Writing a history of Palermo in the Roman Republic

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Any attempt to write a history of Palermo in the period of the final three centuries BCE is bedevilled by many of the same challenges as an attempt to write the history of Sicily itself in the same period. Surviving narrative histories forsake the island, once the city of Syracuse has been sacked by Marcellus. Beyond the occasional spotlights cast by the fragmentary accounts of the Slave Wars, and the very unique portrayal provided by Cicero's *Verrines*, "grand history" only returns, albeit briefly, for the Civil Wars of the 40s and 30s BCE. For the island of Sicily as a whole, any attempt to move beyond the pessimistic portrayal invoked by the combination of the "loss" of Greek Sicily and the corruption of Verres, must lay aside the increasingly sterile debates over civic status and seek to engage with the more complex and disparate evidence of archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics.[1] Paradoxically, perhaps, this moves the story towards an emphasis upon the local, and the implications of readings of the evidence of local material culture for the wider history of the island. At the same time, such an approach entails a rather different sort of history, less focused upon narrative, individuals and institutions, more concerned with cultural patterns and interactions.

In the case of Palermo, ancient Pan(h)ormus, the challenge is, if anything, even more extreme.[2] Subsequent to the passing references to its foundation (THUC. VI 2, 6; unnamed in DIOD. V 35), the city is only mentioned in passing in the fifth and fourth centuries in the context of the military campaigns of the Carthaginians and Syracusans, usually because of the value of its port. This sequence culminates with the temporary seizure of the city, « which has the finest harbour in all Sicily », by Pyrrhus in 278 BCE (DIOD. XXII 10, 4).[3] Subsequently in 258 BCE the Roman consuls made an abortive attack on Palermo (POLYB. I 24, 9-10), before a successful siege was mounted from the sea in 254 BCE and the most important (βαρυτάτη) city of the Carthaginian *eparchia* was captured (POLYB. I 38, 7-10).[4] Diodorus (XXIII 18, 3-5) reports the surrender of the old city in return for a payment of 2 *minas* per person (14,000 individuals bought their freedom; a further 13,000 were sold into slavery). The Romans almost immediately exploited the access to the city's harbour for their fleets (POLYB. I 39, 6; DIOD. XXIII 19, 1), before successfully resisting an attempt by the Carthaginians to recapture the city in 251 BCE (POLYB. I 40).[5] The port continued to be relevant for the Roman fleet in the Second Punic War (LIVY XXIV 36, XXIX 1).

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[1] See CAMPAGNA 2003, PRAG 2009 on the historiography; CAMPAGNA 2011, PRAG 2014 for attempts to read the island's history in this period from such a perspective. SORACI 2016b offers a recent survey of Roman Sicily.

[2] A useful summary of the evidence for ancient Palermo in TAMBURELLO 1994; history down to c. 251 BCE in ANELLO 1998.

[3] Note that Pyrrhus approached from inland, via Monte Iato; cf. PLUT. *Pyrrh.* XXII, which only names Eryx explicitly in Pyrrhus' campaign of 278 BCE.

[4] In 258 BCE the attack was also mounted from the interior; for 254, cf. DIO. CASS. *ap*. ZONAR. VIII 14, 4.

[5] Note the participation of the Panhormitani on the Roman side in 251 BCE; also noteworthy is the presence of merchants trading wine in the version in DIOD. XXIII 21.

After the conquest we enter the silent world of a "peaceful" Roman province.[6] The city passes unmentioned in accounts of the Slave Wars, or indeed the Civil Wars. The only subsequent notices are those of Cicero in the *Verrines*. The city appears as one of the five *civitates immunes ac liberae* in the infamous summary of CIC. *Verr*. II 3, 13, and as one of the major ports of the island (II 2, 185, *cf*. 5, 69-70). It is described as the seat of a *conventus* (II 5, 16 and 140) – and as such, it is a city which Verres, praetor in 73-71 BCE (and Metellus after him in 70), visited repeatedly for the holding of assizes (II 2, 63; 5, 16; 5, 21). Cicero repeatedly refers to the Roman *negotiatores* based at Panhormus (II 2, 153; 5, 140; 5, 161), whose presence is also confirmed by a contemporary dedication to the *legatus* M'. Sabidius by the *cives Romani in Sicilia Panhormi qui negotiantur*, from Tarracina (*ILLRP* no. 387 + *add*. II, 385). Several wealthy Panhormitani were targeted by Verres (II 4, 29; 5, 16; 5, 21), and several Romans, including an *eques*, are mentioned as resident in the city (II 5, 140; 5, 161; 5, 168). The city sent *legati* to testify against Verres at the *Actio Prima* in Rome in 70 BCE (II 2, 120). This extremely limited set of data – which unsurprisingly speaks to a city with a significant harbour on the north coast of the island – is effectively concluded by the briefest of mentions in STRABO (VI 2, 5), who in a summary list of the north coast settlements states that Πάνορμος δὲ καὶ Ῥωμαίων ἔχει κατοικίαν (« Panhormus has a settlement of Romans »; *katoikia* is not Strabo's usual word for a Roman *colonia*).

Consequently, after recounting the Roman conquest, modern discussions have confined themselves almost exclusively to discussions of the city's status after the Punic Wars (in light of the Ciceronian passage), and after the Civil Wars (in light of the Strabo passage).[7] It is perhaps emblematic of such a focus that the city's status as one of the few privileged, tax-exempt cities on the island by the time of Cicero has caused considerable debate and *aporia* among scholars: either because it resisted Rome (which is to ignore the surrender, purchase of freedom, and apparent support in the resistance of 251 BCE), and/or because it was Punic (which is to buy-in to the long tradition of anti-Punic bias and ignore very obvious parallels such as Utica).[8] Already in the nineteenth century, however, Adolph Holm suggested that the importance of the port might itself provide sufficient explanation.[9] A comparison with the case of Halaesa might also be instructive, another north coast city, which « in later times experienced considerable growth, both because of maritime commerce and because of the tax immunity granted by the Romans […] ».[10] Even more ink has been spilt on the question of whether Panhormus was elevated to the rank of a Roman *colonia* from the time of Augustus, or only from the Severan period. Since the problem lies in the ambiguity of the sources, the only basis for a judgement lies in better contextualisation of the significance of the city within Roman Sicily.[11]

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[6] «Seit dem Falle von Syrakus und Agrigent war die Bedeutung Siciliens bei weitem nicht mehr die alte. Eine römische Provinz hat nur in sehr beschränktem Umfange eine gesonderte Geschichte» (HOLM 1898, 67).

[7] So, for example, TUSA 1999 touches on these two points alone for the entire period after 242 BCE; cf. GIARDINA 1987, 225 bookending an account of Palermo in the imperial period by the notice of Strabo and that of Procopius on the conquest by Belisarius in 535 CE.

[8] FERRARY 2014, 19-20 emphasises initial resistance; PAIS 1888, 138 stressed its Punic origins, and SERRATI 2000, 120 with note 16 omits the city from his main list and speculates it must be a separate later grant. SORACI 2016a, 120-122 refers to an «alone di mistero», and summarises past solutions; see PRAG 2014, 197-199 on the status.

[9] HOLM 1898, 81; for Utica, see POLYB. I 83, 11, XXXVI 3, 1 and the epigraphic *Lex Agraria*, line 79 (CRAWFORD 1996, no. 2).

[10] DIOD. XIV 16, 3; see esp. FACELLA 2006, 196-214.

[11] SORACI 2016b, 103 summarises the problem, with bibliographic references – see esp. VERA 1996.

As noted at the outset, this entails therefore that we shift the focus towards the non-literary evidence for the history of the city, in an attempt to build a context both for the Ciceronian evidence and a likely trajectory into which any discussion of civic status might be incorporated. However, the case of Palermo in the Republican period is further compounded by the serious dearth of alternative sources of evidence, making it hard to integrate the city even into the sort of non-narrative, material history envisaged. Epigraphic evidence is almost non-existent for this period (essentially a single Greek and a single Neo-Punic text, both private funerary texts).[12] It could be argued that this is a direct consequence of the city's continuous later occupation, since a comparison with other cities of the region in the Hellenistic period (e.g. Segesta, Solunto, Termini, Halaesa) suggests that rather more might be expected.[13] The archaeological evidence for the Hellenistic and Roman city is likewise scant and rendered extremely challenging by the dense, continuous occupation of the succeeding two millennia.

That said, the archaeological work conducted by the Soprintendenza di Palermo over the last 20 years has not been without significant results. The restudy of the peristyle houses in Piazza della Vittoria has clearly confirmed the significance of "Edificio B" as a building of the later second century BCE, and of a type better paralleled in the eastern Mediterranean, rather than directly following Sicilian or Italic models.[14] The more recently excavated remains of another second-century peristyle house in the interior of the nearby Palazzo Sclafani, in turn «si confermerà il carattere eclettico di una cultura che, ancora in piena età romana e in un momento di generale rinnovamento, si connota per una piena e convinta adesione ai modelli all'epoca in voga in tutto il mondo ellenistico».[15] Both houses are identified as part of a wealthier residential area within the *palaeopolis*, the "old city", not far from the public areas of the city (if the *agora* is assumed to be in the area of the Duomo); by contrast, the "new city", towards the harbour, shows greater evidence for the presence of artisanal quarters.[16] Indeed, it has been suggested that a greater degree of social stratification can be seen in the later Hellenistic city compared to the earlier (primarily funerary) evidence.[17] The urban plan within which these structures belong appears to date back to the fourth century BCE (the relationship of this to earlier planning remains unclear), reflecting what seems to be a major phase of urban renewal in the early Hellenistic period. The "Roman" city effectively re-used the existing urban structures (based upon the Punic foot) in a process of continuous development; although there is limited evidence for the direct impact of the First Punic War, such as the abandonment of houses to facilitate the reinforcement of the city wall.[18] Current evidence suggests that the primary necropolis moved to a different location at this period also.[19] Alongside this and other elements of "key-hole" rescue archaeology, the full extent of the ancient harbour is now much better understood, through a systematic programme of sedimentary coring – confirming what was long suspected, that in antiquity the harbour extended well up into course of the Kemonia river

[12] ISIC1120 and ISIC0809 (see http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk).
[13] PRAG 2018 for a survey of the Hellenistic epigraphy of Sicily.
[14] SPATAFORA-MONTALI 2006, 138-139.
[15] SPATAFORA-MONTALI 2006, 140.
[16] SPATAFORA 2009, 230; cf. ALEO NERO-CHIOVARO *ET AL.* 2018 for an iron workshop in the southern part of the *neapolis.*
[17] SPATAFORA 2009, 230.
[18] SPATAFORA 2009, 227 (with reference, e.g., to the Palazzo Arcivescovile excavations, which revealed at least six use-levels of a street between the fourth and second centuries BCE); SPATAFORA 2012, 18 for mid-third-century reinforcement of the walls at the expense of habitation structures.
[19] SPATAFORA 2012, 17 (mid-third-century tomb close to the western fortifications marking the maximum extent of the original main "Punic" cemetery); SPATAFORA 2009, 224 on the organisation of the main necropolis.

on the south side of the city, as well as including the area of modern Piazza Marina. A total size of some 15-20 hectares, with several likely areas for safe mooring, supplemented by further scope for mooring to the north in the area of the modern harbour, amply confirms the ancient reports of the harbour's value.[20] Recent work in Piazza Marina suggests that the area seems only to have silted up during or after the Islamic period.[21] Furthermore, recent excavations in the vicinity of Piazza Marina (in the Steri complex) suggest the presence of an extra-mural sanctuary overlooking the harbour in the earlier Hellenistic period (fourth/third centuries BCE), as well as providing evidence for occupation and commercial activities in the third century BCE, and perhaps a «più intensa frequentazione delle aree portuali».[22]

This is, necessarily, a very partial record (and this summary is even more partial), but it is already suggestive: the city underwent major redevelopment in the fourth century BCE, which is matched by the evidence for significant activity around the harbour (it has been suggested that the move away from the coast onto Monte Catalfano of the neighbouring settlement at Solunto in this period may have increased the significance of Palermo's port).[23] Although there is no direct evidence for significant destruction, or major restructuring in the transition to the Roman period, there are some changes, such as a move to a new (yet to be clearly identified) burial ground – even if only for the practical reason that the primary necropolis had reached its maximum practical extent – and an apparent shift in the social stratification of the community, with greater wealth and ostentation on display in the *palaeopolis*. In other words, a picture of both continuity and change. In very general terms, this could readily be aligned with the picture that is emerging from much of Sicily in this period, above all in the evidence for an increase in wealthy urban houses, and arguably for greater social stratification – the later second century was not only a period of great urban monumentalisation on the island, but also the time of the two great slave revolts. In other, better excavated, cities the growth of such private houses is matched also by greater urban monumentality, but the evidence in Palermo is so far lacking.[24]

Can we say any more, in the light of such limited evidence? Recent work in the fields of pottery studies and numismatics offers further possibilities. It has long been recognised that there is broad evidence for a major Sicilian element in the developing western Mediterranean wine trade, as reflected in the amphora evidence (a «pista siciliana» in the words of Fausto Zevi, following André Tchernia).[25] This is particularly clear in the Greek and Latin stamped Greco-Italic or MGS ware of the third and second centuries, which is widely attested in western Sicily. Although the question of whether the central Italian wine trade developed seriously pre-200 BCE remains a subject of debate, it is clear that some of the earliest evidence includes Latin-

[20] TODARO 1998, esp. 36-37 with FIG. III and FIG. VI.
[21] SPATAFORA-ALEO NERO *ET AL.* 2012.
[22] SPATAFORA 2009, 226; SPATAFORA 2012, 18; VASSALLO-ALEO NERO *ET AL.* 2016, 9-11.
[23] SPATAFORA 2009, 225-226.
[24] See CAMPAGNA 2006 and 2011 and PRAG 2014 for this general pattern on the island; cf. PORTALE 2006 on the specific case of nearby Solunto.
[25] ZEVI 2002, 44-46, after TCHERNIA 1986, 49-51. There is however little actual foundation for the more specific claim in ZEVI 2002, 46 for «una produzione in Sicilia ad opera di personaggi della classe senatoria che hanno acquistato o comunque sono in possesso di terreni a vigna», an unsupported elaboration of TCHERNIA 1986, 49-51, in turn cited with approval by TCHERNIA 2007. This is pure speculation based on the fact that several of the Latin names visible on the stamps find parallels in the *gentes* of several individuals holding office in the middle Republic (e.g. Iuventius, Antistius). The actual evidence for senatorial landholding in Sicily is essentially nil (see PRAG 2016, 72-74), and it is very uncertain what proportion of these Latin-stamped wares were actually produced in Sicily.

stamped ware similar to the MGS VI containers of the c. 270/260 – 210/200 BC period, and that western Sicily shows the highest proportion of attested examples.[26] As such, western Sicily forms part of a route that extends down the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy, through and around Sicily, and into Carthaginian North Africa, and appears to be a focus of commercial exchange already in the period between the First and Second Punic Wars.[27] This picture is interestingly consolidated now by the detailed study of Babette Bechtold on the western Sicilian ceramic evidence in this period. Western Sicilian sites down to the fourth century BCE are dominated by Sicilian-produced Punic amphorae types, with limited Carthaginian or Campanian imports (Lilybaeum alone shows stronger North African links).[28] Campanian wares, both fine-ware and some amphorae, begin to make some inroads into the region, but still at relatively low levels, from the end of the fourth/start of the third century BCE.[29] However, the major period of change is the middle and later third century BCE (i.e. concurrent with the obvious disruption of the First and Second Punic Wars). This is marked by a major reduction in western Sicilian production, with some evidence for both Campanian and Carthaginian imports (this coincides with the first of the Latin-stamped MGS VI wares on the island).[30] In the following period (end of the third and second century), local production remains limited while there is a very substantial increase in both Campanian and Carthaginian imports (Bechtold suggests Carthage is filling the gap left by local production in the west of the island, from which it was previously excluded).[31] In other words, a strong regional economy in the western half of the island appears to be substantially disrupted by the First and Second Punic Wars, opening the door to the exploitation of the Sicilian market by traders from both north (especially Campania) and south (especially Carthage). Bechtold, in similar vein to van der Mersch, is keen to revive the views of Càssola and others, that the economic interests of elite Romans (as visible in the names found on the stamped wares) drive the political decisions.[32] This is undoubtedly tempting, but risks a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* explanation and, given the relative lack of pre-war evidence, it remains just as plausible that warfare and associated activity instead were the drivers that opened up these new markets (recall the wine traders present at Palermo in 251 BCE, DIOD. XXIII 21, as well as the Italian traders seized by Carthage during the Mercenary War, POLYB. I 83, 5-11). In any event, the picture of regional change is very clear.

This evidence does not, by itself, immediately facilitate an assessment of Panhormus' place in this world – for all that one's instinct might be to assume the significance of the city as a key port in such exchanges – not least because of the extreme scarcity of actual examples of stamped MGS ware from Palermo itself.[33] However, Bechtold had already noted the apparent economic significance implied by the early Hellenistic ceramic evidence from Palermo and Solunto for western Sicily.[34] A more specific picture now emerges from recent work by Bechtold and her collaborators on the amphora production of Palermo itself.[35] Both Palermo

[26] See VAN DER MERSCH 2001, esp. 174-179 and 191, with FIG. I and TAV. I.
[27] Cf. VAN DER MERSCH 1994, 128-131 on the routes in relation to attested stamped wares.
[28] BECHTOLD 2007, 57-58.
[29] BECHTOLD 2007, 59-62.
[30] BECHTOLD 2007, 63-64 with reference to VAN DER MERSCH 2001, 176-177.
[31] BECHTOLD 2007, 59.
[32] BECHTOLD 2007, 64-65; cf. VAN DER MERSCH 2001, 191-192; CÀSSOLA 1962.
[33] I can only find one example in GAROZZO 2011 (*IMGSlt*6aPa, on p. 484: a second-century BCE Latin stamp, Q. ANTRO, of uncertain onomastic resolution); Palermo is, as a consequence, scarcely mentioned in these discussions (but note its repeated presence in VAN DER MERSCH 1994, 128-130); cf. GAROZZO 2006.
[34] BECHTOLD 2007, 58.
[35] I summarise elements of BECHTOLD 2015 at this point.

and Solunto have been identified as significant producers of Punic amphorae, not only with a dominant position in the amphora distribution of western Sicily, but also extending out into the Tyrrhenian basin. In the case of Palermo this only becomes significant from the beginning of the fourth century BCE, which aligns interestingly with the evidence for urban redevelopment and increased activity in the harbour area, noted above. A change of form is visible c. 300 BCE at Palermo, which can be observed across other sites in western Sicily also; but from this point Palermo and Solunto appear to diverge typologically from sites in south-west Sicily (Selinus, Lilybaeum). In Bechtold's view, this point marks the consolidation of the privileged position of Palermo (and Solunto) at the commercial interface with the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy (and she observes the relevance of the increasing presence of Campanian mercenaries in western Sicily during the fourth century BCE).[36] The period of the First Punic War is particularly challenging for any analysis due to the lack of archaeological evidence, but the attestation at Elea in the later third and early second century BCE of amphorae made of the same fabric (PAN-A-1) as earlier wares (which themselves showed continuity of fabric across the c. 300 BCE change in form) provides reasonable proof of «continued stable economic contacts at least with the lower Tyrrhenian area during the beginning of the period of Roman domination».[37] This enables Bechtold to suggest quite plausibly that Panhormus held a key position as the primary Sicilian *emporion* for the beginnings of the Campanian wine trade and the distribution of west Sicilian goods.[38]

The picture which begins to emerge from the ceramic evidence finds interesting and suggestive parallels in the numismatic evidence.[39] Our understanding of coin circulation in western Sicily in the Hellenistic period has been transformed in recent years by the work of Suzanne Frey-Kupper on the evidence from Monte Iato.[40] As in other aspects, the numismatic evidence from Palermo itself is very poor, but it is increasingly possible to build up a picture of the place of Panhormus from the wider material patterns observable in western Sicily. Fundamental to this approach is the fact that coinage, especially bronze coinage, in Sicily illustrates considerable local and regional autonomy. Local issues predominate, and at Monte Iato the dominant mint, over and above the production of ancient Ietas itself, is that of Panhormus. This is part of a pattern of extensive regional circulation in the period c. 350-240 BCE, under Punic control, where several of the dominant regional issues show a north coast focus, at least some originating from Panhormus.[41] As Frey-Kupper observes, this shows a marked correlation with the contemporary amphorae production and distribution patterns, and speaks to a primary role for Panhormus in the economy of western Sicily. Furthermore, just as the amphorae show a change in production c. 300 BCE (see above), at the same period local bronze and silver cease in the region, to be replaced by supra-regional coinages, still however reflecting a key role for Panhormus. An underlying element throughout the period is a clear separation in (bronze) coin circulation patterns between eastern and western Sicily. The disruption of the First Punic War, which is visible in the disruption to amphorae distribution, is also reflected in the coinage of the region: Punic coinage disappears (implying active removal from circulation), but local issues also are significantly reduced, at least in the west. Syracusan issues partially fill the gap

[36] BECHTOLD 2015, 69-70.
[37] BECHTOLD-SCHMIDT 2015, 18-19.
[38] BECHTOLD 2015, 71.
[39] A point which is raised by both BECHTOLD 2015, 68 and FREY-KUPPER 2013, 176-178, cf. 706-707.
[40] FREY-KUPPER 2013, especially the extended summary at 701-720, which is the source for much of the following paragraph, and whence the evidence can be traced in detail.
[41] FREY-KUPPER 2013, 706-707 and see e.g. FIG. CI on 621.

and, during the Second Punic War, so do imported Roman issues, as well as coins of Messana and Rhegium. From the early second century, however, western Sicily is distinguished by a series of "Romano-Sicilian" bronze issues (lasting at least 30 years, c. 190/170-130/120 BCE), bearing the names of Roman office holders (quaestors, when specified). These appear to have two major areas of circulation, one of west/south-west orientation (Lilybaion and Akragas, the Janus/wreath series), and the other north-west in focus around Panhormus (head of Zeus/warrior series).[42] On the one hand these serve as evidence for the apparent efforts of the local provincial administration to meet the economic needs of the region in the wake of the breakdown in western Sicilian numismatic production from the time of the First Punic War; and on the other, their very need strongly implies the continued importance of the harbour city of Panhormus in this regional economy. These issues are in turn superseded by local civic issues in the last quarter of the second century BCE (a pattern repeated across the island). The coinage of Panhormus (with Greek legends), which initially imitates the preceding Romano-Sicilian types, becomes increasingly dominant in the regional circulation. Panhormus issues in the first century BCE include the very suggestive *triskeles* with additional wheat ears type.[43] By the early Principate (by which time issues display Latin legends and imperial types), almost half the coinage circulating at Ietas was from Panhormus. The Panhormus mint was the last to close in Sicily, during the reign of Tiberius.

This evidence for both the centrality of Panhormus to the economic area of north-west Sicily, and the local administrative interest in rejuvenating the local monetary economy after the disruption of the Punic Wars, can obviously be aligned with the evidence for internal economic strength and autonomy implied by the production of amphorae at Panhormus and Solunto, and in turn by the arrival of Roman (and Carthaginian) amphorae from the mid-third century onwards. The final element in this picture is provided by evidence for the wider circulation of the Panhormitan Romano-Sicilian issues, and the subsequent local Panhormitan issues in the second/first centuries BC.

While it is clear that the various issues produced at Panhormus in the final three centuries BC circulated extensively in north-west Sicily, it is now also clear that some of these had a significant circulation beyond the island, and primarily along the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy, including at Rome, Minturnae, Paestum, and Locri (in particular the Panhormitan produced Romano-Sicilian issues of head of Zeus/warrior and above all the subsequent local issues, which reproduced this type with the Greek ethnic of Panhormus, from c. 130 BC onwards).[44] More than this, however, the Panhormitan coins form a significant part of a phenomenon that has been well documented by Clive Stannard and Suzanne Frey-Kupper, namely the production of imitative types by "pseudo-mints". The most conspicuous example of this is the very substantial production of bronze coinage, probably minted at Pompeii, imitating coins of Ebusus; but a major secondary production is that of issues imitating the Panhormus head of Zeus/warrior with ethnic type, most likely minted at Minturnae.[45] The relative frequency of this material in finds from the Tiber at Rome and especially from the Liri river at Minturnae

[42] A number of more minor issues and several local series are also known; these are fully documented now in FREY-KUPPER 2013, I, 204-271; see the circulation map for the issues at 260 FIG. LX, as well as the specific distribution map for the Panhormus series at FIG. CXIII on 627.
[43] FREY-KUPPER 2013, I, 279-283 with FIG. LXIV.
[44] See conveniently the distribution maps in FREY-KUPPER 2013, 627-630, FIGG. CXIII-CXX.
[45] Fullest discussion in STANNARD-FREY-KUPPER 2008 (cf. STANNARD 1998); note esp. the distribution map 376 FIG. IV.

has been suggested as most likely to result «from the commercial activities of Roman *negotiatores* in northwestern Sicily and Panormos», while also attesting to «more intense contacts between these areas and Panormos, and a more important role for its harbor, than previously supposed».[46] The production of such imitative types is generally assumed to reflect a local monetary need for bronze; and the types imitated are reasonably inferred to be chosen on the basis of those most commonly circulating and in turn to reflect the commercial engagement with regions producing those inspirational types. In other words, the circulation of both local Panhormitan coinage, and its imitation, in central and southern Tyrrhenian Italy is highly suggestive of the significance of the harbour of Panhormus in the currents of exchange in the Tyrrhenian basin during the second and especially first centuries BCE. Furthermore, Panhormus is distinct among Sicilian cities in this regard.

Conclusions: what history for Hellenistic/Republican Panhormus?

Having explored a somewhat wider range of categories of evidence, both from within and beyond the city, what sort of history might we now be able to posit for the city of Panhormus in the last three centuries BCE? Our existing literary sources, without fail, focus on the role of the city's harbour, even if only from a political/military perspective; at the end of the period, Cicero's incidental allusions likewise speak to a significant harbour, but also to the presence of Roman traders, and the residence of wealthy Romans and Sicilians. It seems to me that we can now flesh out this picture rather better.

The archaeological and numismatic evidence, both for Palermo itself (urban planning, the growth of the harbour) and for its relations with western Sicily and beyond (local amphora production forming an increasingly significant part of the regional economy; the city as a focal point for much of the regional monetary circulation), speaks clearly of an increasingly prosperous harbour city at the interface between western Sicily and the Tyrrhenian basin, and as one of the primary focal points for the regional economy of western Sicily (and the principal northern facing outlet). Although the evidence for, e.g., exchange with Campania in the period before the Punic Wars is limited, it is nonetheless visible from the later fourth century BC onwards. A shift in patterns of production and coinage circulation c. 300 BCE has generally been interpreted to suggest a degree of centralisation of production in western Sicily, and in Bechtold's view indicates the consolidation, for Palermo, of «la sua posizione di interfaccia commerciale privilegiata soprattutto con l'Italia tirrenica».[47]

The unsurprising disruption of the First and Second Punic Wars is clearly visible in the material record, not least in the clear ruptures in regional coin production and circulation, and reduced evidence for local amphora production; efforts to consolidate the city's defences have also been noted. At the same time, continuity in Panhormus' amphora production is visible through evidence from beyond the immediate region, such as at Elea in southern Italy, while the regional record shows clearly the beginnings of rapidly increasing commercial exchange both with Campania and Carthage. This is particularly marked by the appearance from around the time of the First Punic War onwards of Latin-stamped MGS wares, most likely originating in Tyrrhenian Italy. In this context, it would not be unreasonable to note the construction by Rome, immediately subsequent to the capture of Panhormus, of the road connecting Panhormus

[46] STANNARD-FREY-KUPPER 2008, 363 and 383.
[47] BECHTOLD 2015, 69.

on the north coast with Agrigentum on the south coast.[48] The latter occupied a crucial point of exchange between Sicily and northern Africa throughout this period, echoed in the circulation and production of the Romano-Sicilian issues of the second century BCE noted above, some of which were almost certainly minted at Agrigentum.[49]

The second and first centuries BCE show strong growth of this initial rise in commercial interaction. The presence of Carthaginian wares increases in the second century, which speaks to a rapid opening of the western Sicilian economy, but it is the later Graeco-Italic and MGS wares and their successors which are the most dominant element. The efforts by the regional (Roman) authorities to restart the local monetary economy, and the significant Tyrrhenian circulation of the Panhormitan coinage provide very clear evidence of the extent of that economy and Panhormus' continued key role at the interface between western Sicily and the Tyrrhenian basin, especially Campania. This is a picture which is reinforced by the evidence of archaeological survey from the region, which alongside the dominant presence of Campanian ceramics shows regional growth in rural settlement, and as Philip Perkins has argued, implies a strong nexus between regional economic exchange and the provincial grain tax.[50] One might add to this the impression from the epigraphic record of Sicily in this period: Latin/Roman epigraphic practice is generally weakly attested on the island in the Republican period, but in the pre-Augustan period such material as there is shows a strong concentration on western Sicily, reinforcing this overall picture.[51] This regional picture also aligns well with the limited evidence from the city of Panhormus itself, which attests to continuity in the urban structure, but also to a growth in visible display of wealth in the appearance of grand private houses which attest to participation in the wider currents of exchange in the Hellenistic Mediterranean.

Ancient Panhormus, therefore, would seem to maintain its strong position at the interface between western Sicily and Tyrrhenian Italy throughout the fourth to first centuries BCE. While the city would appear to consolidate this position in the century up to the First Punic War, the third century and the first two Punic Wars appear to mark a period of transition, in which the implication may be that the local Panhormitan elite perhaps lost some degree of control or monopoly over that position of regional economic hegemony in the face of competition from Italian (and north African) traders. The mid-third century BCE appears to mark a period from which external exchange becomes considerably more prominent, especially in relation to Tyrrhenian Italy, and the later evidence suggests the increasing presence of Italian traders alongside locals in Panhormus and the wider region.[52] The extent to which the apparent

[48] PRAG 2006 on the surviving milestone (ISIC0610), most likely 252 BCE; UGGERI 2004, 98 highlights the nature of the northern half of the route, passing a series of interior hilltop strongholds which are mostly abandoned and/or destroyed in this period; at 104 he emphasises the route's continuity into the mediaeval period, notwithstanding the lack of substantial settlements along much of its way, which he concludes must be linked to the importance of connecting these two major port cities, north and south.

[49] DIOD. XIII 81, 3-5 is the *locus classicus* on Agrigentum's wealth and trade with Carthage; the fact that it was the first major city to which Rome directed its forces after Syracuse, in 262 BCE, is clearly relevant. FREY-KUPPER 2013, I, 204-271 on the coinage, circulation map at 260 FIG. LX.

[50] PERKINS 2007, esp. 45; cf. BURGIO 2018, 19 and 24 for increases in rural settlement in the vicinity of both Halaesa and Thermae Himeraeae in the same period.

[51] PRAG 2018, 139-140 with FIG. VIII.

[52] FRASCHETTI 1981 remains the fullest survey of Italian presence, but a revised study based upon epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological evidence is increasingly needed (see, e.g., *SEG* 49, 1301 for a Greek *defixio* form Lilybaeum with an appended list of Latin names in Latin, c. 200 BCE; or ISIC4368 for a Latin dedication set up in Lilybaeum by the Frentrani *qui colunt in Sicelia* [*sic*!], on which AMPOLO 2016).

increase in social stratification at Panhormus reflects these incomers as opposed to merely increased local wealth is entirely unknowable on the basis of the current evidence, and we should certainly not make assumptions based upon the very partial Ciceronian picture of the *Verrines*. The city's vitality in this period fits well into the wider Sicilian picture, but its broader Tyrrhenian connections clearly mark it out from the general picture. The question of whether this shift was driven from the outset by Roman/Italian interests (in other words, whether war, in 264 BCE, was pushed by such groups, with a focus on Agrigentum and Panhormus), or whether the disruption of war itself and the newly acquired Roman dominance of the Tyrrhenian basin after 238 BCE opened new markets (note that the ceramic evidence suggests that Carthaginian traders also only seem to gain significant access to western Sicily after 264 BCE), remains a matter for speculation. In any event, the Roman and Italian interest in Panhormus, the city's importance for the region, and the implications for Roman decisions regarding its status, whether in 241 BCE or the Augustan period, are undeniable. The "history" that we can write, from such perspective, is likewise considerably richer.

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