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The Southern Necropolis of Cyrene

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To my friend James C. Thorn,
the last explorer of Cyrene

Preface

This book is based on a survey of the Southern Necropolis of Cyrene. The aim is to use the monumental tombs as a source of information on Cyrenean society in an attempt to trace this society's evolution through time. The analysis features a comparison with other cemeteries, and the use of historical evidence both from literary sources and from other local archaeological contexts.

This is a long-due book, as it was submitted as a doctoral thesis in Oxford University in 2007. For several years I have not been involved with academia, as practical needs led me to professional field archaeology in Italy. After 2011 a new wave of illegal urban encroachment destroyed too large parts of the Southern Necropolis, notwithstanding the efforts of the local Department of Antiquities. This situation urged me to finalise this publication, almost as repayment to an old 'debt' I owed to Libya and to my friends there. This book is not perfect, especially in the presentation of the finds, but it needed to be published.

A warning is due, as the Demeter Sanctuary is also mentioned, including both the old American excavations directed by the late D. White and the area which has been more recently dug by the Urbino archaeologists. Elements of the sanctuary were included in my numbering sequence of GPS points since 1999, before the late M. Luni's excavations. For practical reasons I could not change it, as I've referred to elements of the same series in past published articles. No pretence is here advanced to finely describe the Demeter Sanctuary: the reader is referred to the relevant publications by the two teams.

The general typology and the chronology of tomb-types that I use in this work partly differ from those presented in previous studies on the Necropolis. In the chapters, I also present the methodology I have used in the survey. It is also important to stress that this work is not based only on art-history, rather it focuses also on the organisation of burial spaces and display strategies.

The vitality of the Cyrenean aristocratic class produced, already during the Archaic period, a complicated tradition of monumental tombs, with multiple models, possibly underlying different identities and messages to be conveyed. Tombs defined land holdings, and the Southern Necropolis is an optimal setting to study the relationship between the burials and sanctuaries, roads and quarries. The continuing prosperity of the city increased the number of tombs and the degree of elaboration that characterises these tombs, especially in Classical/Hellenistic times when the Archaic territorial divisions became invisible in a landscape overcrowded by sepulchres. A tradition particularly focused on external façades was developed, possibly underlying a focus on funerary rituals held outside the tombs. After the Ptolemaic and Roman conquests this tradition was challenged by external models. The Cyreneans slowly adopted these foreign customs in their ancient ritual systems, and by the Middle Imperial period the necropolis more fully conformed to the funerary models of the wider, globalized Roman Mediterranean. Nevertheless, from 3rd century AD onwards the regional crises marked the end of the monumental necropolis' phenomenon.

Finally, the last chapter demonstrates how the Necropolis of Cyrene fits into a wider Mediterranean picture. Attention is focused on possible similarities in attitudes and in the use of the tombs rather than on art-historical comparisons.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank God and my family for their help throughout these years, and to Debora Lagatta for her patience and support. My interest in Cyrene started before my doctorate, thanks to Prof. E. Fabbricotti who brought me in Libya for the first time in 1999. The late J. C. Thorn and D. M. Thorn were particularly precious in helping and inspiring me. Chapter 4 criticizes much of Thorn's typology but my project would not have been possible without Thorns' generosity and encouragement.

I also wish to thank my supervisor at Oxford University, Prof. A. I. Wilson, for his patience and for many precious discussions and suggestions. Through them the vision I had of the necropolis evolved in a completely new way. Prof. Wilson and P. Bennett allowed me to participate in the Euesperides excavation in April 2006, which permitted me to have a season in Cyrene in May 2006. In a similar way Dr. V. d'Ercole allowed me to survey the necropolis in December 2003. Prof. R. Tomlinson was kind in giving his comments on the false façades in my area, especially S4 and S1. Thanks are also due to Dr. J. Reynolds for an e-mail on the Christian crosses and inscriptions in tomb S1.

Many thanks to the late Controller of the Department of Antiquities of Cyrene, Abdulghader Saed Mzeini, for his friendship, help and for having shown me so much unpublished material. In the same way Saed Faraj shared with me his precious knowledge of the territory around the ancient city. Two members of the Department, Saed Allanabi and Mazen Mzeini, assisted me in my fieldwork, quite often resolving problems and mediating with the landowners between 1999 and 2006. Further help has been given by Fatallah Saed Faraj, Belahassan Saed Faraj, Munir Saed Faraj, Mohammed Khalifa, Attyah Mohammed, Abdallah Breyek Saleh, Abdulkerim Faraj. Thanks to Ahmed Buzaian (Garyounis University) for his hospitality in Benghazi and fruitful exchange of ideas, especially on the late use of Tomb S1.

This book would not have been possible without the help and the friendship of the members of the Italian Mission of Chieti University. My friend, the late D. Fossataro has always been ready to answer any problem I had on computer-related topics; with him I drew my first tomb, a long time ago. Together with Prof. O. Menozzi he kindly provided the satellite images. Thanks to Prof. E. Fabbricotti, Prof. O. Menozzi, I. Cherstich, E. Di Valerio and D. Lagatta who often shared with me their information on other parts of the cemeteries and provided useful comments and criticism. The following persons assisted me, in various moments, walking in the Southern Necropolis: D. Lagatta (who also drew some of the tombs here presented), E. Di Valerio, I. Cherstich, A. Santarelli, D. Paolini, F. Siciliano, G. Grilli, M. Capodicasa, V. La Notte.

The Society for Libyan Studies awarded me a grant which financed my stay in Cyrene in May 2006. A grant from Craven Committee (T.W Green fund) and from the Institute of Archaeology of Oxford University (Meyerstein Grant) financed my visit to Cyprus, where Prof. J. C. Connelly kindly showed me the tombs of Aghios Georghios tes Peias and of Meleti (both sites are nearby Paphos). Brasenose College gave me small grants to participate to the SOMA conferences in London (2003) and Dublin (2004). Thanks also to the committee of the "Borsa di Studio D. Fusaro."

The views expressed in this book are obviously mine alone. None of the above-listed persons is responsible for any error or inaccuracy.

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Once again, my family's patience has been essential for the completion of this work, which would not have been possible without the patience (and criticism) of my wife Debora Lagatta and the support of my son Giosuè: to him I wish to have even greater adventures than the ones I had during my wanderings in the necropolis. The role of Oliva Menozzi should also be acknowledged, as she never gave up on pushing me to publish the findings of my research, providing also useful comments on many topics. My friend Rocco d'Errico has provided invaluable help in lay-outing graphics which were often less-than-adequate in their original status. Two other wanderers of the Cyrenean necropoleis should also be mentioned. The first is my brother Igor Cherstich, who has read and commented on some parts of the book. The other is Eugenio Di Valerio, with whom I exchanged opinions on innumerable Cyrenaican topics while we were busy in Italian digs. So many other friends and colleagues have helped me throughout these long fifteen years. Amongst them I list, in alphabetic order, Morgan Belzic, Angela Cinalli, Maria Giorgia Di Antonio, E. Koch Dandolo Fabbricotti, Maria Cristina Mancini, Oscar Mei, Anna Santucci, Stefano Struffolino, Clara Tamburrino and Andrew I. Wilson. With some of them I have co-authored papers on some of topics I touch upon in the book. A few of the images here shown are theirs, as expressed in the captions. My friends in the Dept. of Antiquities of Shahat have played a fundamental role in the completion of this work, sharing information with me and taking pictures of the Necropolis on my behalf when it was not possible for me to visit Libya. Amongst them, Abdalrahim Sheriff Saad and Farag Abdel Hati. The list of people who helped me in this project is endless, and I ask those whose names I forgot to mention here to forgive me. Naturally, none of the above-mentioned persons is responsible for any error or inaccuracies that might be present in this book: those are purely mine.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

AIMS OF THE STUDY

This book analyses the Southern Necropolis of Cyrene. In particular, this study deals with the necropolis as a source of historical information on ancient Cyrenean society and its evolution through time. Throughout the chapters, I will focus on issues of competition in funerary ostentation, display strategies and the ritual use of tombs. The theoretical lens through which I analyse these issues is discussed in Chapter 2, the field methodology is explained in Chapter 3, while the findings of the research are presented in Chapters 5-8 and in the gazetteer.

The book also has three further aims.

- Providing a complete classification of tomb-types organized in the best possible chronology (which is provided in Chapter 4).

- Presenting an analysis of the Southern Necropolis that is more detailed than the one published by Cassels in 1955[1]. Whereas past studies have focused on architectural and sculptural decorations within the tombs, this book also considers the burial features within the tombs (loculi, arcosolia, etc.). and the non-funerary archaeology of the area, including extra-urban sanctuaries. All the structures I have encountered in my survey are recorded in a database, integrated into a wider GIS,[2] and present in the general map.

- Contextualising the necropolis with reference to wider burial trends in Cyrenaica and in the Eastern Mediterranean in order to propose a wider analysis (which I attempt in the concluding chapter).

I first begun to study the Southern Necropolis as an undergraduate student at the University of Chieti, visiting Cyrene on various occasions between 1999 and 2001. However, the material I have collected for this book comes mainly from later surveys (2003-2006) I conducted as a doctoral student at the University of Oxford. Notwithstanding the limitations of this study, it is important to stress that during my visits, I was able to survey about 75% of the c.440 hectares of the Southern Necropolis which was still preserved in 2006, which is about half of what was visible in the 1950s (Figure 5), recording 567 ancient structures in my database.

GENERAL SETTING

Cyrenaica or Jebel Akhdar, the north-eastern part of modern Libya, is a Mediterranean "isle" separated from the rest of Africa through desert areas (Figure 1). The region is internally divided in three levels by natural terraces. The Greek colony of Cyrene is up on the plateau, on the edge of the third level, where the average annual rainfall is higher. It was the major Cyrenaican city in antiquity but numerous other sites dot the rest of the region. Tocra, Barce, Euesperides/Berenike, Apollonia and Ptolemais are just the major ones and they testify to the success of Greek colonization. This prosperity is sometimes justified with the fact that each city possessed territories whose dimensions were unparalleled in Mainland Greece: Cyrene is among the only four cities in the Greek world to possess a chora encompassing more than 3.000 km2 of land.[3] However, prosperity is not just a matter of territory

[1] Which included all the four Cyrenean cemeteries.
[2] This is now part of the general GIS of the Cyrenean *Chora* by the Italian Mission of Chieti University in Cyrene. The Mission gave this resource to the Libyan Department of Antiquities.
[3] Hansen 2006: 107. The number should realistically include also marginal lands. Horden and Purcell (2000: 71) estimate about 2,000 km^2 of productive lands. See also Bresson 2011: 91.

size. The silphion, a precious medicinal plant, was the symbol of the region and Cyrenaica was its only exporter in the Mediterranean: a monopoly which certainly produced a significant income. Possibly more meaningful was a surplus of cereals and the precocity of the harvest if compared to the rest of the Greek world. Possible products are also olives, vines, citron, pine wood, sheep and horses,[4] but the success of ancient cities cannot be explained just enumerating possible resources. Even the benefits of caravan routes from the desert has been possibly sometimes exaggerated.[5] Environmental opportunism was the key for success and it required a complex combination of pastoralism and agriculture in order to exploit the wide variability of Cyrenaican micro-environments.[6]

In general terms the political history of Cyrene is well known, although with obvious moments of obscurity, especially in the Classical period.[7] Battus from Thera founded the city in 632 BC and his descendants ruled as kings until c.440 BC when a "democracy" was born, although one where wealthy aristocrats always had a certain prominence. Cyrene fell under Ptolemaic control in the late 4th century through independent Ptolemaic rulers as Ophellas and Magas. With Ptolemy III, after 250 BC, the Ptolemaic rule over the region became more direct. In 96 BC Romans inherited Cyrenaica from Ptolemy Apion and it became a province in 74 BC. Cyrene prospered under Roman rule until the Jewish revolt of AD 115-7 which heavily damaged the region. The subsequent process of reconstruction and re-colonization by Hadrian changed the old Hellenistic city with new Roman architecture and styles. Two major earthquakes (AD 262 and 365) and invasions by nomads marked the passage to Late Antiquity. Cyrene did not disappear but was substituted by Ptolemais and then Apollonia as the principal urban centre of the region. The fate of Cyrene after the Arab invasion (AD 643) is obscure, but urban life had certainly ended by the Middle Ages when nomads ruled the region, and the only important city was the Arabic Barce/el-Merj.

THE CEMETERIES OF CYRENE

In 1955 Cassels counted not less than 1271 monumental tombs around Cyrene, a number which is certainly not definitive. The near-totality of tombs were looted in imprecise time-periods but the degree of architectural preservation is often high. This monumental necropolis spreads around the ancient city for a radius of 2-4 km in every direction. Cassels divided the area in to four different cemeteries according to the cardinal points (Figure 2). His divisions are understandable, but the borders are not clear-cut and, because Cyrene is sited on the edge of a Jebel (mountain) step, the four cemeteries are essentially partitions of two wider zones: the steep North-Western cliffs and the flatter South-Eastern areas.[8]

[4] A wide overview on ancient Cyrenaican economy is Abdlehamed 2018. A shorter treatment was in Elrashedy 2002: 4-15. For grain see Bresson 2011. It is not yet clear whether Cyrenaican export of wine or olive oil was important. The latest, wide work on these productions is Buzaian 2022.

[5] Elrashedy 2002: 14-5 and related bibliography. The Cyrenean golden coins minted from 5th century BC onwards have been linked with African gold, whether from Sudan or Western Africa (Cunliffe 2023: 125; Liverani 2000: 513) but the subject is poorly understood. Desert caravan routes certainly existed but their real importance for Cyrenean economy is yet to be properly assessed in archaeological terms.

[6] Horden and Purcell 2000: 65-74.

[7] Summaries in Austin 2004: 1243-7; Bonacasa and Ensoli 2000:19-29; complete but out-dated is Thrige 1940. Archaic and Classical periods: Austin 2005; Mitchell 2000; Chamoux 1953. Hellenistic period: Laronde 1987. Imperial period: Romanelli 1943; Laronde 1988. Late Antiquity: Roques 1987 is possibly too positive and its bases were challenged by White 1996. More realistic views in Wilson 2001, 2004.

[8] Cherstich 2002.

Table 1.1. Comparison of the four cemeteries as they appear in Cassels 1955

Necropolis	Total tombs	Built tombs	Rock-Cut tombs	Proportion of Built tombs to Rock-cut tombs	Approximate Area (As in Cassels maps)	No. of tombs per Hectare
Rocky Necropolis						
North	422	55	367	1 : 6.6	1,512,500 m^2	2.79
West	159	11	148	1 : 13.4	562,500 m^2	2.82
Necropolis on the plains						
South	423	161	262	1 : 1.6	7,817,500 m^2	0.54
East	267	206	61	3.3 : 1	6,017,500 m^2	0.44
TOTAL	1271	433	838	1 : 1.9	15,910,000 m^2	0.79

The "Rocky Necropolis" is on the steep cliffs below the Jebel step. Tombs tend to gravitate towards the roads. They are organized in tight terraces, one above the other, (Figure 3) therefore more than one line of tombs can be parallel to the same road (see the density of tombs in Table 1.1). Owing to the steep landscape rock-cut tombs are more frequent than built-tombs, but limestone sarcophagi are also numerous. These cemeteries are more spectacular than the South-Eastern ones, and not just because the landscape is more impressive. Even if many façades and structures are collapsed, tombs are usually better preserved and their original appearances can often be reconstructed. Stone-robbing happened but not to the degree of the South-Eastern plains. Furthermore the north-western necropoleis were cut in a lower stratum of white limestone rich in nummulites, which is harder and more difficult to weather than the superficial limestone of the South-Eastern cemeteries.[9]

The "Necropolis of the plain" is sited directly above the Jebel step. It has small wadis and low hills (Figure 4) but, in general terms, it is certainly flatter than the northern cliffs. As indicated in the table, the number of built tombs is higher since built tombs are better suited for flat areas than for steep cliffs. Tombs still follow ancient roads but, since there are more routes and more spaces between one route and another, the density of tombs is lower than in the North-Western cemeteries (see Table 1.1). The flat landscape had other effects. Many rock-cut courts are sunken below ground-level, and therefore they are often heavily silted. The general appearance of the necropolis is quite unimpressive, too often tombs are buried and structures once monumental are now collapsed and hidden below the *terra rossa*. Furthermore the superficial limestone, yellowish and rich in fossilized algae, is softer than the lower stratum below the Jebel-step: this means that un-buried worked blocks are often badly weathered. Tombs are less well preserved than in the North-West: stone-robbing and re-use have been frequent phenomena. More dangerous is the fact that the modern Arabic city of New Shahat was built, after 1968, directly in the heart of this

[9] Salvini *et alii* 2006: 36.

landscape since the original master plan blindly ignored the South-Eastern necropoleis.[10]

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE NECROPOLIS

This section briefly summarizes past works in the Necropolis, especially in the Southern Cemetery, as others have treated the whole study of past research in Cyrene[11]

Explorers and antiquarians in the 19th century

The impressive tombs in Cyrene were firstly mentioned by travellers during the 18th and early 19th centuries. The first known, even if unrealistic sketch of a Cyrenean temple tomb was made by the Italian physician Agostino Cervelli, who visited the area in 1811-1812.[12]

In 1821-1823 Frederick W. Beechey and Henry W. Beechey undertook the first serious exploration of the ruins of Cyrene, making drawings and descriptions both of the city and the cemeteries. One of their major achievements was a map of the environs around Cyrene, including all the Eastern and Southern cemeteries.[13] By today's standards it is not a very accurate plan but, for long time, it remained the only one. They drew numerous tombs but none in the Southern Necropolis.

The French botanist Jean-Raimond Pacho who visited Cyrene in 1825 produced the most beautiful drawings of the Cyrene Necropolis. He drew numerous tombs in the Northern and Western cemeteries. He drew only one tomb (just the plan) in the Southern Necropolis quite near to the Demeter Sanctuary. This is a rock-cut Hellenistic tomb (CSN-GPS 480 in my gazetteer), it is not shown on Cassels' map and, about 150 years after Pacho, was eventually re-identified and published by Dr. J. Reynolds and Said Faraj due to its inscriptions.[14]

In those years foreign consuls were deeply interested in looting Cyrenaican tombs. The French vice-consul at Benghazi, Vattier de Bourville, spent two months in Cyrene in 1848-1849. His most infamous deed was the removal of the Altalena metopes now in the Louvre Museum in Paris.[15] In the Southern Necropolis De Bourville visited tomb S4 (CSN-GPS 16) and recorded the inscriptions on its big stele and on a statue base.[16]

R. Murdoch Smith and Edwin A. Porcher were in Cyrene for ten months in 1860-1861, excavating inside the city and exploring tombs and producing the earliest photographs of the Necropolis.[17] In the Southern Necropolis Porcher drew the large stele of S4 (CSN-GPS 16).[18]

George Dennis, the famous explorer of Etruria, was the first person to describe Cyrenaican burial practices, albeit briefly, and the artefacts found in a tomb. He writes:

"...the tomb has been so well closed that hardly any earth had penetrated, and on its rocky floor lay the dust of the corpse in the place of the bones, with a group of small vases on either side of the head. There was nothing else! ...some half-dozens pieces of very ordinary pottery...another sepulchre hard by, similar in every aspect, contained similar furniture". [19]

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[10] Doxiades 1968.
[11] Rekowska 2016; Thorn 1998; 2005: I.00-III.25.4; Luni 1998; Cassels 1955: 6-9; Goodchild 1976.
[12] For early explorers: Rekowska 2016: 19-25, 137 fig. 90 (Cervelli's drawing).
[13] Beechey and Beechey 1828: *Plan of the Ruins and Environs of Cyrene.*
[14] Said Faraj 1979: 231-7, fig.1-4.
[15] For the metopes see Bacchielli 1993b. The tomb was not found again for more than a century. It seems that Prof. Bacchielli found it but he never published the location. In May 2001 I, Said Faraj and D. Fossataro found the tomb again in Haleg Stawat, Western Necropolis. The tomb has been re-published in Fabbricotti 2006a: 121-2, figs.2-4. About the area: Cherstich I. 2008.
[16] CIG 5147; Letronne 1848, 374-7.
[17] Bailey 1995: Fig. 3. Thorn 1993: Tav. III,2; more photos are in Thorn 2005:20-6. For a whole treatment of the Smith and Porcher expedition see Thorn D.M. 2007b.
[18] Smith and Porcher 1864: 116, pl.85. ins.27.
[19] Dennis 1870: 141-3.

Probably because these two tombs did not yield anything of value Dennis lost interest in the Cyrenean necropolis. Its seems that his finds are now stored in the British Museum.[20]

From the 20th Century to the Early 21st century

There was a certain interest by American archaeologists in Cyrene in the 1880s and in the two first decades of the 20th century.[21] In a report of the 1909 expedition Oric Bates expressed the possible archaeological richness of the necropolis and probably dug, without any result, in the Western Necropolis.[22]

Richard Norton stayed in Cyrene in 1910-11, excavating in the Northern cemetery. The results were poorly published only as interim notes and an article on epigraphy by D. M. Robinson[23] On 11th March 1911 the epigraphist, Herbert De Cou, was mysteriously murdered and this fact compromised the expedition. New light on Norton's long-unpublished results was shed by Uhlenbrock and Santucci.[24] The finds in two sarcophagi and some tombs are now known, however many doubts remain on those early American investigations.

After the Italian occupation of Libya the extensive excavations started inside the city and not much attention was paid to tombs. An exception are the various inscriptions found by Gaspare Oliverio and then published in *SEG*, IX, unfortunately without accurate indications of the contexts.

Certainly more interesting are the articles of Benedetto Maioletti on the architecture of the Necropolis of Cyrene.[25] Maioletti surveyed the Northern, Western and Southern cemeteries drawing a respectable number of architectural features, especially mouldings, still used in 1975 in Stucchi's *Architettura Cirenaica*. There are interpretative errors in Maioletti's works which can be understood if one considers the nationalist ambience in which he was working. He was apparently looking for the "origins of Roman Architecture" in Cyrenaica, an Italian colony. Despite its great ideological distortions, the work is nevertheless useful for its illustrations, especially the drawing of tomb S185 (Figures 188-189).

In 1947 T. Burton Brown was the first to dig in the cemeteries after World War II. Unfortunately he published his finds poorly, describing what he found in two sarcophagi and just mentioning a few other tombs he dug.[26] After Dennis (more than 80 years before) he was the second person to (briefly) describe an ancient Cyrenaican burial: in a sarcophagus he found two skeletons lying supine, head to foot with pottery behind the skeletons and in the corners of the case.

After Maioletti the first serious attempt to study the Necropolis was done by Alan Rowe in his survey and excavation campaign of 1952, 1955-6 and 1957. In his two publications of 1956 and 1959 there was an amount of detail never before known giving lists of the finds, photos, plans, elevations and sections of the tombs he surveyed or excavated in the North, South and Eastern cemeteries. However, although exceptional for North Africa's archaeology of their times, these two books were far from being complete reports of Rowe's investigations. Most of the finds, in fact, were simply listed without showing any illustration. Thorn re-studied Rowe's finds and analysed all his unpublished field notes.[27]

[20] Thorn 1998: 574 for the records in the British Museum Greek and Roman Department. It is impossible to study the finds from Cyrene. No exact location is known, except for the 1867 material (from Ptolemais, Tocra and Benghazi).
[21] Uhlenbrock 1998; 1999.
[22] Uhlenbrock 1999: 90, 93
[23] Norton 1911; Robinson 1913; Thorn 2005: 47-50.
[24] Uhlenbrock 1998: 108, fig. 4-5; Uhlenbrock and Santucci 2013.
[25] Maioletti 1930; 1931a; 1931b.
[26] Burton Brown 1948a: 78; 1948b:148-152. He was also unclear in his letters to Goodchild in Thorn 2005: 51-2.
[27] Thorn 2005: 100-324

Between November 1953 and January 1954 John Cassels surveyed the necropolis producing the first large maps of the cemeteries. He used aerial photographs as the base to draw the plan and then surveyed the whole area (Figure 2).

He divided the cemeteries into four parts (North, East, West and South necropoleis) and gave to each tomb a name, listing them in a gazetteer. Cassels' names are combinations of a letter indicating the cemetery ("N" for North, "S" for South and so on...) and a number that indicates the tomb: e.g. S4, E19, N171, W20, etc... This division into four areas and these names for tombs are still used today. There are various faults in Cassels' work. His classification is far from accurate and many tombs that he describes in a particular category do not exactly fit that type or, in some cases, any of his types. In some areas he records even sarcophagi while in others he did not notice big rock-cut tombs. Cassels' errors were due to his non-intensive survey technique. He probably started with the study of aerial photographs and he investigated on the ground only where there was something clear in the photos. During my investigations I found many small built tombs not recorded by Cassels and which could be seen only if one intensively surveyed the area on foot while they are invisible in aerial photos.

A treatment of Cyrenaican Roman funerary portraits appeared in the catalogue of sculptures published in 1960 by Elisabeth Rosenbaum.[28] This was the first whole treatment of the subject, but not much attention was paid on niches, the original architectural contexts of those pieces. Later the subject was expanded by Bacchielli's work on the Libyan production from the chora.[29]

Richard Tomlinson published an exceptional article in 1967 about "False-Façade tombs", a class unique to Cyrene.[30] These lavish Hellenistic tombs have enormous façades (sometimes 20 m long) with nothing behind since the real tomb is usually in a lower underground level. Their only purpose is to build a façade in a flat landscape while the entrance of the real tomb is in the middle, hidden in a lower level, or off-centre behind the façade.

Luigi Beschi in 1972 published the most important study on the Cyrenaican funerary half-figures (before the recent work by Belzic), a type of statue extremely common in the necropolis. However, one must always be sceptical about the accuracy of some of his dates, especially regarding the Hellenistic statues dated with accuracy to the century or half-century only on stylistic grounds. It is not uncommon that different scholars give different dates for the same Hellenistic statues with 1-2 centuries' difference between them. Therefore, when other kinds of evidence (e.g. epigraphy, architecture, etc.) are lacking, it is probably simply safer to date a statue only as "Hellenistic", since styles for the Hellenistic period cannot be taken as guides as accurately as they are for the Classical period.[31] I suspect that this could also be true for Cyrenaican half-figures, a class that seems to be typical only of Cyrene and that, therefore, could reflect strong local (maybe conservative) traditions in style.

Sandro Stucchi is the scholar who spent most time and effort in Cyrene. In his *Architettura Cirenaica*, near the end of each chapter there is always a section about tombs in which he tries to summarize the evolution of Cyrenaican sepulchral architecture.[32] However, this basic book on Cyrenaican archaeology has its faults since Stucchi proposes his interpretations "without any qualification of doubt so that readers who have neither the time nor the

[28] Rosenbaum 1960.
[29] Bacchielli 1987, 1990a.
[30] Tomlinson 1967.
[31] Pollitt 1986: 265-271; Smith 1991: 269-273.
[32] Stucchi 1975:12-3, 38-41, 70-82, 149-187, 227, 316-8, 351-2, 533-5.

means to check the references may well mistake assertion for fact".[33]

Stucchi concentrates on small details of the façades but he never mentions internal burial features that might have greater importance than the decorative minutiae he was describing. Such problems lead Stucchi to make interpretative errors which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Stucchi also produced an article about rarer Cyrenaican tomb-types.[34] In an appendix to that paper he discussed the evolution of circular tombs. Unfortunately no date is presented and one can only guess whether the proposed evolution is only an exercise of Stucchi's mind.

Stucchi often treated Cyrenaican architecture considering styles purely from a subjective, aesthetic point of view, forgetting in this way some connection with historical reality. He thought that ancient Greek architects (even artisans carving tomb façades in treacherous, friable limestone) were deeply concerned with the most complicated of mathematical rules, showing in this sense too erudite (and unrealistic) an attitude toward the material record.[35] Coulton explained how "artisans" could have built complicated buildings without any complicated drawing and calculation.[36] Furthermore Gros criticized the lack of methodology and of real precision in Stucchi's interpretations.[37]

The dates given by Stucchi's team to so many public buildings in the *Agorà di Cirene* series could be useful in dating similar styles in the necropolis. Unfortunately pottery shards and dating objects are poorly or never published and, even if the general picture of the evolution of the Cyrenean Agora seems plausible, it is legitimate to have doubts about the strict accuracy of some dating

An illuminating paper on Cyrenaican burial customs was presented by John S. Dent to the Cambridge conference in 1985. He was the first to treat Cyrenaican tombs as sources for ancient social history.[38] He tried to take a broad view of the various evidence available, but his paper resulted in no more than an attempt indicating the potential of the research. Dent produced an interesting hypothesis on the distribution of Archaic tombs which will be discussed in Chapter 5.[39] The same distribution was also used by Claudio Parisi Presicce, trying to demonstrate the extent of Archaic Cyrene.[40] Unfortunately the value of Dent's model is low since it is based on abstract analyses of what is in Cassels' gazetteer and maps (which are poor in detail) rather than on updated fieldwork.

During the last forty years many articles, especially by Italian archaeologists, have concerned individual tombs.[41] Among these papers Lidiano Bacchielli published in 1996 the tomb of "Thanatos", the only purely Alexandrian tomb known in Cyrene while Claudio Frigerio published in 1997 a reconstruction of the false-façade of tomb S388 with a general revision of other similar tombs.

Bacchielli is also noteworthy for his articles on specific themes such as funerary wall-paintings, sculpture and architecture.[42] These papers treat arguments mostly with an art-historical,

[33] Walker 1978: 223. Other reviews: Ward-Perkins 1978; 1979; Gros 1979.
[34] Stucchi 1987.
[35] Ward-Perkins 1979: 365. exemplary are the complicated hypotheses in Stucchi 1984; see also Stucchi 1975: XI, 189.
[36] Coulton 1993: 51-73; 97-123.
[37] Gros 1979.
[38] Dent 1985: 332-4.
[39] Dent 1985: 334-6.
[40] See also Parisi Presicce 2003: 19. The same hypothesis was presented in November 2003 at the Chieti conference.
[41] Bonanno Aravantinos 1998; Santucci 1997, Santucci and Thorn 2003; Bacchielli 1976, 1980, 1992, 1993a, 1996, 2002a; Frigerio 1997.
[42] Funerary wall-paintings: Bacchielli 1993b. On Libyan portraits: Bacchielli 1987, 1990a. Architecture: Bacchielli 2002b (where tombs are also mentioned).

aesthetic approach. Nonetheless, these papers are precious, thorough works, as all the observations are based on vast amount of material evidence.

It is worth reminding how epigraphists like J. Reynolds, C. Dobias-Lalou, L. Gasperini and G. Paci published a certain number of inscriptions from the necropolis. Not much space is usually spent on the contexts, but when a provenance is known this is usually indicated.[43]

The most important work on the Cyrenean necropolis was written by James C. Thorn. This British scholar not only patiently re-studied the discoveries of Alan Rowe but also proceeded to a new investigation of the whole necropolis.[44] Since the times of Cassels, Rowe and Tomlinson, no foreign archaeologist before Jim and Dorothy M. Thorn have so widely and thoroughly walked through the four cemeteries of Cyrene. Thanks to their generosity I was able to access their work long before the 2005 publication, and I found it invaluable. It helped me greatly to orient myself inside the necropolis. This is an extensive piece of research that offers a lot of useful material: drawings of structures and finds, unpublished information from Rowe's field notes, etc. Thorn's original drawings were given by the author to the archives of Chieti University.[45]

Thorn essentially divides tombs into broad categories (rock-cut tombs, round built tombs, sarcophagi, etc.), then within each category he recognizes different subdivisions and labels them with letters (e.g. among rock-cut tombs "A" and "B" are archaic portico-tombs, "C" are tombs without portico but with a particular type of acroteria, etc...). He goes further in the classification identifying numerous subclasses ("A.1" for portico-tombs with Doric capitals, etc...). Thorn is the first scholar interested in tomb-interiors and this is an important novelty because interior plans certainly reflect changing burial practices.

Nevertheless, there are also faults in this work, and these are reflections of the difficulty of the matter he approached. For example, not only is his organization of sub-classes occasionally over-elaborate but it is also sometimes difficult to understand why a tomb is put in one particular class rather than another. These problems reflect the variability of Cyrenean funerary architecture that resists over-meticulous attempts of classification.

Furthermore, the inadequate manner in which Rowe recorded his finds made it difficult for Thorn to suggest many dates. It is impossible to understand if many of Thorn's Classical/Hellenistic types date to the 5th or to the 1st century BC. During these five centuries Cyrenean society evolved and the reflection of such society in tomb architecture could offer precious information on the evolution of the Cyrenean way of displaying the dead. However, without dates, it is impossible to distinguish this evolution and unfortunately this reduces the utility of Thorn's classification.

In any case, some light can still be cast on the tombs' chronology, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4 of this book which will extensively (and critically) use Thorn's important work.

An essential work by J.C. and D.M. Thorn, was the publication of the old 1950s' fieldnotes by Cassels and Tomlinson, which were not just edited but also compared to the authors' own notes from their 1990s/early 2000s investigations.[46] The provided maps are still the old, rough ones published by Cassels in 1955 but the entries of the gazetteer are way larger, including even sketches and old photos. All

[43] Al Muzzeini *et al.* 2003; Bacchielli *et al.* 1992; Fadel and Reynolds 1997; Reynolds 1959; 1989; Reynolds and Thorns 2005; Said Faraj and Reynolds 1979; Dobias-Lalou 2020; Dobias-Lalou and Fadel 1995; Dobias-Lalou and Gwaider 1997; Gasperini 1998; Paci 2003.
[44] Thorn 2005.
[45] Menozzi et al. 2018: 308.
[46] Thorn and Thorn 2009. A complete review is in Cherstich 2009.

this new published information, even if synthetic, is important as it reflects what was visible until tmid-20th century before the recent destructions.

Most recent bibliography

Finally, many new papers on the Cyrenean necropolis were published during the compilation of this work or after its submission as a doctoral thesis in 2007. Some of them were written by the present writer[47] or by other members of the Italian Mission of Università "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara (E. Fabbricotti, O. Menozzi, D. Fossataro, I. Cherstich, E. Di Valerio, D. Lagatta, C. Tamburrino, M.G. d'Antonio, A. Cinalli and others), sometimes written jointly with Libyan colleagues or scholars from other academic affiliations.[48] Many of these papers, written in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities, also deal with the tragic destructions following the illegal buildings which appeared in the necropolis after 2011,[49] a topic underlined also by other scholars.[50]

Noteworthy are also the works of scholars from the Università "Carlo Bo" of Urbino, as Anna Santucci, focusing on tomb decorations and especially funerary wall-paintings,[51] and Oscar Mei, publishing about the destructions in the Southern Necropolis after the new wave of post-2011 illegal buildings.[52]

Worth mentioning is the doctoral thesis of Morgan Belzic on funerary sculpture, widely updating and completing the old Beschi and Rosenbaum books. The reader interested in the matter should check Belzic's past and forthcoming publications. Belzic widely discusses funerary Cyrenean sculpture, something which is somehow missing from my own research in this book (too focused on the contexts of the pieces and their roles in architecture, rather than on their sculptural details). This French scholar should be also remembered for his efforts in fighting the illegal market of Cyrenean artefacts.[53]

General Conclusions on the Previous Studies

Concerning the bibliography preceding my own work, two main lines of the research can be noticed in two hundred years of investigation: the mapping of the area and the typological study of the monuments.

Beechey's 19th-century map was not really accurate and not particularly focused on the cemeteries. More accurate and more concentrated on the necropolis was the attempt done by J.Cassels, although the defects of his survey technique produced schematic maps that cannot be considered definitive or completely reliable.

During the last two centuries most efforts were expended on the study of the tombs. There is a certain evolution from the pioneering 19th-century drawings to the scientific articles of the last decades. The real fault is that the tombs have been always studied from an

[47] *General topics on the Cyrenean cemeteries:* Cherstich 2002, 2004b, 2006c, 2008a, 2009, 2011; Chestich, Fossataro and Menozzi 2010; Cherstich *et ali.* 201. *On the Southern Necropolis:* Cherstich 2006b, 2008b. *On specific monuments:* Cherstich 2005, 2006a, 2021, 2022a, 2022b; Thorn, Thorn and Cherstich 2008; Cherstich and Santucci 2010; Cherstich, Cinalli and Lagatta 2014; Belzic *et al.* 2020.

[48] On the many investigations led by Chieti University: Menozzi 2020; Menozzi and Di Antonio 2018. *For general topics on the Cyrenean cemeteries:* Belzic *et al.* 2020; Cinalli 2004; 2008; 2016; Di Valerio 2004; Di Valerio *et al.* 2005; Di Valerio *et al.* 2017; Lagatta 2008; Paolini 2002; Siciliano 2006; Menozzi and Tamburrino 2012. *On the Western Necropolis:* Fabbricotti 2006a, 2010; Cherstich I. 2008; Di Valerio 2008, 2019, 2020a; *On the Eastern Necropolis:* Catenacci *et al.* 2022; D'Anastasio *et al.* 2020; Fabbricotti 2010; Fossataro 2002; Di Valerio 2020b; Di Valerio and Faccini 2020; Lagatta 2020; Menozzi *et al.* 2016; Quattrocelli 2006; Tamburrino 2016; 2020. *On the Northern Necropolis:* Di Antonio 2020. On the Southern Necropolis: Cinalli 2014, 2018. *On the relationship between sanctuaries and tombs:* Menozzi 2002, 2006, 2015, 2016; Menozzi et al. 2016. *On land divisions:* Menozzi 2010.

[49] Al Raeid *et al.* 2016; Di Antonio and Shariff 2020; Menozzi 2019; Menozzi *et al.* 2017; Menozzi *et al.* 2019.

[50] Abdulkariem and Bennett 2014.

[51] Santucci 2014, 2018, 2022. Santucci *et al.* 2019; Santucci & Reynolds 2010.

[52] Mei and Antolini 2020; see also the Mei part in Belzic *et al.* 2022: 173-178.

[53] Belzic 2017; 2020; 2022.

old-style art-historical point of view. The authors paid more attention to the description of things rather than to their interpretation.

Furthermore many tombs have been studied as individual entities, without any relation to the Necropolis as a whole, complicated unit. Studies like those of Rowe, Stucchi or Thorn went beyond such limitations. They did a lot of fieldwork (or bibliographical research), trying to understand the whole architecture of the necropolis in new, wide classifications.

Sadly, although they are the product of considerable efforts, even such works had many faults. They are not able to offer comprehensive models of evolution which include all the existing tombs; indeed the size of the topic (a monumental necropolis that lasted for ten centuries) precluded any real success. Moreover such works were not completely fruitful because they used an old-fashioned art-historical attitude toward the archaeological record from which they were not able to gain sufficient historical information.

More interpretative attitudes and more reference to the spatial distribution of tombs can be seen in the above-mentioned papers by Dent and Parisi Presicce. However, the results of these two were not convincing because they were apparently based just on the problematic, scant information from the lists included in the 1955 publication by Cassels. Without real fieldwork and updated quantitative data from a new, thorough survey, any hypothesis is bound to be just an academic exercise of the mind. Furthermore, they lack clear statements of the methodology they are using to obtain their conclusions. This fault is not only typical of these two papers but it can be recognised in all the previous works on the necropolis which were based on haphazard approaches to the archaeological record.

But on the foundations laid by previous work, new research can be built. New technological aids (satellite images, GPS, computer applications, etc.) are certainly an obvious advantage but, in order to be really innovative, there is a need to avoid the errors of past studies - the simply descriptive attitude and the formulation of historical interpretations of the archaeological data without any clear methodology. There is a need to redefine the parameters through which interpretation can approach the tombs of Cyrene. The redefinition of such a theoretical base will occupy Chapter 2.

THE SOUTHERN NECROPOLIS: REASONS FOR THE CHOICE

Cassels' survey covered the whole necropolis but the level of detail is quite low. A new study needs a defined territorial sample to survey. The Southern Necropolis (Figure 5) was chosen for various reasons:

- It was the least known necropolis before my survey. All the other studies (even Thorn 2005) have focused on the more visible North-Western cemeteries.

- The flat landscape permitted more tomb-types (especially more built tombs) than in the North-Western cemeteries, therefore the landscape did not limit the number of built tombs as in the North-West (but the Southern Necropolis is still representative of the whole necropolis: see point below)

- The area is also rich in non-funerary archaeology which acts as a context for the necropolis and whose development can be compared to the necropolis.

- When I started my work, in 1999, more than half of the Southern Necropolis had already been devoured by New Shahat. The remaining half needed to be recorded, since tomb-robbing and vandalism were increasingly frequent with the modern city so near.[54]

[54] Later on, the magnitude of this reason became even clearer. For about 10 years (2002-2011) the development of

- The northernmost part of the Southern Necropolis (as the northernmost part of the Eastern necropolis) offers a small sample of the steep rocky landscape. However, this factor is not the reason for the high number of rock-cut tombs in the Southern Necropolis (see below) since great part of the rock-cut tombs are along the Balagrae Road which is on the plain.

All these factors apply to some degree also to the Eastern Necropolis, however the Southern Necropolis was chosen for various further reasons:

- The Eastern Necropolis was surveyed by other members of the Italian team of Chieti University. On the other hand, the Southern Necropolis needed a survey.

- The non-funerary archaeology in the Southern Necropolis includes two important elements whose relationship to the tombs can be fruitfully investigated: 1) an ancient route (the Balagrae road) whose rock-cut shape is still visible on the field and not just in the old Cassels' maps; 2) Two sanctuaries of different types (one is major and public, the other is small and possibly private)

- The Southern Necropolis is the perfect sample to study general funerary practices involving all of Cyrene. First of all it is not a necropolis which developed in one time-period since it shows monuments dating from Archaic to Late Antique times. Secondly, the ratio of built to rock-cut tombs as registered by Cassels (and shown in Table 1.1) (1:1.6), even if higher than in the North-West (1:13.4 and 1:6.6), is still in favour of the second ones, and it is therefore more similar to the general trends of the whole necropolis (1:1.9).[55] This means that the choice of tomb-types in the Southern Necropolis was possibly less affected by landscape reasons than in the steep North-Western cemeteries. In this sense the Southern Necropolis (at least from Cassels' data) seems to be in a middle position between the Eastern and the North-Western cemeteries since the Southern Necropolis is not anomalous as the Eastern Necropolis in its strangely high ratio of built to rock-cut tombs (3.3:1). The reason for this anomaly of the Eastern necropolis is difficult to assess.[56] Suffice to say here that such anomalous reasons did not occur in the Southern Necropolis, which is more "normal" in its general trends.

This last point is quite important and it is worth checking it through simple statistical techniques.

I tried a Chi-Squared (χ^2) test (a simple statistical technique to check how casual are the relationships displayed by the data)[57] on the

new houses stopped in this area, and it was exactly during this time frame that most of my data were collected. After the 2011 events a new wave of illegal buildings appeared in the Southern Necropolis, destroying an incredible number of monuments. The Department of Antiquities was fighting a desperate, heroic battle which they could not won in that chaotic moment. See the appendix which I wrote in Menozzi *et al.* 2019: 120-125. A large part of what I was able to record is nowadays lost.

[55] The high number of tombs in the Southern Necropolis obviously obliges the total ratio to be near to 1:2, however this ratio is less anomalous than appears since the Northern Necropolis holds about the same number of tombs as the Southern Necropolis. In any case it is clear that the Southern Necropolis is similar to the North-Western cemeteries in the high number of rock-cut tombs in comparison with the built tombs.

[56] The northern half of Eastern Necropolis (surveyed by Chieti University) has more rock-cut tombs than Cassels puts in his plan. The majority of built tombs was in the southern half of the Eastern Necropolis. Unfortunately this area has been widely destroyed by New Shahat (excluding a few places like the Katiba in Al Raeid et al. 2016: 25-26; Menozzi and Di Antonio 2018: Fig.4), therefore cannot be checked.

[57] Drennan 1996:185-201. The formula is:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where "O" is the observed value and E is the expected value. The "S" (mathematical symbol of the addition) means that the formula must be calculated for every cell and the results must be summed up. The total $\chi 2$ must be then

data from Table 1.1. The result is that there is a high confidence (more than 99.9%) that there is genuinely a relationship between the ratio of built to rock-cut tombs and which necropolis is chosen, and this relationship is not a simple product of chance (e.g. possible vagaries of Cassels' survey). Here is the procedure used:

Table 1.2 Observed Values (Cassels 1955)

	Rock-cut tombs	Built tombs	TOTAL
North	367	55	422
West	148	11	159
South	262	161	423
East	61	206	267
TOTAL	838 (65.93%)	433 (34.07%)	1271

Table 1.3 Expected values
(Keeping the total proportions of built to rock-cut tombs)

	Rock-cut tombs	Built tombs	TOTAL
North	278.23	143.77	422
West	104.83	54.17	159
South	278.89	144.11	423
East	176.04	90.96	267
TOTAL	838	433	1271

Table 1.4. Single χ^2 values

	Rock-cut tombs	Built tombs
North	28.3190	54.8067
West	17.7754	34.4014
South	1.0233	1.9805
East	75.1767	145.4920

Total χ^2: 358.9750
Degrees of freedom: 3
CONFIDENCE: more than 99.9%
SIGNIFICANCE: less than 0.1%
Value of Cramer's V test: 0.5314

The higher is the value of each single χ^2, the higher is the divergence from the expected values (gained by the mean trends of the whole necropolis). The divergence is quite high in the North, West and Eastern necropoleis but is lower in the Southern Necropolis, which seems more "normal".

I also tested the χ^2 result with Cramer's V test[58] whose results are in the range 0-1. The more the number is near to 0, the less is the difference between the expected and observed results, therefore the more the number is nearer to 1 the strongest is the relationship between the two variables (in our case "necropolis" and "tomb-type"). The value here is 0.5314, which is about half-way between 0 and 1. The distance from 1 (divergence from the expected number of tombs) is mainly due to the North-Western cemeteries (for landscape reasons) and the Eastern Necropolis (for landscape and possibly for anomalous, unknown reasons).

All these considerations mean that there are factors in the other cemeteries which influence the selection of tomb-types in a way which differ from the general trends of the whole Cyrenean Necropolis, but such factors do not apply on the Southern Necropolis.

In any case, even if this study is focused on the Southern Necropolis, any conclusion will be checked through a constant comparison with the other cemeteries in order to avoid bias in the interpretation. The comparison is not just based on the published literature but on numerous personal visits to the other three necropoleis, collaborations and discussions with surveyors of the other cemeteries: J. C. Thorn, the Italian Mission of Chieti University and members of the local Department of Antiquities.

compared with a table such as that in Drennan 1996: 190.

[58] Drennan 1996: 191-4. The formula is:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

where "N" is the number of elements in the sample (that is the grand total for the table) and "k" is the number of rows or the number of columns in the table, whichever is smaller.

THE SOUTHERN NECROPOLIS: DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

To better understand this brief description the reader is referred to the general map (Figure 6 is a smaller version), to the old Cassels map of the Southern Necropolis (Figure 5). Any structure is referred to by the published name and a reference to the GPS point ("CSN-GPS") which appears in the gazetteer and in the maps of this book.

The Southern Necropolis here presented is not a wide as the one in Cassels since most of its eastern part was lost under New Shahat. The monuments displayed in the maps are all those which I was able to visit up to 2007. It is worth reminding that the view here shown roughly corresponds to the situation visible around that time. A huge part of this once well-preserved ancient landscape disappeared after the wave of post-2011 illegal buildings.

A visit to the Southern Necropolis starts from the site of the now lost Southern Gate of Cyrene. This is also the beginning of the ancient road to Balagrae (modern Beida) which in its northernmost part is still in use and covered by modern asphalt. The visit should start from there, going southwards.

On the left (east) of the road one sees a vast quarry (CSN-GPS 1) (Figure 7). On the right (west) of the road it is possible to see the steep Wadi Belghadir which defines the northern half of our sampled area. A public extramural sanctuary consecrated to Demeter and Kore is sited in the southern half of the wadi, in a gentle valley slope just above the steep canyon. This area is quite large (c.12 hectares) and includes both the "sanctuary" excavated by the Americans led by Prof. White (CSN-GPS 216), the theatre (CSN-GPS 193), the temple (CSN-GPS 2) excavated by Urbino University (Figure 8). All these elements are parts of the same wider, Demeter sanctuary and will be mentioned in Chapters 5-7 with appropriate bibliographical references.

The Balagrae road defines the eastern limit of this sacred area displaying a series of votive niches (also excavated by the Urbino team, S53-54, CSN-GPS 9-12) on the left and sacred buildings on the right (CSN-GPS 5-6, once called "Temene 1 and 2 of the Southern Necropolis", nowadays identified as the Apotropaion area, with an inscription attesting the border of the sacred area).[59] In this area the road gently rises, conforming to the gentle valley slope on which the sanctuary is built.

After the niches and the Apotropaion the sanctuary area finishes and the road stops rising. From there the real necropolis starts. On the left of the road, when the line of niches ends, there is even a line of orthostats (running from CSN-GPS 9-10 eastwards), perpendicular to Balagrae Road, and which seems to define the end of the sacred area (Figure 9). These lines are quite frequent in the necropolis, originally the spaces between the slabs were filled with rubble which is today lost, but they were originally used for territorial divisions.

Going southward tombs become frequent on the two sides of the asphalted road. Around tomb S64 (CSN-GPS 36), where a Roman milestone (CSN-GPS 37) stands (restored by Goodchild), the ancient track separates from the modern asphalted route (Figures 10-11). Here the road is a kind of rock-cut channel (Figures 4, 12) cut in the lower part of a hill. Rock-cut courts open off the two sides of the road which are up to 2 m high. On the ground are even visible wheelmarks (Figures 4, 13). Even considering all the tombs which were destroyed post-2011,[60] this is still possibly the best-preserved ancient road in all the necropoleis of Cyrene.

But even the parallel modern road is based on an ancient route, as demonstrated by few terrace blocks below the asphalt (Figure 14)

[59] Mei 2016.
[60] As well demonstrated by the images in Menozzi *et al.* 2019: 120-125.

and by the line of rock-cut tombs (S7-S13) on its western side. Nowadays, after the post-2011 destructions, all the tombs along this line are lost or hidden behind concrete fences. How this ancient passage ends is difficult to say, possibly it connected with the rock-cut Balagrae road.

Coming back to the principal ancient route, after tomb S78 (CSN-GPS 68) the low hill ends, therefore the rock-cut sides of the road are much lower (c.40-50 cm) (Figure 15). Built tombs become numerous but rock-cut tombs do not end, although courts are now obviously sunken in the ground. A few tombs are far from the road but the majority gravitate towards it.

With a couple of bends the Balagrae road turns westwards in the area S251-2 (CSN-GPS 556-7). This final part is called Mgata and it is less flat. A few hills appear on the border of the route and wide courts are directly cut there. Around tomb S260 (CSN-GPS 516) the ancient road disappears under the modern asphalted road which goes southwards. Another modern road goes westward through a small wadi tributary of Wadi Graga. Possibly the ancient road also divided into two. Tombs are here rarer but they follow both routes. A *gasr* (a Late Roman fortified farm) (CSN-GPS 500) still stands on the hill which separates the two routes (Figure 276).

The area surveyed along the Balagrae road, from the Southern Gate to Mgata, is c. 2 km long. East of this line there is a strip of land (c.80 hectares) which separates the Balagrae road from New Shahat. It is c. 25% of the Southern Necropolis which in 2007 was not yet devoured by Shahat but, unfortunately, there was not enough time to survey it.[61]

On the other hand, the lands west of the Balagrae road have been intensively surveyed. The area is defined on the south-western angle by the valley slope but it is, generally, flat and rich in both built tombs and rock-cut sunken courts. There are isolated patches of thicker soil but, in general, all the area is rocky like the Balagrae road, as testified by the rock-cut tombs. By 2007 the greater part of the tombs mentioned by Cassels were still visible, but a series of modern farms and isolated houses made it sometimes difficult to follow the tracks shown in Cassels' map.

The principal ancient road in this area links the Balagrae road (at the height of tomb S78, CSN-GPS 68) with a small wadi tributary of Wadi Belghadir. In the section S14 (CSN-GPS 320) – S51 (CSN-GPS 231) the ancient road was still used in 2006 as a modern track with lines of orthostats still marking the sides of the road (Figure 16). A series of other modern houses and a modern asphalted road passing just above the limit of tomb S45 (CSN-GPS 233) made it difficult to identify the road and the tombs. Nowadays this is even worse, especially in the northern part of this area, with all its new, illegal houses.

From about S130-1 (CSN-GPS 443) northwards tombs re-appear. Even if its floor is still buried, the road can be traced through the rock-cut tombs on the walls of the small wadi. In Cassels' map this small tributary of Wadi Belghadir is called "El-Baggara" (Figure 5). The name is here used for coherence with his work, even if today the locals tend to call "Baggara" the whole area south of Cyrene, not just that small wadi (Figure 17).[62] This small valley is filled with sarcophagi and rock-cut tombs and its mouth opens off Wadi Belghadir about 300 m east of the Demeter Sanctuary. The ending part is the site of a small rural Sanctuary dedicated to Dionysus (CSN-GPS 474) (Figures 87-93).

[61] Most of this long area between Balagrae Road and New Shahat is now overcrowded with new, illegal buildings, with only a few, badly known tombs remaining. I plan to write a paper in the future about them.

[62] Illustrative of the difficulties in local modern toponymy are the names in Menozzi 2006: 64-6, fig.2 which are opposite to the ones here used. Menozzi calls this small wadi "Ain Bueda" and she calls "Baggara-Belghadir" the area which in Cassels 1955 is the spring "Ain Bueda", in the Western Necropolis. Cassels' names are here preferred only for the sake of coherence with his maps, as there is clearly not a single, correct answer, as even the locals are not always accurate about some of these names.

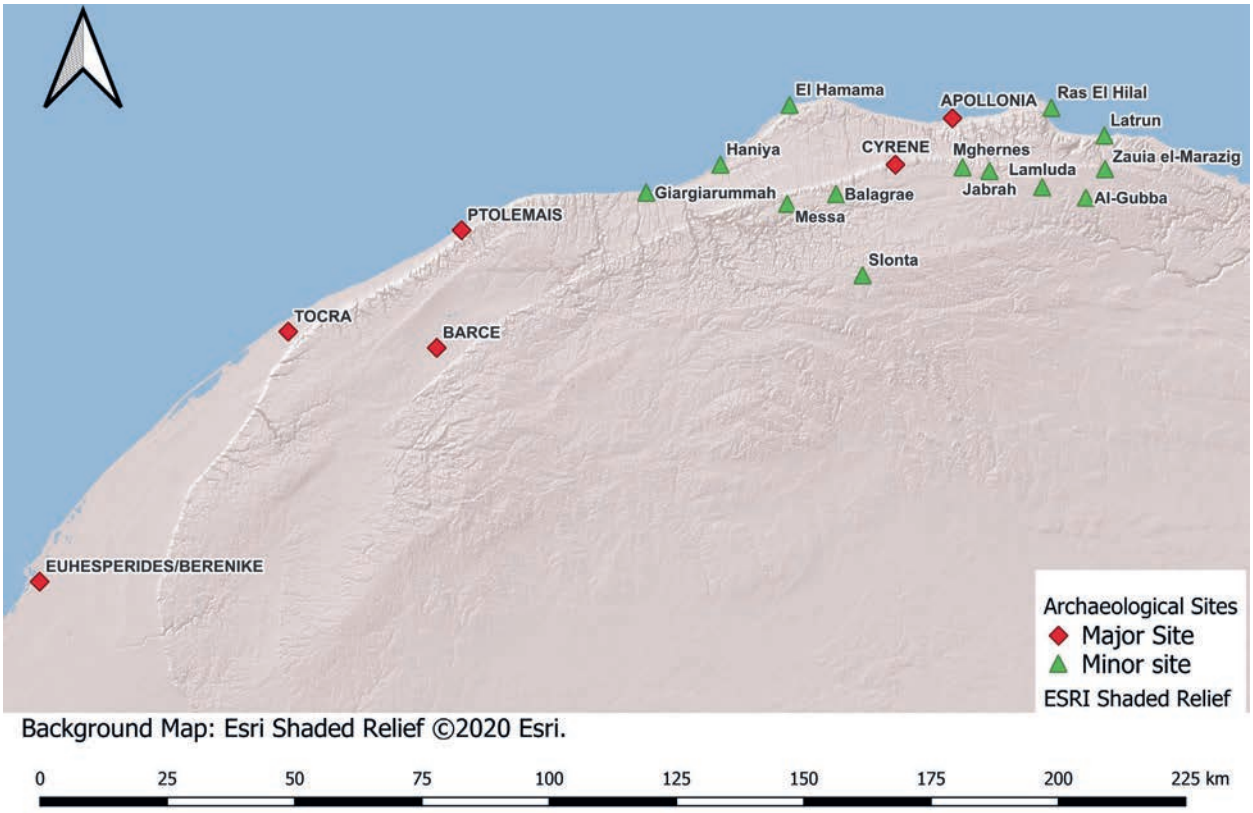

Figure 1. The main archaeological sites of Cyrenaica (base: Esri Shaded Relief ©2020 Esri).

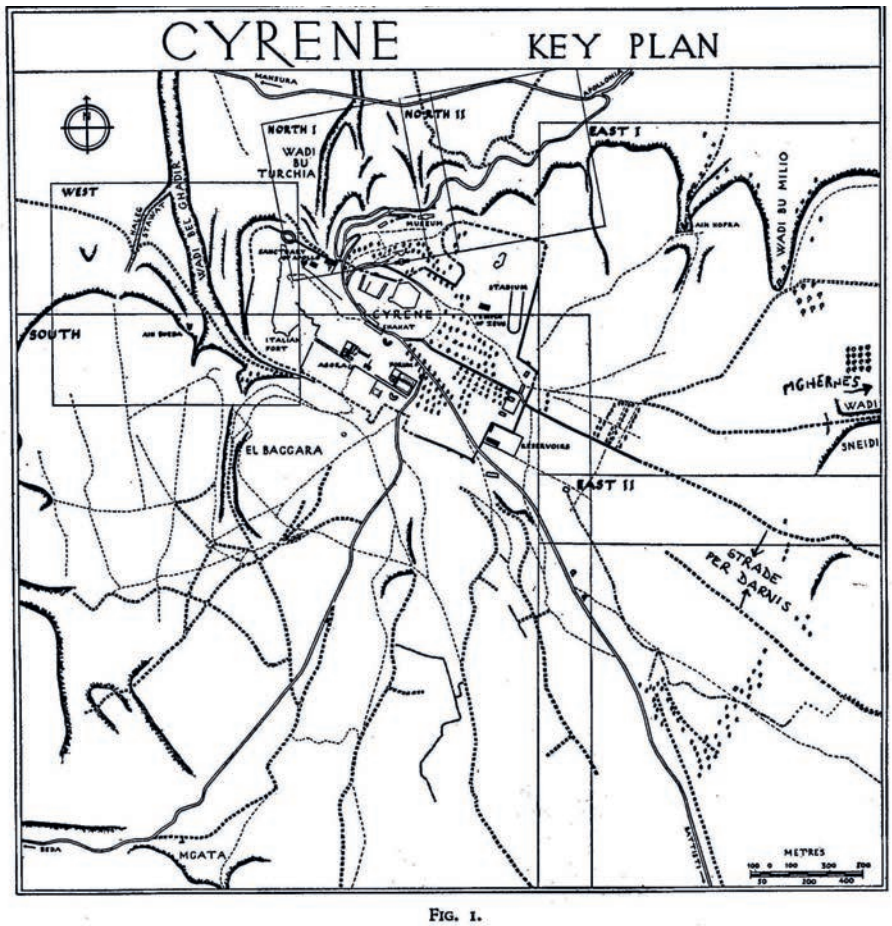

FIG. 1.

Figure 2. The Four cemeteries of Cyrene according to Cassels' division (Cassels 1955).

Figure 3. A view of the rocky landscape in the Northern Necropolis (1999, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 4. A view of the "necropolis of the plain". Balagrae road, Southern Necropolis (2007, Photo: L. Cherstich).

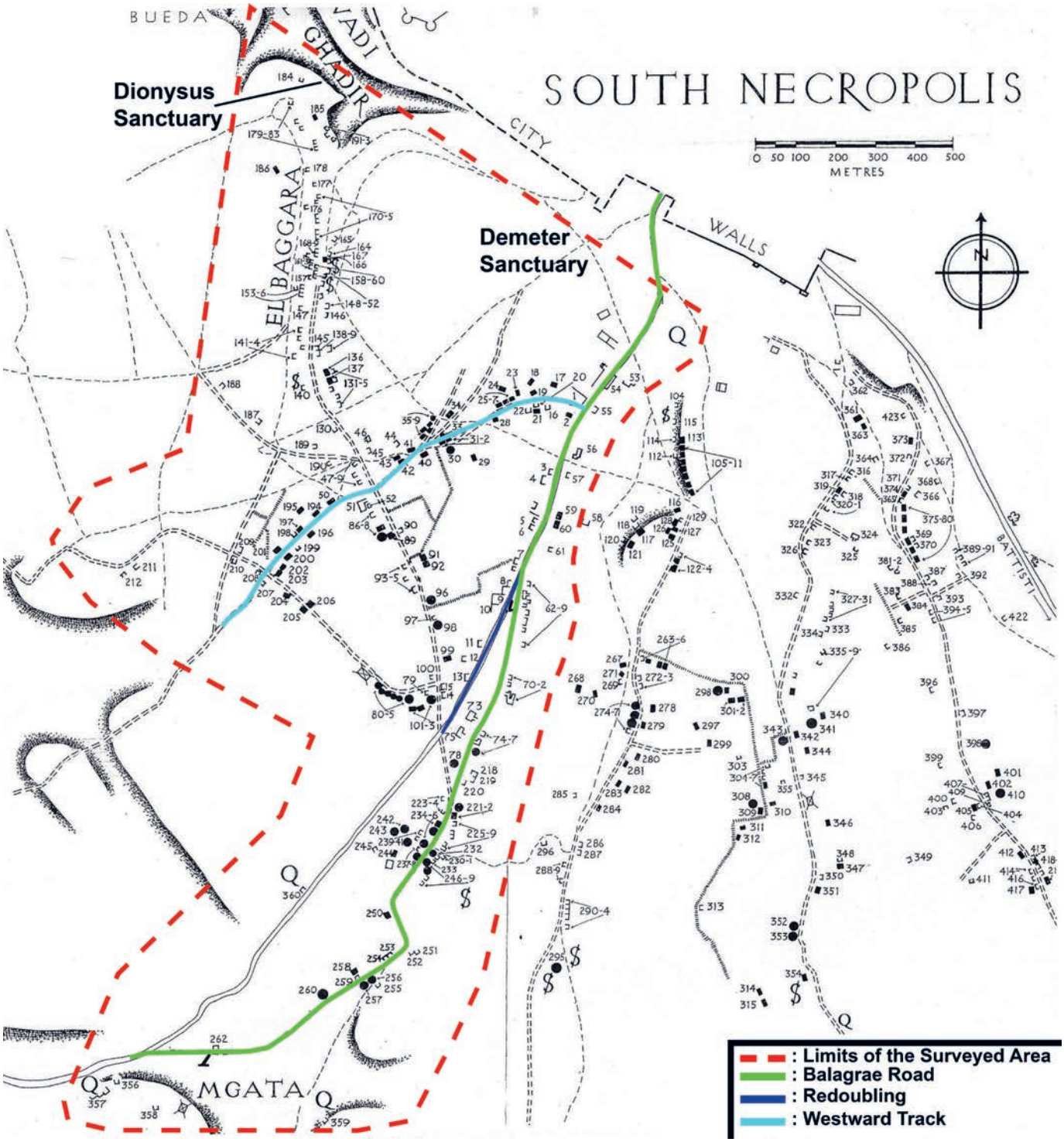

Figure 5. Cassels' map of the Southern Necropolis (Cassels 1955, pl.1) with limits of the new survey and indications of the main routes mentioned in the text.

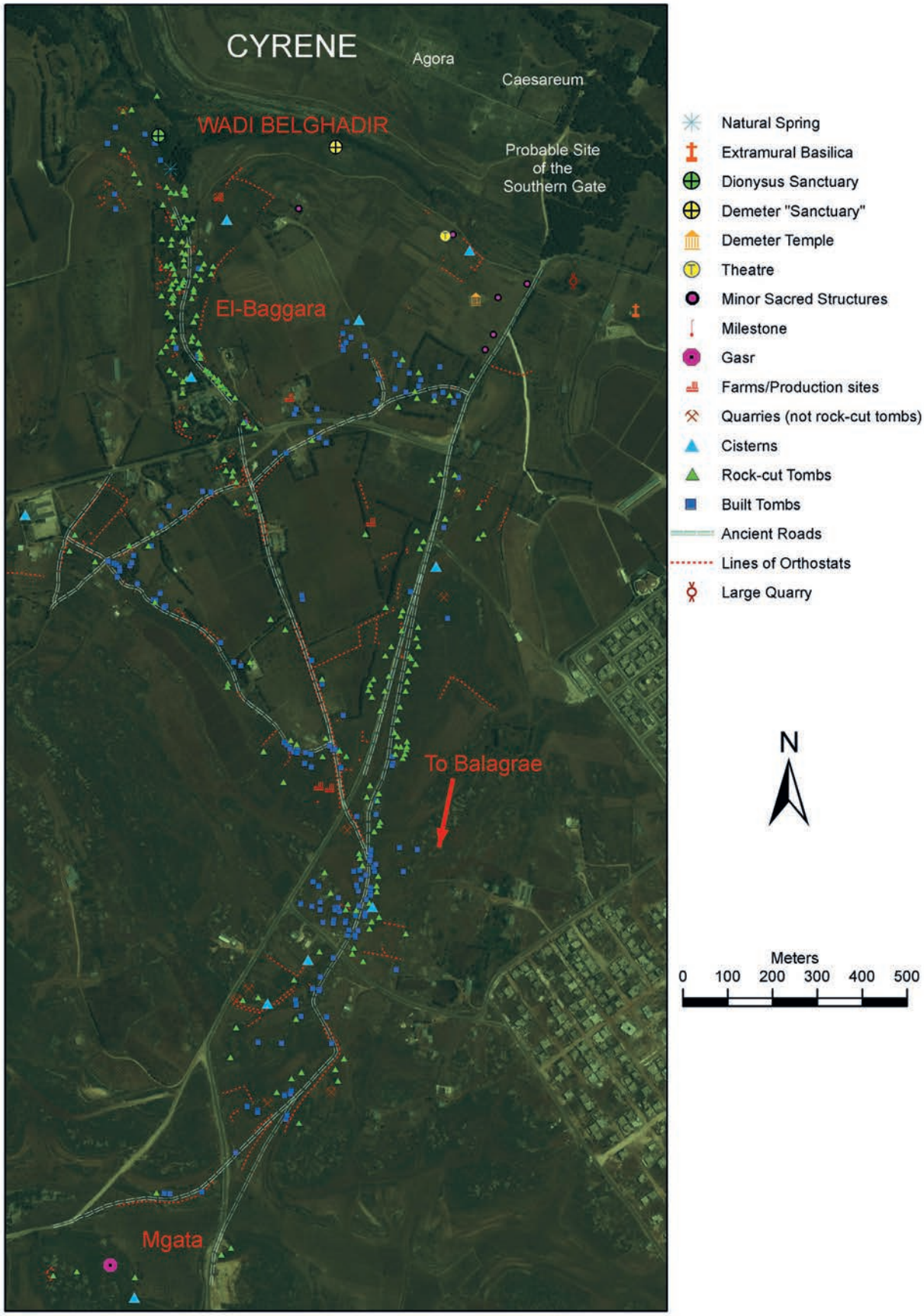

Figure 6. General plan of the surveyed area in the Southern Necropolis (Map: L. Cherstich. Satellite Image: property of the Archaeological Mission of Chieti University in Cyrenaica).

Figure 7. Large public quarry (CSN-GPS 1) (2002, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 8. The temple excavated and restored by the Urbino Italian Mission under Prof. M. Luni as it appeared in 2006 (CSN-GPS 2) (Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 9. Line of orthostats, perpendicular to Balagrae Road, behind the S53-54 niches (CSN-GPS 9-12), dividing the sacred area from the necropolis. The Apotropaion area (which was not yet dug, is on the background) (2002, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 10. Modern asphalted road running nearby Balagrae Road (2006, southward view from S8 /CSN-GPS 8), Balagrae Road on the left (photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 11. Modern asphalted road with Balagrae Road on the right, beyond the milestone, northward view (2006, photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 12. Balagrae Road, view from S78 (CSN-GPS 68) northwards (2007, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 13. Balagrae Road, wheelmarks on the northern part (2006, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 14. Ancient terrace blocks under the asphalted road parallel to Balagrae Road (2000, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 15. Balagrae Road, view from S78 (CSN-GPS 68) southwards (2007, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 16. Modern track re-using an ancient passage (GPS 231-320). Note the line of orthostats on the right side (2001, Photo: L. Cherstich).

Figure 17. The small wadi "El-Baggara" tributary of Wadi Belghadir, view from the eastern ridge (2006, Photo: L. Cherstich).