

Oriana Silia Cannistraci, Riccardo Olivito

A *Gymnasion* at Segesta? A Review of the Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence

Summary

Despite numerous inscriptions related to *gymnasia* and their magistracies in Sicily, our knowledge of their architecture is still fragmentary because safe identification of *gymnasia* is difficult and often debated. This exemplarily regards the Hellenistic city of Segesta, where excavations of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa since the 1990s have exposed epigraphic evidence relating to a *gymnasion* and a peristyle building, next to the *bouleuterion*, that has been attributed to a *gymnasion*. This paper critically reviews this epigraphic and archaeological evidence and investigates what the sources really reveal and whether they can rightly be correlated. It is argued that currently only one single inscription testifies to the existence of the *gymnasion* in Segesta, and that the peristyle building did not belong to a *gymnasion*, but to a coherently planned and built complex of political-administrative buildings.

Keywords: Segesta; epigraphy; *gymnasion*; *bouleuterion*; *agora*

Obwohl zahlreiche Inschriften aus Sizilien *Gymnasia* und ihre Ämter erwähnen, ist die Kenntnis der zugehörigen Architektur spärlich, weil die Identifizierung von *Gymnasia* oft umstritten ist. Das betrifft exemplarisch die hellenistische Stadt Segesta, in der Ausgrabungen der Scuola Normale Superiore Inschriften mit Bezug zu einem *Gymnasion* und einen Peristylbau freigelegt haben, der als Teil eines *Gymnasions* identifiziert worden ist. Dieser Beitrag untersucht kritisch die

entsprechenden epigraphischen und archäologischen Quellen und diskutiert, was sie aussagen und ob sie begründet verbunden werden können. Er zeigt, dass nur eine Inschrift die Existenz der *Gymnasion* in Segesta belegt und der Peristylbau eher zu einem einheitlich geplanten Komplex politisch-administrativer Bauten gehörte.

Keywords: Segesta; Epigraphik; *gymnasion*; *bouleuterion*; *agora*

We would really like to thank the organizers of the Conference for giving us the opportunity to discuss some of the hypotheses we have formulated during our research in the *agora* of Segesta, Sicily. Besides, we are grateful to Carmine Ampolo and Maria Cecilia Parra, directors of the excavations, for allowing us to present the results of the investigations in this area of the *agora* of Segesta and for their very helpful considerations. We are also grateful to the Servizio Parco Archeologico di Segesta and its director, for their support and kindness in all the different phases of our research. Last but not least, we want to thank Agata Abate and Donatella Erdas for the very useful suggestions they gave us while working on this paper. Although this paper results from a common work, the overview, the paragraphs on methodological premises and epigraphic evidence as well as the conclusion are by Riccardo Olivito, and the others by Oriana Silia Cannistraci.

The wide and very interesting amount of critical issues and stimulating ideas that emerged from the conference held in Berlin in February 2016, has strongly encouraged us in presenting a review and new interpretation of the poor remains of a building in the *agora* of Segesta, by some scholars interpreted as the περίστυλος or *palaestra* of the local *gymnasion*.

Indeed, the question mark in the title of our paper not only aims at stressing the still existing problem of the presence of a *gymnasion* in the Sicilian town, but also at emphasizing the need for a thorough analysis of all the available data before identifying this kind of building on the ground.

As will be seen, the Segestan *gymnasion* can in fact represent a very interesting case study from an epigraphic, archaeological and hermeneutic point of view since its identification, as well as its existence, can be hypothesized, or even rejected, only on the basis of a deep examination of all the architectural, planimetric, topographical, and epigraphic evidence.

Thus, as far as Segesta is concerned, in this paper we will try to sum up the most recent findings in these different fields. The final goal is to verify whether or not the hypothesis of a Segestan *gymnasion* can be maintained.

After a brief overview of the urban context of the presumable Segestan *gymnasion*, namely the *agora* of Segesta, the epigraphic and archaeological evidence, which has been linked with a *gymnasion*, will be presented; in a second step, this evidence will be critically reassessed.

1 The *agora* of Segesta: an overview

The research by the Scuola Normale Superiore in the *agora* of Segesta started at the very beginning of the 90s, directed by Giuseppe Nenci and, after a long break, since 2001 they have been pursued under the direction of Carmine Ampolo and Maria Cecilia Parra (Pls. 1, 2).

The area involved in the excavation activities is characterized by a series of wide terraces, on different altimetric levels, resulting from the huge anthropic operations that, especially in the late Hellenistic period, were pursued in order to better define the monumental aspect of

the *agora* (Fig. 1).¹ Although occupied since the proto-historic age, and then more intensively in the archaic and classical periods, the main archaeological evidence dates back to the early Hellenistic, late Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods. Indeed, at the beginning of the 3rd century AD the *agora*, and more generally speaking, the whole urban center was destroyed and had to be abandoned, probably due to a terrific earthquake. Only during the medieval age the three terraces were reoccupied and the ancient structures deeply spoliated in order to get new building material.

Although this paper will be mainly focused on the so-called ‘area of the *bouleuterion*’, that is the uppermost terrace of the *agora*, it is necessary to give a brief preliminary summary of the most recent excavations in the intermediate terrace, where the monumental remains of a more than 80 m long *stoa* have been discovered. This will be of great importance: indeed, it would be quite impossible to achieve a more complete reconstruction of the very articulated architectural design of the Segestan public square without bearing in mind that this portico, built at the end of the 2nd century BC, used to play a fundamental role in linking not only all the different altimetric levels involved in the monumentalization of the city center, but also the several buildings lying on them.

The portico was a building with two aisles and two stories, set up on a three stepped stylobate.² The lower colonnade, of Doric order, was ca. 6.6 m high (from the upper face of the stylobate to the upper face of the *geison*), whereas the upper Ionic colonnade, ca. 4.3 m high, was completed with a *sima* and lion head waterspouts. The total height of the *stoa* was ca. 11 m (Fig. 2). An intermediate row of octagonal pilasters divided the external aisle (ca. 5.80 m deep) from the internal one (ca. 5.5 m deep). The northern side of the building was 82 m long.

As to the internal planimetric organization, currently available data seem to demonstrate that the northern side of the *stoa* did not have rooms along the back wall. On the contrary, along the rear wall of the northern portico, some stone arches had been built in order to sustain and strengthen those points where the rock had been cut before the construction of the *stoa*.³

The eastern wing, although still not completely investigated, was ca. 20 m long and, in addition to the

1 Ampolo and Parra 2012; Parra 2006.

2 For the preliminary architectural study of the *stoa*, and in particular of

the western wing, see Abata and Cannistraci 2012.

3 Facella and Olivito 2013; Olivito and Serra 2014.

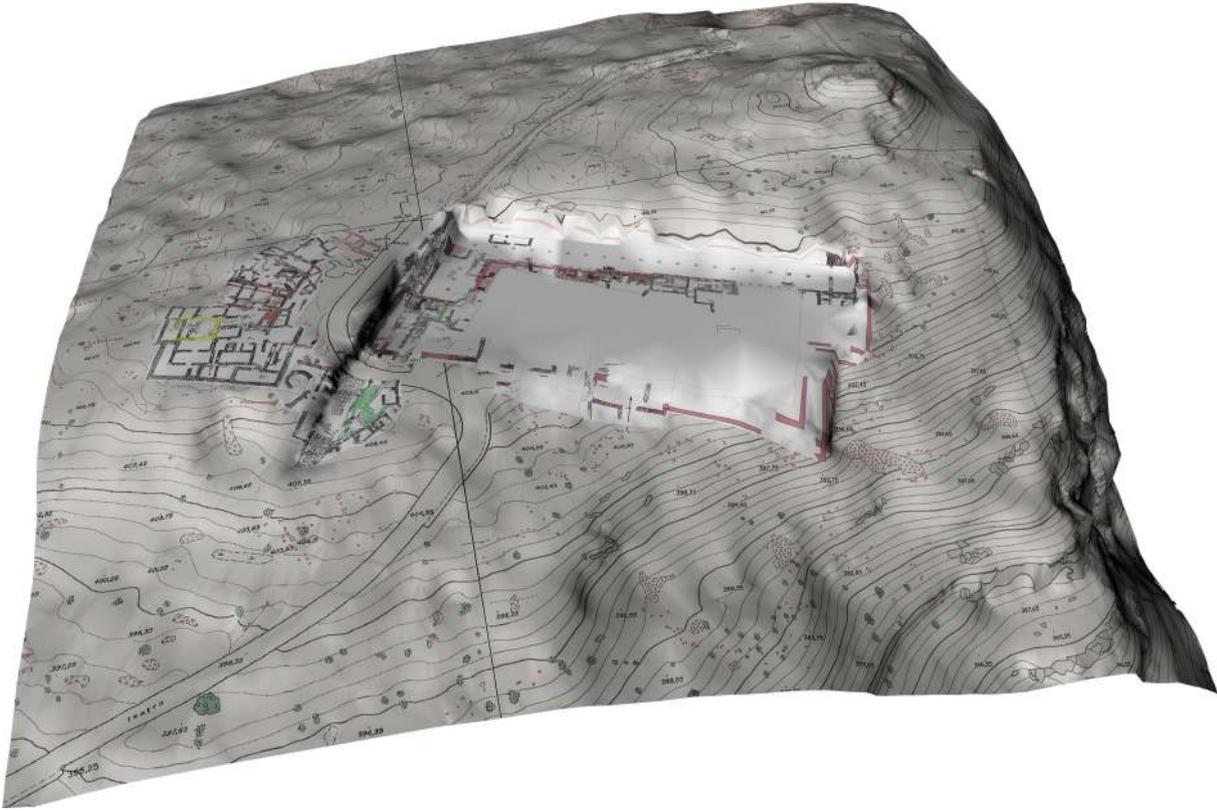


Fig. 1 Digital Terrain Model (DTM) of the *agora* of Segesta.

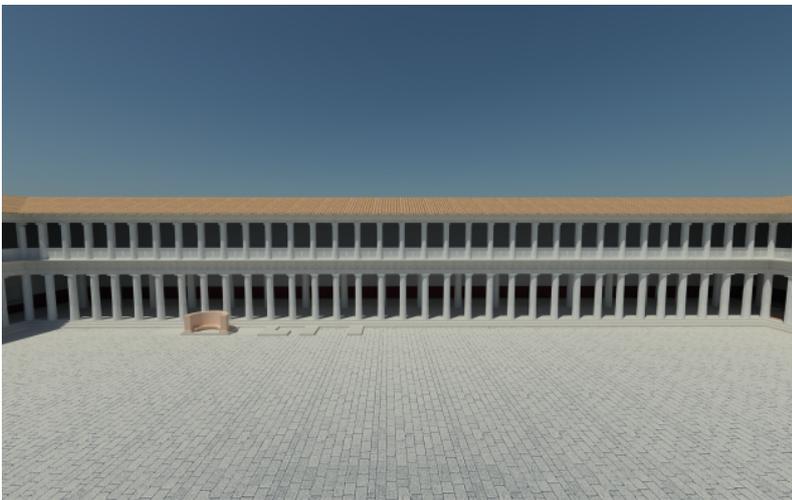


Fig. 2 3D reconstruction of the *stoa* in the *agora* of Segesta.

vertical sequence of Doric and Ionic colonnades, it was completed with at least one or perhaps two other stories, partially underground, open on the southern side of the square with a series of windows and doors, and probably used as stores and shops.⁴

The eastern wing is also the only area of the *stoa* where the presence of internal rooms has been verified. Indeed, a threshold has been discovered, demonstrating the presence of at least one small room in this part of the *ala*. Furthermore, at the intersection between the eastern

4 Ampolo and Parra 2016; Perna 2016.

and the northern portico, a large room has been identified (the so-called ‘Ambiente I’), whose main entrance was marked by pilasters with semi-columns.⁵ Although its function is still unknown, the presence of burnt remains along the walls of the room, probably to be related to wooden shelves, might suggest an identification of the so-called ‘Ambiente I’ with an archive or a document depository.⁶

The western wing, ca. 20 m long, is the only one that has been completely investigated. Together with the two colonnaded stories, the west *ala* is characterized by the presence of stairs lying in the northwestern corner of the building and leading to the upper floor of the *stoa*. While demonstrating the physical link between the two stories of the portico, the presence of stairs, together with the total height of the *stoa* and the topographical relation with the near upper terrace, might demonstrate the existence of a connection between the buildings of the ‘area of the *bouleuterion*’ and the main sector of the Segestan *agora*, i.e. the one defined by the *stoa*. These two areas had to be part of a more articulated architectural complex in which the Council House and the peristyle building that we will examine in the following pages had to play a fundamental role.

Indeed, the two sectors were partially divided by a monumental road leading to the theater.⁷ As far as the *agora* is concerned, the monumental road was partially covered due to the presence of a *cryptoporticus*, in the southernmost part of the square, and had to be partially open in the area behind the western wing of the *stoa*.⁸

The planimetric and archaeological features of the road in the area south of the *agora* are more clearly articulated and easily reconstructed. Here, in fact, the new archaeological investigations have shown different structural elements, allowing us to clarify the intricate evolution of this urban sector.⁹

The earliest traces of monuments in this area can be dated back to the end of the 2nd century BC, when a portico was built. Its main function during the late Hellenistic period was the creation of a monumental scenography at the entrance of the *agora*.

Between the end of the 1st century BC and the very early years of the 1st century AD this area assumed greater importance, due to the construction of a small triangular square and the monumentalization of an already existing road leading to the theater, now paved with stone slabs. At the same time, about 2 m south of the stylobate of the late Hellenistic *stoa*, a circular building with a single door was built.

The construction of the circular building can be dated to the early 1st century AD, while the abandonment of this area and of the entire *agora* took place at the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Together with topographic considerations, the very abundant presence of butchered bones found in the floor levels within the building allowed for its identification as a *tholos macelli*, used as a slaughterhouse.¹⁰

Near the *macellum*, during the first decades of the 1st century AD a small triangular square was built, due to the euergetic activity of two local notables, *Onasus* and *Sopolis*, honored in an inscription, over 5 m long, incised on the slabs of this small square.

Finally, the *macellum* and the triangular square were separated by the already mentioned monumental paved street, which passed through the *cryptoporticus* and behind the western wing of the *stoa*, leading to the theater.

So far, we have quickly illustrated the main buildings of the *agora* and of the area south of the public square. With these structures and topographic features in mind, we can thus move to the upper terrace and the hypothetical presence of a *gymnasion* in this area of the town.

2 Methodological premises

The hypothetical identification of the so-called *gymnasion* of Segesta is an interesting example of archaeological hermeneutics. On the one hand, old readings of epigraphic documents that had been known for many centuries have been used in order to interpret the poor ar-

5 For the architectural study of the entrance to the ‘Ambiente I’ see Abate and Cannistraci 2013.

6 Cannistraci and Perna 2012, 13–14; Abate and Cannistraci 2013, 45–48.

7 For the road system of this urban sector see Facella and Olivito 2012; Olivito 2014b; Olivito 2017 [2018].

8 It is still uncertain how the presence of the road behind the western wing of the *stoa* influenced the physical connection between the upper terrace

and the late Hellenistic portico. Unfortunately, this issue is hardly investigable due to the construction, during the 50s of the 20th century, of a road leading to the theater. We will come back to this point in the following pages.

9 Facella and Olivito 2012; Olivito 2017 [2018].

10 Olivito 2014a.

archaeological remains of a peristyle building as part of a *gymnasion*.

On the other hand, the interpretation of the poor archaeological remains as traces of a *gymnasion* have been considered as an element validating old epigraphic readings. This circular process has led to the hypothesis of a *gymnasion* on the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta, close to the Council House (Pl. 3–4). As will be seen, the most recent findings in the epigraphic field, and a new analysis of the archaeological and topographical data, independent of the epigraphic ones, allow us to formulate new hypotheses. The main question is not whether or not Segesta had its own *gymnasion*, but rather whether or not we can identify the poor remains of the above mentioned peristyle building on the upper terrace with the περίστυλος, or *palaestra*, of the *gymnasion*.

3 Epigraphic and archaeological evidence: the construction of a hypothesis

3.1 Epigraphic evidence

As far as the Segestan epigraphic documentation is concerned, we rely on a corpus composed of five inscriptions concerning the organization and funding of public works at Segesta. All of the inscriptions – dating back to the period between the 4th and the 2nd century BC – have been studied by Giuseppe Nenci, who first formulated the hypothesis of the Segestan *gymnasion*. At present, the whole epigraphic dossier is under re-examination by Carmine Ampolo and Donatella Erdas.

IGDSII, no. 85 (SEG XLI, 827) represents the starting point for the assumption of a gymnasial institution at Segesta.

Though already mentioned by Giacomo Mangano,¹¹ the document was first published by Nenci, who discovered it in the repository of the Soprintendenza of Marsala.¹² Unfortunately, we know almost nothing

about the discovery of the inscription, except for the fact that it seems to have been discovered along the modern street leading to the theater.¹³

The text is inscribed on an architrave block of limestone, decorated with moldings on both the upper and lower parts. These features, together with the text itself, led Laurent Dubois to interpret it as a statue base.¹⁴

IGDSII, no. 85 (SEG XLI, 827)

Ed. IGDSII, no. 85:

[Ἀρτε]μιδώρα Νύμφονος τὸν αὐτάστα πατέρα
[Ἀρτέ]μιωνα Ἀλείδα γυμνασιαρχήσαντα
[ἀνέθ]ηκε κατὰ διαθήκαν.

Artemidora (i.e. wife) of *Nymphon*, in accordance with a disposition by will, dedicated the statue of her own father, *Artemon* son of *Aleidas*, who was *gymnasiarch*.

The inscription, to be dated around the 4th and the 3rd century BC,¹⁵ or more precisely in the second half of the 3rd century BC¹⁶, presents several interesting elements as regards Segestan onomastics, which cannot be further investigated here.

As far as the Segestan *gymnasion* is concerned, we would like to stress that *Artemidora* is a very common anthroponym in Segesta, quite certainly linked with *Artemis*. Although we do not have any further information on *Aleidas*, Dubois has correctly suggested that the patronymic is typically Segestan and of local origin.

Then, we can conclude that the inscription IGDSII, no. 85 demonstrates the existence of the gymnasial magistracy at Segesta, but it does not refer to any specific building, even less in the area of the *agora*.

Two other inscriptions with similar content have been traditionally linked with the *gymnasion*.

The first one is IG XIV, 291, unfortunately of unknown provenance, which has been dated by Margherita Guarducci to not before the middle of the 3rd century BC.¹⁷

IG XIV, 291 (IGDS, no. 216)

Ed. IGDS, no. 216:

11 Mangano 1980, 446 and with restoration of l.2, Mangano 1999, 66. See also Cordiano 1997, 45–46.

12 Inventory no. SG. 2024. See Nenci 1991, 926–927.

13 This is the only information that G. Nenci was able to collect from an oral communication with the custodian of the archaeological site.

14 IGDSII, 165–166.

15 Nenci 1991, 926.

16 IGDSII, 166.

17 See the commentary by Guarducci in Marconi 1931, 398. See also Nenci 1991, 923, pl. CCXCVIII, and Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278; Carmine Ampolo and Donatella Erdas. “Segesta. Un’iscrizione ellenistica nel suo contesto: nuovi apporti storico-epigrafici alla conoscenza della città”. *Notizie degli scavi di antichità comunicate dalla Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa S* 5.10.2. Forthcoming.

Ἱερομναμονεύων
 Τίττελος Ἀρτεμιδώρο[υ]
 τὰν ἐπιμέλειαν ἐποιήσα[το]
 τῶν ἔργων τοῦ ἀνδρεῶνο[ς]
 [κ]αὶ τὰς προέδρας μετὰ τ[ῶν]
 ἱεροφυλάκων.

While being hieromnamon, Tittelos son of Artemidoros took care of the works at the andreon and the proedra, together with the hierophylakes.

In addition to the important onomastic information, the text is particularly interesting for the references to the words ἀνδρεῶν and προέδρα.

As to the term ἀνδρεῶν, corresponding to the Attic form ἀνδρών¹⁸, that is men's apartment, Dubois suggested to interpret it as a possible equivalent to the Cretan word ἀνδρήιον, to be identified as the banqueting-hall where the Cretan *syssitia* took place.¹⁹ In this regard, the association with the word προέδρα,²⁰ interpreted as a reference to the front and most important seats in a building (especially a theater), was of great importance for thinking of the Segestan ἀνδρεῶν as a particular building, that is a meeting hall for the town magistrates (i.e. a sort of *prytaneion*²¹), furnished with at least one row of front seats.²²

Dubois's thesis was firmly rejected by Nenci, who indeed suggested linking IG XIV, 291 to the presence of a *gymnasion* at Segesta, on the basis of another Segestan inscription, that is IGDSII, no. 89.²³

IGDSII, no. 89 (Marconi 1931, 397–399)

Ed. Ampolo and Parra 2012:

[...]
 Ἱ]ερομναμονέοντος
 Ἀ]ρτεμιδώρου Δόσσιος Γραδαναίου

τὸ δίπυλον οἱ ἀνδρεῶνες
 5 ἅ προέδρα ἐστεγάσθεν ἐθυ-
 --- -ς δις- ---

[...] *while being hieromnamon Artemidoros, son of Dossis Gradanaios, the dipylon, the andreones, and the proedra were covered.*

The inscription records work activities for the covering of the δίπυλον, the ἀνδρεῶνες, and the προέδρα: then, its object is similar to that of the previous document, although they are not contemporary, since, according to Ampolo and Erdas, IGDSII, no. 89 dates back to the 2nd century BC.²⁴ Thus, in Nenci's view, similarly to the singular ἀνδρεῶν, the plural ἀνδρεῶνες might refer to the presence of several male rooms, as well as of a προέδρα, within the *gymnasion* of Segesta: "[...] nel qual caso non andranno ricercati a Segesta i resti di un ginnasio e di un ἀνδρεῶν, ma solo del ginnasio."²⁵ At the same time, differently from what he stated in the case of the singular ἀνδρεῶν, Dubois suggested that: "Les ἀνδρεῶνες pourraient être ici des salles du gymnase dévolues à la catégorie des ἄνδρες."²⁶

On the contrary, in commenting on the inscription, Guarducci linked it with the theater,²⁷ thinking of additions to this building by the *hieromnamon* Artemidoros.²⁸ In particular, Guarducci thought the ἀνδρεῶνες to be a sort of banqueting rooms reserved for the men of the town, whereas the προέδρα would have been a space reserved for the meeting of the *proedri*. Indeed, well noticed by Ampolo, in this case it is important to consider that the indication of a roof as the object of the work activity, seems in fact to allow us to exclude that we are dealing with a row of seats:²⁹ in fact, it is more likely that

18 IGDS, 273–274. The form ἀνδρεῶν is attested in Hdt. I, 34.

19 For an epigraphic reference to the Cretan ἀνδρήιον, see e.g. GDI, 4992, a, II, 9. Unfortunately, we still do not have enough data on the Cretan institution, both from a socio-historical and an archaeological point of view. As a result, it is quite impossible to state a certain comparison between the Segestan ἀνδρεῶν and the Cretan ἀνδρήιον. On the Cretan institution of the ἀνδρήιον/ἀνδρεῖα (explicitly recalled by Dosiadas [FGrHist 458, fr. 2, 5–15], apud Ath. IV, 143b) see among others Lavrencic 1988 and, more recently, Perlman 2014, 185–192 (with previous literature).

20 For the form προέδρα, equal to προεδρία, see e.g. IG V, 2, 113, from Tegea.

21 On Greek *prytaneia* see Miller 1978; Hansen and Fischer-Hansen 1994, 30–37; Emme 2013, 86–122.

22 See IGDS, 274.

23 Inventory no. SG 2004. See also Nenci 1991, 923–924 pl. CCXCIX, 1;

SEG LIX, 825; Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278; Ampolo and Erdas forthcoming (see fn. 17).

24 See also the commentary by Guarducci in Marconi 1931, 399.

25 Nenci 1991, 923.

26 IGDSII, 168.

27 This suggestion was probably influenced by the provenance of the inscription that was discovered near the theater as recorded in a communication by Marconi to the custodian of the archaeological area. For the transcription of this communication (dated 27th May 1927) see Nenci 1991, 924 n. 20.

28 See Guarducci in Marconi 1931, 399: "Dato il luogo di rinvenimento, si può supporre che essa (i.e. the inscription) possa in qualche modo essere messa in relazione con il teatro greco [...]"

29 Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278; Ampolo and Erdas forthcoming (see fn. 17), passim.

we are dealing here with covered rooms and/or structures, composing a larger and more articulated architectural complex.

A further probable evidence of the interesting role played by the ἀνδρεῶνες at Segesta might be represented by the most fragmentary inscription of the whole Segestan *dossier*, published by Nenci in 1991.³⁰

Nenci 1991, 921, no. 1 (SEG XLI, 826)

Ed. Nenci 1991, 921, no. 1:

[τοῖς] Δι[οσκούροις]
[οἱ τριτίρ]ε[ς] καὶ οἱ ἀνδρ[ε]ς
[συγκατασκ]ευσασθέντες

Ed. SEG XLI, 826:

[- -]ΔΙ[- -]
[- -] γες καὶ οἱ ΑΝΔ[- -]
[- - -]ευσασθέντες

The text, inscribed on a limestone block whose original context is unknown, was interpreted by Nenci as a dedication to the *Dioskouroi* by two groups of people, that is the τριτίρηνες (i.e. the *epheboi* of the third year) and the ἀνδρες. The obvious deduction was that these two groups were part of those attending the Segestan *gymnasion* and that the final verb had to be restored as [συγκατασκ]ευσασθέντες, or, as an alternative as [κατασκ]ευσασθέντες. Thus, a further link with gymnasial activity was stated by Nenci, on the basis of the association between the κατασκευή and the Greek *gymnasion*.³¹

More recently, Ampolo has reexamined this document noting that although the readings by Nenci are correct, the restoration of the missing text, and consequently its interpretation, is highly hypothetical.³² In particular, rather than reading οἱ ἀνδρ[- -] and restoring it as οἱ ἀνδρ[ε]ς, it can be restored as οἱ ἀνδρε[ῶ]νες.³³ The final verb is more convincingly identified as the third person plural of the passive aorist tense of ἐπισκευάζω. Therefore, the inscription would have no di-

rect link to the gymnasial institution.

Finally, the last but still most important document that Nenci used in order to strengthen the thesis of the Segestan *gymnasion* is IG XIV, 290 (IGDS, 215).³⁴

Similarly to the previously examined documents, also in this case we have to remember that the original provenance of the inscription, now stored in the public library of Calatafimi (TP, Sicily), is unknown. At the same time, the chronology of the inscription can only be stated on the basis of a paleographic analysis. This is obviously a fairly problematic issue, as demonstrated by the different hypothetical dates suggested for the document: end of the 4th century BC according to Nenci,³⁵ 2nd century BC, according to Ampolo.³⁶

The text is inscribed on a *tabula ansata* and was first published by Nenci, still lacking its left side.

IG XIV, 290 (IGDS, 215):

[Ἐρ]οθυτέοντος Φάωνος
[τοῦ Νύμ]φωνος Σωπολιανοῦ,
[ἀγορα]νομέοντος Ξενάρχου
[τοῦ Δι] οδώρου καὶ τὰν ἐπιμέλειαν
5 [ποίη]σαμένου τῶν ἔργων
[τοῦ ξυσ]τοῦ ἅ κατεσκευάσθη.....

While being ierothytas Phaon son of Nymphos Sopolianos, while being agoranomos Xenarchos son of Diodoros, he (i.e. Xenarchos) took care of the works realized to the xystos.

It is obvious that in this case the most important element for our discussion is in line 6. Indeed, since the work of Désiré Raoul Rochette,³⁷ this part of the text has been restored with the word [τοῦ ξυσ]τοῦ. Although this reading had been already rejected by Jean Delorme,³⁸ both Nenci³⁹ and Dubois⁴⁰ accepted the restoration by Raoul Rochette and, consequently, used it as a very meaningful and convincing element supporting the thesis of a *gymnasion* at Segesta.

It is important to recall this element since, as we will see later, the general sense of the inscription has been

30 Inventory no. SG 2007. Nenci 1991, 921–923 pl. CCXCVI; see also Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278–279.

31 Nenci 1991, 922. In this regard, Nenci recalled Oehler 1912.

32 Ampolo and Parra 2012, 279.

33 As to the τριτίρηνες, this is a very rare term, only attested in a 2nd century BC ephobic list from the Messenian town of Thouria (IG V, 1, 1386). For this reason, Nenci's restoration seems to be unlikely. For a review of this term and the others linked to it, see Lanérés 2008.

34 The inscription was already known to Gualtherus; Gualtherus 1624, 49, no. 322.

35 Nenci 1991, 924.

36 Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278.

37 Raoul Rochette 1836, 94.

38 Delorme 1960, 288 n. 7; 487.

39 Nenci 1991, 923.

40 IGDS, 273.

deeply modified by recent research on Segestan epigraphy.

3.2 Archaeological evidence

The upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta (Pl. 1) occupies a wide plateau south of the Hellenistic theater, which is located on a higher level than the terrace of the *stoa*. In the 1990s, excavations revealed monuments belonging to different epochs: in particular, a fortified medieval village set directly upon the remains of a late Hellenistic *bouleuterion*, a peristyle building, and a late Archaic structure (perhaps a temple).⁴¹ Scanty remains of a prehistoric settlement complete the archaeological frame, whereas remains from the Roman Imperial period are conspicuously absent. This suggests continuous use of the Hellenistic buildings in the Roman period or complete abandonment after the ‘Romanization’ of Segesta, in the first decades of the 1st century AD.

As to the ancient structures, the best preserved building is the *bouleuterion*, whose maximum capacity was 150–200 seats (Pl. 5).

From a typological point of view, the Segestan Council House can be inserted into the group of Sicilian *bouleuteria* (among others that of Soluntum and Agrigentum) characterized by a semicircular *cavea* inscribed within a rectangular building, and completed with a frontal portico.⁴² Indeed, this type can be directly compared with the Hellenistic *bouleuterion* of Miletus and, more generally speaking, with other *bouleuteria* in Asia Minor such as those of Iasos and Nysa.⁴³ Like the latter, the *bouleuterion* of Segesta had an *ambulatorium* running under the last two rows of seats, accessible from the north and allowing the council members to reach the *summa cavea* through a small staircase.⁴⁴

A small tetrastyle portico and a monumental inscription, to be dated to the 2nd century BC, emphasized the main entrance to the *bouleuterion*. The text, inscribed on four limestone slabs, recorded the dedication of the building by the ἐπιστάτης Asklaḗpos, son of Diorodos, and the architect Bibakos, son of Tittelos.⁴⁵

Further investigations allowed archaeologists to verify that two slabs of a stylobate, discovered on the southeastern side of the *bouleuterion*, were part of a portico running in front of the western wing of the *stoa* and, perhaps, along the road leading to the theater (Pls. 3–5).

Two different architectural phases have been identified: the first dated to the end of the 4th century or the early 3rd century BC; and the second dated to the end of the 2nd century BC. Whereas elements of the first phase are very poorly preserved, the second phase is well represented by stratigraphic evidence, architectural features and epigraphic evidence (i.e. the above mentioned monumental inscription).

To the southwest of the *bouleuterion*, since 1989, remains of a peristyle building with paved floor, colonnade, and rear wall were revealed under various walls of the medieval Swabian village (Pl. 3, Fig. 3). The peristyle building is partially preserved. Only four limestone slabs of the stylobate are still visible on the ground. The analysis of the stylobate allowed a reconstruction of a column with smooth shaft and a lower diameter of ca. 0.75 m. The interaxial span is not homogeneous, ranging from 2.5 to 2.7 m, probably because of subsequent modifications. The preserved length of the stylobate on the northern side of the peristyle is 11.30 m. On the southeastern side of the building a monumental threshold for a door with two leaves has been discovered (Fig. 4). In front of it, traces of a drainpipe were found. Unfortunately, it is still impossible to assign any of the architectural elements that were found during the excavations or were reused in the medieval walls to this portico.

In addition to the remains of the colonnade and the threshold, a small portion of a wall running from east to west, probably part of the rear wall of the building, and some portions of a floor composed of square bricks, 20 cm large and 8 cm thick (Fig. 5), are the only other surviving components of the peristyle complex. This kind of pavement, discovered in two points along the northern and eastern areas of the peristyle, can be well compared to other examples from Segesta.⁴⁶ It also has parallels in Hellenistic buildings outside Segesta, such as

41 Parra 1997. The complete publication of the *bouleuterion* and all the structures on the upper terrace is forthcoming.

42 Parra 2006, 109–112.

43 Parapetti 1985; Balty 1991, 444–453; Johannowsky 1994.

44 Besides, it is likely that the *ambulatorium* led to an underground room that may have been an archive or a storage room.

45 For the inscription see: Nenci 2000, 810–811; IGDSII, 167, no. 88. This inscription is also under re-examination by Ampolo.

46 Cf. the brick floor in the so-called Southwestern *stoa*, near the *tholos macelli*; Benelli et al. 1995, 685; or the well-preserved floor in the eastern *ala* of the *stoa* in the *agora*; Cannistraci and Perna 2013, 19–20; Abate and Giaccione 2014, 33–35.



Fig. 3 Aerial view of the remains of the peristyle building on the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta.



Fig. 4 Peristyle building: the threshold at the main entrance.



Fig. 5 Floor with square bricks in the area of the peristyle building.

the *stoa* in the *agora* of Halaesa⁴⁷ and the *agora* of Soluntum.⁴⁸

As frequently attested at Segesta, the area of the peristyle was heavily reused in the medieval age. Spoliation and reuse of the Hellenistic structures were not limited to the walls, but also involved the central paved courtyard, whose *lacunae* were filled with smaller slabs recovered in other buildings. For this reason, we have no evidence allowing for the reconstruction of the original size of the peristyle and, consequently, of the general plan of the building.

Despite the poor state of preservation, the remains can be identified as a four-sided peristyle, of which only two colonnades survived. The building had a monumental entrance with a large threshold on its eastern side, possibly along the road leading to the theater. Rooms with brick pavements may have opened to the northeastern side of the peristyle. While this building can safely be interpreted as a *περίστυλος*, its proposed identification as a *palaestra* of a *gymnasion*,⁴⁹ requires critical revision.

4 Epigraphic and archaeological evidence: reassessment

4.1 Epigraphic evidence: reassessment

It is obvious that the identification of a *gymnasion* in Segesta is based on a circular interpretative process, where the inscriptions have been interpreted and restored on the basis of the poor archaeological remains and, at the same time, the architectural evidence has been read with the aid of a highly lacunose epigraphic dossier. Both epigraphic and archaeological evidence require careful independent reassessment.

We would first like to highlight a few very meaningful points derived from Ampolo's new readings and interpretations of some of the above-mentioned inscriptions.⁵⁰ As we have seen, the most significant epigraphic

evidence for the hypothesis of the Segestan *gymnasion* has been the reference to the *ξυστός* in the inscription IG XIV, 290.⁵¹ Nevertheless, in 2003 a very important discovery was made during the excavations in the *agora*:⁵² the missing left part of the inscribed stone, which has allowed Ampolo to correct the previous reading of the text (Fig. 6). On the basis of the new fragment we can now correctly reconstruct the name of the *agoranomos*, which is Xenarchos, son of Apollodoros, rather than the previously read Diodoros son of Apollodoros.⁵³ More importantly, the new fragment has allowed Ampolo to definitively exclude the presence of the genitive *τοῦ ξυστοῦ* in line 6. The first letter of line 6 is an *α*, whereas the following letter, partially preserved, can be only intended either as a second *α* or, more likely, as a *λ*. Although this means that the possibility to validate the restoration of this term on the basis of the *περίστυλος* on the upper terrace of the *agora* cannot be considered valid anymore, it does not mean that the connection with a *gymnasion* at Segesta has to be completely rejected.

In this sense, granted that at the beginning of line 6 the letters *αλ* can be read, and that Gualtherus' and Nenci's reading of the first letters of the other block of the inscription is correct (i.e. *του*), could we still think of an inscription somehow connected with the Segestan *gymnasion*? Ampolo has convincingly shown that the genitive form of the term *τό ἀλειπτήριον* (that is the place for anointing in *gymnasia*) must be excluded because this word is too long.⁵⁴ However, it is difficult to think of other possible restorations without risking misunderstanding the actual and original sense of the inscription. Thus, while waiting for the forthcoming edition of the Segestan epigraphic *corpus*, it will be better to simply consider this document as a further demonstration of the activity by an outstanding citizen, Xenarchos, who personally funded the construction and care of several works, though not necessarily those in the *gymnasion*.⁵⁵ Ampolo succinctly summarizes the significance of the epigraphic evidence as follows:

47 Tigano 2012, 138.

48 Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994, 31–32; Wolf 2013, 21–22.

49 First hypothesized by Nenci 1991, the identification of this structure with the Segestan *gymnasion* on the upper terrace of the *agora* has been later supported by other scholars: see Michelini 1997, 1148–1150; De Cesare and Parra 2000, 278; Mango 2009, 764–765.

50 As we have already pointed out, a new edition of the whole Segestan epigraphic dossier by Ampolo and Erdas is forthcoming (see fn. 17). Though, some of the most innovative elements derived from his examination have been preliminarily presented in Ampolo and Parra 2012,

278–280.

51 See above.

52 Erdas and Gagliardi 2003, 427–428.

53 Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278.

54 Ampolo and Parra 2012, 278. As far as the *gymnasion* is concerned, the term *τό ἀλειπτήριον* is attested among others at Delos (IG XI, 2 199, l. 105) and Thera (IG XII, 3, 1314).

55 On the meaning of the verb *κατασκευάζειν* in this kind of inscription see also Ampolo 2008, 25–26.



Fig. 6 Cast of IG XIV, 290 (IGDS, 215) with the newly-discovered fragment on the left.

Questo gruppo di iscrizioni menziona sia la cura (*epimeleia*) dei lavori di costruzione di alcune strutture sia la costruzione od esecuzione di alcune opere. Le iscrizioni sono simili per forma (i.e. mainly in form of *tabulae ansatae*) e caratteri, ma non totalmente identiche. Probabilmente sono vicine nel tempo, ma non furono eseguite contemporaneamente. Esse coinvolgono personaggi diversi per varie operazioni di cura di lavori o di esecuzione vera e propria, che ricevertero per questo una statua onoraria e l'iscrizione.⁵⁶

Thus, reassessment of the epigraphic evidence yields the following picture:

1. The inscriptions which mention a δίτυλον, the ἄνδρων or ἀνδρεῶνες and the προέδρα are of unknown provenance (IG XIV, 291 and SEG XLI, 826) or seem to have been discovered in the area of the theater (IGDSII, no. 89). Consequently, the possibility of linking them with a *gymnasion* lying in the area of the public square, and in particular with the peristyle building near the *bouleuterion*, must be very carefully re-considered. As a hypothesis, we cannot even exclude a connection with structures lying in the area close to the theater.
2. Rather than automatically suggesting a relation between the terms ἀνδρών/ἀνδρεῶνες and the local *gymnasion*, we can refer them to rooms reserved to

male citizens, possibly having a political or administrative function (e.g. as *prytaneion*) and totally independent from the gymnasial institutions. The inscription SEG XLI, 826, where a possible reference to the τριτίρενες and the ἄνδρες was reconstructed, has recently been interpreted as further evidence of work activity involving the ἀνδρεῶνες.

3. Only IGDSII, no. 85 can demonstrate that in the 3rd century BC the institution of the γυμνασιαρχία did exist in Segesta.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it cannot be connected with a specific building of the town, let alone the peristyle building near the *bouleuterion*.
4. Most importantly, the hypothesis of a ξυστός at Segesta, so far considered as the most important proof of the existence of a *gymnasion*, is refuted by the recent discovery of a new fragment of IG XIV, 290.

4.2 Archaeological evidence: reassessment

Based on new evidence derived from an up-to-date analysis of the epigraphic dossier, and especially after having demonstrated how the hypothetical identification of the *gymnasion* with the structures on the upper terrace of the *agora* actually relied on a wrong reconstruction of the epigraphic texts, we would like to definitively separate the epigraphic data from the peristyle near the *bouleuterion*, suggesting a new interpretation of the archaeo-

⁵⁶ Ampolo and Parra 2012, 279. On the energetic activities in many of the most important cities of western Sicily see also Campagna 2007.

⁵⁷ A still unpublished inscription, probably of ephobic nature, could possi-

bly represent further evidence of the existence of a *gymnasion*. For a short note see Parra 2006, 107 n. 5. The forthcoming edition of the Segestan epigraphic dossier by Ampolo will shed new light on this document.

logical evidence on the basis of its topographic and architectural nature.

With regard to this, we need to mention some archaeological features that have not been sufficiently highlighted so far:

1. First, the floors of the *bouleuterion* and of the peristyle building lie at the same level. In our view, this suggests unity of planning (Pl. 6).
2. Second, while delimiting the southwestern side of the *bouleuterion*, the western wall of the *ambulacrum* of the Council House had to define also the northeastern side of the peristyle building. In our view, this element can allow for the hypothesis of a common architectural project which linked these buildings planimetrically and structurally with one another.
3. Third, the southern wall of the *bouleuterion* is aligned with the monumental threshold of the peristyle, so that we can imagine a long common front wall for the two buildings.
4. Finally, a further element which speaks for a unified plan is represented by the poorly preserved stylobate blocks that we think of as part of a colonnade running ca. 3.5 m south of the two buildings. Indeed, two limestone slabs with traces of the lowest part of the column are preserved, allowing us to reconstruct a base diameter of 60 cm. This measure is comparable with the lower diameter of the columns composing the portico in front of the *tholos macelli*. Thus, we can reconstruct a colonnade running quite perfectly parallel to the southern wall of the *bouleuterion* and, more importantly, partially facing the peristyle building with its southernmost stylobate block. On the basis of this assumption, can we then imagine a long single-aisled portico, its final purpose being the creation of an architecturally unifying scene

for the road leading to the theater? Such an urban planning solution would not be without parallels since, as already shown by Roland Martin, especially in the Hellenistic period colonnades and porticoes were increasingly used as tools for the unification of the front walls of spaces and buildings with different functions,⁵⁸ especially those playing a political role. Indeed, as Burkhard Emme has correctly noticed: “Erst in der nachfolgenden, hellenistischen Zeit ist verschiedentlich eine Tendenz zur Vereinheitlichung der Agora-Randbebauung zu erkennen, indem verschiedenen Gebäuden politischer Funktion eine einheitliche Säulenhalle vorgelegt wurde.”⁵⁹ Similarly, Barbara Sielhorst has recently argued that, in the Hellenistic period, the *stoai*: “sorgten für eine Vereinheitlichung der Gebäudefronten.”⁶⁰

Once we have assumed a possible project unity for the two above-mentioned buildings, it is not hard to find comparisons for a combination between a *bouleuterion* and a peristyle complex. Generally speaking, several late Hellenistic *bouleuteria* and particularly that of Miletus (Fig. 7),⁶¹ which became a model for many of the Sicilian Council Houses,⁶² show that the *bouleuterion* was often completed with a portico devoted to the activities of the *bouleutai*.

As far as the Sicilian examples are concerned,⁶³ we would first like to recall the case of the earlier *bouleuterion* of Iaitas (Fig. 8).⁶⁴ Here a small *bouleuterion*, whose construction has been differently dated from the end of the 4th century BC to the middle of the 2nd century BC, has been discovered at the northwestern corner of the public square.⁶⁵ Similarly to the *bouleuterion* of Segesta, that of Iaitas had a *cavea* (60–70 seats maximum) inscribed in a small rectangular room. The Council House was accessible directly from the portico defining the northern side of the *agora* (the so-called ‘North *stoa*’), through a wide

58 Martin 1951, 490–494 and 502. See also Lauter 1986, 124–127.

59 Emme 2013, 92.

60 Sielhorst 2015, 54.

61 Knackfuss 1908; Schaaf 1992, 37–60, with previous literature.

62 On the influence of the *bouleuterion* of Miletus on the Sicilian Council Houses see Campagna 2006, 28.

63 For a general overview on the Sicilian *bouleuteria*, see Isler 2003 and, more recently and briefly, Campagna 2006, 25–28; Wolf 2013, 67–70 pl. 113. More generally speaking, on the *bouleuterion* see McDonald 1943;

Gneisz 1990; Balty 1991, 429–600; Hansen and Fischer-Hansen 1994, 37–44.

64 On the earlier *bouleuterion* of Iaitas see Isler 2012, 230–231 with earlier literature. A later *bouleuterion*, larger than the first, has been discovered on the western side of the *agora*: see Isler 2012, 232–233.

65 A 4th century BC chronology is suggested by Isler 2003, 429–431 and Isler 2011. On the contrary, a 2nd century BC date is firmly sustained by other scholars: see in particular Campagna 2006, 28.

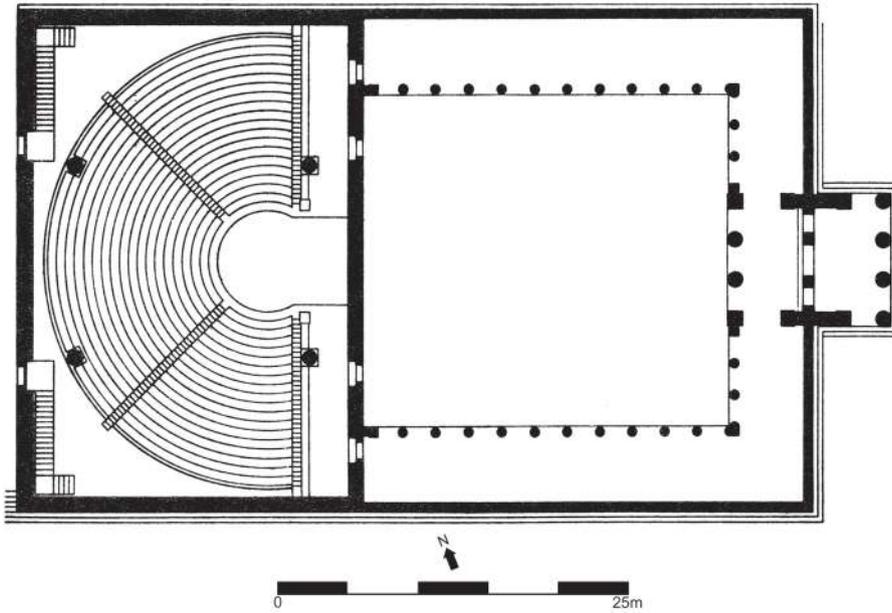


Fig. 7 Plan of the *bouleuterion* of Miletus.

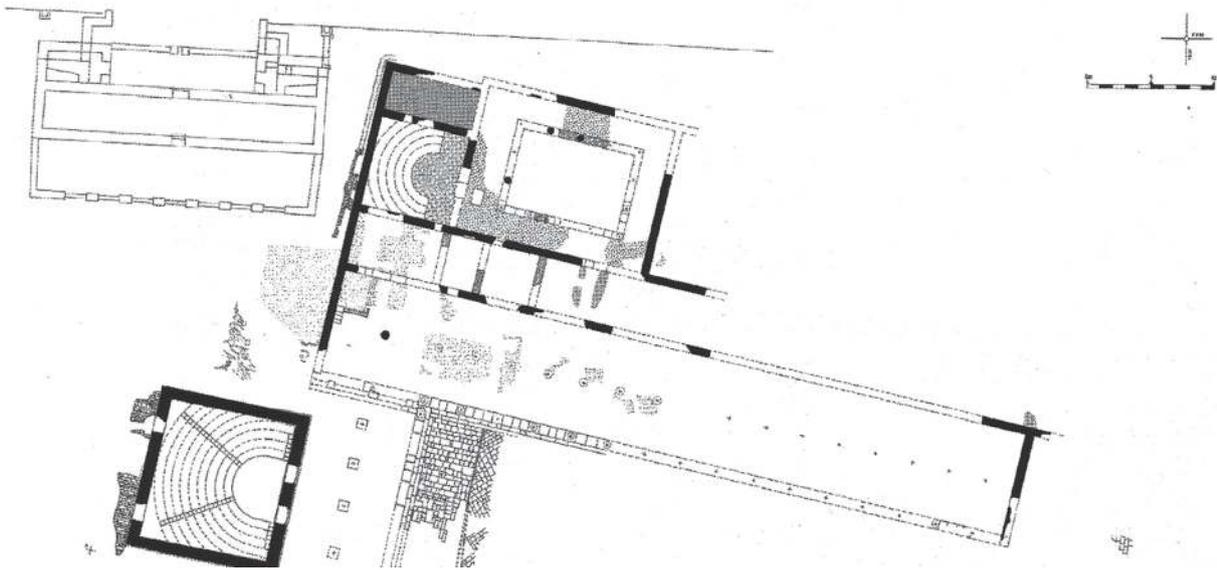


Fig. 8 Plan of the *bouleuterion/prytaneion* complex on the northern side of the *agora* of Iaitas.

opening that led to the rear part of the *cavea*.⁶⁶ Apart from the analogies with the Segestan *bouleuterion*, the combination of the *bouleuterion* with a peristyle building are of particular interest here. Indeed, joined to the eastern wall of the Iaitas Council House and, accessible from the 'North *stoa*', an open court with 4 x 5 columns has been discovered. Still, on the western wall of the

peristyle, a partially preserved threshold connecting the peristyle with the *orchestra* of the *bouleuterion*, definitely demonstrates the existence of a planimetric, and consequently functional unity between the two buildings.

Furthermore, the unity existing between the Iaitas *bouleuterion* and the peristyle, was emphasized due to

⁶⁶ According to Isler, during the 2nd century BC the width of the entrance to the *bouleuterion* was drastically reduced, due to the construction of a *podium* with a small staircase in the northwestern corner of the *stoa*. This

structure has been interpreted as the *tribunal* of the new Roman town: see Isler 2012, 230.

the role played by the ‘North *stoa*’, which, as correctly pointed out by Hans Peter Isler, was not

un elemento autonomo, ma formava un complesso monumentale insieme ad un edificio pubblico retrostante con il quale ha il muro occidentale in comune. Il complesso retrostante si compone della prima sala di consiglio di Iaitas [...] e di un cortile a colonne, cioè un peristilio, antistante i due locali, con quattro colonne in senso Nord-Sud e cinque in senso Est-Ovest.⁶⁷

Without a doubt, there is a strong analogy in the use of a columned façade unifying the *bouleuterion* and the peristyle building in both the cases of Segesta and Iaitas. In our view, this is a very meaningful element for the interpretation of the peristyle as a space somehow functionally connected to, or depending on, the Council House rather than as a *gymnasion*.

The comparison between Iaitas and Segesta is even more revealing if we look at the building that we have already defined as the model for many of the Sicilian *bouleuteria*, i.e. is the *bouleuterion* of Miletus. One of the main architectural features of this building was the presence of a wide columned open courtyard preceding the main entrances to the Council House. Here the relation between the *bouleuterion* and the peristyle is so intrinsic that they have to be conceived as a single unity.⁶⁸ A very similar relation seems to characterize the cases of Segesta and Iaitas, although in the former the peristyle is not preceding the main entrance to the *bouleuterion* but rather completing its rear side.

Furthermore, we are well informed about the combination of the *bouleuterion* with other buildings, mainly having a central open courtyard, from both epigraphic and archaeological sources.⁶⁹ As Maria Cecilia Parra has

noticed,⁷⁰ from an epigraphic point of view a very interesting comparison for such an architectural and planimetric composition can be found in the decrees in honor of Archippe, benefactress of Kyme who funded the construction and repairs of the *bouleuterion* and the sanctuary of *Homonoia*.⁷¹ On the one hand, the decrees refer to celebrations offered by Archippe, to be held within the *bouleuterion*; on the other hand, while recalling the thanksgiving for the extraordinary euergetic activity of Archippe, one of the inscriptions refers to the dedication of the golden bronze statue of the benefactress, set up on a marble column standing in the enclosure of the *bouleuterion* (ἐν τῷ περιβόλῳ τοῦ βουλευτηρίου).⁷² According to Ivana Savalli-Lestrade, the celebrations recorded in these decrees had to be not only limited to the very Council House, but also to the nearby area and in particular to the περίβολος, to be understood as a large open courtyard surrounded by covered porticoes on at least three sides.⁷³ Thus, this structure would appear as a component of the *bouleuterion* complex or, in other words, as a well-equipped monumental space integrating the small area of the *auditorium* itself. In this sense, Parra is probably right in thinking of a structure preceding the *bouleuterion*,⁷⁴ similar to what we have seen in the case of the peristyle preceding the *bouleuterion* of Miletus (which is thought to have represented the model also for the *bouleuterion* of Kyme)⁷⁵ and Iaitas.

Still on the basis of Parra’s considerations, we could recall other famous combinations of *bouleuterion* and περίβολος/peristyle.⁷⁶ This is the case of Iasos, with the Council House joined to the περίβολος of Artemis Astiàs,⁷⁷ and that of the ‘A and Γ buildings’, joint to the peristyle of the *Asklepieion* of Messene, which have been identified with the local *ekklesiasterion/odeion* and *bouleuterion/synedrion*.⁷⁸

67 Isler 2012, 230.

68 Tuchelt 1975, 114. 120.

69 On the frequent combination of *bouleuterion* and buildings with an open courtyard see Hamon 2005. We also know of buildings that are commonly interpreted as *bouleuteria* but could have had a different function, see Kockel 1995, 35–37.

70 Parra 2006, 109.

71 IGSK, 13=SEG XXXIII, 1035–1041. See among others Savalli-Lestrade 1993; Bremen 2008; Meier 2012, 342–353.

72 The inscription in question is SEG XXXIII, 1039, ll. 27–29: “[...] στήσαι δὲ τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν χρυσὴν ἐπὶ στυλίδος | μαρμαρίνης ἐν τῷ περιβόλῳ τοῦ βουλευτηρίου ᾧ ἀνατέθεικεν Ἀρχίππη{ι} ἐπὶ | γραφὴν ἔχουσαν [...]”.

73 Savalli-Lestrade 1993, 242–246, 266.

74 Parra 2006, 109.

75 The possible derivation from the *bouleuterion* of Miletus is also suggested by Bremen 2008, 371–372.

76 Parra 2006, 108.

77 Laviosa 1995, 83; Berti 2011, 300.

78 The identification of the two buildings with the local *ekklesiasterion* and *bouleuterion* was first suggested by Gheorghios Oikonomos, Oikonomos 1909, and has been more recently supported by Petros Themelis, Themelis 2004, 69–73. Contra Hellmann 2013, 174. For an up-to-date analysis of the archaeological remains of the *Asklepieion* and a revision of the interpretations concerning these two buildings see Emme 2013, 39–49, 340–341; Sielhorst 2015, 100–105, 251–253.

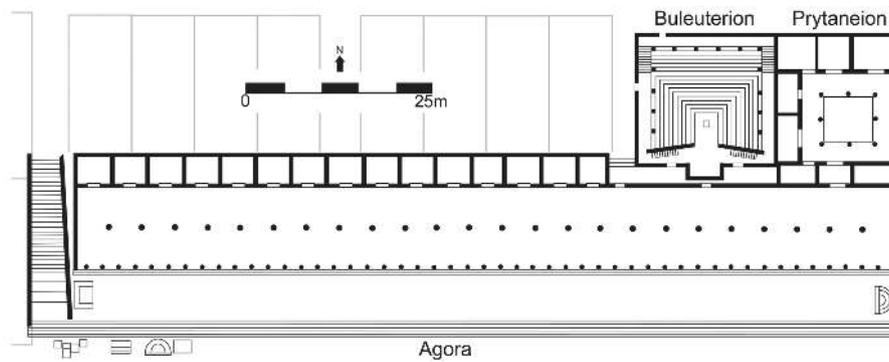


Fig. 9 Plan of the *bouleuterion/prytaneion* complex of Priene.

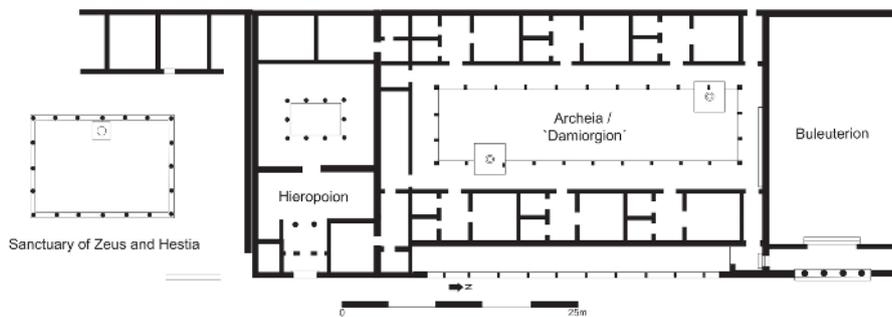


Fig. 10 Plan of the northwestern side of the *agora* of Megalopolis.

If we move to the archaeological evidence, we would like to add a couple of further possible examples of such an architectural complex, composed of *bouleuterion* and buildings articulated around a central columned court. The first example we would like to recall is the one composed of the *bouleuterion* and the so-called *prytaneion*, in the northeastern corner of the *agora* of Priene (Fig. 9).⁷⁹ Although not in direct communication with one another, the two buildings can be considered as part of a harmonious complex. In this sense, a crucial role is without doubt played by the huge ‘North *stoa*’. This building not only defines the northern side of the *agora*, but also contributes to linking all the different structures of this side of the square (i.e. the square rooms on the western half of the portico and the *bouleuterion/prytaneion* complex on the eastern half), shaping a coherent and homogeneous whole.

A second interesting example of such a planimetric

composition is in the western side of the *agora* of Megalopolis (Fig. 10).⁸⁰ Here, south of the *bouleuterion* occupying the northwestern corner of the public square, a building composed of six ‘Dreiraumgruppen’ units, is set up around a central columned court. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to say that, in terms of plan, the *bouleuterion* of Megalopolis is totally different from that of Segesta,⁸¹ and there are no traces of a portico or a *stoa* creating a common façade toward the *agora*, as we have in fact seen in the cases of Segesta, Iaitas and Priene. Despite this, it seems to us that the physical and functional relation between the two buildings of Megalopolis cannot be underestimated. While there is no doubt about the identification of the Council House, not the same can be said of the other building, though it has been generally identified with the town *prytaneion* or *damiorgion*.⁸² Whether we accept one term or the other, or even Lauter’s more articulated designation of ‘*demisia*

79 On the *agora* of Priene see Sielhorst 2015, 108–115, 266–271 with previous literature. On the *prytaneion* of Priene see also Miller 1978, 117–127.

80 For a complete study of the political buildings on the western side of the *agora* of Megalopolis see Lauter-Bufe and Lauter 2011. See also Osanna 2003; Emme 2013, 89–92, 340; Sielhorst 2015, 96–100, 246–250.

81 The *bouleuterion* of Megalopolis is indeed planimetrically and architecturally comparable to a different kind of Council House, more similar to

‘hypostyle halls’ such as the *bouleuterion* of Assos, Arslan and Eren 2012, and the above-mentioned ‘T building’ at Messene, rather than to that of Miletus.

82 The identification was already suggested by Lauter 2005, 238. See also Lauter-Bufe and Lauter 2011, 77–79. Contra: Hellmann 2013, 174. For an up-to-date analysis, with previous literature, see Emme 2013, 91; Sielhorst 2015, 248.

oikia, we perfectly agree with him in understanding the sequence of buildings on the western side of the *agora* of Megalopolis as an ensemble of structures serving the civic and political life of the town.

5 Conclusions

Our reconsideration of the Segestan dossier does not overcome the basic difficulty represented by a lacunose archaeological and epigraphic documentation. Indeed, it aims at focusing our attention on the need not to force the meaning and interpretation of fragmentary data in order to create univocal connections between different kinds of sources.

Thus, on the basis of the re-examination of the epigraphic and archaeological data, we question the hypothesis of a *gymnasion* at Segesta and, above all, its identification with the peristyle building near the *bouleterion*.

At first glance, the dedication to the gymnasiarch Artemon son of Aleidas (IGDSII, no. 85) is the only element possibly demonstrating that Segesta had its own *gymnasion*.⁸³ Unfortunately, this does not allow us to automatically identify where the building devoted to the gymnasial activities was set up. Besides, we do not aim at investigating here the role played by the *gymnasion* and the γυμνασίαρχος in the Hellenistic World and, more specifically speaking, in Sicily.⁸⁴ Still, it cannot be underestimated that, especially since the late Hellenistic period and the Roman conquest, the role of the *gymnasion* and the γυμνασίαρχος seems to have been increasingly linked with the military activity of cities.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, Philippe Gauthier described the *gymnasion* as: “servant d’abord à la formation du citoyen-soldat, là où substituait une armée civique.”⁸⁶ As far as Sicily is con-

cerned, such a close relationship between military and gymnasial activities is well-demonstrated by an inscription from Solunto which records a dedication to the γυμνασίαρχος Antallos Ornicas by three units of infantry (τάξιες τρεῖς), in association with the epebes.⁸⁷ Remarkably, for Solunto epigraphic and archaeological evidence were also correlated, leading to the initial identification of the *gymnasion* with a building on the so-called Via dell’*agora* (the so-called Ginnasio).⁸⁸ Although the interpretation of this structure as the local *gymnasion* was first stimulated by the discovery of the γυμνασίαρχος inscription near the building, the presence of a columned courtyard provided a key feature for this identification, similar to the case in Segesta. More recently, the Soluntine ‘Ginnasio’ has been correctly identified as the house of a wealthy local notable.⁸⁹ The actual *gymnasion* of Soluntum has been correctly identified in a peristyle building next to the theater.⁹⁰

Both the examples from Segesta and Soluntum show in fact how in the case of the *gymnasion* different sources must be separately examined and their possible connection carefully assessed. Even if one would expect a separate *gymnasion* building in a monumentalized city center like that of late Hellenistic Segesta, the presence of a γυμνασίαρχος was not necessarily connected to a specific and actual building within the urban area. This seems to be true for the Roman period, especially in the eastern Mediterranean,⁹¹ and suggests that the equation γυμνασίαρχία = *gymnasion* (understood as a specific building within the urban context) should be critically revised. This has already been observed by Delorme:

[...] magistrat et monument ne sont pas indissolublement unis. A vrai dire, le cas inverse, c’est-à-dire l’existence de la fonction sans l’édifice serait plus convaincant encore. [...]

83 As we have already noticed, a further epigraphic element supporting the thesis of the Segestan *gymnasion* might be represented by a still unpublished inscription, possibly of an epebic nature: see above.

84 In addition to Delorme’s still valid overview on the Greek *gymnasion*, Delorme 1960, we want to recall Philippe Gauthier’s and Henner von Hesberg’s considerations on the gymnasial institution and the corresponding magistrates and buildings; Gauthier 1995; von Hesberg 1995. More recently, these issues have been investigated by Ralf von den Hoff (von den Hoff 2009), and in several contributions to the volume Kah and Scholz 2004. In particular, as far as the γυμνασίαρχία is concerned, see Schuler 2004. See also D. Kah in this volume. Finally, for the *gymnasion* and the gymnasial institution in Sicily, see Cordiano 1997, Prag 2007, Mango 2009, and M. Trümper in this volume.

85 Jonathan Prag has correctly noticed and carefully examined this peculiar

feature of the Sicilian *gymnasion* during the Hellenistic and especially the Roman period: Prag 2007.

86 Gauthier 1995, 10.

87 IG XIV, 311 = SEG XXXVIII, 964. Among others see: Manni Piraino 1973, 144–147; Cordiano 1997, 70–72.

88 The peristyle building was supposed to be the Soluntine *gymnasion* by Francesco Saverio Cavallari: Cavallari 1875, 3.

89 Wolf 2003, 3–52, resuming an identification proposed already by Salinas 1884, 25;

90 Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994, 77–79; Wiegand 1997, 26–28; Mango 2009, 763–764; Mistretta 2013; De Vincenzo 2013, 184–186; M. Trümper in this volume.

91 See M. Vitale in this volume.

Même si l'on ne consent pas à admettre cette explication, il n'en demeure pas moins certain [...] que l'existence du gymnasiarque ne peut suffire à garantir celle du monument.⁹²

Whether or not this was the case in Segesta, a hypothetical *gymnasion* must be reconstructed in a place different from the area of the *agora*. Indeed, the most recent archaeological investigations have shown that there is not enough space for such a building, neither on the upper terrace of the *agora* nor on the intermediate terrace. Alternatively, we might rather think of a structure in the area of the theater. This urban sector had its main architectural development in the Hellenistic period, when the theater was set up. While only further archaeological investigations will allow for a better planimetric definition of this area, this hypothesis would be supported by the possible provenance of the inscription IGDSII, no. 85 from this area. Furthermore, the connection of theater and *gymnasion* would find a good parallel in the city center of Solunto.

The suggested identification of the *palaestra* of the Segestan *gymnasion* with the peristyle building on the upper terrace of the *agora* must be rejected, once and for all. On the basis of the above mentioned *bouleuteria/prytaneia* complexes, a similar interpretation may be suggested for the complex in Segesta. The hypothetical presence of a *prytaneion* near the *bouleuterion* could explain the references to ἀνδρεῶνες in various inscriptions discussed here.⁹³ Still, basing a new interpretation solely on the rather generic feature of the peristyle courtyard

would be tricky, and indeed a repetition of questionable methodological procedures and hermeneutic attempts that we have criticized here.⁹⁴

Thus, instead of looking at a single architectural feature, we should better think of the topographic context and the proximity with other buildings. With such an approach, we can recognize the *bouleuterion*-peristyle complex on the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta as a functionally coherent ensemble and as a further strong demonstration of the Micro-Asiatic (and particularly Milesian) influences on Sicilian architecture and urban planning in the late Hellenistic period.

5.1 Postscriptum

Only after the final submission of this paper we have had the chance to read a very recent and stimulating article by S. De Vido,⁹⁵ in which the Segestan *hierophylakes* and the inscription IG XIV, 291 are thoroughly examined. Although the article is mainly devoted to an epigraphic analysis of this and other documents, the author suggests the possibility of identifying the περίστυλος near the Segestan *bouleuterion* with the local *prytaneion* due to its possible connection with the above-mentioned inscription. As already noticed, IG XIV, 291, as well as many of the documents with which De Vido deals, are unfortunately of unknown provenance. Still, the final remarks of De Vido's article could represent a further element supporting our hypothesis of a *bouleuterion/prytaneion* complex on the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta.

92 Delorme 1960, 5–6. The same idea was supported by Gauthier 1995, 6, no. 1. See also Campagna 2006, 31, and De Vincenzo 2013, 185.

93 IG XIV, 291; SEG XLI, 826, and IGDSII, no. 89.

94 As B. Emme has recently re-asserted, Emme 2013, 4–5, the peristyle had

several different functions: as a result, it used to represent a very versatile element that, similarly to the *stoa*, was adapted to the surrounding context.

95 De Vido 2016.



Pl. 1 General plan of the *agora* of Segesta.



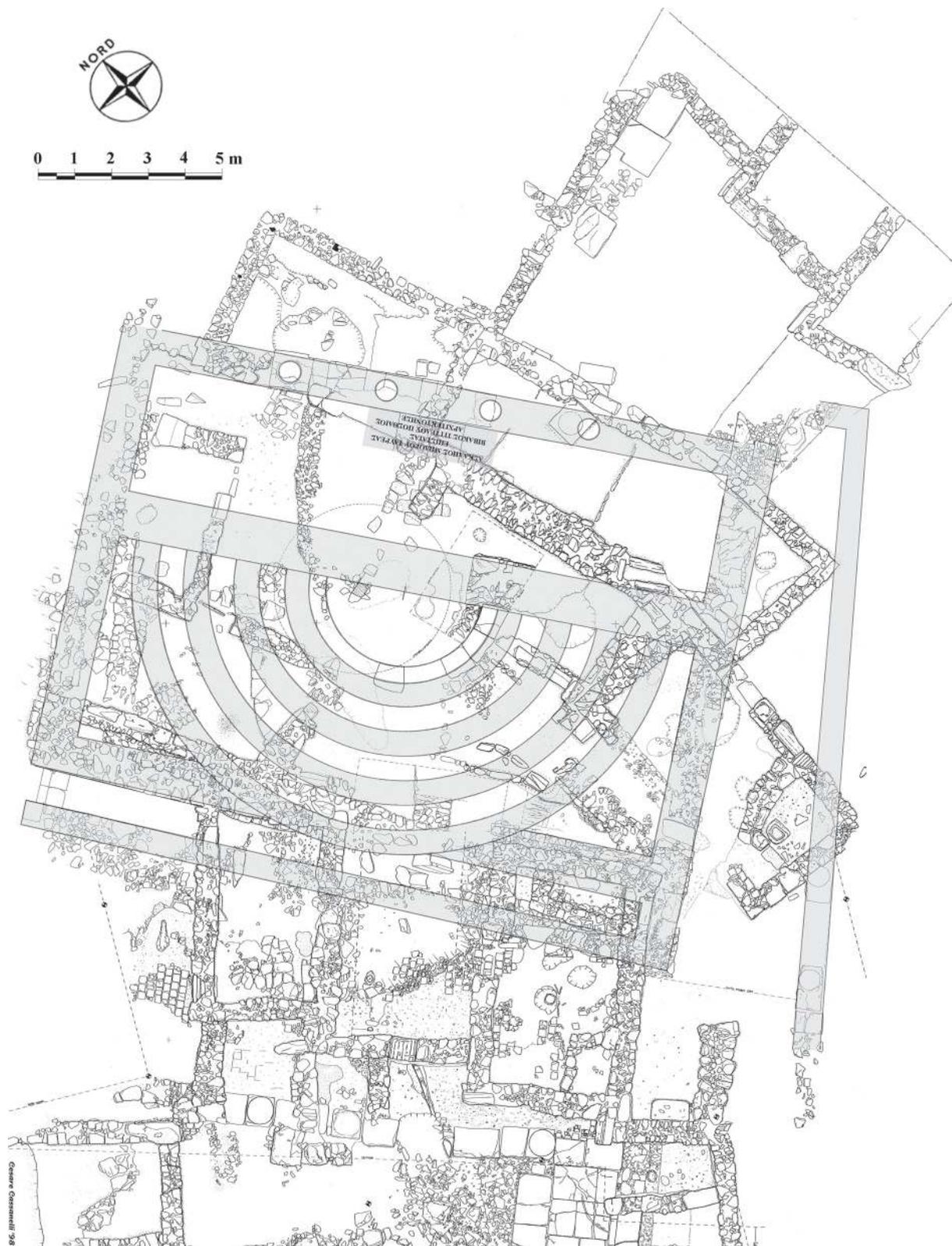
Pl. 2 Aerial view of the *agora* of Segesta.



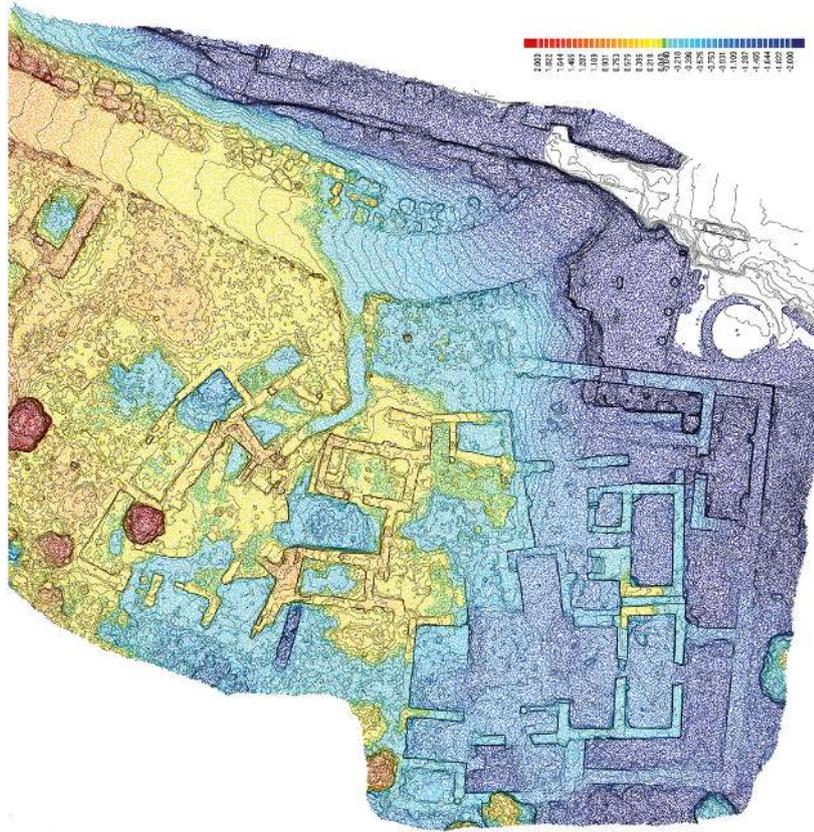
Pl. 3 Plan of the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta, i.e. the 'area of the *bouleuterion*'.



Pl. 4 Aerial view of the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta, i.e. the 'area of the *bouleuterion*'.



Pl. 5 Plan of the *bouleuterion* of Segesta.



Pl. 6 Digital Elevation Model (DEM) with contour lines of the upper terrace of the *agora* of Segesta.

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ILLUSTRATIONS: 1-2 E. Taccola. 3 Scuola Normale Superiore. 6 Ampolo and Parra 2012, fig. 323. 7 Emme 2013, 460 pl. 72. 8 Isler 2012, fig. 240. 9 Emme 2013, 482 pl. 84. 10 Emme 2013, 446 pl. 58b. **PLATES:** 1 Plan by C.

Cassanelli, Scuola Normale Superiore. 2 Scuola Normale Superiore. 3 Plan by C. Cassanelli, Scuola Normale Superiore. 4 E. Taccola. 5 Plan by C. Cassanelli, Scuola Normale Superiore. 6 E. Taccola.

ORIANA SILIA CANNISTRACI

M. A. (Pisa 2006), Postgraduate Diploma (Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene 2010), currently Ph. D. candidate (Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa). Her scientific interests focus on public spaces and buildings in the Hellenistic world, with an interdisciplinary approach involving architecture, literary and epigraphic sources, and socio-anthropologic aspects. She has been supervising the archaeological investigations in the agora of Segesta for more than ten years.

Oriana Silia Cannistraci
Scuola Normale Superiore
Piazza dei Cavalieri, 7
56126 Pisa, Italy
E-Mail: oriana.cannistraci@sns.it

RICCARDO OLIVITO

M. A. 2008 (Pisa 2008), Ph. D. (Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa 2012). His research concerns planning and socio-economic aspects of Greek and Roman public spaces, public and domestic architecture at Pompeii; more recently, he has focused on Digital- and Cyber-Archaeology, with special attention to the perception and visualization of images in the Ancient World. He has been supervising the archaeological investigations in the agora of Segesta for more than ten years.

Dr. Riccardo Olivito
IMT - School for Advanced Studies, Lucca
Piazza San Ponziano, 6
55100 Lucca, Italy
E-Mail: riccardo.olivito@imtlucca.it