

We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

6,500

Open access books available

176,000

International authors and editors

190M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities



WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com



Chapter

The Heritage of Eastern Mediterranean Cultures in Greco-Roman Town of *Akrai/Acrae*, SE Sicily

Roksana Chowaniec

Abstract

The chapter presents new studies of a material culture, recently excavated within ancient town *Akrai/Acrae*, south-eastern (SE) Sicily, and shed light on the rich history of acculturation and assimilation of the local traditions with Eastern Mediterranean cultures (e.g. Greek, Aegean, Cyprus, and Levantine). The *Akrai/Acrae*, founded by Syracuse and being for centuries a part of Syracusan Kingdom, after the Roman conquest in 212 BC, similarly to many other Sicilian urban centres, became a part of Roman province. From the very beginning, the links with the East in this region are evident, both in the legal rules adopted here (e.g. *lex Hieronica*) and in the religion (e.g. cult of Cybele), but above all in the iconography and in the material culture. Many finds (e.g. pottery, terracotta figurines, glass, lamps, and jewellery), discovered within the excavations between 2009 and 2020), are an excellent confirmation of these long-distance relations throughout the town's history. These cultural implications and imports embraced mostly the Eastern Mediterranean producers and suggest strong economic and other contacts of the population of south-eastern Sicily with the centres in the East.

Keywords: *Akrai/Acrae*, Sicily, material culture, Eastern Mediterranean, Greco-Roman world

1. Introduction

Sicily, being the largest island of the Mediterranean, has always been a natural junction point among East, West, South, and North. It was a land where various worlds of Europe, Africa (particularly with Egypt), and Near East linked, just as the Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian, and Latin cultural circles. It was a melting pot of miscellaneous cultures, a crossroads of trade routes, and a bountiful land rich in desirable goods unavailable elsewhere. Its history made it so multifaceted, as it was first shaped by heritage of the Phoenicians, the Elymians, the Sicani, the Sicels, the Greeks, and the Carthaginians, only to be taken over by the Romans for several centuries, then briefly by the Vandals, the Ostrogoths, and the Byzantines.

Discussing Eastern Mediterranean influences in south-eastern Sicily, it is essential to mention Aegean and Levantine material culture, dated to the middle of 3rd-end of 2nd millennium BC. The Sicani and Sicels were influenced by the Mycenaean culture, whereas the Elymians came to Europe from the lands by the Aegean Sea, from Anatolia, having previously travelled through northern Africa [1]. But genuine eastern influences had begun with the Greeks, who started the colonisation here since the 8th century BC, when *apoikiai* of *Syrakousai*, *Katane*, or Messina were established [2–6]. The Greeks consistently pursued an expansive territorial policy, also in relation to their western neighbours, the Carthaginians, for example by establishing Himera, which enraged the Carthaginians, who treated western Sicily as their domain of influence. The very territorial and trade expansions itself led to armed conflicts between the Carthaginians and the Greeks, especially those from south-eastern Sicily, from Syracuse [7, 8]. The Greeks elbowing around the island caused much strife, which eventually resulted in the Romans appearing on the island in the 3rd century BC. The First Punic War was a consequence of disagreements and dissensions between three sides—Rome, Greece, and Carthage—and was entirely waged in Sicily and on neighbouring waters [9]. Syracuse and Carthage, the eternal rivals, became allies for a short time. However, when the Romans besieged Syracuse, many Sicilian Greek towns switched sides and started to support Rome. Then, Hiero II, the ruler of Syracuse, abandoned by his ally—Carthage—and forced by the odds, signed a peace treaty in 263 BC and became a Roman ally [10]. But during the Second Punic War, some Sicilian towns manifested their spite towards the Romans by making alliances with Carthage. The Syracusan Kingdom was also among them [11].

For the reasons above mentioned, and because of its location, the south-eastern part of Sicily, with its cities, is an excellent example to trace the region's relationship with the Eastern Mediterranean cultures. This region has always had a strong connection to the East, which has manifested itself in both material and nonmaterial culture.

2. Greco-Roman town of *Akrai/Acrae*, SE Sicily

The ancient town *Akrai/Acrae*, located in south-eastern Sicily, close to the modern town of Palazzolo Acreide, Syracuse province, naturally belonged to the eastern circle of civilisation (**Figure 1**). The ancient settlement, located in the Hyblaean Mountains, and situated between the rivers of Anapo and Tellaro, was established in the 7th century BC by Greeks, who arrived here from Syracuse, where they migrated from Corinth, in large numbers. It resulted in leading to a surge in urban development and new settlement, expansion of farming, and intensified stockbreeding [4, 12, 13]. The presented data were collected within the recently surveyed and excavated residential area of the ancient town and its surroundings since 2009 (**Figure 2**).

The first visible trace of Eastern influence in the town is a temple of Aphrodite, built in the second half of the 6th century BC, and interpreted as a symbol of *Akrai*'s transformation into a truly urban organism. With the founding of the town, Greek beliefs, political and economic structures, architecture, and material culture emerged here.

In the meantime, numerous sanctuaries *extra muros* were also established, like the so-called *Templi Ferali*, carved in a rock and associated with a cult of death. But the great example is Santoni, one of the most important cultic centres dedicated to the Phrygian goddess Cybele, dated to the 3rd century BC. Cybele was worshipped for millennia throughout Asia Minor as *Magna Mater* and her rock sanctuary, *La Cuntrata del Santicedda*, was localised at the foot of the ancient town *Akrai/Acrae*.

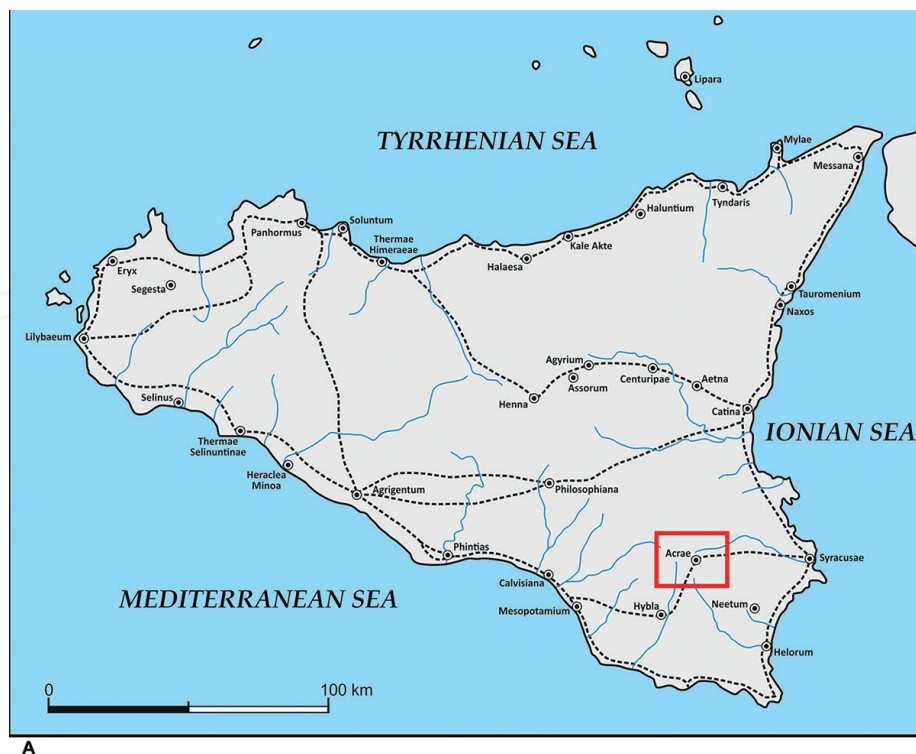


Figure 1.
Akrai/Acrae, marked on the map of Sicily with the courses of the ancient roads.



Figure 2.
Orthophotomap of archaeological site of Akrai/Acrae and with recently excavated areas and structures.

The goddess is depicted with lions and in some niches, and Cybele is holding offering bowls or drums/tambourines [14–17]. In reliefs II and VIII from the Santoni sanctuary is represented also Attis, alongside Cybele. Representations of Attis became popular in the Greek world ca. 3rd century BC with examples from Sicily, Athens, Delos, Amphipolis, and Olynthos. Beyond the sanctuary, among the terracotta finds from *Akrai/Acrae*, there is also a figurine of Attis wearing a Phrygian attribute—a cap, the key identifying element (**Figure 3**) [18].

Until the 3rd century BC, *Akrai/Acrae* appeared to be a town of marginal importance, heavily influenced by Syracuse. After the fall of Syracuse in 212/211 BC, like other Syracusan towns, *Akrai/Acrae* was placed under the Roman administration. The recently done archaeological excavations suggest that the town functioned until the beginning of the 8th century AD [19], all the while remaining in close relations with Eastern cultural circles. Throughout the period between 212 BC and beginning of the 8th century AD, the Eastern Mediterranean influences are widely and strongly represented in the material culture coming from the excavated area of Hellenistic-Roman residential complex of *Akrai/Acrae* [13].

The largest category of finds, which allows eastern influences to be captured, is pottery. The vessels were obviously not only produced regionally, but were also imported from various production centres, depending on the time period from eastern parts of the Mediterranean or Africa. Plain tableware, represented by a wide gamut of forms, shows eastern imports, like deep bowls (kraters) with horizontal handles originally from the Eastern Mediterranean (Rhodes?) [20]. The eastern types of thin-walled pottery, present here already in Hellenistic period, continued to appear throughout the 1st century AD and until the early 2nd century AD. The Eastern sigillata A and Knidian ware were noticed in archaeological contexts dated from the 1st century BC until the early 3rd century AD; the Eastern sigillata B, imported from the



Figure 3.
Relief from sanctuary of Cybele, in ‘Santoni’ in the vicinity of the ancient town Akrai/Acrae, painted by Jean-Pierre-Louis-Laurent Houël between 1776 and 1779.

western coast of Asia Minor (the Meander Valley)—in the contexts dated from the 1st century AD until the early 2nd century AD; while Eastern sigillata C, from Pergamon or Pitane—in the contexts dated from the late 1st century AD through the early 3rd century AD. The similar chronological range represents the Pontic sigillata and Aegean thin-walled pottery, which, however, lasted until the 3rd century AD [21, 22]. In the Late Antiquity, the eastern imports, like the Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip, substituted the irregular supplies of the African Red Slip pottery during the Vandal occupation of North Africa (**Figure 4**) [22].

Among the group of amphorae, many fragments were produced in the East and imported at *Akraï/Acrae*. On the one hand, amphorae were manufactured in the Aegean basin, in workshops in Rhodes (**Figure 5**), Cnidus, Kos, and on the other hand in the western coast of Greece, Egypt, and the Adriatic coast (e.g. Corinthian type B amphorae). Also, the amphorae from the Black Sea coast from Sinope are registered (**Figure 6**) [23].

Kitchen and cooking wares imported from the East should also be mentioned. Vessels and other utensils for the food preparation and cooking were identified as Aegean cooking ware, most probably from Knidos and Knossos [24].

Another category of finds with eastern connotations is glassware. Inter alia (I.a.) shallow bowls made of naturally coloured transparent glass (Isings 97a) dated to the end of the 2nd century AD through the 4th century AD, common in Syro-Palestine and Cyprus; shallow bowls with wide collars (Isings 118) from Syro-Palestinian workshops [25], or mug-like translucent olive lamps with three handles and mouths bent outwards made of light-green glass (**Figure 7**), and semi-circular mugs with truncated polished mouths with a relief decoration in the form of vertical striae dated to the 4th century AD through the early 5th century AD, which were imported from the Eastern Mediterranean [25].

The olive lamps present a strong connection to the Asia Minor, and Egypt, in both imports and influences. For example, the lamp Ricci type F was inspired by Athenian

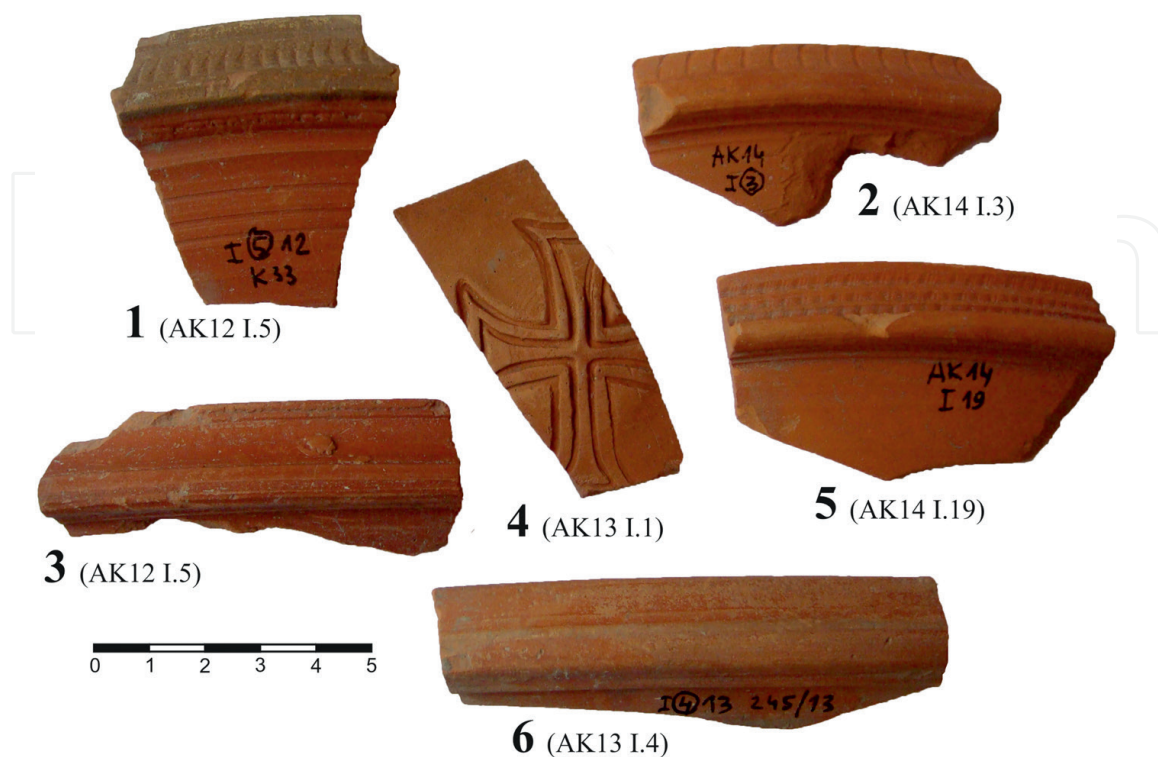


Figure 4.
Late Roman C/Phocean Red Slip ceramic registred in Akrai/Acrae.



Figure 5.
An example of the handle of Rhodos amphora registred in Akrai/Acrae.

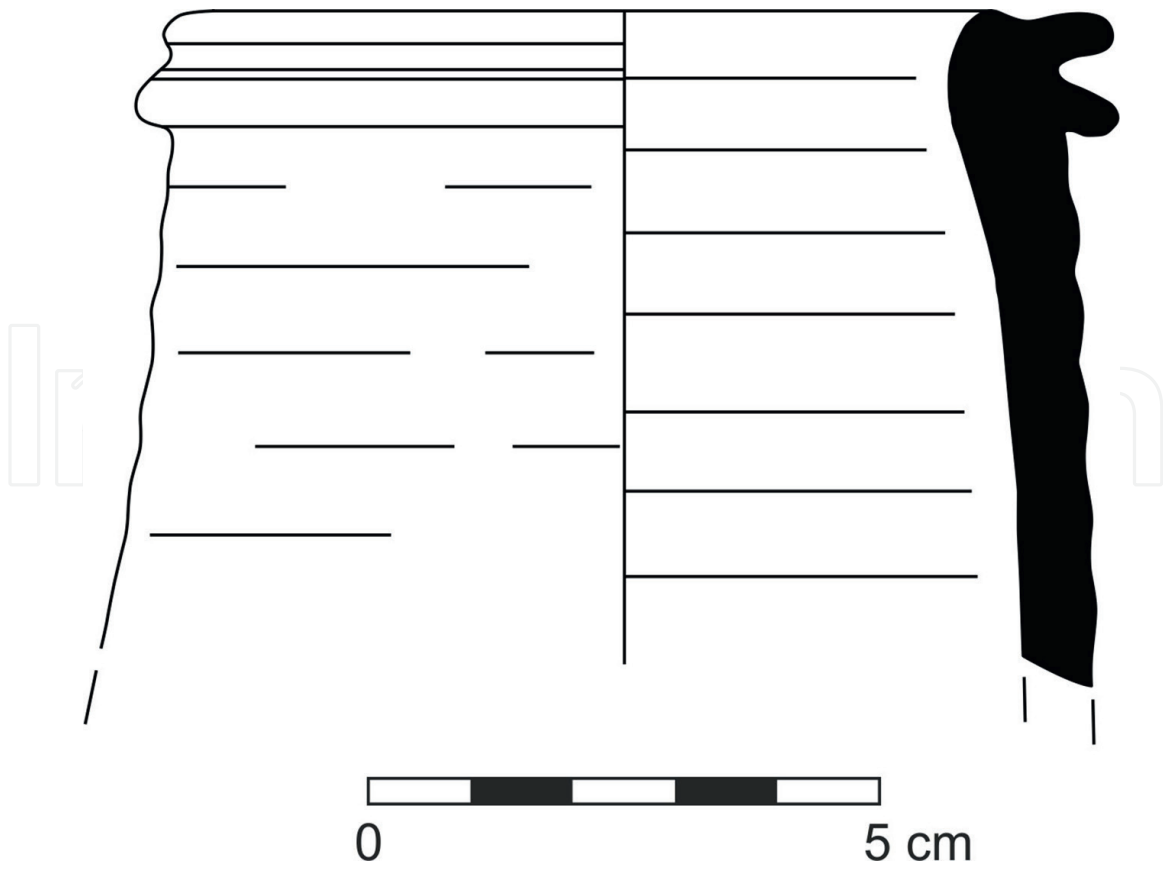


Figure 6.
An example of Sinope amphora registred in Akrai/Acrae.

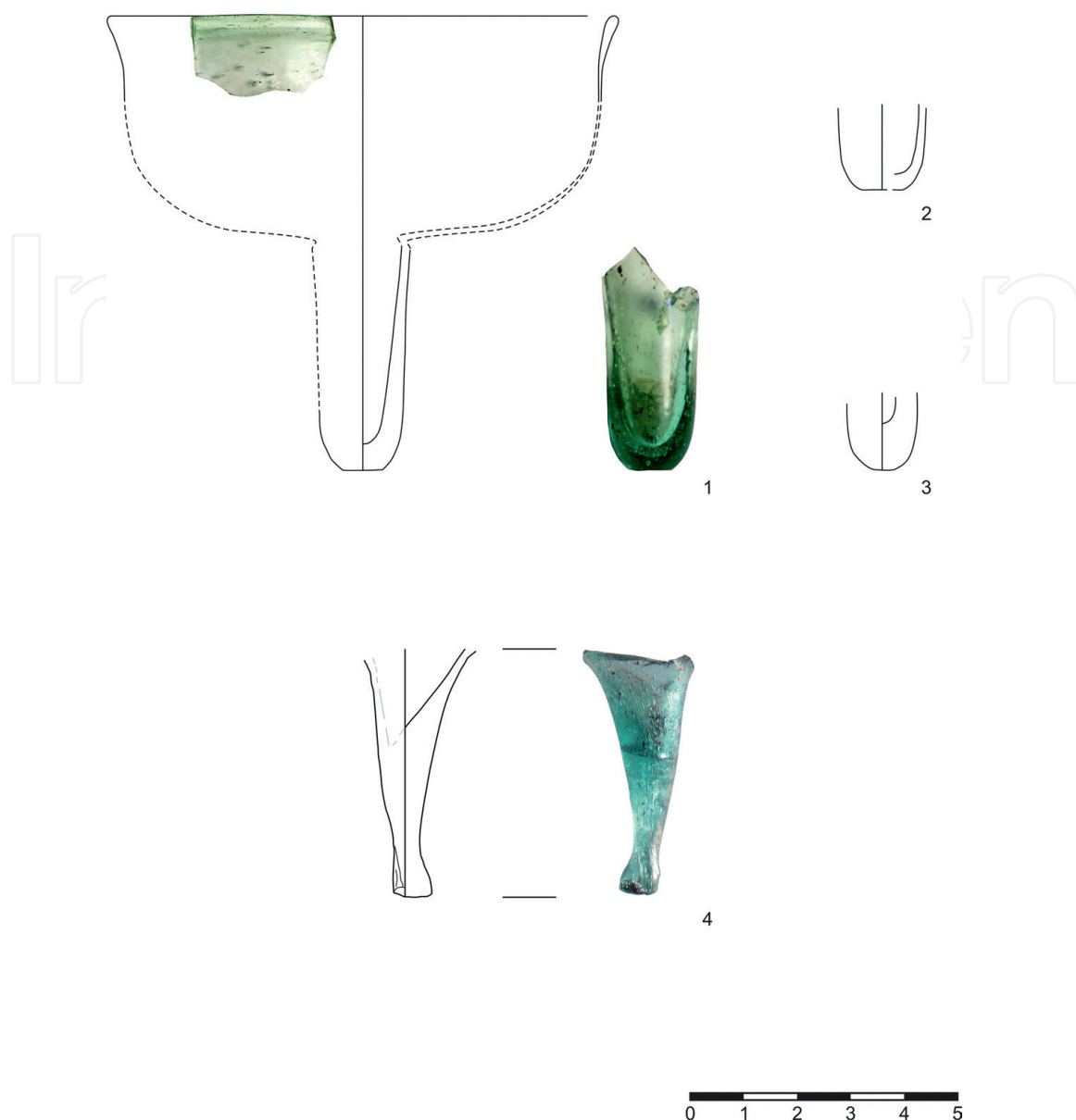


Figure 7.
The examples of lamps made of glass from Akrai/Acrae.

lamps belonging to Howland type 27, whereas the lamp Ricci type G is an adaptation of Hellenistic from Aegean as well as Asia Minor [26, 27].

The typically eastern connotations have the scarab-shaped objects [28], which are most likely game counters. Several such artefacts made of cobalt, light-green, dark opaque, light olive-green, and yellow-green glass have been found in *Akrai*. Also, some glass bracelets with tooled or moulded decoration produced in the Syro-Palestine workshop (**Figure 8**) and various glass beads dated to the 3rd–5th century AD, manufactured in Egypt and in the Syro-Palestine were registered [28–30].

It is also worth mentioning about lead seals found in *Akrai*, dated from the Hellenistic up to the Byzantine period, representing the Eastern Mediterranean iconography (e.g. Athena, Zeus), and with Greek lettering (**Figure 9**) [31].

Furthermore, the presence and inspiration of Byzantine culture in the ancient *Akrai/Acrae* are evident through the discovery of numerous artefacts during the

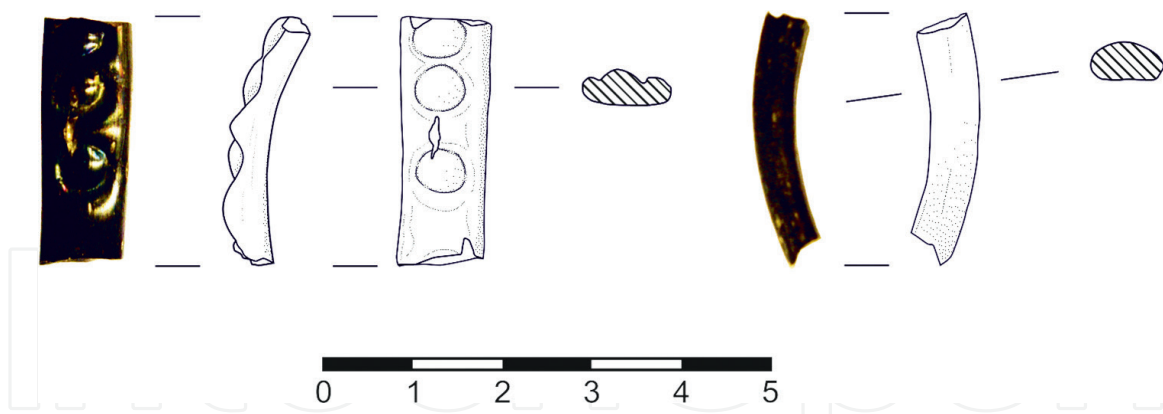


Figure 8.
Some glass bracelets produced in the Syro-Palestine workshops from Akrai/Acrae.



Figure 9.
The examples of lead seals with Eastern Mediterranean iconography and with Greek lettering found in Akrai/Acrae.



Figure 10.
The artefacts being the example of influence of Byzantine artistic traditions registered in Akrai/Acrae.

excavations in the residential complex between 2011 and 2020. These finds provide valuable evidence of the influence and dissemination of eastern Byzantine cultural elements within the town. Among the artefacts were registered the Byzantine coins, nearly exclusively of local production of eastern Sicilian mints, predominantly that of Syracuse mint, but also a fragment of a bronze censer, bronze belt buckles, 'half-crescent'-shaped electrum earrings, bronze and iron rings and crosses, dated to the 5th–8th centuries AD and being the great examples of the influence of Byzantine artistic traditions (**Figure 10**) [32].

These long-distance imports embraced mostly the Eastern Mediterranean producers, instead of the Gaulish or Spanish ones. This suggests much stronger economic and other contacts of the population of south-eastern Sicily and *Akrai/Acrae* with the Eastern centres than with the western Mediterranean.

3. Heritage of Eastern Mediterranean cultures in SE Sicily and *Akrai/Acrae*

3.1 Eastern Mediterranean culture before the Roman conquest

The eastern part of island, together with its town, among which was also *Akrai/Acrae*, despite the presence of many cultures here, including the Romans, was permeated with Greek heritage and tightly linked to the Hellenistic world of the Eastern Mediterranean.

When the Greeks arrived in Sicily, they transformed and consolidated the economy to the so-called 'Mediterranean' type, based on the 'triad' of grapes, olives, and grain. Greek colonists introduced standardised farming and before the 6th century BC, the island's wheat production not only catered to the local needs but also permitted extensive trade. Under Greek influence, Sicily became known for olive oil, grain, and wine [4, 33, 34]. With the newly arrived style in farming and breeding, is also associated gastronomy, and describing culinary variety was the favourite form of indicating cultural differences in the Greek world [35]. Already, Epicharmus of Kos (540–450 BC), who certainly lived in Sicily, allegedly mocked at Syracusan scroungers, who never cease eating and drinking [36]. Thanks to the frequent connections within Sicily and Eastern Mediterranean, Sicilian cooks were mentioned in literary works, for example Plato (427–347 BC), who probably has stayed in Syracuse, mentions 'the Syracusan table' and 'the Sicilian elaboration of delicate dishes', and Cratinus the Younger (4th century BC) praises the Sicilian cooking art. The food products were exported to the Greece. For example, Sicilian cheese, which is attested already by Homer, who mentioned Sicilian cheese made of mixed goat's and sheep's milk [37, 38].

A little later, in the Hellenistic period, the very strong relationship of the Syracuse Kingdom, together with *Akrai/Acrae*, with kingdoms of the Seleucids or the Ptolemies can be observed. This is particularly clear when Syracuse is in power of Hiero II. The ruler pursued a wise, coherent, and calculated policy, influenced the local economy, architecture, and culture, and through his administrative skills secured a long period of peace for his region. The status of Syracuse was so high that the Seleucids or the Ptolemies maintained extensive economic and cultural relationships with it [39]. For instance, as a token of a perfect partnership, Hiero II presented the rulers of Egypt with a luxury ship *Syrakosia*, built circa 240 BC, which was additionally loaded with 60,000 kilogrammes of grain and 10,000 jars of salt. Another illustration may be an exchange of artists and creators, such as Theocritus of Syracuse's stay at the court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Hiero's strong position was also evidenced by the fact

that when Rhodes was struck by an earthquake in 227 BC, the ruler sent financial aid for inhabitants of the town in order to help them in their misfortune [13]. Also, the Sicilian metropolis drew upon Hellenistic experiences and heritage, for instance, by adopting the tax laws from the Ptolemies as well as the habit of putting images of living rulers and queens on coins. Simultaneously, it introduced various innovations regarding different aspects of life, such as inter alia a new plan of a theatre decorated with figures—maenads, satyrs, etc., and novel Ionic and Corinthian capitals of the so-called Sicilian type.

The best example of Eastern influence is the law, the so-called *lex Hieronica*—a taxation law setting the levy at 10% of harvest and rearing—adopted by Hiero II from the Ptolemies [40]. Not only the law itself but also the method of tax collection based upon the assumption that the land in the state belonged to the king, and so people did not pay taxes but rather a leasing fee was adopted. However, details of this method remain obscure to us. It is also worth noting that the introduction of the *lex Hieronica* could not have been a direct copy of the system of the Ptolemies, since Sicilian social structure and municipal administration were completely different.

These relationships allowed Syracuse to strengthen its Greek identity and help the Syracusan Kingdom become a prominent point on the world map of the time.

3.2 Eastern Mediterranean culture after the Roman conquest

Although after 212/211 BC the region was incorporated into the Roman province and gradual Latinisation started, it took place not before the Principate. *Akrai/Acrae* as other towns of the former Syracusan Kingdom, for nearly 200 years, remained a part of the Hellenistic world enshrouded in the Sicilian Greek heritage until the end of the Republic [13, 41, 42]. After Sextus Pompeius had been defeated in 36 BC, not only the number of inscriptions in Greek, but also the predominance of Greek elements in ceramics or art, started to decrease systematically, albeit not dramatically, which should be understood as a result of the growing number of immigrants coming from Italy and settling in Sicily, lower inflow of population from the east (e.g. from Greece) [43], and superseding or downturn in the autochthonous population. At the same time, Kalle Korhonen believed that there was no information suggesting either an inflow or an outflow of Greek-speaking settlers in the early Imperial Period and quoted only a few examples of Greek-Sicilian tombstones beyond the island [44]. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the colonisation of towns initiated by Octavian Augustus prompted the migration of Latin-speaking people, including many thousand veterans and their families [45].

But the inflow or even mere presence of newcomers did not always impact local communities, and in a number of cases it could be quite the opposite. The Roman world came here, but mostly only in politic. The local inhabitants probably learnt to call and to consider themselves Romans, but they did not adopt the Roman language or Roman civilisation. Alberto Vårvaro noted that Latin onomastics acted as a camouflage for the Greek community and actual domination of Latin should be sought only in the villages, as it was where the new settlers bought or were granted land [46]. However, Giacomo Manganaro was of a different opinion and believed that it was the rural population that still spoke Greek [47]. Kalle Korhonen tried to explain the differences by pointing out that Latin might have dominated in towns situated along the western and northern coasts, especially in public epigraphy, whereas in the east, the Greek language still prevailed [48]. In order to decide such discrepancies, archaeological sources also need to be consulted. For instance, in *Akrai* or Syracuse, fragments of terra sigillata

vessels with graffiti in Greek, produced in the 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD, have been found. This proves that Greek has never disappeared from the epigraphy of this region, was still present in everyday life, and acted as a lingua franca, enabling or facilitating communication within the multi-ethnic environment [13, 44]. During the Byzantine Period, Greek experienced a renaissance, which was noticed by Belisarius when he came to the island [49]. At the same time, the regained supremacy of Greek inscriptions was observed mostly precisely in the south-eastern part of the island.

Religious landscape of the region was equally complicated. We can also notice a mixture of Greek and Roman elements as well as reminiscence of Sicel, Sicani, Punic, and Elymian religions, and the influence of Hellenistic heritage upon the Roman religion. The mutual permeation of religions started after Rome absorbed southern Italy with its Greek towns, but as a result of which the conquering of Sicily intensified. Since the Hellenistic period, due to a close relationship with the Ptolemies, also Egyptian inspirations started to appear. Roman set of beliefs prevailed but it was based upon local Greek traditions. Since the 3rd century AD, and even more intensively since the 4th century AD, local religions were adopting elements of Judaism, which was introduced into the island by numerous incoming Jewish communities from the East [50–53]. Since the 4th century AD, Christianity developed quickly, represented by both the Latin and the Byzantine churches [32]. Christianity permeated the eastern coast of Sicily along with new landowners [54, 55]. It has generally been accepted that already in the first half of the 5th century AD, the previously dominant sets of beliefs were displaced by Christianity. It seems, however, that the new faith was not adopted all that fast, as Pope Gregory alarmed that heresy and traditional beliefs were still present on the island [32, 56].

Greek towns, already possessing stable municipal infrastructure many centuries before the Romans came to Sicily, left little room for outlandish innovations. In this case, Roman factor occurred within the existing urban structures, usually through foundations by Roman officials residing on the island. Such situation caused much difficulty in introducing Roman architectural elements. An *agorà* was usually transformed into a forum, while an existing theatre was adopted to Roman spectacles. It should be remembered also that in many cases Roman architecture have followed the Hellenistic models closely [13, 57]. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that from the mid-3rd century BC to the mid-1st century BC, no major changes in urban character of the Greek centres occurred [13, 19, 58]. Intermingling of local Greek and new Roman elements was noticeable also in residential architecture.

It should be very strongly emphasised that Eastern Greek influences affected Roman culture. The Romans valued Greek culture much higher than most local cultures they conquered [13, 59]. By gradually conquering first *Magna Graecia*, then Sicily, and finally the remaining territories permeated with the Greek culture, the Romans developed tight relations with the Hellenistic world. They were aware of the existence of great highly developed towns as well as the nature and diversity of cultures which created them. They started learning Greek and studying Greek literature and philosophy [13, 60]. Since the 3rd century BC, the existing relationship between the Greeks and the Romans influenced various aspects of Roman life [61]. Knowledge and services of teachers, physicians, craftsmen, or artists, who often were hostages or slaves, were in high demand. Having conquered and looted Greek towns in Sicily, including Syracuse and *Akrai*, the Romans captured magnificent works of art and craftsmanship [13, 19, 62]. The Greek spirit was so strong that it was reflected by the development of Roman theatre, literature, and daily life. Therefore, the Greco-Sicilian traditions were not a big nuisance for the Romans [63].

During the 5th century AD, Sicily found itself again to be strongly influenced by the Eastern, particularly Byzantine, culture and power. This period marked a significant shift in the political and cultural landscape of the island. The Eastern influence on Sicily can be attributed to the expansion of the Byzantine Empire, which sought to establish its dominance over the Mediterranean region. Sicily, with its strategic location in the heart of the Mediterranean, became a crucial territory for Byzantine control and influence. Under Byzantine rule, Sicily experienced a series of transformations. This brought the changes in land ownership and taxation, and also had a profound impact on the island's culture, art, and architecture. Byzantine artistic styles and techniques permeated Sicilian art, particularly in the creation of mosaics, frescoes, and religious iconography. Byzantine architectural elements, such as the use of domes and intricate decorative motifs, can be seen in the architectural constructions [32, 56, 64]. The Eastern influence on Sicily in this period also extended to trade and commerce. The island became an important hub for maritime trade routes connecting the Eastern Mediterranean with Western Europe. This facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural practices between different regions, further enriching Sicily's cultural landscape [12, 32, 56, 64].

4. Conclusions

Sicily, due to its geographical location and role as a link between naval passageways leading from the east westward and from the south northward, was simultaneously a final destination for transported goods and an intermediary station on long-range trade routes. The eastern Sicilian ports in Syracuse or Catania were important stops for ships sailing from the East, Asia Minor, islands on the Aegean Sea, and the Peloponnese to the west, through the Strait of Messina, to Sicily but also to the ports in Latium, in Sardinia, or in Corsica [65]. With such proximity to naval lanes, Sicily had access to all products (pottery, olive lamps, glass, etc.) circulating in the Mediterranean Sea, which were first available at cities with ports, and then were redistributed inland to places like *Akrai/Acrae*.

Thanks to archaeological research and excavations carried out between 2011 and 2020 in this ancient town, the presence of Eastern Mediterranean influences has been unequivocally confirmed. The location of *Akrai/Acrae*, close to the port and great town of Syracuse, as well as the whole region, has fostered the exchange of ideas, trade, and cultural practices with various Eastern Mediterranean civilisations. The eastern Greek influence (in language, customs, and culture traditions) is prominent and can be traced back to the ancient colonisation and foundation of towns, among them *Akrai/Acrae*. These colonies became centres of Greek culture, fostering the development of art, agriculture, architecture, literature, philosophy, and political systems that were characteristic of the Eastern Mediterranean Greek world. Later, the Eastern Mediterranean cultures, particularly the Hellenistic and Byzantine, also played a significant role in shaping the cultural heritage of this Greco-Roman town. Hellenistic influence introduced new artistic styles, including the fusion of Greek and Eastern motifs, the use of products manufactured there, as well as beliefs. With the rise of the Byzantine Empire, Eastern Mediterranean cultural influences intensified. The Byzantine presence impacted trade routes and economic exchanges, further connecting the island to the Eastern Mediterranean region. The heritage of Eastern Mediterranean cultures in the Greco-Roman town of *Akrai/Acrae*, or more generally in the south-eastern part of the Sicily, is reflected

in the material culture. It is a testament to the vibrant history, one of the places where Greek, Roman, Hellenistic, and Byzantine influences have merged to create a unique cultural mosaic.

Conflict of interest


The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author details

Roksana Chowaniec
University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

*Address all correspondence to: roksanac@yahoo.com

IntechOpen

© 2023 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. 

References

- [1] Tanasi D. Sicily before the Greek. The interaction with Aegean and the Levant in the pre-colonial era. *Open Archaeology*. 2020;**6**:172-205
- [2] Antonaccio CM. Excavating colonization. In: Hurst H, Owen S, editors. *Ancient Colonizations. Analogy, Similarity and Difference*. Duckworth: Bloomsbury Publishing; 2005. pp. 97-113
- [3] La Torre GF, Sicilia e Magna Grecia. *Archeologia della colonizzazione greca d’Occidente*. Roma–Bari: Laterza; 2011
- [4] De Angelis F. *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily. A Social and Economic History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2016
- [5] Frasca M. Interazione tra Greci e Indigeni nella Sicilia orientale. Il caso Leontinoi. *Forum Romanum Belgicum* art. 13.4. 2016
- [6] Camera M. The impact of Greek colonization on the eastern Sicily indigenous communities. A reading through the ceramic documentation. *Forum Romanum Belgicum* art. 13.1. 2016
- [7] Moscati S. *The World of the Phoenicians*. London: Phoenix Giant; 1999
- [8] Lengauer W. *Starożytna Grecja okresu archaicznego i klasycznego*. Warszawa: DiG; 1999
- [9] Ziółkowski A. *Storia di Roma*. Milano: Mondadori Bruno; 2006
- [10] Carey BT. *Hannibal's Last Battle: Zama and the Fall of Carthage*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books Ltd; 2008
- [11] Verbrugge GP. *Sicily 210-70 B.C.: Livy, Ciceron and Diodorus*. Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association. 1972;**103**:535-559
- [12] Chowaniec R, Fetner R, Fiorentino G, Gręzak A, Stella M. Akrai, South–Eastern Sicily. Multidisciplinary study on ancient human impact on the natural landscape. In: Prescott C, Karivieri A, Campbell P, Goransson K, Tusa S, editors. *Trinacria, 'an Island Outside Time'*. International Archaeology in Sicily. Oxford-Philadelphia: Oxbow Books; 2021. pp. 33-44
- [13] Chowaniec R. *The Coming of Rome. Cultural Landscape of South–Eastern Sicily*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2017
- [14] Vermaseren MJ. *Corpus cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA) IV. Italia–Aliae provinciae*, Leiden: Brill; 1978
- [15] Distefano S. Le terracotte della collezione acrense del Museo A. Salinas di Palermo. *Contributo allo studio dei culti e delle istituzioni religiose di Akrai*. Catania: C.R.E.S.; 2006. pp. 18-20
- [16] Bellia A. I “Santoni” di Akrai. Esempi di raffigurazioni musicali del culto di Cybele in Sicilia. *Sicilia Antiqua*. 2007;**IV**:87-97
- [17] Pedrucci G. *Cibele Frigia e la Sicilia. I santuari rupestri nel culto della dea*. Roma: L’Erma di Bretschneider; 2009
- [18] Fituła M, Konrad A. Selected terracotta figurines from Akrai/Acrae. In: Chowaniec R, Fituła M, editors. *The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Akrai/Acrae, Sicily*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag; 2022. pp. 213-236
- [19] Chowaniec R, Fituła M. Il paesaggio del territorio acrense dopo

la conquista romana alla luce della ricerca interdisciplinare ad Akrai/Acrae. In: Cugno SA, Mastroianni D, editors. *Uomo e ambiente nel paesaggio siciliano. Lago (CS): Il Sileno Edizioni; 2022. pp. 31-46*

[20] Młynarczyk J. Mortaria, lekanai, kraters? Large open-form vessels from Akrai/Acrae, their formal typology, chronology and function. In: Chowanec R, Fituła M, editors. *The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Akrai/Acrae, Sicily. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag; 2022. pp. 177-199*

[21] Domzalski K. Roman and late antique fine pottery from Akrai (2011-2014). First discoveries and research problems. In: Chowanec R, editor. *Unveiling the Past of an Ancient Town. Akrai/Acrae in South-Eastern Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2015. pp. 277-293*

[22] Domzalski K. Quantifying and contextualizing pottery from Akrai. General information with particular attention to the Fine Ware evidence. In: Chowanec R, editor. *On the Borders of Syracuse: Multidisciplinary Studies on the Ancient Town of Akrai/Acrae, Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2018. pp. 209-223*

[23] Matera M. Transport amphorae from Akrai/Acrae. In: Chowanec R, Fituła M, editors. *The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Akrai/Acrae, Sicily. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag; 2022. pp. 149-168*

[24] Wicenciak U. Kitchen and cooking wares. First remarks. In: Chowanec R, editor. *Unveiling the Past of an Ancient Town. Akrai/Acrae in South-Eastern Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2015. pp. 249-276*

[25] Wagner M. Late antique glass vessels from the excavations at Akrai.

In: Chowanec R, editor. *Unveiling the Past of an Ancient Town. Akrai/Acrae in South-Eastern Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2015. pp. 151-170*

[26] Chrzanowski L. The lamps of the 2011-2014 campaigns and their contribution towards a better understanding of the lychnological phenomenon in the Hyblaean highlands. In: Chowanec R, editor. *Unveiling the Past of an Ancient Town. Akrai/Acrae in South-Eastern Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2015. pp. 171-248*

[27] Chrzanowski L. For a lychnological panopticon of Akrai before and during the early Imperial period. In: Chowanec R, editor. *On the Borders of Syracuse: Multidisciplinary Studies on the Ancient Town of Akrai/Acrae, Sicily. Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2018. pp. 249-269*

[28] Spaer M. *Ancient Glass in the Israel Museum: Beads and Other Small Objects. Jerusalem: Israel Museum; 2001*

[29] Grossman RA. Glass. In: Aylward W, editor. *Excavations at Zeugma. Vol. 2. Los Altos, California: The Packard Humanities Institute; 2013. pp. 218-258*

[30] Arveiller-Dulong V, Nenna M-D. *Les Verres Antiques du Musée du Louvre. Vol. 3. Paris: Louvre éditions; 2011*

[31] Chowanec R. Sealing, stamping, protecting. Securing ... Lead-seals from Akrai/Acrae. In: Chowanec R, Fituła M, editors. *The Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Akrai/Acrae, Sicily. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag; 2022. pp. 21-60*

[32] Chowanec R. Vandals, Ostrogoths and byzantine footprints in Sicily: An archaeological-historical review. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry. 2019;19(2):51-61*

- [33] Sirago VA. *Storia agraria romana. Fase ascensionale. Vol. I.* Napoli: Liguori; 1995
- [34] Soraci C. *Sicilia frumentaria. Il grano siciliano e l'annona a Roma V a.C. – V d.C.* Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider; 2011
- [35] Notario F. Food and counter-cultural identity in ancient cynicism. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies.* 2015;55(3):583-607
- [36] Wilkins J. *The Boastful Chef. The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2000
- [37] Hill S, Wilkins J. Mithaikos and other Greek cooks. In: Walker H, editor. *Cooks & Other People. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1995.* Devon: Oxford Symposium; 1996. pp. 144-148
- [38] Chowanec R. “Are you eating all this, mister Marcus?” towards a study of ancient Sicilian food products. In: Jakubiak K, Łajtar A, editors. *Ex Oriente Lux. Studies in Honour of Jolanta Młynarczyk.* Warsaw: University of Warsaw; 2020. pp. 401-410
- [39] Basile C, Di Natale A editors. *La Sicilia antica nei rapporti con l'Egitto. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siracusa, 17-18 settembre 1999.* Siracusa: Istituto internazionale del papiro; 2001
- [40] Walbank FW. *The Hellenistic World.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1993
- [41] Wilson RJA. Hellenistic Sicily, c. 270-100 BC. In: Prag JRW, Quinn HC, editors. *The Hellenistic West Rethinking the Ancient Mediterranean.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2013. pp. 79-119
- [42] Lomas K. Between Greece and Italy: An external perspective on culture in Roman Sicily. In: Ch S, Serrati J, editors. *Sicily from Aeneas to Augustus. New Approaches in Archaeology and History.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; 2000. pp. 161-173
- [43] Prag JRW. Epigraphy by numbers: Latin and the epigraphic culture in Sicily. In: Cooley AE, editor. *Becoming Romans, Writing Latin? Literacy and Epigraphy in the Roman West.* Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology; 2002. pp. 15-31
- [44] Korhonen K. Sicily in the Roman Imperial period. In: Tribulato O, editor. *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2012. pp. 326-369
- [45] Roselaar S. Colonies and processes of integration in the Roman Republic. *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome.* 2011;123(2):527-555
- [46] Vàrvaro A. *Lingua e storia in Sicilia (dalle guerre puniche alla conquista normanna).* Palermo: Sellerio; 1981
- [47] Manganaro G. Greco nei pani e latino nelle città della Sicilia “romana” tra I e VI sec. d.C. In: Calbi A, Donati A, Poma G, editors. *L'epigrafia del villaggio.* Faenza: Fratelli Lega; 1993. pp. 543-594
- [48] Korhonen K. Language and identity in the Roman colonies of Sicily. In: Sweetman RJ, editor. *Roman Colonies in the First Century of their Foundation.* Oxford: Oxbow Books; 2011. pp. 7-31
- [49] Schirò G. Aspetti e eredità della civiltà bizantina in Magna Grecia. In: *Magna Grecia bizantina e tradizione classica. Atti del decimosettimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto 9-14 ottobre 1977.* Napoli: Arte Tipografica Napoli; 1978. pp. 11-58

- [50] Gebbia C. Comunità ebraiche nella Sicilia imperiale e tardoantica. *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia Orientale*. 1979;75:241-275
- [51] Gebbia C. Presenze giudaiche nella Sicilia antica e tardoantica. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore; 1996
- [52] Rutgers LV. Interaction and its limits. Some notes on the Jews of Sicily in late antiquity. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. 1997;115:245-256
- [53] Rutgers LV. *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers; 1998
- [54] Cracco RL. La Sicilia e la fine del mondo antico (IV–VI secolo). In: Gabba E, Vallet G, editors. *La Sicilia antica. La Sicilia romana. Vol. II.2*. Napoli: Storia di Napoli e della Sicilia; 1980. pp. 481-524
- [55] Cracco RL. Il primo cristianesimo in Sicilia (III–VII secolo). In: Messina V, Priolo S, editors. *Il cristianesimo in Sicilia dalle origini a Gregorio Magno*. Caltanissetta: Edizioni del Seminario; 1987. pp. 85-125
- [56] Sami D. Sicilian cities between the fourth and fifth centuries AD. In: García-Gasco R, González Sánchez R, Hernández de la Fuente D, editors. *The Theodosian Age (a.D. 379-455). Power, Place, Belief and Learning at the End of the Western Empire*. Oxford: BAR International Series 2493; 2013. pp. 27-36
- [57] Winter FE. *Studies in Hellenistic Architecture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 2006
- [58] Wilson RJA. *Sicily under the Roman Empire. The Archaeology of Roman Province, 36 BC – AD 535*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips; 1990
- [59] Vacanti C. *Guerra per la Sicilia e guerra della Sicilia. Il ruolo delle città siciliane nel primo conflitto romano-punico*. Napoli: Jovene; 2012
- [60] Bringmann K. *A History of Roman Republic*. Cambridge: Wiley; 2007
- [61] Buscemi F. *Architettura e romanizzazione della Sicilia di età imperiale. Gli edifici per spettacoli*. Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali; 2012
- [62] Chowaniec R, Chrzanowski L, Domzalski K, Gręzak A, Matera M, Młynarczyk J, et al. Unwrapping the micro-history of one house' cistern from ancient Akrai/Acrae, South-Eastern Sicily. *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*. 2020;29(2):603-653
- [63] Lomas K. Greeks, romans, and others. Problems of colonialism and ethnicity in southern Italy. In: Webster J, Cooper N, editors. *Roman imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives*. Leicester: University of Leicester; 1996. pp. 135-144
- [64] Vaccaro E. Patterning the late antique economies of island Sicily in a Mediterranean context. In: Lavan L, editor. *Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Island Regions in the Late Antiquity*. Leiden–Boston: Brill; 2013. pp. 267-269
- [65] Arnaud P. Ancient sailing routes and trade patterns: The impact of human factors. In: Robinson D, Wilson A, editors. *Maritime Archaeology and Ancient Trade in the Mediterranean*. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology; 2011. pp. 61-80