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I ŚREDNIOWIECZNA.  
ARCHEOLOGIA POLSKI

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ŚRÓDZIEMNOMORSKA  
I POZAEUROPEJSKA



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W GROBACH KOMOROWYCH NA ZIEMIACH POLSKICH W OKRESIE WCZESNEGO  
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ROSA LANTERI, MARTA FITUŁA

## ANCIENT SETTLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORY OF NOTO (SYRACUSE PROVINCE): NEW DATA FROM THE GIOI AND NIURA DISTRICTS

### Introduction

In recent years, due to a shortage of funds for scientific research, the only way to carry out archaeological excavations has been offered by application of preventive (or rescue) archaeology during public works.<sup>1</sup> As a result, in the years 2011 through 2014, public works of renovation and modernization of the road system created an opportunity to acquire new archaeological data, in particular in the districts of Gioi and Niura, along the road called Strada Provinciale 19 (SP 19), about 1 km SE of the city of Noto. It is important to note that archaeological excavations have been conducted on pre-existing roads and, consequently, on areas with layers already altered or destroyed. Despite various problems connected to the rescue archaeology, the synergic collaboration between the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage of Syracuse and members of the Italian-Polish Mission in Akrai (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw) was very fruitful.<sup>2</sup>

The city of Noto has a vast hinterland where some of the most important archaeological sites of the whole Syracuse province are concentrated: the Greek colony of Eloro, the Roman Villa of the Tellaro River, the ancient city of Noto, just to cite a few of the approximately 60 known and catalogued archaeological sites. The data refers to the sites included in the 'Provincial Landscape Plan' adopted in 2012.

Here is now presented a preliminary report on eight new findings resultant from the modernization of the Noto – Pachino road. The archaeological remains are chronologically placed mainly between the early Imperial period and the Byzantine period, but there are also older examples, such as the Hellenistic cistern in Contrada Niura.

Undoubtedly, the soil's fertility and the proximity of the Gioi River, made the area a favourable place for settlement from Antiquity to present days. Despite the data is

fragmentary, due to the previous works that damaged the archaeological artefacts at the edge of the road, the newly-acquired findings are useful in order to demonstrate the density of settlements in this area.

Since the Greek times, the settlements have arisen close to the *Helorine hodos*, the ancient route connecting Syracuse and its sub-colony of Eloro mentioned by Thucydides (VI, 66, 3; 70, 4; VII, 80, 5), about 1 km north of which a monumental tomb, known today as 'Column Pizzuta', was built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. The road was a catalyst for settlement over the centuries, and particularly during the Roman Imperial period and late Antiquity, as evidenced by the Roman Villa of Tellaro, located a few kilometres away from the Gioi district. The large villa, decorated with beautiful floor mosaics, fortunately well-preserved, is the best known example of an extra-urban residence in the south-eastern Sicily and has been associated with the exploitation of a vast agricultural property between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD. The new data are encouraging, as they present a possibility to discover similar settlements located along the ancient route of communication in this area and benefiting from the presence of navigable rivers which in Antiquity provided connection with ports on the coast.

### Gioi and Niura districts in the territory of Noto. Topographical and historical context

The area of the road construction works, approximately 1 kilometre to the south-east from the city of Noto, is delimited by the Asinaro and Tellaro rivers, and is crossed by the Gioi Stream, which springs from the slopes of Monte Finocchito. The Gioi River, which gives its name to the district, after a long course continues in Cava Lauffi, close to Cozzo Azzini, and finally enters the Ionian Sea near Eloro.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This introduction is by Rosa Lanteri, Scientific Director of the preventive archaeology works. The following paragraphs are by Marta Fituła who carried out the archaeological excavations.

<sup>2</sup> We want to extend our sincerest thanks to the members of the Italian-Polish (University of Warsaw) Mission in Akrai. Their technical and scientific expertise was invaluable for the preliminary study of the finds from the Roman site of Gioi: dr Roksana

Chowaniec, dr Renata Kucharczyk, dr Marcin Matera, dr Monika Rekowska, dr Tomasz Więcek and dr Urszula Więciak.

<sup>3</sup> The localisation has been defined on the maps of IGM (Istituto Geografico Militare - Military Geographical Institute) by the following sheets: I.G.M. F. 277 (Avola) IV S.E. and I.G.M. F. 277 (Noto) IV-SO. (F: foglio – sheet, S.E.– south-east, S.O.– south-west).

The area of the archaeological investigations is characterized in one part by clay soils (marl) and, in the other part, by clay and sandy silt soil (alluvial deposits). The landscape has been altered by the realization of artificial terraces used to expand the land suitable for agriculture. The agricultural landscape today is characterized by crop trees (mainly citrus, almond, olive, and carob), vineyards, and small gardens.

The locality of Gioi is designated in historical maps with different names.<sup>4</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was mentioned by Tommaso Fazello and Vincenzo Littara in *Netinae Urbis Topographia* who described the course of the River Tellaro: "...on the left, in a quite elevated place called Gioi, various ruins of an ancient house, and scrolling wets the same Baiachemo Bridge, which connects its banks from one to the other side..." (LITTARA 1999: 22).

However, P. Orsi negates the information about the ruins: "Joye (Joye)?? - Ruins of a village, disappeared. It was habit of the old and modern writers to take as gospel Fazello's news and descriptions, that verified on field revealed themselves to be very confusing and untrue" (ORSI 1965: 212).

Along the Gioi Stream, the lower part of its course is called Laufi, like the coastal zone described by Fazello: "After the mouth of the river Asinaro, up to the Eloro's castle, today ruined, almost all the four miles long riviera, is vulgarly called Laufi" (FAZELLO 1574: 294).

The Gioi River, according to R. L. Mirisola and L. Polacco, should be identified as the Asinaro River, while the Noto River, which is today called Asinaro, could be the Erineo River (MIRISOLA, POLACCO 1996), but the identification of the Noto River with the ancient Asinaro has been accepted by most scholars.

## New archaeological discoveries

The project of public road-works included modernization of three pre-existing roads (namely Strada Provinciale 19, Strada Provinciale 35, and Strada Provinciale 59), as well as construction of six roundabouts and one new road between Rotatory (Rotatoria) Bonfanti and Rotatory Gioi. Furthermore, a new system of drainage and road lighting was introduced.

Thanks to constant archaeological supervision during all the construction phases, it was possible not only to discover new sites, but also preserve structures and artefacts. In total, 8 areas with concentration of the archaeological

material have been identified: 6 in the Gioi district, 1 in the Niura district and 1, of minor importance, close to the highway (Fig. 1). Few fragments of pottery were found during the works at Strada Provinciale 59. For this reason Area VII (section Rotatoria Bonfanti- Highway A18) as well as Area VI (section Rotatory Zupparda – Rotatory Gioi) should be rather considered spot finds. In two cases (the areas III and VIII), due to the presence of ancient structures, it was necessary to proceed with archaeological excavations. All the findings coming from the eight areas together with documentation are preserved at the Superintendence of Syracuse.

**Area I** – coordinates: 36°51'41"N, 15°04'48"E; elev. 47 m a.s.l. The site is located to the west from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Pizzuta. The area with the concentration of artefacts was 1160 m<sup>2</sup>. The site is close to a building known as 'Old Convent', about 140 metres to the south from the Gioi Stream, near 'Case Gine', where one building with votive aedicule is indicated by A. Frasca as a resting place beside an old road called 'the wine route' (FRASCA 2007: 206). There, pottery fragments were concentrated on the surface of the soil between the road (Strada Provinciale 19) and an artificial terrace, situated near a well and one modern structure.

After weeding a small portion of the terrain, in the cut section of the hill, an already upset layer was revealed, composed of stones of various sizes mixed with fragmented bricks and amphorae, presumably coming from the levelling of the overlying layers during construction of the modern artificial terraces. A single bronze coin (probably Byzantine) come from the site along with several pottery fragments belonging to a *mortarium*, amphorae (including a handle with a rectangular stamp), oil lamps, small cups, *skyphoi*, and *lekythoi* (Fig. 2). These finds cover a long chronological arc, and testify that the site was occupied during the 5<sup>th</sup> c. and the Byzantine period.

**Area II** – coordinates: 36°51'42"N, 15°04'48"E, elev. 45 m a.s.l. The site is located to the west from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Pizzuta. The area with the concentration of artefacts was 350 m<sup>2</sup>. About 40 metres to the north from Area I, in the north-western part of the same hill, about 100 metres to the south from the Gioi Stream, another area of distribution of archaeological material was identified, which included fragments of black-painted pottery ('a vernice nera'), a red-figures *skyphos*, and a Ionic *kylikes*. The finds can be dated to between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>4</sup> The locality of Gioi has been known under various names (Ligioi, Ligoj, Ioye, Joye, Ioie) in old maps, including those of Gerardo Mercatore (*Siciliae Regnum*, (in:) *Italiae, Sclavoniae et Graeciae tabulae Geographicae*, 1589), the nautical map by Gerard van

Keulen (*Nieuwe Afteekening van het Eyland en Koninkryk Sicilia* [...], (in:) *De groote nieuwe vermeerden zee-atlas ofte water-waereld* [...], ca. 1718), and the topographic map of Noto drawn by an architect, Vincenzo Sinatra, in 1764.

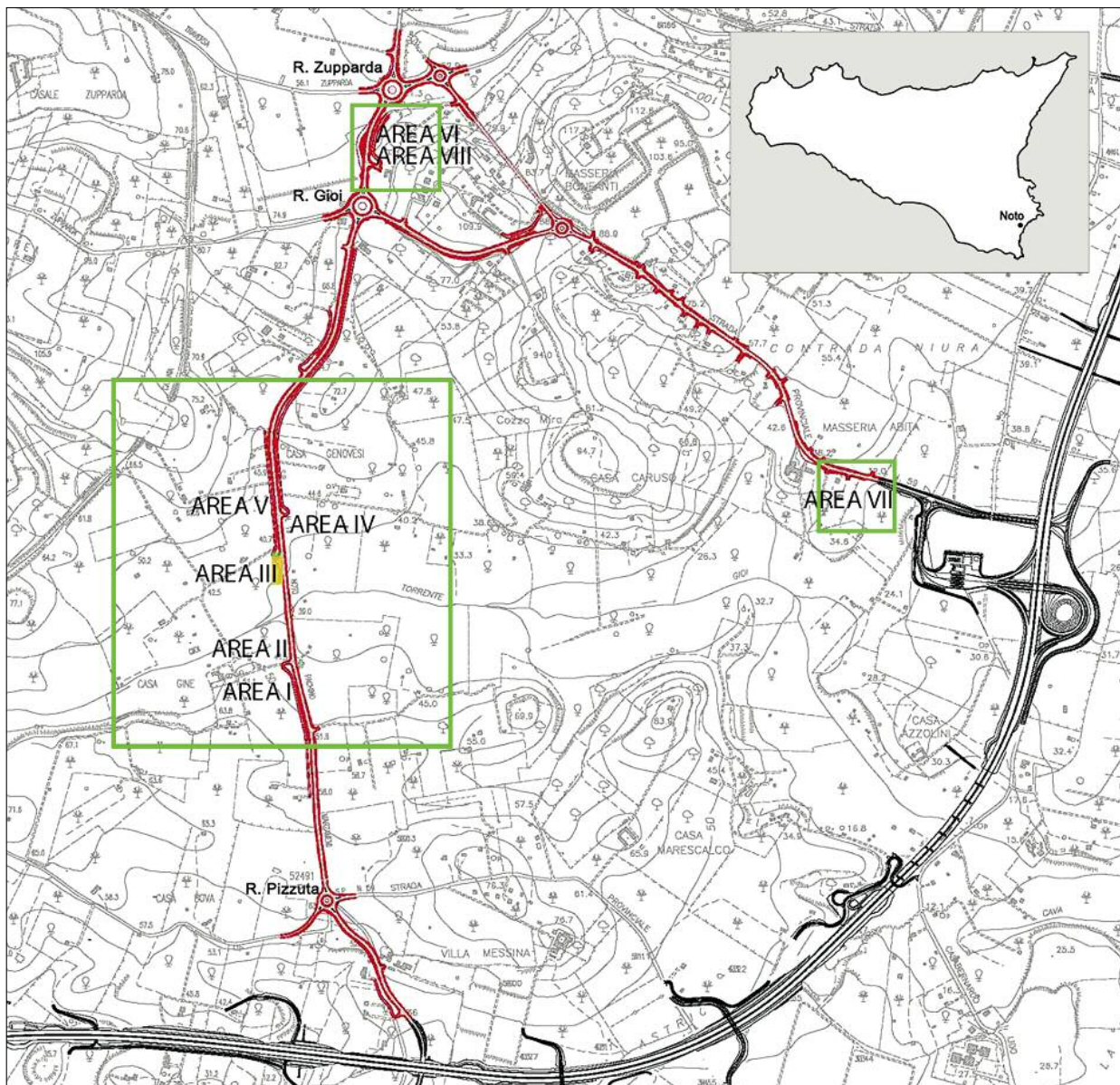


Fig. 1. Strada Provinciale 19. Positioning of the new archaeological sites (drawing by M. Fituła)

Fig. 1. Strada Provinciale 19. Posizionamento delle aree archeologiche (rielaborazione di M. Fituła).

Ryc. 1. Strada Provinciale 19. Lokalizacja stanowisk archeologicznych (ryc. M. Fituła).

**Area III** – coordinates: 36°51'51"N, 15°04'47"E, elev. 42 m a.s.l. The site is located to the west from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Pizzuta. The area of the investigated site was ca. 60 m<sup>2</sup>. To the north from the above-mentioned area, structures from the Roman period were discovered. The excavations revealed a drain channel paved with *bessales* bricks between USM 1 and USM 2.<sup>5</sup> The channel is L-shaped, sloping towards the east

(**Fig. 3**). The USM 1 is a dry stone wall built of limestone blocks of various sizes, with an average thickness of about 0.50 m and length about 3 m. The surfaces of USM 1 (E-W) retain traces of plaster on the interior part of the channel. The average thickness of USM 2 (N-S) is about 0.45 m and is preserved to the length of about 2.50 m. It is presumed that the channel runs under the Strada Provinciale 19 road.

<sup>5</sup> USM – Unità Stratigrafica Muraria – Structure Stratigraphic Unit.

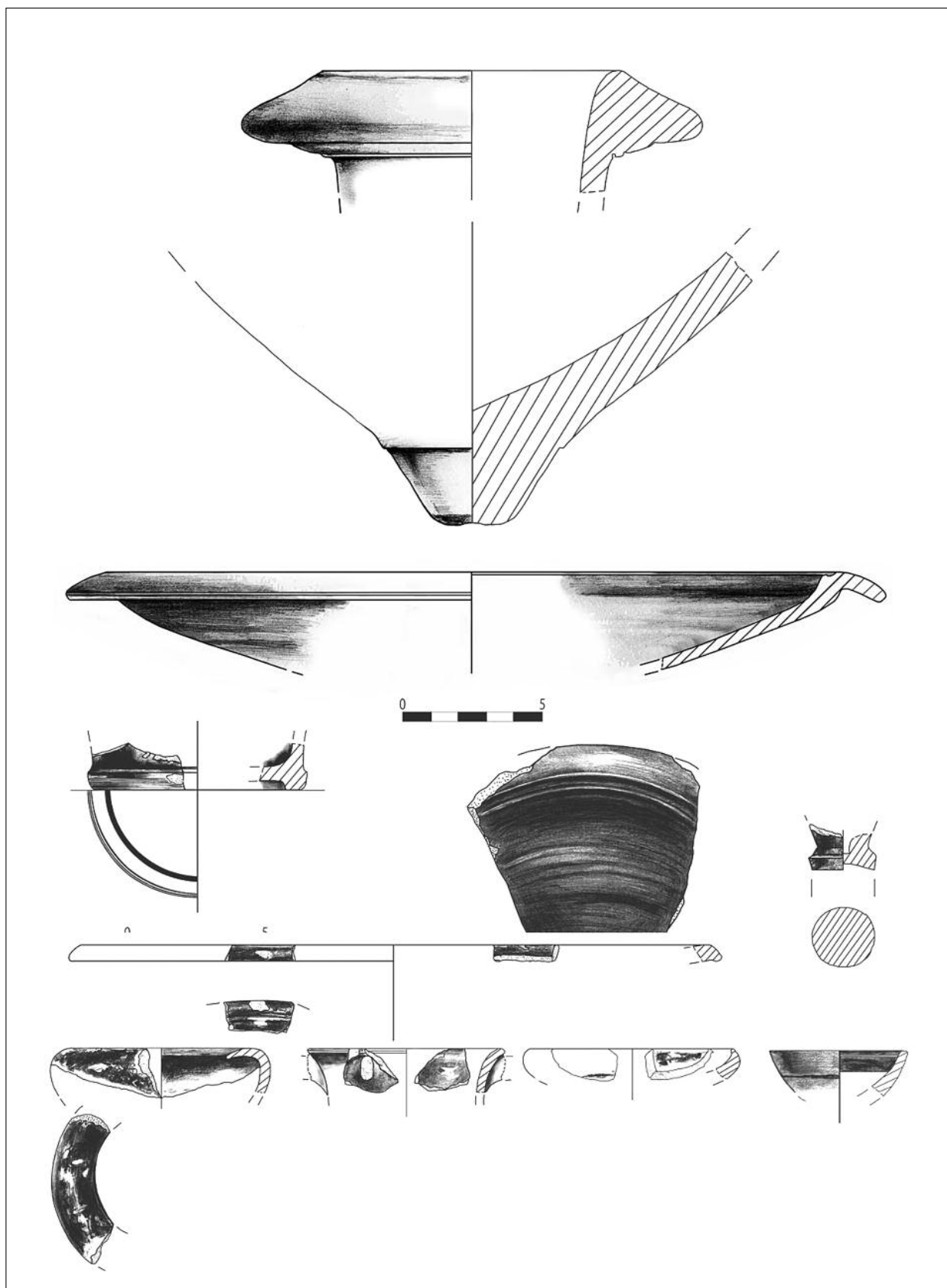


Fig. 2. Area I. The pottery fragments (drawing by M. Fitula).

Fig. 2. Frammenti ceramici dall'Area 1 (disegno di M. Fitula).

Ryc. 2. Area I. Fragmenty ceramiki (ryc. M. Fitula).

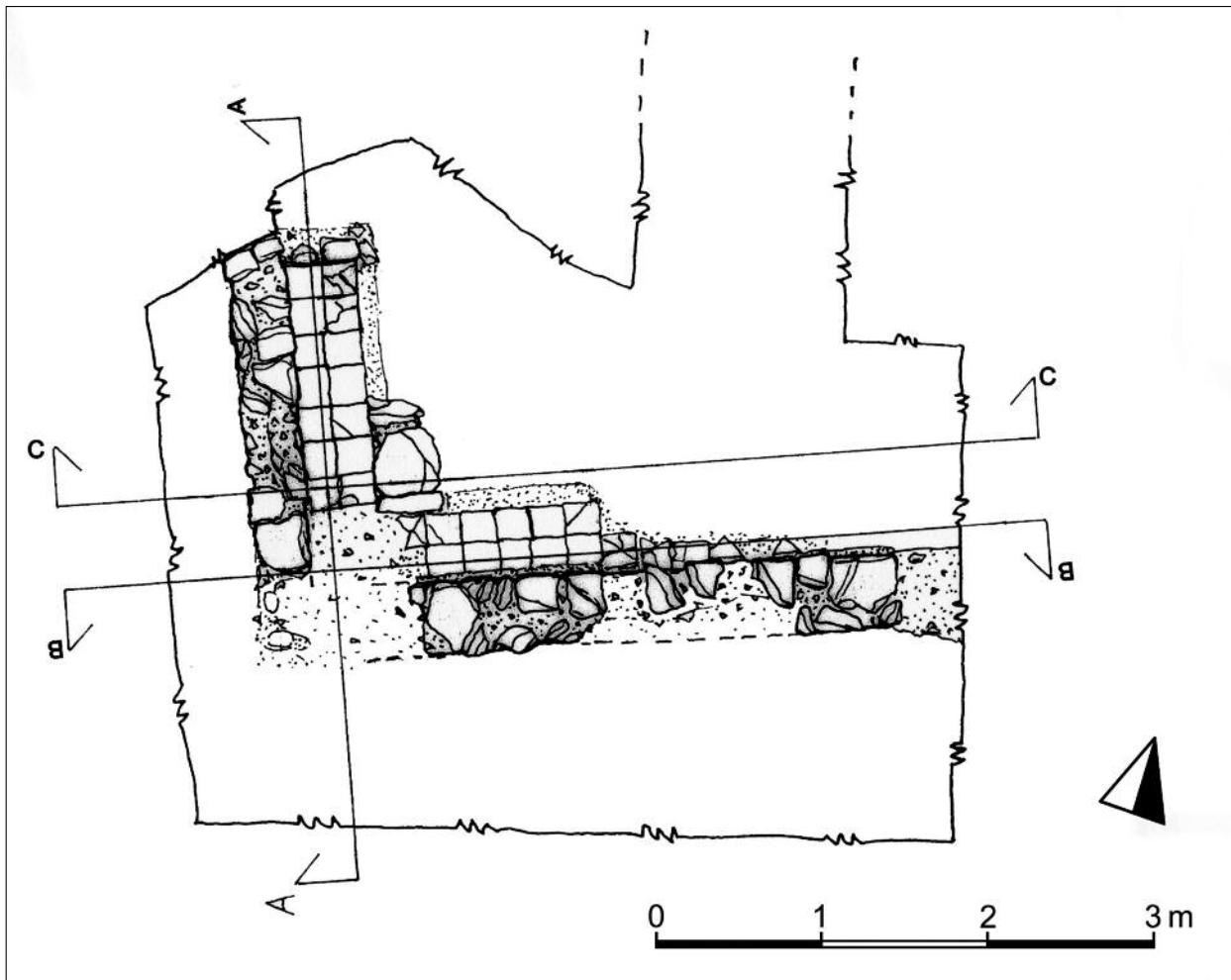


Fig. 3. Area III. The Roman drain channel (drawing by M. Bombelli).

Fig. 3. Area III. Canaletta (disegno di M. Bombelli).

Ryc. 3. Area III. Kanał z okresu rzymskiego (ryc. M. Bombelli).

Continuing the works towards the north and into the trench carved as a part of the drainage system, other structures were discovered, which probably witness a retaining wall oriented along the NW-SE axis. A beaten earth floor was found on its eastern side, composed of mortar mixed with sandy soil, river stones, pottery fragments, and iron slag. Further to the north, at the depth of about 2 m, a series of limestone blocks were found, probably a continuation of the structure already intercepted. There, the wall was composed of regular blocks, partially squared and of various sizes. Between the remains of the construction there was also a fragment of a lava millstone. The structures seem to indicate the existence of a housing complex in the neighbouring area, probably extending to the north-west, which can be confirmed by the discoveries of fragments with painted plaster, black and white mosaic *tesserae*, fragments of marbles, window glass, tiles, and tubules often used in the *thermae*.

These kinds of artefacts suggest the presence of a prestigious building with annexed *thermae*. The site yield-

ed fragments of plaster painted with wide range of colours: yellow, red, black, purple, green, and blue. Most of the plasters were monochrome white, but there were also bi-colour. There was also one fragment decorated with painted leaves (purple on white) rendered in a very schematic way. Among the others, some fragments painted in yellow ochre and Pompeian red colours, widespread in the Roman Republican and Imperial periods, should also be noted.

Among the fragments of precious marble used for wall coverings and pavements prevail slabs of white marble, probably of eastern origin. The light colour marbles, white and grey, show similarities to the marbles from the Greek islands, such as the Pentelic, 'Caristo', Parian, or 'Cipollino'. There is also one fragment of porphyry and one of marble with veins typical for the island of Skyros.

Two fragments of the same alabaster *alabastron* from US 12 presumably belong to a group of artefacts which were imported from the eastern Mediterranean. Numerous fragments of glass contributed to dating the site from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD.



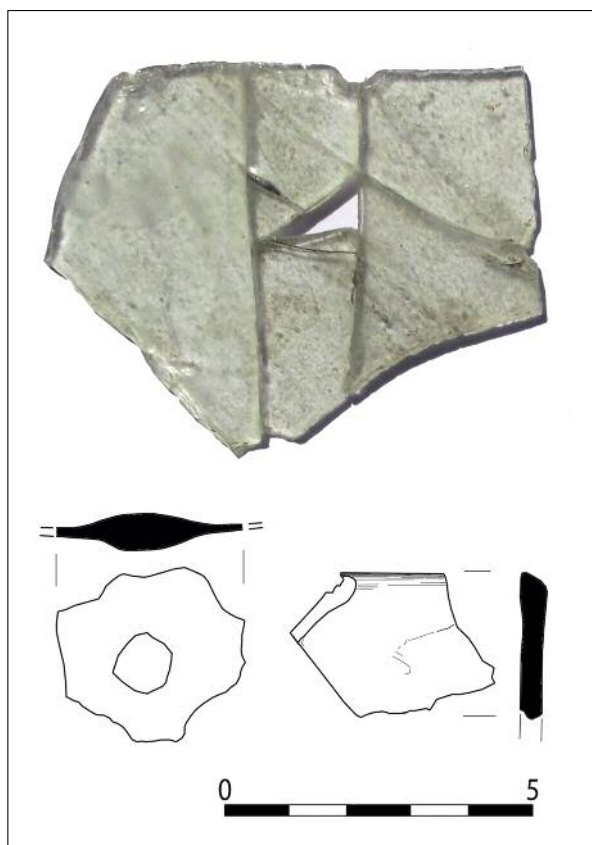


Fig. 4. Area III. The window glass examples from US 11 (drawing and photo by M. Fitula).

Fig. 4. Area III. Frammenti di vetri di finestre (disegno di M. Fitula).

Ryc. 4. Area III. Wybrane fragmenty szyby (ryc. M. Fitula).



Fig. 5. Area III. The bone dice (photo by M. Fitula).

Fig. 5. Area III. Dado in osso (fot. di M. Fitula).

Ryc. 5. Area III. Kostka do gry (fot. M. Fitula).

Apart from fragments of vessels (cups, beakers, *unguentaria*, and bottles), window glass was found: 'flat pane' type and 'bull's eye' type (Fig. 4). From the northern part of the area came irregularly shaped pieces of metal probably used in constructions, but there were also some leaden artefacts, such as a weight. Bronze artefacts constituted a less numerous group. Among others, there were bronze coins, rings, small lamina, and *spatula probes*. Artefacts made of bone include some items of daily use: pins, needles, a shuttle for weaving, and objects connected to leisure time, such as an *astragalus* (a bone in the ankle) and bone dice (Fig. 5).

The most numerous group of finds consists of a wide range of pottery (fine and coarse wares and lamps), transport amphorae, and architectural ceramics (bricks and tiles). Achromatic ceramic is prevalent, however there are also many fragments of terra sigillata, mainly African. From the oldest strata come two fragments of terra sigillata 'italica' with stamps: CRIS/PINI and [...] ILAR/(...)S(A)FR. The *terminus post quem* for their dating is between 10 BC and 10 AD. A dupondius of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD) was found on the overlying strata, along with a fragmented coin of Claudius II Gothicus (268–270 AD). The drain channel paved with *bessales* was made at a later phase, as evidenced by the presence of the African terra sigillata from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD in the oldest strata. Fragments of amphorae of the Late Roman 5/6 type of Palestinian production and a glass bottle foot from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD, both from the strata inside the channel, suggest the channel was in use until the late Imperial period.

**Area IV** – coordinates: 36°51'53"N, 15°04'47"E, elev. 43 m a.s.l. The site is located to the east from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Pizzuta. The area of the site was ca. 550 m<sup>2</sup>. On the eastern side of Strada Provinciale 19, about 160 metres to the north from the Gioi Stream and to the south from 'Case Genovesi', pottery fragments (including Italic and African terra sigillata), 1 artefact made of lead, 2 fragments of late Roman glasses (bottle and goblet), as well as prehistoric brown colour flint with retouching were found. More ceramic material was found on the surface, but it was mostly non-diagnostic. Beside the flint, all the other finds can be dated the same as those from the previous area.

**Area V** – coordinates: 36°51'53"N, 15°04'46"E, elev. 44 m a.s.l. The site is located to the west from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Pizzuta. The area of the site was ca. 950 m<sup>2</sup>. On the western side of the same road, about 200 metres to the north from the Gioi Stream, close to the areas III and IV, a concentration of archaeological materials was detected on the surface as a result of a survey. From this area came various pottery fragments, including a number of examples of African Red Slip ware and terra sigillata 'italica'. Other artefacts were found in the strata underlying the topsoil: fragments of terra sigillata and coarse achromatic pottery, amphorae, large containers, bricks, one architectural fragment of limestone, and



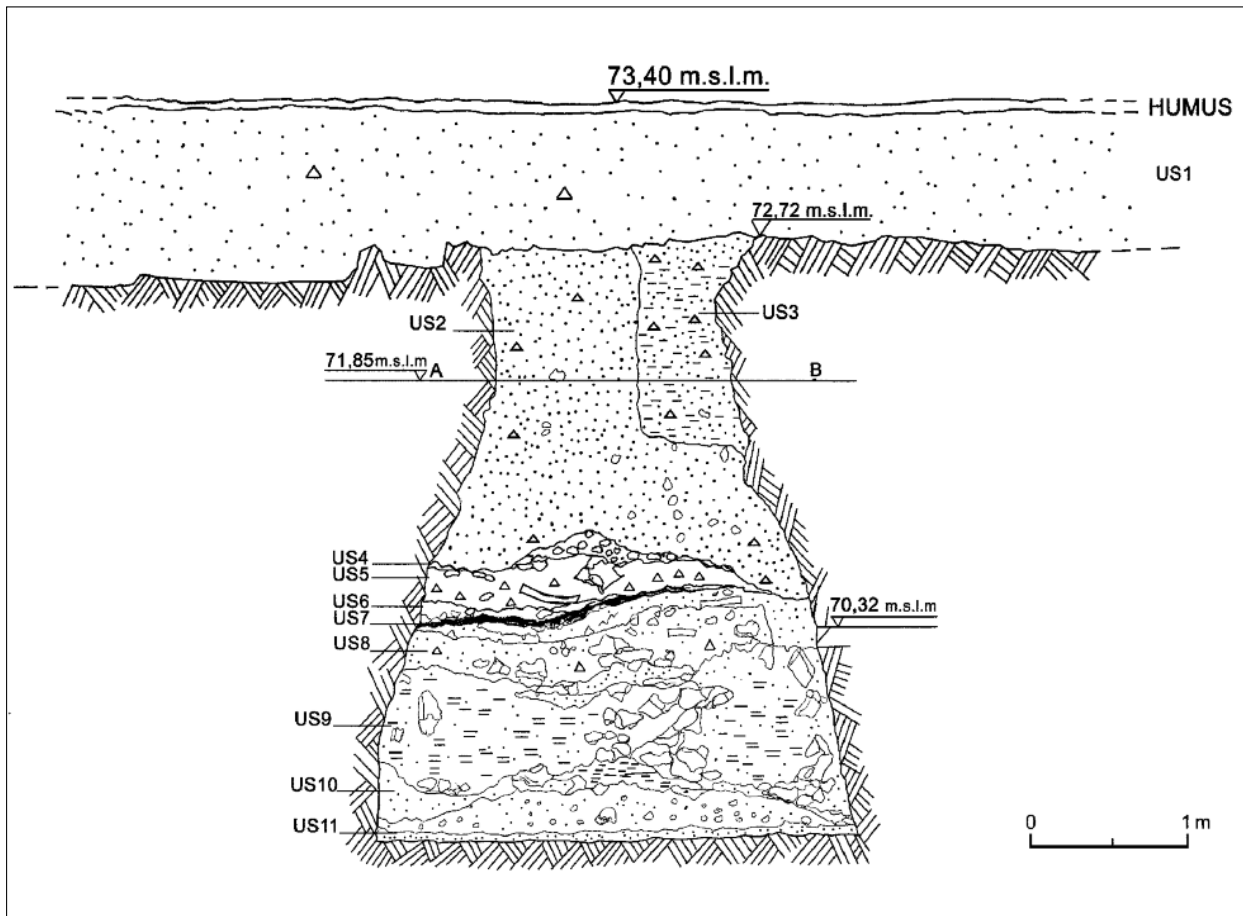


Fig. 6. Area VIII. The Greek bell-shaped cistern in cross-section (drawing by M. Fituła).

Fig. 6. Area VIII. Sezione della cisterna (rilievo di M. Fituła).

Ryc. 6. Area VIII. Cysterna grecka, przekrój (ryc. M. Fituła).

a stone axe. As earlier, the finds indicate this site was still occupied in the Roman Imperial period.

**Area VI** – coordinates: 36°52'28"N, 15°04'56"E, elev. 66 m a.s.l. The site is located to the east from the road on the section between Rotatory Gioi and Rotatory Zupparda. The area of the site was 25 m<sup>2</sup>. The site was identified about 300 metres to the south from the Noto River (Asinaro), on the eastern side of SP19 and 100 metres from Provincial Road 35, due to the presence of various types of pottery, mostly black-glazed. Only one fragment of kitchen ware was discovered along with 9 fragments of achromatic pottery. The finds were extremely fragmentary and it was not possible to determine more precise dating. However they should be considered in relation with Area VIII.

**Area VII** – coordinates: 36°51'57"N, 15°05'50"E, elev. 33 m a.s.l., section Rotatory Bonfanti, motorway (A18). The area of the site was 220 m<sup>2</sup>. It was identified approximately 200 m to the north from the motorway (A18), on the western side of Strada Provinciale 59. The digs made during the modernization of the pre-existing road enabled identification of the stratigraphic sequence on the profile of the trench performed by mechanical equipment. There,

below the layer of brownish red soil, some pottery fragments dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> BC, including 2 rims of black-glazed small cups, were found.

**Area VIII.** In the Niura district, about 500 m, as the crow flies, to the south from Asinaro River, an internal road was constructed in 2013 to provide access to the rural estates along the SP 19, in the section Rotatory Zupparda – Rotatory Gioi (IGM, Tavoletta 277 IV-SE: Avola). During the road-works in that section, the presence of artefacts and structures was noticed and, in order to avoid destruction of antique layers, two trenches were opened.

Trench I (7 × 11 m; coordinates: 4.080.824.18 N, 2.527.349.17 N, elev. 71.101 m a.s.l.) revealed a wall (USM 1) and a channel, both oriented along the E-W axis. The structure (USM 1) was partially preserved (0.64 m × 1.20 m) and made of large and medium-sized river stones. The function of this construction was probably to reinforce the channel where the surface of the natural rock (in which it was excavated) was lower. The drainage channel, which goes on for about 11 m, is 0.50 m wide and 0.40 m deep in the western part, while the eastern side is narrower. Slightly inclined and rounded walls are preserved on the bottom.



Fig. 7. Area VIII. The terracotta from the Hellenistic cistern (photo by M. Fituła).

Fig. 7. Area VIII. Terracotta figurata dal riempimento della cisterna (foto di M. Fituła).

Ryc. 7. Area VIII. Terakota z przedstawieniem figuratywnym pochodząca z wypełniska cysterny (fot. M. Fituła).



Fig. 8. Area VIII. The miniature vessel from the cistern (photo by M. Fituła).

Fig. 8. Area VIII. Vasetto miniaturistico dalla cisterna (foto di M. Fituła).

Ryc. 8. Area VIII. Naczynko miniaturowe z cysterny (fot. M. Fituła).



Fig. 9. Area VIII. The fragment of the red-figured crater from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (photo by M. Fituła).

Fig. 9. Area VIII. Frammento di cratere a figure rosse, IV sec. a.C (foto di M. Fituła).

Ryc. 9. Area VIII. Fragment krateru czerwono-figurowego, IV w. p.n.e (fot. M. Fituła).

At about 10 m to the north from Trench II (4 × 4 m; coordinates: 4.080.849.759 N, 2.527.353.176 E, elev. 70.157 m a.s.l.), a bell-shaped cistern carved into the limestone rock was revealed (Fig. 6). It is about 3.80 m deep, with a diameter of 1.20 m at the mouth and m 3.10 at the bottom. Inside, there were 11 distinct stratigraphic strata with numerous fragments of pottery (tableware and kitchen ware, as well as large containers), bricks and tiles, metal artefacts (iron, lead, and bronze), and bones. Among others, there were also fragments of terracotta, perhaps bearing images of Artemis (Fig. 7), few fragments of clay female busts, miniature vessels (Fig. 8), beads made of bone, a piece of arm or leg of a clay doll articulated at the hips and shoulders, a fragment of a red-figure bell crater with Eros and a draped female figure dated to the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Fig. 9). Numerous fragments of black-glazed pottery with palms engraved on the bottom confirm that the cistern was being reused as a dump between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. The housing complex related to the cistern by all probability is to be sought to the east from Trench II.

## Conclusions

On the basis of the gathered data, it was possible to ascertain that the examined area was in use from the

5<sup>th</sup> c. BC to the Byzantine period. Undoubtedly, soil fertility and the presence of rivers encouraged human settlement in the area since the prehistoric times, as demonstrated by the prehistoric finds from the areas IV, V, and VIII.

In addition, alluvial deposits identified in Area III, the latest of which date back to the 1950s, confirm that the Gioi Stream used to be wider in Antiquity, and therefore was navigable, which had a decisive impact on the settlement choices both in the Greek and Roman periods.

This paper is only a preliminary report on the new data acquired as a result of the rescue archaeological excavations. Of course, further scholarly investigation is needed in order to clarify the settlement dynamics in this territory, which was inhabited from the prehistoric period, as evidenced for the first time by the above-mentioned finds.

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### INSEDIAMENTI ANTICHI NEL TERRITORIO DI NOTO (PROVINCIA DI SIRACUSA). NUOVI DATI DALLE CONTRADE GIOI E NIURA

#### Introduzione

Negli ultimi anni, la carenza di fondi destinati alla ricerca scientifica ha fatto sì che per le Soprintendenze per i Beni Culturali ed Ambientali l'unica possibilità di effettuare scavi archeologici fosse offerta dall'applicazione della normativa sull'archeologia preventiva in occasione della realizzazione di opere pubbliche. E così che recentemente, durante i lavori di "Riqualificazione, ammodernamento e collegamento allo svincolo autostradale del sistema viario del nodo di Noto e completamento del primo tratto della S.P.19 Noto – Pachino" realizzati fra il 2011 e 2014, nonostante si intervenisse su viabilità preesistente e, conseguentemente, su aree già profondamente alterate, è stato possibile acquisire nuovi dati, in particolare nelle Contrade Gioi e Niura, lungo la S.P. 19, a circa 1 km a SE della città di Noto.

La città di Noto possiede un vastissimo territorio su cui si concentrano alcuni dei siti archeologici più importanti del siracusano, quali l'antica colonia greca di Eloro, la Villa Romana del Tellaro, la stessa città di Noto antica, solo per citare alcuni dei circa 60 siti noti e censiti. Si presenta qui la relazione preliminare sui nuovi ritrovamenti avvenuti durante i lavori di ammodernamento della strada provinciale Noto–Pachino: cinque aree ricadono in Contrada Gioi, mentre una sesta è stata individuata in Contrada Niura. Cronologicamente le emergenze archeologiche si inquadrano prevalentemente fra la prima età imperiale e quella tardoantica e bizantina, ma non mancano testimonianze

più antiche, come la cisterna di età ellenistica di Contrada Niura.

Indubbiamente, la fertilità dei suoli e la vicinanza del torrente Gioi hanno fatto della zona in esame un'area privilegiata per l'insediamento dall'antichità fino ai nostri giorni. Pur nella frammentarietà dei dati, dovuta al fatto che i manufatti archeologici ai margini della preesistente strada provinciale sono risultati già in parte compromessi dai precedenti lavori, gli elementi emersi sono tuttavia utili a dimostrare la densità dell'insediamento in quest'area. La Villa Romana del Tellaro è solo l'esempio più noto e fortunatamente conservato di residenza extraurbana legata allo sfruttamento di vaste proprietà agricole fra IV e V sec. d.C. I nuovi dati sono indicativi dell'esistenza di residenze simili nella zona, dislocate lungo un'antica via di comunicazione (la *Helorine hodos*) e in antico collegate con gli scali sulla costa grazie anche alla presenza di fiumi navigabili.

#### Contrada Gioi e Contrada Niura nel territorio di Noto. Inquadramento topografico e storico

L'area oggetto di intervento si trova a circa 1 chilometro a sud-est dell'attuale città di Noto, nel territorio delimitato dai fiumi Asinaro e Tellaro, ed è attraversata dal torrente Gioi, che nasce dalle pendici del Monte Finocchito e, dopo un lungo percorso, vicino a Cozzo Azzini prosegue nella Cava di Laufi, sfociando infine nel mar Ionio nei

pressi di Eloro. I tratti Rotatoria Zupparda – Rotatoria Gioi e Rotatoria Gioi – Rotatoria Pizzuta, su cui sono state condotte le indagini archeologiche, si sviluppano in parte sulle marne argillose e in parte su un terreno limoso – argilloso sabbioso (depositi alluvionali). La superficie originaria è stata alterata dalla realizzazione di terrazze artificiali, utilizzate per recuperare terreno adatto all'agricoltura. Il paesaggio agricolo di questa zona è caratterizzato da colture arboree, prevalentemente agrumi, mandorleti, uliveti, carrubeti, vigneti e piccoli orti.

Il sito di Contrada Gioi è indicato nella cartografia storica con toponimi diversi ed è menzionato nel XVI sec. da Tommaso Fazello e da Vincenzo Littara nel *"Netinae Urbis Topographia"* che, descrivendo il percorso del fiume Tellaro, asserisce: "...a sinistra invece, in un luogo alquanto elevato, chiamato Gioi, varie rovine di un'antica dimora, e scorrendo bagna lo stesso Ponte Baiachemo, che collega da una parte e dall'altra le sue rive... P. Orsi però confuta le notizie delle rovine: "Ioye (Joye) – Ruine di un borgo, scomparse. Fu costume dei vecchi scrittori e dei moderni prendere per oro colato le notizie e le descrizioni del Fazello, le quali però confrontate sul terreno appaiono confusissime né rispondenti a verità". La zona lungo il torrente Gioi, nella parte alta fino al mare, è chiamata Laufi, come la parte costiera descritta dal Fazello: "Dopo la bocca del fiume Asinaro, per fino al castel d'Eloro, che ho oggi è rovinato, quasi tutta la riviera, che dura quattro miglia, e che si chiama volgarmente Laufi...". Secondo R. Mirisola e L. Polacco con Laufi (Gioi) andrebbe identificato il fiume Asinaro, mentre il fiume di Noto sarebbe l'antico Erineo. I nuovi dati acquisiti grazie alle recenti indagini contribuiscono, però, all'identificazione del fiume di Noto con l'antico Asinaro, tesi condivisa oggi dalla maggior parte degli studiosi.

## Le recenti scoperte archeologiche

Durante i lavori di ammodernamento della strada provinciale sono state individuate 8 aree che hanno restituito manufatti archeologici, 5 delle quali ricadono in Contrada da Gioi e una in Contrada da Niura (Fig. 1).

**Area I.** Si trova nei pressi delle strutture del cosiddetto "Vecchio Convento", a circa 140 metri a sud del torrente Gioi, in prossimità di Case Gine, dove un edificio con edicola votiva è segnalato da A. Frasca come luogo di riposo sulla vecchia trazzera detta "via del vino". La maggiore concentrazione dei reperti si è registrata nei pressi di un pozzo e della struttura moderna. Dopo il diserbo, in sezione, nel tratto sottostante il muro di confine di due proprietà private, si è evidenziato uno strato sconvolto costituito da pietre di varie dimensioni misto a frammenti di laterizi e di anfore, presumibilmente provenienti dai livellamenti degli strati soprastanti effettuati per la realizzazione dei terrazzamenti artificiali moderni. Oltre ad una moneta in bronzo in pessimo stato di conservazione (probabilmente bizantina), si sono recuperati vari frammenti ceramici appartenenti ad un *mortarium*, frammenti di anfore (fra cui un'ansa con

bollo rettangolare), lucerne, paterette, *skyphoi*, *lekythoi* (Fig. 2).

**Area 2.** A circa 40 metri a nord della precedente, nella parte nord-occidentale della stessa altura, a circa 100 metri a sud dal torrente Gioi, si è individuata un'altra area di dispersione di materiali archeologici, tra cui frammenti di ceramica a vernice nera, *skyphos* a figure rosse, *kylikes* ioniche.

**Area 3.** A nord della precedente, si sono rinvenute strutture di età romana. Lo scavo ha messo in luce una canaletta di scolo realizzata con mattoni *bessales* e le strutture murarie denominate USM 1 e USM 2 che la definiscono. La canaletta ha forma di L, con pendenza verso est (Fig. 3). La USM 1 è costituita da un muro a secco a paramento unico di blocchi di pietra calcarea di varie dimensioni, con uno spessore medio di circa 0,50 m ed una lunghezza di circa 3 m, e conserva le tracce dell'intonaco all'interno della canaletta. La USM 2 (di andamento nord-sud) ha uno spessore medio di circa m 0,45 ed è conservata per una lunghezza di circa m 2,50. Si presume che la canaletta proseguisse sotto la strada S.P.19.

Nell'avanzamento dei lavori in direzione nord, all'interno di quest'area sono state rinvenute altre strutture interpretabili come un muro di contenimento con andamento NO-SE, nella cui parte est si è notata la presenza di un piano di calpestio composto da malta mista a terra sabbiosa, ciottoli di fiume, frammenti fittili e scorie ferrose. Nella prosecuzione dell'opera verso nord, ad una profondità di circa 2 metri, sono stati rinvenuti una serie di blocchi in pietra calcarea, probabile continuazione del muro di contenimento già intercettato. Qui il muro è composto di blocchi regolari, parzialmente squadrati e di varie dimensioni, nonché materiale di riutilizzo, come una parte di macina in pietra lavica.

Le strutture fanno ipotizzare l'esistenza di un complesso abitativo nell'area limitrofa, che si sviluppava probabilmente a nord-ovest, come conferma il rinvenimento di frammenti d'intonaci dipinti, tessere musive bianche e nere, frammenti di marmi policromi, frammenti di lastre in vetro, frammenti di coppi e tegole, nonché frammenti di tubuli che fanno pensare ad un impianto termale annesso all'abitazione. La gamma dei colori sui frammenti di intonaci di varie dimensioni è abbastanza ampia: giallo, rosso, nero, viola, verde, azzurro. Prevalgono intonaci monocromi di colore bianco, ma ci sono anche frammenti bicolori ed un frammento con foglie dipinte in maniera molto schematica in viola su fondo bianco. Tra i colori non manca il giallo ocre e il rosso pompeiano, diffuso sia in età repubblicana che imperiale.

Tra i frammenti di marmi pregiati utilizzati sia per coperture parietali che pavimentali prevalgono lastre di marmo bianco, di probabile provenienza orientale. I marmi chiari, bianchi e grigi, presentano somiglianze con quelli delle isole greche, come il pentelico, il caristo, il pario o il "cipollino". C'è poi un frammento di porfido ed uno con venature viola tipico di Skyros.



Sono di provenienza orientale anche due frammenti appartenenti allo stesso vasetto in alabastro. Numerosi sono i frammenti di vetro rinvenuti, datati dal I al V sec. d.C., pertinenti a coppe, bicchieri, unguentaria, bottiglie. Sono stati inoltre recuperati frammenti di lastre e “*bull's eye like type*” utilizzati nelle finestre (Fig. 4).

Dalla zona settentrionale dell'area provengono metalli di forma irregolare probabilmente utilizzati nell'edilizia, ma ci sono anche altri oggetti come un peso. Rispetto a quelli in piombo, gli oggetti in bronzo sono in numero minore. Oltre le già menzionate monete, si sono recuperati anelli in bronzo, una laminetta e una *spatula probes*. Al gruppo dei manufatti in osso appartengono alcuni reperti di utilizzo quotidiano: spille, aghi, una navetta per la tessitura. Non mancano oggetti per lo svago come un dado e un astragalo (Fig. 5).

Il cospicuo gruppo di materiali ceramici dell'Area 3 consiste in una vasta gamma di frammenti di contenitori d'uso quotidiano (ceramica da fuoco e da mensa, lucerne), di anfore da trasporto e laterizi. Prevale la ceramica acroma, ma numerosi sono anche i frammenti di terra sigillata, soprattutto africana. Dagli strati più antichi del saggio provengono frammenti di terra sigillata italica di cui due con bollo: CRIS/PINI e [...] ILAR./(...)S(A)F.R. *Il termine post quem* per la loro datazione si colloca tra il 10 a.C. e 10 d.C.

Dagli strati sovrastanti provengono un dupondio di Marco Aurelio (161–180 d.C.) e una moneta frammentaria di Claudio II il Gotico (268–270 d.C.). Probabilmente la canaletta con *bessales* fu realizzata in una fase successiva, come dimostra la presenza negli strati più antichi di frammenti di terra sigillata africana (II/III sec. d. C.). Dal riempimento della canaletta provengono frammenti di anfore del tipo Late Roman 5/6 di produzione palestinese e un piede di bottiglia in vetro databile al V sec. d.C., il che suggerisce un utilizzo della canaletta fino ad età tardo imperiale.

**Area 4.** Sul lato orientale della S.P.19, a circa 160 metri a nord del fiume Gioi, a sud di Case Genovesi. Nel corso dei lavori sono stati recuperati frammenti di vasellame (tra cui frammenti di terra sigillata sia italica che africana), frammenti di bottiglia e di un calice in vetro di età imperiale e un frammento di scheggia con ritocco, in selce bruna, di età preistorica.

**Area 5.** Sul lato occidentale della stessa strada, circa 200 metri a nord del fiume Gioi in prossimità delle Aree 3 e 4, in seguito all'attività di “survey”, si è rilevata una concentrazione di reperti in superficie. Da quest'area provengono vari frammenti ceramici, tra cui numerosi in terra sigillata e italica. Dallo strato di humus sottostante sono stati recuperati frammenti di vasellame (terra sigillata e sigillata italica, ceramica da fuoco, acroma, anfore e grandi contenitori), frammenti di laterizi, un frammento architettonico in pietra calcarea e un'ascia in pietra levigata.

**Area 6.** È stata individuata a circa 300 metri a sud del fiume di Noto (Asinaro), sul lato orientale della S.P. 19

e a 100 metri dalla Strada Provinciale 35. In superficie si sono recuperati prevalentemente frammenti di ceramica a vernice nera.

**Area 7.** A circa 200 metri a nord dello svincolo autostradale (A18), sul lato occidentale della S.P. 59. Sono stati recuperati alcuni frammenti di ceramica tra cui due orli di paterette a vernice nera.

**Area 8.** In Contrada Niura, a circa 500 m. in linea d'aria a sud del fiume Asinaro, dove nel 2013, durante gli scavi per la realizzazione della traversa di accesso ai fondi rurali S.P.19 nel tratto dalla Rotatoria Gioi alla Rotatoria Zupparda, la presenza di un'area di dispersione di frammenti ceramici in superficie ha suggerito l'esecuzione preventiva di due saggi di scavo.

Il saggio I ha rivelato la presenza di un muretto (0,64 m × 1,20 m) e una canaletta con andamento est-ovest. La struttura (USM 1) si è conservata parzialmente ed è composta da pietre di fiume di medie e grandi dimensioni. Probabilmente si tratta del muro di sostegno, che aveva funzione di rafforzamento della parete della canaletta, dove la roccia naturale (in cui era stata scavata) risultava più bassa. Nella parte occidentale, la canaletta, che prosegue per circa 11 m, è larga 0,50 m e profonda 0,40 m, mentre nella parte orientale risulta più stretta. Le pareti della canaletta sono leggermente inclinate e arrotondate sul fondo.

A circa 10 m a nord della canaletta, il saggio II ha messo in luce una cisterna campanata (Fig. 6) scavata nella roccia, profonda circa 3,80 m, con diametro alla imboccatura pari a 1,20 m e 3, 10 m sul fondo. All'interno si sono distinte 11 unità stratigrafiche da cui provengono numerosi frammenti ceramici (da mensa e da cucina, grossi contenitori), laterizi (tegole lisce e con alette, coppi), reperti metallici (in ferro, piombo, bronzo), ossei e un frammento di terracotta figurata, probabilmente Artemide (Fig. 7), oltre ed alcuni frammenti di busti femminili. Si segnalano, inoltre, vasetti miniaturistici (Fig. 8), qualche vago di collana in osso, un frammento di braccio o gamba di bambola fittile del tipo ad arti snodabili, un frammento di cratere a figure rosse con Eros e una figura femminile panneggiata databile al terzo quarto del IV sec. a.C. (Fig. 9). Numerosi frammenti di ceramica a vernice nera con palmette incise sul fondo confermano che la cisterna venne riutilizzata come discarica tra IV e III sec. a.C. Probabilmente le strutture abitative riferibili alla cisterna si sviluppano ad est del saggio.

L'individuazione delle nuove aree contribuisce ad arricchire le nostre conoscenze sulla distribuzione degli insediamenti antichi nel territorio tra Eloro e Noto Antica. La fertilità dei suoli e la presenza dei fiumi ha favorito lo stanziamento umano in quest'area fin dalla Preistoria. Inoltre, i depositi alluvionali individuati nell'area 3, gli ultimi dei quali risalgono agli anni '50 del secolo scorso, confermano la maggior portata del torrente Gioi in antico, e quindi la sua navigabilità, decisiva per le scelte insediative sia in età greca che romana.

ROSA LANTERI, MARTA FITUŁA

## ŚLADY OSADNICTWA STAROŻYTNEGO NA TERYTORIUM NOTO (PROWINCJA SYRAKUZY). NOWE ZNALEZISKA Z „CONTRADA GIOI” I „NIURA”

Nadzór archeologiczny prowadzony w latach 2011–2014 przez dyrekcję Głównego Urzędu Konserwatorskiego w Syrakuzach (Soprintendenza per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali di Siracusa) nad realizacją projektu „Remont, modernizacja i realizacja połączenia systemu dróg i węzła komunikacyjnego z autostradą oraz pierwszego odcinka Drogi Prowincjalnej 19 Noto – Pachino”, na terenach peryferyjnych miasta Noto (prowincja Syrakuzy) przyczynił się do zlokalizowania i ochrony 8 nowych stanowisk. Większość znajduje się wzdłuż drogi S.P.19 w miejscowości „Contrada Gioi” i „Contrada Niura”, w pobliżu cieków wodnych Gioi i rzeki Asinaro.

Zabytki pochodzące ze stanowisk znajdujących się na południe od Gioi (Area I i II) z powierzchni, z warstw poprzednio naruszonych stanowią głównie fragmenty ceramiki greckiej zarówno stołowej (czerwono-figurowej, czarno pokostowanej), amfor, jak i budowlanej. Podczas realizacji systemu kanalizacji, w odległości około 150 m na północ od koryta Gioi zlokalizowano struktury z epoki rzymskiej (Area III). Zarówno kanał przeznaczony do odpływu wody jak i ściana oporowa ograniczająca nawierzchnię z otoczków rzecznych, zaprawą mieszanej z piaszczystą ziemią i tłucznem ceramicznym sugerują obecność kompleksu architektonicznego na zachód od drogi. Ponadto niektóre rodzaje zabytków pochodzących z założonych wykopów (fragmenty tynków z freskami, marmury, kostki mozaiki, szkła okienne, terra sigillata) wykorzystanych jako materiał wtórny przy budowie struktur, wskazują na charakter rezydencjalny kompleksu, którego wstępne datowanie obejmuje cały okres imperialny epoki rzymskiej (w najstarszych warstwach znaleziono m.in. fragmenty dwóch naczyń typu terra sigillata „italica” ze stemplami z 10 r. p.n.e./10 n.e.).

Zabytki z wypełnienia kanału wybudowanego prawdopodobnie w kolejnej fazie (II/III w. n.e.) datowane na V w. n.e. sugerują, że był on użytkowany aż do okresu

późnorzymskiego, podobnie jak pobliska willa rzymska nad Tellaro. Kolejne koncentracje zabytków zlokalizowane nieopodal, w kierunku północnym (Area IV, V) przemawiają za gęstym zasiedleniem badanego obszaru w okresie rzymskim. Jedno stanowisko (Area VII) zlokalizowane na podstawie materiału ceramicznego (m. in. fragmenty czarno pokostowanych pater) znajduje się przy zjeździe z autostrady, natomiast kolejne dwa (Area VI, VIII) na południe od rzeki Asinaro.

Eksploatacja cysterny oraz warstw zalegających nad murem wspierającym ścianę płytkiego rowu w miejscowości „Contrada Niura” dostarczyły szerokiej gamy zabytków hellenistycznych. Z 11 warstw wypełnienia cysterny o przekroju w kształcie dzwonu („campanata”), pochodzą m.in. miniaturowe naczynia, fragmenty ceramiki apulijskiej, terracotta. Liczne zabytki użytku domowego świadczą, iż zbiornik wykuty w wapiennej skale został ponownie wykorzystany jako jama śmietnikowa pomiędzy IV/III w. p.n.e., stąd przypuszcza się, iż w najbliższej okolicy, na wschód od cysterny znajdowały się obiekty mieszkalne.

Pomimo, iż nadzór objął obszary w dużej mierze zmodyfikowane podczas realizacji istniejącego już systemu dróg, udało się zlokalizować aż 8 nowych stanowisk na dość ograniczonym odcinku, które dostarczyły danych przydatnych do wykazania zagęszczenia osadnictwa w starożytności, zwłaszcza w epoce greckiej i rzymskiej. Żyzność gleby oraz obecność rzek sprzyjały zasiedlaniu na terytorium pomiędzy antycznymi miastami Eloro i Noto Antica, począwszy od czasów prehistorycznych, o czym świadczą niektóre zabytki z krzemienia lub kamienia gładzonego. Ponadto depozyty aluwialne, z których ostatnie sięgają lat 50-tych ubiegłego wieku, potwierdzają większą objętość Gioi i wyższy poziom wód w starożytności, nie wykluczając możliwości żeglugi.