership owing to their potential for housing multiple burials, therefore directly expressing symbolic or factual group allegiance. These tombs were also clearly visible from the urban settlements, their façades were monumentalised with architectural embellishments and they were spatially clustered in groups. A similar strategy can be seen to have been implemented in Solunto and Palermo, where starting in the mid-6th century, people began to reuse rock-cut chamber tombs to accommodate multiple burials - equipped with the highest-quality grave goods found in these necropoleis. In Palermo, these tombs aligned with the road running through the city of the dead, further maximising visibility. The evidence supports the hypothesis that increased burial expenditure was perceived as an effective way to render burial hierarchy in death, which itself was a reflection and an extension of social hierarchies in life.

The existence of a socially structured and differentiated society is not only evident in the mortuary variability. The epigraphic evidence also showed how 'written hierarchies' – understood here as access to and use of writing - also corresponded to social hierarchies. The written word was in fact used as an élite technology, an ensconced rarity which was the cultural prerogative of a select group of individuals. This has emerged with clarity at the tophet of Mozia and the Meilichios sanctuary of Selinunte: only a select group of people could make written dedications in this sanctuary, whereas the wider ritual community could dedicate uninscribed markers in Mozia, or unwrought stones with a mostly symbolic value indicating presence and votive renewal in Selinunte. In both cases, despite the intrinsic differences in nature between these two sanctuaries, the actual use of writing appears to have been reserved for a small subgroup. This accounts for the contextually limited number of inscribed markers found in these sanctuaries, compared to the total number of offerings.

But the inscribed texts themselves were also being manipulated in order to emphasise the exclusive social identity of the people writing. Formulations implying ownership, pre-eminence assigned to the name of the dedicator and his ancestry, the absence of accessory elements unrelated to the social groups and personal status, were all strategies adding value, visibility and power to the dedications – and their dedicators. The priority was to see and be seen.

The impact of visible public and private writing on popular imagination may be retraced in the conscious textual choices of Selinunte's curse tablets. The curses represent a very different type of literacy from the licensed, official writings of the city, but within this individual writing practice I have examined attempts to actively borrow the authority of licensed literacy in order to confer potency to the curse's violent and unlicensed ends. The evidence of the curses is at odds with the patterns examined in the other epigraphic and mortuary assemblages, as this practice does not necessarily reflect the priorities and choices of a social élite in Selinunte. Instead, it offers valuable insight into a wider yet less visible sector of Selinunte's demography, one to which social status and visibility were less of a priority, compared to the social rationales of the groups dedicating *horoi* at the Meilichios sanctuary (close by one of the largest curse deposits in Selinunte). In order effectively to confront situations of civic strife and personal difficulties, these people created the new practice of written cursing, borrowing the textual formulations of official public and private epigraphy such as the listing of names, to guarantee sinister effectiveness to the text. The existence of a social alternative to the exclusive groups more publicly visible in the burial and epigraphic evidence of western Sicily has been more arduous to pin down decisively in the mortuary record.

In sum, the social hierarchies I have identified in the burial and epigraphic assemblages signify the existence of smaller, exclusive groups and their relations with wider communities of practice. These groups were selecting and adapting objects, texts and rituals based on their functions, cost, power, distinctiveness, recognizability, exclusivity and desirability to better respond to updated socio-cultural priorities and settings. The potential for inter- and intra-settlement social interaction, competition and emulation are often at the heart of the deliberate ways these social groups chose to structure and express their identities through burial and epigraphic practices. In fact, the wider visibility and intelligibility of their choices seem to have been an important factor at play, possibly suggesting that the social identities under discussion were not only intrinsically related to personal experiences, but were also constructed as expressions that would be viewed by others.

But these collective identities were as liable to change as the social contingencies giving rise to them in the first place. I have already discussed how the late-5th century represented a watershed moment in the fates of western Sicilian settlements. The alteration of historical circumstances and the upsetting of economic balances pursuant to politically motivated conflicts led to the contraction of civic life across the region. As a consequence, the social differentiations which had previously signified the existence of distinct collective identities either crumbled away or morphed into different balances of power. Changes in the burial economy and rituals of Manico di Quarara suggest a weakening social environment, engendered by a decrease in the all-important connectivity between sites. Civic life and social structure in Solunto, Monte Castellazzo, Mozia and Himera simply ceased to exist after the destruction of the settlements. But it is in Selinunte that alterations in social and urban landscape pre- and post-409 BCE are most visible: the city's occupation by Carthaginian forces introduced a series of profound changes in the settlement's texture and

urban makeup. The cessation of cultic activities such as *horoi* dedications in the Meilichios' *campo di stele* was to be replaced by the new practice of dedicating uninscribed *stelai* in the *recinto* by what appears to be a wider community of practice, no longer defined in terms of social exclusivity in its cultic prerogatives.

The 5th – 4th century crises represent the cut-off point of the social history of western Sicily I have outlined in this Chapter and detailed in my earlier case studies. To summarise, this history has examined how sub-groups and individuals constructed their practices and their social identities by means of the careful selection of salient features in order to assert their élite status within a context of social mobility and competition. The emergence of social hierarchies was in fact engendered by heightened inter-community contacts, which reached their climax in the mid-6th century. These changes are not to be understood in terms of cultural imperialism imposed top-down, but as the product of processes of selection from a set of coexisting available solutions, enacted on the terms of the different communities of practice. Different contexts and different priorities translated into different local responses in the burial and epigraphic cultures. These differences are not conveyed by the blanket label 'Hellenization', with its implications of a monolithic process. Instead, I have observed how a coherent burial culture engendered by different socio-historical contexts was selectively adopted and adapted within each necropolis to fit local priorities. I have tested these conclusions on the epigraphic evidence as well, and have seen how the textual choices and the use of writing were also strategically adjusted to express the social identity of a collectivity.

This situation has therefore less to do with ethnic distinguishability of grave typologies, of grave goods, languages and ritual practices, and more to do with status-based identities. Indeed, the adoption and adaptation of locally available and historically situated

funerary and written cultures – as well as other aspects of material culture – expedited the blurring of distinct demarcations of the 'Greek' and 'Elymian' (i.e., 'them' and 'us') ethnic characterisation of communities and practices. On the one hand, the local responses to imported practices and goods through processes of selection, conformity and persistence could help break down the traditionally conceived polarisation between Elymian, Sikan and Sikel ethnicities enforced by the labels applied by past study. In fact, I have investigated and uncovered sets of trans-regional and intra-regional patterns of practice, priorities and identities which respond to a wider set of connectivities than to a distinct typology of ethnicities. On the other hand, by emphasising the patterns of practice at a local level, I have teased apart the specificities of processes loosely defined as 'Hellenization' and of practices or goods broadly labelled as 'Greek', and refined the evidence in terms of its visibility and availability within the western Sicilian ambit.

This comparative discussion has ultimately enabled me to appraise how these communities of practice speak to the broader western Sicilian environment and its material cultures. The patterns of practice that this social history of western Sicily has examined are not blips on the western Sicilian radar, but are large-scale shifts traceable across the entire region as local responses to wider circumstances. In fact, variability on a local level is matched by homogeneity on a regional level, whereby local patterns and differences in burial practice could be explained as reflections of the region-wide processes of peer-polity interactions. I have extended the concept of collective social identity definition as operating not only among sub-groups within individual settlements, but also on the wider stage and the larger scale of the western Sicilian settlements, engendered by regional networks of competitive emulation, social interaction, interconnection and intervisibility among peer polities.

To conclude, this social history of western Sicily between the late Archaic and Classical period has shown how social differentiation worked in the western Sicilian settlements. It has illuminated the complexity of the relationships between groups and individuals in this contested and complex *milieu*, without necessarily attributing them to inter-ethnic conflict or coexistence. Both the burial and the epigraphic record have worked as excellent proxies for examining variability in the conscious and deliberate choices underlying the selection of practices, and the ways this burial and epigraphic variability reflects social differentiation. This history has shown how peer-polity interactions structured burial and epigraphic variability into regionalising patterns of widespread practice, expressing the different ways that tradition, change and selection in burial and epigraphic practices translate into expressions of status, wealth, solidarity, and the assertion of collective corporate identities.

Conclusions

This thesis has charted the collective identities of groups and individuals settled in western Sicily during the late Archaic and Classical periods. It has examined the burial and epigraphical record for potential markers of identities which have become salient when expressed by the social requisites and priorities of the communities of practice. It has also challenged the assumption that identities are automatically and unproblematically classifiable according to ethnic or Hellenocentric categorisations, a premise which has hindered the observability and study of other group and individual identities in much past scholarship. Instead, this thesis has investigated the reasons, the contexts and the conscious strategies for the construction and expression of specific collective identities, focusing on the processes instead of the outcomes of identity construction. It has teased out patterns of change and persistence, the local contexts and the regional networks of interaction, and has isolated social identities which do not follow abstract boundaries. Specifically, I have examined the burial and epigraphic record for evidence of ways and hierarchies of belonging which had gone unnoticed or had been interpreted along ethnic lines by much past scholarship.

In Part One I discussed how the prioritising of ethnicity in the definition of collective identities in this region is a theoretical assumption which continues to influence the ways the agents and dynamics of contact in this region are conceptualised. I argued that an excessive emphasis on ethnicity as a basis for identity is unjustified, and it is often the case

in Sicilian studies that group identities are assumed to be ethnic, despite the surviving evidence indicating otherwise. Instead, I proposed to undertake for the first time a study of the western Sicilian burial practices between the late Archaic and Classical periods, which incorporates comparative examples from the epigraphic evidence. It investigates how the collective identities of groups and individuals were negotiated, differentiated and localised, by means of a new analysis of the burial and epigraphic evidence of western Sicily over an extended timeframe.

In Part Two I examined the burial record of four necropoleis. I focussed on how burials could work as the medium for, and the forum of, social differentiations expressed by patterns in the burial practice. One of the observed patterns across all four necropoleis under consideration has been that differences and similarities in burial practice are consciously resorted to express social priorities. Variability and differentiation in life are extended to death in a final assertion of identity. Furthermore, the existence of certain local corridors and networks of connectivity across the Conca d'Oro and the Belice river valley was instrumental in the definition of different coexisting vocabularies of material culture traceable in different necropoleis. Access to - or isolation from such networks came to influence a community's social textures. This was no random, inevitable or unconditional acculturation process: selection, coexistence and adaptation were visibly at work.

In Part Three I tested Part Two's findings on three different epigraphic practices. I showed how the textual choices and the use of text reflected different priorities, requisites and identities expressed by different communities of practice, and which were negotiated around different epigraphic cultures. These practices seem distinct from presumed ethnic distinctions supported by linguistic practices and literary traditions. Instead of applying assumed labels to the diverse contexts and epigraphic cultures examined throughout Part

Three, I teased out the specificities of the patterns of practice observed and embedded them within the wider western Sicilian ambit, while emphasising their local significance. I also paid attention to the changes these practices underwent in response to evolving and changing historical contexts, modes of association and participation.

In Part Four I picked up the observations made throughout Parts Two and Three and connected my finds to the original aims of this thesis, discussing the success of my approaches and my choice of datasets in writing a history of western Sicily in the late Archaic and Classical periods. I can summarise my conclusive general remarks as follows. Firstly, my case studies have drawn a coherent picture of mixed and macroscopic practices engendered by complex interactions reflected across western Sicily. The local responses to inter-group competition and interaction were transposed on a regional scale as 'peer-polity' interactions. Secondly, the individual and group identities signalled in the evidence examined are strongly influenced by the specific historical circumstances and economic drivers and socio-cultural contexts whence they originated. These account for the variability seen in the mortuary and epigraphic records, a variability I associate to social differentiation. It was under these circumstances that social identities become visible.

Thirdly, the identities I have isolated were rarely defined in a cohesive and collective sense: differences were not dismissed, social hierarchies and inter-group competition were clearly spelt out, and no extended sense of communal belonging was promoted. In fact, my case studies have uncovered that internal social distinctions, built on status, wealth, kinship, social mobility and ancestry, and predicated through the access to writing, to ritual practices, to burial typologies and to trade networks actively shaped intra- and inter-group dynamics. Burial and epigraphic hierarchies thus corresponded to social hierarchies. Fourthly, the social differentiations defining these identities appear to be unrelated to

presumed ethnic distinctions supported by linguistic practices, literary traditions, and the archaeology of ethnicity. I have shown how the applicability of supra-regional cultural groups or processes predicated along ethnic boundaries ('Punic', 'Greek', 'Hellenization') to explain patterns in practice cannot fully account for the single choices of local communities. Boundaries were negotiated around social requisites, and do not appear to have been embodied by ethnic notions. I have shown how the western Sicilian communities of practice did not conform to static notions of identity, but stood on the intersecting edges of allegiances, affinities and roots; and consciously chose salient aspects of their identities depending on contexts and priorities.

While I set out to break down boundaries of the kind enforced by overly-rigid and poorly-supported ethnic labelling, I have come across other boundaries, but this time they are not established etically, but emically negotiated within communities of practice for their own priorities and preferences (most commonly in a social sense). In this thesis, I have determined that, just as in their written and burial practices, the situational collective identities of the western Sicilian communities were signalling elective affinities, strategic compromises, and other possibilities of perceived boundaries and commonalities built around historical circumstances and social rationales which could have been felt by the people settled in western Sicily as a normal condition of life.

These conclusions respond directly to the higher aims that this thesis set out to address: thinking about what use might broad labels be when applied to the processes and outcomes of identity construction, and thereby contributing to the wider theoretical debate concerning ancient identities. This thesis has shown how, when considering what labels might possibly be applied to groups and individuals in western Sicily, it is less helpful to think in terms of distinct peoples, but rather in terms of 'people'. Labels are of limited help

when they are called on to signify a whole set of distinctive elements which groups chose to emphasise as the symbolic cornerstone of their sense of individual and collective self. In fact, this thesis has shown how social requisites, contexts and priorities contributed to the definition of identities in western Sicily, which complicated in turn the idea, use, and applicability of all-encompassing labels by acting across assumed boundaries (geographical, linguistic, ethnic, political, religious). This *modus operandi* has allowed for new and meaningful communities of practice to emerge, and for new ways of writing a history of communities in western Sicily from the mid-6th to mid-4th centuries BCE to be investigated.

Despite their 'slippery' nature, the western Sicilian identities deserve to be studied not despite their complex, localised and situational nature on the edge of abstract boundaries and simplistic categorisations – but precisely because of it. New studies should move beyond the restricted and restrictive interest in the history of the Greeks, the Phoenicians or the Elymians in western Sicily, as to fossilise such categories is to miss an opportunity to tease apart the complexity of socially defined and locally negotiated identities and the contexts whence they arose. Engaging in these new directions of study is especially congenial to current studies on this region, as new archaeological data continues to be published in increasingly systematic ways, and new advanced technologies expedite the analysis of large bodies of evidence.

In fact, with regard to new data and new directions of study, in this thesis I focussed on the burial and written evidence of certain sites and practices, but I believe that it would be highly interesting to study whether the social differentiations examined across these assemblages of evidence might also be reflected in the evidence for sacred and domestic architecture. The future publication of Himera's western necropoleis could also further complicate the picture of the burial patterns discussed in Part Two, while the forthcoming

publication of the 54 curse tablets from Himera will also advance our understanding of the textual choices exhibited by this class of epigraphic documents, beyond archaic and classical Selinunte. Furthermore, western Sicily is but one of the many possible regions of the ancient Mediterranean (and beyond) where an explicit focus on group identities could advance our understandings of social dynamics and complicate our assumptions on the ways people identified themselves in terms of differentiation or cohesion.

It would furthermore be fruitful to tackle a large-scale comparison between the patterns of practice and signalling of identities traced in western Sicily with their eastern Sicilian counterparts, in order to ascertain whether the regional patterns examined in this thesis could also be mirrored or disputed by eastern Sicilian practices. Eastern Sicilian material (especially with regard to burial practices for example, as detailed in the introduction to Part Three) has been published and studied by scholars interested in the diversity of group identities, and it would be compelling to compare the funerary practices of the western and eastern regions of Sicily against their distinct social, cultural and political backdrops. Moreover, the question 'ma gli Elimi sono esistiti?' should also be asked of the Sikels and of the Sikans (allowing re-evaluations to advance beyond the study of the linguistic evidence, in the case of the Sikans), whose altered geographical and historical *milieu* especially surrounding Ducetius' revolt could also open new lines of enquiry.

In terms of future directions in data analysis, this research has been challenged (but not limited) by the state of evidence for burial practices. The current state of conservation, safeguarding and publication of the archaeological material is largely unsatisfactory. The solutions and opportunities offered by large-scale digitisation projects should be realistically considered, as the demonstrated potential of digital corpora such as *ISicDef* and *I.Sicily* could unlock new patterns and detailed distributions in quantifiable burial data.

These are only some of the possible broader implications and future directions for new research invigorating the study of the processes of identity construction in the ancient world. New perspectives, new discoveries, and new histories await to be written, if one is prepared to break down self-imposed scholarly boundaries and search instead for Tony Judt's edge, 'the place where countries, communities, allegiances, affinities, and roots bump uncomfortably up against one another'.[1027] To return to the source of the heuristic model of 'edge people' this research has investigated with regard to the communities of western Sicily, I conclude this thesis with Tony Judt's advice, 'If you are born at intersecting margins and ... are at liberty to remain there, it seems to me a decidedly advantageous perch'.[1028]

[1027] Judt 2010: 205.
[1028] Judt 2010: 207.

Bibliography

Conventions and Abbreviations

Abbreviations of periodicals follow those recommended in *the American Journal of Archaeology (AJA)* 95 (1991), 1-16, supplemented by those in *L'Année Philologique.*

Abbreviations of ancient authors are those in S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[3] (Oxford, 1996), supplemented by those in H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones (eds.), *A Greek English Lexicon with a revised supplement* (Oxford, 1996). Translations of quoted texts are taken or adapted from a variety of existing editions, and are thus indicated in the notes. For all other texts, where no translator is stated, the translation is my own. All dates refer to BCE unless otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations of reference works follow those in S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[3] (Oxford, 1996), and in H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones (eds.), *A Greek English Lexicon with a revised supplement* (Oxford, 1996), with a few additions listed below.

Abbreviations of epigraphical publications follow H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones (eds.), *A Greek English Lexicon with a revised supplement* (Oxford, 1996), with the following additions:

CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.* Berlin 1863-.
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.* Paris 1881.
DTA	Audollent, A. (1904). *Defixionum tabellae quotquot innotuerunt: tam in Graecis orientis quam in totius occidentis partibus praeter Atticas in Corpore inscriptionum Atticarum editas.* Paris.
FGrH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.* Berlin 1923-.
IAS	Agostiniani, L. (1977). *Iscrizioni anelleniche di Sicilia.* Firenze.
ICO	Guzzo Amadasi, M. G. (1967). *Le iscrizioni fenicie e puniche delle colonie in Occidente.* Roma.

IG — *Inscriptiones Graecae consilio et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum RegiaeBorussicae editae.* Berolini 1873-.

IGASMG — Arena, R. (1989-1998). *Iscrizioni greche arcaiche di Sicilia e Magna Grecia.* vols. 1-5. Milan.

IGLPalermo — Manni Piraino, M. T. (1973). *Iscrizioni greche lapidarie del Museo di Palermo.* Palermo.

IGDS — Dubois, L. (1989). *Inscriptions grecques dialectales de Sicile: contribution àl'étude du vocabulaire grec colonial.* Roma.

I.Sicily — Prag, J.R.W. (ed.). *I.Sicily.* Online at: http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/ (accessed 13.01.20).

ISicDef — Sommerschield, T. (ed.). *ISicDef.* Online at: http://defixiones.ic3man.gr/ (accessed 13.01.20).

KAI — *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften.* Wiesbaden, 1960-.

MO — De Simone, R. (2013). *Minima epigraphica punica: nuove iscrizioni di Sicilia.* Palermo.

Mozia I-IX — AA.VV. (1964-1978) *Mozia I-IX: Rapporto preliminare della Missione archeologica della Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia occidentale e dell'Università di Roma.* Roma.

NGTC — Jordan, D. R. (2000). New Greek curse tablets (1985–2000). *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies, 41*(1), 5-46.

OCR — Eidinow, E. (2007). *Oracles, curses, and risk among the ancient Greeks.* Oxford.

PGM — *Papyri Graecae Magicae.* Leipzig 1931-.

SEG — *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.* Leiden 1923-.

SGD — Jordan, D. R. (1985). A survey of Greek defixiones not included in the special corpora. *Greek, Roman & Byzantine Studies, 26*, 151-197.

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