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AN OFFPRINT FROM

ROME AND THE NORTH-WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

INTEGRATION AND CONNECTIVITY C. 150–70 BC

Edited by

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Hardback Edition: ISBN 978-1-78925-717-5

Digital Edition: ISBN 978-1-78925-718-2 (epub)

Between Carthage and Rome: Artisans, Businessmen and Colonists in Roman Republican Sardinia (150–50 BC)

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Introduction

The conquest of Sardinia in 238 BC originated from circumstances that could be described as ‘accidental’, with a myriad of hesitations and without any accompanying, well-defined economic or political plan (Brizzi 1989, 76–8 and 84–6; Loreto 1995, 191–9; Hoyos 2007, 154–9 and 248–52). For these reasons, the island’s transition from Carthage to Rome did not involve significant changes to its economic and social structure, and indeed this remained the same as the preceding period (Ibba 2015, 14–9). There were urban, mainly coastal, centres inhabited by the descendants of the Sardo-Phoenicians and by a smaller number of Punic people. The countryside was characterised by a diffuse settlement pattern of farms and villages occupied by only a few families, and was occupied by Sardi, immigrant Numidae who had moved to the island in around the 4th century BC and Punic entrepreneurs. The more inland regions occupied by Sardi and Sardo-Punic inhabitants were organised into a tribal system that partly derived from what had existed during the Iron Age (Fig. 17.1).

It was consequently a multi-ethnic society, economically stratified, profoundly tied to Punic and local culture in its numerous regional variants, but fully part of the Hellenistic Mediterranean *koiné* (common culture and ideology). This was a world generally considered as mysterious and primitive, but it was not completely unknown to the Etruscan and central-Italic *negotiatores* (traders) who had long frequented its ports and perhaps the areas nearest the coast (Brizzi 1989, 69–74 and 80; Ibba 2021, 200–3, 210–1, 214 and 216–7; unpublished site of San Lorenzo – Sassari). These introduced precious goods such as Campanian A black-glazed ware, pottery from the *atelier des petites étampilles*, and even the very rare *Heraklesschalen* (moulded bowls depicting

Hercules). Also, artisans, *publicani* (contractors), soldiers and state officials gradually began to move permanently or temporarily into this world, marginal to the interests of Rome. Being permanently present, especially at Karales (modern Cagliari) and Olbia, they contributed to the introduction of new customs and traditions among the local population (Bonetto 2006, 258–9; Pietra 2013, 225 and 243–5; Tronchetti 2020, 42).

By contrast, interest in Sardinia changed radically in the 2nd century BC with the so-called ‘second conquest’ by Rome and the consequent programmes of colonisation, occupation and exploitation of its resources between 181–c. 100 BC (Ibba 2015, 20–2 and 25–7). Quantifying the impact of this process and defining the nature of its protagonists is not a simple exercise and cannot be entrusted exclusively to the study of material culture and architectural features. These undoubtedly provide basic information about the ideology of those living on the island, but are often powerless to clarify their origins. If, however, they are combined with the epigraphic and literary sources, although they are more limited in quantity, it can more usefully result in providing clear answers on these issues.

The Epigraphic Evidence

One source of evidence is the famous votive inscription of San Nicolò Gerrei (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, CIL I/2, 2226 = X, 7856 = *Inscriptiones Graecae*, IG XIV, 608 = *Corpus Inscriptionum Semititicarum*, CIS I, 143 = Guzzo 1967, *ICO Sard*, Npu 9). The chronology of this has recently been questioned but can probably still be dated to the second half of the 2nd century BC (Ibba 2016, 77–8; Llamazares Martín 2020; *contra* Culasso Gastaldi 2000;



dis. Salvatore Ganga 2021

Figure 17.1 Historical regions, Roman towns and modern places in Sardinia (produced by Ganga).

Pennacchietti 2002). From the three texts in Latin, Greek and neo-Punic incised on the plinth of a bronze Attic base (Fig. 17.2), it can be seen that *socii*, a group of businessmen presumably from Italy, had won the contract to manage some salt pans not far from a Carthaginian town, perhaps Karales or even Sarcapos (territory of modern Villaputzu) (Ibba 2021, 205). They had entrusted their running to the slave Cleon, who was perhaps originally from Asia Minor. This *servus* thanked the deity who had healed him, addressing him as Aesculapius, Asklepios, Eshmun, each time accompanied by Merre, perhaps a palaeo-Sardinian theonym.

It is readily apparent that the neo-Punic text was longer and more detailed than the Greek and especially the Latin ones, these being very hesitant and short. Indeed, the *officina*, the workshop which produced the texts, was clearly still unfamiliar with the use of Latin forms (*Aesculapio* for *Aesculapio*, *lubens* for *libens*, *merente* for *merenti*) and with translating expressions typical of Roman legal practice into Punic (ŠHSGM, ‘he who is subject to the SG’, a neologism perhaps clumsily modelled on the term *socii* to reproduce the formula *sociorum servus*). Cleon himself preferred using terms in the neo-Punic text more familiar to him, such as LTRM ‘pound (weight)’, derived from the Greek *litra*. Regardless, he was aware that in order to communicate his message to those visiting even a small rural sanctuary, it was necessary to resort to multiple languages. That requirement now coincidentally and very usefully indicates that the nature of island society was both composite and still tied to tradition. This is reflected in the epigraphic aspects of neo-Punic, the god with the curious theonym, the reference to the sufetes, the use of formulas typical of Punic epigraphy and even the unusual social position occupied by the *servus*, unthinkable in the Roman world. But it also shows that society was now open to innovations, such as the use of Latin, the presence of the *socii* and the translation of words.

The *salarii socii* (salt operatives) were not the only *societas* operating on the island. To them can probably be added the *Falesce quei in Sardinia sunt* (the Falisci who are in Sardinia) (*CIL* XI, 3078; Peruzzi 1966, 127–8, 16–2; Wachter 1987, 441–8), despite the uncertainties regarding the date (150–100 BC is more probable than 238–200 BC), the context (pastoralism, agriculture and possibly also trade) and the area in which they operated (Ogliastra, Sarrabus–Gerrei, Marmilla and Sarcidano?). There were also the *sodales Buduntin(enses?)* (members of a society from Buduntum, modern Bitonto in Italy) (Fig. 17.3) who were probably engaged in the exploitation of the mineral resources of the Argentiera in the Nurra (*Année Épigraphique*, *AE* 1985, 486 = 1988, 650: 100–50 BC; Silvestrini 1999, 150–3) and were entrepreneurs who may have encouraged the installation of small workshops at the mouth of the nearby Rio Mannu, where Octavian founded the colony of Iulia Turris Libisonis (modern Porto Torres) (Petrucci 2018, 78–82). Other Italics seem to have been involved in the exploitation of land or pasture. These included the Patulcenses Campani, linked to the Patulcii who were well known at Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli in Italy), or to the temple of Janus Patulcius at Cales, settled in 111 BC between the Trexenta, Sarcidano and Planargia regions by the proconsul Marcus Caecilius Metellus (*CIL* X, 7852, 7933; Zucca 2011, 80–1; Mayer i Olivé 2012, 353–6). The Euthiciani were similarly in Planargia, and perhaps again thanks to Metellus (an epitaph from Karales mentions a Patulcius Eutythianus in the imperial period, *CIL* X, 7861). The foundation of Valentia and Santa Sofia di Laconi in Sarcidano, Uselis in Alta Marmilla, Gurulis Nova in Planargia and perhaps Tibula in Romangia, at the mouth of the river Coghinas, can also be ascribed to Metellus and before him to Lucius Aurelius Orestes (125–121 BC) (Ibba 2015, 26–9; 2016, 75–6; 2021, 205 and 210).



Figure 17.2 Bronze votive item from San Nicolò Gerrei (from Llamazares Martín 2020, 19).

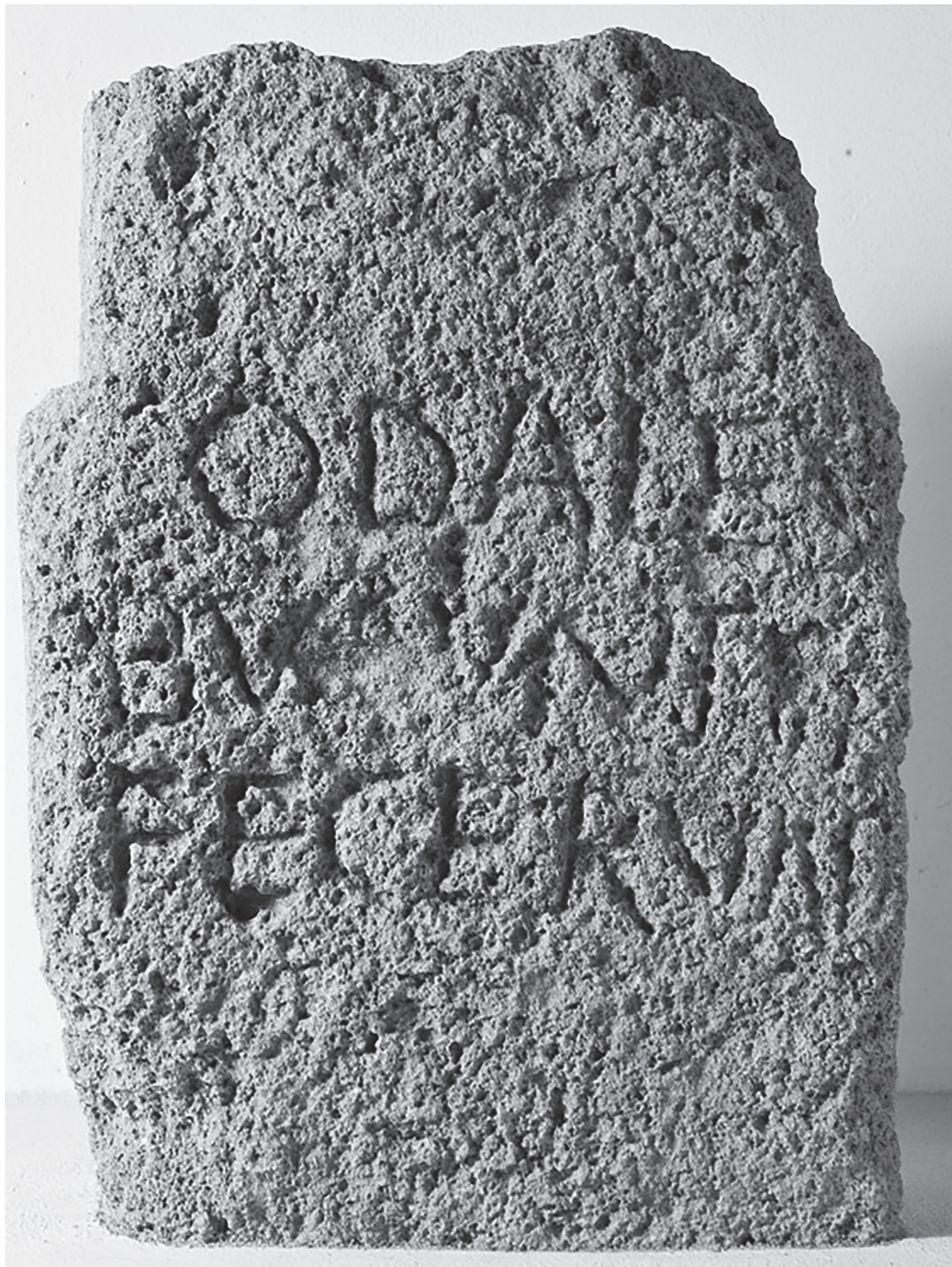


Figure 17.3 Boundary cippus of the Buduntin(---), AE 1985, 486 = 1988, 650 (photo: Ibba collection).

Countryside: Organisation, Production, Imports and 'Folk Art'

A consequence of these efforts was more extensive occupation of the countryside, but without any associated reorganisation or dismantling of structures created by Carthage to control territory (van Dommelen 1998, 156–7, 205–6; Pietra 2013, 244–6; Tronchetti 2020, 42–3). Instead, significant continuity of practices can be observed in the Punic or Sardo-Punic settlements scattered throughout the island (Colombi 2010, 20–1; Pietra 2013, 204–6; Roppa 2013, 98–100 and 130–8). There are some differences, however. For instance, the area around Neapolis (modern Santa Maria di Nabui, in the territory of Guspini) and Nora sees some abandonment and new foundations, which nevertheless still form around an urban centre, the terminus for the export and import of surplus goods. Again in the Neapolis area, restructuring seems to be associated with the introduction of new and diversified intensive farming, though it is unclear whether in response to market demands or the arrival of colonists. Around Olbia, Tarrhi, Othoca (modern Santa Giusta), Monte Sirai, Sarroch and to a lesser extent between the Marmilla and Trexenta regions and at Bosa, there is a significant increase in the number of medium–small farms and even in villages with a mixed agricultural and pastoral economy, practising intensive or extensive cultivation (particularly cereals). Also, in the Barbagia area between Lula and Ussassai there are about 10 new settlements, though some of these probably had a military function (Tiscali, Rughinis, Soroeni, Su Sfortorgiu, Nolza, Noddole, Nuraghe Mannu, Sant'Efis, Orulù and Locoe; cf. Delussu 2009, 8; 2012, 62; Maisola 2012, 2769–70 and 2774; Trudu 2012a, 2652–5).

Archaeology has so far not confirmed the existence of large estates, but it is possible that sizeable properties, assigned to Sardinian or Italic entrepreneurs, were later divided into smaller *fundi* (farmsteads) managed by the local population (Ibba 2015, 18 and 28–9). This may be true of the Numisiae, bordering the Euthiciani, under which the tribes of the Uddadhaddar, the [---]rarri and the [---]uthon worked (Sotgiu 1961 = *ILSard* I, 233; *CIL* X, 7931–2: 1st century BC–1st century AD?: cf. van Dommelen 1998, 174; Mayer i Olivé 2012, 357–9; Roppa 2013, 29; Ibba 2016, 75–6, n. 40). Large, estate-based farms only start appearing in about 50 BC, though their management by slaves remains to be demonstrated: they are found around Nora, Neapolis, Monte Sirai, in the region of Coros, perhaps at Olbia and everywhere in conjunction with either abandonment or enlargement of numerous Sardo-Punic farms and villages. It is therefore no coincidence that only now do inscriptions mention senatorial families with substantial properties on the island (Ibba 2016, 74–5): e.g. the Plautii between Othoca and the Barigadu (*CIL* X, 7902), Fundania Galla, the wife of Marcus Terentius Varro Reatinus, who owned lands between

Alta Marmilla and Tarrhi (*CIL* X, 7893), and the Lucilii Rufi in the area of Nora (*CIL* X, 8059.237).

The increase in rural settlements presumably led to an increase in production volumes, in response both to a slowly developing taxation system (Clemente 1990, 368–9 and 376; van Dommelen 1998, 174–5; Naco del Hoyo 2003, 532–5 and 539–40; Roppa 2013, 30–2) and to the demands of a market that, thanks to the efforts of traders (*mercatores*) and businessmen (*negotiatores*), now extended beyond the restricted local areas (Tronchetti 2020, 42).

The availability of resources favoured an exponential increase in the imports of valuable consumer goods not only to towns, but also to the rural interior, with a few limited exceptions (e.g. some settlements near Neapolis). Alongside locally made storage amphorae and African amphorae, Graeco-Italic wine amphorae, in particular Dressel 1, also became widespread even in the most remote villages. This type of wine amphora is normally accompanied by Campanian A black-glaze tableware and, to a lesser extent, Campanian B and B-oid ware. The forms especially include cups, attributable to the identity-affirming ritual of wine drinking, dear to the Italic peoples, thin-walled jars and *paterae* (shallow bowls) (Tronchetti 1996, 27–31; 2020, 42; see also Pietra 2013, 246).

The success of these imports was such (Roppa 2013, 104–24 and 136) that in the space of a few decades the ceramic forms of the past were completely replaced, proof of an almost total adherence to the ideological messages conveyed by these luxury objects. Further confirmation of their popularity is the very large number of local imitations, with characteristic grey fabric. These flooded the domestic market from the middle of the 2nd century BC in such large quantities that they equalled the imports of Campanian A ware and surpassed those of Campanian B ware. Their distribution in all contexts and their persistence until the middle of the 1st century AD indicate the presence throughout the island of central Italic potters capable of introducing and disseminating new production techniques, and adapting these to the tastes and techniques present on the island (Tronchetti 1996, 32–4; 2018, 14).

It is more difficult to form a view about the nature of those who commissioned these products. Whilst it can plausibly be proposed that there was a substantial presence of immigrants, capable of creating such a marked change in taste in this rapid and radical way, the contribution of the Sardo-Punic inhabitants should not be underestimated. This is confirmed by the frequent occurrence of graffiti scratched on Campanian A and Campanian B pottery by the owners (e.g. Nabor, Ricoce, Saturninus, Fufius, Se. Herennius, Q. Vina – regrettably often unpublished) found in urban and rural contexts and unequivocally attributable to both the Italic and Libyan-Punic worlds (Ibba 2016, 71, 73 and 79). Regardless, the presence of important Roman-Latin groups in the countryside can be inferred

from burials in earthenware jars (Carboni *et al.* 2012, 85–8), practised particularly between Nurra and Meilogu (and also at Olbia, Buddusò and Sorgono), from the so-called ‘alla cappuccina’ burials, where inclined tiles were arranged to create a ‘roof’ covering the body and grave goods (van Dommelen 1998, 175; *contra* Carboni *et al.* 2012, 85), the ‘mirror stelae’, the miniature reproductions and the large terracotta sculptures.

The ‘mirror stelae’ or ‘stelae of Viddalba’ (1st century BC) are widespread between the Nurra, Coros and Roman-gia areas, which were little affected by Punic colonisation. These are small *sémata* (memorial tombstones) with a stylised representation of the deceased’s face, and some were accompanied by a concise Latin text (Fig. 17.4). Inspired by the votive offerings from the Campania-Latium-Etruscan area, they introduced the complete novelty of the funerary portrait to Sardinia, but this achieved only very limited popularity on the island (Mastino and Pitzalis 2003, 657–95; Angiolillo 2012a, 153–5, 158–62 and 164–6; Mastino and Zucca 2012, 415–7). The later hut-shaped (*cippi a capanna*) and box-shaped (*cippi a bauletto*) memorials of the Barigadu and Campidano di Oristano areas (1st to 2nd centuries AD) belong to the same cultural horizon, though these show both strong Punic (presumably from Tarrhi) and local influences. The origin of the people associated with these memorials also seems different, mainly *peregrini* (people without Roman citizenship) or individuals who had Romanised very keenly (Angiolillo 2012a, 156–7 and 162–4; Mastino and Zucca 2012, 423–8; Farre 2015, 1594–5).

The small bronze with a silver mask from Giorré-Florinas (Fig. 17.5) and the hundreds of miniature reproductions found in the votive deposits of dozens of rural and urban sanctuaries and in the necropolis of Olbia, concentrated especially around Tarrhi and in the Coros, also point to Mediterranean Hellenism and Etruscan-Faliscan traditions. Such places of worship, however, had been frequented since the 4th century BC, sometimes without interruption into the Roman period. In other cases, they had been abandoned during the 3rd century BC and reoccupied during the 2nd to 1st centuries BC by immigrants and Romanised Sardo-Punic inhabitants (van Dommelen 1998, 151–3, 155 and 175; Trudu 2012b, 393–9). The refined miniatures represent deities of uncertain identification (of health or fertility, fields or waters), people making donations, animal and plant offerings, anatomical parts and architectural elements. In the same contexts, there are often Punic-Hellenistic perfume burners and images of ‘sufferers’, rustic in character, and the expression of Sardo-Phoenician inspired ‘folk art’, though they were never something uneducated or humble. All this provides further evidence of that hybrid society already described at San Nicolò Gerrei (Garbati 2008, 19–57 and 62–85; Angiolillo 2012b, 26–8; Carboni *et al.* 2012, 13–8 and 31–7; Carboni 2017).

‘High Art’ in Rural Sanctuaries

Unexpectedly, the countryside has also yielded some very fine examples of ‘high art’, in the form of large terracotta cult statues, some being larger-than-life-size. These are the fruit of major investments by those living in Sardinia who were making the dedication, but whose residency did not make them unaware of the political-cultural debate taking place on the mainland. There is no agreement among scholars on the origin of these artefacts. Some believe they are experiments of Punic-Hellenistic origin, enriched by subsequent eclectic contributions from the area of central Italy. Others think they are purely the outcome of influences from the Italian peninsula, imported into or produced in Sardinia by highly specialised workshops employing Italic or Sardo-Punic clay sculptors who imitated foreign products or they were made by itinerant craftsmen using moulds circulating around Sardinia in response to the demands of specific patrons (*e.g.* Campus 1994, 116–8; 1996, 589–90; Salvi 2004, 71–2; Garbati 2008, 62; Ghiotto 2014, 544–6; Carboni 2017, 109–10).

The most striking example comes from the Punic temple of Sid-Baby (B’BY) (a Punic deity related to healing and hunting) at Antas-Fluminimaggiore, where other deities of the Carthaginian pantheon were also venerated (Melqart, Ashtart-Demeter, Horon, Shadraphà). This was destroyed possibly during the Mercenaries’ war or during the turbulent phases of the Roman’s ‘first conquest’ in the last decades of the 3rd century BC probably due to its ideological importance (*contra* Garbini 2019, 85). In the second half of the 2nd century BC, the sanctuary was restored and adorned with terracotta decorations inspired by the Hellenistic motifs of central Italic origin (*contra e.g.* Bonetto 2006, 268; Tomei 2008, 23, 25 and 211–2). These included lion-head water spouts, parts of wall friezes with images of the Potnia theròn (goddess of animals) which alternated with others, perhaps of a winged deity (though these might belong to an Augustan phase), friezes with griffins held by the tail by harpies, wall-slabs with a procession of winged *hydrophorai* (water carriers) converging towards a single point, and finally one or more slabs in high relief, perhaps from the front pediment, with four large figures (4/5 life-size), three of which are heroic nudes. It is likely that Iolaus was in the middle of this group, with a plumed headdress and perhaps a spear, if it followed the typical iconography of Sid, and to his left Hercules-Melqart with the lion skin, with both figures standing and perhaps separated by a vine; at the sides were Ceres-Ashtart seated on a throne, perhaps dressed in a *chiton* (tunic), and a young man lying or seated presumably on a rock, interpreted as Dionysus, perhaps the equivalent of the Punic Eshmun. The temple may also have contained a marble acrolithic statue, perhaps of Ashtart, made in the Rhodes-Alexandria area (Torelli 2019) and possibly colossal bronze statues of Sid and Melqart, though their chronology is uncertain. In addition, there are



Figure 17.4 Epitaph from Viddalba of Tertius Amu[lii ? f.], AE 1998, 679 (photo: Ibba collection).



Figure 17.5 Bronze statuette with silver mask from Florinas, and specifically at Giorré (photo: Ibba collection).

the usual clay or bronze votive offerings as also found in other rural sanctuaries.

The interpretation of the building's form and the characters represented there is not unanimous, but it is evident that in the new temple the legend of the island's colonisation was re-celebrated in the name of Sid-Sardò, son of Makéris-Melqart at the head of the Libyes, or in the name of Iolaos, nephew of Hercules leading the Athenians and Thespiades, based on the two versions of the myth, Phoenician-Punic or Attic (Paus. 10.17.2, 5–7 and 9; Diod. Sic. 4.29–30 and 5.15). The figures of Ashtart and Eshmun may have been added in deference to Carthaginian theology (which commonly associated the two divinities with Sid and Melqart) and to the ideology of the Sardo-Punic elites who still held economic and political power in this part of Sardinia. Alternatively, it can be suggested that the traditional view was now eclipsed by another, and relates to the identity values of Italic *negotiatores* and of the nascent group of the *populares*, who had their own symbols in Ceres-Ashtart, Dionysus-Bacchus and in the ritual of wine.

Following this second interpretation, it can be argued that just as the cult of Sid L'B (?) *pater* was introduced from Carthage to Antas to seal a fruitful alliance with the Sardi aimed at exploiting the rich mineral resources of the Sulcis-Iglesiente, similarly in this phase, its Graeco-Latin equivalent Iolaos-Sardus *pater*, associated with a civilizing Hercules and now removed of allusions to the Punic world, was used to seal a new agreement between the Sardo-Punic and Italic *populares*. It should be noted that the latter always enjoyed general approval on the island and that the group was headed by Gaius Gracchus. Gaius was the son of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, who, during the 'second conquest', was victor over the tribe of the Ilienses, a tribe which according to Pausanias (10.17) descended from Iolaos. It should also not be forgotten that Gaius always held his quaestorship on the island, supporting Aurelius Orestes (mentioned above) in military operations and enjoying great support among the dignitaries of the province (Bernardini and Ibba 2015, 81–101; Ibba 2015, 20–2 and 25–6; not always agreeing Manca di Mores 2019; Zucca 2019, 42–3 and 47–58).

A similar ideological sequence may also have occurred in the temple of an anonymous god of health, with votive deposits having been found in the area of Is Caniles at the foot of the hill of San Giuseppe, at the gates of Padria, the ancient Ogryle-Gurulis Vetus. In an open but presumably consecrated space, offerings were recovered which showed that the temple was used between the 4th century BC and 3rd century AD. There are numerous parallels with Antas: thousands of votive offerings typical of 'cult-crafts' and large terracotta statues of female and male deities were recovered from the remains. The constant references to

Hercules and his attributes (the club, the lion skin) were probably an allusion to the foundation myth of Ogryle and once again to the feats of Iolaos and the Athenians. In other cases, references are found to the rites of *sanatio* (healing), to the agricultural world, to fertility (e.g. a very rare example of the representation of a uterus, which, in contrast, is well attested in Italic sanctuaries). This is all evidence presumably again attributable to the process of reoccupation and exploitation of the countryside between the Planargia and Meilogu areas, involving both immigrants and locals (Campus 1994, 99–115; 1996; Angiolillo 2012b, 26; Carboni 2017, 109–10). There is also the sanctuary of Santa Margherita di Pula, halfway between Bithia and Nora. Alongside numerous ‘folk art’ miniatures and plaques, ascribable to the cult of Ceres and Tanit, this also has two terracotta statues of Demeter and Core and the bust of a seated deity, presumably belonging to one of the two heads, of clear Campanian influence (Garbati 2008, 26 and *cf.* 77–8; Angiolillo 2012b, 25; Roppa 2013, 74).

Hybridisation Processes in the Towns

The most striking evidence of the new cultural climate in Sardinia comes from its towns. If the early but significant examples from Olbia are ignored (Garbati 2008, 44–5; Angiolillo 2012b, 29; Pietra 2013, 56–8, 225 and 243–4: end of the 3rd century BC), this being the closest port to the coasts of Italy and therefore the most convenient (Ibba 2021, 215–7), examples of both miniature and monumental ‘cult-crafts’ are found from the mid-2nd century BC at Karales and Nora, in a few cases accompanied by magic formulas in neo-Punic (Salvi 2004; Garbati 2008, 20–1, 25–6 and 61–2; Ghiotto 2014, 541–9; Carboni 2017, 109–10 and 115–6). These are not just cult images, though. From the so-called temple of Aesculapius at Sa Punta ‘e su Coloru, at Nora, come two statues of incubants (this relates to the ritual practice of *incubatio*, where the *incubant* slept in the sacred area in order to receive healing or blessings and visions via dreams) with iconography that is completely unusual in the Mediterranean, and were evidently intended to illustrate the peculiar rituals practiced in the sanctuary on the outskirts of the city (Garbati 2008, 26; Angiolillo 2012b, 24–5 and 28–9; Carboni 2017, 113).

There are other examples: the central Italic ‘theatre-temples’ of Via Malta at Karales, perhaps dedicated to Venus, with numerous moulds for the ‘cult’ offerings being found nearby; the ‘Temple of the Acropolis’ on the hill of Su Pisu at Sulci (modern Sant’Antioco), perhaps of Elat or Isis and Serapis; the ‘Tempietto K’ of Melqart at Tarrhi; perhaps the second phase of the ‘Temple of the Doric half-columns’ which was perhaps to Demeter or Pomona, who were always at Tarrhi; and probably the stepped temple on the promontory of Torre di Chia at Bithia, perhaps of Jupiter (Ghiotto 2004, 34–8; Ibba 2004, 121–3; Bonetto 2006, 258 and

261–8; Tomei 2008, 72–99, 102–7, 121–6, 142–8, 205–8, 212–3, 217–8, 220–1 and 224–6; Angiolillo 2012b, 23, 25 and 27–8; Roppa 2013, 50–1, 57–8, 62 and 65–6; Minoja *et al.* 2015, 1908–11; Bassoli and Chergia 2016, 333–4). To these can be added: an, albeit limited, use of Ionic, Doric and Tuscan capitals (Nieddu 1992, 13–5: end of the 2nd century BC); the use of lime mortar (2nd century BC); and from the mid-1st century BC the first public portraits of notables (Saletti 1989, 77; see below). In addition, between the 2nd century BC and 1st century AD there was the slow spread of ‘tower’ or ‘naiskos’ funerary monuments usually destined for lead, clay or stone funeral urns. Such monuments were perhaps influenced by North Africa, but were certainly a sculptural reflection of the economic and ideological power attained by an obviously small number of entrepreneurs who were not necessarily Italic (Arca 2013; 2014; 2017).

There are further indications of the spending power on the island. One is the small votive offering, made very unusually of marble (Fig. 17.6), that the wife presumably of the proconsul Lucius Aurelius Orestes placed in a sanctuary in the provincial capital, perhaps to give thanks for the protection afforded to her husband during the campaigns against the Sardi (*CIL* X, 7579; *cf.* Ibba 2016, 72). Another is the neo-Attic stele with references to Dionysus and banqueting, displayed by a cultured collector in his house and later perhaps in his tomb at Karales (Ibba 2019, 133–5). Also, the dedication of a cult building at Tarrhi, surrounded by a stone wall and with an adjoining (orchard) offered by the slave *dispensator* (finance officer) of Fundania Galla and perhaps identifiable with the reconstruction of the ‘Temple of the Doric half-columns’ mentioned above (*CIL* X, 7893: mid-1st century BC; *cf.* Tomei 2008, 126; Ruggeri 2011, 301–2). The sporadic nature of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence leads us to firstly imagine a Sardinia that was marginal in the economic and cultural movements taking place in the western Mediterranean (Nieddu 1992, 15). On the other hand, the same evidence could arguably simply be a reflection of the unsystematic nature of archaeological discovery and research, and the challenges even recent work faces when seeking to make any advances.

It should also be emphasised that innovations coexisted with traditions in towns. Residential architecture continued to preserve the layouts of the Punic period (the first Italic-style houses have been identified at Karales and date to the Augustan period). Similarly, chamber tombs, the *tophet* (cemetery open to the sky) and stelae inspired by the stylistic motifs adopted in Africa all continued in use (van Dommelen 1998, 175–6; Ghiotto 2004, 158–65 and 173–5; Roppa 2013, 65; Unali 2017, 418). In reality, towns appear to be a more preferential area for different cultural trends to mingle than in the countryside. Thus in the cemetery of Isciamariana at Olbia, a burial was associated with a ‘*naiskos*’ monument (typical of the Punic world), funerary trappings usual for the 4th–3rd centuries BC and, above all, a dedication in



Figure 17.6 Votive item from Cagliari, CIL X, 7579 (photo: Ibba collection).

Punic pre-dating 238 BC, which could have been displayed on a granite pillar (*ICO Sard*, 34). This could all, though, be combined with stressing the deceased's adherence to the ideology of the new Sardinian ruling classes, while still proudly exhibiting the noble genealogy of his family, according to which he descended from a Carthaginian dignitary and even from the god Sid, who was the first to lead the Libyes to Sardinia (Campus 2012, 38–40; Pietra 2013, 140–3, cf. 241–7; Arca 2017, 339; see also above).

According to three inscriptions, a similar process of hybridisation is recorded at Sulci, a community that was by definition multicultural thanks to its commercial ports, and a favoured stop for *mercatores* crossing the Mediterranean (Roppa 2013, 60–3; Ibba 2021, 212–3). The oldest inscription is probably a black marble slab with a dedication in neo-Punic of a statue to Felix Cressius, Ceresius or Carisius (LPLKS KHRHSY), an Italic or Sardo-Punic, set up by Pullius Agbor (PHLY 'GBR), son of MQR' (Macer?) (*CIS* I, 151 = *ICO Sard*, Npu 2: I BC), a local notable who may have been individually granted Latin rights. The votive

painting on an ivory plaque offered perhaps to Shadraphà by [---]rubalis f., where the Latin text is associated in the lower right corner with isolated neo-Punic letters, perhaps for propitiatory purposes, is generically dated to after 50 BC (*AE* 2012, 641). There is also a statue base, of more uncertain date, with a dedication in Punic and Latin (which may have been added later, using the spaces left over between the Punic inscription and the cornice) offered to [H]imilco Idnibalis f. Hi[imilconis n.] by his son Himilco to celebrate the construction of a temple (the 'Temple of the Acropolis'?) for which his father may have been responsible as a sufete (*CIS* I, 149 = *ICO Sard*, Npu 5 = *CIL* I / 2, 2225 = X, 7513: post-80 BC or Augustan period; Ibba 2016, 78).

These three documents clearly demonstrate that, in the late Republic, Sulci gradually distanced itself from the values of the Semitic world, while retaining its institutions and traditions (the unusual names, the figure perhaps of a chief or 'TM', the council of elders, RŠ', and probably the sufete magistracy). This is shown for example, by the sometimes hesitant introduction of a new shared language and

new art forms such as the portrait, unthinkable in the Punic world, anthroponyms occasionally inspired by the Italic world, and perhaps even of Latin law for Pullius (Jongeling 2008, 277–80; Campus 2012, 180–3; Ibba 2016, 76 and 78–9). Such trends are correspondingly reflected in other aspects of society at Sulci. These are the stepped temple on the hill of Su Pisu, the reorganisation of the countryside around Monte Sirai and the appearance of the first estate-based farms (see above), the ‘*naiskos*’ funerary monuments of Sa Presonedda and Santa Lisandra (Arca 2013, 239–43; 2014, 147–50; 2017, 338–9: 2nd–1st centuries BC), the transition from inhumation to cremation inside the Steri 2 family hypogeum tomb (burial in an underground chamber) (Tronchetti 2020, 43–4), the continued use of the *tophet* until the middle of the 1st century BC (Bernardini 2005; Roppa 2013, 62), the frequency of ‘*naiskos*’ and later of ‘walking ram’ stelae between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (Unali 2017, 418–9; Pla Orquín 2020, 1828; *contra* Mastino and Zucca 2012, 406–7), and perhaps only in a later phase replaced by funeral urns, not archaeologically attested in the *tophet*, but the memory of which may survive in the modern toponym (‘*Sa guardia ‘e is pingiadas*’, ‘The lookout of the jars’). The *dókanon* in bas-relief (two uprights connected by two crossbeams) of the Dioscuri may have been depicted on the inner side of the entrance door of Sa Presonedda. This was a personification of the ancestors, but also of protective deities of travellers (and thus well suited to both seafaring and funerary contexts) and a symbol of the *equites*, a social element that, if confirmed, would further enrich the picture of local society (Angiolillo 2012b, 25–6 and 29–32; doubts in Arca 2013, 241; 2014, 149).

It has rightly been observed (Ghiotto 2004, 184–9; Bonetto 2009, 236–41; Pietra 2013, 247–53; Roppa 2013, 42–6, 58–9 and 64–5) that a coherent urban remodelling of Punic cities in a Roman context cannot be achieved until the Caesarian-Augustan period (Nora, Tarrhi) or even the Julio-Claudian period (Sulci, Olbia). It is likely, however, that, by the mid-2nd century BC and under pressure from the provincial governor and Italic residents, the political centre of Karales was transferred from the Punic settlement near the Santa Gilla lagoon, to an area closer to the *munitus vicus* (small, defended settlement) (Varro Atacinus *poet.* fr. 18), where the proconsul and part of his administrative staff probably resided, presumably near the current Piazza del Carmine or Piazza Yenne (Ghiotto 2004, 64–6 and 180–3; Stiglitz 2007; Tomei 2008, 67–72; Roppa 2013, 49–53). Not only was the theatre-temple of Via Malta, mentioned above, soon built here, but probably also the *capitolium* (temple dedicated to Jove, Juno and Minerva), the *praetorium* (residence of the provincial governor) and the *tabularum* (provincial archive) though these are recorded only in texts of the Imperial period. A new port was also constructed for large cargo ships, intended to replace the previous one (Ibba 2021, 200–5).

The places of worship already visited by the Sardo-Punic inhabitants were not abandoned (e.g. Santa Restituta, perhaps linked to the cult of water, and the *thesaurus* (sanctuary) of Sant’Eulalia, used between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC) and further sacred buildings were built on the outskirts of the new town, such as the temples of Viale Trieste, Viale Trento (perhaps dedicated to Eshmun-Esculapio) and of Via Angioj (Ibba 2004, 117–21, 124 and 126–8; Salvi 2005, 739–49; Garbati 2008, 19–20). The necropolis of Tuvixeddu, which had served the Punic ‘KRLY’, continued to be used, but gradually the *busta* (cremations) and later, Italic-style funeral urns, were placed above the actual burials, sometimes arranged in complex burial chambers that recalled the tradition of hypogeum burials (Salvi 2000, 65–7, 73 and 76–8; 2001, 246–52). A new cemetery began in parallel from the 3rd century BC on the eastern outskirts of the city and here, around 50 BC, C. Apsena Pollio, presumably a *mercator* of Etruscan origin, commissioned a ‘*naiskos*’ mausoleum. It was adorned with a Doric frieze with metopes decorated with six-petaled flowers and *paterae umbelicate* (shallow bowls with a central button), probably with the object of emphasising his economic status and origins which distinguished him from many other Karalitani (AE 1986, 271, cf. Angiolillo 1985; 2012b, 22 and 27; Mastino and Zucca 2012, 407–8; Ibba 2016, 76).

Not far from the cemetery, in a production area serving the new port and residential district, is located the *fullonica* (?) (cloth fulling mill) of *Plotius Silionis f. Rufus* (ILSard I, 58: 1st century BC), adorned with an Italian peninsula-inspired style of mosaic floor, with six-petalled flowers and references to the sea. The name of the entrepreneur reveals his Sardo-Punic origins and ties to the central Italic family of the Plotii, active in the major ports of the Mediterranean and who may have freed him (Angiolillo 2012b, 22 and 29; Ibba 2016, 79). Pollio and Rufus are classic examples of members of a multi-ethnic society, open to novelties, but once again not forgetful of its traditions: being still managed by *sufetes* (Aristo and Mutumbal Rocco) at the end of Caesarian period, but minting coins with a Latin legend and a representation of a temple of Venus on the reverse (*Roman Provincial Coinage* = RPC 624).

Conclusion

Although there are fewer sources for Nora, it can be suggested that the situation was similar there (Cic. *Scaur.* 43; AE 2006, 520; Campus 2012, 185; Ibba 2016, 79–80; Ruggeri and Pla Orquín 2017). This allows the conclusion that in the Sardinian cities and countryside there were dynamic and mixed communities, which were ready to accept customs and habits introduced by *negotiatores* and by Italic immigrants, at all levels of society, depending on the specific spending power of each individual, the various market offerings and the amount of the individual’s ideological

conviction. A hybrid culture emerged from the meeting of these two worlds, with its own specific features, but perfectly incorporated into the *koiné* of Mediterranean Hellenism. It was anything but backward or primitive and even had characteristics that made it unique within a particular context.

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