Frerich Schön und Hanni Töpfer (Hrsg.)

KARTHAGO DIALOGE

Karthago und der punische Mittelmeerraum – Kulturkontakte und Kulturtransfers im 1. Jahrtausend vor Christus

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Punische Siedlung (»Quartier Hannibal«) auf dem Byrsa-Hügel, Karthago. (Photo H. Töpfer)

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Inhalt

SALVATORE DE VINCENZO

Western Sicily from Romanization to the Punic Age
Methodological problems and suggestions on the basis of some case studies

As implied by the title of the article, which appears to reverse the usual chronological sequence of historical phases by placing Roman before Punic phases, this contribution shall try to show the necessity of a virtually stratigraphic approach to Western Sicily. This consideration might seem trivial, but constitutes a necessary precondition for our purpose. It has to be taken into consideration that for a long time there has been some sort of interpretative fundamentalism inclined to point out a Punic character based on manifestations of cults, architectural complexes or urbanistic structures in an apodictic way, and the scope of interventions in Roman times is ignored. Therefore, a real reconstruction of these contexts in the Punic age can in no way be attempted without an initial analysis of the Roman phases and aspects connected with the process of Romanization in Western Sicily.

A lot of examples and case studies could be mentioned here. Of all the issues, certainly one of the most important is related to the urbanistic development of settlements. The archaeological evidence seems to suggest a radical reorganization of the urban structures of these cities and a contemporary monumentalization of their public areas in the late period of the Roman Republic. Some of the centers within the western sector of the island were considered to follow a Punic matrix, based solely on a calculation of measurement units that belonged to their urbanistic system. Similarly, it has been argued that many of these cities show a regular urban planning with *plateiai* and *stenopoi* intersecting each other orthogonally, which is thought to be implemented already in Punic times. Once these sites are examined more carefully, another image emerges.

In Palermo test trenches, which were carried out on today's Piazza Sett'Angeli, behind the cathedral and under the Palazzo Arcivescovile, in the easternmost sector of the *neapolis*, showed a general leveling of the previous archaic and classic structures at the beginning of the 4th century BC. This seems to be demonstrated by residual finds dated between the end of the 7th and the 5th century BC[1]. In particular, the excavations in the Palazzo Arcivescovile did bring to light a 3 m wide beaten earth road axis with six layers overlapping it, which was dated between the middle of the 4th and the 2nd century BC and interpreted as *stenopos*. Another *stenopos* of similar dimensions was discovered in the area of today's Piazza Sett'Angeli[2]. Palermo would therefore present a regular urban

1 Spatafora 2003, 1179 f.

2 Spatafora 2003, 1180 f.; Spatafora 2005, 39–41; Spatafora 2009, 227. Regarding the Piazza Sett'Angeli excavations: Spatafora 2005, 49–51; Spatafora – Montali 2006, 134.

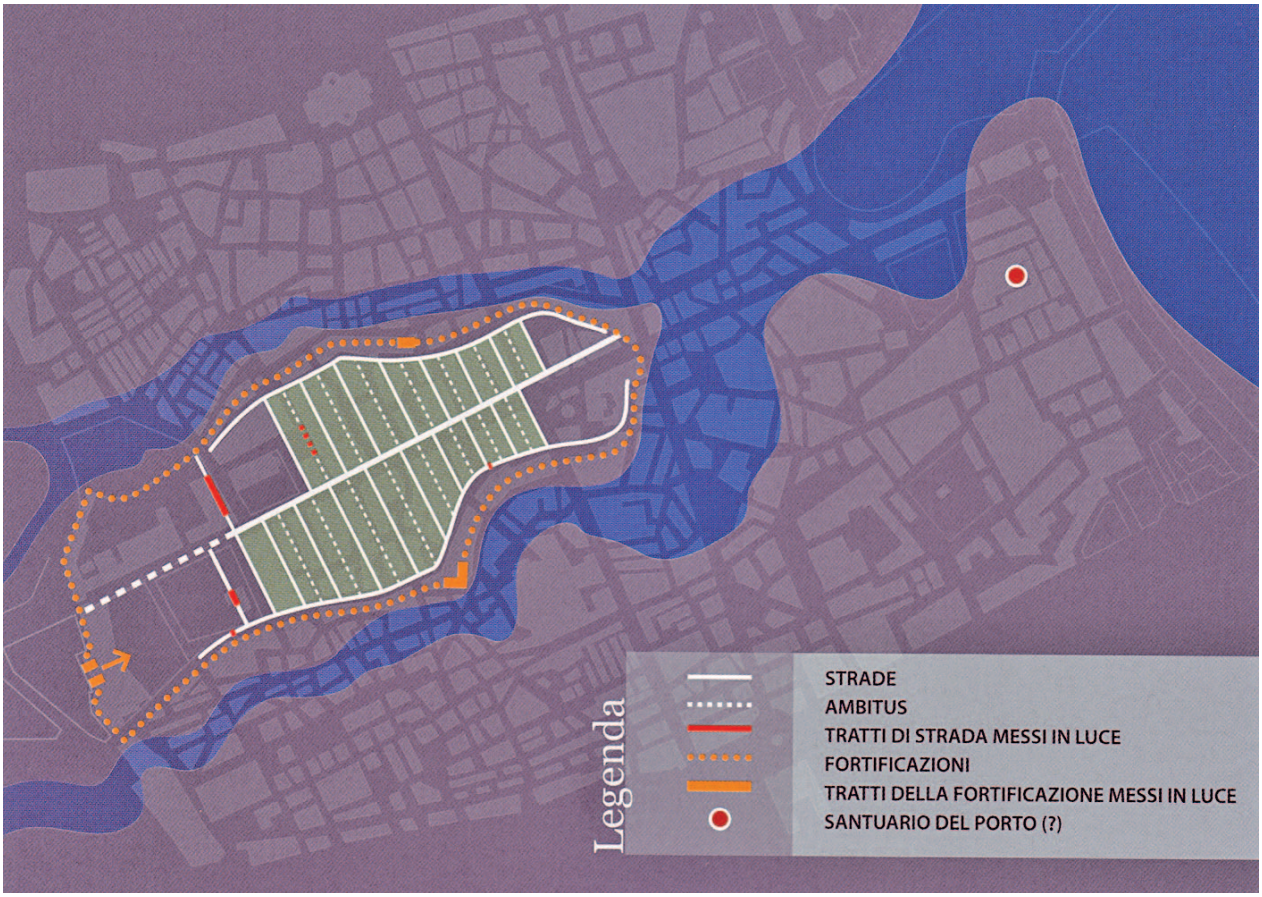

Fig. 1. Palermo. Reconstruction of the Punic city plan (Spatafora 2009, 224 fig. 4).

planning since the middle of the 4th century BC, which was based on a single East-West orientated *plateia*, the modern day Corso Vittorio Emanuele. The *plateia* was intersected orthogonally by a series of North-South orientated *stenopoi* (*fig. 1*). On the basis of this urban design with 51–53 m wide *insulae*, the Punic cubit of 0.5281 m has been recognized, whereby 100 cubits wide blocks have been reconstructed[3]. But it should be noted that this unit corresponds with 180 Roman feet as well, each 29.65 cm, which equals both units at 1.50 *actus*, since one *actus* comprises 120 Roman feet. The road axes, whose width was fixed at approx. 3 m, would therefore measure 10 Roman feet. Consequently, based solely on the metric system a Roman matrix for the city's urban design cannot be excluded, which could point to a substantial reorganization of the center in Roman times. Given this suggestion, it has to be mentioned that the last beaten earth pavement of the road axis beneath the Palazzo Arcivescovile has been dated to the end of the 2nd century BC. The absence of subsequent beaten earth pavements could be explained with a different urban organization from that time onwards, if the continued frequentation of the city is taken in consideration, thus confirming its dating to Roman times.

At Lilybaion only a small part of the ancient city was excavated, while most of the conclusions regarding its urban design were retrieved from photographic interpretation, mainly by G. Schmiedt. The scholar established that there was a regular shaped city planning which was based, in his opinion, on a Roman matrix. Without giving any chronological hypothesis he claimed the city's urban design was based on *insulae* of 35.52 × 106.56 m, thereby following a ratio of 1 : 3 and moreover arranged *per scamna*[4]. These notions have recently been reconsidered, whereby

3 Belvedere 1987, 294–296.

4 Schmiedt 1963, 70. For the new investigations of Lilybaion, see Giglio – Vecchio 2006.

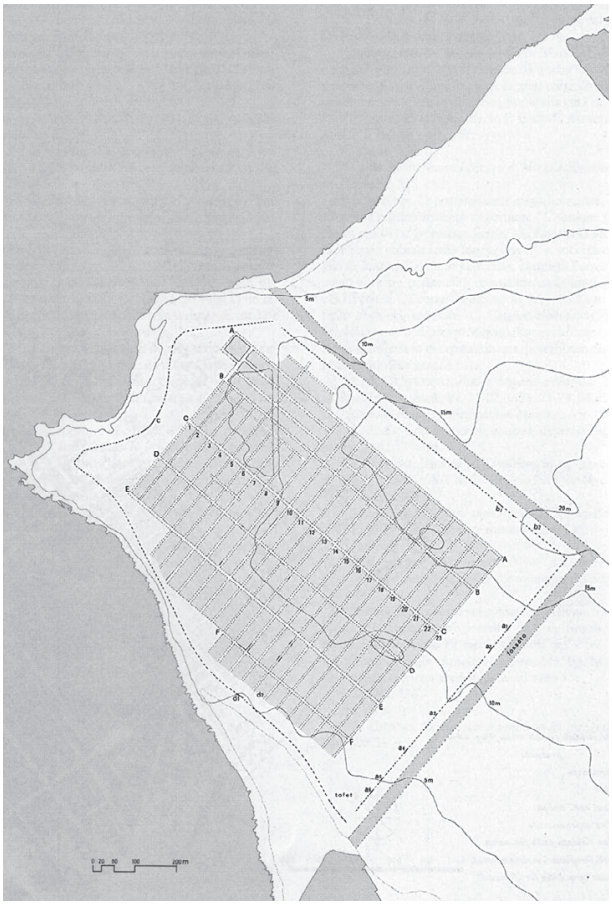

Fig. 2. Lilybaion. Reconstruction of the Punic city plan (Caruso 2003, fig. 2).

Fig. 3. Soluntum. Planimetry of the Roman city (Greco 2003, La Pianta Urbana).

the beginning of city planning in Lilybaion was dated in the 4th century BC, at the time of the Punic foundation of the settlement, which was allegedly based on the Punic cubit of 0.5218 m[5] (*fig. 2*). The urban design would be considered to follow an arrangement *per strigas*, with 6 main *plateiai* and at least 3 secondary *plateiai*, all orientated Nortwest-Southeast, intersected orthogonally by 23 *stenopoi*. The intersections of this road network should have generated blocks of ratios alternating between 1×3 and 1×4, both 60 cubits long and between 200 and 240 cubits wide respectively. The *plateiai* would have a width of 6–6.50 m, equivalent to 12 cubits, while the *stenopoi* would be 5–5.20 m wide, corresponding to 10 cubits[6]. Regarding this proposal, it is remarkable that the length of 106.56 m equals 360 Roman feet, which comprises, as mentioned before, 29.65 cm, which would result in *insulae* of 120×360 feet. These measurements are particularly significant because 120 Roman feet are 1 *actus*. The organization of Lilybaion could therefore be based on *insulae* of 1×3 *actus*.

The case of Soluntum plays a very important role within this discussion, because such as in Lilybaion and Palermo, its city planning is said to be inspired by a Punic matrix, although none of its buildings seem to follow Punic traditions. After a more thorough analysis of the dimensions of its road axes and *insulae*, it becomes clear that the measurements are very variable. The recognition of the Punic cubit as a fundamental measurement is therefore obviously an approximation and other units of measurement cannot be excluded as a basis for the urban design. The new city, which was founded after the destruction caused by Dionysios I of Syracuse is located on a plateau on the summit of the Monte Catalfano and shows remarkable differences in elevation, as an area of 18 ha spans from a height of 235 m to 170 m. In spite

5 Caruso 2003, 153.

6 The blocks, like the *plateiai* 12 cubits wide, would follow a sexagesimal system, similar to the system in Byrsa, while a centesimal system would generate their length, identical to the system in Palermo: Caruso 2003, 154.

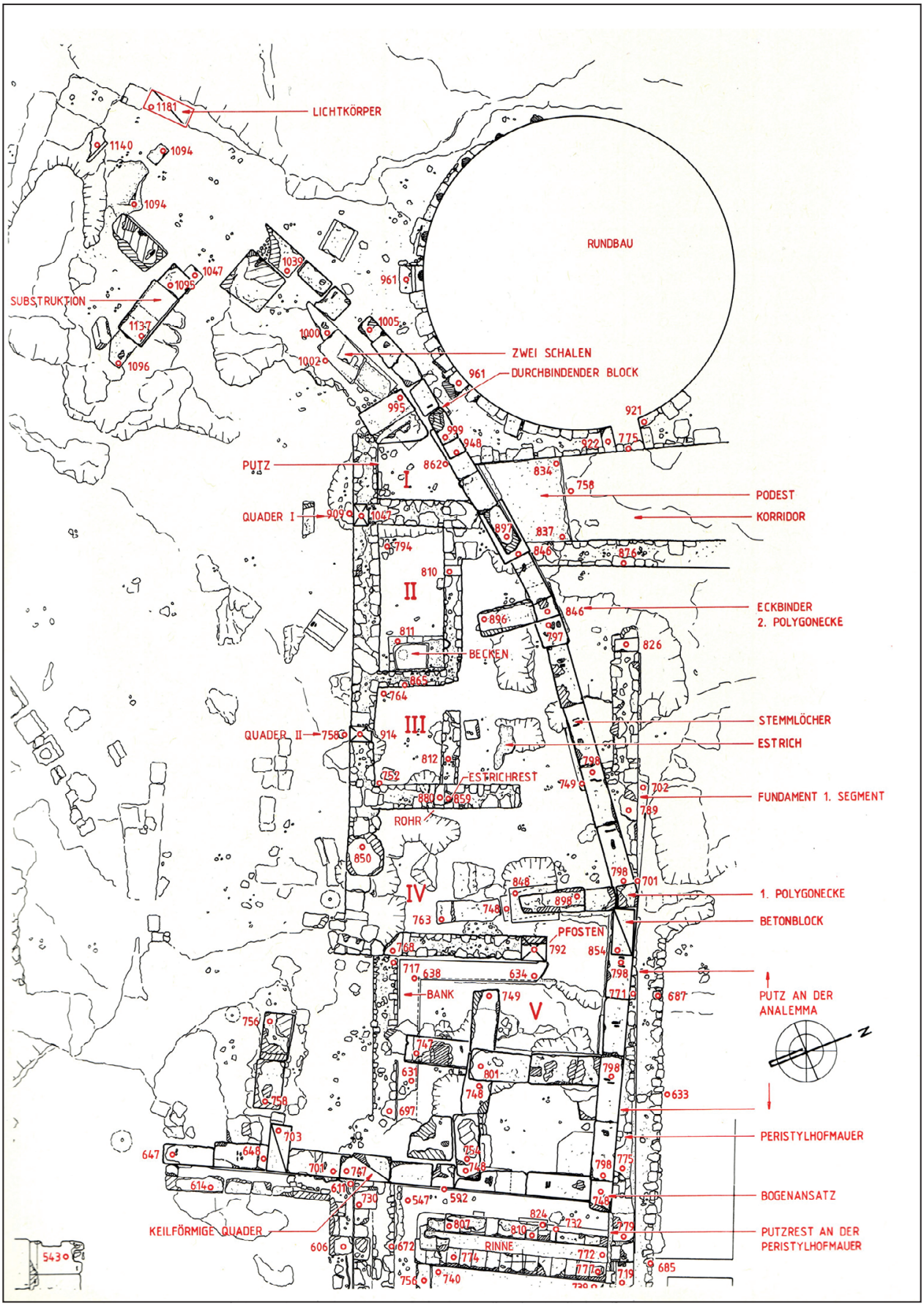

Fig. 4. Soluntum. Structures beneath the theatre (Wiegand 1997, 19 fig. 7).

of its location on a steep slope the city presents a very regular urban system with orthogonal road axes, which delimit blocks arranged *per strigas*[7]. The average dimensions of the blocks are approx. 41.50–42 × 81.50–82 m, which has been equated to 80 × 160 Punic cubits[8] (*fig. 3*). In Soluntum, the Punic cubit would have been used only within the scope of the general urban design, as seems to be clarified by a reinvestigation of different parts of the theatre, where its deployment could not be attested. Moreover, M. Wolf has identified the Doric and the Ionic feet as applied units of measurement concerning private buildings[9].

This image of Soluntum would thus present a city with a regular urban reticule based on a Punic unit of measurement while the public buildings would have been measured in other units[10]. In this regard, it has been shown that the city planning of Soluntum could have been based on the Doric foot, which equals approx. 32.70 cm, thereby creating *insulae* that measured 125 × 250 Doric feet[11]. Similarly, it is interesting to observe that the dimensions of the *insulae* would be 280 × 140 feet if based on the Ionic foot, which equals approx. 29.30–29.50 cm or the Roman foot, which equals 29.65 cm. The Punic cubit as a marker for a Punic matrix of the urban design of Soluntum constitutes therefore apparently an obvious forcing of facts. The relation between length and width of the *per strigas* arranged *insulae*, which presents itself with a ratio of 1 : 2, as the *insulae* are twice as long as wide, is interesting as well. This ratio could indicate the need to lower the date of Soluntum city planning, as it seems to appear later than the ratio of 1 : 4 in the city planning of the Timoleon age, for example in Camarina. Elongated *Insulae* are also to be found to a lesser extent in the urban design of Tindari and Alesa, the city planning of

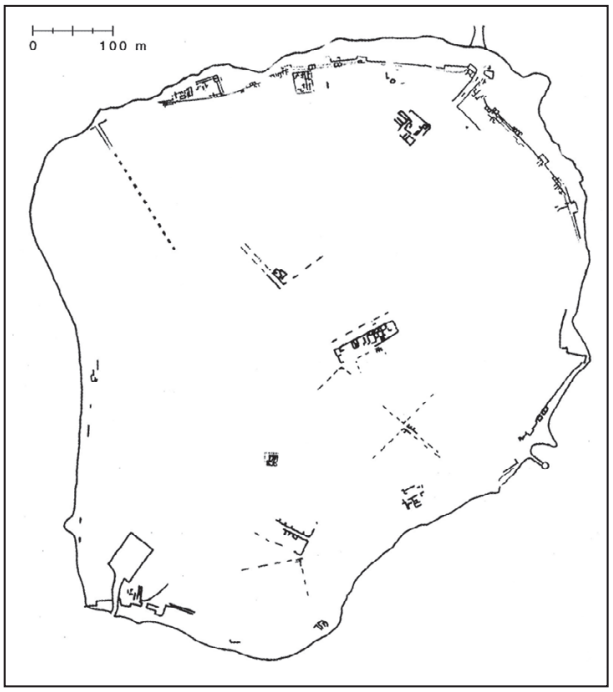

Fig. 5. Mozia. Location and alignment of the roads (Famà 2009, 272 fig. 1b).

which has recently been dated to Roman times[12]. The ratio of 1 : 2 is in any case the most common ratio in Hellenistic times[13]. Taken into consideration that all public and private buildings can be traced back to the last quarter of the 2nd century BC, it is more likely that the urban planning of the city has to have been carried out within in the same period, thereby distorting the appearance of the previous Punic center completely. Another fact that could support the different urban organization in Roman and Punic times can be seen in the construction of public buildings, like the theatre or the gymnasium, above older Punic private buildings[14] (*fig. 4*).

Compared to the presented cases, the most significant evidence for the layout of the urban design of Punic settlements in Sicily seems to emerge from an analysis of Mozia, because it was destroyed in the early 4th century BC, and frequented only sporadically in the subsequent phases. The city planning, as far as it can be reconstructed, was not based on an orthogonal grid. Instead, some buildings were aligned to the islands' perimeter, while the buildings in the center followed a differ-

7 Italia – Lima 1987, 57–72; Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994, 33–36; most recently Portale 2006.

8 According to O. Belvedere and E. Termini, the city grid follows a sexagesimal system with subdivisions of 1/3 = 20: Belvedere – Termine 2005, 89. For an exact measurement of the *insulae* see Spatafora 2009, 234 fig. 10. For the Punic cubit in general, see Barresi 2007.

9 Wolf 2003, 47 f.

10 R. Wilson considers the deployment of the Punic cubit as a form of persistence of the Semitic culture in Sicily: Wilson 2005, 913. For the survival of the Punic cubit in Roman times see Barresi 1991; Bonetto 2006, 268.

11 Wolf 2003, 48.

12 La Torre 2006, 90–93.

13 Greco – Torelli 1983, 355.

14 De Vincenzo 2013b, 771–773.

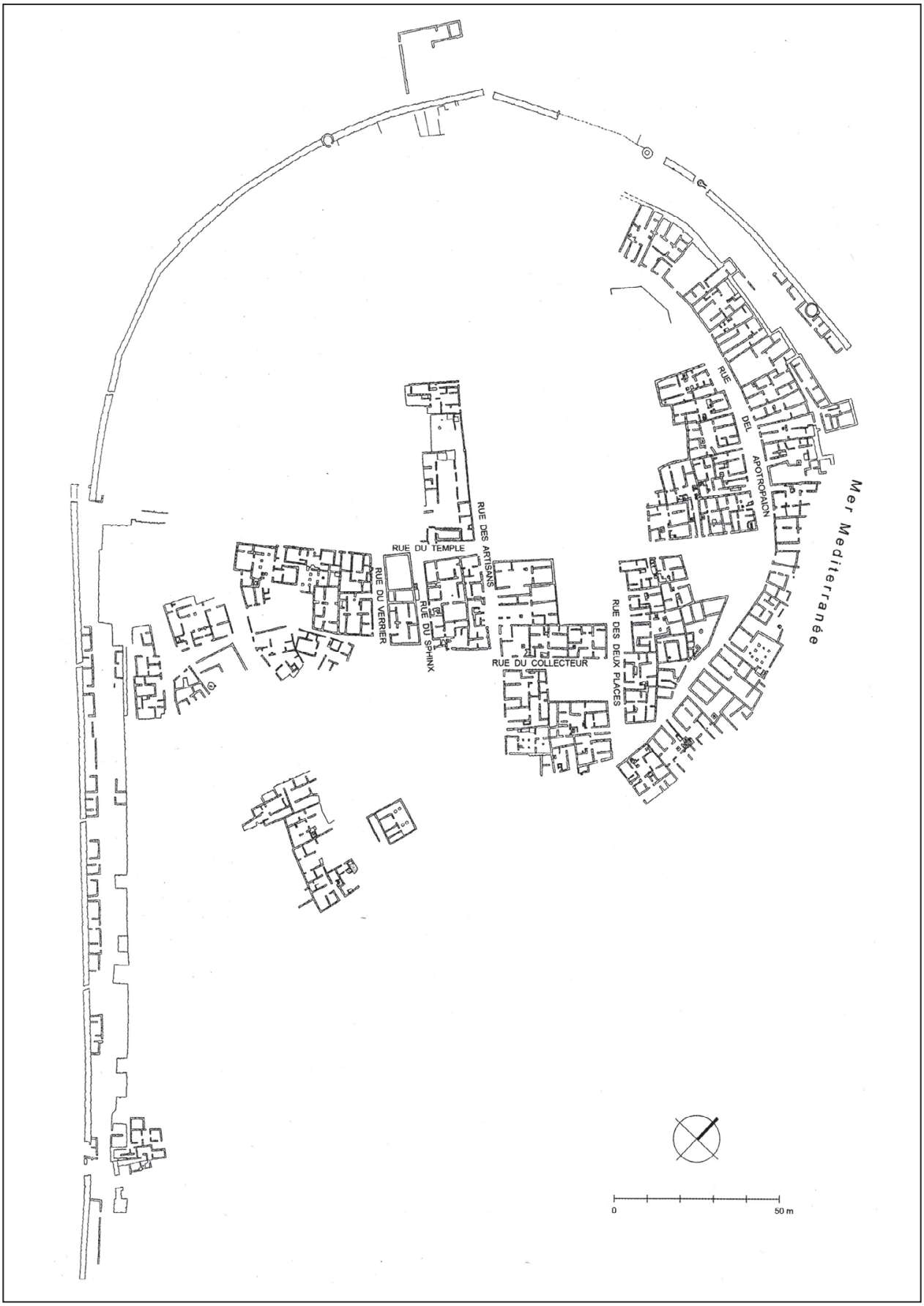

Fig. 6. Kerkouane. City plan (Fantar 2009, 192 fig. 1).

ent orientation (*fig. 5*). The organization of Mozia therefore resembles that of Kerkouane in North Africa (*fig. 6*), or of Monte Sirai in Sardinia, which show particularly interesting features, as they are among the few Punic settlements, which don't have construction phases dated to the Late Roman Republic, especially in the case of Kerkouane[15], and are examined almost in their entirety. In the light of those sites, the urban design of Punic settlements in Sicily should have a similar organization, with buildings aligned to the settlements' perimeter and a different orientation in the city center. An analog situation is to be found at Carthage, where the proposed regularity of the urban organization has to be reconsidered, since it seems to be limited to the so-called Magon Quarter, which was built at the end of the 5th century BC[16]. These structures follow the course of the fortification walls and the coastline, while structures found in the center of the Punic city have a different orientation. In this regard, the connection with the Punic settlement on the acropolis of Selinunte, which was implemented later than the so-called Magon Quarter, becomes considerably important. The private buildings of the new Punic foundation were not arranged on the axes of an orthogonal pattern, but followed the orientation of various sections of the fortification, which practically dictated the orientation of the city blocks. This could further hint to a non-orthogonal urbanistic organization of the Punic settlements in Sicily, which would be characterized by city blocks aligned along the fortification wall and a different organization in the central sectors, which are more regular, as is attested for example in Kerkouane[17].

The founding of Kerkouane has been dated to the 4th century BC, and its abandonment towards the middle of the 3rd century BC. Seven road axes were discovered, one of which, the so-called Rue de l'Apotropaion, winds along the fortification wall, thereby producing *insulae,* which are rather irregularly aligned. In the settlements center, the *insulae* continue to show different shapes and dimensions, the road axes behave likewise, but some intersect each other almost orthogonally in the central part of the city[18]. Within the free space between the road axes, three open squares with exclusive commercial function and no civil buildings have been hypothesized, therefore representing a model of open spaces different from the Greek concept of an *agora*[19]. Due to the lack of excavations in the area around the temple in the city center, it is impossible to propose hypotheses about the relationship between the temple and the commercial area, which on the contrary has been investigated in Selinunte and in Cossyra[20]. In Selinunte, in the area immediately North and East of Temple C, a series of twelve aligned rooms were found, which were interpreted as open workshops within a portico. This area most likely served a public function, and should be interpreted as a sort of an *agora*: its commercial character is further attested by the discovery of seals[21] (*fig. 7*). However, the finding of these objects does not exclude non-commercial uses of the building, but could hint at a sacred place already used in Punic times. The presence of seals in a Semitic temple is not unusual, because temples functioned also as archives[22]. Support in favor of this hypothesis comes from an extremely widespread type of seal, which show Heracles/Melqart with a bull, a club and a dolphin. This iconography appears on coins minted at Selinunte as well[23]. The workshops and the area in front of Temple C in any case represent the only part of all settlements of the Punic eparchy in Sicily with a commercial function in a city center, which can be interpreted with certainty as public area[24]. Given the scarcity of data concerning the design of public places in Punic settlements within the entire Mediterranean, the importance of this context is not limited to Sicily[25].

15 On the urban design of the Punic settlements in Sardinia see Blasetti Fantauzzi (2015).
16 Rakob 1991, 216 f. 228–238, Beil. 26 f. 34; Rakob 1995.
17 Fantar 1984.
18 For the urbanistic organization of Kerkouane cf. Fantar 1984.
19 Fantar 1984, 210.
20 De Vincenzo 2013a, 62 f.
21 Mertens 1997, 309–313; Helas 2009, 292; Helas 2011, 125–130.
22 For the use of the temple as an archive see Berges 1993; Berges 2002.
23 Cutroni Tusa 1995.
24 Based on the example of Selinunte, it seems possible to hypothesize a similar context in Cossyra within the area immediately east of the temple on top of the city: De Vincenzo 2013a, 62 f.
25 For an in-depth discussion of this problem, see De Vincenzo 2013a, 123–129. For a synthesis of the different hypotheses regarding a regular Punic city planning, cf. Fumadó Ortega 2013.

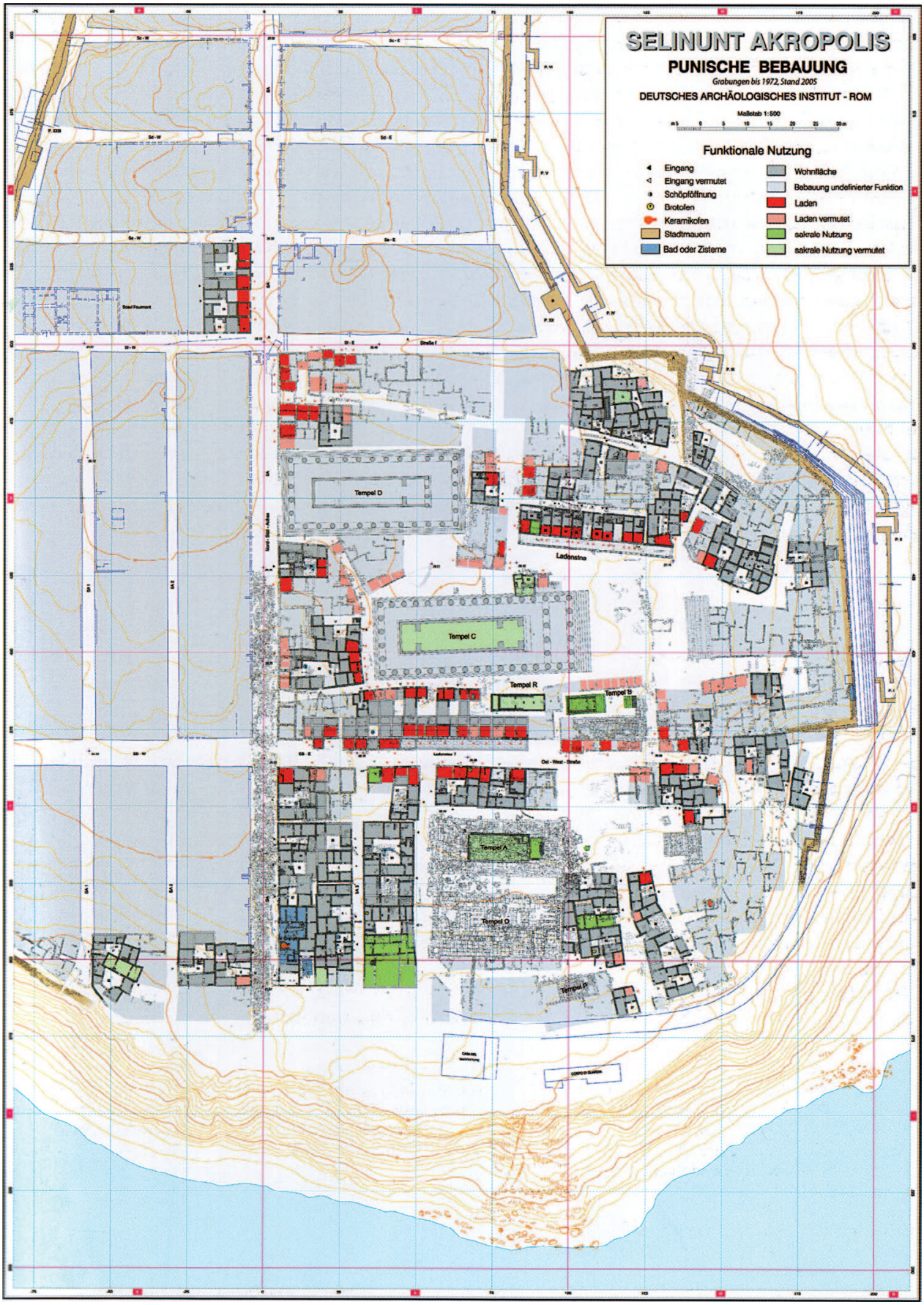

Fig. 7. Selinunte. The acropolis in Punic times (Helas 2009, 291 fig. 2).

Further data related to the tendency towards biased interpretations mentioned above that lead to a postulation of an oriental matrix in contexts that date from Roman times and are characterized in any sense as Punic, arises obviously from buildings in sacred areas. Thus, the existence of a Punic type of a broad-room temple in Sicily has been postulated for a long time, the temple ›a tre celle‹. This kind of temple was identified in various ways in numerous settlements of the eparchy, including Mozia, the area around Temples A and O in Selinunte, Monte Adranone, Monte Iato and Soluntum. After a renewed and more careful analysis of these contexts, it is evident how this hypothesis is rather indefinite and based on old conjectures, which were never unconditionally verified but instead repeated indiscriminately. Particularly evident cases are the temple ›con altare a tre betili‹ in Soluntum and the two alleged Punic temples in Monte Adranone, which do not have any sacred characteristics.

In Monte Adranone, the so-called temple of the acropolis and the temple on the lower terrace were claimed to be Punic merely because of their plan[26]. The so-called temple of the acropolis, which has an elongated rectangular form (31 × 10 m), shows two construction phases[27] (*fig. 8*): in the first phase the ground plan was divided into three parts, formed by adjoining and non-communicating spaces, which could be entered by three different accesses on the south side. The central room, which was claimed to be a hypaethral shows on its central axis two quadrangular blocks of sandstone, interpreted as bases for two columns or baetyls. Within the structure traces of burning were found, supposedly remains of sacrifices.

The western room was divided into two parts, while the eastern room was interpreted as *sancta sanctorum*, because of a molded block found in layers of debris, considered an Egyptian cornice. Based on this fragment, it was claimed that the building once had been a monumental structure. In the second phase, a two-tier room was erected in the north-western part of the area, while a platform was built in the Southeast, which incorporated a part of the rock and which would have been

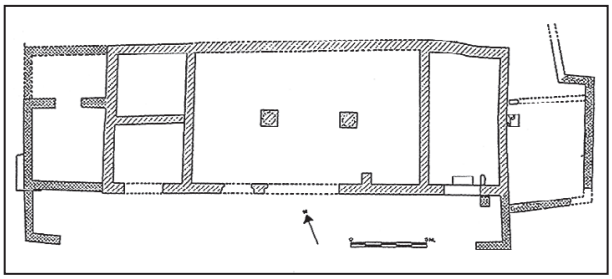

Fig. 8. Monte Adranone. So-called Punic Temple of the acropolis (Wilson 2005, 916 fig. 12).

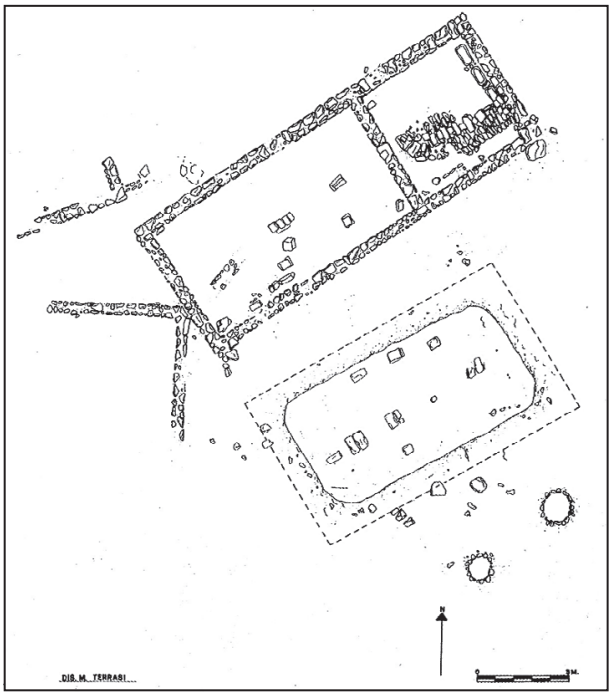

Fig. 9. Monte Adranone. So-called Punic Temple of the 2nd terrace (Fiorentini 1995, 63 fig. 41).

large enough to sustain the bases of the square altars. Furthermore, a portico with wooden L-shaped *antae* was built at the south-eastern front, the foundations of which were excavated. In this second phase a system of small canals was installed, to channel water originating from a ramp east of the sacred area and to gather it for ritual purposes. This sanctuary could have been consecrated to a pair of gods, given the combination of baetyli and altars. The transition from three to four *cellae* during the second phase, »insistendo sulla duplice ripartizione interna« supports this idea in particular[28].

26 For a synthesis cf. Fiorentini 1980.
27 Fiorentini 1995, 19 f.; Fiorentini 1999, 69 f.
28 Fiorentini 1995, 27; Fiorentini 1999, 76. At first G. Fiorentini proposed that the sanctuary could be consecrated to Baal Hammon and Tanit: Fiorentini 1982/1983.

The second supposed Punic temple is a building situated on the second terrace beneath the acropolis[29] (*fig. 9*). This building, whose corners are oriented Northeast-Southwest, has an elongated rectangular form (21 × 8 m) and two adjacent rooms at its disposal. In the eastern room three sandstone bowls were found leaning against the eastern wall, while in the second room, which possibly had no roof, two bases made of sandstone with traces of burning, therefore interpreted as support for two baetyli, were preserved. The excavation of this building has furthermore brought to light two hundred coins of Punic or Siculo-Punic mint, which were claimed to be collected on the basis of a tribute system or as offerings[30]. Directly behind the second building a rectangular cistern with a row of pillars in its center was discovered, connected to the presumably practiced cults, according to the excavators[31].

The two buildings of Monte Adranone are supposed to be the most characteristic elements of the settlement from the Punic point of view, while the site shows a composite culture, with both Greek and Punic contributions. Accordingly, it is even more difficult to maintain their connection to the sacred sphere merely because of the ground plan, animal bones and traces of burning. Neither inscriptions nor *ex voto* were found. Regarding the Punic elements, only the bases of the baetyli seem to be beyond doubt. It is however more probable that the bases had a load-bearing function, possibly for wooden beams which supported the roof, as is indicated by their central position within the room as well. The same argument is valid for the bases in the center of the cistern next to the second building. However, regarding the alleged capital with an Egyptian cornice, if one considers its obvious disproportion given the clearly lesser height, it seems improbable to interpret it as such[32]. Perhaps it would be more likely for it to be a simple corbel, taken into account its elongated form. Thus the mere discovery of coins in the building on the middle terrace, even though they are numerous, cannot justify the proposed sacral character of the site, given that one cannot exclude the possibility of a small hoard of coins instead of money collected under the temples administration[33].

To comprehend the so-called temple with three *cellae* and the altar with three baetyli from Soluntum, the interventions and reorganizations in Roman times cannot be ignored. This building, located at the entrance of the city's *agora*, although forming a unitary architectural complex, is divided in two different buildings (A and B). They occupy four levels, at the lowest one of which, situated at street level, the so-called altar with the three baetyli was accommodated[34] (*fig. 10–11*). Building A (20.50 × 6.50 m) is composed of three chambers (a, b, c), all adjacent to each other but not communicating, which opened only towards the so-called Via dell'Agora. Chamber (a) (3.40 × 3 m) contained the »altar with three baetyli« in the center. The alleged baetyli are slabs of yellowish tuff, situated at a distance of approx. 60 cm from one another and built upon a structure of stones coated with plaster (approx. 2 × 1 m) with a lightly gradient surface, which was interpreted as a gradient platform of Punic tradition[35]. North of the altar, in the northwest corner of the chamber, a little square-cut basin was found, 1 m in length and 0.70 m high, completely coated on the inside and responsible for the collection of liquids deriving from the sloping surface during the sacrifices. Behind the alleged baetyli, along the western wall of the chamber, traces of red paint on the white plaster led to the assumption of a later installed bench, considering the fact that it was interrupting the walls plaster. The bench of chamber (a) was thought to be contemporary to the bench in chamber (b), which is a rather later intervention because it was leaning against the plaster of the walls[36].

29 Fiorentini 1995, 15; Fiorentini 1999, 70 f.
30 Ribichini 1988, 120.
31 Fiorentini 1999, 71.
32 In this regard, A. Ciasca already cast heavy doubts, demonstrating the oddity of the alleged capital, which shows »un singolare rapporto di proporzioni«. See A. Ciasca's interventions in G. Fiorentini's contribution (Fiorentini 1982/1983, 185). For Egyptian cornices in general, see Lezine 1962, 97–101 fig. 52; Tore 1991; Francisci 2002.
33 Regarding the lack of ceramic fragments and Punic objects in general within the settlement, see Fiorentini 1995, 29.
34 The building was brought to light by V. Tusa in 1954: Famà 1980; Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994, 66–70; Tusa 1999, 371–373; lastly, De Vincenzo 2013b, 779–786.
35 Famà 1980, 13–16; Bisi 1991, 231–233; Spagnoli 2003, 174–176; Chiarenza 2007, 182 f.
36 Fama 1980, 15 f.

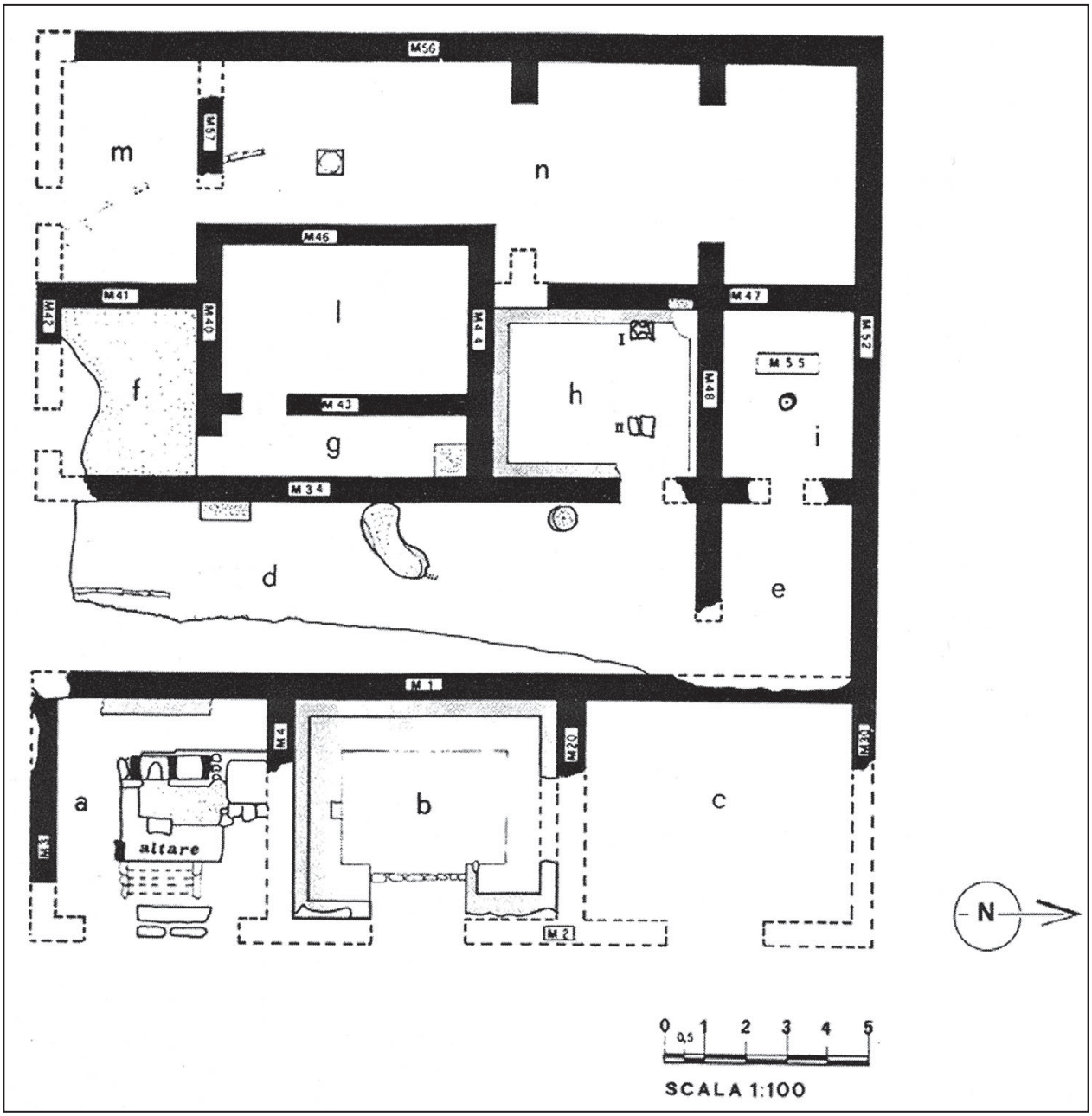

Fig. 10. Soluntum. So-called Temple of the »Three-baetyli-Altar« (Famà 1980, 8 fig. 1).

As to the chronology of this building, two phases have been distinguished based mainly on the data which emerged from Building B, without being able to propose an absolute chronology due to the lack of accurate stratigraphic data. Moreover, it was proposed to distinguish four different constructive interventions during the first grand phase, recognizable particularly in the chamber (a) with the ›altar with three baetyli‹. At the actual state of the investigations, it is not possible to determine whether this chamber presented the alleged altar from the beginning, while the small bench, considered contemporary to the one from chamber (b), was added later. The alleged altar in its final form must have been finished at a later moment in time, in which the basin and, consequently, the coated sloping ground did not exist yet. The slope was designed to collect the blood of the sacrificed animals and represents the last intervention of the first phase. The existence of a previous altar with smaller dimensions has been assumed, to situate the construction of the al-

Fig. 11. Soluntum. So-called »Three-baetyli-Altar« (Tusa 1989 fig. 663).

leged altar »with three baetyli« at an initial stage of Building A, but no stratigraphic and structural data in favor of this hypothesis could be retrieved. Regarding absolute chronology, the excavation of Building A failed to produce any fragments of pottery dateable to the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, whereas nearly all fragments could be dated to the 1st and 2nd century AD. Despite the absence of more ancient material, at least the first phase has been settled in a chronological horizon between the first quarter of the 4th and the end of the 3rd century BC, solely by the material found in Building B. The materials rediscovered in chamber (a) of Building A, however, could be ascribed to the final phase of the building's frequentation, although their connection to a construction or late reorganization of the building cannot be excluded. The second major phase of Building A can be dated between the end of the 3rd century BC and the 2nd century AD. No constructive intervention can be associated to this phase, only finds that mainly date into the first two centuries AD and could possibly hint at the attendance and abandoning of the structure[37]. The lack of excavations and stratigraphic investigations, especially when it comes to the levels of the foundation, demands therefore major caution with any chronological proposals. Besides the chronology, the interpretation of the slabs as baetyli inside Building A also must be doubted. Taking into account the absence of more ancient material in the chamber of the alleged altar, the possibility of its building in a more advanced phase of the structure cannot be ruled out. Likewise, elements that served to reinforce the interpretation of the three vertical tuff slabs as sacred objects, i. e. the basin and the inclined paving of alleged Punic tradition, were actually made only in occasion of the last constructive intervention of chamber (a)[38].

37 Fama 1980, 36 f.

38 Sloping platforms and their connection with sacrifices in the Punic world are documented by steles found in a deposit of the temple of Saturn in Dougga, which portray

A last significant fact to consider, that has been long neglected, is the presence of a fourth slab at the southeast corner of the alleged altar, modeled from the same material, with the same size, height and alignment (*fig. 11*). There seem to be too many correspondences to keep its presence accidental. It may be more probable to claim a common context for the four plates, which could have been used to define a structure nowadays no longer retraceable, rather than being baetyli of Punic tradition. This consideration requires the interpretation of the building's sacred nature to be revised. The presence of the benches along the walls of the three chambers alone cannot be seen as an explicit reference to Phoenician and Punic religion[39]. The revision of the supposed sacred attribution calls for a revision of the identity of the settlement. This also applies to Monte Iato and Monte Adrone, where similar cases of alleged temples have been recognized. Their hypothetic Semitic connection has indeed been the source for hypotheses regarding *Mischkultur* or conservatism of the religious Punic architecture in Roman times[40]. Building A, as already mentioned, was interpreted as forming a sole complex together with the rearward Building B since the time of its excavation. The complex would have been of rectangular shape (20.50 × 16 m) and structured on three levels, in which it is possible to distinguish nine chambers, ascribable to three different groups of chambers. The entrance was situated in the South, from where a rectangular shaped chamber (d) (16.10 × 4 m) is entered, probably an open court as the discovery of the small basin of an elliptic cistern documents. It was installed in the central part of the chamber near the western wall and near a small channel connected with the cistern. A division in two major phases was also proposed for the building B[41]. The presence of pottery dateable from the first quarter of the 4th century BC has led to hypothesize a chronology for this first phase, ranging from the beginning of the 4th and the end of the 3rd century BC, while the second phase would reach up to the 2nd century AD[42]. This chronology is based only on some pottery fragments originating from the southern section of the beaten earth pavement of chamber (n) and not from the foundations of the building. The northernmost section of the beaten earth floor of this chamber provided fragments of sigillata, thereby rendering the context possibly disturbed, as a later chronology was beforehand excluded and everything attributed to more ancient phases[43]. The meager stratigraphic data available should again lead to major caution regarding the chronology. Equally, the proposed elements, as already demonstrated for Building A, cannot support the interpretation of the structure as a sacred area with the exception of the presence of a small bench, the *arulae* in chamber (h), and the presence of an alleged deposit in chamber (n), immediately west to chamber (h)[44]. The ground plan of building B has been approached with different typologies of sacred buildings but no actual comparison was proposed[45]. However, a more accurate analysis of the site plan ought to be performed in order to define this complex better, starting from the unjustified distinction into two different buildings, A and B. This distinction is founded upon the apparent absence of a connection between the two buildings and upon the different positions of their entrances: Building A is entered east, while Building B is entered south. Considering that the beaten earth floor of chamber (d) in Building B is undoubtedly higher than the one from Building A, and that this chamber is considered to be open to the sky and has no eastern wall, it makes sense to assume a spacious court. This court would also extend above Building A, which therefore would function as a

animals, mostly sheep, as they climb the steps leading to the altar: Pensabene 1990, 256 f. fig. 3–4.

39 V. Tusa (1999, 371) considers the benches to be an opportunity to rest for the faithful attending the ceremonies.

40 Wilson 2005.

41 Contrary to Building A, where the walls present the same technique, different building techniques have been attested for Building B, Famà 1980, 28 f.

42 Famà 1980, 19.

43 Famà 1980, 35 f.

44 The materials come from a pit interpreted by V. Tusa e M. L. Famà as a deposit (Famà 1980, 27–30). Remains of two beaten earth pavements have been discovered. The deposit was completed within the inferior pavement. Its filling contained loom weights, fragments of clay *arulae*, a significant quantity of ceramic fragments and animal bones. If the material is to be interpreted as deposit, it seems clear in any case that it cannot be ascribed to the first phase but must be contemporary with the second pavement.

45 The other rooms must have been used as service areas for the cult practice. Considering the basin and cistern court (d) was interpreted as a shelter for the animals were to be sacrificed: Famà 1980, 37–42.

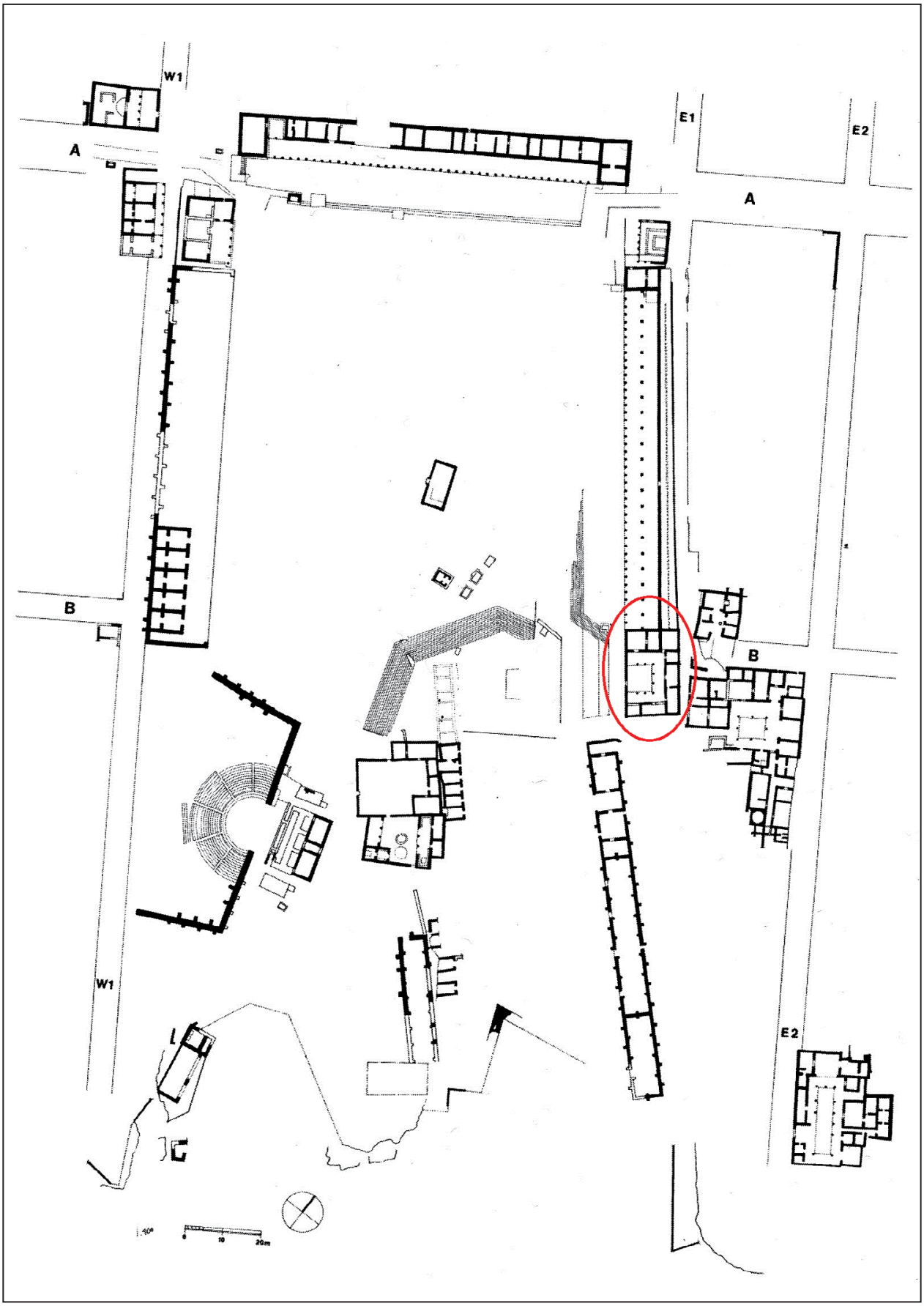

Fig. 12. Morgantina. Plan of the agora (Minà 2005 166).

sub-construction. In this case the same organization of the remaining houses facing along the Via dell'Agora would apply. The presence of chamber (e) along the north side of court (d) is remarkable as well, leading to assume chambers were also arranged along the southern side of the spacious court. The excavations have retrieved a unique column drum, discovered in chamber (i), which could be related to a probable peristyle. Given the collapse of the court's section, it would have been destroyed completely[46].

If this complex is regarded in its entirety as a private building, the presence of the benches, especially in chamber (h), which connects it mostly to the remaining houses of Soluntum, shouldn't be omitted. The benches, associated at their discovery next to chamber (h) with fine dinner sets and a notable quantity of animal bones, could be interpreted as support for the *klinai,* connected with the practice of the banquet. This must be connected to the discovery of elements linked to the religious sphere in an area near chamber (h), among them fictile *arulae*, loom weights and lamps[47]. This association between banquet and sacred sphere, found here, is not definable to a greater extent because of the state of preservation. Significant for the definition of the complex might be its location at the entrance of the *agora*, virtually set against the *stoa,* which could indicate a public rather than a private character of the building. Analogue buildings in close proximity to the *stoa* are documented in Hellenistic contexts at Priene, Colophon and especially at Morgantina, which constitutes perhaps the closest comparison for the one at Soluntum, which were interpreted as *prytaneion*[48] (*fig. 12*). However, this group of buildings proves to be problematic in their potential function as *prytaneion*, since their plan is very similar to the ones of private buildings. To this effect, and also taking into account their late chronology, it was proposed to considerate them as a more evolved pattern of this typology of buildings[49].

Therefore, the monument of Soluntum, considering its location close to the *stoa,* can also be interpreted as *prytaneion*, thus location of Soluntum's *koinon*. In Sicily the case of Soluntum is surely not an isolated example. *Pryteneia* are documented, besides Morgantina, at Lipari, Entella and Syracuse as well[50]. This last one is a particularly interesting case, since it is mentioned in a passage from Cicero's Verrines, which documents the continuity of this type of monuments in Roman times[51]. The probable *prytaneion* is connected eastwards with an additional structure by a stairway. Inside one of the rooms of these structures, an altar was recognized, which would hence implicate a sacred context. This room, as well as the rest of the structure, was connected directly with a court that opened towards the *agora*, thereby practically amplifying the theater's terrace[52]. The stairs and the open area hence show a direct connection with the *agora*, which perhaps reinforces the hypothesis of the public character of the entire complex.

At the end of this particularly significant reconstruction, stands a reused Greek inscription found at Soluntum, in the area of the so-called altar with three baetyli, which documents a dedication from the *koinon* of Soluntum to Sextus Peducaeus, who was praetor between 76–75 BC[53]. It has been hypothesized that the inscription originates from the *agora*, but given the many suggestions, a provenance from the area of the so-called altar with three baetyli cannot be excluded, thus possibly fortifying the building's identification as a *prytaneion.*

Generally, as the example of the building of the so-called altar with three baetyli of Soluntum points out, it is very difficult to rummage through the different interpretive suggestions regarding the sacred buildings from Punic Sicily. With utmost probability, as has emerged from recent works, the so-called *Pfeilertempel* can be regarded as the real prototype for the Phoenician temple, also in the West, as has been shown in particular by investigations carried out by L. Nigro regard-

46 For the column drum see Famà 1980, 22.
47 Famà 1980, 27–30.
48 For *prytaneia* in general, see Miller 1978; Hansen 1994, 30–36; lastly Steskal 2010, 223–231.
49 Miller 1978, 126 f. Given the plainness of materials used for the construction and decoration of these buildings and their lack of monumentality, in addition to their resemblance with private buildings, see Hansen 1994, 36 f.
50 Hansen 1994, 30–37. The case of the *prytaneion* of Entella seems to be more problematic: Parra 2005.
51 Cic. Ver. 2, 4, 119; 2, 4, 125.
52 Cutroni Tusa et al. 1994, 67. 69.
53 Calascibetta – Di Leonardo 2012; Greco 2014.

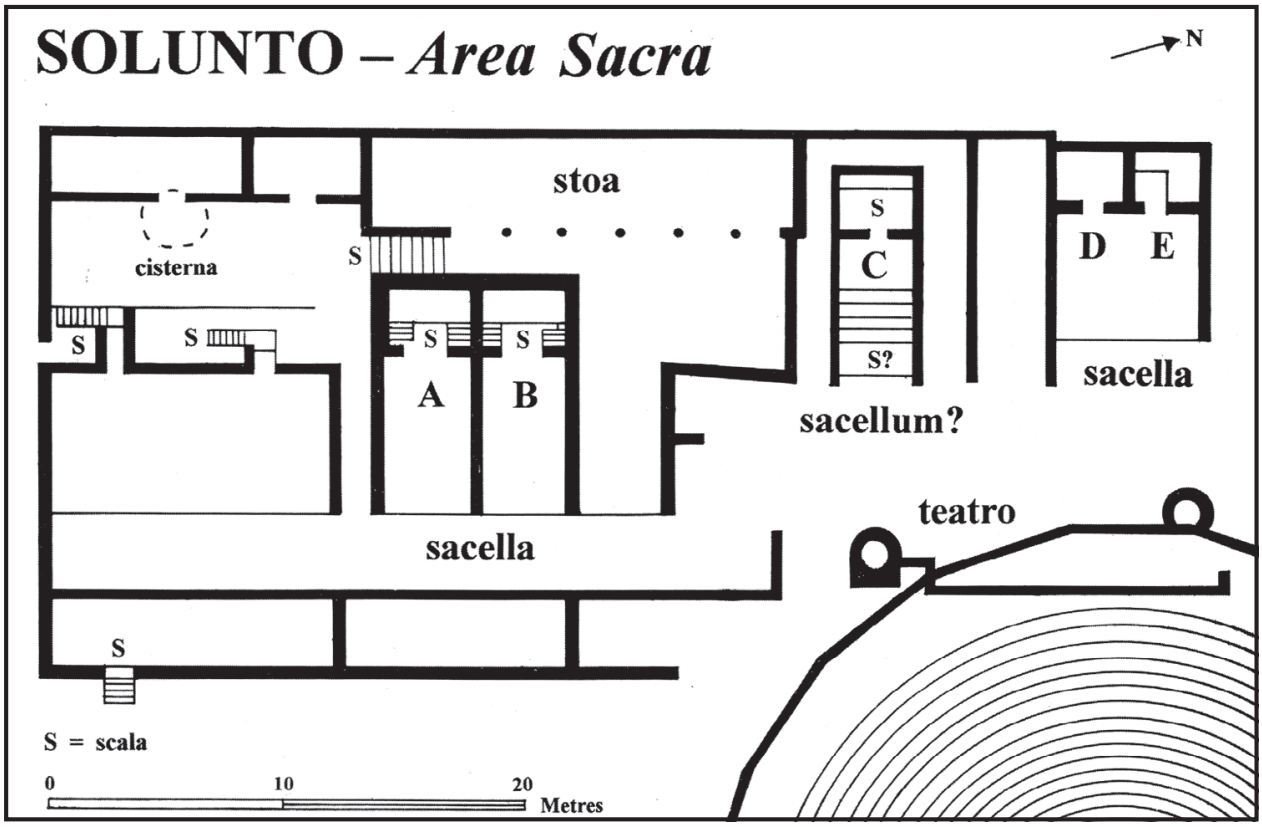

Fig. 13. Soluntum. The cult buildings on the terrace west of the theatre (Wilson 2005, 915 fig. 10)

ing the temple of the *Kothon,* and the first phase of the Cappidazzu in Mozia[54]. Concerning however the temple typology of Punic Sicily, in all likelihood the temple »with three cellae« should not be recognized as a proper prototype, but the temple without *peristasis* of the type *oikos* or *in antis*, generally considered being of Aegean origin, characterized by an elongated alignment and an entrance on the short side.

There seem to be various examples for this type of temple in Sicily after an attentive reinterpretation of the various contexts, as illustrated especially by the example of Punic Selinuntee. This is the case for example for Temple A or the Temple of Zeus Meilichios, a distyle temple of the type *in antis* on a low podium, also built in Punic times. The temple of Malophoros and the so-called Triolo Nord A show also an elongated alignment and were substantially rearranged after the city's conquest by the Carthaginians[55]. The temples without *peristasis* of the *oikos* type could also present adjacent *cellae*, the typology of which is documented in the Aegean area but also in Roman contexts until the Imperial period. Furthermore, the so-called temple with two aisles of Soluntum has to be attributed to this tradition. Situated within a porticoed area, it has been attributed to the city's Punic phase, considering its plan. However, the *sacellum* situated North-West from the so-called temple with two aisles presents a different plan (*fig. 13C*). Its location in an area where traces of a continuation of the *stoa* are preserved, have led to the assumption that it was built in a later phase. The building of this temple, as well as of the Temple *in summa cavea*, the latter similar to two analog buildings of Alba Fucens generally dated between the 3rd and 2nd century BC, and of a more distinctive Roman character, could make the withdrawal of the line of temples in consequence of the construction of the theater probable. The presence of the theater would indeed have made the access to the sacred area, delimited by the *stoa,* difficult. Anyway, the excavation data doesn't allow to de-

54 Nigro 2009a; Nigro 2009b.
55 Lately, De Vincenzo 2013a, 248–259.

termine whether the central temple was built after the theater or moved in connection with the theatre's construction, dated according to the architectonical decoration, to the last quarter of the 2nd century BC[56].

The presented examples are only a part of the case studies that illustrate the common tendency to recognize a Semitic matrix, and therefore assigning a Punic dating, to numerous contexts of Roman time, which has characterized the archaeological approach of the settlements of Western Sicily for a long time. On a methodological level, studies on the Carthaginian territories and the analysis of the problems related to the Punic phase, as well as to the successive Roman phase, are generally carried out on two parallel tracks, one of which represents »Punic Archaeology«, while the other »Classic Archaeology«, with rare moments of an attempted entanglement. Every one of these fields of study has consequently given birth to an autonomous point of view regarding the development of the settlements in Carthaginian controlled territories, distinguishing as required their Punic, Greek or Roman character in accordance with the respective field. This tendency has of course been reinforced by often occurring cases of missing solid stratigraphic data. But only the convergence of these fields of study, i. e. 'Punic Archaeology' and 'Classical Archaeology', can generate a real and rigorous stratigraphic approach for the analysis of this territory, as well as for other Punic contexts, thereby assuring the clearest and most adequate overview possible. In the specific case of Western Sicily, it emerges clearly how the framework of the evidence concerning the Phoenician and Punic frequentation should be significantly resized in the light of these analyses, thereby performing a sort of »unpunicization« with regard to many of its archaeological contexts. The interventions of Roman times have indeed greatly affected the preceding Punic levels of these settlements, permitting today only as much as a guess as to their structures, except of course for Mozia, that, since no consistent Roman phase exists, preserved its Punic character[57].

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56 De Vincenzo 2013a, 294–299. It is interesting to notice how the cult statue of the so-called temple of the two aisles, the Zeus of Soluntum, dated to the end of the second century BC, is probably more recent. The reliefs of the throne show a series of symbols that can be attributed to the Augustean propaganda. The work should be assigned to the same age accordingly.

57 For a complete bibliography of the Punic settlements of Western Sicily and their Roman phase, cf. De Vincenzo 2013a, 409–439.

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