



Ceramic production at Selinunte (Sicily) during the 4th and 3rd century BCE: New archaeometric data through the analysis of kiln wastes

G. Montana^a, L. Randazzo^{b,*}, E. Tsantini^c, M. Fourmont^{d,1}

^a *Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra e del Mare (DiSTeM), University of Palermo, Italy*

^b *Dipartimento di Biologia, Ecologia e Scienze della Terra (DiBEST), University of Calabria, Italy*

^c *Universitat de Barcelona, Fac. de Geografia i Història, Dept. de Història i Arqueologia, Equip de Recerca Arqueològica i Arqueomètrica de la Universitat de Barcelona, Spain*

^d *Institut de Recherche sur L'Architecture Antique (IRAA), CNRS, Paris, France*

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Sicily
Selinunte
Classic and Hellenistic Age
Ceramic
Tableware
Archaeometry
Compositional reference group

ABSTRACT

A set of 37 overfired ceramic samples was collected from the dump of two kilns sited in the productive area FF1 in the acropolis of Selinunte (south western Sicily), being specifically active in the period 409–250 BCE. The ceramic samples were analysed by thin-section petrography and chemical analysis, with the aim to establish a valuable ‘reference group’ representative of the ceramic produced at Selinunte during the Punic phase.

The petrographic and chemical analyses allowed to state that the ceramic manufactures from the kilns operating in the FF1 insula are characterized by rather homogeneous textural/compositional features. The daily-use common ware here produced is characterized by aplastic inclusions mainly falling in the size classes of coarse silt and medium sand, with relative abundance ranging between 15 and 25% area. The inclusions are composed of monocrystalline quartz and, subordinately, of calcareous bioclasts, polycrystalline quartz, K-feldspar, plagioclase, chert, sandstones and acid rock fragments. The relatively low total chemical variability of the ceramic sample set reflects the specific incidence of the above-mentioned mineralogical and textural features. The variable amount of quartz-rich sand used for tempering the local raw clays produces slight variations in the SiO₂/CaO concentration ratio. Nonetheless, the chemical ‘reference group’ defined through this study seems to be consistent and characterized by satisfactory low standard deviations and it is fully congruent with the geo-lithological background of the area.

This new chemical ‘reference group’ might be applied to studies that are aimed to define the trade networks in that time in south western Sicily. It could also represent a useful starting point for future systematic studies concerning various ceramics classes (i.e. tableware, cooking ware, transport amphorae, etc.), taking into account the consumption and insular/extra insular trade dynamics of the ceramic products of Punic Selinunte.

1. Introduction

Selinus (or Selinous, modern: Selinunte) is one of the rare “second generation” Sicilian Greek colonies. It is in fact related to the Greek mother-city Megara Nysaea and its first Sicilian colony Megara Hyblaea, laying the foundation of the sub-colony Heraclea Minoa as well. Selinunte was the farthest western outpost of the Greek civilization in the central Mediterranean being located on the border of the Phoenico-Punic and the Elymian territories (Fig. 1).

In 480 BCE, the Greek world was threatened by the Persians at east and by the Carthaginians at west. In that historical frame, Sicily's fate was decided at the Battle of Himera. In this conflict Selinunte is the only

major Greek colony that did not participate to the battle on the Greek side. The ambiguous neutrality of Selinunte towards the Carthaginians, who were defeated at Himera, did not prevent its destruction in the 409 BCE. In the following decades several treaties redefined continuously the borders between the Greek and the Punic parts of the island and, finally, the city passed under the Carthaginian control. During the 4th-3rd century BCE, as soon as the limits of the city were redefined, Selinunte was deeply influenced by both Greek and Punic culture and a prosperity period with rising commercial businesses and craft activities took place (Fresina and Bonanno, 2013; Fourmont, 2014).

The vocation of Selinunte for pottery production roughly dates back

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: luciana.randazzo@unical.it (L. Randazzo).

¹ Honorary member.

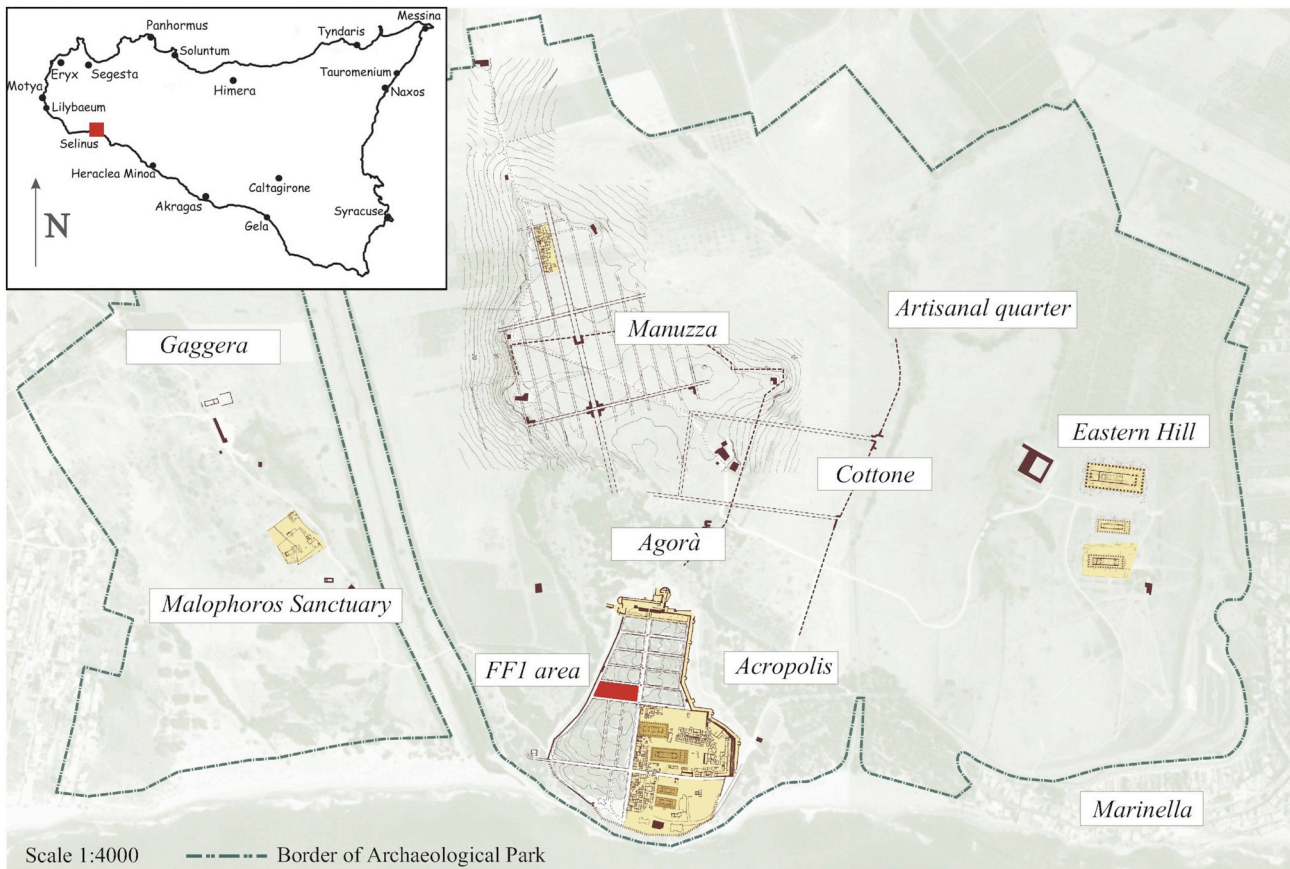


Fig. 1. Location of the Archaeological Park of Selinunte (south-western coast of Sicily) with indication of the FF1 block in red (modified by Montana et al., 2018 - original source Regione Siciliana - Assessorato dei Beni Culturali ed Ambientali e della Pubblica Istruzione). (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

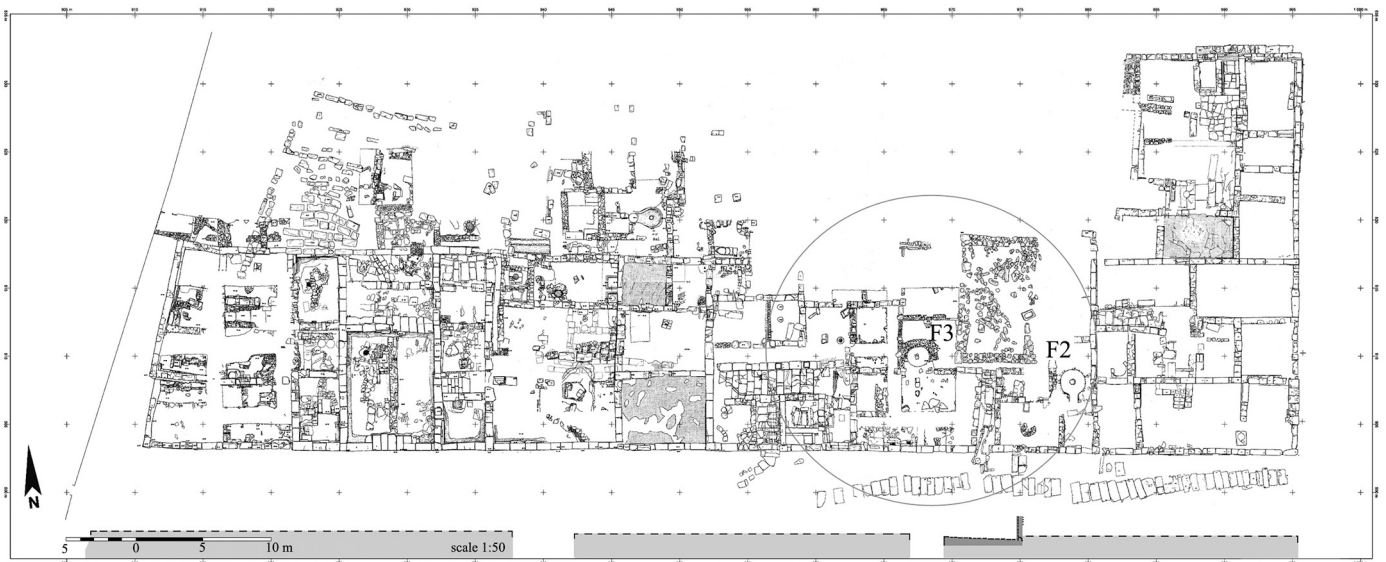


Fig. 2. Planimetric reconstruction of the FF1 block with indication of the studied kilns (F2 and F3).

to the period of its foundation, as it was recently evidenced by a research of the University of Bonn. In fact, on the eastern flank of the hill named *Manuzza*, several bricks, tiles and pottery manufacture structures were found that date back to the beginning of the 6th century BCE (Bentz et al., 2013). In this relatively small area of the eastern site of the city, extensive geophysical surveys have identified at least 80 kilns for ceramic firing that represent a unique case in Antiquity. The workshop

area of *Manuzza*, however, no longer produced after the destruction of 409 BCE. Despite of that, astonishing evidences of pottery making activities for the period following 409 BCE were documented, in the last quarter of the 19th century (Fourmont, 1991, 2005). In fact, in the part of the excavations of Selinunte named FF1 North, the presence of several potter's workshop producing vessels and terracotta figurines was attested (Fourmont, 1991). These workshops are particularly relevant

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11027556>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11027556>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)