

The Sanctuary of Astarte at Ras il-Wardija in Gozo (Malta) Between Carthage and Rome

Cults, Rituals, and Religious Entanglements of a Mediterranean Sanctuary (Fourth Century BC-Second Century AD)

Federica Spagnoli, Giuliana Bonanno, Tecla Zucchi

Sapienza Università di Roma, Italia

Abstract The Ras il-Wardija sanctuary (fourth century BC-second century AD) in Gozo was a key Punic-Roman site dedicated to Astarte, protecting seafarers and linked to Gozo's agricultural economy. Excavations by Sapienza University of Rome, in collaboration with Superintendence CH and Heritage Malta since 2021, have revealed pottery fragments inscribed with Astarte's name. These resemble those from Tas-Silġ, Malta's main Punic sanctuary, suggesting an unprecedented link between the two sites. This discovery sheds light on religious rituals, including Anagógia and Katagógia festivals.

Keywords Astarte. Phoenicians. Temples. Religion. Inscriptions.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 1.1 The Cave. – 1.2 The Temple of Astarte on the First Terrace. – 1.3 Architectural Comparisons. – 2 Material Culture and Inscriptions: The Cult of 'Štrt 'nn, Astarte of Malta. – 3 Malta and Ras il-Wardija at the Centre of the Mediterranean: A Mention of the Sea Routes. – 4 Reconstructing the Rituals Performed.



Antichistica 44 | Storia ed epigrafia 11

e-ISSN 2610-8291 | ISSN 2610-8801

ISBN [ebook] 978-88-6969-931-3 | ISBN [print] 978-88-6969-932-0

Peer review | Open access

Submitted 2025-04-04 | Accepted 2025-04-22 | Published 2025-09-24

© 2025 Spagnoli, Bonanno, Zucchi | © 4.0

DOI 10.30687/978-88-6969-931-3/011

1 Introduction

The sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija (fourth century BC-second century AD) rises on a promontory overlooking the sea in the north-western coast of Gozo and holds one of the most spectacular Punic-Roman sacred compounds of the Ancient Mediterranean [fig. 1]. It was investigated between 1964 and 1967 by the Italian Mission in Malta, and after more than 50 years of oblivion, the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo resumed the archaeological research in the sanctuary and surrounding area in 2021, with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Heritage Malta, and the University of Malta.



Figure 1 Drone view of the Punic-roman sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija on the island of Gozo (Malta), situated on a high cliff overlooking the Gozo Channel, with the cave visible on upper terrace (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)

1.1 The Cave

The sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija extends over five terraces (V-I), which slope down toward the cliff that overhangs the sea [fig. 2]. The sacred complex hosts a cult chamber carved into the rock, and a temple [fig. 3]. The cave, facing southwest, opens onto the highest terrace of the five that comprises the natural scenic setting of the sanctuary. It is hewn from Globigerina limestone, a yellowish and highly friable rock, which forms one of the geological layers of the island of Gozo. The courtyard in front of the rock chamber features several installations, including a bell-shaped cistern and a rectangular pool, also carved from the rock, accessible via steps.



Figure 2 Drone view of sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija, articulated in five terraces, from the south-west (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)

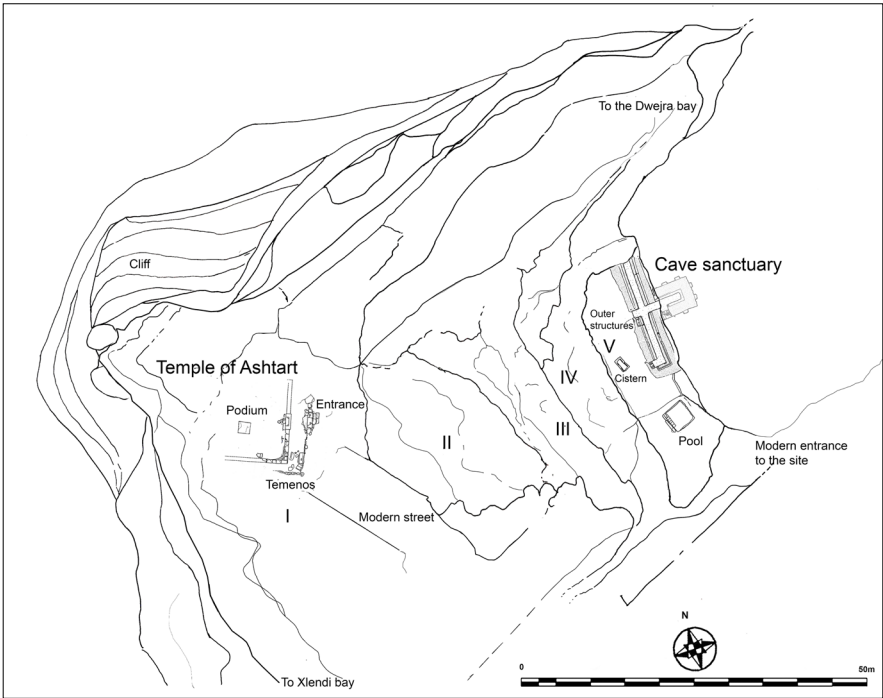


Figure 3 Plan of the sanctuary displaying the cave on the fifth terrace, and the temple on the first one (drawing by F. Spagnoli)

The rock chamber has a rectangular plan, standing about 2 m high, 5.80 m deep, and 4.70 m wide, and is artificially created by exploiting a pre-existing natural cavity. The cave is adorned with niches on each of the three walls, topped by mouldings and enriched with recesses designed to support architectural shelves [fig. 4].¹ The niches are not arranged in an orderly manner, reflecting an architectural style associated with the Punic world: there are two on the west wall, two on the rear wall, and one on the east wall. Each of the five niches likely housed painted images, as suggested by the partially preserved traces of paint. Additionally, the opening of the chamber was framed by two small rocky ledges that narrowed the entrance [fig. 5]. Although the images have not survived, they played an important role in rituals, which were carefully controlled and repeated to allow participants to experience a connection with the images represented. A deep bench runs along the three sides of the cave, drawing a 1m deep corridor at the centre. The corridor extends to the outside intersecting another perpendicular corridor running parallel to the rocky wall, framed by a long ledge on the two sides.² At the entrance to the rock chamber, a step was created against the south wall, its flat surface featuring two large circular cavities, and two hollows interpreted as containers for offerings [fig. 6]; a similar installation is at the southern end of the outer corridor [fig. 7].³



Figure 4 The cave with sunlight hitting the inside of the rock chamber and the niches carved out of the walls, from the south (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)

1 Spagnoli 2022, 22-4; 2023, fig. 3.

2 Spagnoli 2022, figs 8-9; 2023, figs 5-7.

3 Caprino 1966, 129; Spagnoli 2022, 24.



Figure 5 Frontal view of the cave at Ras il-Wardija and the ancillary structures on the outside, from the west (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)



Figure 6 Detail of the interior of cave from the north: the benches running along the walls, the central corridor, the step with two recesses, which may have been used for libations or offerings, resting on the southern side (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)



Figure 7
The outer corridor
and benches:
in the foreground the step
with two circular recesses,
along the corridor
the recesses for stelae
and baetyls; from the south-
east (photo courtesy of the
Sapienza Archaeological
Mission to Gozo)

The structures with its two cavities and the rock ledges at the entrance to the cave seems to mark the transition between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, representing a sacred boundary that required a special rite of passage. The identical structure at the southern end of the corridor may have had the same function as a passage to the descent of the corridor.

Due to the severe erosion of the promontory, it is possible that the present configuration of the cave differs significantly from its original structure. Nevertheless, remnants of the initial layout of the cave sanctuary remain discernible within the Globigerina limestone wall, where the chamber opens, despite extensive erosion. At the northern and southern edges of the rock façade, two overhanging sections, curving at right angles toward the centre of the fifth terrace, may have once constituted the side walls of an outer chamber that housed the corridor and benches. According to this hypothesis, the cave complex was originally composed of two chambers: an outer chamber which enclosed and sheltered the auxiliary structures, now exposed to the elements, and a smaller, inner chamber adorned with niches, which remains intact today.

1.2 The Temple of Astarte on the First Terrace

The temple of Astarte rises on the lower terrace. The building features a rectangular plan, with its entrance oriented towards the cave. Based on the size of the threshold, the structure must have been monumental, suggesting it was more extensive than what remains today [fig. 8]. The temple was constructed using Globigerina blocks. The rocky ground was incorporated into the pavement, which was regularised by a floor of limestone mixed with marble fragments. Numerous fragments of coloured plasters detected both inside and outside the temple indicate that the walls were adorned with plaster revetments. The presence of frames and other architectural elements made of plaster suggests that the temple walls had plastic decorations, particularly around the doors.



Figure 8 View of the temple of Astarte on the lowest terrace of the sanctuary area
(photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)

Inside the temple, there is a square recess aligned with the threshold, likely housing a pedestal or podium that supported the cult image of the deity. At the time of excavation, part of the white plaster covering the podium was still visible in its original position, attached to the floor. From other fragments of the podium coating found nearby, its height was estimated to be approximately 0.9 m. Another hollow in the rocky floor, about 1.70 m north of the podium, suggests the presence of an irregularly shaped rectangular slab, probably used as an offering table [fig. 9].



Figure 9 The square recess cut into the pavement at the center of the temple, probably hosting a lost podium; view from the south (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)

The temple was surrounded by a temenos, whose entrance was a monumental structure composed of two stone slabs with circular recesses. These slabs were surmounted by two steps made of blocks, the upper of which are now lost [fig. 10]. This structure, initially interpreted as an altar, is more likely the entrance to the temenos, with its function related to the sacredness of thresholds, a concept deeply rooted in the religious traditions of Maltese prehistory.⁴

1.3 Architectural Comparisons

The sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija combines a cave and a constructed temple structure, situated at opposite ends of the sacred area in a picturesque setting, featuring a monumental design. It fits into a broader category of Mediterranean sanctuaries, influenced by a variety of architectural models. Its architectural references are drawn from Phoenician-Punic, Hellenistic architecture – particularly that of the Greek islands – and Roman sacred architecture.

⁴ Caprino 1968, 88-9; Trump 2002, 156-7.



Figure 10 The Temple of Astarte, the temenos (in the background) and its monumental entrance in front of the threshold, first terrace (photo courtesy of the Sapienza Archaeological Mission at Gozo)

Concerning the connections to the Hellenistic sanctuaries, it is noteworthy to observe the affinity with certain extra-urban sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter. Among these is the sanctuary of Humei Tepe at Miletus, dated to the third century BC, which comprises a prostyle Ionic temple built on a rocky outcrop and a cave at the highest point of the hill.⁵ The sanctuaries of Kaunos and Lindos, while lacking a cave, are also situated on rocky ledges and equipped with rock-cut bowls for libations, in line with the chthonic character of the Demeter cult.⁶ The Ras il-Wardija sanctuary also features cavities carved into altars and benches, likely serving a similar function.

A temple associated to a cave arose on the acropolis of Rhodes. The temple of Apollo Ylatis is connected to the so-called 'Cavernous sanctuary', located to the south of the Temple. This rocky complex⁷ combines natural and artificial features [fig. 11]. It consists of two rectangular rooms connected by an internal door. The narrow sides of the first large chamber are decorated with two rectangular niches.⁸

⁵ Müller, Weiner 1980, 30-8; Karatas 2019, 155, fig. 6.

⁶ Karatas 2019, 158-60, fig. 13.

⁷ Kondis 1958.

⁸ Patsiadis 2013, 53, figs 7-9.



Figure 11 The so-called “Cavernous Sanctuary”, on the Acropolis of Rhodes: plan and section (after Patsiadis 2013, fig. 7), and façade (photo courtesy L. Nigro)

The similarities between the Ras il-Wardija cave and certain Roman sanctuaries are primarily architectural. Notably, parallels can be drawn with several Mithraic temples, sharing features such as a rectangular rock-cut chamber, often artificially shaped, side benches likely used for ritual banquets,⁹ and a niche positioned along the rear wall.¹⁰ It is significant to highlight that while the Ras il-Wardija sanctuary was originally established during the Punic period, it remained in continuous use until at least the third century AD.

The temple of Astarte on the first terrace can be reconstructed as an open-air sanctuary, characterised by an enclosure and a monumental entrance. Drawing on the preserved remains, a comparison with the Neo-Punic sanctuary of Menzel Harb in Tunisia, which features a porticoed *temenos* enclosing an open courtyard,¹¹

⁹ See, as an example, the Mithraeum of San Clemente in Rome (second-third centuries AD): Guidobaldi 1992; Provinciali et al. 2008, figs 1, 13.

¹⁰ As in the Mithraeum of Duino (second-fifth centuries AD), engraved in a karst cave: see Ventura 2024.

¹¹ Foucher 1966, 119-21.

has been proposed.¹² A similar architectural configuration appears in the temple of *Baalat* at Byblos, as depicted on a coin issued by M. Opellius Macrinus (217-218 AD) [fig. 12].¹³ This coin illustrates a rectangular sacred enclosure with a monumental entrance along the long side and a central podium supporting a baetyl. The temple of Astarte at Kouklia-*Palaephaphos* in Cyprus also conforms to this architectural model, as reconstructed by Maier and Karageorghis.¹⁴ Consequently, the temple of Astarte at Ras il-Wardija appears to align with a broader typology of sanctuaries dedicated to the goddess,¹⁵ a design widely observed across the Levant, including the temples at Byblos and Kouklia-*Palaephaphos*.¹⁶

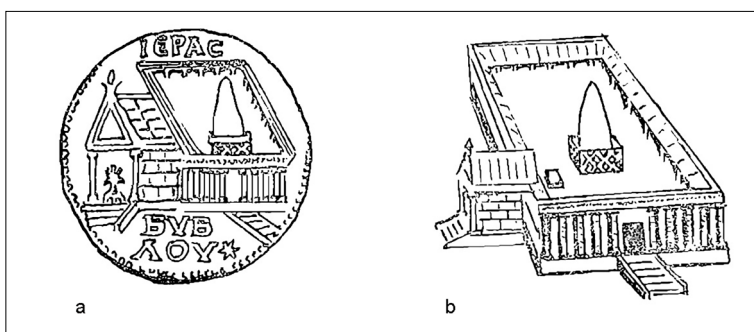


Figure 12 The temple of Baalat at Byblos as depicted on a coin by M. Opellius Macrinus (218 AD) (a), and axonometric reconstruction (b) according to R. Dussaud (from Stockton 1974-1975, fig. 1, a-b)

2 Material Culture and Inscriptions: The Cult of ʕtrt ʕnn, Astarte of Malta

The cult of Astarte was widely spread in the Mediterranean, and her sanctuaries played a pivotal role in maritime dynamics, since they were proper land infrastructures for a safe navigation, as their presence signalled landing places or areas where navigation was particularly dangerous.¹⁷

¹² Cagiano de Azevedo 1964, 124.

¹³ Dussaud 1927, 119-20, figs 1-2; Stockton 1974-75, 7.

¹⁴ Schwarzer 2013, 30, pl. 11: 22.

¹⁵ Spagnoli 2024b, 349. For the spread of the open-air sanctuaries dedicated to this goddess, worshipped as *Potnia* in the Minoan and Aegean area, see Kourou 2015, 186.

¹⁶ Finkbeiner 1981; Bietak 2019, 175-9, fig. 5.

¹⁷ Spagnoli 2024, 369-71.

The cult of the Goddess is testified by stelae, baetyls, and fragments of a clay idol of the type of the Goddess with raised arms [fig. 13].¹⁸ The ceramic repertoire is mainly composed by tableware, suggesting that one of the rituals celebrated at the site was feasts or communal meals for all devotees.¹⁹ The varied group of transport amphorae testify to the sanctuary's extensive trade connections throughout the Mediterranean.

Figure 13
Base of clay idol of the type of the Goddess
with raised arms (photo courtesy of the
Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo)



Some of the ceramics, as plates, bowls, cooking pots and jugs, bear short Punic inscriptions, *alphabetica signa*, probably abbreviations [fig. 14, 1-2] and symbols [fig. 14, 3], incised before firing, as they were produced for exclusive use in rituals. The inscriptions are similar in paleography and content to those found at Taş-Silğ, a sanctuary in the south of Malta dedicated to the Goddess. The numerous inscriptions found in the Maltese sanctuary bear *ʿštrt ʿnn*, the name of Astarte followed by the epithet *ʿnn*, i.e. the Phoenician name for Malta.²⁰ This epithet defines the sanctuary of Taş-Silğ as a place of worship with a regional dimension and suggests that there must have been a 'national' cult of Astarte of Malta, centred at Taş-Silğ, to which the other sanctuaries of Astarte in the Maltese archipelago – like the one at Ras il-Wardija – may also have referred.²¹ The links between Ras il-Wardija and Taş-Silğ are evidenced both by the types of ceramics and by the inscriptions engraved on them. Perhaps the most representative example is an inscription engraved on a fragment of a juglet (W51/4) [fig. 14, 4]. The inscription is divided into two lines due to its lower position in the vessel. In the first line *kaf*, *ʿayin*, *shin*, in the second

¹⁸ Spagnoli 2023, 307, fig. 15.

¹⁹ Piacentini 2011, 32-3.

²⁰ Amadasi Guzzo 2011, 20-1; 24, figs 10, 12, 15.

²¹ The Punic inscription found in Gozo, the *Melitensia Quinta* (CIS I, 132, end of third-second century BC), mentions sacred buildings on the island, including one dedicated to Astarte. Ras il-Wardija possesses all the attributes necessary to be recognised as the main sanctuary of Astarte on the island of Gozo, as mentioned in the inscription (Bonanno 2005, 79-80).

line *resh*, *taw*, and can be read as *k'š[t]rt*, where *k* is the abbreviation of *khn*, priest, followed by *'štrt*, Astarte, the priest of Astarte. The formula, both in the abbreviated and complete variant *š khn'štrt*, of the priest of Astarte, is well attested at Taş-Silğ.²² The name of the Goddess is usually attested in the standardised formula *l'štrt* in the most important Mediterranean sacred areas dedicated to Astarte, such as Motya and Eryx in central Mediterranean²³ and Paphos in Cyprus²⁴.

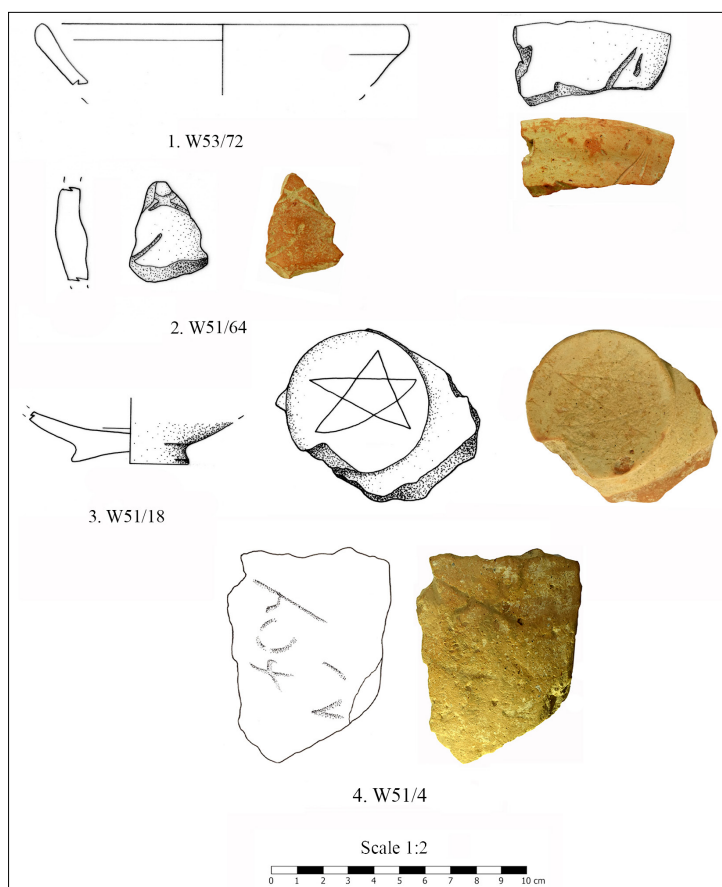


Figure 14 Punic inscriptions on pottery. 1: the bowl W51/64 with the incised letters shin and taw, integrated as *l'štrt*, "to Astarte"; 2: the bowl W53/72 recording the Punic *taw* in the typical shape of the Maltese islands; 3: astral symbol incised on the bottom of the Punic bowl W51/18; 4: the inscription *k'š[t]rt*, abbreviation of *š khn'štrt*, "of the priest Astarte," on the juglet W51/4 (photos Sapienza Archaeological Mission to Gozo, drawings D. Iorio)

²² De Bonis et al. 2019, 1626.

²³ Angiolillo, Sirgiu 2009; Ribichini 2004, 57.

²⁴ Amadasi Guzzo 2004, 50.

3 **Malta and Ras il-Wardija at the Centre of the Mediterranean: A Mention of the Sea Routes**

Unravelling the complex network of maritime routes that shaped our understanding of the ancient Mediterranean and its people has long captivated scholars. New questions continue to emerge, especially regarding the extensive routes navigated by the Phoenicians and later the Carthaginians, not only those from the Levantine coast to the Straits of Gibraltar and beyond, but especially the commercial circuits of the central Mediterranean.

The strategic position of the Maltese archipelago at the heart of both these routes has made it a vital cultural hub since prehistoric times. Its islands maintained their importance across different eras, including the period relevant to this study, from the fourth century BC to the second century BC, when they were under Carthaginian rule and subsequently annexed by Rome. Even the name of Gozo, the second-largest island, has maritime roots, deriving from the Phoenician/Punic word *gwl*, meaning a round vessel.²⁵

A key-site in this context is the Punic and Roman sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija. Located in a strategic position, its function was not limited to that of a religious site, but also as a reference point in maritime networks. Indeed, it signalled the presence of a haven to the north, in the Dwejra Bay, and the entrance to the port of Xlendi, a little further south of the sanctuary. Little is known about Gozo's ancient harbours, but Xlendi stands out for its probable use as an anchorage site. While it may not have served as a major port due to limited space, archaeological evidence suggests it extended further inland in antiquity indicating a broader bay that could accommodate larger vessels.²⁶

This area has yielded significant underwater artefacts since the nineteenth century, with discoveries such as the seventh century BC Phoenician shipwreck, which included items like volcanic stone saddle querns from Pantelleria and diverse amphoras mostly of Maltese production.²⁷

Further explorations have identified multiple shipwrecks in Xlendi, dating from the third century BC to the fifth century AD, with notable finds like amphoras from various Mediterranean regions. The 'Tower Shipwreck', now accessible through a digital archaeological park, showcases a variety of goods, suggesting continuous trade connections.

25 Saliba 2002, 931.

26 Gambin 2002-03.

27 Gambin, Sourisseau, Anastasi 2021.

Comparing the artifacts from Xlendi with those from Ras il-Wardija offers valuable insight into Malta's local and broader Mediterranean networks. These connections imply that sailors who anchored in Xlendi may have frequented Ras il-Wardija, emphasising the Maltese islands' integral role in ancient maritime circuits.

4 Reconstructing the Rituals Performed

Reconstructing the precise nature of the rituals performed at the sanctuary remains challenging due to the limited and fragmentary archaeological evidence available. Nevertheless, it is plausible to suggest that these rituals involved a significant degree of mobility. The original entrance to the sanctuary was located on the first terrace, implying that participants likely followed a deliberate, structured route from the temple to the cave – traversing the terraces and moving from the exterior to the interior of the cave, and vice versa – guided by the layout of the corridors. The ancient access path ran along the coastal high cliffs overlooking the sea, linking the sanctuary to Xlendi bay. It is reasonable to propose that this extra-urban sanctuary, despite lacking direct access from the sea, functioned as a pilgrimage destination, with the journey beginning from the coast. Moreover, the smaller-scale processional movement through the terraces and corridors may have symbolically mirrored the larger, more arduous pilgrimage required to reach the site.

Regarding the cave, insights into the rituals performed there can be gained through an analysis of spatial organisation and cult installations. In the area directly in front of the cave, the presence of a cistern and a stepped pool suggests a water-related purification cult, likely involving ablutions or therapeutic baths.²⁸ The presence of such hydraulic structures at Ras il-Wardija may further emphasise the association of Astarte with natural elements, aligning with her characterisation as a chthonian deity. However, the sanctuary appears to consist of two distinct spaces, the cave and the temple, which may suggest the coexistence of different cult practices. The rituals connected to the cave, particularly those involving the adjacent pool, imply that Astarte may not have been the sole deity worshipped at the site. Instead, the sanctuary may have centred on the veneration of a divine couple. The pool, situated near the cave, suggests the practice of ablution and purification rites, evoking the sphere of healing, which can be linked to the god Eshmun. This ritual practice recalls that of the Grotta Regina near Palermo, where, between the fourth and second centuries BC, devotees worshipped Shadrappa, a healing

28 Garbati, Pedrazzi 2019, 217-18.

deity within the Punic pantheon.²⁹ Furthermore, notable parallels exist between the two sanctuaries: both are situated on promontories overlooking treacherous stretches of sea, implying their shared function as sites of divine protection for sailors. Additionally, the presence of benches within the cave hints at the practice of *incubatio*, a ritual involving sleeping within the sacred space to seek divine visions or healing. This practice, sometimes associated with rites of passage, is attested in sanctuaries dedicated to Eshmun from the Phoenician period through Roman times. A notable example of such a sanctuary is that of Eshmun/Aesculapius at Sa Punta 'e su Coloru in Nora, Sardinia, which is similarly located near the low cliffs and directly accessible from the sea.

Finally, the unprecedented link between the sanctuaries of Taş-Silg and Ras il-Wardija, established by the discovery in inscriptions similar to those known from the Maltese sanctuary, allows us to consider the possibility that the two sanctuaries were part of the same pilgrimage circuit. Concerning the celebrations in honour of Astarte, the classical authors describe the festivals of *Anagógia* and *Katagógia*, documented in Sicily in the fourth century BC during the Carthaginian Eparchy. These celebrations involved moving the Goddess from one sanctuary to another in the Mediterranean, e.g. from Eryx in Sicily to Sicca in North Africa, according to Athenaeus of Nacuratis and Claudius Aelianus.³⁰ The festivals dedicated to Astarte were introduced by Carthage in the fourth century BC as part of a deliberate religious strategy aimed at leveraging the widespread veneration of the goddess to assert control over, and facilitate the integration of, various Mediterranean regions under Punic hegemony. Following the fall of Carthage, the Romans appear to have similarly recognised and exploited the cult's unifying potential to consolidate their authority within the former Punic territories of the central Mediterranean. The participation of sanctuaries in Malta and Gozo in these celebrations and associated pilgrimages dedicated to Astarte suggests that the Ras il-Wardija sanctuary was among the sites involved in such ritual activities.

The sanctuary was thus part of a Central Mediterranean religious network, integrating it into the system of devotion to the goddess Astarte. This affiliation carried extensive implications, including political control, functioning as a commercial hub, and serving as a landmark to facilitate navigation.

²⁹ Orsingher 2020, 538-40, figs 2-3.

³⁰ Athen. *Deipnosophistae* 394f-395a; Ael. *VH* 1.15; Spagnoli 2023, 319-20.

Bibliography

- Amadasi Guzzo, M.G. (1967). *Le iscrizioni fenicie e puniche delle colonie in Occidente*. Roma.
- Amadasi Guzzo, M.G. (2004). "Astarte fenicia e la sua diffusione in base alla documentazione epigrafica". Matilla Séiquer; G., Egea Vivancos, A.; González Blanco, A. (eds), *El mundo púnico. Religión, antropología y cultura material: actas II Congreso Internacional del Mundo Púnico* (Cartagena, 6-9 de abril de 2000). Murcia, 47-54.
- Angiolillo, S.; Sirgiu, R. (2009). "Astarte/Venere Ericina a Cagliari. *Status quaestionis* e notizia preliminare della campagna di scavo 2008 sul Capo Sant'Elia". *Studi Sardi* 34, 179-211.
- Azzopordì, G. (2017). *Ras il-Wardija Sanctuary Revisited: A Re-Assessment of the Evidence and Newly Informed Interpretations of a Punic-Roman Sanctuary in Gozo (Malta)*. Oxford.
- Bietak, M. (2019). "The Obelisk-Temple in Byblos and its Predecessors". Pieńkowska, A.; Szeląg, D.; Zych, I. (eds), *Stories Told Around the Fountain: Papers Offered to Piotr Bieliński on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*. Warsaw, 165-85.
- Bonanno, A. (2005). *Malta. Phoenician, Punic and Roman*. Malta.
- Bondì, S.F. (2019). "L'Occidente: la Sicilia". Bondì, S.F. (a cura di), *Fenici e Cartaginesi. Una civiltà mediterranea*. Roma, 163-93.
- Bloch-Smith, E. (2014). "Archaeological and Inscriptional Evidence for Phoenician Astarte". Sugimoto, D. (ed.), *Transformation of a Goddess: Ishtar – Astarte – Aphrodite*. Fribourg; Göttingen, 167-94.
- Bonzano, F. (2016). "Quale rito per la Dea? Pratiche del sacro nel santuario di Tas-Silġ a Malta". Fontana, F.; Murgia, E. (a cura di), *Sacrum facere = Atti del III Seminario di Archeologia del Sacro. Lo spazio del 'sacro': ambienti e gesti del rito* (Trieste, 3-4 ottobre 2014). Trieste, 147-75. Polymnia. Studi di Archeologia 7.
- Cagiano De Azevedo, M. (1964). "La ricognizione preliminare". Bonello, V.; Borg, V.; Cagiano de Azevedo, M.; Ciasca, A.; Coleiro, E.; Davico, A.; Garbini, G.; Moscati, S.; Pennacchietti, F.A.; Pugliese, B.; Scrinari, V., *Missione Archeologica a Malta: Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1963*. Roma, 17-24. Serie Archeologica 5.
- Caprino, C. (1966). "Ras il-Wardija (Gozo). Lo scavo del complesso rupestre sulla V terrazza e della IV terrazza". Cagiano de Azevedo, M.; Caprino, C.; Ciasca, A.; Coleiro, E.; Davico, A.; Garbini, G.; Malilla, F.S.; Moscati, S.; Pugliese, B.; Rossignani, M.P.; Tamassia, A.M., *Missione Archeologica a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1964*. Roma, 125-42. Serie Archeologica 11.
- Caprino, C. (1968). "Ras il-Wardija (Gozo): Lo scavo". Cagiano de Azevedo, M.; Caprino, C.; Ciasca, A.; Davico, A.; Del Monaco, R.; Garbini, G.; Pugliese, B.; Rossignani, M.P., *Missione Archeologica a Malta: Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1967*. Roma, 87-94. Serie Archeologica 15.
- CIS = *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum ab Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum conditum atque Digestum. Pars prima, Inscriptiones Phoenicias Continens*, t. 1. Parigi 1881.
- Clottes, J. (2003). "Caves as Landscapes". Sognnes, K. (ed.), *Rock Art in Landscapes - Landscapes in Rock Art*. Trondheim, 11-30. Skrifter 4.
- De Bonis, A.; De Bonis, B.; Piacentini, D. (2019). "Les inscriptions phéniciennes et puniques sur poterie de Tas-Silġ (Malte)". Ferjaoui, A.; Redissi, T. (éds), *La mort, la religion*. Vol. 3, *La vie, la mort et la religion dans l'univers phénicien et punique. Actes du VIIème congrès international des études phéniciennes et puniques* (Hammamet, 9-14 novembre 2009). Tunis, 1625-40.

- Dussaud, R. (1927). "Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique du Service des Antiquités et des Beaux-Arts en Syrie, t. IV". *Syria* 8(4), 357-8.
- Finkbeiner, U. (1981). "Untersuchungen zur Stratigraphie des Obeliskentempels in Byblos. Versuch einer methodischen Auswertung". *Baghdader Mitteilungen*, 12, 13-69.
- Foucher, L. (1966). "Un sanctuaire néopunique à Menzel Harb". *Africa* 1, 119-30.
- Gambin, T. (2002-03). "The Harbours of Ancient Gozo". *Malta Archaeological Review*, 6, 20-6.
- Gambin, T.; Sourisseau, J.C.; Anastasi, M. (2021). "The Cargo of the Phoenician Shipwreck Off Xlendi Bay, Gozo: Analysis of the Objects Recovered Between 2014-2017 and Their Historical Contexts". *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 50, 3-18.
- Garbati, G.; Pedrazzi, T. (2019). "Eaux et cultes en Phénicie à l'époque perse". Robinson, B.A.; Bouffier, S.; Fumadó Ortega, I. (eds), *Ancient Waterlands*. Aix-en-Provence, 213-24.
- Guidobaldi, F. (1992). *San Clemente. Gli edifici romani, la basilica paleocristiana e le fasi altomedievali, San Clemente Miscellany*. Roma.
- Heltzer, M. (1993). "The Inscription CIS, 1, 132 from Gozo and the Political Structure of the Island in the Punic Period". *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 3(2), 198-204.
- Lewis-Williams, D. (2002). *The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art*. London.
- López-Bertrán, M. (2014). "Sobre la llamada geografía sagrada fenicia en el Extremo Occidente: otras perspectivas de estudio". Arruda, A.M. (ed.), *Fenícios e Púnicos, por terra e mar. Actas do VI Congresso Internacional de Estudos Fenícios e Púnicos*, vol. 2. Lisboa, 818-25. *Estudios & Memórias* 6.
- Mavridis, F.; Jensen, J.T. (2013). *Stable Places and Changing Perceptions: Cave Archaeology in Greece*. Oxford. BAR International Series 2558.
- Müller-Wiener, W. (1980). "Milet 1978-1979". *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 30, 31-8.
- Orsingher, A. (2020). "Gli dèi al buio. Un riesame di Grotta Regina". Celestino Pérez, S.; Rodríguez González, E. (eds), *Un viaje entre el Oriente y el Occidente del Mediterráneo. Actas del IX Congreso Internacional de Estudios Fenicios y Púnicos*. Mérida, 223-37. *Mytra. Monografías y Trabajos de Arqueología* 5.
- Patsiadas, V. (2013). "E architectoniké tou topíou sten póle tes Ródou" (L'architettura del paesaggio nella città di Rodi). Giannikouri, A. (ed.), *Ólbios Áner, Melétes ste mnéme tou Gregóre Konstantinópoulou, Ródo 4*. Atene, 47-77.
- Provinciali, B.; Marinelli, A.M.; Poggi, D.; Capitani, D.; Proietti, N.; Di Tullio, V. (2008). «Il Mitreo di San Clemente a Roma. Lo studio dei materiali costitutivi e la valutazione del loro degrado attraverso l'NMR Unilaterale». *XVII International Congress of Classical Archaeology*. Roma, 63-7.
- Ribichini, S. (2004). "Al servizio di Astarte: ierodulia e prostituzione sacra nei culti fenici e punico". González Blanco, A.; Matilla Séiquer, G.; Egea Vivancos, A. (eds), *El Mundo Púnico. Religión, Antropología y Cultura Material = Actas II Congreso Internacional del Mundo Púnico* (Cartagena, 6-9 de abril de 2000). Cartagena, 55-68.
- Sala, M. (2020). "Innovation, Eclecticism, and Cultural Entanglement in Second Millennium BC Lebanese Sanctuaries". Doumet-Serhal, C.; Maila-Afeiche, A.M. (eds), *Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. Three Global Harbors of the Ancient World. Proceedings of the International Symposium* (Bristol 25-29 October 2017). Beirut, 147-61.
- Saliba, P.C. (2002). "Phoenician-Punic Gozo". Cauchi, M.N. (ed.), *Gozo. Past and Present*. Gozo, 7-22.

- Schwarzer, H. (2013). "Heiligtümer der Aphrodite Paphia in der antiken Münzprägung". *Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie*, 26, 2013, 19-46.
- Spagnoli, F. (2022). "Il Santuario di Ras il-Wardija: La prima campagna di scavi 2021 della Missione Archeologica a Gozo dell'Università di Roma La Sapienza". *Vicino Oriente*, 26, 21-42.
- Spagnoli, F. (2023). "The Phoenician-Punic Sanctuary of Ras il-Wardija (Gozo). A Reassessment of the Cult and Ritual of Astarte in the Light of Recent Discoveries by the Sapienza Archaeological Mission at Gozo-Ras il-Wardija Project (2021-2022)". *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies*, 11(2-3), 297-322.
- Spagnoli, F. (2024). "The Goddess *anakoiranéousan en pónto kai epì chthonì*. The Role of the Coastal Sanctuaries of the Mediterranean in the Development of the Land and Sea Landscapes: the Case of Ras il-Wardija at Gozo (Malta)". Ramazzotti, M. (a cura di), *Costeggiando l'Eurasia/Coasting Eurasia. Archeologia del paesaggio e geografia storica tra l'Oceano Indiano e il Mar Mediterraneo. Primo congresso di Archeologia del paesaggio e Geografia storica del Vicino Oriente antico* (Sapienza Università di Roma, 5-8 Ottobre 2021). Roma, 363-82. *Atlante del Vicino Oriente antico Opere collettanee* 3. Collana Convegni 71.
- Spagnoli, F. (2024). "A guardia del Mediterraneo: nuove ricerche della Sapienza a Ras il-Wardija (Gozo, Malta)". *Il Mediterraneo Antico e gli studi fenicio-punici a cento anni dalla nascita di Sabatino Moscati* (Roma, 28-29 novembre 2022). Roma, 343-61. *Atti dei Convegni dei Lincei* 361.
- Stockton, E.D. (1974-75). «Phoenician Cult Stones». *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 2(3), 1-27.
- Trump, D.H. (2002). *Malta Prehistory and Temples*. Valletta.
- Ventura, P. (2020). "Il Mitreo di Duino e altre attestazioni archeologiche del mitraismo in Friuli Venezia Giulia". Gariboldi, A. (a cura di), *Ritrovamenti monetali e mitraismo nel mondo romano*. Trieste, 99-139. *Polymnia. Numismatica antica e medievale. Studi di Archeologia* 18.

