



Farms, villas, and villages in late roman Sicily: a subregional approach to the landscape evolution

Fabrizio Ducati

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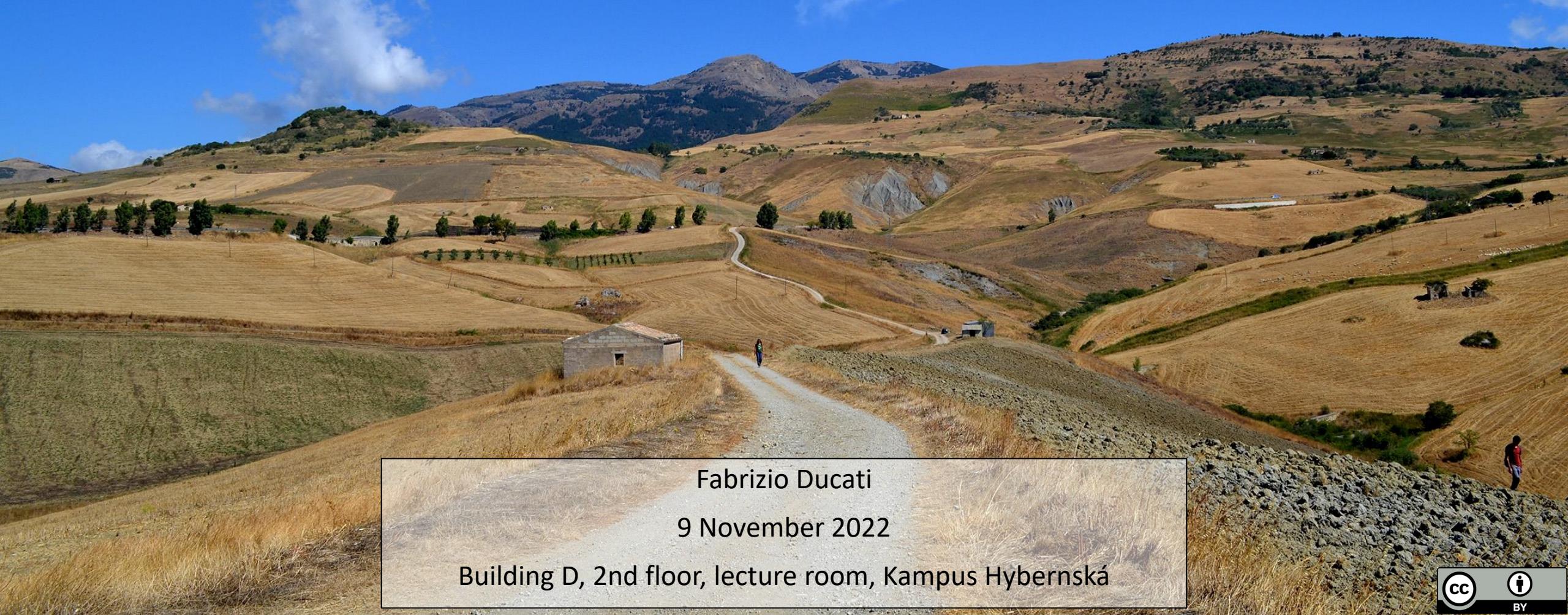


INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY
Faculty of Arts
Charles University

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B | 4

Farms, villas and villages in late Roman Sicily

A subregional approach to the landscape evolution



Fabrizio Ducati

9 November 2022

Building D, 2nd floor, lecture room, Kampus Hybernská



Today, we will discuss

1. Sicily as Mediterranean lynchpin during the Roman time
2. Cereals, wine, oil and much more: the wealth of Roman Sicily
3. Landscape in evolution
 - I. The crisis of minor rural settlements during the 3rd century AD
 - II. The rise of luxury villas during the 4th century AD
 - III. Sprawling agricultural villages between 5th - 6th centuries AD
4. Some conclusive remarks

Let's start

Chapter 1

Sicily as Mediterranean lynchpin during the Roman time

Sicily is a Mediterranean crossroad



for goods, people and ideas moving along long-standing routes

It is a strategic island

**Sicilian Channel: 145 Km
Strait of Messina: 3,14 Km**



It is a strategic island



long contested by the great Mediterranean powers

Some meaningful events for Sicily before the Imperial age

241 BC: 1st Punic War ends. Western Sicily is under Roman control

211 BC: Fall of Syracuse. Sicily is totally under Roman control

210 BC: M. Valario Levino restores the ‘provincia Sicilia’

42-36 BC: Civil war. Sicily sided with Sextus Pompey against Octavian

30 BC: Conquest of the Egypt. Sicily lost his role in Rome supplies

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th



Then, a long period of peace and marginality

until the second half of the 3rd century AD

1st

2nd

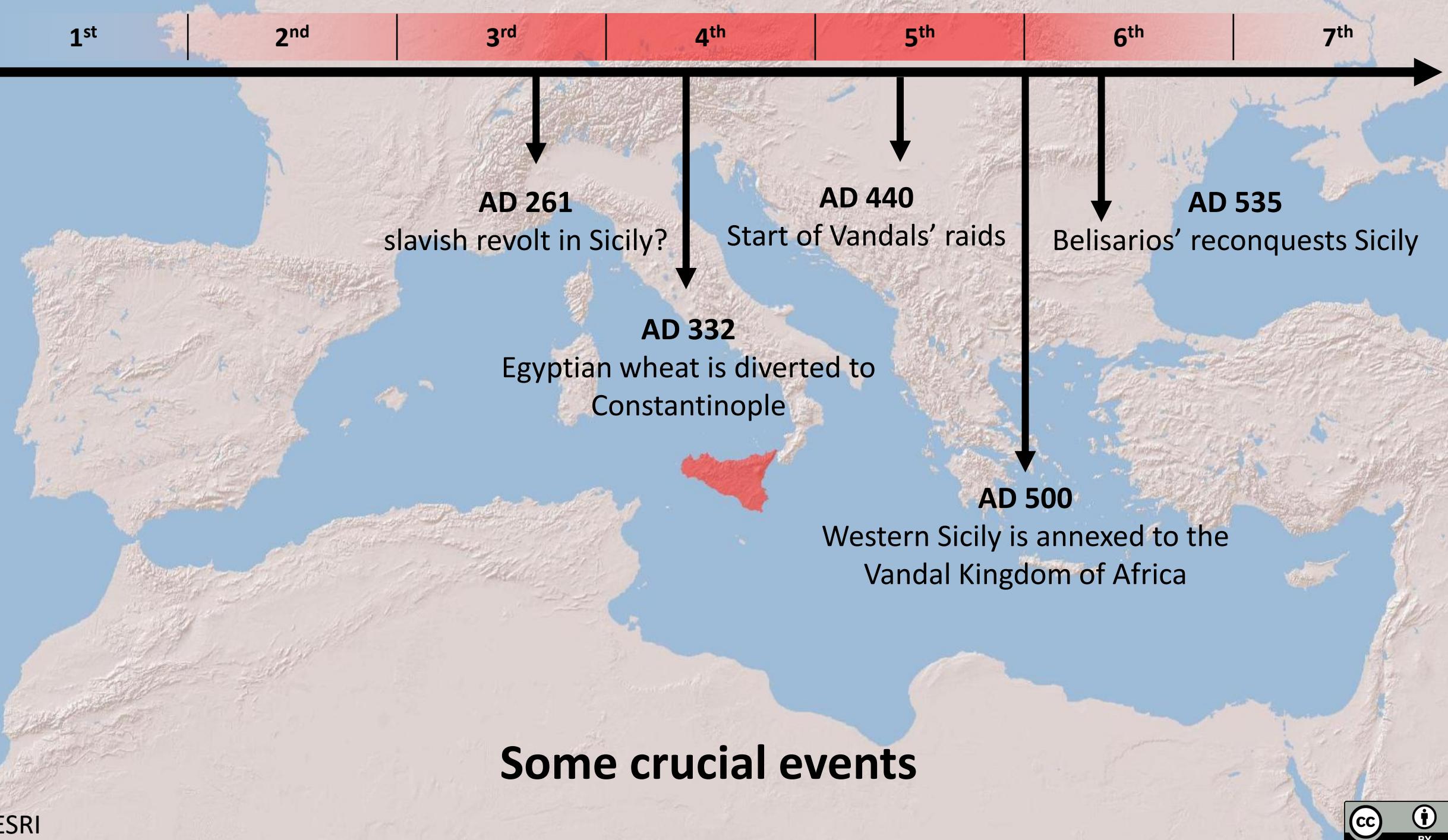
3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th



Chapter 2

Cereals, wine, oil and much more: the wealth of Roman Sicily





Wheat



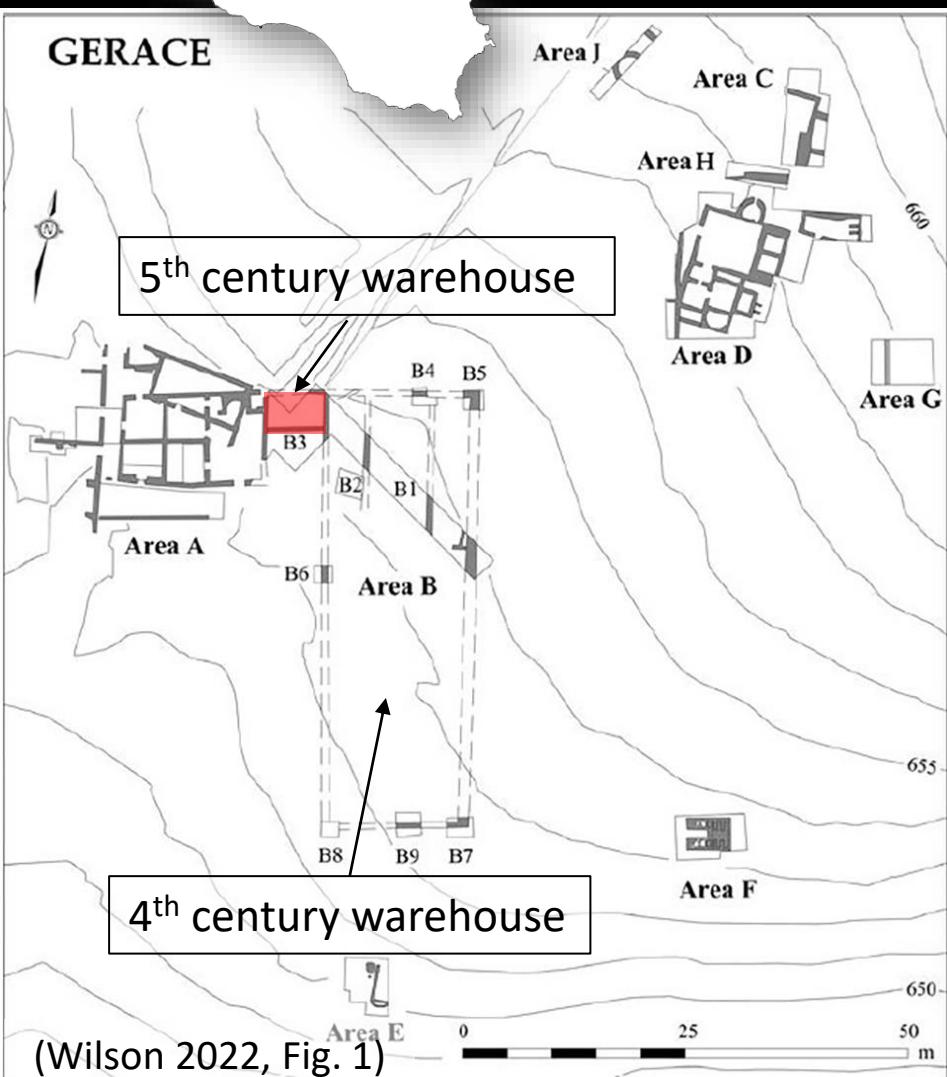


Gerace:

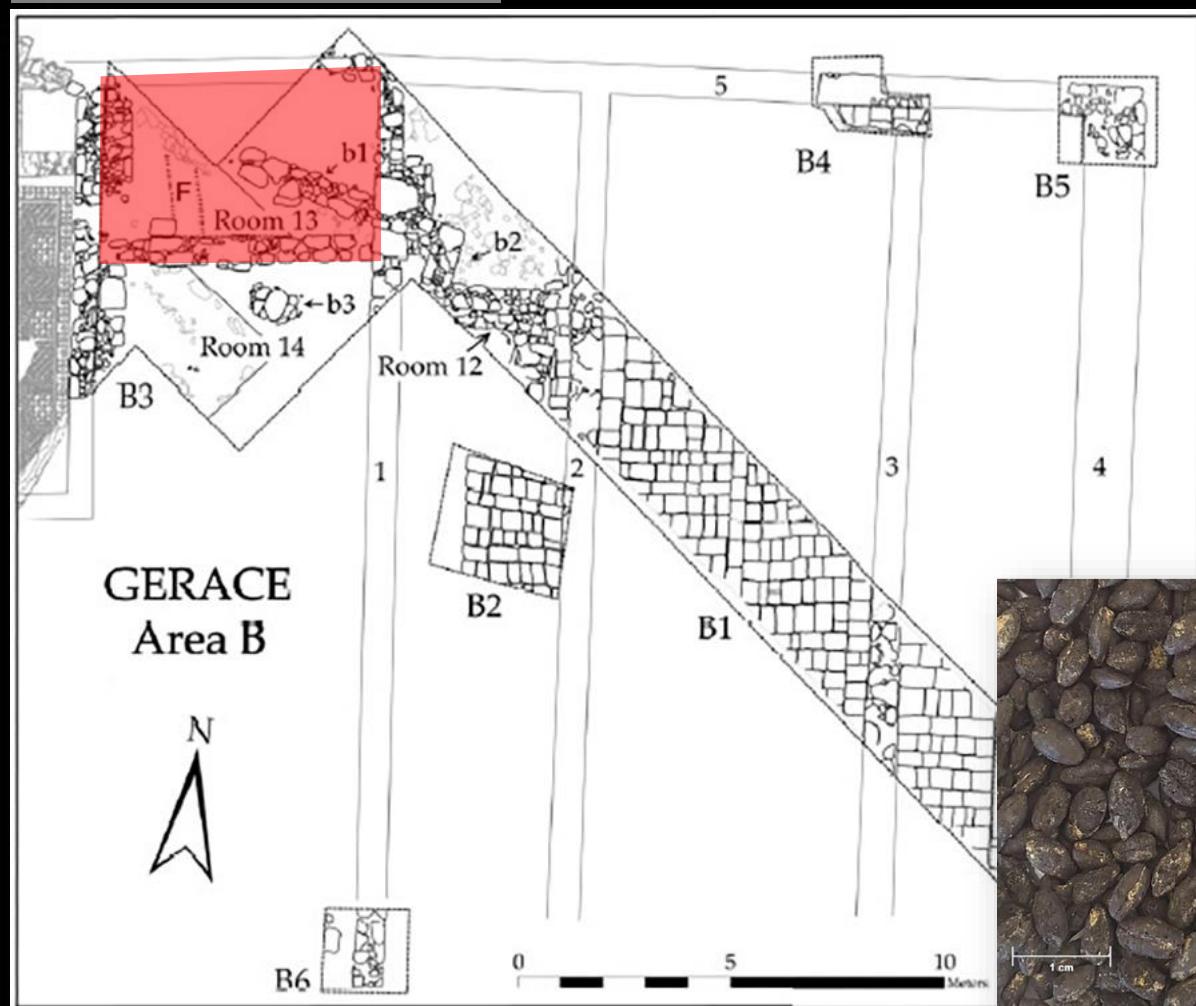
A small warehouse destroyed by fire after 450 AD



Gerace



(Wilson 2018, Fig. 4b, 11)



Charred seeds:
Barley
Wheat
Broad beans
Lentils
Peas
Chickpeas
Grapes

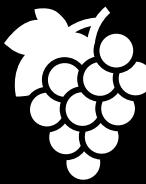


Wheat

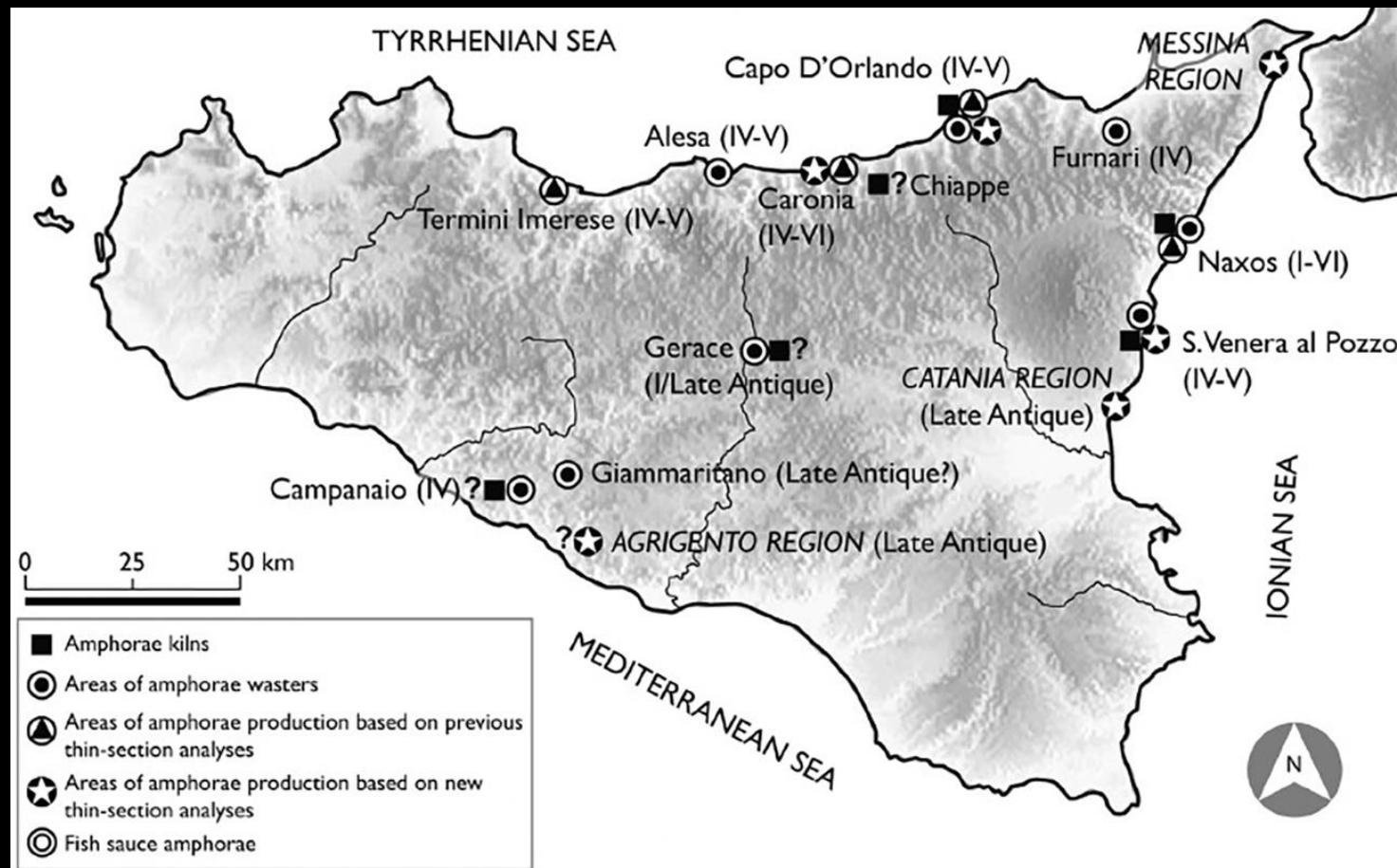
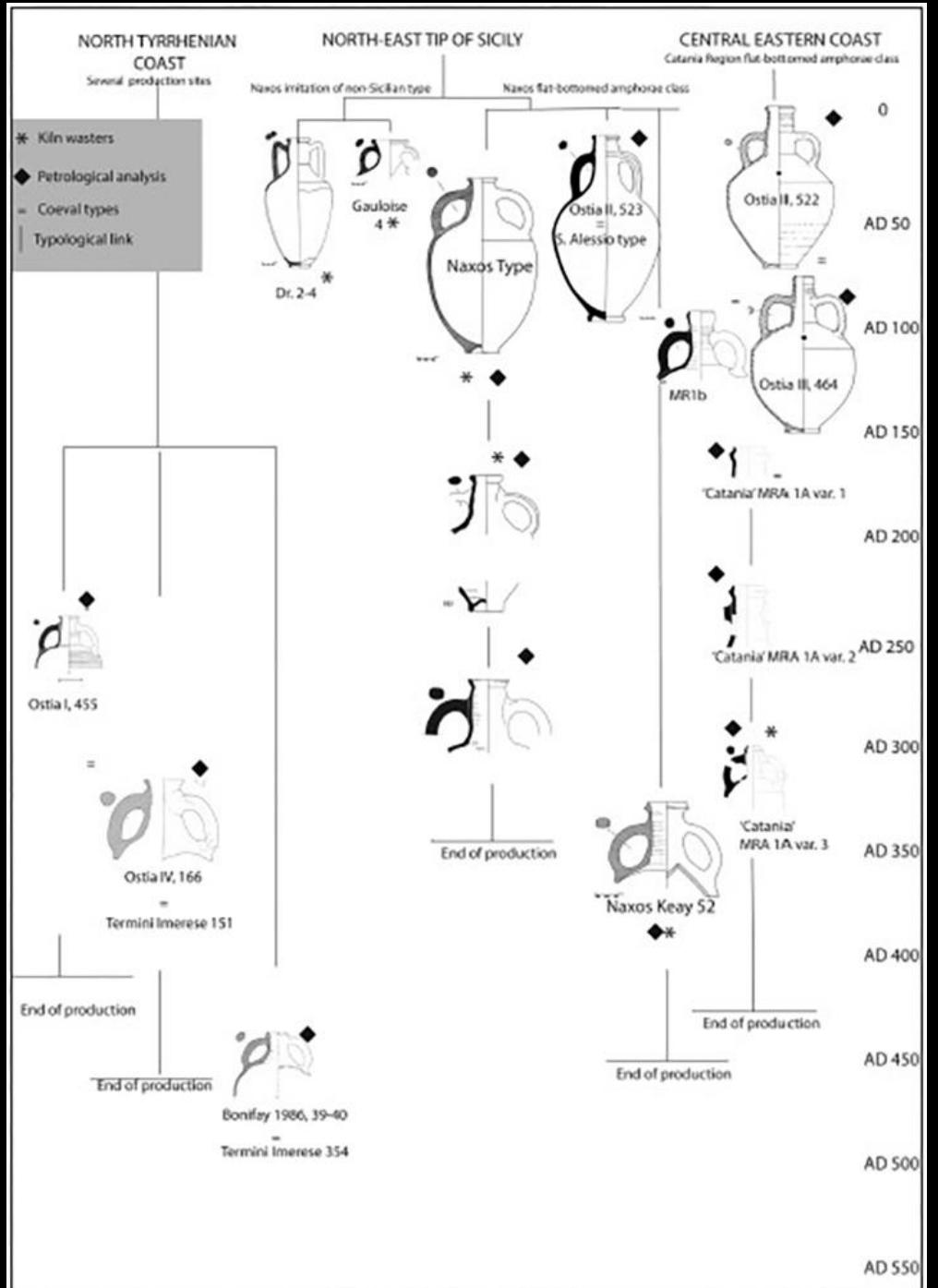


Wine





Sicilian amphorae workshops (1st - 6th century AD)



(Franco & Capelli 2014, Fig. 1-2)



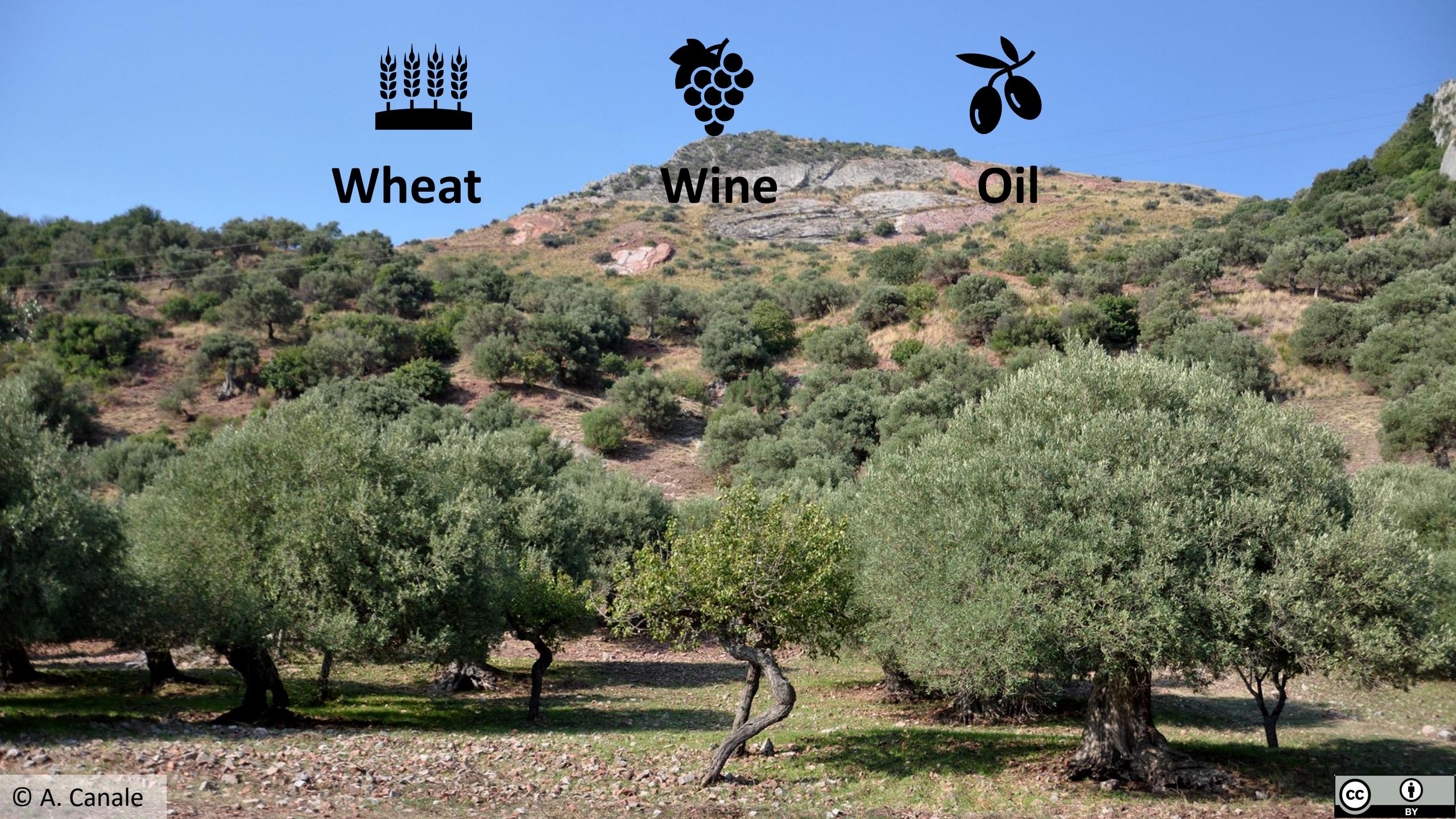
Wheat

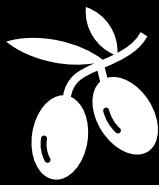


Wine



Oil





Oil industry in southern Sicily

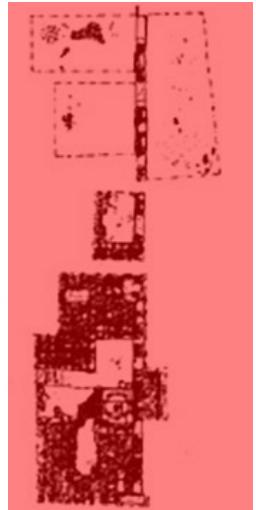
The Roman settlement at Serra Ciarberi



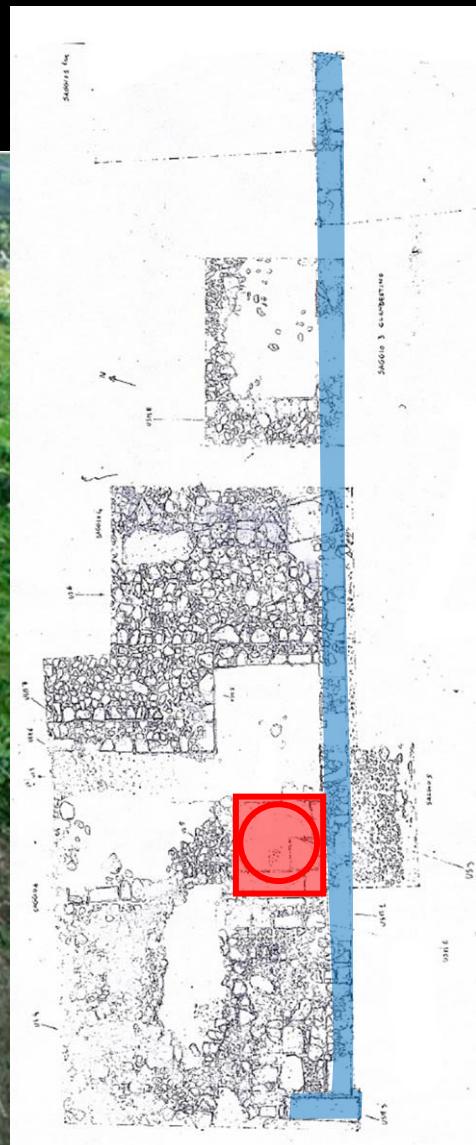
Serra Ciarberi

Di Stefano 2018, Fig. 3-5

Early imperial age building



Hellenistic



BY

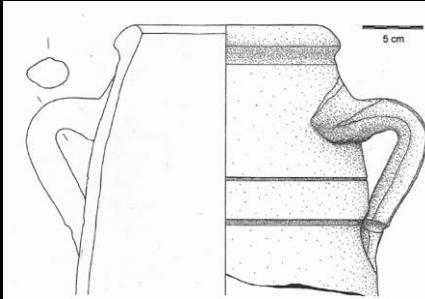
Alcamo Marina



(Malfitana 2022, Fig. 2)



Fish industry at Porto Palo and Dressel 21-22 amphorae kilns at Alcamo Marina



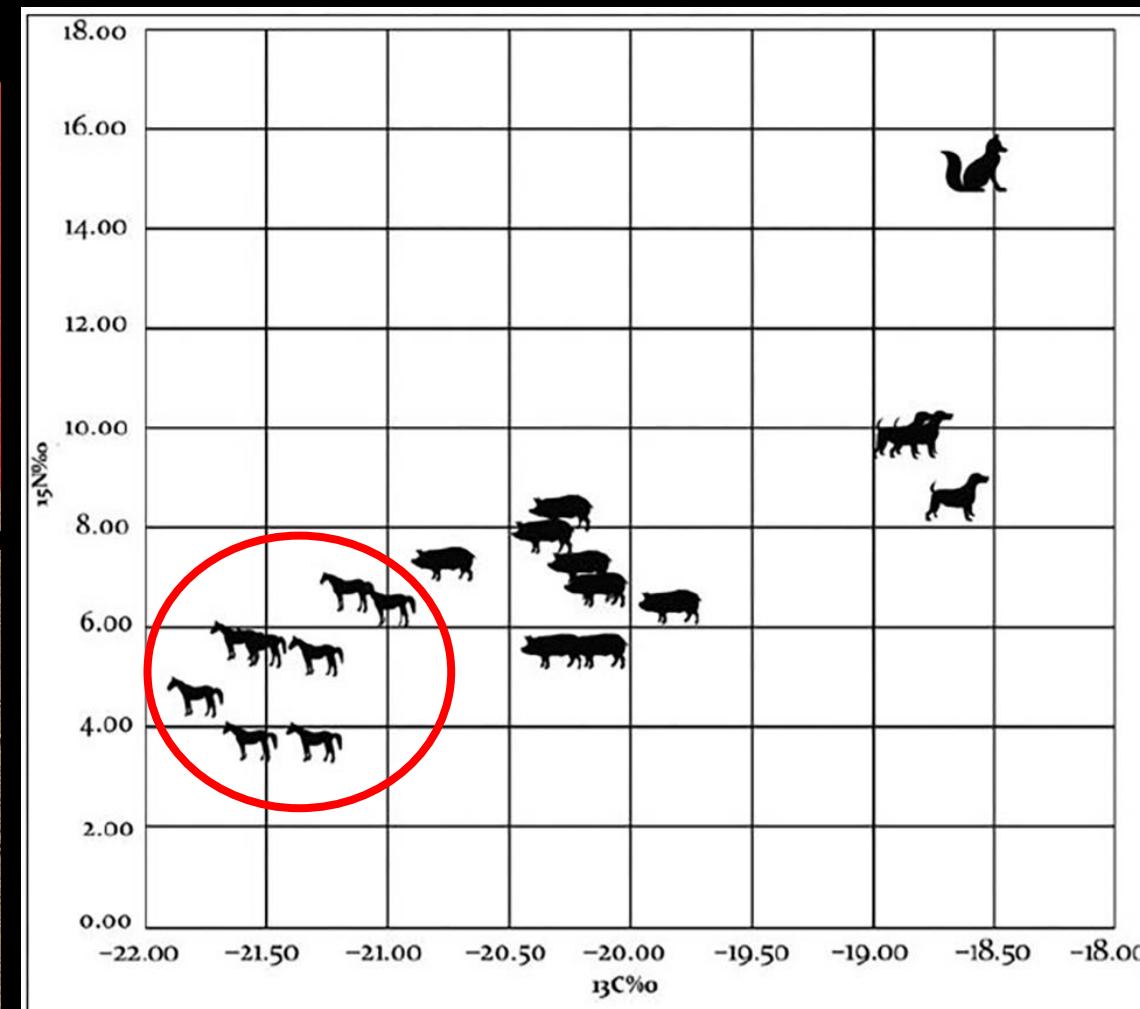
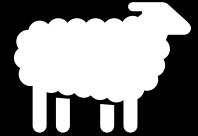
(Giorgetti 2006, Fig. 28, Tav. II, XIIIa, XIVb)



BY



Farming economy at Gerace: a horse ranch during the Late Antiquity



(Wilson 2022, Fig. 48-49, 50)



BY



Minerals

Rock salt

*In Siciliam flumen est **Himeras**, quod, a fonte cum est progressum, dividitur in duas partes; quae pars profluit contra Etruriam, quod per terrae dulcera secum percurrit, est infinita dulcedine, quae altera parte per eam terram currit, **unde sal foditur**, salsum habet saporem*

Vitr. 8.3.7





Rock salt

Minerals
Sulphur

*in terrae autem reliquis generibus vel maxime mira
natura est sulpuris, quo plurima domantur. nascitur in
insulis aeoliis inter siciliam et italiam, quas ardere
diximus, sed nobilissimum in melo insula.*

Plin. Nat. 35.63



Minerals

Rock salt

Sulphur

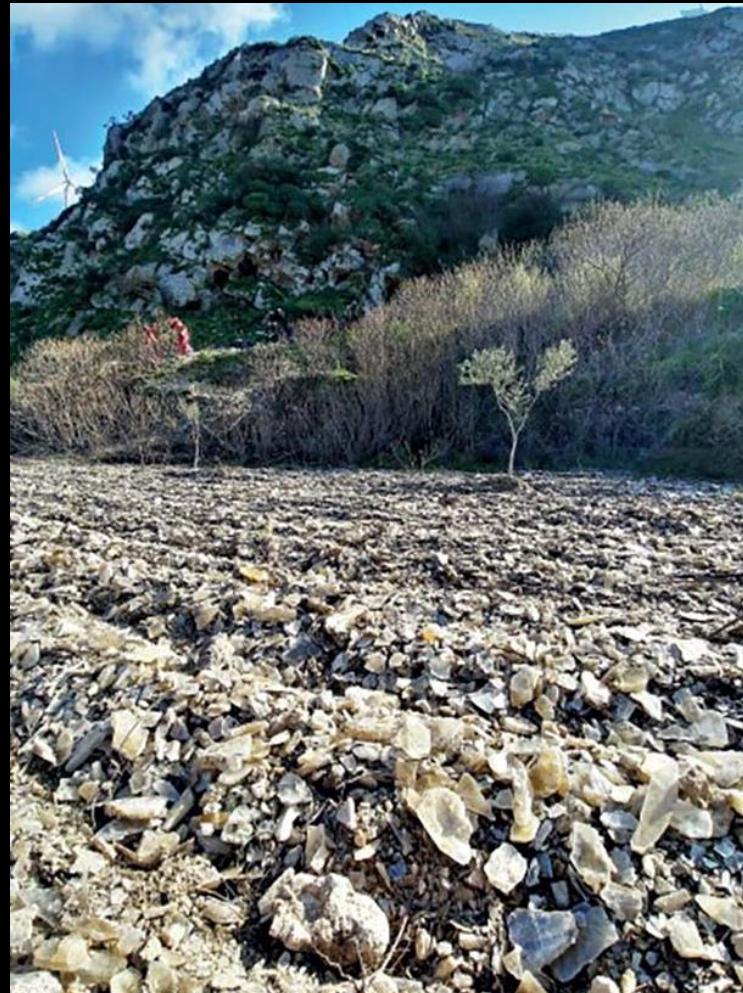
Gypsum
(*lapis specularis*)

*et hi quidem sectiles sunt, **specularis** vero, quoniam et hic lapidis nomen optinet, faciliore multo natura finditur in quamlibeat tenues crustas. hispania hunc tantum citerior olim dabat [...] iam et cypros et cappadocia et **sicilia** et nuper inventum africa [...]*

Plin. Nat. 36.51



Tegulae sulphuris ANNORVM from the hinterland of Agrigento and Roman quarry of *lapis specularis* at Grotta inferno



(Gullì et al. 2019, p. 163; Fig. 23-25)

(Polito & Tripodi 2018, p. 26)



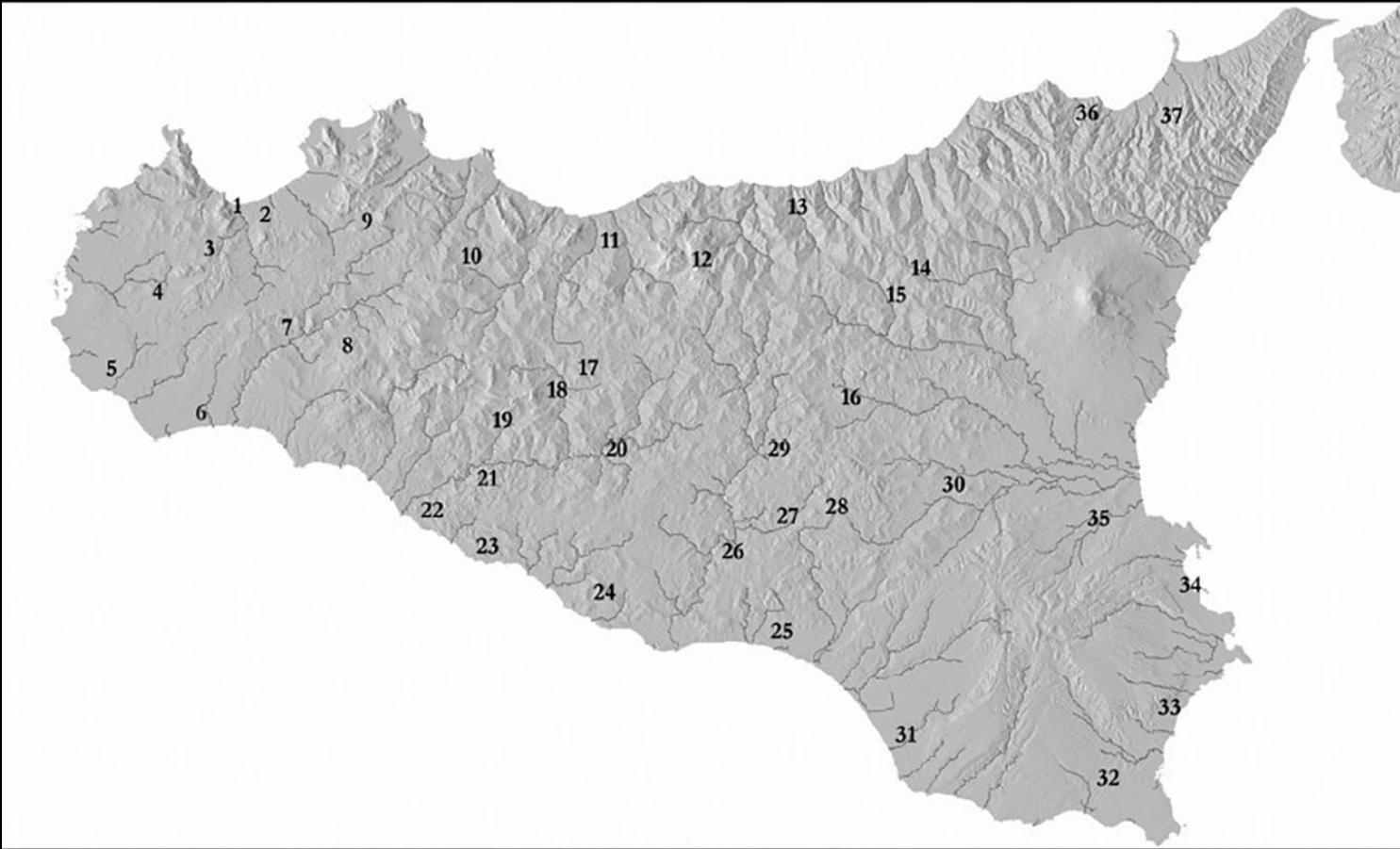
BY



Chapter 3

Landscape in evolution
3rd-6th century AD

Some surveyed areas in Sicily

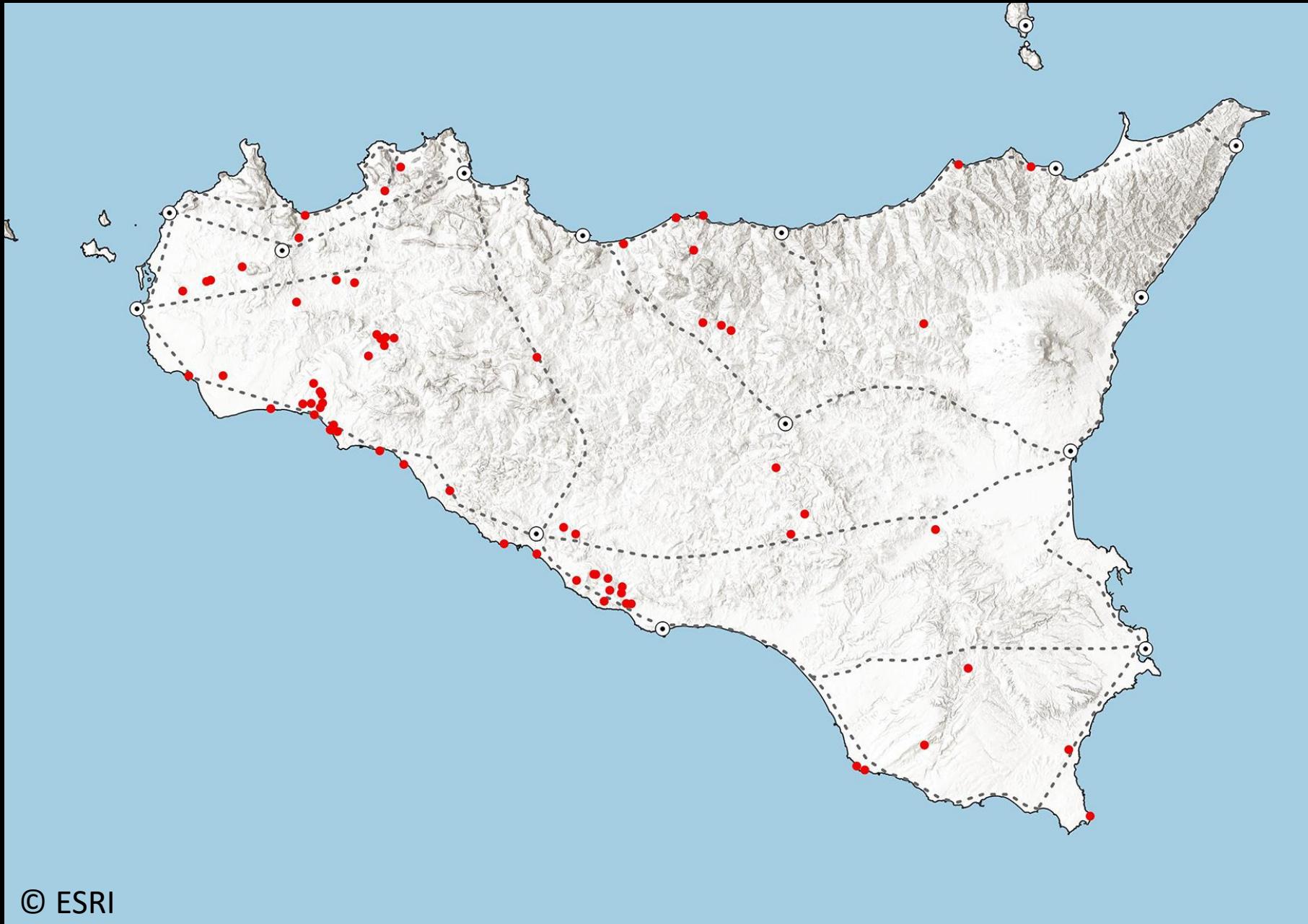


1. Castellammare del Golfo; 2. Alcamo; 3. Segesta; 4. Salemi; 5. Marsala-Mazara; 6. Selinunte; 7. Salaparuta; 8. Entella; 9. Monreale; 10. Baucina; 11. Himera; 12. Madonie occidentali; 13. Alesa; 14. Troina; 15. Upper Simeto Valley; 16. Morgantina; 17. Lercara Friddi; 18. Castronovo di Sicilia; 19. Monti Sicani; 20. Medio bacino del Platani; 21. Basso bacino del Platani; 22. Eraklea Minoa; 23. Costa ad Ovest di Agrigento; 24. Cignana; 25. Gela; 26. Medio bacino del Salso; 27. Braemi; 28. Philosophiana; 29. Torcicoda; 30. Gornalunga-Margi; 31. Camarina; 32. Rosolini; 33. Cassibile; 34. Priolo; 35. Lentini; 36. Tindari; 37. Patrì-Rodì Milici

A complex network

**composed of settlements different in size and functions
in part existing since the Hellenistic period
that changes in space and time
with evident sub-regional differences**

F. Ducati (ongoing work): mapping rural settlements in late roman Sicily



F. Ducati (ongoing work): mapping rural settlements in late roman Sicily



BY

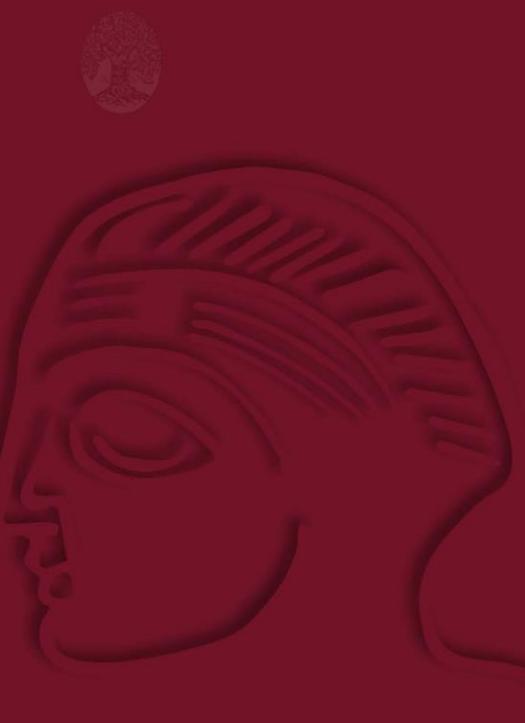


CASR project (2008-2016)

La ceramica africana
nella Sicilia romana

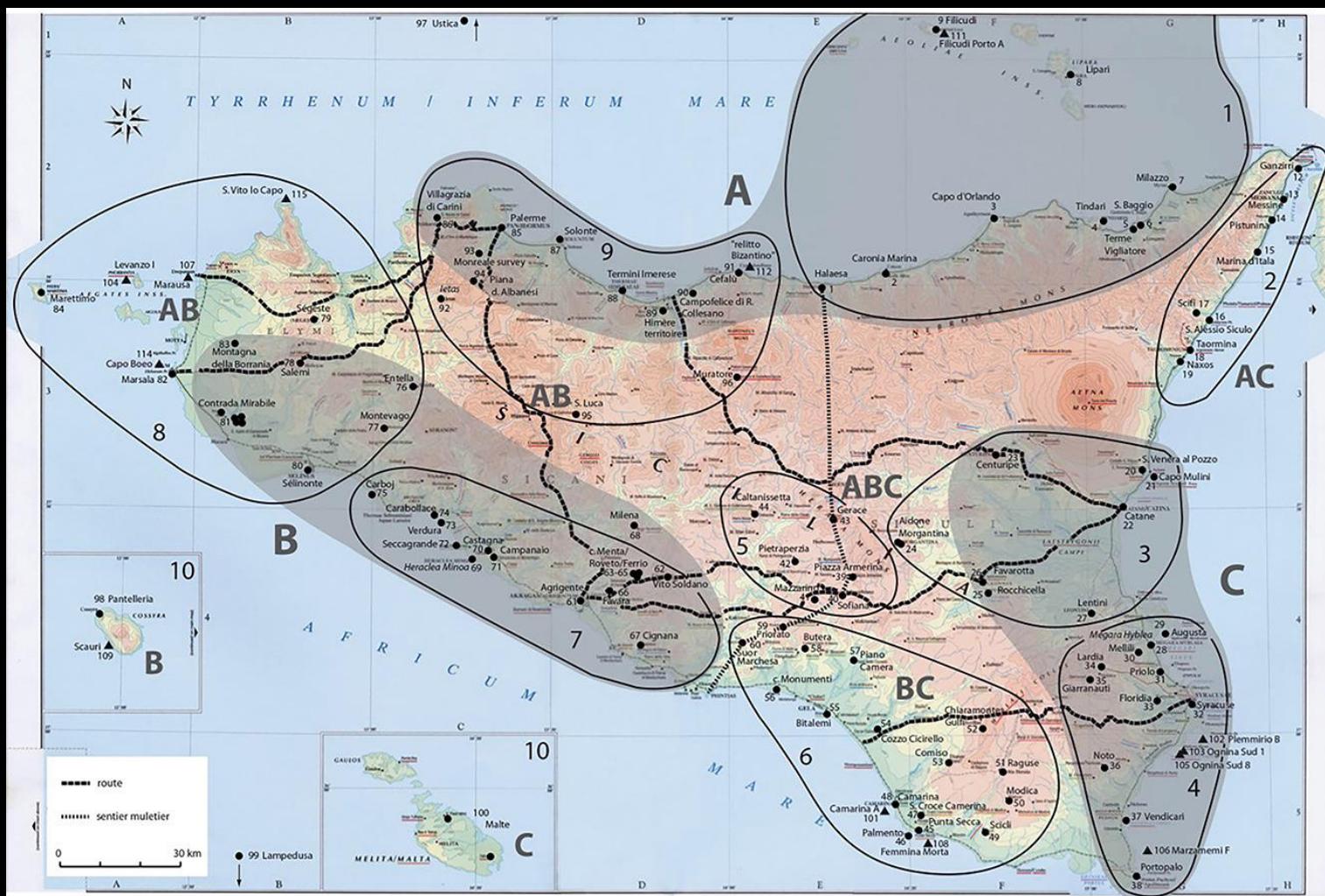
La céramique africaine
dans la Sicile romaine

a cura di / sous la direction de
Daniele Malfitana e / et Michel Bonifay



Tomo / Tome I

Testo e Tavole
Texte et Planches



Three main distribution zone:

A: Generic supply is dominant (like Ostia)

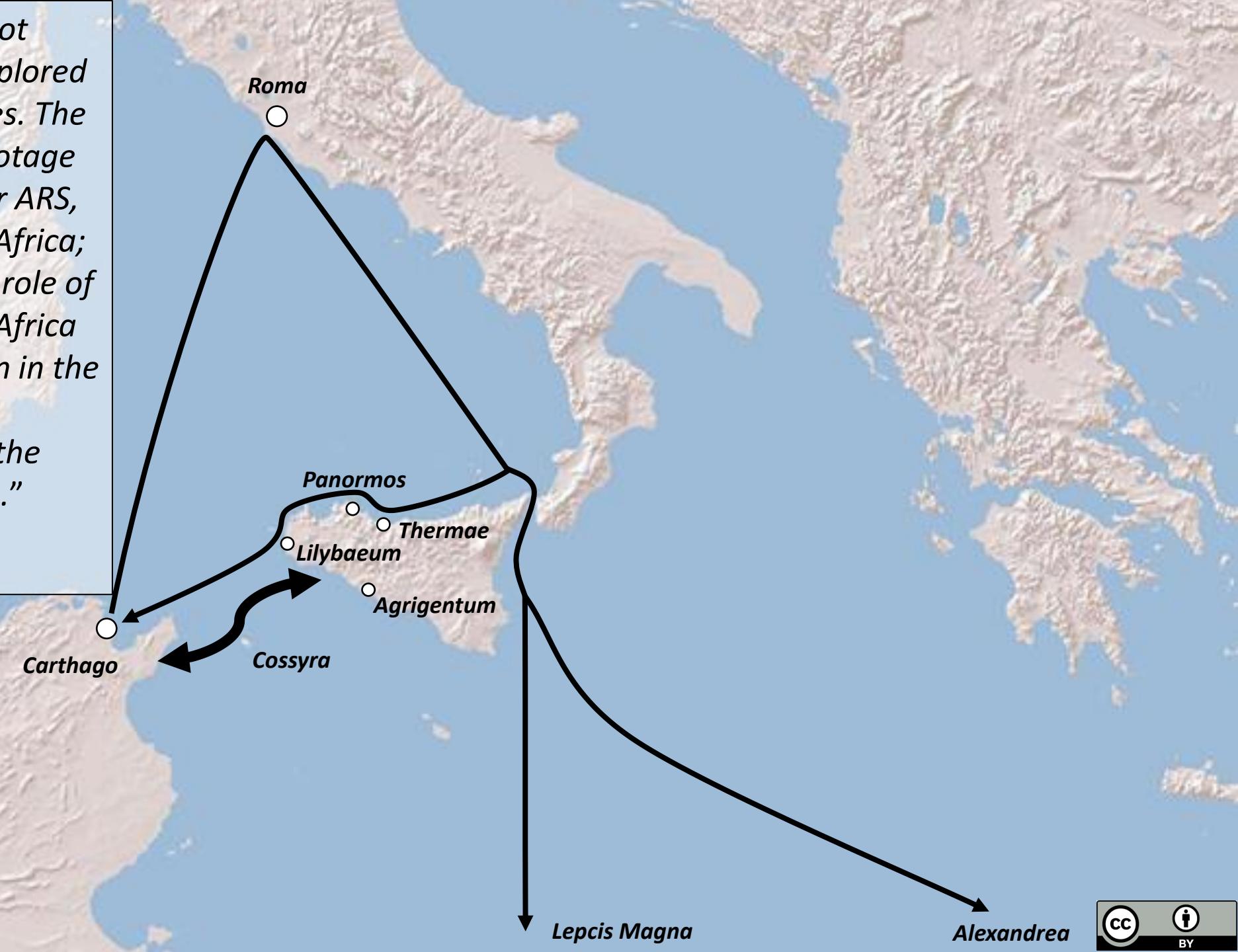
B: Privileged contacts with Capo Bon (northern Tunisia)

C: Diversified supply



"Two mechanisms, which are not necessarily exclusive, will be explored here to explain these differences. The first is the potential role of cabotage as a distribution mechanism for ARS, given the proximity of Sicily to Africa; and the second is the potential role of Rome as an entrepôt between Africa and the western Mediterranean in the redistribution of ARS, given the pivotal role played by Rome in the economy of the Mediterranean."

(Fentress et al. 2004)

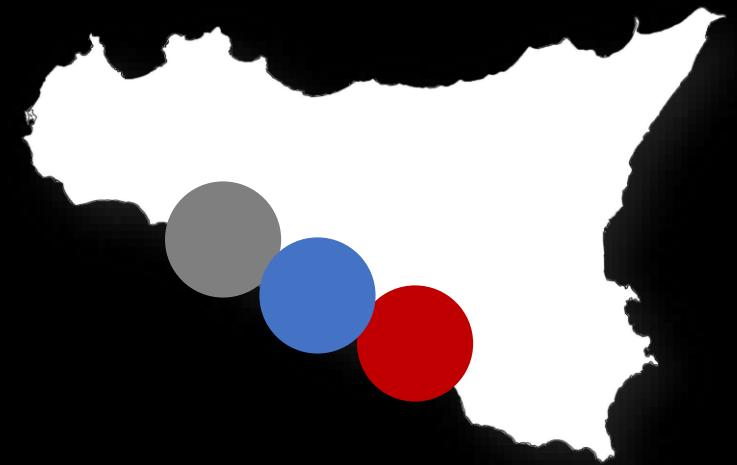


Transition I

the crisis of the minor rural settlements

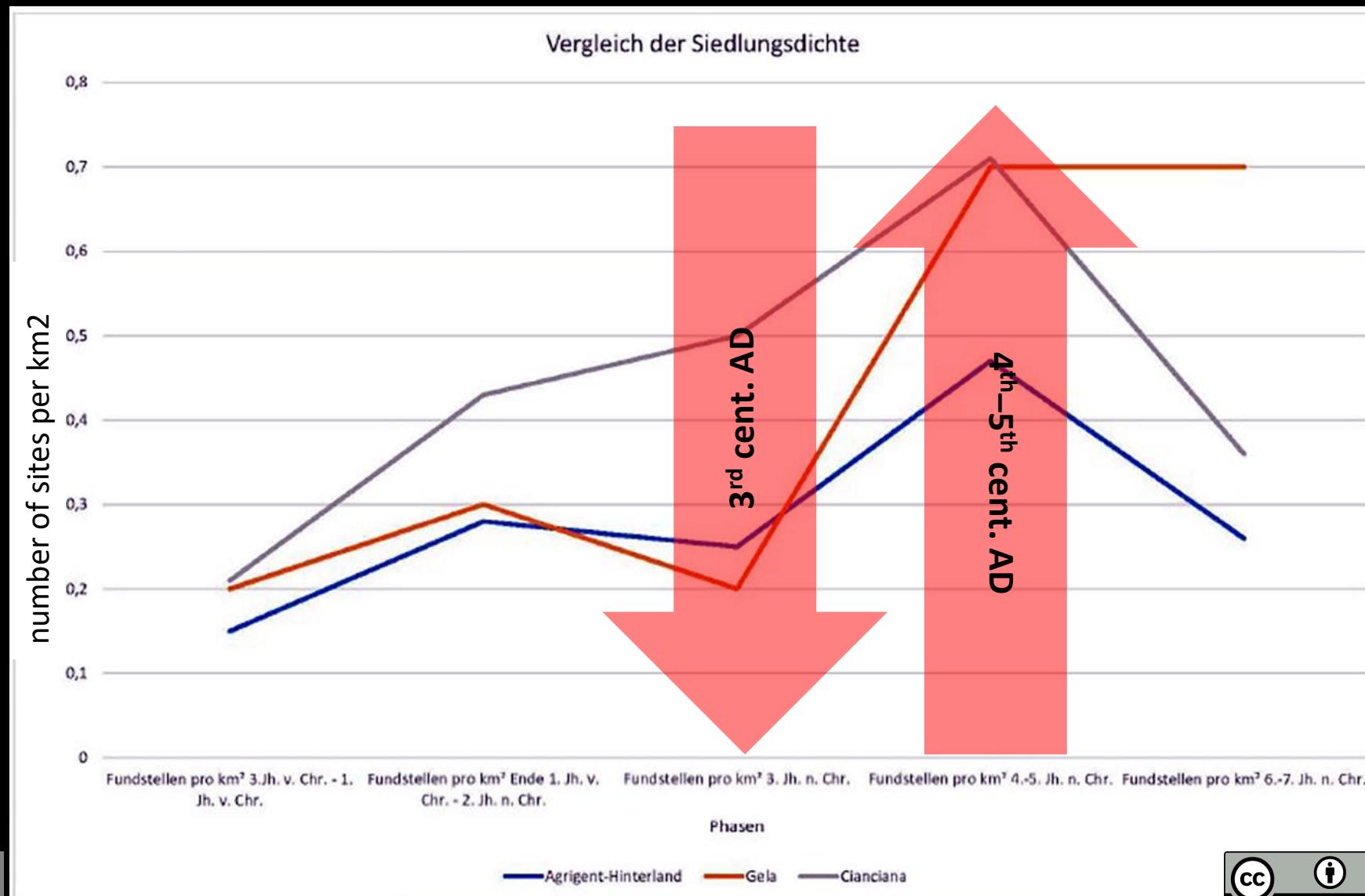
3rd century AD

A comparison between the Agrigento, Gela and Cianciana surveys

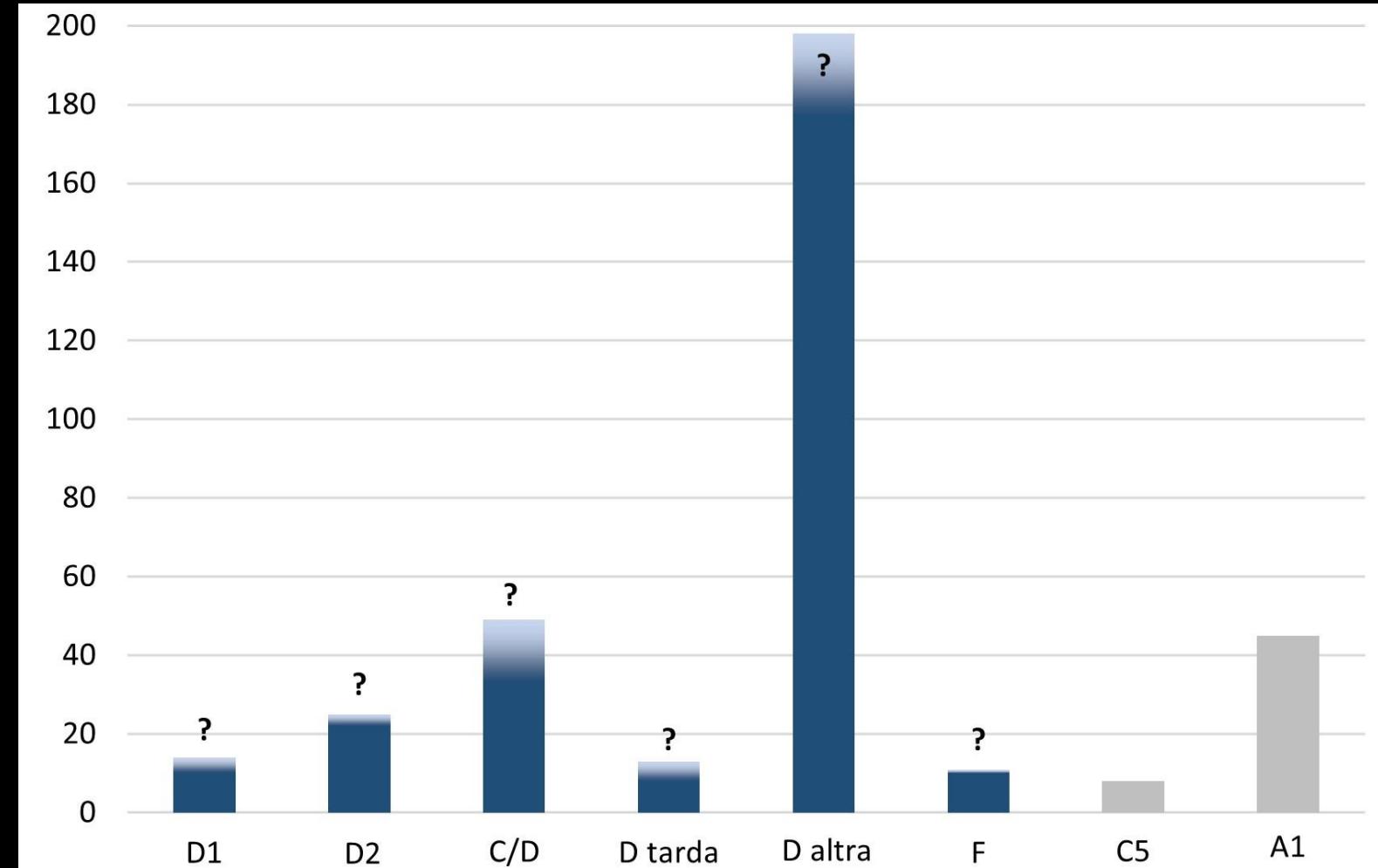
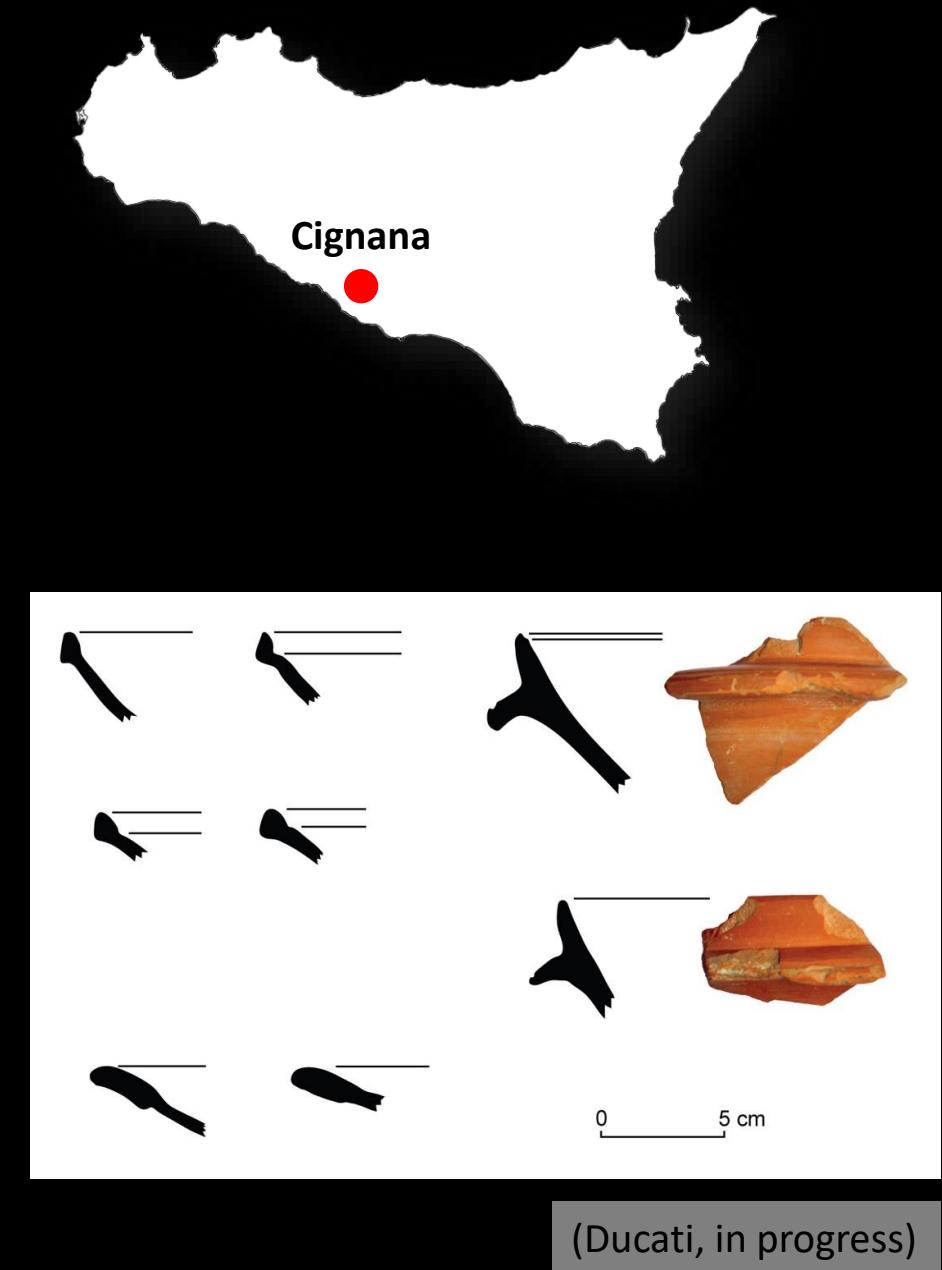


- Agrigento survey**
- Gela survey**
- Cianciana survey**

(Klug 2018, Fig. 4)



Cignana survey: African Red Slip wares (1st -7th centuries)





(Ducati, in progress)

Acknowledgement: Dr Maria Serena Rizzo (Parco Archeologico Valle dei Templi)



BY

The Durruegli seaside villa

(Polito & Tripodi 2018, p. 8, 16, 20)



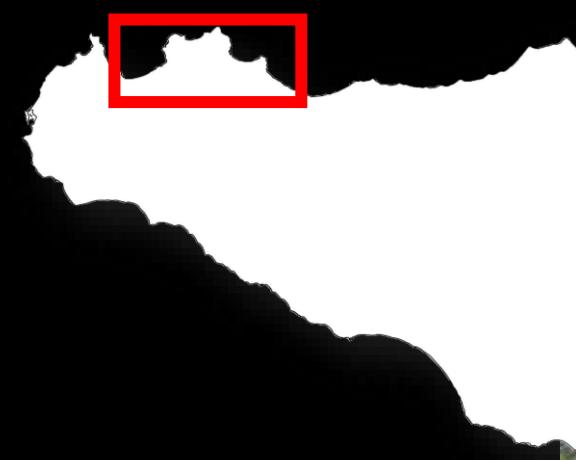
Planimetria generale della villa:

- 1 - *viridarium*
- 2 - portico con peristilio
- 3 - bacino
- 4 - *tablinum*
- 5 - *cubiculum occidentale*
- 6 - anticamera del *cubiculum occidentale*
- 7 - *cubiculum orientale*
- 8 - anticamera del *cubiculum orientale*
- 9 - *triclinium*
- 10 - anticamera del *triclinium* e ambiente di passaggio alle terme di Nettuno
- 11 - grande ambiente rettangolare
- 12 - prospetto monumentale sul mare con i pilastri di un arco a due fornaci
- 13-14 - ambienti di servizio delle terme di Nettuno
- 15 - *apodyterium* delle terme di Nettuno
- 16-17 - Ambiente di servizio
- 18-21 - stanze riscaldate delle terme di Nettuno e vani di servizio a Sud
- 22 - Cisterna
- 23 - *apodyterium* delle terme di Scilla
- 24 - *trigladium*
- 25 - piscina del *frigidarium*
- 26-28 - ambienti di servizio delle terme di Scilla
- 29-30 - *tepidaria* delle terme di Scilla
- 31 - *caldarium*



BY

Roman settlements in the hinterland of Palermo



- From excavations
- From surveys



(Cucco 2016, Fig. 1)



The roman settlement at St. Marina

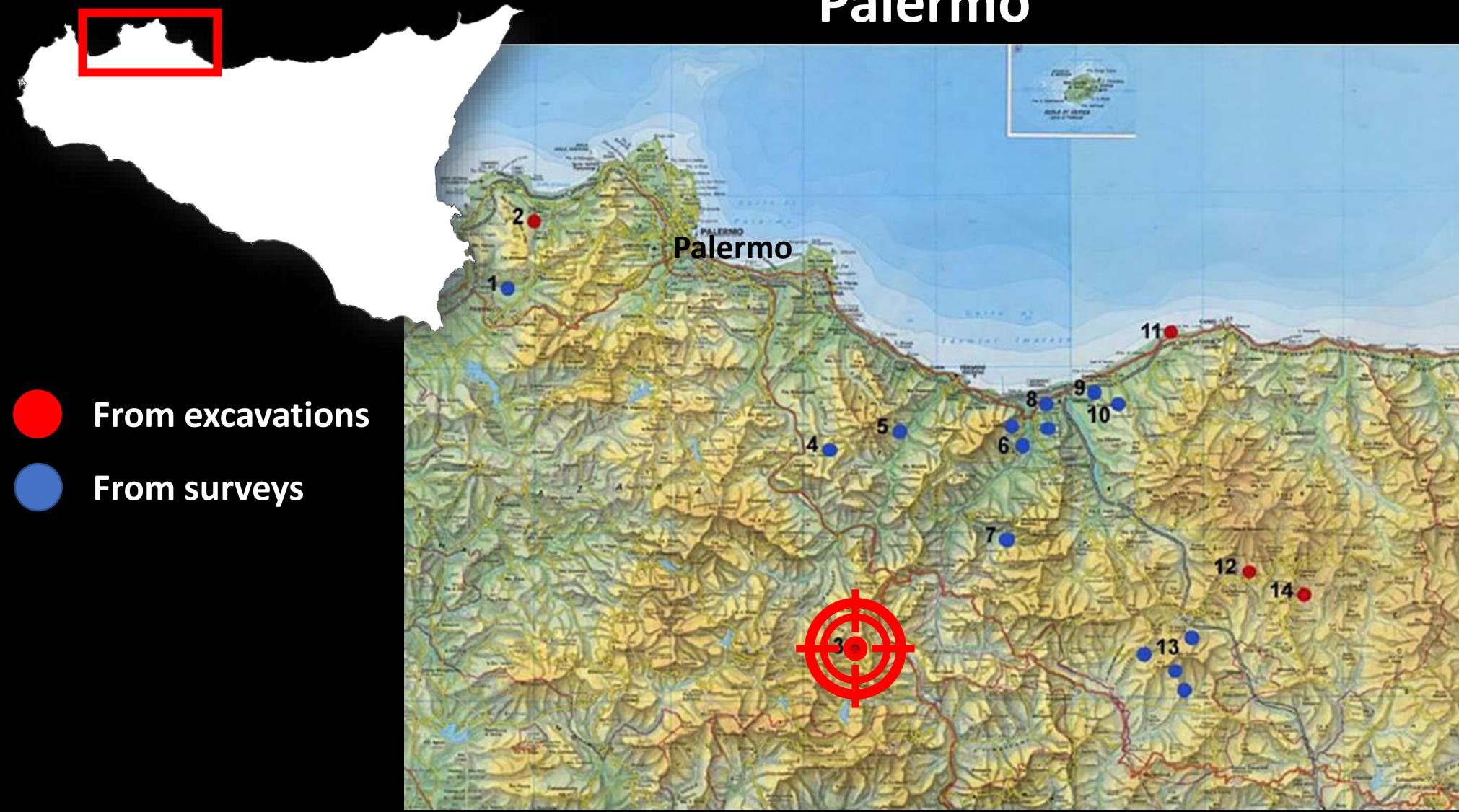


(Belvedere et al. 2016, Fig. 2, 5)



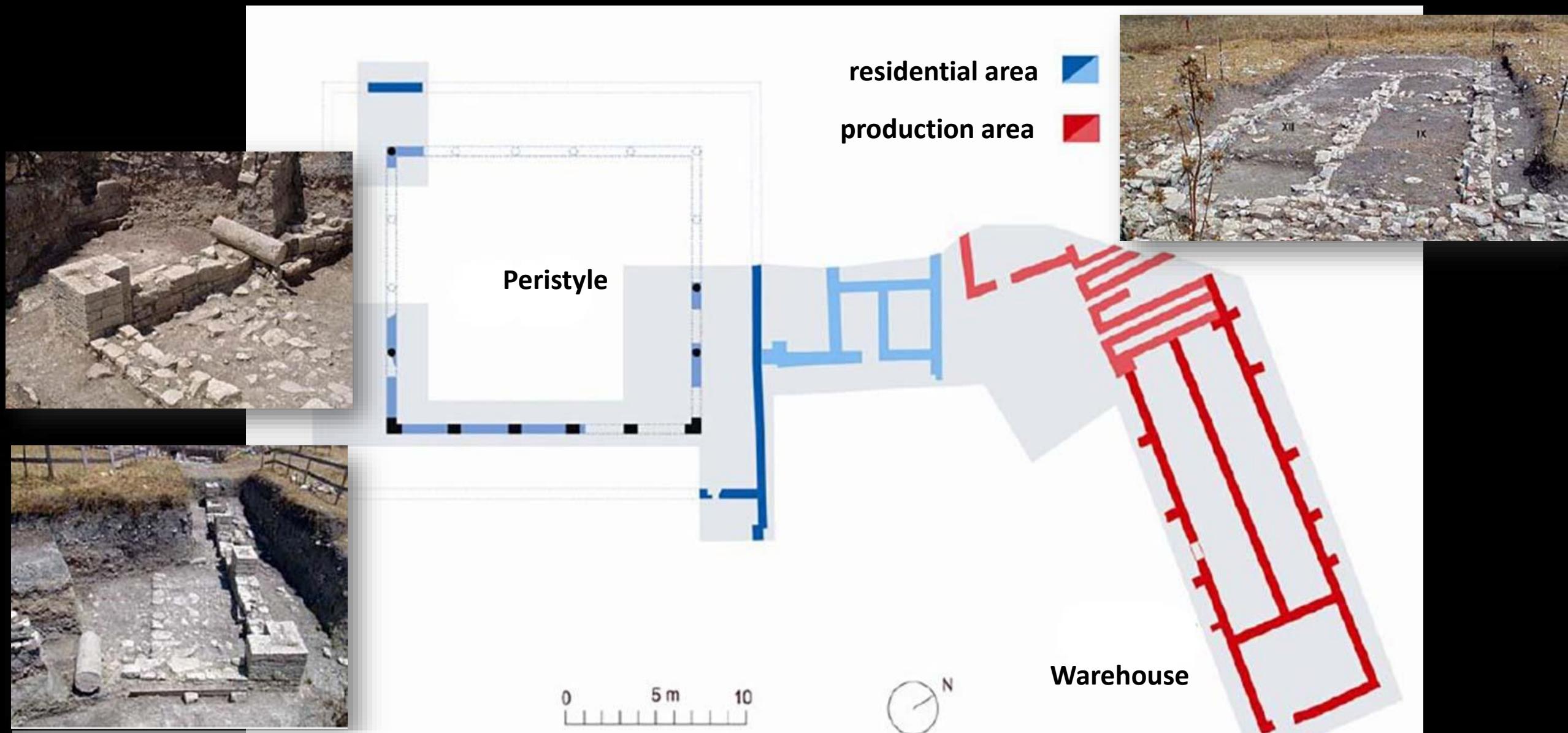
BY

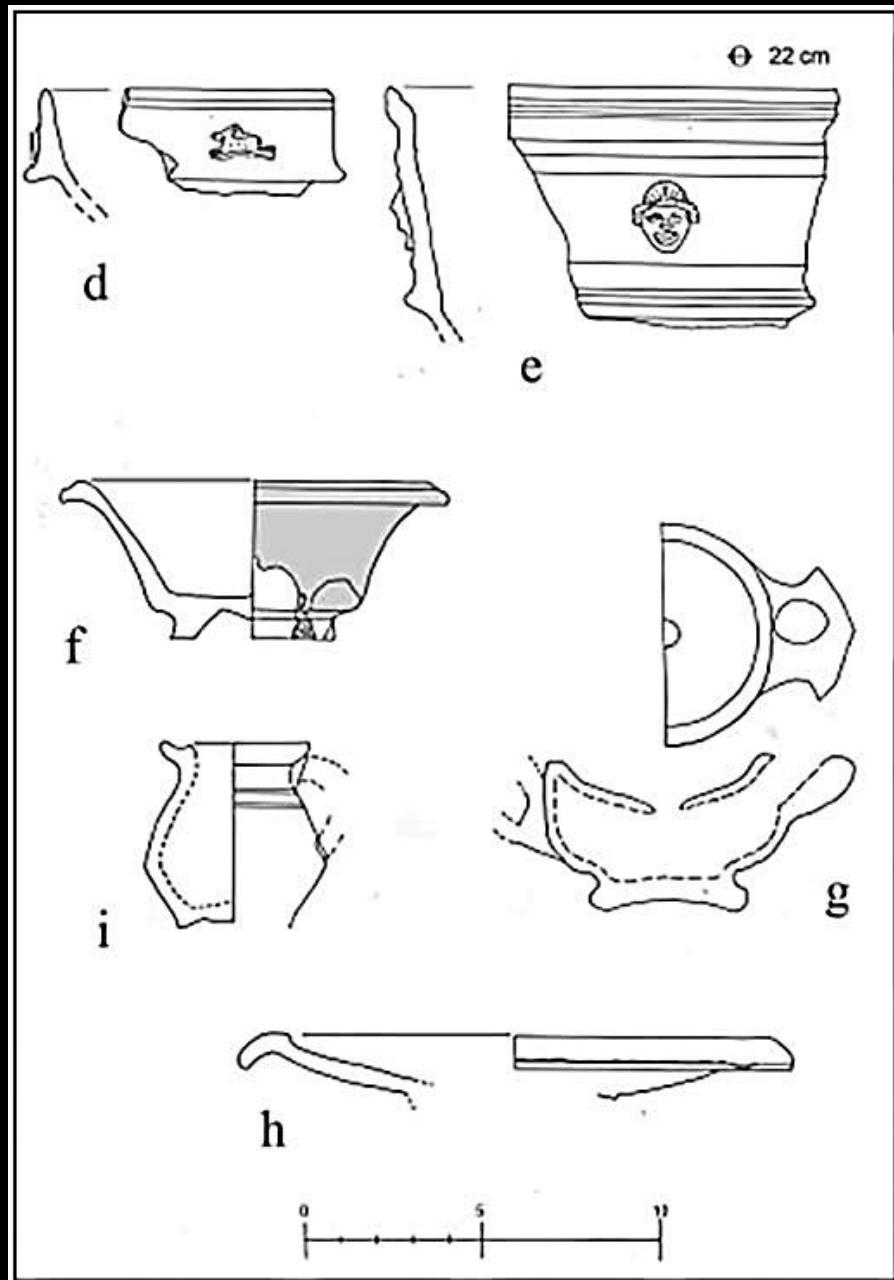
Roman settlements in the hinterland of Palermo



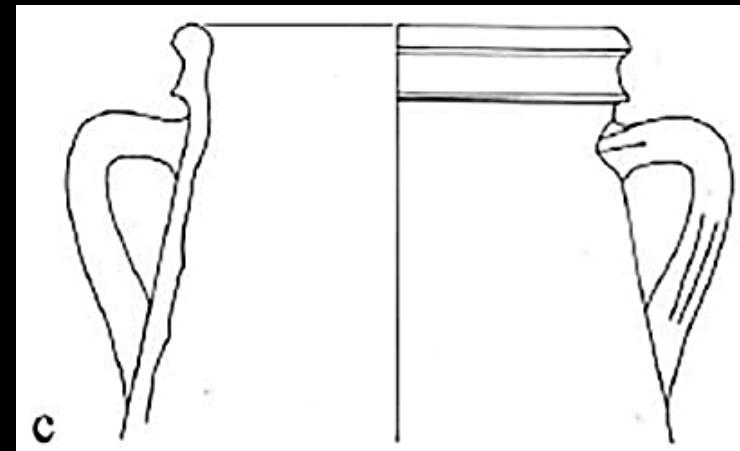
1. Namone; 2. S. Nicola; 3. S. Luca; 4. Balatelle; 5. Ciacca/Gurgo; 6. Ville della bassa valle del Torto; 7. Palisi; 8. Buonfornello; 9. Casa dell'Acquedotto; 10. Terre Bianche; 11. Costa Schiavo; 12. Muratore; 13. Susafa, S. Giacinto, Ciaramito, Tudia; 14. S. Marina.

Roman villa at St. Luca

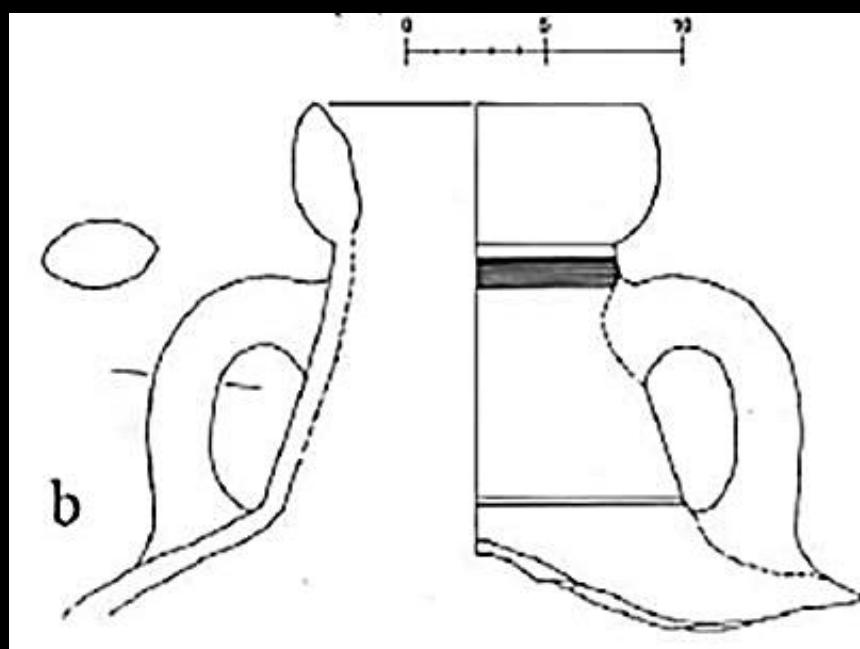




(Vassallo & Zirone 2009, Fig. 503-504)



Italian Sigillata, African Red Slip ware, and amphora Dressel 21-22 from the area of residential building



Late African amphora (Keay 57) from the apsidal building



BY

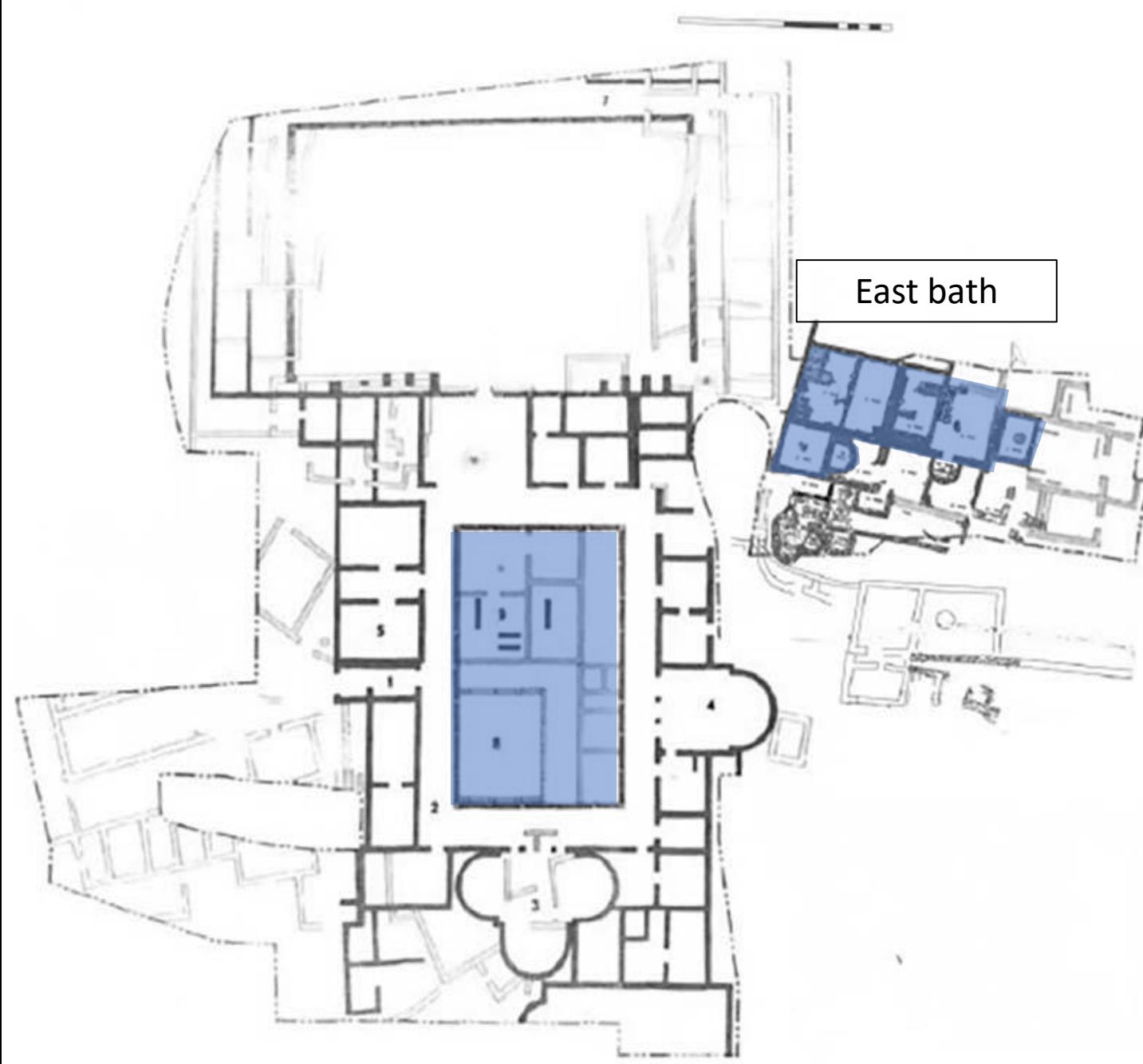
Patti Marina

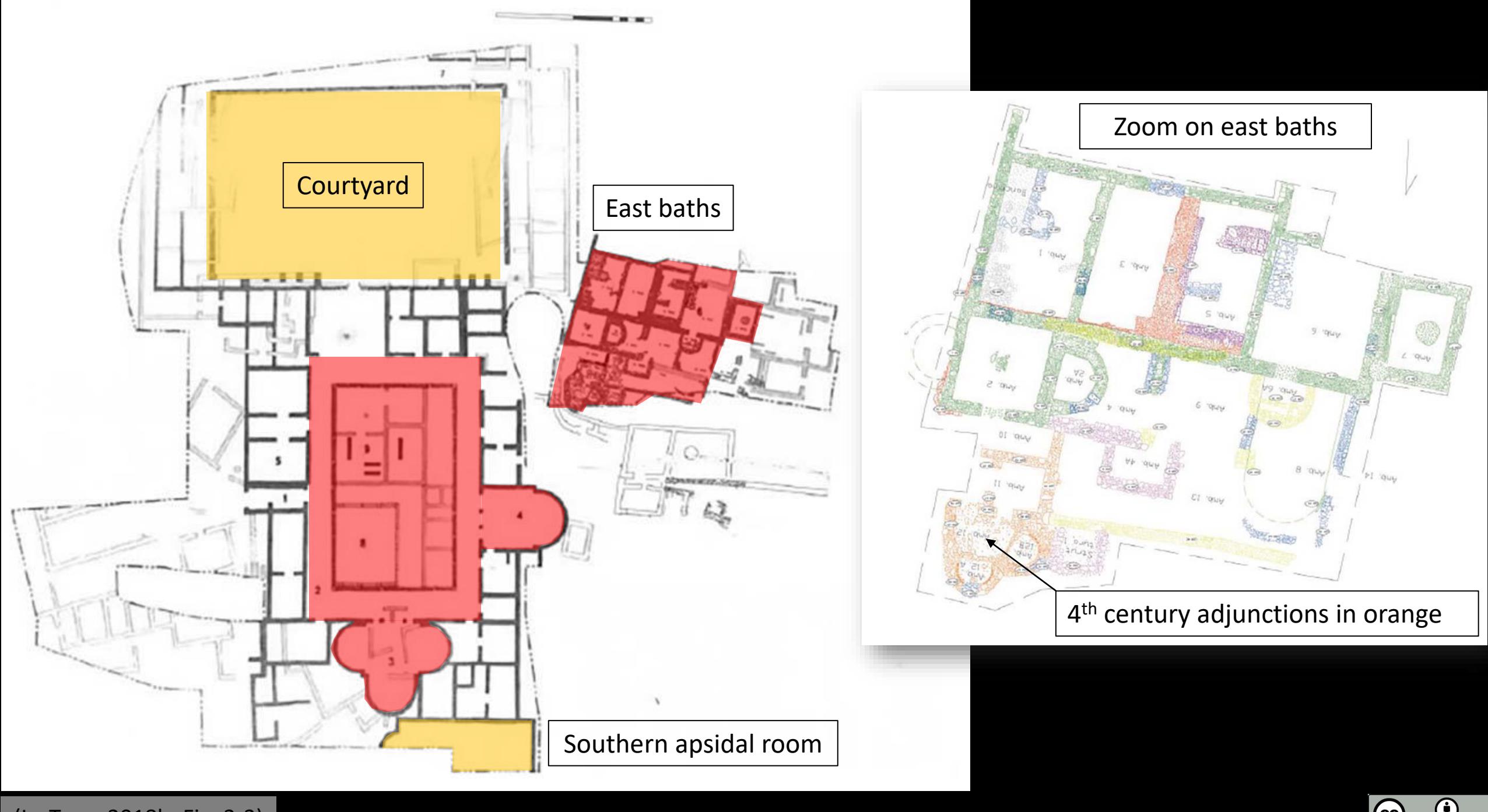
Roman villa at Patti Marina



<https://www.romanoimpero.com/2021/06/villa-di-patti-sicilia.html>







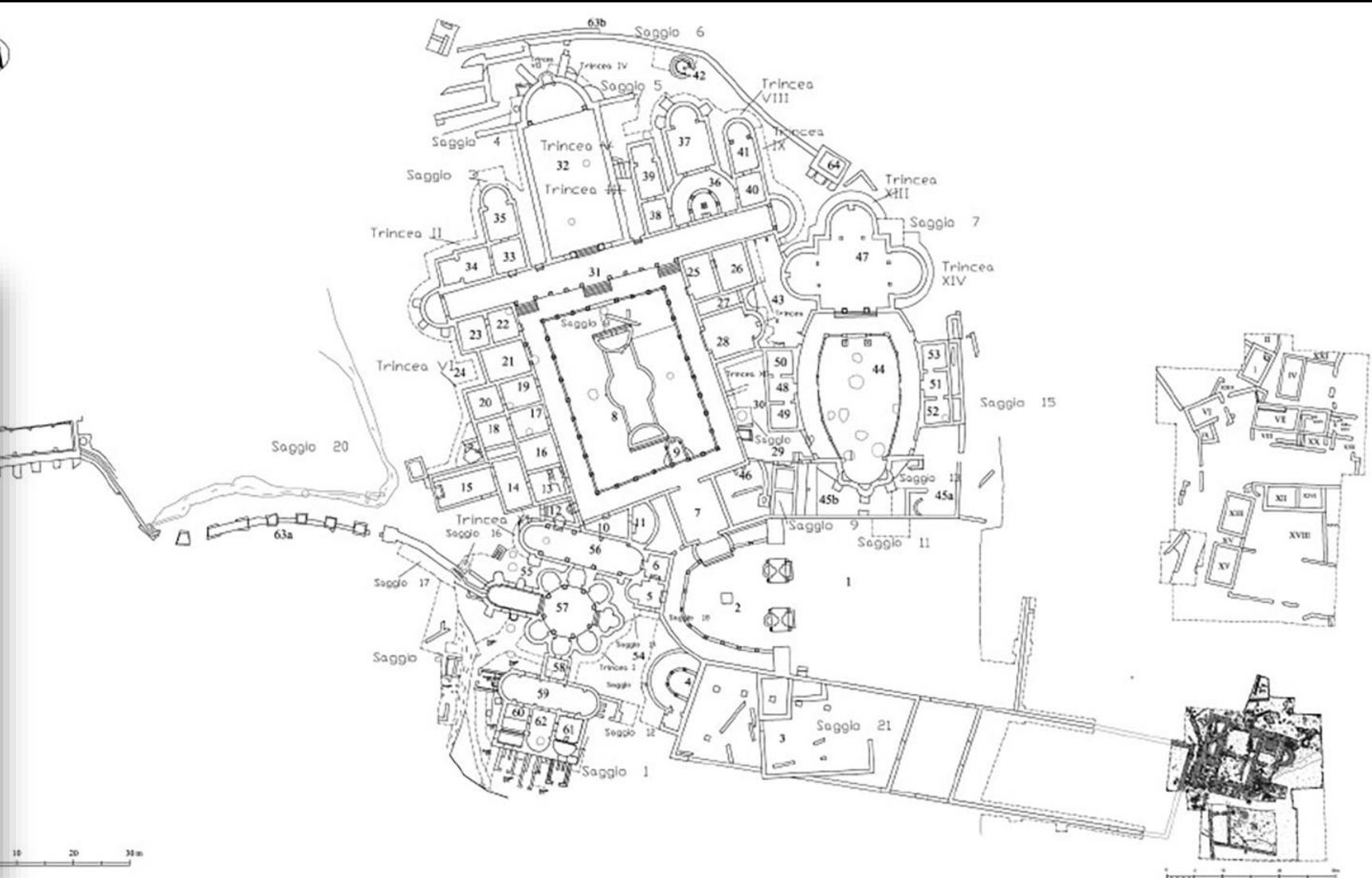
Transition II

The rise of luxury villas

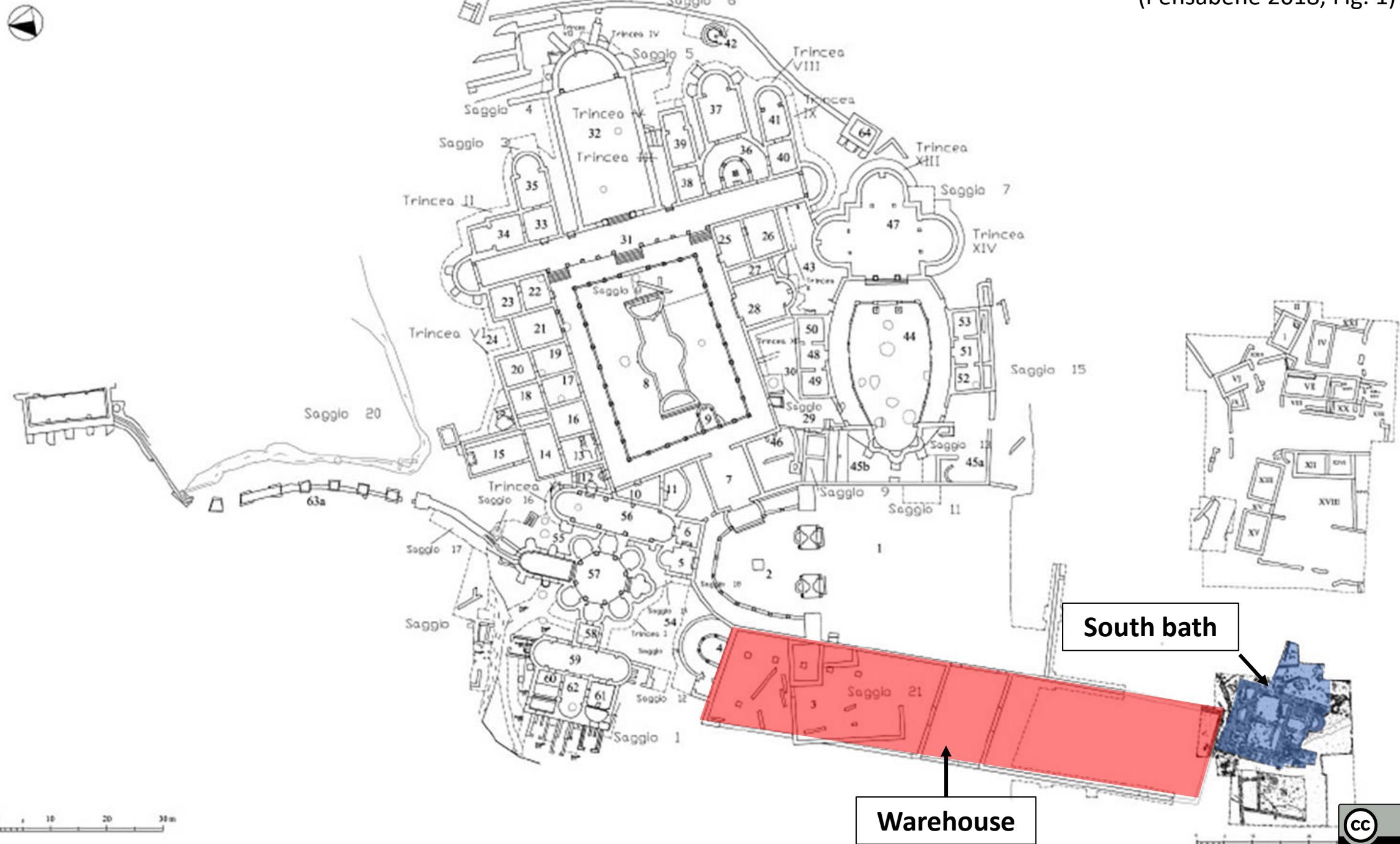
4th century AD

Villa del Casale

Villa del Casale

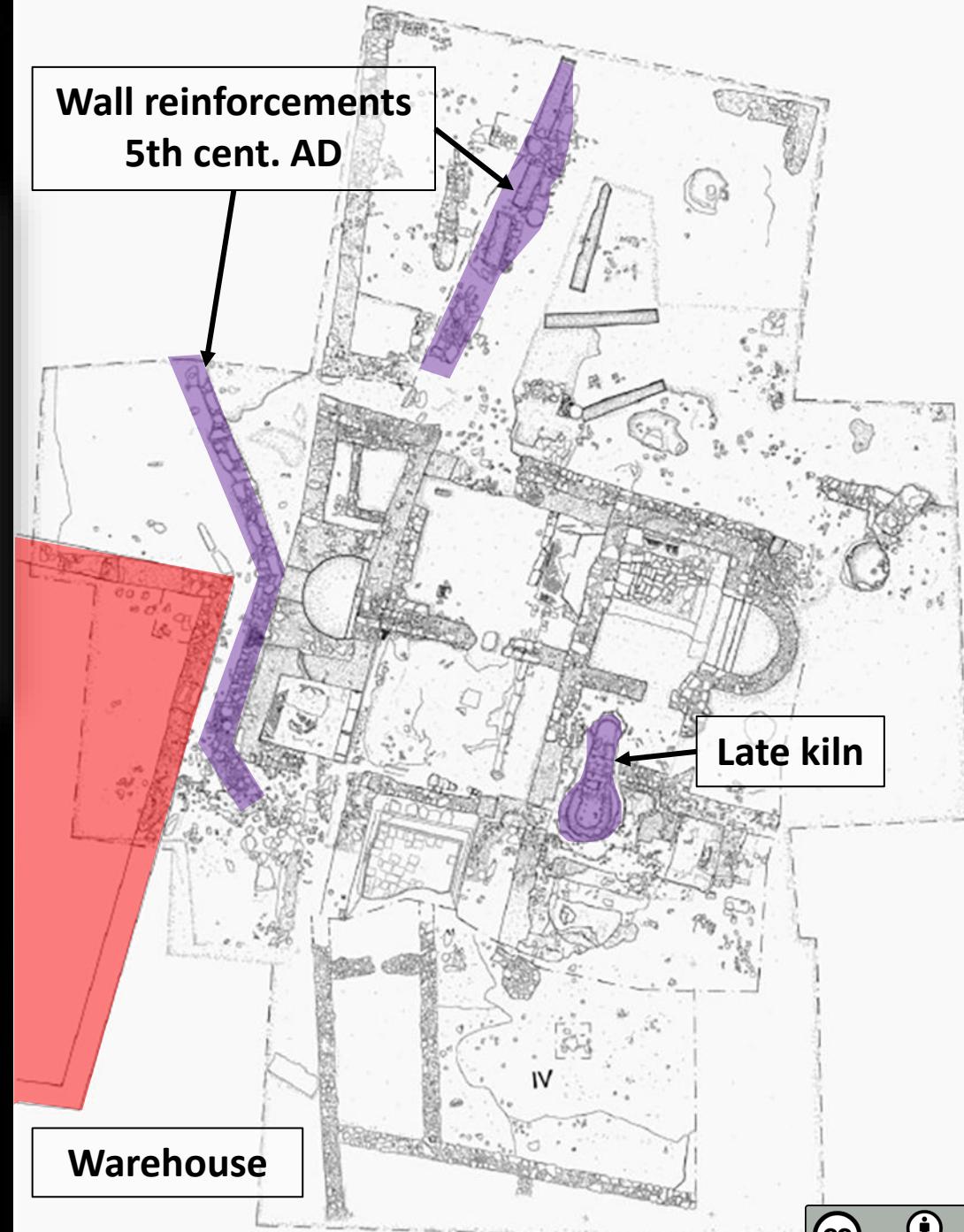






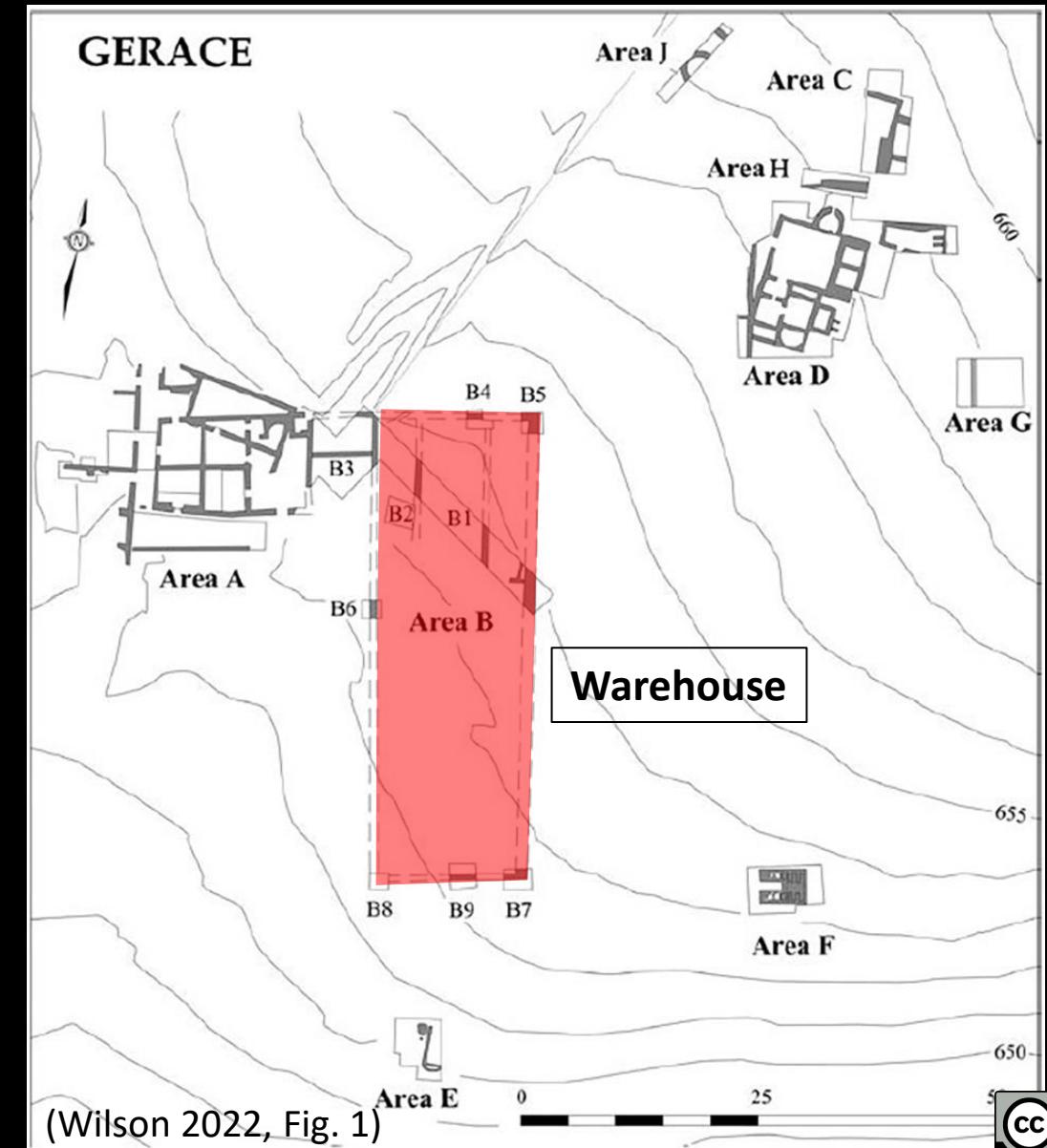
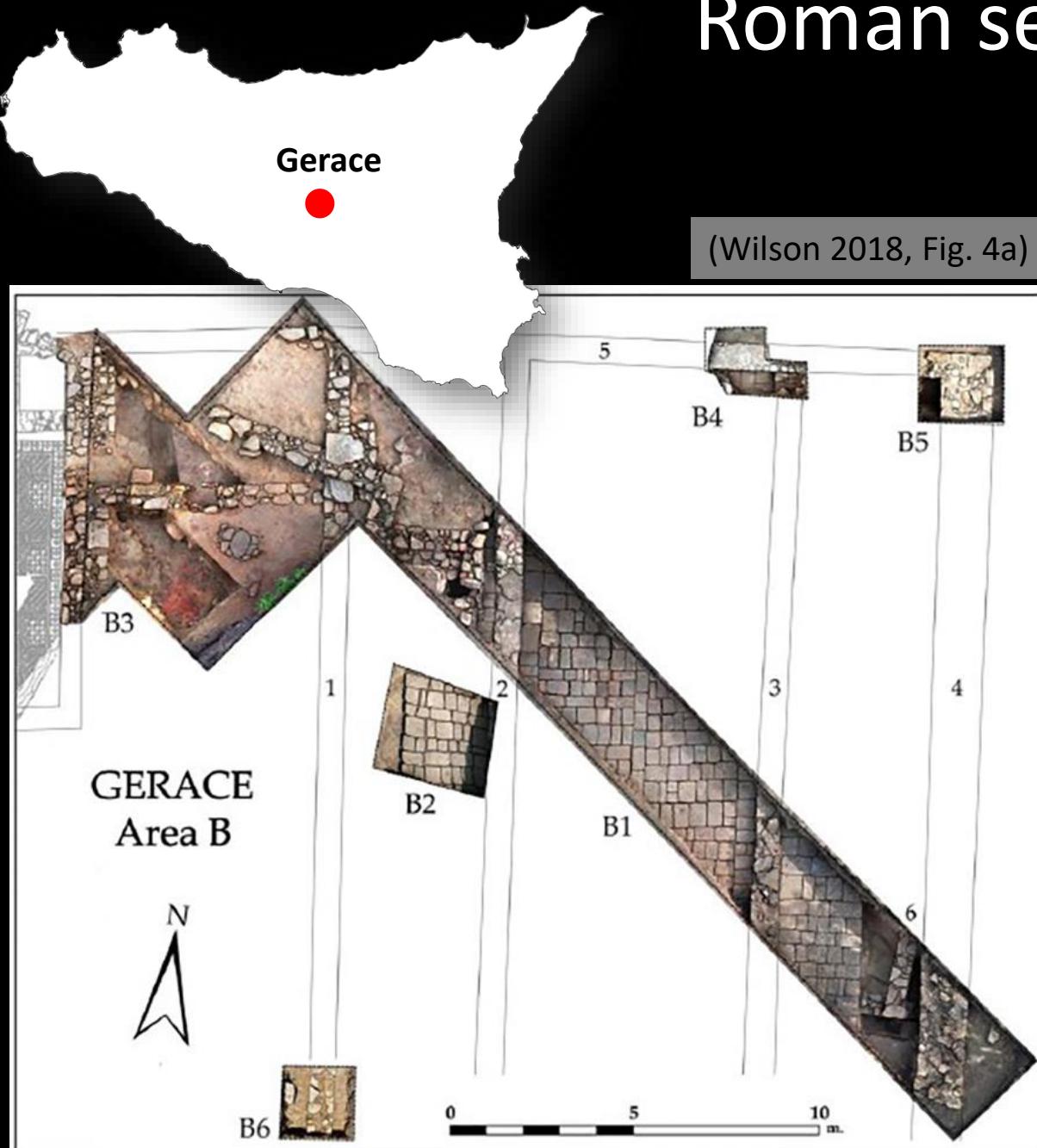
Capitals and columns reused in late walls

(Pensabene 2018, Fig. 2-4, Tav. I,3, Tav. II,10)

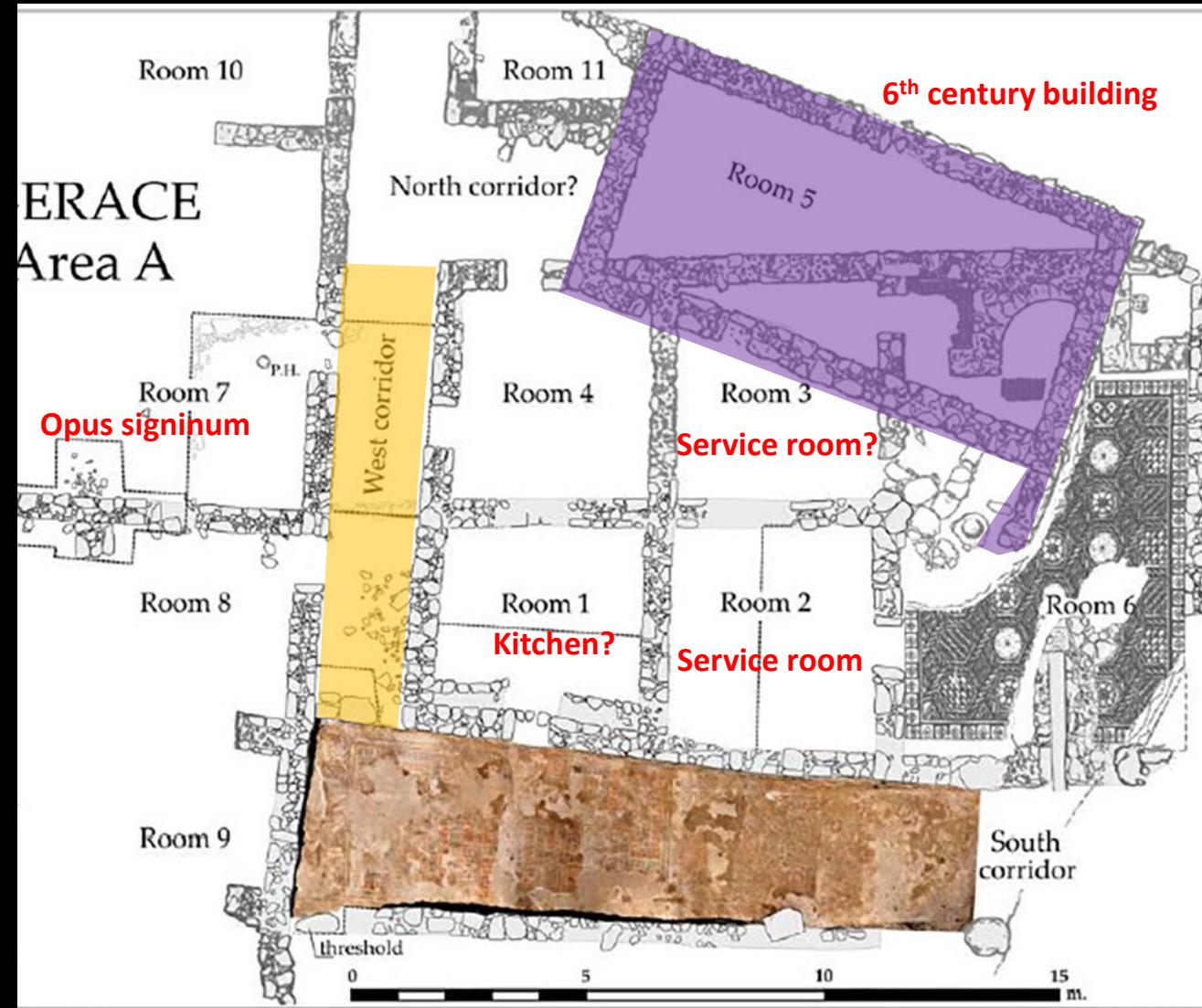


BY

Roman settlement at Gerace



(Wilson 2022, Fig. 1)



(Wilson 2018, Fig. 6, 8d)



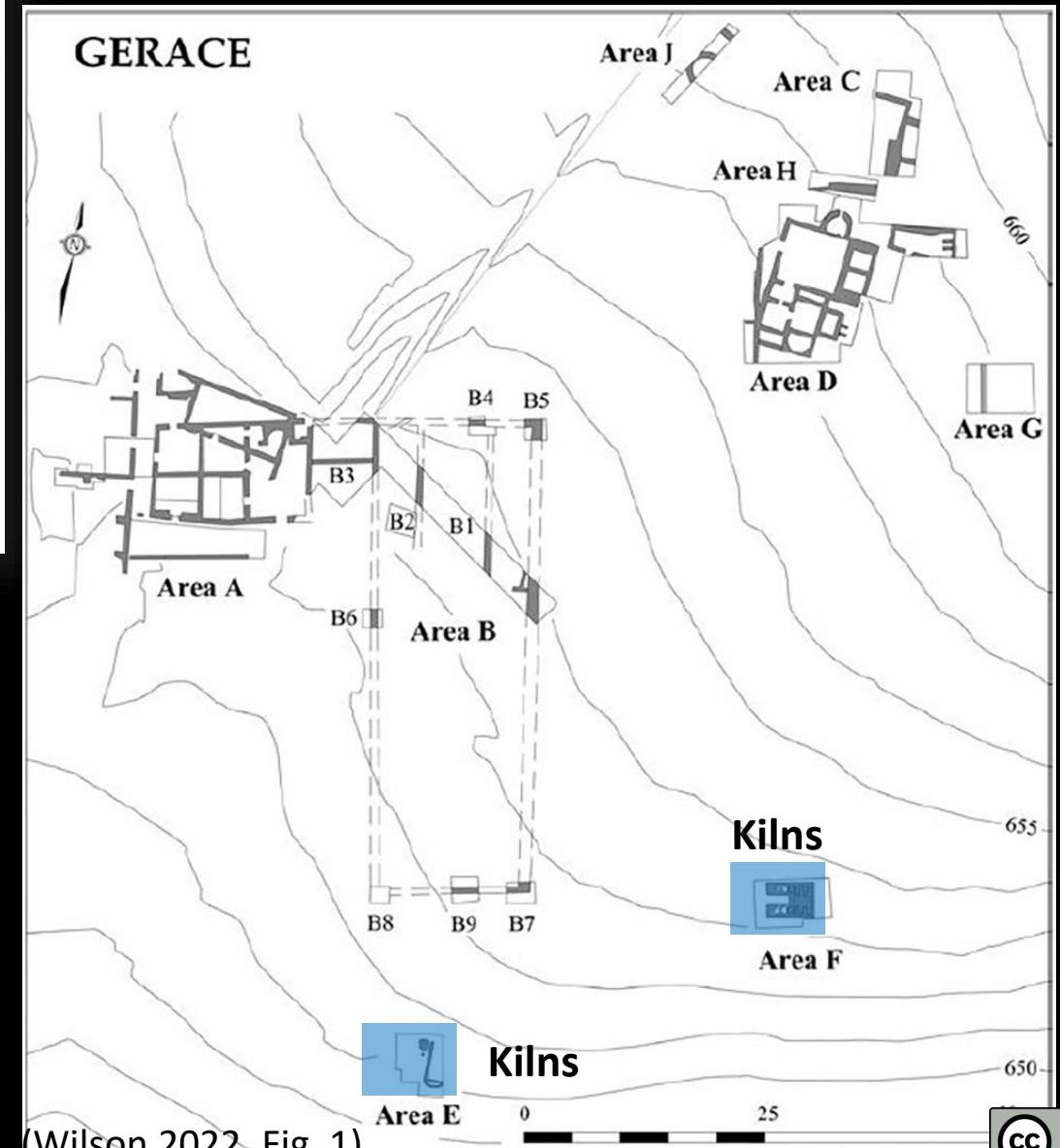
BY

(Wilson 2020, Fig. 2)

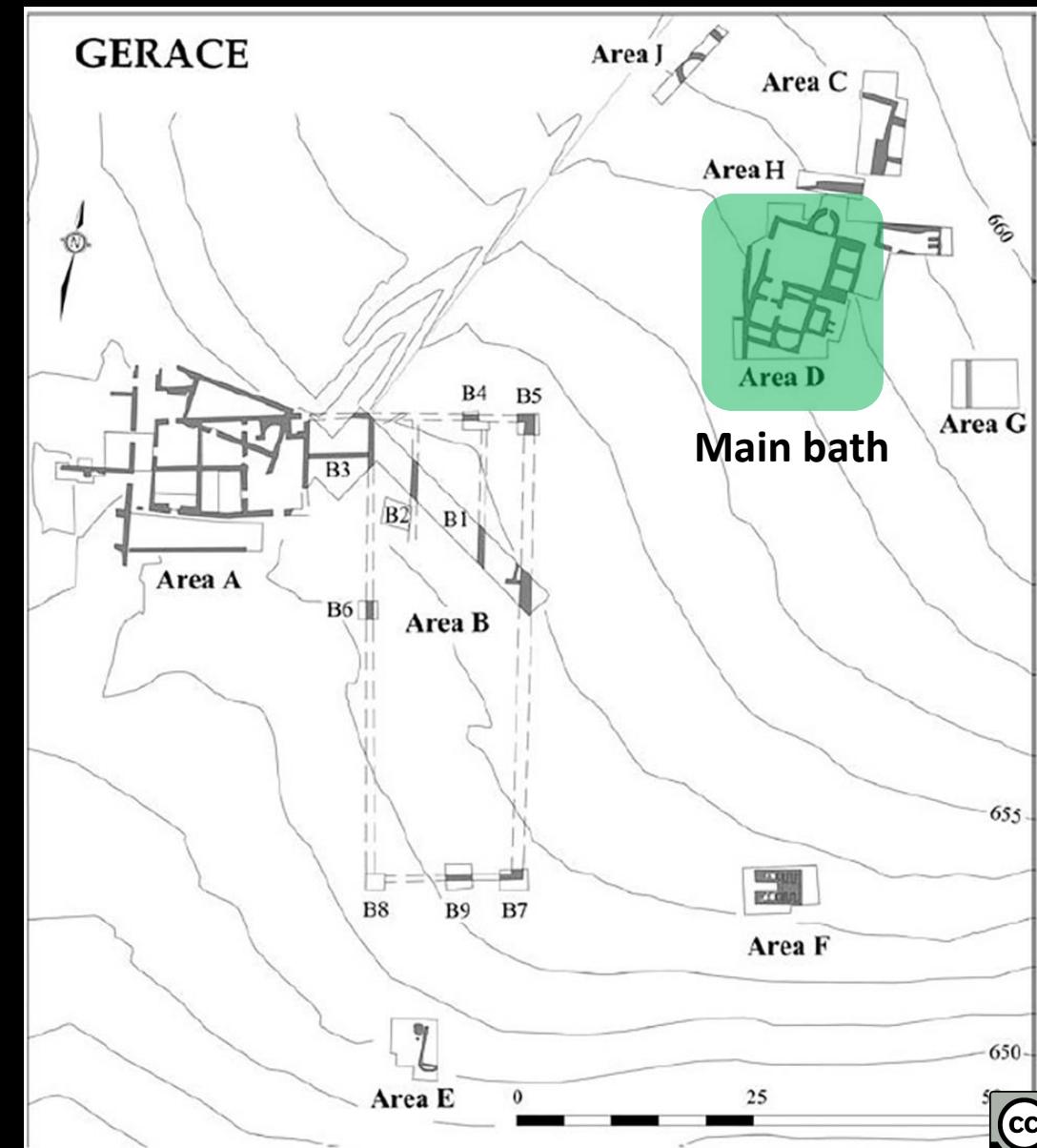


- 5th cent. tile kiln (built after Philippianus' death)
- 5th cent. reduced kiln
- 6th cent. small kilns

(Wilson 2018, Fig. 12)



(Wilson 2022, Fig. 1, 34)



BY



(Wilson 2018, Fig. 20)



(Wilson 2020, Fig. 24, 30-31)



PHILIPPIANORVM PRAEDIA FELI(cia) (palm branch)

CAPITOLINIS GAVDIVM

PLVRA FABRICETIS MELLIORA DEDI

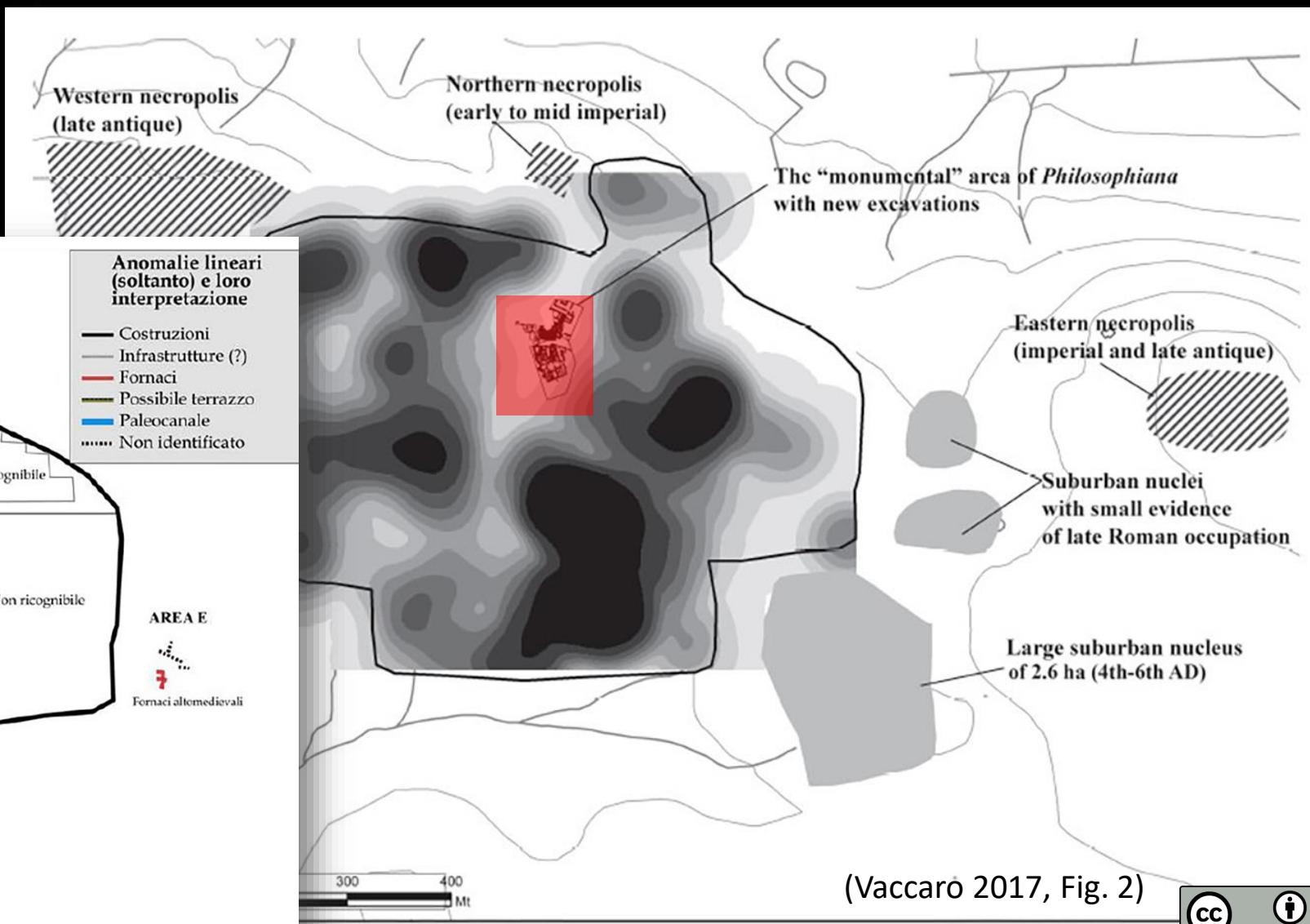
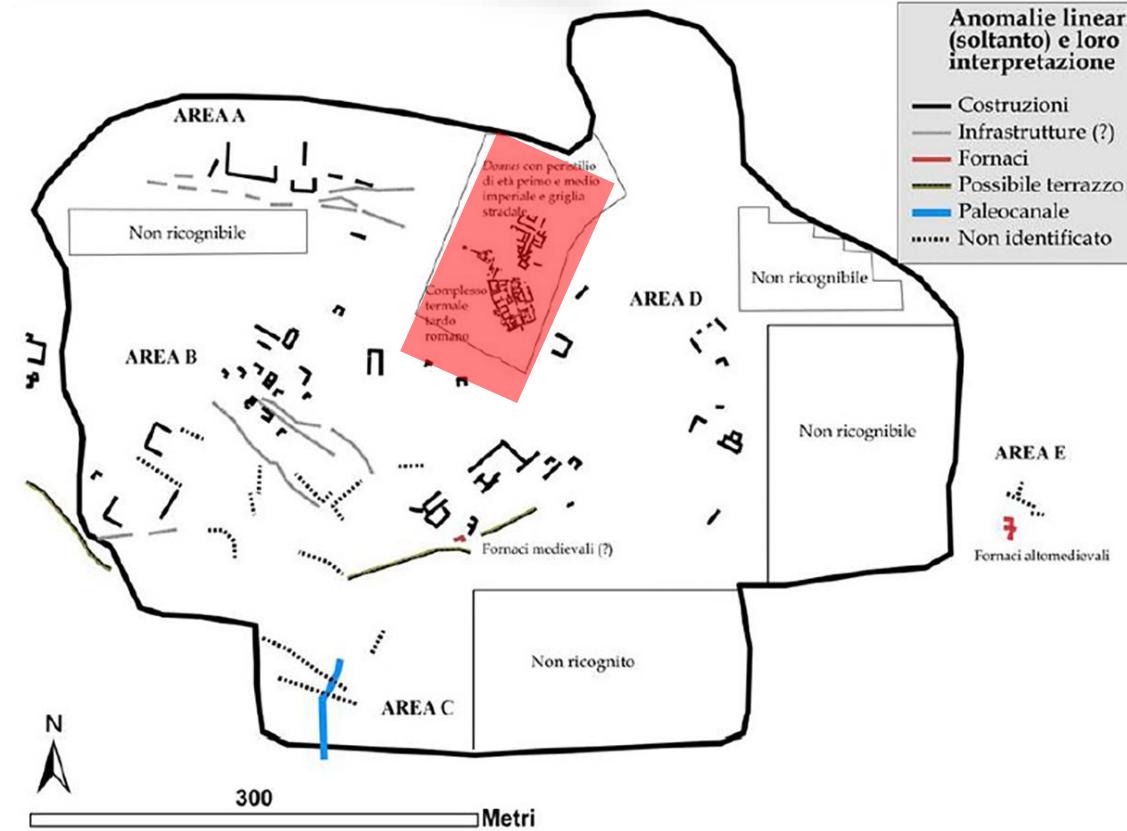
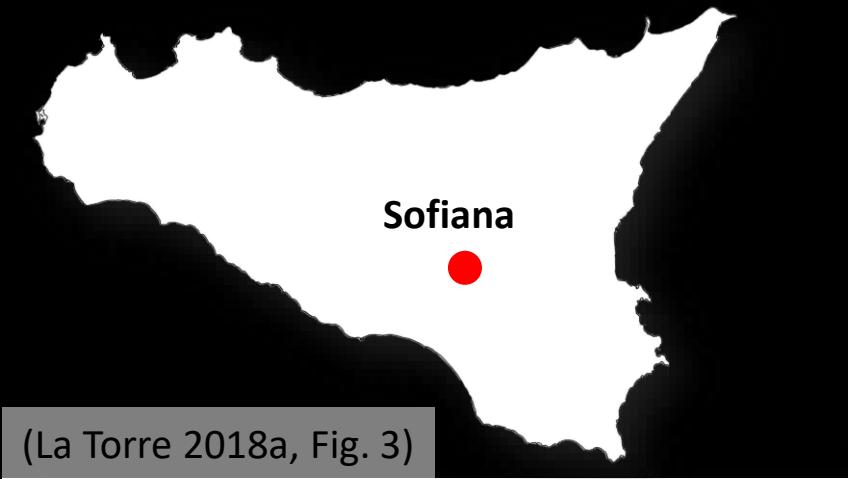
CETIS ASCLEPIADES SENESCAS CVM TVIS

Proposed interpretation:

'[May] the estates of the Philippianorum prosper! Joy to the Capitoline [games]! May you build more things, dedicate better things. Asclepiades, may you grow old with your family'

Philosophiana

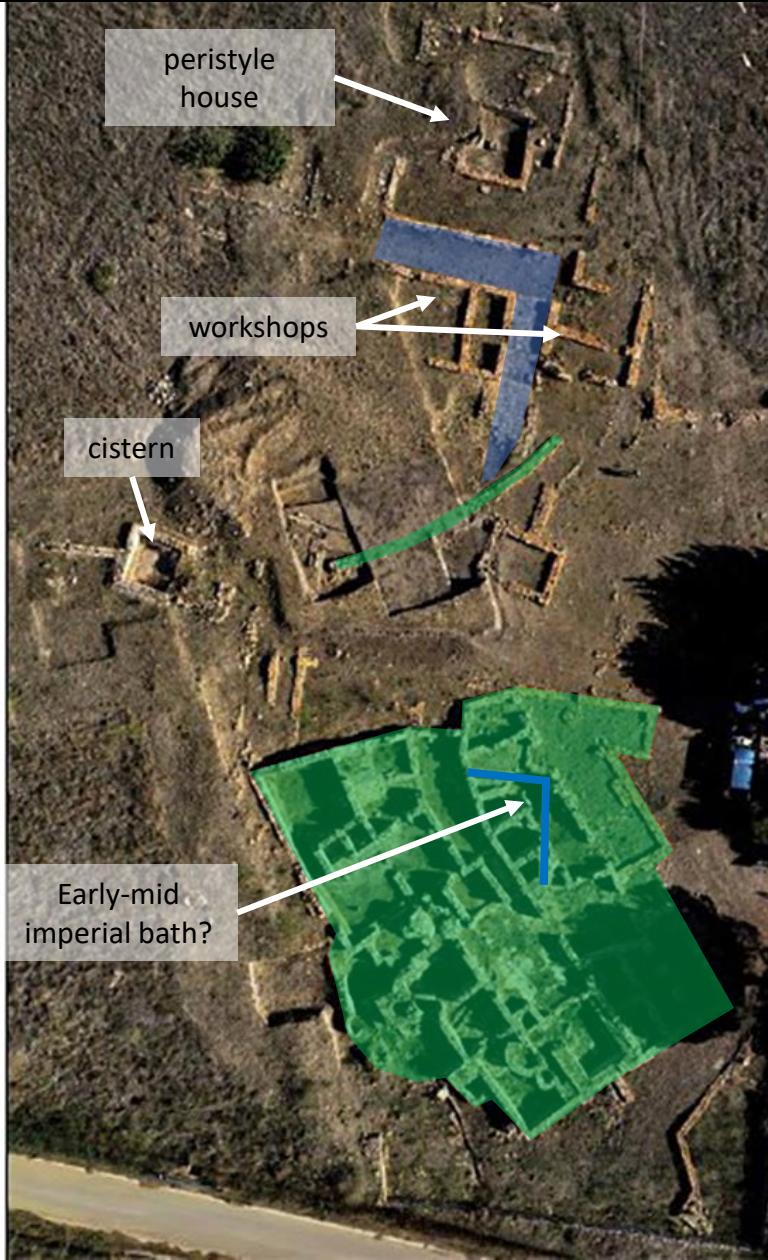
stationes nunc institutae



The monumental area

(La Torre 2018a, Fig. 5)

(Vaccaro 2017, Fig. 3)

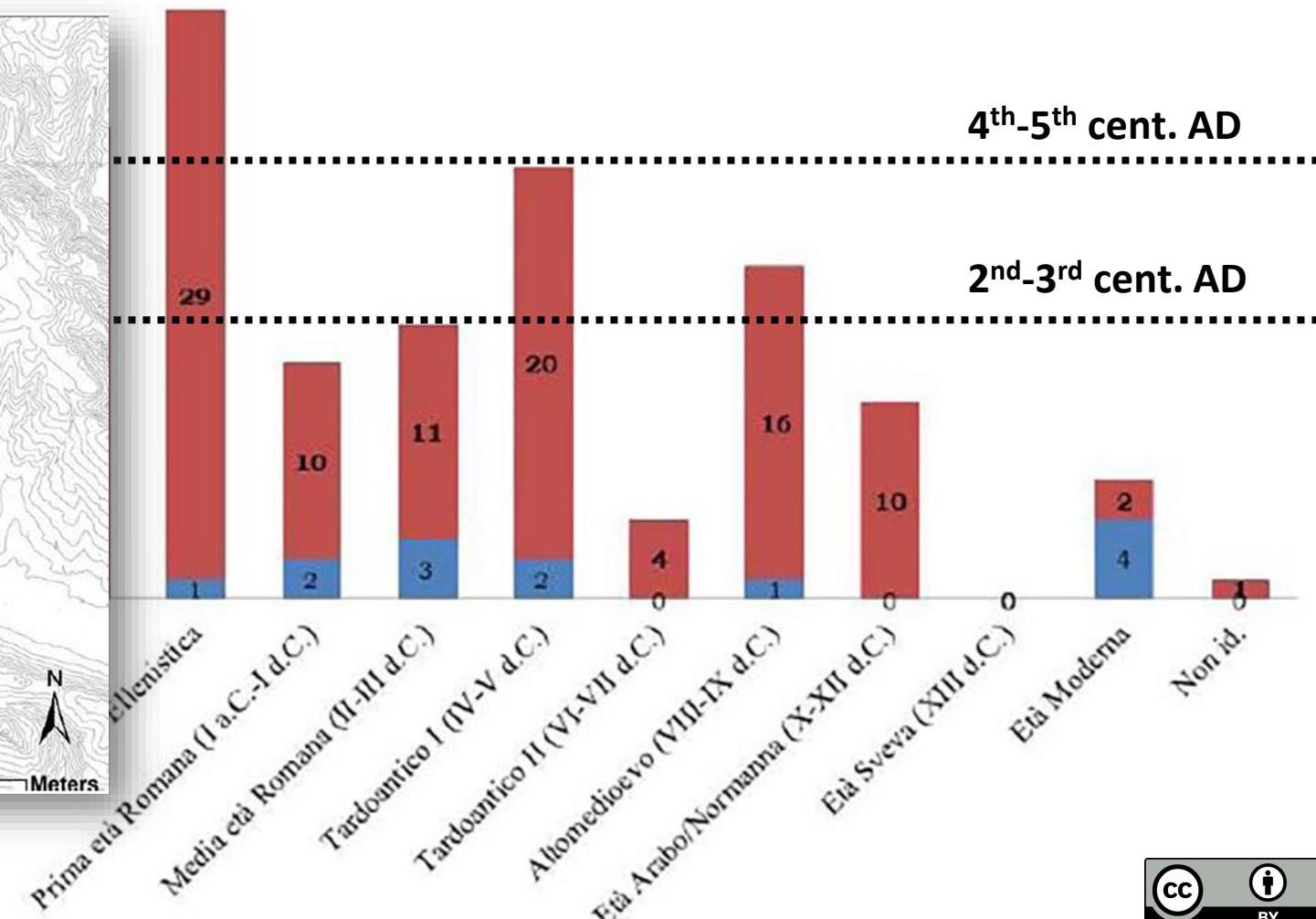
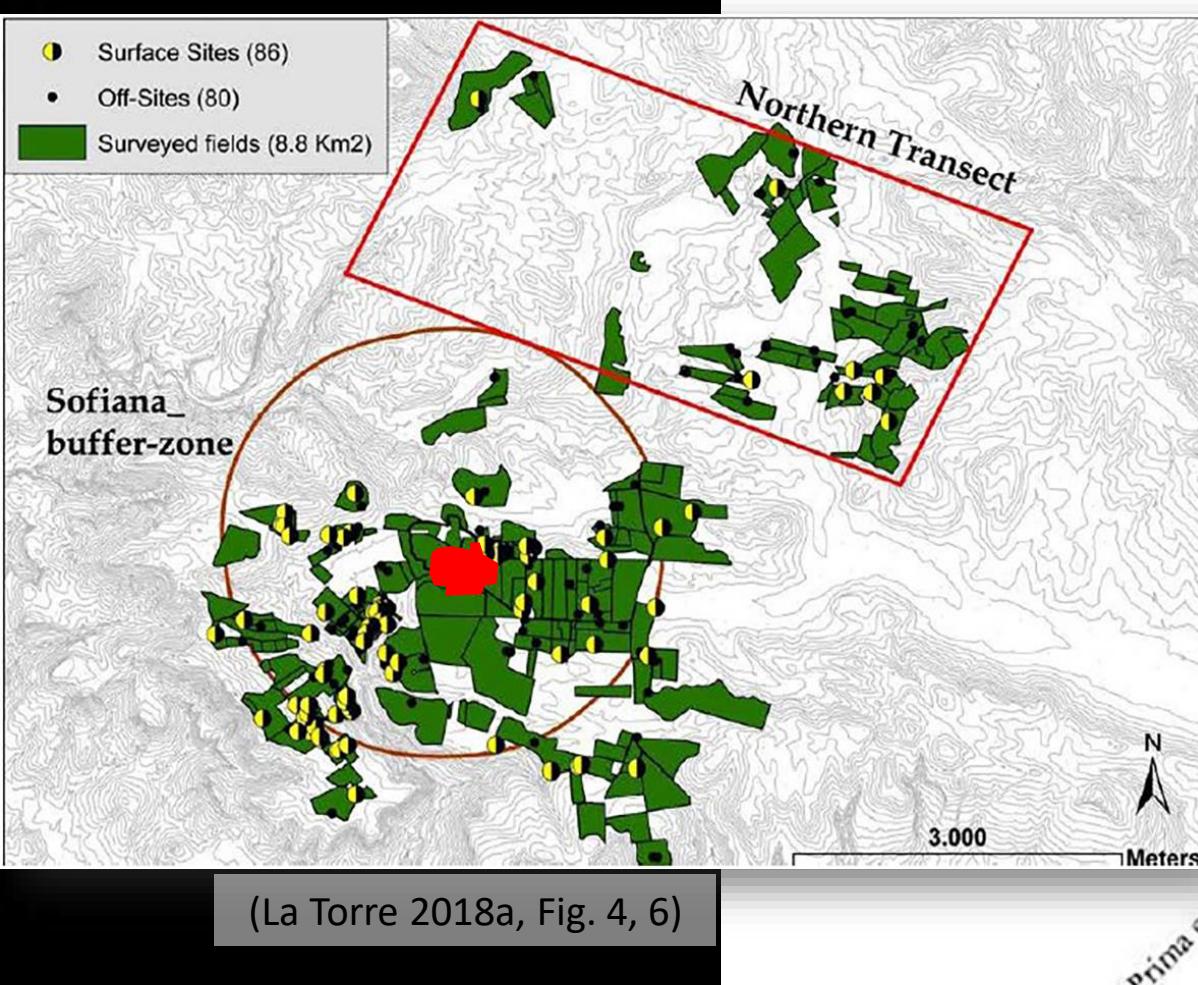


Filosofiana survey

Number of sites according to chronology

North transect

Buffer zone around the site

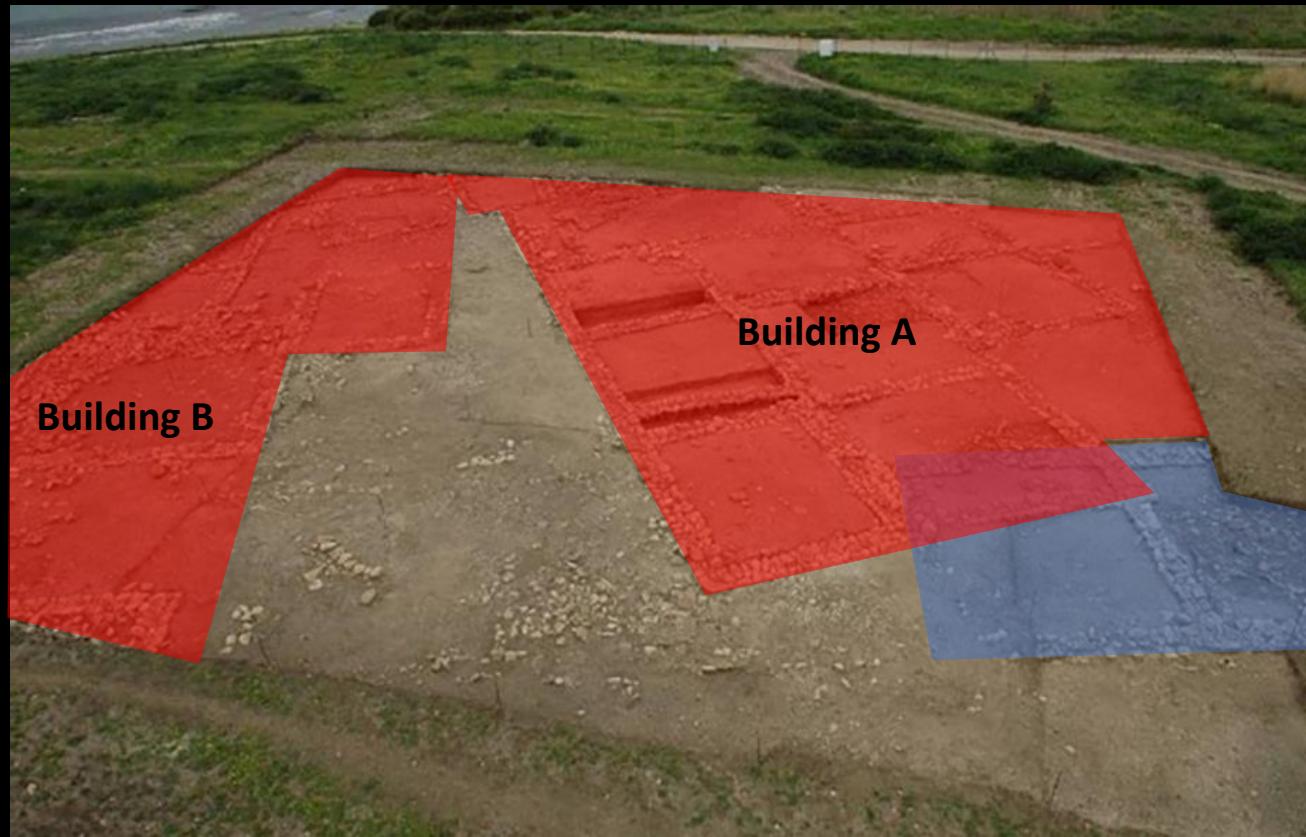
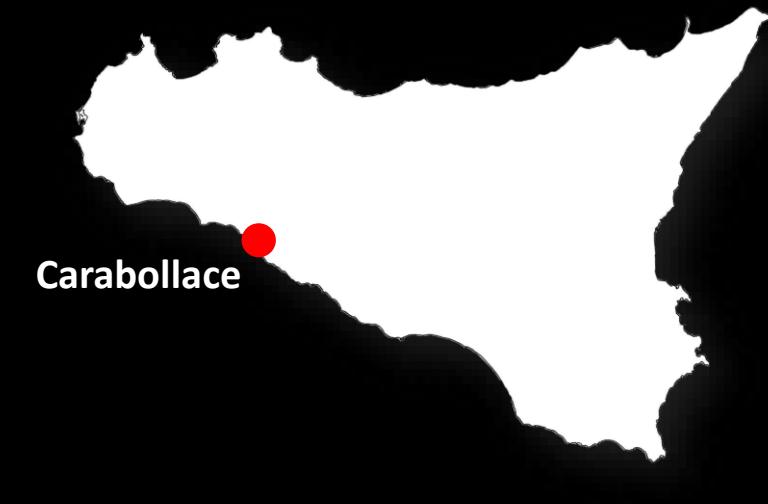


Transition III

Sprawling agricultural villages

5th – 6th centuries AD

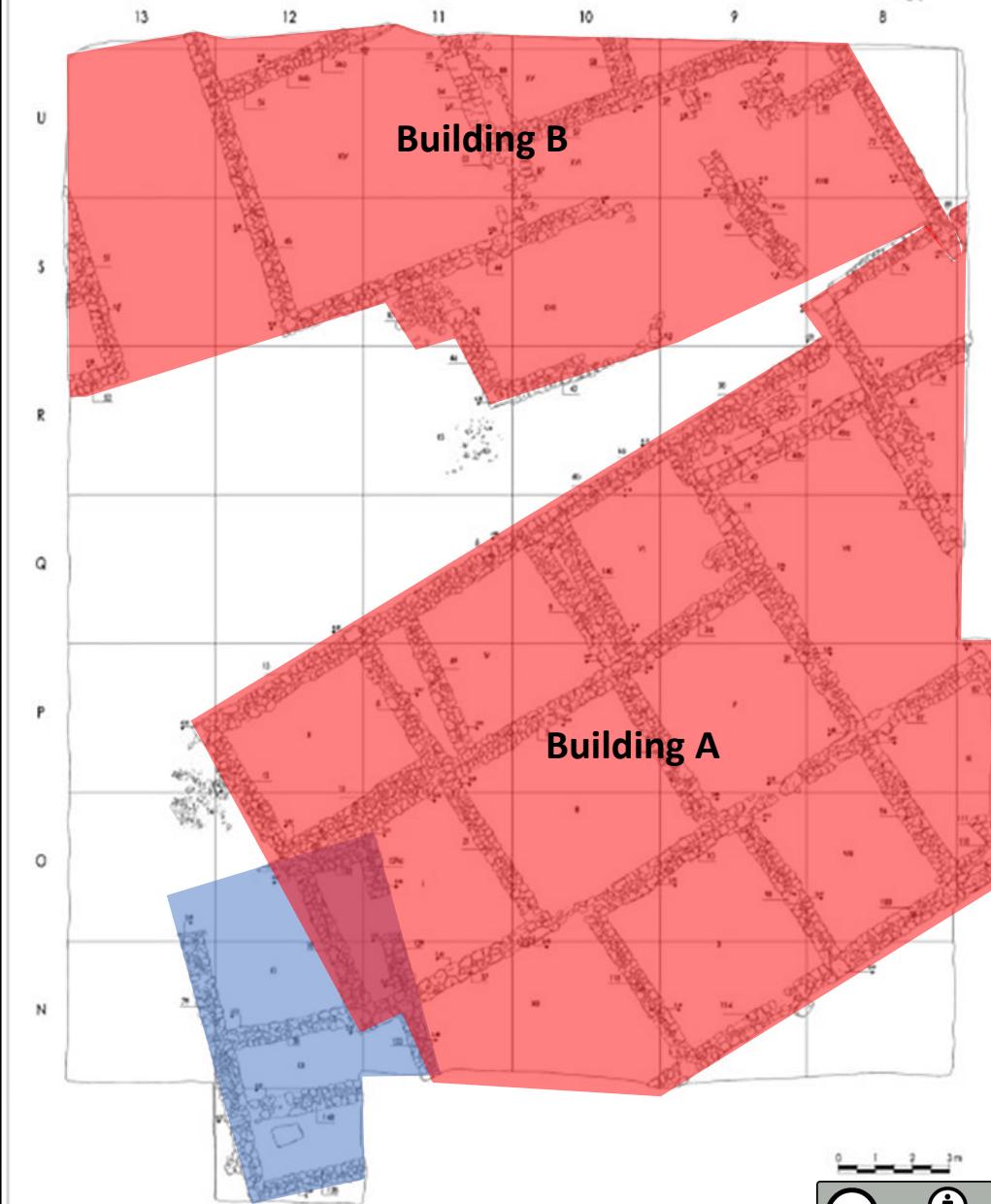
Carabollace



(Caminneci 2010, Fig. 5-6)

SCIACCA (AG)
CARABOLLACE 2006-07

PUEBLO M. MARITA
DORON Y. CICCHAKI



BY

Verdura



(Rizzo 2014, Fig. 5)

(Parello, Amico, D'Angelo 2010, Fig. 2)



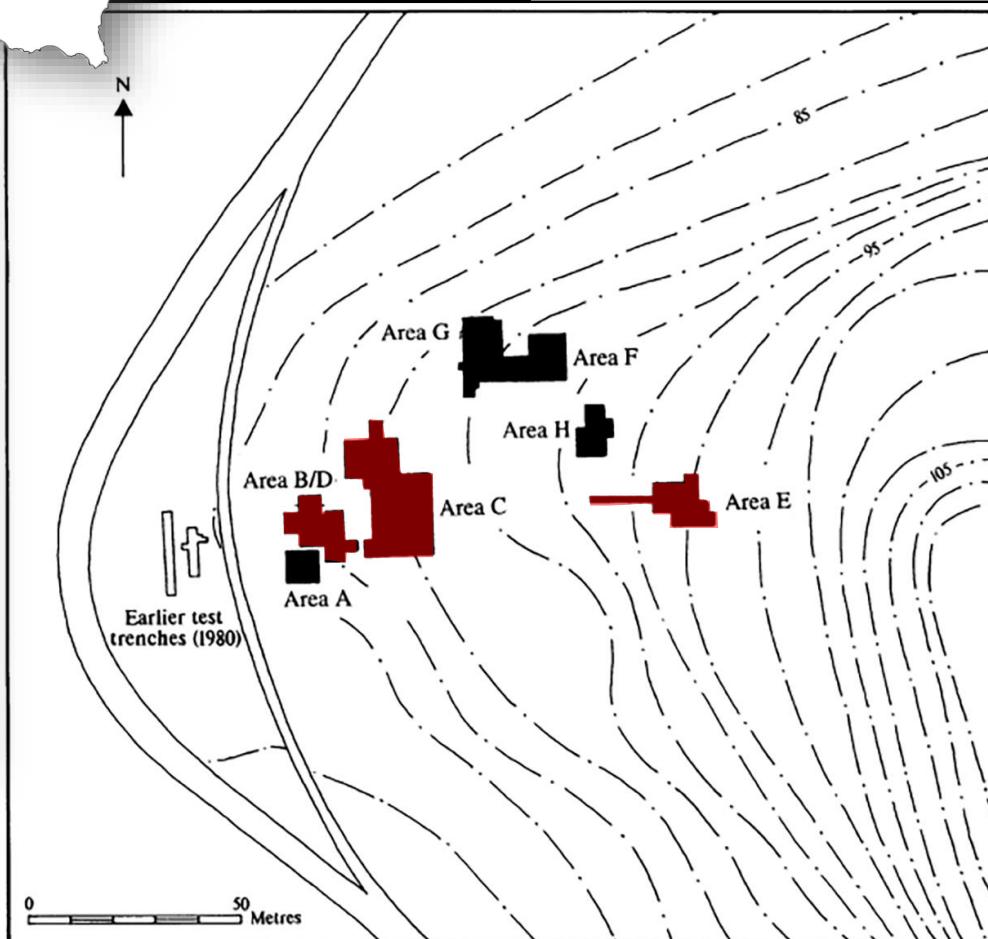
BY

Campanaio

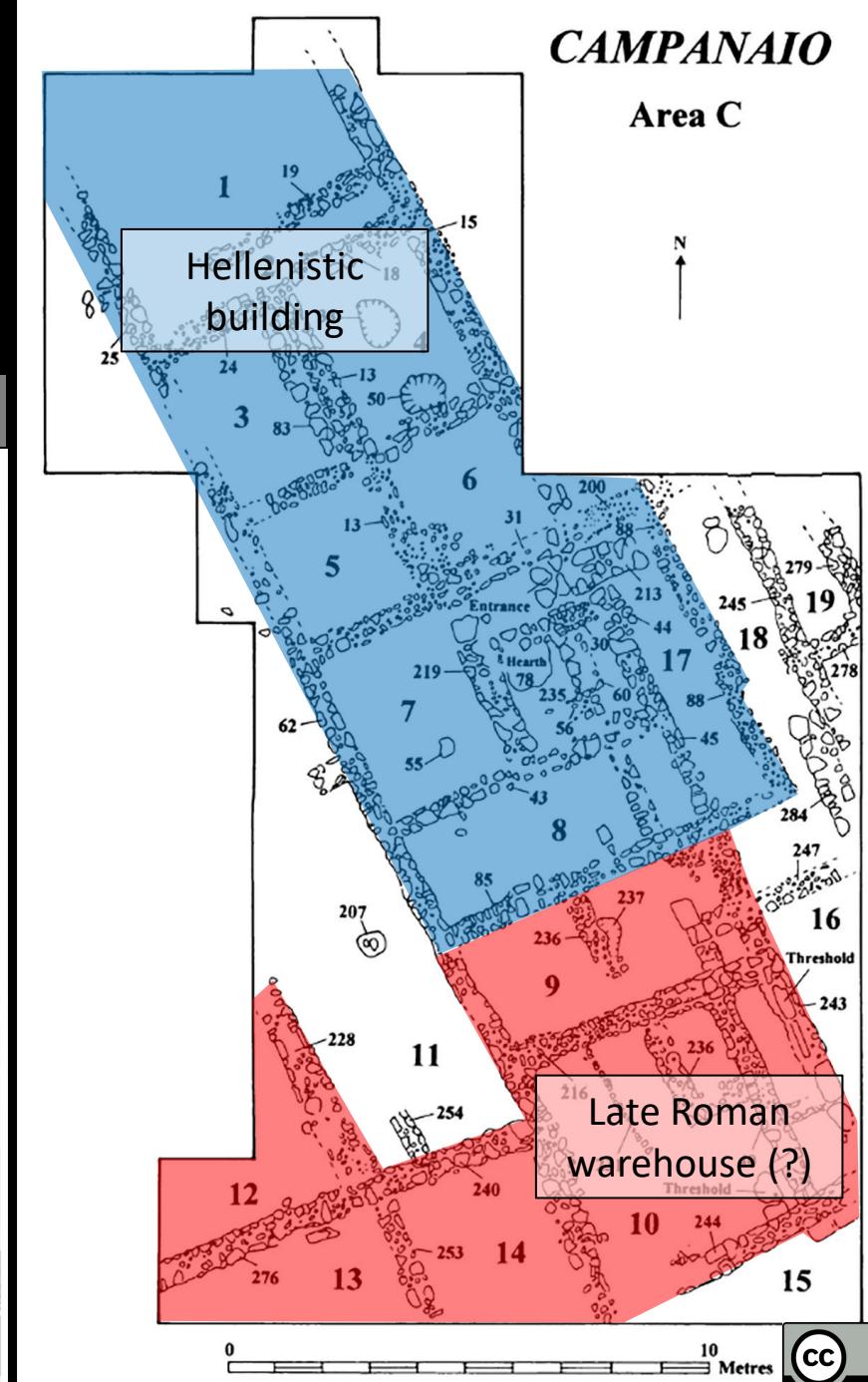
Campanaio



Smashed tiles and amphora deposit, 5th cent. AD, from Room 13

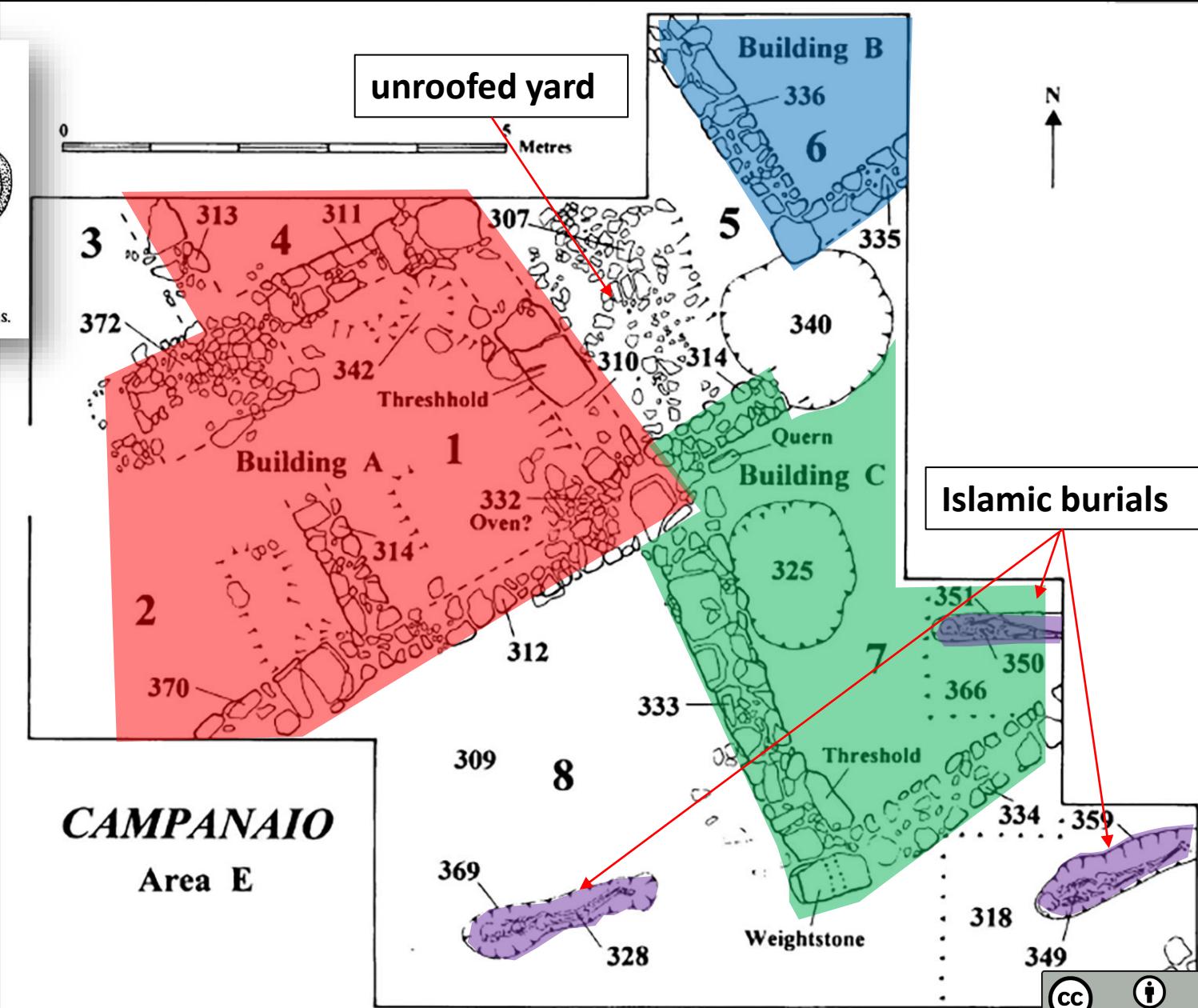
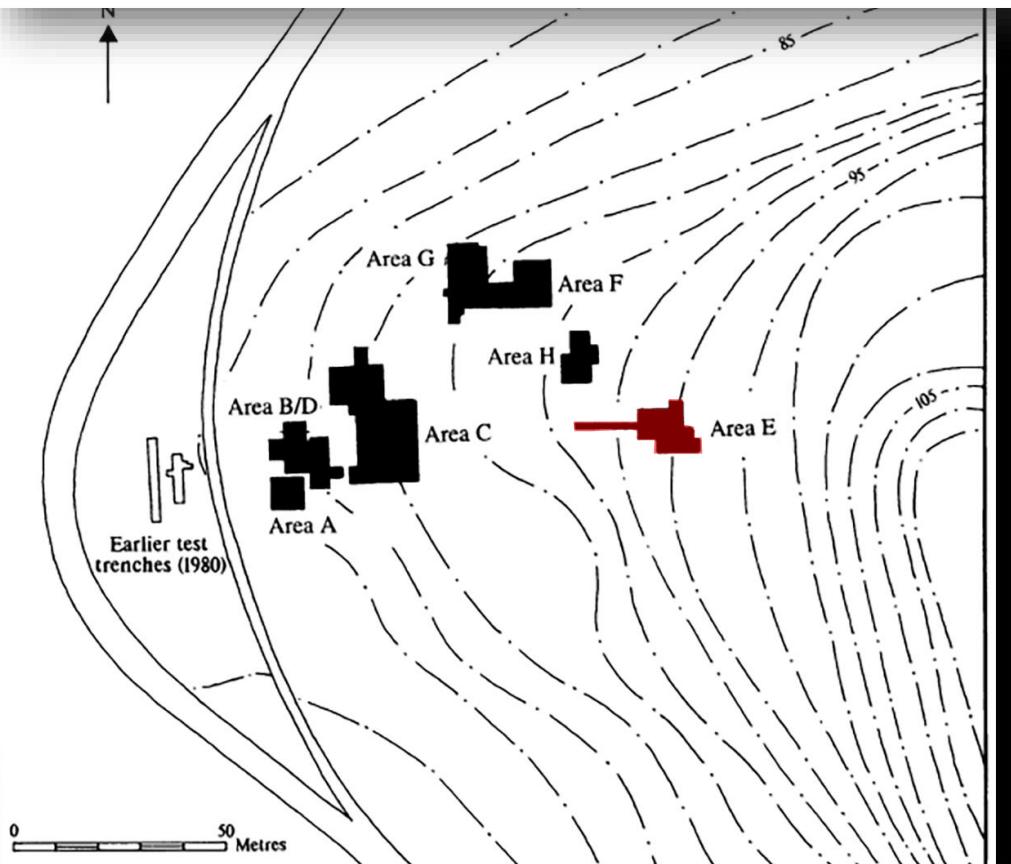
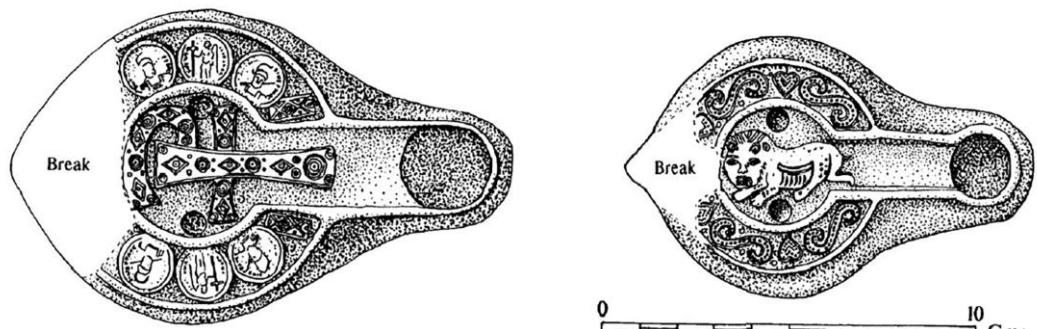


(Wilson 2000, Fig. 2, 5, 9)



impressions of a gold coin of Emperor Theodosius II AD 430

(Wilson 2000, Fig. 2, 10, 11)



Muratore



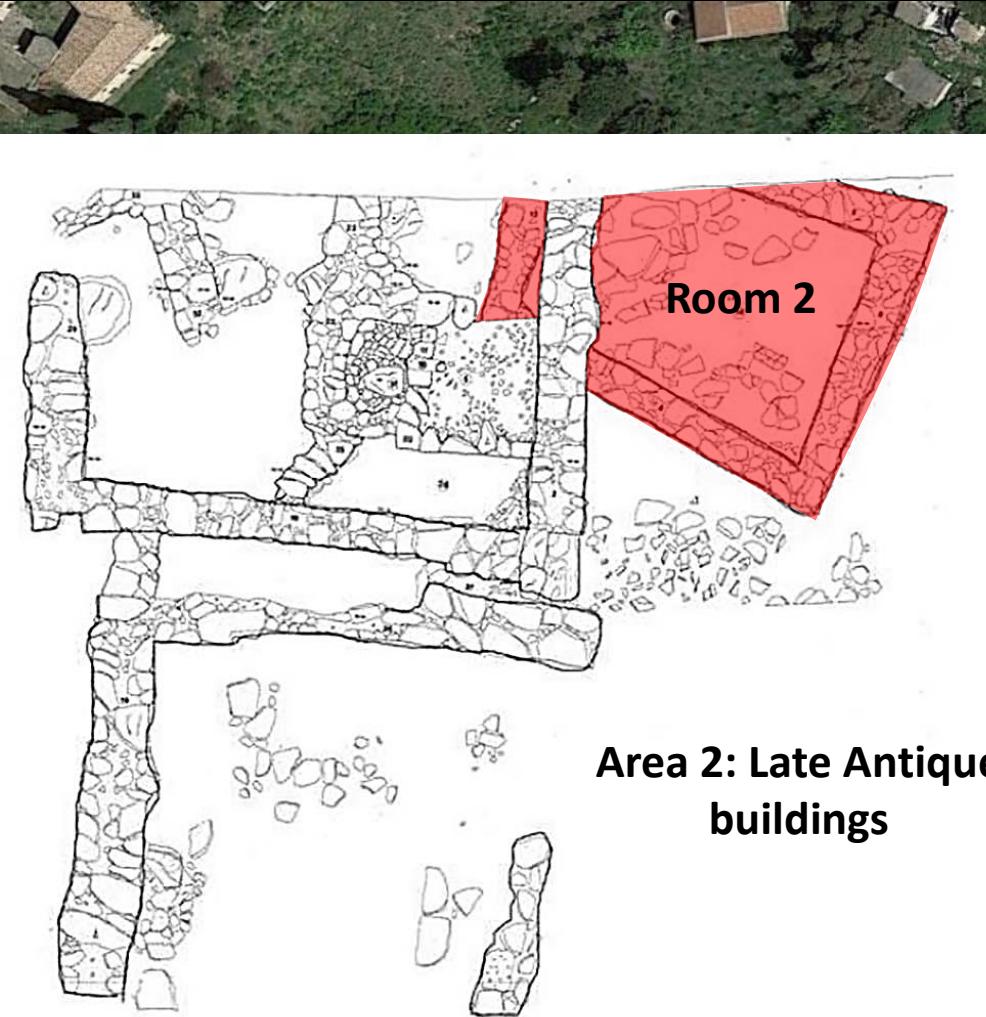
Muratore



(Valentino & Vassallo 2016, Fig. 17, 19)



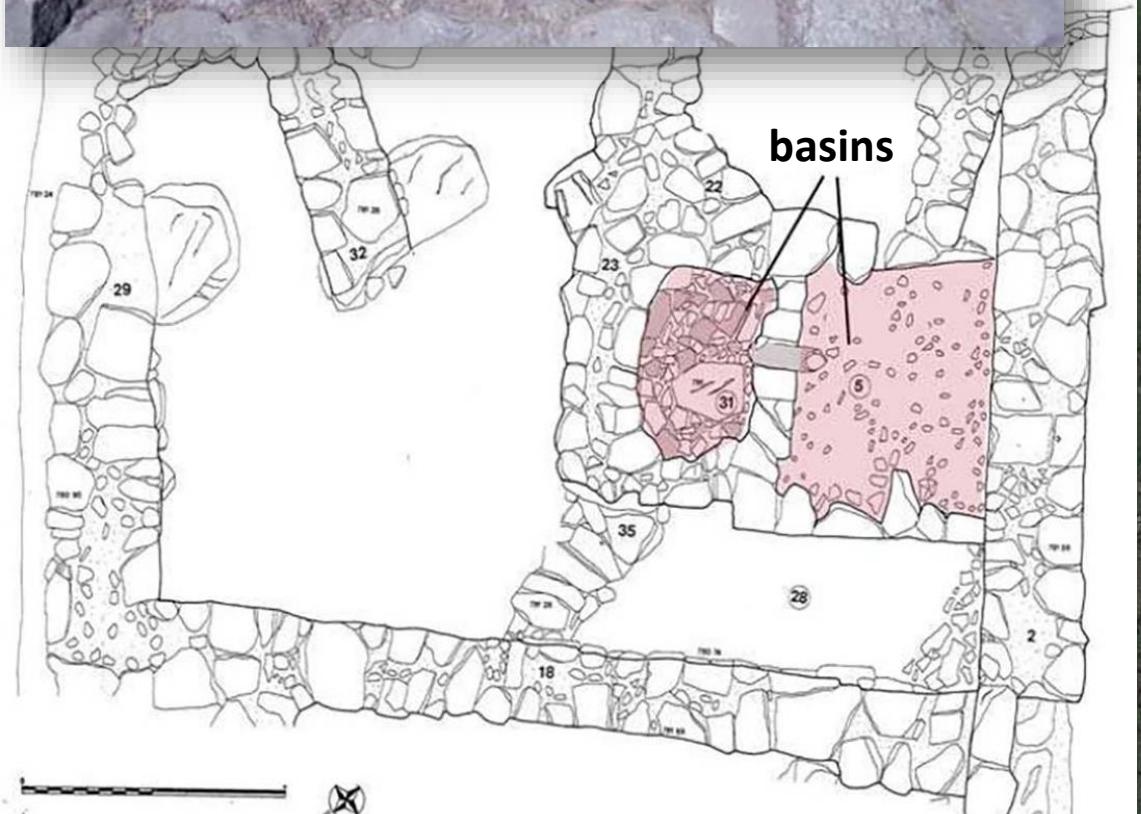
Area 1: Imperial age bath?



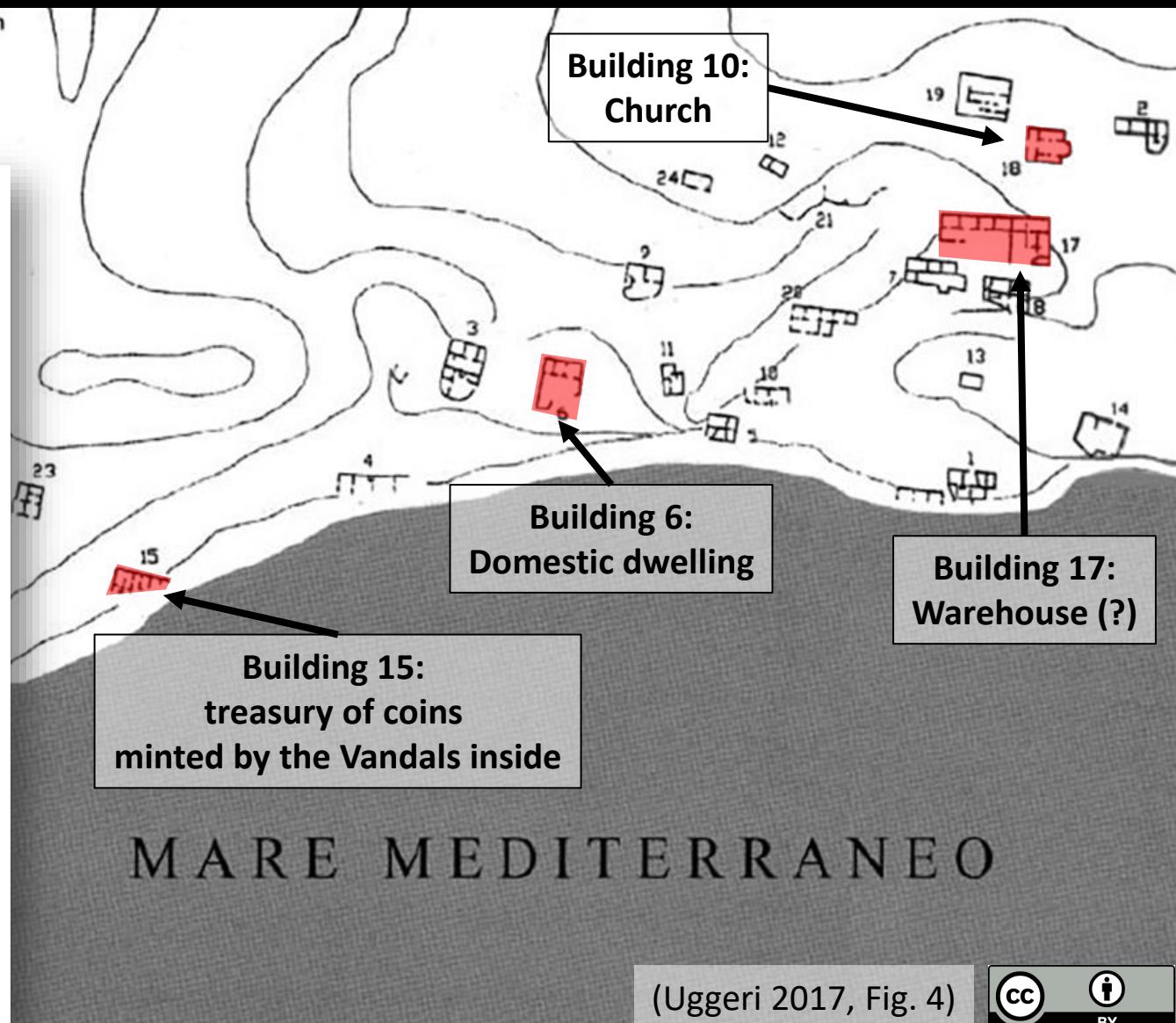
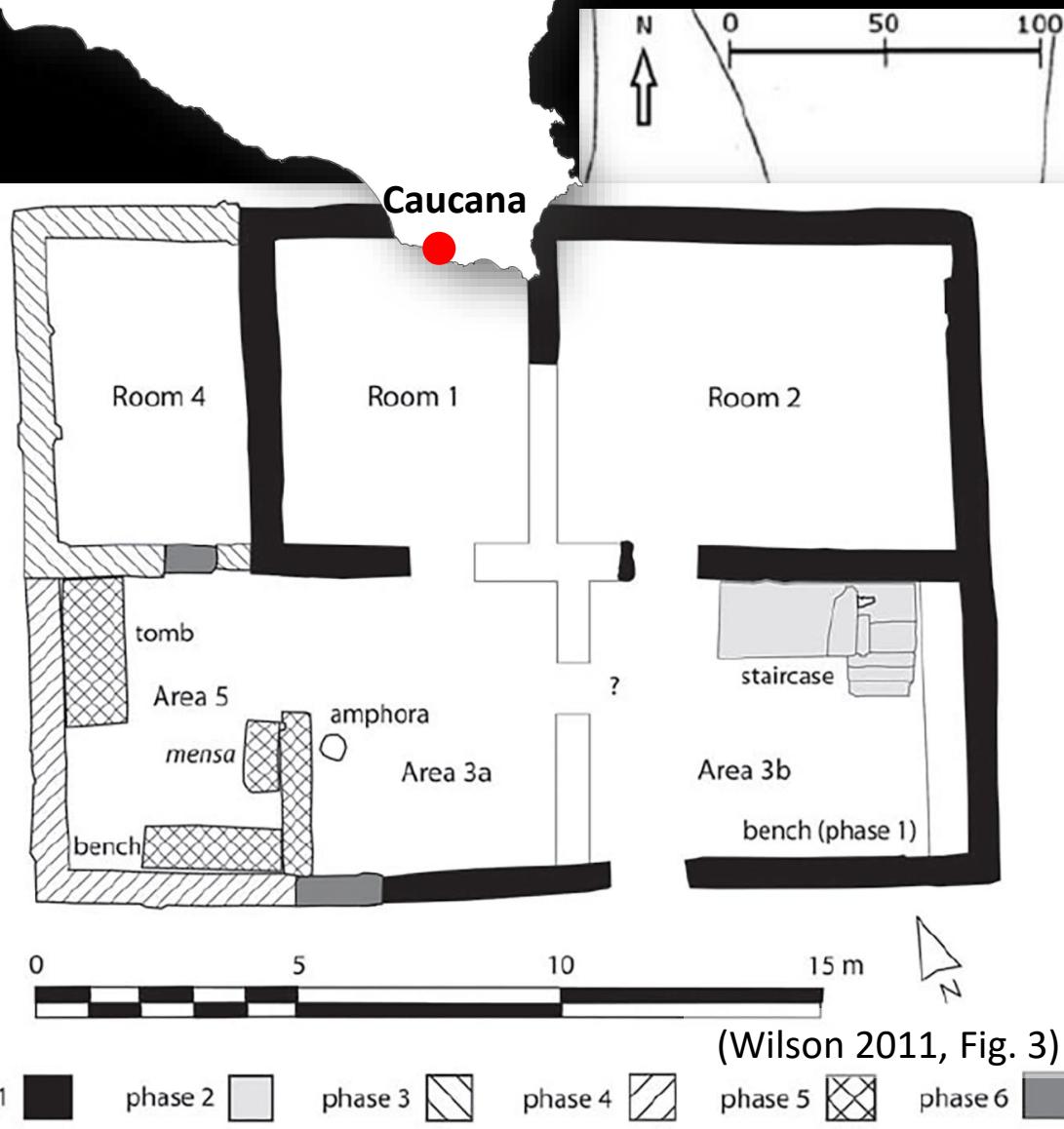
Area 2: Late Antique buildings



(Valentino & Vassallo 2016, Fig. 17, 28-29)



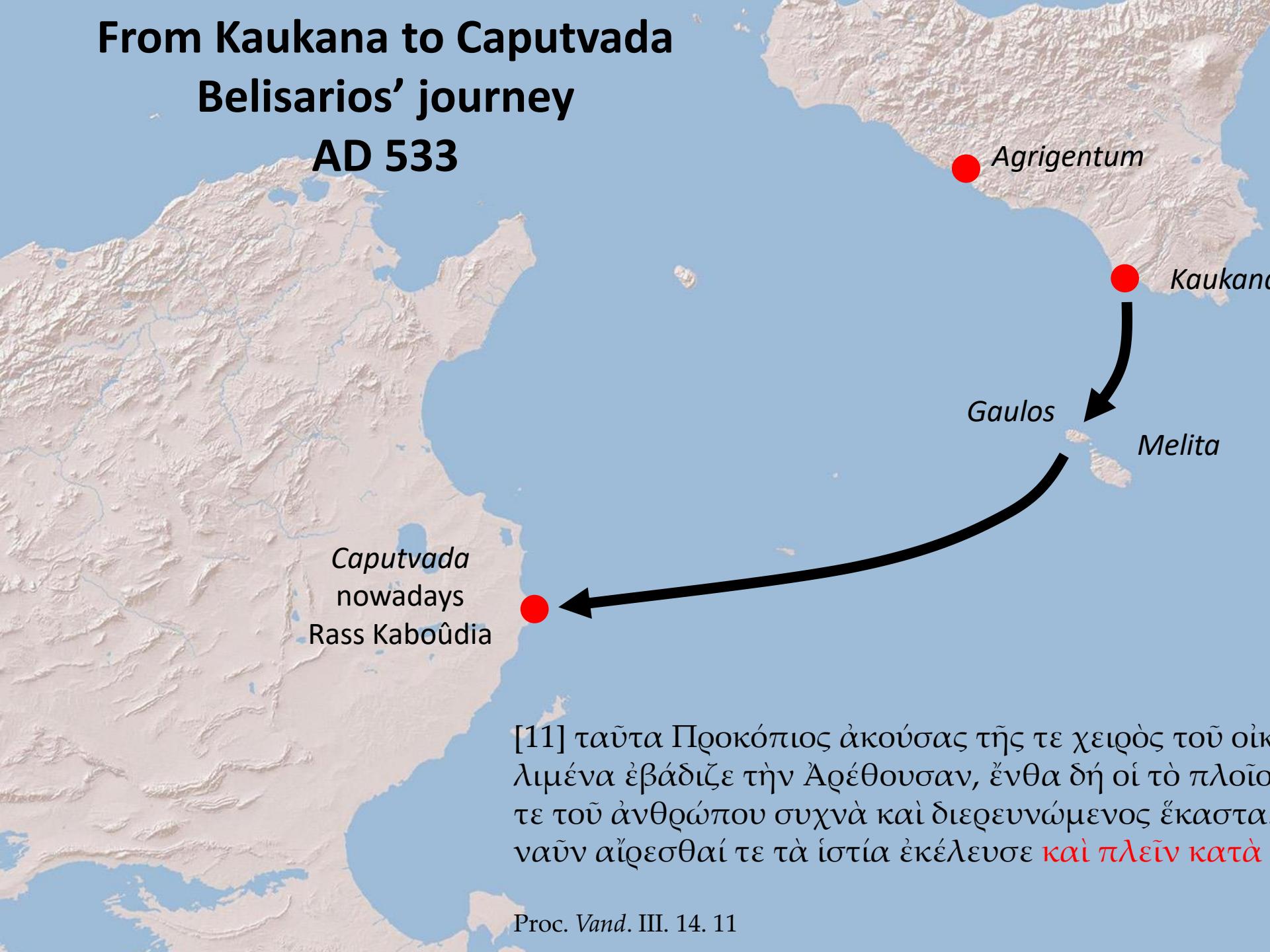
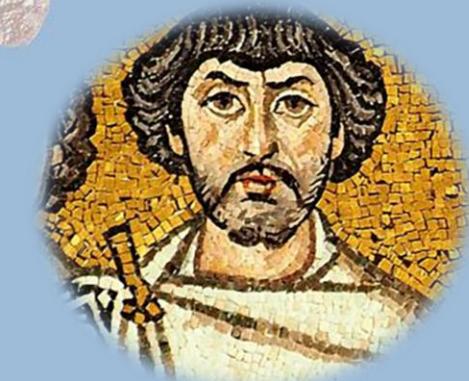
Caucana: a landing place in southern Sicily?



From Kaukana to Caputvada

Belisarios' journey

AD 533



[11] ταῦτα Προκόπιος ἀκούσας τῆς τε χειρὸς τοῦ οἰκέτου λαβόμενος ἐπὶ τὸν λιμένα ἐβάδιζε τὴν Ἀρέθουσαν, ἔνθα δή οἱ τὸ πλοῖον ὡρμίζετο, πυνθανόμενός τε τοῦ ἀνθρώπου συχνὰ καὶ διερευνώμενος ἔκαστα. ἐσβὰς δὲ ξὺν αὐτῷ ἐς τὴν ναῦν αἴρεσθαι τε τὰ ίστια ἐκέλευσε καὶ πλεῖν κατὰ τάχος ἐς Καύκανα.

Some conclusive remarks

Main transitions

1. Crisis of minor rural settlements during the 3rd century AD
2. Big luxury villas during the 4th centuries AD
3. Sprawling agricultural villages between the 5th-6th century

What reasons might trigger changes and resiliencies in human settlement patterns on a local scale?

and other related issues

How to distinguish farms from minor villas, villages, workshops of different nature, service facilities for the *cursus publicus*?

Necessity of a new protocol of analysis

Necessity of publishing old excavation reports and surveys

Necessity of broaden our knowledge concerning material culture

Thank you

And come to Sicily for visiting these sites

We need help for solving these and much more issues

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