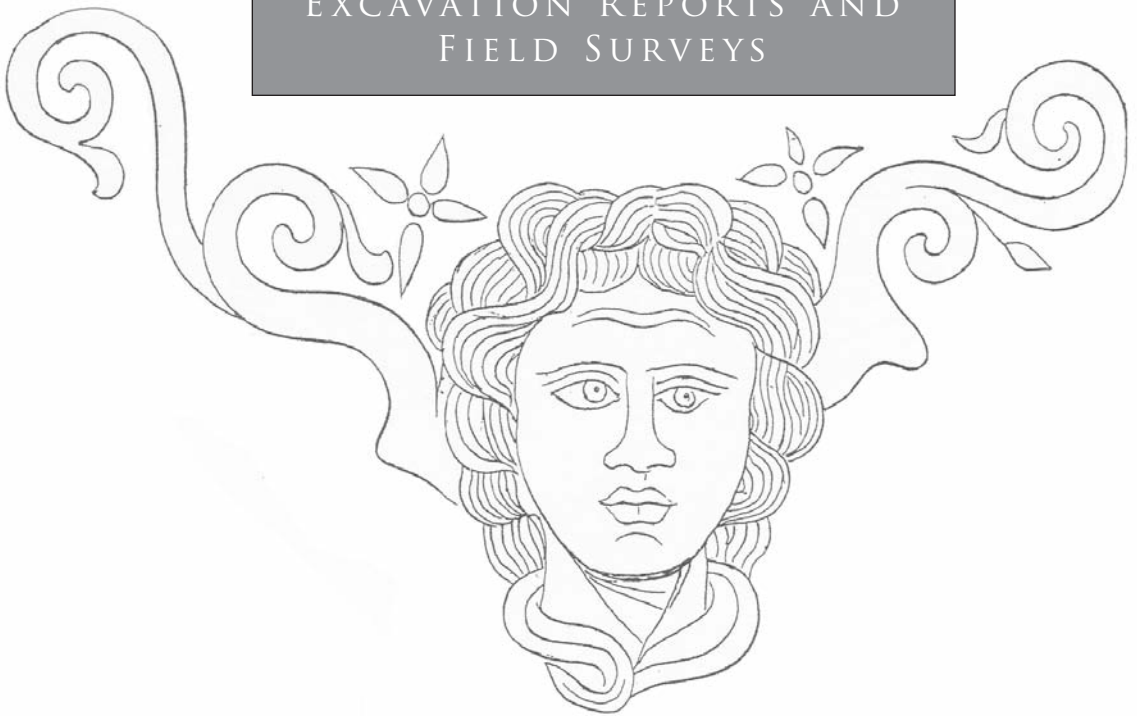


EXCAVATION REPORTS AND
FIELD SURVEYS



*The Marsala Hinterland Survey:
Preliminary Report*

BY EMMA BLAKE AND ROBERT SCHON

INTRODUCTION

The Marsala Hinterland Survey is a diachronic archaeological project investigating a 112 km² block of terrain adjacent to the coastal town of Marsala, in the Province of Trapani of northwest Sicily (Fig. 1). The project is carried out in collaboration with the Soprintendenza per i Beni Culturali ed Ambientali di Trapani.¹ Western Sicily has a rich and complex past, changing hands between multiple foreign powers and experiencing repeated outside cultural influences. Despite this colorful history, the region is markedly understudied archaeologically, with only piecemeal urban excavations and one small-scale intensive survey.² Our survey aims to reconstruct the region's long-term settlement patterns and history of land use from its first inhabitants to today. A pilot season in 2007 served to clarify the geologic evolution of the land formations in our area, and in 2008 we began full scale data collection. This report summarizes our methodology, research agenda, and preliminary results.

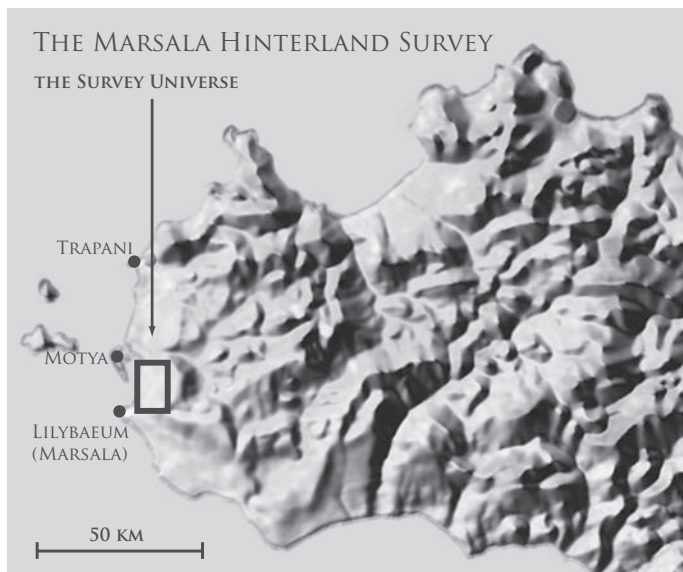


Figure 1 – Map of the Study Region

THE LAND

Geomorphological Assessment (contributed by Dr. M. C. Blake, Western Washington U.)

Topographically, the survey area is characterized by a coastal plain between 100 and 500 meters wide, bounded to the east by a sharp ridge running roughly north-south. East of the ridge, the land opens into broad alluvial plains before rising into rolling hills of 150 m.a.s.l. and finally higher altitude peaks beyond the eastern edge of our survey area. Our goal in 2007 was to determine the age of the alluvial plains and the relative stability of surface soils in the study area. As elsewhere in Italy and the broader Mediterranean, geomorphological instability (in particular, the silting up of ancient coastlines) as well as recent changes in land use (for example mechanization and the shift from subsistence farming to growing cash crops) create problems in site recognition for surface surveys.³ Our geologic and geomorphological assessment determined that the entire area, although a composite of diverse geologic periods, is no younger than the early Holocene period (10,000-8000 y. BP (Years Before Present)).

Uplifted Pleistocene marine terraces that range in elevation from about 50 m.a.s.l. near Marsala to as much as 150 m.a.s.l. several kilometers to the east underlie the western and southern portions of the study zone. Locally, these limy beach deposits—"tufa"—are overlain by Holocene alluvium consisting of unconsolidated sand and gravel. In the northeast portion of the study area, the flat-lying terrace deposits are underlain by deformed Miocene and Pliocene marine sedimentary rocks (sandstone and siltstone) that form steep canyons and resistant hills up to several hundred meters high. In light of the Holocene age of the alluvial plains, we predicted that we would be unlikely to detect pre-Neolithic sites in the low-lying areas, but would possibly find them on the higher elevations of older date. This has proved to be the case. This pattern is of some significance in assessing our survey results for the earlier periods, but means that geomorphological change should not be a factor in the patterns of later periods.

Land Use

The land along the coast is increasingly developed into holiday homes. Indeed, this survey constitutes one of the *last* opportunities to document archaeological remains in an area subject to rapid development; a construction boom means that the rural hinterland of Marsala is disappearing. Inland and above the coastal ridge the territory is rural, divided into numerous unoccupied private holdings tended by owners who live in nearby towns or, increasingly, by corporate wineries. The few scattered buildings consist of early modern fortified farmhouses locally known as *bagli*, in ruinous condition, and smaller one-room structures serving a variety of agricultural purposes such as storage and seasonal accommodation. The terrain offers excellent surface visibility and is easily accessible; the majority is under wine grape cultivation, with a substantial minority devoted to grain, olive and other crops, and finally a small amount of uncultivated land, consisting of exposed limestone outcrops, locally known as '*sciare*'. The *sciare* have been quarried and must have constituted an alternative income to farming for some.⁴ In addition, the shallow lagoon of Marsala (the '*Stagnone*') offers two

important resources: fish, and, from the late 15th c CE, the salt pans (*saline*) which constitute an ongoing, if now declining, source of revenue.⁵

RESEARCH AGENDA

Two ancient settlements anchor our survey: Motya and Lilybaeum. Motya was a Phoenician colony established in the late 8th century BCE on a small island just off the coast, in the lagoon of Marsala. By the late 6th century BCE Motya was under the control of the Phoenician colony of Carthage, like the other Phoenician colonies in the west. Lilybaeum, ancient Marsala, is 8 km down the coast from Motya and on the mainland. Lilybaeum was founded in 397 BCE following the sacking of Motya by Dionysius, tyrant of the Greek colony of Syracuse. Lilybaeum became the new nexus of activity in the region, and continued as a Carthaginian (Punic) city until 241 BCE.⁶ Lilybaeum was at the front lines of each subsequent foreign conquest, becoming Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab (when it was renamed Marsala), and so on, in turn, until 1860 when it became 'Italian'. Indeed, Marsala was the landing point of Garibaldi and his men on their conquest of Italy.

But what transpired outside of the cities and away from the coast? Our project addresses three interrelated binary themes: 1) the relationship between coast and interior; 2) the interactions between foreigners and natives; and 3) the interdependence of urban and rural zones. These themes resonate in all periods and indeed in some ways these relationships continue to frame life in the region to this day, with the coast now inundated with tourists who largely bypass the interior.

METHODOLOGY

Our primary method of data collection is a pedestrian field survey. Teams of four to six field walkers and one team leader systematically traverse agricultural fields searching for surface evidence of past human activity. This method is by now a well established component of archaeological research in the Mediterranean, providing the regional scope that most excavations lack at a fraction of the cost, while at the same time ensuring greater intensity, systematization, and less bias than extensive topographical methods.⁷ The vast preponderance of materials that form our data sets consists of portable artifacts, mainly ceramics and lithics, although other objects, such as the occasional coin or mosaic *tessera*, have been discovered by our fieldwalkers as well. Architectural features, such as ancient walls or individual blocks, are as yet quite rare. We analyze all artifacts recovered from the field in our lab at the Nave Punica Museum in Marsala and our data are being compiled in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

Our sampling strategies are designed to address our main research questions relating to coastal/interior interactions with maximum efficiency and minimal bias. In terms of selecting places to fieldwalk, we chose to stratify our sample based on distance to the coast. During the initial field season, we concentrated our efforts in contiguous parts of three 1 x1 km² blocks along the northernmost kilometer of our permit zone, with

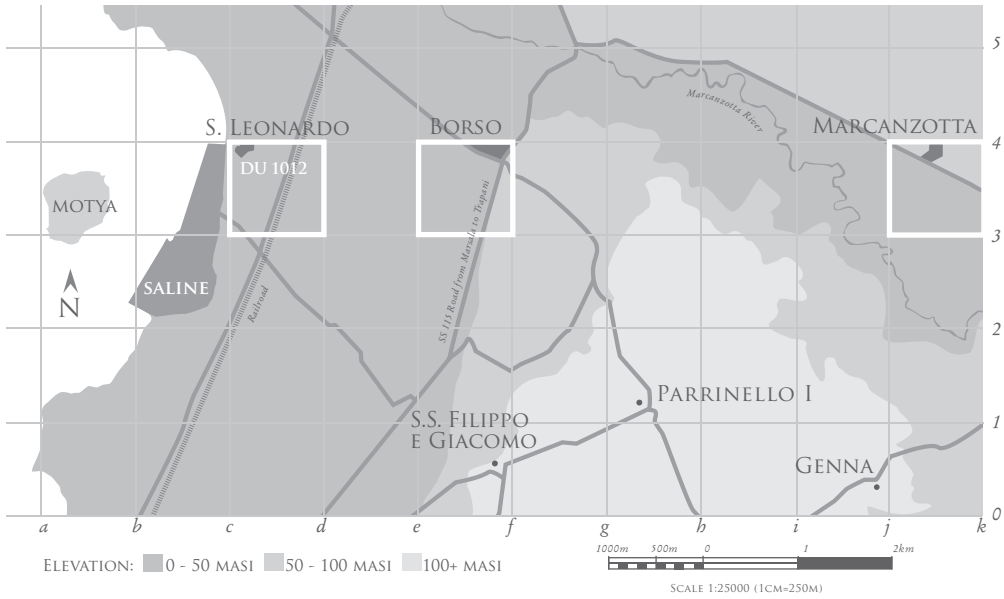


Figure 2 – Map of Areas Explored in 2008. (DUs are shaded in dark within each square.)

a single team working for a week in each area (Fig. 2). In 2008 we surveyed 72 fields (labeled Discovery Units, DU for short) totaling 22 hectares. We covered 11 DUs totaling 3.5 ha along the coast in the locality called San Leonardo, 34 DUs totaling approximately 7.5 ha in the center at Borso and 27 DUs also totaling 7.5 ha on the eastern edge of our rectangle, in the alluvial plain of the Marcanzotta River.

For each unit, walkers were spaced 10 meters apart and were instructed to collect all artifacts that lay within 1/2 meter of them on either side, providing a sample fraction of 10% of all the fields we walked. The choice of 10 meter spacing was based partially on methodological grounds⁸ and partially on convenience: the vast majority of our survey units were in vineyards and in all of them the vines are spaced 2.5 meters apart. As a result, our walker arrays were very easy to set up, as each walker lined up in every fourth row between the vines. In terms of artifact sampling, we did not wish to subject our field-walkers, most of whom were student volunteers with little prior survey experience and with limited familiarity with the full range of artifact types from all periods present in western Sicily, with the burden of determining what types of artifacts would be meaningful to collect (i.e. diagnostics) at any given time. Instead, we chose to collect everything, but from a highly restricted swath within each field. This sampling method, we feel, has certain analytical advantages over other collection strategies that limit recovery to diagnostics, or chronotypes, and risk missing potentially valuable data. The disadvantage of a full collection, specifically overburdening the lab with excessive amounts of non-diagnostic or repetitive artifacts (think tiles in a Roman villa), was mitigated by the decision to restrict collecting to a narrow swath. Redundant and non-diagnostic artifacts were returned to the fields from where they were removed after they were analyzed in the lab. The relatively small size of each survey unit meant that this “repatriation” did not alter

the archaeological record too severely, as other postdepositional processes, such as plowing, could displace the artifacts just as much as we did. Exceptionally diagnostic or particularly photogenic artifacts, that were discovered beyond the swath of each walker were collected as “grab” samples. These were useable as part of our qualitative analysis, in order to establish periods of occupation for example, but were not factored into our quantitative calculations of artifact densities.

Initially, we had hoped to adopt a site-based interpretive strategy, as our previous experience in other parts of Sicily showed that most sites are quite well defined with very little background scatter.⁹ That is not the case in coastal western Sicily, which seems to be more like the “unbroken carpet” described by Bintliff and Snodgrass for parts of Greece.¹⁰ As a result, we have adopted a hybrid site and off-site based analytical approach in this initial stage of the research.

LAB PROCEDURES

The finds are stored in the Nave Punica Museum at the Baglio Anselmi, Marsala. Artifacts are separated into lithics, pottery, metals, and smaller groupings of rarer materials such as worked bone and ancient glass. As to be expected on Mediterranean field surveys, the vast majority of our finds are pottery sherds. The ceramics from each DU are weighed, counted, and separated into diagnostic and undiagnostic sherds. The diagnostic sherds (defined here as all decorated sherds and any rim, handle, or base sherds) are washed prior to study. The undiagnostic sherds, given the limited water on Sicily and the loose compaction of the dirt on surface finds there, are simply dry-brushed. At this preliminary stage of analysis, prior to a full-scale study season, the unit of study remains the individual DU and we sort the diagnostic sherds found in that context into groupings according to date and provenance. We adopt Gregory’s principle that “individual identifications had to carry with them, first and foremost, some chronological definition (however broad), since chronology is the first and most important delimitator in survey (or any) archaeology.”¹¹ Our broad chronological and cultural groupings and sub-groupings (e.g., Group: Roman finewares: Sub-groups: Republican black gloss; terra sigillata italica; ARS; Other; Roman fineware unspecified) allow us to quickly record a mass of data and assess the date range of artifact concentrations virtually on the same day we locate them. For each grouping we record the vessel forms present if known, with as much detail as we can, anything from ‘bowl’ to ‘carinated bowl’ to ‘carinated bowl, Hayes type 8A’. We also record the numbers of body, rim, handle, and base sherds, the total number of sherds and the total weight of sherds of that category. Particularly significant sherds are noted but the preparation of a catalogue, in which individual finds become the units of study, awaits the study season. The diagnostic and undiagnostic sherds remain in separate bags after sorting and recording, but those bags are kept together for future study, when it is hoped that the often difficult to classify undiagnosics may be incorporated more fully into the analysis.

Among the other materials, the lithics are of interest for establishing prehistoric activity in the region. Preliminary formal analysis allows for broad chronological groupings into Paleolithic or Neolithic categories, while some non-local materials such as

obsidian and volcanic basalt point to exchange networks. Several coins, both Punic and Roman, have contributed to the dating of particular sites.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Preliminary results have already proven dramatically fruitful. We discovered sites and artifacts ranging from the Paleolithic through the early modern periods, including a magnificent Roman villa on a site occupied for over 1500 years between the Bronze Age and Late Antiquity, as well as a number of stone tools which may expand the record of early occupation of this part of Sicily.

From the Paleolithic to the Iron Age

While human settlement in the province of Trapani from as early as the Lower Paleolithic (c. 400,000 BP) is probable, based on finds of stone tools of possible Clactonian type, more secure evidence comes from the late Upper Paleolithic (the Italian Epigravettian), from circa 18,000 BCE, when extensive occupation of caves is attested.¹² Prehistoric lithics of probable Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic date were found in all of our sampling zones. The presence of substantial numbers of stone tools is significant given the results of the Contrada Mirabile survey, which yielded no traces of a prehistoric presence.¹³ The disparity in the evidence from areas separated by no more than 10 km is surprising, and may be due to a real difference in land use. The Contrada Mirabile surveyors suggested that the land was not cleared prior to the 4th century BCE.¹⁴ The lithics from our survey require closer study but the wide variation in styles suggests that they belong to a range of periods. In addition to the more common flint flakes, the discovery of several pieces of obsidian, which must have been imported, in all probability from either Pantelleria or Lipari, points to a Neolithic date, from c. 6000-3000 BCE, when obsidian circulated in the central and western Mediterranean.¹⁵ Besides these stone tools, we have yet to identify any prehistoric materials prior to the Bronze Age. This may in part be due to problems of preservation for the low fired ceramics of the Neolithic and Copper Ages, which do not lend themselves to surface preservation.

The Iron Age and Archaic Period

Although cultural interactions are evident since the Neolithic, a substantial foreign presence in our survey zone is attested only after 800 BCE. By this period it is thought that the native inhabitants of Sicily were divided into three cultural groups, according to Thucydides' account (6.2.3). Those peoples occupying northwest Sicily, including our survey area, he called Elymians, and gave them mythical origins as Trojans, an identity that would be reaffirmed with the Roman conquest. While this designation has stuck, in practice distinct archaeological markers of this ethnic group are virtually undetectable.¹⁶

The indigenous Iron Age in Sicily spans the period from 900-650 BCE, thus overlapping with the Greek Archaic Period, and the earliest phase of Greek and Phoenician colonization in the West. One of our primary research questions concerns the interactions among the Phoenicians (and subsequently the Carthaginians), Greek colonists, and the local inhabi-

tants. Sicily in the 8th to 6th centuries BCE saw intensive commercial and cultural exchanges among these groups, and in the following two centuries, with the rise of Syracuse and the Carthaginian takeover, these interactions deteriorated into hostilities and eventually warfare. While the Etruscan orbit seems not to have extended as far as northwest Sicily, beyond some imports, these localized tensions played out on a bigger scale throughout the Tyrrhenian region. Our survey area, where the Phoenician influences were already established when the Greeks arrived, sheds some new perspectives on these dynamics. The territory of our survey covers the only Phoenician and Carthaginian dominated zone on the island, and thus has the potential to offer a more nuanced understanding of culture contact in the region than previous interpretations have put forth.

In our survey, not only is there very little indigenous material from the colonizing period, but there is very little identifiable Archaic Period material at all. We found none of the earliest Phoenician pottery, nor did we find any Greek material from the 8th through mid 6th centuries BCE and none of the Corinthian sherds or Ionian cups that serve as the normal identifying imports of those centuries. Nor were there Archaic amphora sherds, apart from one Archaic East Greek amphora sherd from DU 1012 in the San Leonardo zone (See Fig. 2). The few indigenous grayware sherds were virtually the only evidence of any Archaic Period activity in this northern transect. They were found in 18 field units, but never were more than a handful of sherds. Although the local well-levigated dark gray ceramics that best characterize the period can be easily overlooked, this potential recovery bias is countered by our field walkers' extensive prior experience at the site of Monte Polizzo. Having worked at this indigenous Archaic Period settlement 28 km to the east of our survey area, we are familiar with the Archaic indigenous fabrics. Of the 18 DUs yielding indigenous graywares in the northern transect, none can be called a site; rather they represent offsite scatters. The most extensive evidence of an Iron Age/Archaic indigenous presence comes from the site of Genna, which was the location of a Roman villa, discussed more fully below. There the concentrated assemblage of sherds does suggest an Archaic site of some sort, preceding the Roman villa.

Two explanations for the scarce presence of Archaic materials in the northern transect of our survey area come to mind. One explanation is that the area was virtually uninhabited. It is more likely, given the results of other work in the region, that the native inhabitants in the Iron Age were living in a nucleated settlement that we have yet to locate, possibly outside of our survey area. The native population in northwest Sicily at the time of the Phoenician and Greek colonization continued to reside in nucleated hilltop settlements (e.g. Monte Polizzo; Monte Maranfusa) and left few traces in the lowlands, as the Contrada Mirabile survey indicated.¹⁷ If so, the continuation of this native land use pattern after the Phoenicians arrive confirms the picture of limited penetration by the Phoenicians. In the first two centuries of Phoenician settlement on Motya, there is little trace of their influence on the immediate hinterland.

The Punic and Hellenistic Periods

The Carthaginians have a reputation of territorial aggression, so a key question is the extent to which Motya's relations with the native populations changed following the Carthaginian takeover in the late 6th century BCE. In this respect the survey contributes to the burgeoning research on the Punic countryside in the central and western

Mediterranean.¹⁸ Whether we are speaking of actual Carthaginians settling in Sicily, or local populations adopting Punic material culture, is difficult to determine, but in western Sicily, ‘Punic’ should be treated less as an ethnic marker and more as a cultural and chronological descriptor. Chronologically, it refers to the period from the late 6th century BCE until the Roman conquest in 241 BCE, during which time Carthaginians may have settled in some number in the region, and influenced the extant populations (both the descendants of the Phoenician colonists and the native inhabitants).

The Punic period is far from static. What other surveys in western Sicily have shown is that a sharp break in land use occurs not at the onset of Carthaginian influence, in the mid 6th century BCE, but rather following the heightening of political and military control from the end of the 5th century BCE, known as the Carthaginian *epikratia*. The seven intensive surveys that have been published in western Sicily are consistent in observing a marked upswing in rural settlements in the 4th century BCE, although the precise dates of the expansion, from early in that century to late, vary, as do the types of rural sites represented.¹⁹ While this has led Spanò Giammellaro *et al.* to caution against seeing the phenomenon in homogeneous terms,²⁰ or even attributing it to the *epikratia*, there is no denying that a broad trend of infilling of the countryside is evident. Whether it is a case of immigrant farmers settling the countryside, or the dispersion of previously nucleated native populations, or internal population growth, is difficult to determine. These new rural sites are clearly tied to broader trading networks, as they are characterized by plentiful sherds of Greco-Italic amphoras, Punic amphoras, and Greek colonial black glazed finewares. We even found a late Etruscan amphora rim sherd, Type Py 4a, our only securely Etruscan find so far (Fig. 3). This type dates to 450-250 BCE, and is thought to have been produced at Cerveteri or Veii. This late variety is much rarer in Sicily than the preceding Type Py 3b, as it postdates the heyday of Etruscan exports in the Archaic Period.²¹ Thus, following scarce Archaic Period activity, the bulk of our earliest material in the northern transect dates to the 4th century BCE.

It has been established at excavated sites in the region that by the end of the Archaic Period the traditional native pottery industry disappears, having given way to Greek and Carthaginian products, both imported and produced in the colonies, and some local imitations thereof. The 4th-3rd century BCE material we found consisted of both Punic and Greek products. The worn condition of the sherds combined with the preliminary nature of our analysis meant that in most cases it was not possible to narrow the dating of the sherds further than simply 4th-3rd centuries BCE. However, the fact that there is nothing securely 5th century BCE in date is notable, and may be due to the hostilities that wracked that century. While the abovementioned Etruscan amphora sherd has a date range that extends back to the mid 5th century BCE, the Punic amphora sherds and black glaze sherds all belong to vessels dating to the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE. Thus our survey would seem to follow the pattern noted elsewhere in western Sicily, and one that van Dommelen observed in western Sardinia, wherein the Carthaginian involvement in the hinterland intensified only from the 4th century BCE on, rather than immediately after takeover.²²

This pattern can be teased out further. While all three areas that we sampled along the northern transect show the same upsurge in materials in the 4th and 3rd century BCE,

the ratio of Greek to Carthaginian materials changes markedly as one moves inland. Along the coast, Carthaginian sherds outnumber ‘Greek type’ sherds nearly 3 to 1. 3 km inland, the ratio shrinks to 1.5. 8 km inland, the ratio is reversed and there were 1.4 times more Greek sherds found than Punic ones. As the sample of pottery in the eastern zone of our survey is relatively small, these ratios are tentative. Nevertheless, the pattern is an intriguing one. What we may be detecting is a tangible trace of the boundary between colliding spheres of influence- Greek and Punic.

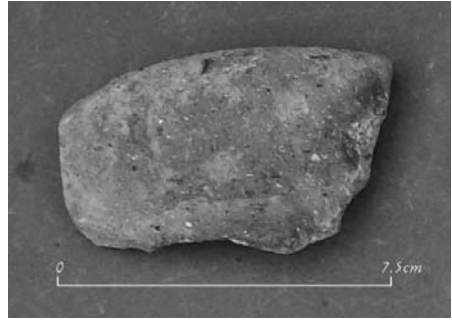


Figure 3 – Etruscan Amphora Sherd

To sum up these patterns, our evidence supports the standard picture of limited early Phoenician involvement with the native peoples of the area. Indeed, there was so little Archaic Period material that either the area was minimally occupied or, more likely, there was an indigenous settlement that we have yet to come across, which was not located along our particular transect. Either way, the few Archaic Period sherds that did stray into our area are mainly indigenous products, with just two securely identifiable Phoenician sherds and one Archaic Greek amphora sherd. Based on our current findings there is no evidence of intensive Phoenician involvement with the hinterland directly across from the colony. However, one pattern to observe carefully is the *absence of any Greek material* in this early period. It is too early to say but it may be taken as indirect evidence of the Phoenician presence- they may have prevented the Greeks from trading in the area.

This empty landscape is transformed in the 4th century BCE, when both Carthaginian and Greek sherds are found in abundance. Since one research question is how the Greeks, Carthaginians, and native populations interacted in this region, it is particularly intriguing that by this period there are considerable numbers of Greek materials in what historically we know was Punic territory. In fact, the finewares are consistently Greek. How do we explain this pattern? The presence of Greek materials at other 4th and 3rd centuries BCE Punic sites has been explained as a sign of the Hellenization of everybody, Punic and native alike, but our findings do not quite fit that idea. Among the Greek vessels the range of forms is limited mainly to cups. This is in contrast to the Greek finds of the same period from the hinterland of the Greek colony of Heraclea Minoa along the southern coast of Sicily. There, Greek vessel forms from the survey included a bowl, plate, lamp, and amphora.²³ Moreover, while Greek imports may have been the preferred finewares, Punic pots are the primary plainwares and coarsewares. Likewise, the transport amphora sherds in this period are all Punic. There are no datable Greek transport amphoras until the appearance of very late Greco-Italic ones of the end of the 3rd and early 2nd century BCE, after the Roman takeover. So the wine itself seems to have been Punic, even if the preferred wine cups were Greek!

Thus, while Punic culture had absorbed some Greek habits and operated within the Hellenistic *koine*, it remained still a distinct culture just as Carthage itself was an independent political and economic force. While the ethnicity of the inhabitants of this countryside is not easily determined, we can say that the same Greek finewares observed in the survey are equally



Figure 4 – The Site of Genna (on Plateau in Background)

common at Motya and Lilybaeum in this period, and in the other surveys in western Sicily. Together this assemblage of Greek finewares and Punic amphoras and plainwares should be understood as a cultural ‘package’, one that is in play in both rural and urban contexts. We can infer from this homogeneity that what we are seeing in our survey area is a rural landscape under Punic control. This ‘punicized’ landscape in coastal western Sicily is a pattern that follows the one laid out by van Dommelen for Sardinia.²⁴ However, the trend of an increasing ratio of Greek material as one moves inland is one we hope to clarify further in coming seasons, because it may signal a progressive loss of Punic influence from coast to interior, with Greek traders operating more freely the farther they were from Motya, Lilybaeum and the coast.

The model of progressive Hellenization posited for Greek colonial-native interactions cannot simply be transposed to this alternative colonial setting, where the Phoenician and Punic influences are radically different. Traditional views have held that the Phoenicians, unlike the Greeks, involved themselves little with the local populations. Yet the absence of Archaic Phoenician and earlier Punic goods may mask a degree of transformation well under way by the 6th century BCE, one in which ceramics actually played a limited part. A causeway linking Motya to the Sicilian mainland was constructed in the mid 6th century BCE, and the residents of Motya also established a cemetery at Birgi on the mainland in the 6th century BCE: these actions are suggestive of an expanded involvement with the Sicilian coast. Likewise, indigenous pots in Phoenician graves at both Motya and Birgi speak to contacts between the native populations and the settlers.²⁵

The Roman Period

At the end of the First Punic War, in 241 BCE, Rome defeated the Punic navy at the Battle of the Egadi Islands, off the west coast of Sicily.²⁶ The Romans took over all the Punic territory on Sicily, including Lilybaeum. Lilybaeum flourished under Roman rule; there are some nice houses and monuments, known thanks to years of excavations around the city.²⁷ It was an important administrative center, even serving as the first capital of the province until supplanted by Syracuse after 211.²⁸ This small city, eventually made a *colonia* under Septimius Severus, had an estimated 8,000-16,000 inhabitants.²⁹ The extent to which Punic culture survived under Roman rule is difficult to assess. One useful gauge would be the degree of survival of the Punic language, but there are very few inscriptions from western Sicily. Of those, none are in the Punic language after the 1st century BCE, which seems significant, but there are almost none in Greek or Latin either. Moreover, Wilson observed that in North Africa, where the Punic language was certainly spoken, there are very few Punic inscriptions either, so the epigraphic evidence in this case may not be helpful (beyond the fact that the low number of inscriptions itself points to a Punic cultural propensity not to inscribe).³⁰ Nevertheless, there are few other survivals of Punic material culture to point to by the late Republican period, leading Wilson to conclude that “the influence of Punic culture in Sicily during the Empire seems to have been negligible”.³¹ He sees a waning of Punic culture already evident by the late 3rd/early 2nd century B.C.E, when the burial practice in Lilybaeum changes from inhumation, a typically Punic practice, to cremation, the Roman burial practice at that time.³²

How did these cultural and political transformations play out in the hinterland? The continuity of occupation of rural sites founded in the 4th century BCE into the Roman period is attested on the Contrada Mirabile survey, but whereas the 4th century sites were uniformly modest, they grew in size in the Roman period. In addition the survey records an expanded settlement of the territory and its centuriation at the end of the 3rd century and through the 2nd century BCE.³³ This fits with a picture of politically derived agricultural intensification on Sicily under Roman rule, as Sicily became a major grain supplier to Rome.³⁴ These sites continue during the Empire, which contrasts with the data from other surveys in western Sicily. Those other surveys instead recorded a consolidation of separate landholdings into a few extremely large estates in the 1st century CE. Further inland, however, there has been recorded a growth in settlements from the 2nd century CE on, so clearly there was no uniform rural response to imperial governance.³⁵

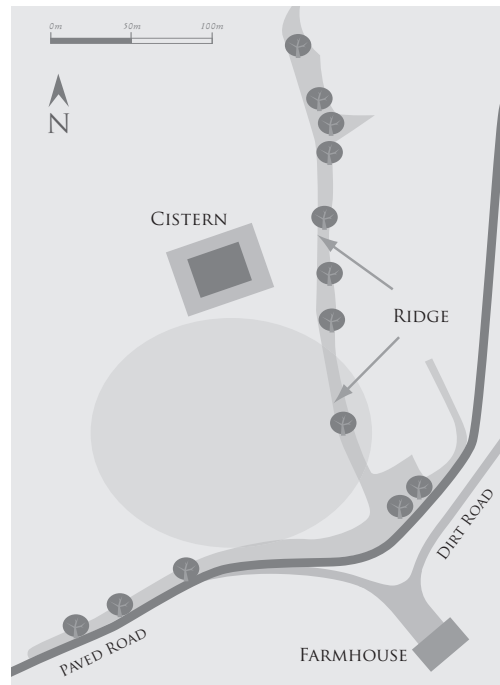


Figure 5 – Map of Genna. Artifact scatter indicated by shaded oval.

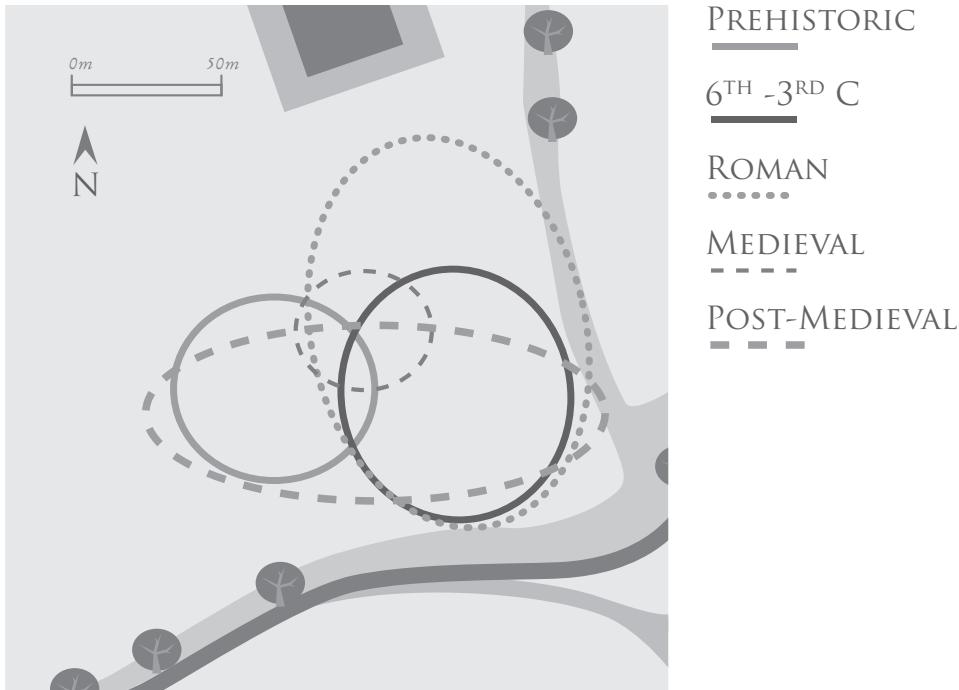


Figure 6 – Genna's Occupational History

The two Roman sites recorded on our survey in 2008 (as opposed to more exiguous offsite finds) may support the pattern of consolidation in the Early Empire. The site at DU 1012, less than one kilometer from the coast (see Fig. 2), must have been a modest farm whose owners nonetheless had some access to luxuries. Occupation began in the 4th century BCE, and continued into the 1st century CE. The absence of African Red Slip sherds suggests a cessation in use certainly by the 2nd century CE. In contrast, the site at Genna (Figs. 2, 4, 5 and 6), a much larger settlement, shows Roman occupation from the Republican period until the Late Empire and beyond. This site, discussed below, may have been a winner in the consolidation of landholdings of the 2nd century CE that Belvedere describes.³⁶ The site sits on a well-watered plateau overlooking a fertile plain. The exact use to which the land in the area was put in antiquity remains undetermined. While cereal monoculture is likely, further evidence is required to confirm this.³⁷

We located the site of Genna during our extensive reconnaissance to the south of the northern transect,³⁸ and we spent a full week in 2008 collecting a sample of its vast surface remains. By our calculations the site covered approximately 3.5 hectares, and *tesserae*, marble slabs and even the toe of a statue suggest it was a villa of some wealth, following standard classifications by size and architectural finds.³⁹ The remains indicated the villa's long habitation, from the Republican period through the Late Empire. Along with numerous sherds of terra sigillata, African Red Slip, and many, many roof tiles, some intriguing finds included the above mentioned statue toe and two coins. Medieval glazed pottery hints at occupation at the site possibly as late as the 9th century CE.⁴⁰ Likewise some consider-

able quantities of prehistoric, Archaic, and Hellenistic pottery indicate pre-Roman activity at the site, so the site occupation may be well over a thousand years.

Due to the overall density and our initial impression of the potential of discrete patterning among the artifacts at the site, we employed a more intensive method of artifact collection than we used in our DUs. We marked out a 10 x 10 meter grid over the site and collected all the artifacts we saw from 32 of the 95 grid squares. Of those, the finds from 17 of the squares have thus far been analyzed. The densest of the squares yielded over 1,000 artifacts, so it is readily apparent why we chose to sample, rather than collect every square. The 32 randomly chosen grid squares we did collect took our full crew a full week to demarcate and process.

Fig. 6 displays our preliminary spatial assessment of the site's occupational history. The density plots are based on an assessment of the presence or absence of materials

from each period. Fig. 7 displays a comparison of the number of diagnostic sherds for each period. Not surprisingly, Roman materials dominate the assemblage, with more diagnostics than all the other periods combined. While this partially may be a result of their comparative visibility (i.e. Roman sherds are relatively easy to identify) and the long duration of the Roman period, it is doubtful that these biases would affect our interpretation in this particular case.⁴¹ When the raw counts are converted to finds per century (Fig. 8), the pattern is little changed, although the Punic/Greek period does become more prominent.

First, the tiles and pottery scatters together suggest that the core of the Roman structure was located at the eastern edge of the ridge, overlooking the plain to the east. It appears to be an expansion of the 6th – 3rd century occupation which was located at the southeast corner of the plateau. The prehistoric material, in contrast, clusters slightly west and north of this, as does the Medieval scatter, suggesting slight settlement drift within this small area. Post Medieval artifacts were discovered throughout the grid, but in numbers even lower than the prehistoric finds, suggesting a sharp contraction in activity at the site. We anticipate that fur-

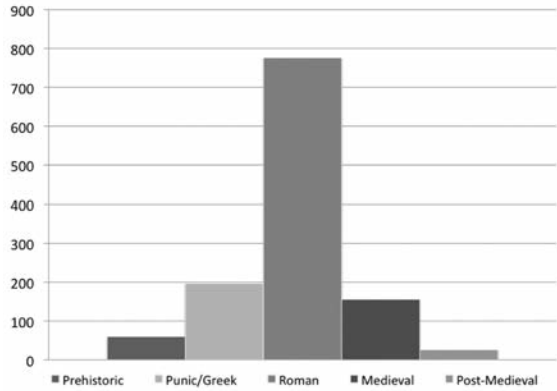


Figure 7 – Diagnostic Pottery from Genna by Period

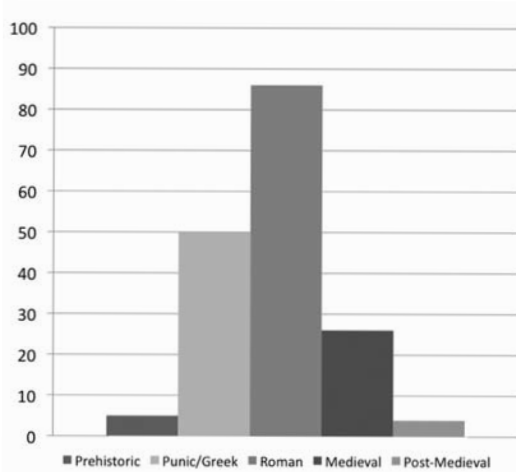


Figure 8 – Diagnostic Pottery from Genna per Century

ther study of the remaining grid squares and the DUs that were walked around the grid will continue to clarify the occupational history of this important location.

The Late Empire and After

Lilybaeum's fortunes changed with the onset of the Vandal raids, led by Geiseric from his base in North Africa, from 440 CE on. Traces of destructions have been attested in excavated portions of the city. Although other cities in Sicily suffered, Lilybaeum, so close to North Africa, was particularly vulnerable, and the 35 years of raids that followed sent the town into a decline from which she took centuries to recover.⁴² Sicily itself was part of the barbarian kingdom of Italy, but the Gothic rulers could do little to prevent the raids. The countryside seems to have been spared Lilybaeum's fate however. While some recorded 5th century coin hoards point to insecurities elsewhere in Sicily, none are known from our area.⁴³ Nor is there evidence of the abandonment of settlements. Evidence from the Contrada Mirabile survey shows that, although some sites were abandoned in the mid 5th century CE, the four largest settlements continued into the 7th century CE.⁴⁴ Likewise, at the Roman villa at Genna, the site seems to have continued in use until the 6th century CE, and possibly until the 9th century CE (although we cannot confirm continuity of occupation). Nevertheless, this distinction between the decline of the city and the survival of the countryside is made more complex by the economic interrelationships necessary between the two zones.

The Vandal raids ceased when a peace was reached with Geiseric in 476 CE. Lilybaeum and its hinterland passed into Vandal hands for a few decades from 500-535 CE, and then were conquered, along with the rest of Sicily, by the Byzantines under general Belisarius.⁴⁵ The Byzantines ruled until 827 CE, when the Arabs conquered the island. Several centuries later it was the Normans' turn to occupy Lilybaeum (renamed Marsala by the Arabs) and its territory, and more foreign groups followed. The story of these later conquests has been recounted by others elsewhere, and this later material from our survey is still awaiting study. The question of continuity of land use against the backdrop of political unrest is of particular interest.

There was a strong medieval and early modern (up through the 18th century CE) presence in the easternmost zone of our survey area, along a broad alluvial plain, 7 km or so from the coast. This is at variance with the pattern of overall decline in material towards the interior in the Archaic, Punic, and Roman periods. These distinctive temporal variations undermine the romantic notion of a traditional and unchanging Mediterranean landscape, much as other surveys have done elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

CONCLUSIONS

In future seasons we hope to detect more of the native substratum in rural contexts, and of course, to cover more area so as to verify or amend these preliminary tentative observations. We look forward to filling out our picture of land use and coastal-interior interactions further in subsequent seasons of fieldwork.

The potential impact of this project is multi-faceted, and the urgency of conducting this research cannot be overstated. It offers a new case study of Phoenician/Greek/indigenous interaction that not only will inform classical scholars, but also others working on questions of colonization and postcolonial studies. Archaeological survey presents the opportunity to approach these topics in the *longue durée*. To conclude, working from the coast toward the interior, this survey is beginning to fill in the regional picture and situate this area more precisely within the complex circuits of exchange and interaction in the central and west Mediterranean.

Emma Blake
School of Anthropology
University of Arizona
PO Box 210030
Tucson, AZ 85721-0030
ecblake@email.arizona.edu

Robert Schon
School of Anthropology
Department of Classics
University of Arizona
PO Box 210030
Tucson, AZ 85721-0030
rschon@email.arizona.edu

NOTES

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2. Tusa 2005; Fentress *et al.* 1986.
3. Ammerman 1995.
4. Lombardo 2003, 74-5.
5. Spadaro 2003, 21.
6. See Ciasca *et al.* 1989 for a useful summary of the history and excavations at Motya; See di Stefano 1993 for a similarly useful summary of Punic Marsala.
7. Cherry 1978, 1983, 1994; Barker 1991.
8. Cherry 1983.
9. See Thompson 1999, 49-50.
10. Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988, 506.
11. Gregory 2004, 19. In the interests of avoiding a severe backlog, however, we have not adopted Gregory's chronotype system and instead use a looser but quicker recording system for our finds.

12. Tusa 1994, 17-25.
13. Fentress *et al.* 1986, 80.
14. Fentress *et al.* 1986, 80.
15. See Tykot 2004.
16. Holloway 1991, 86; Spatafora 2003, 9.
17. Albanese Procelli 2003,146; Fentress *et al.* 1986, 80.
18. Van Dommelen and Gómez Bellard 2008.
19. See Spanò Giammellaro *et al.* 2008 for summary of these results and references to the specific surveys.
20. Spanò Giammellaro *et al.* 2008.
21. Caravale and Toffoletti 1997, 78-9; Albanese Procelli 2001, 300.
22. Van Dommelen 1998, 157.
23. Wilson and Leonard 1980, 227-31.
24. Van Dommelen 1998; van Dommelen and Finocchi 2008, 181.
25. Bisi 1967.
26. Two of the Punic ships thought to have been sunk in that battle have been found, and are now preserved in the Nave Punica Museum in Marsala.
27. Di Stefano 1984.
28. Wilson 1990, 18.
29. Based on a surface area of 77 hectares within the Roman period fortifications, with population estimates of 100-200 people per hectare (Wilson 1990, 170).
30. Wilson 1990, 316.
31. Wilson 1990, 316-7.
32. Wilson 1990, 129.
33. Fentress *et al.* 1986, 83-84.
34. Wilson 1990, 189-91.
35. Belvedere 1995, 195.
36. Belvedere 1995.
37. Basalt grindstones, as we found at Genna, are ubiquitous on Roman period sites in Sicily and can be attributed to grinding for home use rather than for surplus.
38. This site was known to the Soprintendenza but had not been studied (Di Stefano 1982-83, 359).
39. For material correlates to Roman villas, see Belvedere 1995, 197, although see Kahane *et al.* 1968, 153-6 for a more cautious application of this label.
40. The coins are currently being restored and studied at the Servizio in Trapani.
41. See Rutter 1983.
42. Wilson 1990, 330-2.
43. Wilson 1990, 333.
44. Fentress *et al.* 1986, 81.
45. Wilson 1990, 337.

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