

Introduction

The central Sicilian city of Morgantina was refounded on a new site in the fifth century BCE. The urban plan and political agora of this second Morgantina are the subjects of this book. The first three chapters describe the new site, the orthogonal city plan, and the probable date of the move. Descriptions of the agora and twelve civic or sacred monuments follow. Objects that cast light on the function of the buildings and spaces are presented in catalogues for each chapter. The coins that circulated in the public center are particularly abundant: they are useful for dating and cast light on the local economy.¹

The buildings of the agora demonstrate the variety and character of the civic architecture of a prosperous, early Hellenistic western Greek *polis*. Most of them were components in an ambitious, co-ordinated program adopted in the second quarter of the third century BCE, when the city had come under the strong cultural and economic influence of Syracuse. The American excavators have long held that early Hellenistic Morgantina also lay within the political boundaries of the Syracusan kingdom. In their design and planning, the city's agora and public buildings seem to reflect Hellenistic forms and practices that were transmitted through the contemporary architecture of the coastal metropolis.

Most of the public buildings also had two distinct lives: after Morgantina fell to Rome in 211 BCE at the end of the second Punic war, they were taken over by the city's new population of Hispanic soldiers. The ensuing changes document the ways in which a group of mercenaries settled into and radically transformed the intact Hellenic city they had received as a gift from Rome. The book concludes with a series of appendices; the first three deal with a limestone sculpture, toppled and discarded in the violent transition to Roman rule; with the extensive use of wood in the city's civic architecture; and with the kinds of masonry represented in the agora. Two further appendices describe the geology and geography of the city and a secondary human burial found below the Northeast Building and North Stoa. The study of the geology is the work of the late Prof. Sheldon Judson of Princeton University; the report on the human remains is contributed by Dr. Carrie L. Sulsky Weaver.

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Before its refoundation in the fifth century, Morgantina occupied a hilltop in the upper reaches of the plain of Catania, as the crow flies fifty-six kilometers from the modern coast line (*map 1; plan 1*).² The archaic site has been known since the later Middle Ages as Monte Cittadella.³ The river Gornalunga rises to the southwest and flows below the city, before joining the Dittaino, the ancient Chrysas, near

the coast.⁴ Although of limited area, the Cittadella was well-protected by steep slopes. The valleys to the west, north, and east were ideal for cereal crops; olive trees grew on the hillsides.⁵ To the south and southwest were forests, long a source of timber and game.

The first Morgantina was founded at the end of the late Bronze Age by immigrants from the Italian mainland. The Morgetes who gave their name to the city were related ethnically and linguistically to groups of Sikels who settled in southeast Sicily at Lentini and the Mulino della Badia site near Grammichele, and to the north at Kentoripai and Assoros.⁶ Like the Greeks who came later, the Italic immigrants established discrete foundations, several of which grew into autonomous cities.

Greek settlements on the eastern and southern coasts in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE brought new material goods into the Sicilian interior; Greek ceramics provide evidence for trade with the coastal cities. Adoption at Morgantina of coastal building types, architectural terracottas, and cult images indicates that by the later sixth century a strong Greek element must have existed within the local population.⁷ Early in the fifth century, this small, long-established city was probably drawn into conflicts ignited by the Greek tyrant Hippokrates of Gela.⁸ His successor Gelon took the tyranny to Syracuse, ca. 484 BCE; Gelon's victory in 480 over the Carthaginians at the battle of Himera gave him great reknown. His brother Hieron inherited the tyranny in 478; in the following decade, harsh transfers of social groups and even entire urban populations set the stage for further conflict. One consequence of these events would be the refoundation of Morgantina.

Planned cities come into being at precise historical moments, when the dimensions of public spaces, streets, and house lots have been decided on and the new settlement is actually laid out on the ground.⁹ As Morgantina's removal to Serra Orlando is not mentioned

⁴ The ancient name of the Gornalunga is unknown; for the suggestion Albos, Raffiotta 1996, 16. The river was a habitat for tench and migratory eels at least through the mid-twentieth century; bronze fishhooks attest to local fishing in antiquity.

⁵ The territory of Aidone, the modern successor to Morgantina, is still given over to cereal culture and orchards; the heraldic motto of the city is *fertilissima civitas*. Agriculture may not have greatly changed since antiquity, climate and soil being constants.

⁶ Strabo 6.1.6; MS IV, 187–192; Albanese Procelli 2003, 18–27; Leighton 2012, 205–213, with fig. 3.7.

⁷ Antonaccio 2010. Excavations in the archaic city will be the subject of future volumes of *Morgantina Studies*, edited by Carla M. Antonaccio. For the Iron Age settlement, MS IV; Leighton 2012. Greek building types, PR X, 377; Antonaccio 1997, 174–180; Guzzo 2020, 174–175. Architectural terracottas, Kenfield 1990, 1993, 1994. Cult images, Marconi 2008; below, chapter 1.2, with fig. 1.3.

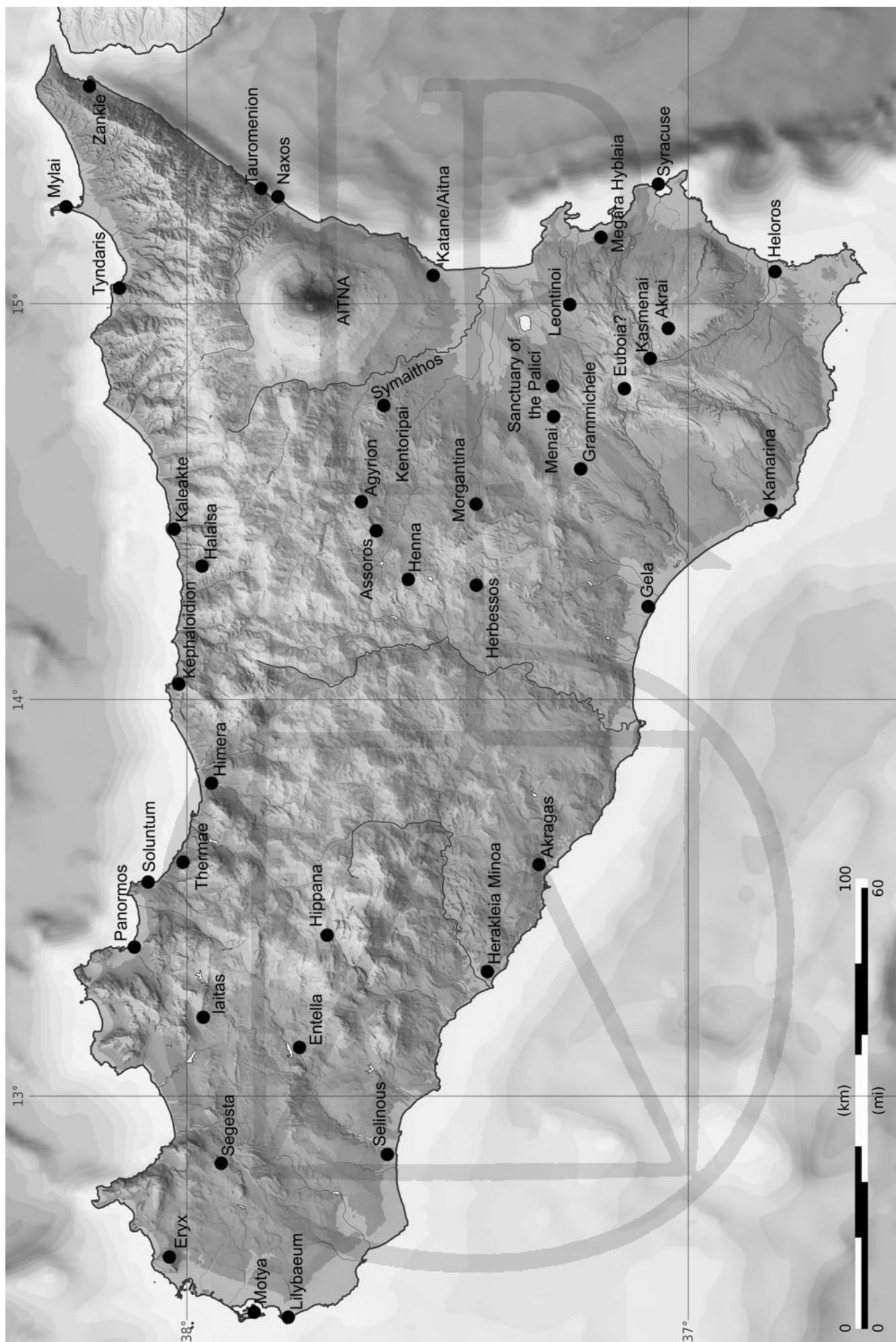
⁸ Sjöqvist 1973.

⁹ Mertens 2006, 63–72 (Megara Hyblaia).

¹ Identifications of almost all coins have been checked and weights verified.

² On the geographical location of Morgantina, see also Judson, appendix 4.1–2. General accounts of the two urban sites at Morgantina include Bell 2010; MS VI, 2–26; and Guzzo 2020, 172–179.

³ Sjöqvist 1973; MS IV, 154–161; Antonaccio 1997; Leighton 2012.



Map 1 Sicily, with ancient cities (base map by Semhur; licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

in surviving written texts, a probable date has to be sought from the archaeological evidence and the historical context. The key event may have been the capture of the city on the Cittadella by the Sikel leader Douketios in 459 BCE, as reported by the historian Diodorus.¹⁰ The principal features of the new city plan and the archaeological evidence are consonant with a mid-century date; in chapter three the case is put for the agency of Douketios, shortly after he had gained control of the early city. If a refounded city can be said to have an oikist, the energetic Sikel leader may have played that role. And, indeed, Douketios was responsible for the founding or refounding of several cities.¹¹ Morgantina's first coinage was struck in this period.¹²

The new city would be much larger than its predecessor, occupying the sequence of hills and plateaux that extend westward from the Cittadella along the ridge called Serra Orlando (chapter 1). The site was more accessible but also more exposed. The plan chosen for the second city is a characteristic example of fifth-century Greek urban design, with a network of broad streets meeting at right angles, large house lots of equal size, and an unusually spacious agora (chapters 2 and 3). Were it not for the abundant material evidence dating to the second quarter of the fifth century, we might be inclined to propose a more convenient foundation date in the last quarter of the fifth century, when the city fell into the orbit of Greek Kamarina.¹³ The pottery and coins, however, paint a more complex picture of an earlier refoundation. The city plan does indicate that Greeks participated in the new city's design; some may have come from the first Morgantina, their numbers augmented by new arrivals from the coastal cities, or from groups of immigrant mercenaries in need of land.

The various parts of the plan were carefully adapted to the topography of Serra Orlando. The streets and housing lots have parallels at Olynthos in northern Greece (refounded 432 BCE), while broad public spaces for meetings of citizen assemblies and commerce occur in such archaic Sicilian foundations as Selinous (ca. 650/600 BCE) and Kamarina (ca. 598 BCE).¹⁴ The very large agora at Morgantina is a late example of that tradition. A notable feature of the city plan is the presence of altars at street-corners. With parallels at Sicilian Naxos and Himera, the altars imply a system of neighborhood organization and suggest that streets may have been named for deities and heroes (chapter 2.6).

The era of Douketios at Morgantina ended with his surrender at Syracuse, ca. 450 BCE.¹⁵ During the following quarter century, the new city is likely to have paid annual tribute to the coastal metropolis.¹⁶ Although the meager written sources give us only two dates during those decades, both are important: we learn from Thucydides that Morgantina was ceded by Syracuse to Kamarina on the south coast in 424 BCE for an unspecified quantity of silver, and from Diodorus that it was forcibly taken back, ca. 396, by the tyrant Dionysios.¹⁷ The impotence of Kamarina after its fall to Carthage in 405 no doubt played a part in the reappearance of Syracuse in the Sicilian

hinterland, an event that seems to have been accompanied by burning and destruction (chapter 3.2). Along with well-dated Attic imports, the matt-painted pottery known as Siculo-geometric is a chief marker in all the deposits of the second half of the fifth century. This local ware reflects a ceramic tradition that originated in the Sikel towns of the interior; while it is likely to have been produced by Sikel artisans, its consumers appear to have included Greeks, just as Greek products were purchased by the Sikels.¹⁸ The ceramics seem to say that a mixed group of Sikels and Doric-speaking Greeks inhabited the city at least until ca. 396. Some of the Greeks may have come from Kamarina, whose mint is well-represented among the excavated coins of the fifth century.¹⁹

One civic monument is dated toward the end of the early period: this is the Northeast Building (chapter 6), a stoa-like structure facing the agora that housed the city's Prytaneion and remained in use until the mid-third century, when it was replaced by the North Stoa. The Northeast Building may belong to the brief period of Kamarina's hegemony over the city and its fertile territory (424–405 BCE). Probably contemporary is the remarkable cult image of a goddess, discovered clandestinely in the 1980's in the large extramural cult center of Demeter and Kore known today as the San Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary (fig. 1.5). Exported illegally and sold on the art market, the over life-size limestone and marble sculpture was repatriated from the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2011.²⁰ As the seat of a major civic institution, the long-lived Northeast Building offers evidence for cultural and demographic continuity between the fifth and third centuries (chapter 6).

The history and character of Morgantina's large agora are delineated in chapter four, followed by accounts of stamped brick and tile, civic institutions, cults, the provision of water, and transformation in the second century BCE. Descriptions follow of ten early Hellenistic public buildings that were placed within and around the great space that had been allotted to the agora by the fifth-century urban planners. The happy conjunction of a major architectural program and a spacious setting offers one key to the particular character of the new city center. Another must have been the involvement of experienced architects and planners. The Ekklesiasterion and associated cult of Zeus (chapter 5), three stoas (chapters 7, 8, and 11), and the Fountain House (chapter 10) all belong to the initial building program of the second quarter of the third century. The older Northeast Building (chapter 6) is described with the North Stoa that replaced it (chapter 7); this is the only known example in the agora of a sequence of structures on the same site. The West Stoa (chapter 12) and Public Office (identified as a center of financial administration, possibly a bank; chapter 9) were later third-century additions to the building program, while the Bouleuterion (chapter 13) and Doric Stoa (possibly the city's Agoranomion; chapter 14) both occupy former house lots immediately outside the original boundaries of the agora. The Public Office and presumed Agoranomion contribute unusual building types to the repertory of Greek civic architecture.

The core components of the building program were the Ekklesiasterion and adjacent cult of Zeus, the three long stoas, the East Granary, and the Theater. All were independent structures, separated from one another by spaces permitting access to, and circulation within, the public center. Through alignments and sight lines they also formed a unified composition. Eliminating any one part would affect

¹⁰ Diod. 11.78.5.

¹¹ Cities founded by Douketios: Menainon (459 BCE), Diod. 11.91.4; Palaikos (453 BCE), Diod. 11.88.6; Menai or Neai (?), founded ca. 453 BCE (here chapter 3, n. 101); Kale Akte (446 BCE), Diod. 12.8.2; also, chapter 2.6 below.

¹² Walhall 2018; also, chapter 3.4 below.

¹³ On the later fifth century at Morgantina, chapters 1.2, 3.3; Guzzo 2020, 185–186, arguing for refoundation after 424 BCE.

¹⁴ Hoepfner – Schwandner 1994, 76–77; Mertens 2003; 2006, 173–178, 351–354.

¹⁵ Diod. 11.92.

¹⁶ Ampolo 1984.

¹⁷ Thuc. 4.65; Diod. 14.78.7. Bell 2000, on Morgantina at the Congress of Gela in 424.

¹⁸ On Siculo-geometric pottery at Morgantina, Lyons 1996, 73–89; both Greek and Sikel wares are found together in the chamber tombs of the early city. On the question of late archaic ethnicity and identity, Antonaccio 2001, 2010; Walsh 2011–2012, 117–118; Baitinger – Hodos 2016.

¹⁹ MS II, nos. 117–124; here cat. 6.39.

²⁰ Bell 2007c; Marconi 2016; Greco 2017; chapter 1.2.



Map 2 Eastern Sicily with possible boundaries of the Syracusan kingdom (after Ampolo 2013, fig. 11)

the whole. The balancing of discretely defined units within a larger composition is characteristic of an early phase of coordinated Hellenistic city planning, foreshadowing the great architectural ensembles with continuous porticoes of second-century Greece and Asia Minor, as seen at Messene, Miletos, Priene, and Ephesos.²¹ Early Hellenistic Syracuse was the likely training ground of the planners and architects who worked at Morgantina. The local buildings seem to illuminate building types and details of the lost civic architecture of the metropolis. Hints of such coordinated design at Syracuse survive in the theater and associated stoas (*figs. 4.19–20*).

Among the later additions to the building program, the ambitious, unfinished West Stoa (chapter 12) was intended to become a *stoa hemistadidia* with two floors of seventeen paired shops. Designed at the apogee of early Hellenistic Morgantina's economic prosperity, ca. 230 BCE, the West Stoa exemplifies the range of the city's material resources and the skill of local stone masons. It also illustrates how a major public project was constructed over time, in a series of separate, presumably annual campaigns.

From their varied architecture, it is evident that the buildings of the agora housed diverse political institutions including the offices of magistrates, civic archives, public dining rooms, and law courts. While the functions of some buildings are evident (Bouleuterion, Fountain House), the large stoas are less revealing. The meager epigraphical record at Morgantina does not offer much help. Clues do survive in such features as interior altars, a speaker's platform or *bema*, internal windows, off-center doorways, and, in a few cases, significant small finds that are here included in the catalogues. The many public inscriptions of such east Sicilian cities as Akrai and Tauromenion record the existence of civic offices and institutions, suggesting purposes and occupants for the numerous but mute architectural spaces at Morgantina. Securely identified civic political structures include the Ekklesiasterion (chapter 5), Bouleuterion (chapter 13), Dikasterion (chapter 8), Prytaneion (chapter 7), and various public dining rooms or *syssitia* (chapters 7, 11); as noted above, identifications are also proposed for an Agoranomion or headquarters of the agora supervisors (chapter 14), an office for the *hiaropolos* or eponymous magistrate (chapter 7, room 16), and a public bank or *demosia trapeza* (chapter 9). Other possible *archai* of the agora are discussed at chapter 4.12.

The extensive building activity in the third-century agora of Morgantina coincides with the flourishing of the Syracusan kingdom of Hieron II (*map 2*). Large-scale building projects were also carried out at Akrai, Megara Hyblaia, Tauromenion, Heloros, and, most important, the metropolis itself.²² Probable political ties with Syracuse are discussed in chapters 4 and 9; architectural connections are noted in chapters 5, 7, 10, 12, and 13. Aspects of local architecture that may be derived from sources in the coastal metropolis include freedom of design (Ekklesiasterion, chapter 5), experimentation (Fountain House, chapter 10), and such unusual features as the bilateral symmetry of the North Stoa (chapter 7) and the early semicircular cavea of the Bouleuterion (chapter 13), which may imitate the council house on the agora of Syracuse, a building praised by Cicero (*Verr. 2.4.62*). Such innovation seems at home in the age of Archimedes.

The third recorded wartime capture of Morgantina took place in 211 BCE, when the city was taken by a Roman army near the end of the second Punic war in Sicily (Livy 26.21.17). Although we know nothing of the circumstances – we cannot say whether the city fell af-

ter a siege or surrendered in advance of one – the consequences appear to have been far more traumatic than the earlier transitions. In 214 Morgantina had followed the metropolis of Syracuse into alliance with Carthage, an act of rebellion in the view of Rome, the great power with which the Syracusan state had long been allied. Rome reserved harsh punishment for conquered former allies. Although the material city survived the transition, the citizenry apparently suffered greatly. While Livy does not reveal their fate, most Morgantinoi in 211 BCE probably could not have avoided death or slavery.²³ Such demographic continuity as had survived the city's eventful history was surely shattered that year. Human burials within the city walls, in sanctuaries, storerooms, and houses abandoned in 211, speak of a great crisis, as do the many precious objects, from single coins to large hoards, from gold and silver jewelry to bronze reliefs and collections of silver plate, all hidden about this time and never recovered by their owners (chapter 4.14). The survival of several major works of art in the extramural San Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary appears to have been owed to precautions taken by priests and faithful before the arrival of the Romans in 211 BCE. This remarkable collection of objects, all apparently preserved in antiquity for their cultural significance, beauty, or intrinsic value, today forms a sort of memorial to a thriving population that was utterly undone by war.

After the capture or surrender, the Roman senate awarded Morgantina to the Hispanic mercenaries who had betrayed Syracuse to Marcellus a year earlier and to whom a city had been promised (Livy 26.21.12, 17). The Hispani now formed a new, much smaller citizen body (*fig. 2.5*), some men perhaps taking wives from survivors of the ill-fated earlier population. The passage from Greek *polis* to mercenary *municipium* left many traces in the buildings of the agora.

In abandoned shops there is evidence for a period of anomie immediately following the fall of the city (chapter 4.13). Of the buildings that were reoccupied by the mercenaries, some continued to serve their original functions, but with changes (Ekklesiasterion, chapter 5.2; Public Office, chapter 9.9; Fountain House, chapter 10.6), while others were put to entirely new uses. Manufacturing and processing were now introduced into the upper agora, where a bronze foundry, olive press, and two ceramic workshops occupied spaces in stoas that had earlier housed political institutions (chapters 7.12, 8.12). The Greek city walls in the south agora appear to have been at least partly demolished (*fig. 5.22*), an external *proteichisma* or defensive outworks now serving as the site of a large kiln.²⁴

The Hispani appear to have deliberately suppressed inconvenient or disturbing reminders of the earlier city, one aim perhaps being the cancellation of claims of continuity with the Greek *polis* (chapter 4.14). The dearth of Greek public inscriptions on bronze is presumably owed to the melting down of the epigraphic record (chapter 11.6, 7; 13.8); one public inscription survived only because it was converted into a cheese-grater (chapter 4.14; *fig. 4.21*). Greek epigraphic claims to public ownership on brick and tile appear to have been intentionally broken and discarded (chapter 4.10). Treatment of the Prytaneion, an institution central to the identity of the Greek *polis*, was especially harsh: the *hestiatorion*, or dining room, was transformed into a bronze foundry and the hearth-altar of Hestia was destroyed. Of the two altars of Zeus at the Ekklesiasterion, one was chosen for preservation, the other suppressed (chapter 5.7). A public sculpture in the East Stoa was knocked down and the major parts discarded (appendix 1). Neighborhood sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore had existed throughout the Greek city; now the South Sanctuary, North

²¹ Lauter 1986, 94–99.

²² Akrai: Bernabò Brea 1956, 32–51 (theater and bouleuterion). Megara Hyblaia: Tréziny 2018. Tauromenion: Campagna – La Torre 2008; Campagna 2011. Heloros: Wolf 2016, 57–71. Syracuse: Rizzo 1923; Bell 1999; Wolf 2016, 23–56; Campagna 2003.

²³ Harris 1979, 51–52.

²⁴ MS III, 28–35.

Sanctuary, North Sanctuary Annex, East Sanctuary, Cittadella Sanctuary, and extramural San Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary were all permanently abandoned, probably, as Donald White proposed, because of the active involvement of the cult of the Two Goddesses in the final resistance to Rome.²⁵ The city may now have become known as Murgentia.²⁶

At some point in the first century of their possession of the city, the Hispani began to issue a bronze coinage bearing their name in the genitive: HISPANORUM. The remarkable numbers of such coins recovered in the first two years of the U.S. excavations led the Princeton graduate student Kenan T. Erim to connect the previously unnamed site of Serra Orlando with the historically attested city of Morgantina; near the end of the second Punic war, Morgantina (called Murgantia by Livy) was given by the Roman Senate to the Hispanic mercenaries who had betrayed Syracuse to Marcellus not long before.²⁷ Although there were a few early dissents, Erim's identification was widely accepted and has never been seriously questioned.²⁸ The chronology of the HISPANORUM series has been more controversial. Erim's dating of the first issues in the second half of the second century was questioned by Maria Caccamo Caltabiano, arguing for a starting date not long after the Hispani took possession of Morgantina, ca. 210 BCE.²⁹ Corroborative evidence for the introduction of the first series of the HISPANORUM coinage in the early second century is presented here in chapter 5.1.

The mercenaries' first century in Sicily was probably disturbed by a major earthquake (chapter 4.14), certainly by the slave rebellions of ca. 138–136 and ca. 102–101 BCE (Diod. 34/35). The latter troubles affected the archaeological record only indirectly, while seismic damage earlier in the second century is conspicuous in the collapsed portico of the Bouleuterion (chapter 13.7), repaired walls of the North Stoa (chapter 7.5) and Theater, and, beyond the agora, the fallen vaulting and cupola of the North Baths. In the lower agora, the first collapse of the north *analemma* of the Theater was probably owed to the same event. The burial of two-thirds of the Ekklesiasterion under alluvial soil also took place in the second century, perhaps on successive occasions when heavy rainfall may have coincided with periods of civic disorder (chapter 5.2). The first alluvial deposit, early in the century, may have occurred after the presumed earthquake, while the second can be associated with the siege of Morgantina by the slave army of Salvius during the second revolt.

The second century BCE also saw an expansion in the agora of commercial activity, which contributed to the need for a local coinage. In addition to the insertion of several shops in the North Stoa,

others were constructed *ex novo* to the east of the building. The failure of the Hispani to complete the West Stoa was counterbalanced by construction of the Macellum in the open space of the former political agora. This was an enclosed and secure market for meat and other foodstuffs; it remains the earliest known example of the building type. The Macellum was the major architectural undertaking of the Hispani; not included in the present book, it will form part of a second volume of *Morgantina Studies* on the buildings of the agora.³⁰ Perhaps contemporary with the Macellum was a small temple at the west end of the North Stoa, the only known sacred building constructed by the mercenaries (chapter 7.14). Fragments of the terracotta cult image indicate a female deity; the adjacent street altar from the third century probably served the temple (chapter 7.14).

The Hispano-Roman era at Morgantina ended in the mid-30's BCE, when the city was once again depopulated, apparently as a consequence of having sided with Sextus Pompeius in the civil war that marked the end of the Roman Republic; the evidence has been collected by Shelley C. Stone.³¹ The victors were Octavian and Marcus Agrippa. The dawning of a new era did not extend to Morgantina, where there was now widespread destruction in residential neighborhoods; major buildings in the agora were abandoned, including the East Stoa, Ekklesiasterion, and Macellum, along with most rooms in the North Stoa. Spoliation of ashlar blocks began in the Northwest Stoa. Inhabited briefly as a dwelling, the Public Office above the Ekklesiasterion was abandoned by the end of the century. In the later first century BCE, Strabo could declare that the city no longer existed.³²

Excavation has indeed confirmed that urban life at Morgantina had ended by the turn of the eras. A village community hung on in the northwest corner of the agora; a few formerly public buildings were still occupied, but with new functions, including a house in the large dining room 1 of the North Stoa (chapter 7) and a small public bath and sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in the Doric Stoa (chapter 14). The sacellum at the west end of the North Stoa continued in use, as did the outer basin of the Fountain House across the agora. On the West Hill a few large Hellenistic houses were still occupied by well-to-do owners who imported fine Roman pottery.³³ By the middle years of the first century CE, even these vestiges of communal life were gone, and the site of the second city returned to its pre-urban existence, inhabited, if at all, by farmers and shepherds. It would be back at the summit of the Cittadella that the next occupation of the site of Morgantina is documented, with the probable foundation of a Byzantine monastery in the seventh century CE.³⁴ Nothing suggests that the old name was remembered.

²⁵ White 1964.

²⁶ Murgentia: Cicero, *Verrines* 2.2.103; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 14.265; murgentini (ethnic): Pliny, *Natural History* 3.8.91. Morgantia: Livy 24.36.10, 26.21.12, 17. Cicero's direct knowledge of eastern Sicily makes his version of the name more likely.

²⁷ Livy, 26.21.17. Erim 1958. The Hispani appear never to have self-identified as Morgantinoi or Murgentini.

²⁸ Particularly significant is the finding at Serra Orlando of most of the numismatic issues of the Greek city of Morgantina, which have not turned up elsewhere; MS II, 3–34; here chapter 3, section 4. Objections: Piraino 1959, Manni 1981, 204–205.

²⁹ Caccamo Caltabiano 1985.

³⁰ Nabers 1967; publication of the Macellum is being prepared by Henry K. Sharp and Joanne Spurza.

³¹ MS VI, 17–23.

³² Strabo 6.1.6.

³³ MS VI, part IV, 203–228; part V, 282–290.

³⁴ MS VI, 69; PR X, 376, coins of the seventh century CE; MS II, nos. 754–757.

I Refoundation at Serra Orlando

1. The new site

For half of its thousand-year history Morgantina occupied the elevated hilltop today called Monte Cittadella. Then, in an era of change in the fifth century BCE, the city was moved to a much larger site immediately west of the Cittadella, in the cluster of hills known today as Serra Orlando (*plan 1; figs. 1.1–2*). No surviving historical source mentions the refoundation. The U.S. excavators initially assigned it to the fourth century, subsequently pushing the date back to the later fifth century.¹ The evidence for an earlier, mid-fifth-century refoundation at Serra Orlando is presented here in chapter three.

The two urban sites are almost contiguous, at their closest point only ca. 220 m. apart (*plan 1*).² As measured by the area within the early Hellenistic defensive walls, the new site (78 ha / 192.66 acres) is more than six times larger than the Cittadella (12.23 ha / 30.21 acres).³ Although the older city was not entirely abandoned, Serra Orlando now became the principal urban settlement of Morgantina.⁴ The elongated site chosen for the new city measures 2,080 m. from east to west, ranging in its north-south dimension from ca. 140 m. at the east to ca. 540 m. at its widest at the center. The north flank is defined by a steep limestone ridge rising seventy-five to one hundred meters above the valley of the river Gornalunga. The city at Serra Orlando was largely hidden behind this ridge when viewed from the north. The elevation of the ridge increases from ca. 500 masl at the east to 620 masl at the west. It continues to climb westward beyond the new city, ascending sharply to the mountain of Aidone, two kilometers west of the west gate and, at 890 masl, the highest point in the vicinity.⁵

The precipitous north edge of the Serra Orlando ridge formed one boundary of the city. South of it are five hills, all of which were encompassed within the later city walls (*fig. 1.1*). These increase in altitude from east to west: East Hill, 564 masl; West Hill, 586 masl; Papa

Hill, 613 masl; Agnese Hill, 635 masl; and West Bastion, 656 masl. The geological formation of Serra Orlando is described by Sheldon Judson, whose study is included here in appendix four.⁶ The first three hills were crowned by partially exposed beds of limestone that would be trimmed and leveled for streets and housing.⁷ The built portion of the new city eventually occupied these three hills and the surrounding valleys. The urban street grid appears not to have extended over the two western hills.

As Judson observes, the stratified layers of limestone, sand, clay, and gravel that form the eastern hills of the site are tilted to the south and west.⁸ In consequence, the water table drains in those directions, with seeps emerging as a series of springs along the gentler southern slopes of the new site (*fig. 1.1*; section 3 below).

The east end of Serra Orlando is riven by the deep San Francesco valley. The plateau that forms the southern edge of the valley (ca. 560 masl) is an arm of the East Hill; to the north is the more extensive series of terraces known as Contrada San Francesco (ca. 500–525 masl).⁹ Both of these formations lay within the city walls. The San Francesco valley was probably created by waters draining from the north and west, bypassing the agora. The valleys of the agora, West Hill, and Papa Hill drain instead to the south.¹⁰ The hills and intervening valleys of Serra Orlando would eventually be ringed by a defensive wall (*fig. 1.1*). That the area within the walls was from the start intended for the city is indicated by the geophysical formation of the site, which does not contain a smaller defensible zone. The very large agora also implies an ample population occupying an extensive area (chapter 3.3).¹¹

¹ Refoundation in the fourth century, PR I, 157–158; II, 160; IV, 127, 133; in the late fifth century, PR VI, 140; VII, 169, VIII, 140; X, 362–363. Of a more remote era, Early Bronze Age occupation has also been encountered at several points on the Serra Orlando ridge; PR III, 169; PR VI, 142–143; PR VIII, 149; see also Leighton 1989.

² Judson, appendix 4.2.

³ Although constructed later than the two settlements, their respective city walls define the inhabited areas of both sites.

⁴ Continued habitation at the Cittadella on a reduced scale is indicated by the presence of coins and ceramics of the later fifth century BCE (Walsh 2011 – 2012, 125). The temple on the summit of the Cittadella may have been abandoned ca. 400 BCE, perhaps as a result of capture of Morgantina by Dionysios of Syracuse ca. 396 (see also section 2 below, at n. 24). The settlement became more substantial in the fourth and third centuries; PR X, 378; Antonaccio – Stone 2021.

⁵ Ancient remains in Aidone are not recorded. The summit became the site of a Norman castle early in the twelfth century CE; the town of Aidone was probably founded below it at about the same time. There is no modern account of the early history of Aidone; Mazzola 1912 remains useful, although not always reliable.

⁶ Appendix 4.5.

⁷ Appendix 4.9, 4.10.

⁸ Appendix 4.7; *fig. Ap4.4*.

⁹ Exiguous remains of the medieval church or convent of San Francesco Bisconti are located near the East Gate.

¹⁰ Judson, appendix 4.3.

¹¹ On the size of the city, below, chapter 3.2. Artifacts of the fifth century BCE have been found on house lots as far west as stenopos W9 (below, chapter 2.3).

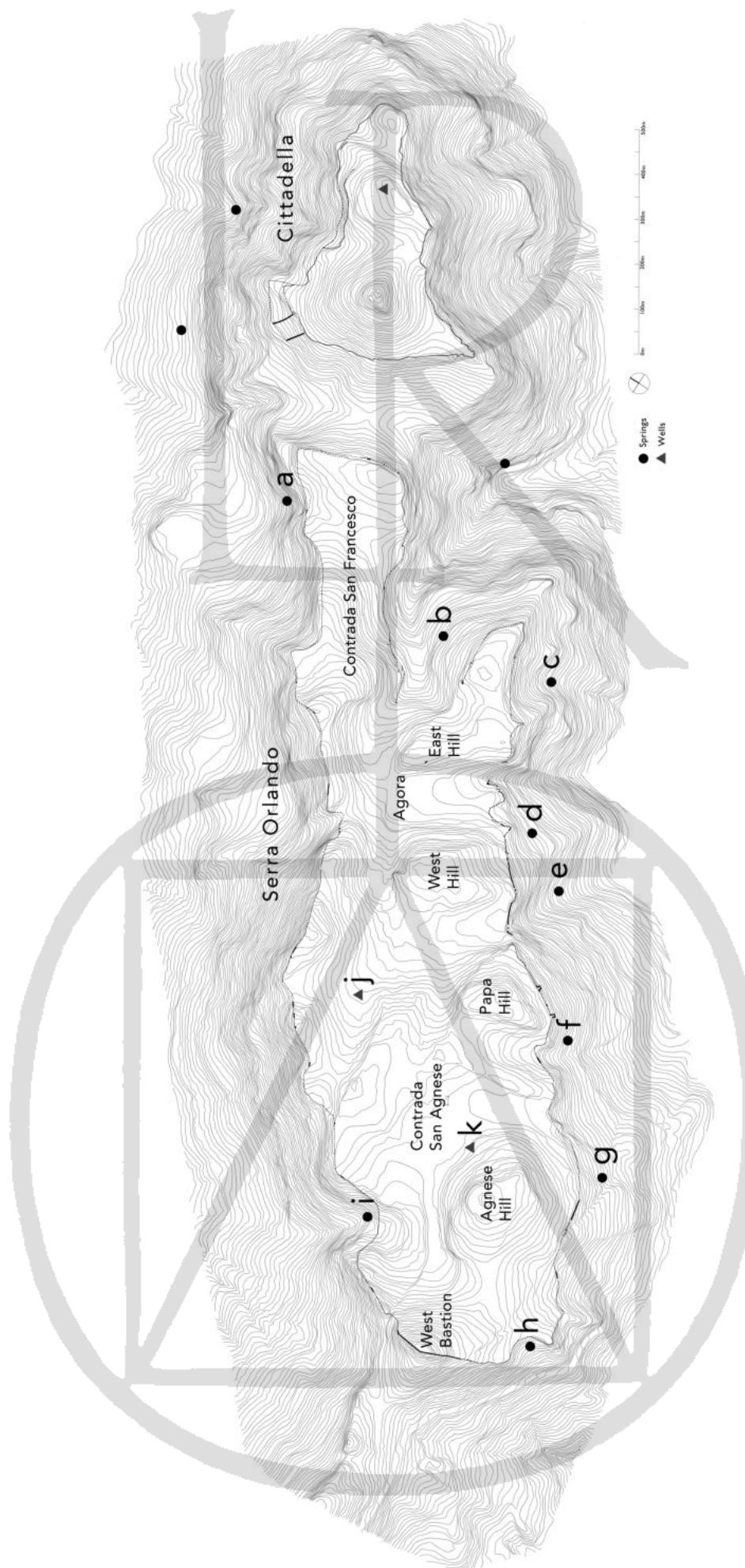


fig. 1.1. Plan of Serra Orlando, with locations of springs and wells (Erik Thorkildsen).



Fig. 1.2 Cittadella and Serra Orlando, aerial view from north (1957).

2. Earlier occupation at Serra Orlando

In the late archaic period the site of the new city was probably cultivated in vineyards, olive groves, fruit orchards, and wheat fields, very much as it is today. Proximity to the first city on the Cittadella would have given special value to the fertile land at Serra Orlando. In the modern era, a country lane with an approximate east-west orientation has provided access to the farms and villas at Serra Orlando.¹² Large- ly unpaved until the 1990's, this road is the present-day successor to plateia A, the paved, rectilinear main street of the fifth-century BCE city plan (*plan 1*). The orientation of Serra Orlando makes an archaic predecessor likely. The modern road intersects with several narrower lanes leading to flanking neighborhoods; these too will have had early counterparts, giving access to farms and orchards. For the new city, the central area must have been obtained at the start through expropriation or confiscation.¹³

Some early forestation at Serra Orlando was suggested by Judson.¹⁴ At several points in the agora a dark brown earth rich in organic mate-

rials underlies buildings of the classical and Hellenistic city; this is the so-called “cioccolato” soil often mentioned in the early years of the excavation. Containing cultural evidence of habitation at least through the late Iron Age, the dark soil may have been formed during a long period of forestation, possibly of oaks.

The only known major building at Serra Orlando antedating the fifth-century city plan is an archaic *oikos* temple in Contrada San Francesco, the roof of which was decorated with Gorgoneion antefixes.¹⁵ In the early Hellenistic era, the East Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore stood on the same site; a thread of religious activity appears to have existed there from the second half of the sixth century until 211 BCE, when the quarter was abandoned.¹⁶ Erik Sjöqvist believed that the archaic building had been destroyed during the campaigns of the Ge- loan tyrant Hippocrates in the 490's; if destruction instead came later,

¹² The Serra Orlando road appears in the modern topographical plan included in PR IV, fig. 1.

¹³ On the likelihood of expropriations, chapter 3.2.

¹⁴ Appendix 4.11.

¹⁵ PR VI, 142; PR VII, 170; PR VIII, 146f.; Sjöqvist 1973, 46–47; Kenfield 1990, 269; Antonaccio 1997, 173. The full dimensions of the temple were not determined. The site had been occupied in the Early Bronze Age; Allen 1977.

¹⁶ MS I, 248, context V B. Formerly known as the San Francesco Sanctuary, it is now identified as the East Sanctuary, to distinguish it from the large extra-mural San Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary (n. 18 below).



Fig. 1.3 Acrolithic sculptures of Demeter and Kore, from the S. Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary; Aidone, Museo Archeologico Regionale.

space would presumably have been provided for the sanctuary in the mid-fifth-century grid plan. Near the easternmost extremity of Serra Orlando, non-orthogonal walls that may be earlier than the refoundation were noted in 1967–68; probably to be interpreted as house walls, these represent the only other excavated intramural structures of archaic date.¹⁷

Three hundred meters south of the East Sanctuary, on the steep slope of the neighboring arm of the East Hill, an extramural sanctuary of Demeter and Kore was frequented as early as the third quarter of the sixth century BCE (*plan 1*). The complex is called the San Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary. In the wake of clandestine digging in the mid- and late 1970's, excavations conducted by the Superintendency of Agrigento revealed a series of terraces giving access to rooms cut into the hillside and to a circular *bothros*.¹⁸ Parts of two archaic acrolithic sculptures of Demeter and Kore of Thasian marble from these early clandestine excavations entered the international art market (fig. 1.3); in 2007 they were repatriated from the United States.¹⁹

¹⁷ PR X, 367; these walls may represent archaic habitation at the closest point of Serra Orlando to the early city, analogous to the extramural settlement northeast of the Cittadella (below, chapter 3, at n. 78).

¹⁸ On the sanctuary, De Miro 1980, 134–136; Fiorentini 1980–81, 593–598; Hinz 1998, 124–127; Greco – Nicoletti – Raffiotta 2009; Greco 2015; Raffiotta 2007, 2008, 2015. The excavations have continued under the Superintendence of Enna.

¹⁹ Acroliths: Marconi 2008; Adornato 2013; Maniscalco 2015. Elements of the terracotta throne on which one or both of the acrolithic images presumably sat were recovered from the same room clandestinely in the mid-1970's and sold on the art market; they are today (2021) in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Inv. Nr. V 3299a; Seipel 2006, 3–4; the throne was first published when still in private hands and on exhibit in the Antikensammlung, Basel; van der Meijden 1990. Two sets of mold-made terracotta statuettes were attached to the throne: to the arms, a larger female figure holding a dove, to the rungs



Fig. 1.4 Terracotta head of Hades, from the S. Francesco Bisconti Sanctuary; Aidone, Museo Archeologico Regionale.

Brought to light at the same time and recovered by the authorities was a fragmentary terracotta statue of a life-size draped figure of early Hellenistic date.²⁰ A bearded terracotta head from the sanctuary has been identified as Hades (fig. 1.4); a stylistically similar female head wearing a cylindrical polos also entered the art market.²¹ The male head, which is distinguished by a remarkable blue beard, was acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum and repatriated in 2015; at the time of writing the location of the female head is not known – not, at least, to science. The clandestine activity that had begun in the sanctuary in the 1970's continued into the next decade; a further discovery was the over-lifesize limestone statue of a veiled goddess with marble head and extremities (fig. 1.5). In the summer of 1988 the sculpture was purchased in London by the J. Paul Getty Museum; in 2011 it, too, was repatriated. The ornate, wind-blown drapery places the remarkable work at the very end of the fifth century BCE.²² The location of

below, a smaller, draped male figure; fragments of the female figure that appear to belong to the throne are located in the Museo Archeologico Regionale, Aidone. The female figure is also known in several impressions not attached to the throne; MS I, no. 2a–b, pl. 1, with references.

²⁰ The fragments are worn and incomplete; at the time of writing they have not been reassembled.

²¹ Head of Hades: Ferruzza 2013, 192, fig. 133; Raffiotta 2015, 44. Female head (surely Persephone): Sotheby's December 8, 2000, lot 85. It is said that both heads were initially offered for sale by the dealer Symes but that the female head was not sold. Both are likely to have belonged to busts of the characteristic Sikeliote type, on which see chapter 10.9.

²² Cult statue: Giuliano 1993; Getty Villa Workshop 2007; Greco 2007, 2010; Marconi 2007, 2013, 60; 2016. The limestone has been attributed to a quarry in southeastern Sicily; Alaimo et alii 2007. Although doubts about the provenance of the work at Morgantina were expressed by the present writer (Getty Villa Workshop 2007), the local origin is now known to be certain. If the cult statue was carved at Morgantina, or if it arrived as a recent work,