Kale Akte – ‘the Fair Promontory’.
New Research and Interpretations on the Urban History and Foundation by Ducetius

Adam Lindhagen

Abstract. This paper examines the origins of the ancient urban settlement Kale Akte on the north coast of Sicily, based on the extensive excavations and research carried out at Caronia and Caronia Marina over the last two decades. It is suggested that the name Kale Akte – ‘Fair Promontory’ – was probably coined in Archaic times by Greek merchants and would have derived from the promontory with its harbour, an obvious landmark for the Greeks. The recently discovered Archaic harbour at Caronia Marina is regarded as a Sikel harbour, created as a maritime outlet for a Sikel settlement that must have existed on the hill-top of Caronia before the foundation by Ducetius. The archaeological finds suggest that the Sikel settlement was well acquainted with the Greek custom of the symposium. In the Archaic period, Kale Akte can be viewed as a ‘middle ground’ where traders of different ethnicities and cultural identity put differences aside in order to make a profit on trade. The topographical characteristics of the site are compared with the two other alleged foundations by Ducetius: Menai (Mineo) and Paliké. The hill-top of Caronia has close similarities with Mineo, but also with Cittadella, the precursor to Morgantina. Ducetius cannot have been the instigator behind the grand urban plan of Morgantina, since all his urban projects seem to have been on a relatively limited scale. The topographical situation of Kale Akte is also compared with that of the neighbouring cities Halaesa, Apollonia and Halantium. However, the interests of these urban centres were dominated by territorial ambitions, while Kale Akte appears to have specialized in trade and maritime commerce from its inception. It is suggested that the harbour of Kale Akte in Roman times may well have served a much larger area than its own territory. The foundation of Kale Akte on the hill-top of Caronia is thought to have been undertaken by Ducetius with the consent of Syracuse, which was interested in founding a maritime trading post on this part of the coast, and was still under Sikel dominion. This would explain the open character of the settlement and the lack of any fortifications.

According to the tradition recorded by Diodorus Siculus, the polis of Kale Akte was founded by the Sikel leader Ducetius on the north coast of Sicily (Figs. 1-2). The Sikel

1 The author wishes to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for valuable comments and suggestions. The discussion on the invitation of the Ionians and the foundation of Kale Akte draws on Lindhagen 2020, chapter 1. I would like to thank Kristin Bornholdt Collins for her meticulous
hegemon had been defeated by the major powers of Sicily, Syracuse and Akragas in 449 BC, but escaped under cover of night and sought asylum at an altar in the agora of Syracuse. He was pardoned and granted exile in Corinth. Three years later, in 446 BC, he unexpectedly returned from exile and founded a city at a place on the north coast called Kale Akte. This paper explores this much-debated foundation, incorporating new data from recent excavations and research which was undertaken at Caronia and Caronia Marina, the sites that have traditionally been identified as ancient Kale Akte, to better understand the character of the settlement, comparisons are made with the earlier settlements founded by Ducetius, as well as with Kale Akte’s neighbouring cities. Topography is vital to understanding the site and its continued historical role.

proofreading, and Ilia Marraffa for improving the Italian summary. All remaining errors are my own.

2 Diod. Sic. 11.91.3-92.4.
3 Diod. Sic. 12.8.2; 12.29.1.
and which have produced the material foundation for the hypotheses and conclusions of this article. The aim, with this background, is to shed light on the history of the site and its function, especially on the previously little-known historical events connected with it: the never achieved settlement by the fugitive Ionians in the early fifth century BC, and the subsequent foundation by Ducetius. and function in Hellenistic and Roman times, and is therefore a frequent theme in this discussion.

The identification of Kale Akte
The exact location of the ancient city Kale Akte (Gr. Καλή Ἀκτή) has been in dispute for many centuries. In the sixteenth century the Italian historian Fazello observed ruins in the village of Caronia Marina, the maritime settlement of the hill-town Caronia (Figs. 1-3), ‘ad aedem Annunciatae circa Carnioae littora’, but he identified the site with the ancient city Halaesa. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the German geographer Philipp Clüver became the first to identify Caronia Marina with Kale Akte, the settlement founded by Ducetius. Since then, Caronia and Caronia Marina have remained the primary reference points for researchers interested in the geographic position of Kale Akte, but opinions as to whether the settlement should be identified with Caronia or Caronia Marina have differed. The hill-town of Caronia enjoys an advantageous and strategic position, on a ridge of the Nebrodi mountains, with steep slopes, about 300 m.a.s.l. (Fig. 3, A1; Figs. 4-5).

5 Fazello 1558, 1.9.4.
6 Clüver (Cluverius) 1619, 291-293.
7 Fischer-Hansen et al. 2004, 177; Lentini et al. 2002; Scibona 1987. The Roman itineraries, which place the ancient city between Agathyrnum (near Capo d’Orlando) and Halaesa (near Tusa), are the reason that Caronia has long been the prime candidate for the site of Kale Akte. The distances from these cities fit very well with Caronia (Tab. Peut. 7,1; Itin. Anton. 92, 4-5).
In 1961, the Romanian archaeologist Dinu Adamesteanu thought he had identified, through aerial photography, a plateau immediately to the east of Caronia (cda Trapesi) (Fig. 3, find-spots 30-35), with traces of a regular street-grid and fortifications, and formulated the hypothesis that the site could be identified with the city founded by Ducetius. This hypothesis, however, later turned out to be erroneous. Only beginning in the early 1990s did Caronia and Caronia Marina become the focus for a series of archaeological excavations carried out by the Soprintendenza of Messina. Excavations in 1993-1999 and 2005 in the contrade Telegrafo and Sotto San Francesco led to the discovery of an urban settlement at the top of the hill of Caronia, dating from at least the fourth century BC to the end of the first century AD, where several Hellenistic/early Roman wall structures and cisterns were uncovered. The later excavations from 1999-2005 have instead concentrated on the ancient maritime settlement discovered at Caronia Marina (Fig. 3, A2).

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8 Adamesteanu 1962.
9 Later investigations have shown that the terrain here is sterile, apart from a small Hellenistic-Roman farmstead (Scibona 1987, 10-11).
11 Bonanno 2008; Lentini et al. 2002; Lindhagen 2006.
The Sikel harbour at Caronia Marina

In this part of the Sicilian north coast, there are no good natural harbours, just a few small coves for the sheltering of ships. Today’s Caronia Marina clings to the most articulated cove of this coast, protected to the west by a promontory (Fig. 3, A2; Fig. 6). While this cove no doubt existed in antiquity, its innermost part does not seem to have been the primary choice for a port. The first settlement at Caronia Marina appears to have clung to the eastern part of the protruding promontory, but seems not to have extended to the innermost part of the cove, which in the Hellenistic period was occupied by a necropolis (Fig. 3, B3).\textsuperscript{12} The central part of the cove would

\textsuperscript{12}Scibona 1987, 11.
therefore have constituted the eastern limit of the harbour; the ancient necropoleis were always, as is well known, situated outside the limits of the settlements. There are many strong indications of a harbour from at least Hellenistic times to the west of the current settlement, in cda Pantano. Both in cda Pantano and further to the west in the vast cda di Noto, pottery sherds are abundant on the surface and date from late Classical to late Roman times.¹³

As we will see below, there is evidence for a harbour basin in this area beginning in the late Hellenistic period (Fig. 3, C), but it is doubtful whether this basin existed in Archaic and Classical times. It is, however, probable that there was an inflow of water in the cda Pantano, which may have sheltered smaller boats from currents. The contrada is named after a pantano or small lake that existed here, and which was only completely drained in the 1920s-30s. It is still possible today to see clear traces of it in the topography: the area lacks vegetation and is full of the ubiquitous rounded seabed stones which were used for filling in the swamp.¹⁴ The promontory would have given the settlement on the hill with its harbour its name: Kale Akte, in Greek ‘Fair Promontory’.¹⁵

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¹³ Scibona 1987, 11.
¹⁴ Collura 2016, 225, 228; Lindhagen 2020, 52.
¹⁵ The coastline has not changed very much since antiquity. The excavations at Caronia Marina in 2003-2005 demonstrated that the coastline would have been only a few metres higher compared to today’s shore (Bonanno 2008, 18).
The evidence for a commercial harbour at Caronia Marina by the sixth century BC comes partly from excavation, and partly from pottery found in connection with prospection.\(^{16}\) Excavation yielded fine-ware and pottery from the last quarter of the sixth-early fifth centuries BC, although lacking any connection with buildings (Fig. 7a-h).\(^{17}\) The earliest buildings encountered so far are warehouses, and these belong to the

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\(^{16}\) The idea of a late Archaic harbour at Caronia Marina and material from this period from Caronia Marina was first presented in Lindhagen 2006, 84, 135-36, 162. Later the same idea has been reiterated in Bonanno 2008; Collura 2016; Lindhagen 2020. With the exception of a few fragments recovered in scientific excavation, the late Archaic-early Classical material published in Lindhagen 2006, Collura 2016 and Lindhagen 2020 belongs to a deposit of excavated soil encountered to the west of the excavation area in cda Pantano. The soil probably derives from construction work in the south-western outskirts of Caronia Marina.

\(^{17}\) Among the finds are a Corinthian A amphora of the type found in the contexts of destruction from the Persian sack of Athens in 480 BC, a Corinthian kotyle dating to 525-475 BC, two fragments of drinking cup type Monte Iato 480 with an identical dating, a fragment of a black-figured Attic column crater from the late sixth-early fifth century BC, fragments of Ionian cups, and an appliqué of a Daedalic female head from the end of the seventh century BC (Lindhagen 2006, 51-52, 83-84, pl. 1, 1; 1, 3; pl. 36, 1; Bonanno 2008, 13, 16, cat. 173, tav. XVII, fig. 21.).
From the top, left to right: Fig. 7a-b Two fragments of Attic red-figured column krater, rim with palmette and neck with lotus buds, possibly belonging to the same vessel (first half to mid-fifth century BC). Photograph: Salvatore Serio. Fig. 7c Fragment of Attic red-figure krater, rim with lotus buds (c. 480-430 BC). Photograph: Francesco Collura. Fig. 7d Fragment of Corinthian kotyle (c. 520-480 BC). Photograph: Salvatore Serio.
Fig. 7e Fragment of Corinthian A amphora, c. 500-480 BC.
Drawing: Adam Lindhagen.

Fig. 7f Fragments of lamp, Iato 480 drinking cup, c. 525-480 BC, base of Corinthian skyphos, 'coppa a bande', Siciliote lekane.
Photograph: Francesco Collura.
first phase of Ducetius’ settlement and the late fifth century BC. The ceramic material of the late Archaic and early Classical phase seems to include only Greek imports. The absence of any building remains before the late fifth century BC and the dominance of amphorae and Greek pottery, combined with the lack of any Sikel pottery in an otherwise completely Sikel-dominated territory, are strong indications that we are dealing with a harbour that imported Greek goods, but not necessarily a proper settlement. A settlement would be characterised by domestic buildings and a greater frequency of fine-wares and coarse wares, Sikel pottery in particular. It should be underlined that none of the twelve building remains that until this day have been identified at Caronia Marina, dating from the Classical period to late antiquity, all are either storage buildings or in some way connected with commerce and production. In addition, none of the tombs discovered at Caronia Marina date to before the Hellenistic period. However, the Attic and Corinthian fine-wares found at Cda Pantano may well stem from late Archaic and Classical tombs along the coastal main road close to the harbour. Such high-quality pottery is rarely found in concentration in common domestic or warehouse contexts. Moreover, imported drinking vessels related to the Greek symposium are a common feature of Sikel tombs from this period. If such tombs can be related to a settlement at Caronia Marina, or rather to the hillsettlement, remains to be understood. In any case, if some kind of late- Archaic/Classical settlement existed at Caronia Marina, it would have been very small.

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18 Sudano 2008, 16-18, fig. A; Lindhagen 2020, 55.
20 For example, prominent members of the Sikel aristocracy living in the hill settlement may have preferred to be buried in a more visible position along the coastal road instead of outside the gates of the hill settlement, where common people were also buried. In this way, they would also have been associated with the trading post and the outer world, the former being the most important source for their wealth.
and sporadic, and closely related to the hill settlement, which was the only safe location for a stable settlement.

Clearly, a Greek _emporion_ can be ruled out.²¹ Any so-called Greek settlement of this kind would have left clear archaeological traces. Although the possibility that small warehouses existed in the harbour at Caronia Marina before the arrival of Ducetius should not be ruled out, the construction of harbour infrastructure on a more organised scale probably took place only with the foundation of the hill-town by Ducetius. It is probably only with the end of the third century BC and the beginning of the inclusion of Sicily in a Roman _Mare Nostrum_ that we can speak of a more consistent settlement at Caronia Marina. In any case, prior to that period, and certainly before the foundation of the polis on the hill, it would have been too dangerous to build a permanent settlement in such an exposed environment, on a narrow strip of land directly by the seaboard and the coastal road, lacking any type of defensive structures. First and foremost, commerce and trade need security and predictability, then as today, and it is not a coincidence that, as a rule, the Greek _emporia_ were protected by fortifications.

**Before Ducetius – the Sikel settlement at Caronia**

The hill of Caronia was well-situated with a view of a vast part of the north coast and the Aeolian islands. Its slopes, together with the area of Caronia Marina, were settled in the Bronze Age.²² The hill presents the typical choice of site for a Sikel settlement. The harbour at Caronia Marina, active by the sixth century BC, would not have made any sense without a nearby settlement controlling it. In such uncertain times, exposed to all the perils from the sea, it would have been natural to build the settlement on the hill above the harbour, easy to defend and with a perfect view for miles around, from which ships could be observed well in advance.²³ The continuous relationship between hill and maritime settlement for the last two and half millennia is a constant in the history of this site, and there is nothing to suggest that this would have been different prior to the foundation by Ducetius. The harbour provided opportunities for trade and communication, whereas the hill provided security: hill and port were always dependent on each other; one could not exist without the other.

Tangible evidence for a Sikel settlement at the hill of Caronia before Ducetius has been scarce. But, a few fragments of coarse impasto pottery of Sikel production have been discovered, as well as a fragment of Sikel-Geometric pottery.²⁴ This latter

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²¹ Collura puts forward this view without evidence and without defining the term _emporion_ (Collura 2016, 311-344).
²² Bonanno 1997-98, 423-426, figs. 1-3; Collura 2016, 279-282.
²³ Over the centuries, from the excellent vantage point of the hill of Kale Akte, its inhabitants would have been able to view several dramatic events unfolding: the ships from Syracuse gathering up at the shore of Himera to assist its inhabitants fleeing the Carthaginians in 406 BC as well as the large Roman and Carthaginian fleets clashing in these waters in the First Punic War, and again the fleets of Sextus Pompey and Octavian in their struggle for the island in 36 BC.
²⁴ Collura 2016, 129; 136, no 3; 153, fig. 3.
fragment was found on the floor of a room cut out of the rock, with a wall of baked bricks and stone. The discovery was made in connection with construction work at the so-called Case Popolari on the upper east slope of Caronia.\textsuperscript{25} Collura dates this room to the first phase of the city of Ducetius, i.e. from the last decades of the fifth century BC. It seems that this dating was based only on the presumption that this was the oldest phase of the urban settlement, and consequently must be ascribed to the Ducetius foundation. However, it should not be ruled out that the rock-cut room may date to the period prior to Ducetius, i.e. a pre-existing Sikel settlement, which was later incorporated into the new settlement. At present, this must be regarded as speculative, but the fact remains that this kind of simple room, cut out of the rock, is typical for Archaic Sikel settlements.\textsuperscript{26} It is also perfectly possible that this tradition continued and was used in the first layout of Kale Akte, but it seems that such constructions are unknown from similar Sikel-Greek sites, such as its neighbour Halaesa, founded only four decades later (Fig. 2). In any case, the use (or reuse) of a Sikel building technique, at least at the moment of the Ducetian foundation, shows how Sikel traditions carried on in this ‘Hellenised’ city. The fact that traces of Sikel material culture have been found through mere prospection suggests that more evidence may await us beneath the many layers of Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Medieval and modern occupation. A pre-Ducetius Sikel settlement could be expected to have concentrated around the hill of the Norman castle, which probably filled the function of acropolis, and may have housed a sanctuary. It may be compared with the Archaic settlement at Cittadella (Morgantina), which had a similar hill with a sanctuary (Farmhouse Hill).\textsuperscript{27}

The phourion of Pizzo Cilona
The hill of Pizzo Cilona, 2 km south of Caronia, has been interpreted as a phourion, a fortress, protecting the coast from attacks from the interior. The site has not been excavated, but has recently been investigated through prospection.\textsuperscript{28} The characteristic ridge was fortified with a wall of pseudo-isodomic blocks, enclosing an area of about 3 ha (Fig. 8). More than 80% of the surface finds are fragments of pithoi, which are characteristic of a fortress used mainly for storing commodities in times of crisis. The remaining material consists of everyday pottery such as kylikes, skyphoi, cups and plates, of which the vast majority are simple and undecorated; only about 10% of the pottery total is black-glossed. To this may be added a few fragments of transport amphorae. The simple style of the artefacts stands in stark contrast to the imported fine-wares found at Caronia Marina. The finds indicate that Pizzo Cilona was not a centre for the

\textsuperscript{25} Collura 2016, 29; 97-102, figs. 80-94.
\textsuperscript{26} Albanese Procelli 2003, 148.
\textsuperscript{27} Antonaccio 1997. See also the various Morgantina Preliminary Reports of the Morgantina excavations in AJA in the 1960s.
\textsuperscript{28} Scibona 1987; Collura 2016, 413-434. See also ibid. 59, 61; 291-292.
redistribution or consumption of imported Greek goods. Rather, the finds confirm the interpretation that we are dealing with a fort that controlled the important road towards the interior, guarding the Sikel settlement that must have existed on the hill of Caronia against attack.  

Even so, Pizzo Cilona, situated a few kilometres inland, lacks a good view of the coast. In fact, the harbour at Caronia Marina with its evidence of imported goods, and this Sikel phrourion in the hinterland of Caronia, together provide strong indications of the existence of a political centre controlling the commercial and military activities suggested by the finds from Caronia Marina and Pizzo Cilona. Such a political centre can only have been a settlement situated on the hilltop of Caronia, which apart from having a direct sightline to the fort at Pizzo Cilona, could easily control and overlook the harbour, and also had a sightline stretching from the commercially and strategically important Aeolian island Lipari in the east to Panormus (Palermo) in the west. Such a settlement was in all probability situated on the uppermost plateau of the hill, perhaps even on its summit, where the Norman castle

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29 This kind of phrourion became increasingly widespread in late Archaic times (Albanese Procelli 2003, 163).

30 Collura (2016, 291) does not consider the possibility of a Sikel settlement at the hill of Caronia, and regards Pizzo Cilona as originally an autonomous settlement that only later was converted into a phrourion by the polis of Kale Akte.
is today. It is therefore not surprising that no trace of it has yet been found. The fact that the cities of Haluntium/San Marco d’Alunzio and Agathyrnon (above Capo d’Orlando) developed from small, Sikel Iron Age settlements, supports this hypothesis.31

Trading post or emporion?
Emporion is a term that should be treated with some care. It usually stands for a community of Greek traders in a foreign environment.32 It is also possible to label enclaves of Greek merchants as enforia.33 Since there are no indications or evidence of the harbour at Caronia Marina being ethnically Greek, and it cannot be regarded as a settlement in itself, the term clearly is not suitable here. It is probably more useful to speak about Caronia Marina in late Archaic and early Classical times as a trading post or ‘gateway community’. This kind of settlement constitutes an interface between areas of different cultural identity, and often also between areas of differing geographic character.34 Caronia Marina was an interface between Greek and Sikel merchants as well as being situated on the border between sea and land as well as between coast and hinterland. This kind of ‘indigenous’ gateway settlement is well known: Naukratis in Egypt was indigenous before being taken over by Greeks, as were several early Phoenician outposts in southern Spain. The trading post Narona in Dalmatia was Illyrian, welcoming Greek merchants, before it was conquered by the Romans.35 The gateway settlement constitutes a neutral area, often in connection with a sanctuary, where it was possible for merchants to liberate themselves from social customs and tradition, and instead follow the rules of the market. There have been many names for this kind of environment, from Polanyi’s port of trade, to Bhabha’s ‘third space’ and White’s ‘middle ground’.36

In this middle ground, cultural differences were negotiated, leading to the hybridisation of cultural identities. If viewing the increasing connectivity and trade of this period as a kind of early ‘globalisation’, it becomes apparent that this process was multifaceted and complex. It is well known that in general globalisation entails increasingly shared values and practices, but at the same time, an increasing awareness of differences appears.37 It is thus possible to speak of a ‘Hellenisation’ (increasing homogenisation) and ‘hybridisation’ (selective choice of cultural traits to adopt,

31 Haluntium: Bernabò Brea 1958, 183; Bonanno & Arcifa 2009, 600; Facella 2006, 46. According to Dionysius of Halikarnassos 1.51.2, Haluntium was founded by the Aecarnanian Patron at the time of the arrival of the fugitive Trojans. According to myth, Agathyrnum was founded by Agathynos, son of the wind-god Aiolos (Diod 5.8.1-3). Such myths that attribute an ancient origin to a site often also reflect a core of truth, namely that the settlements had ancient origins.
33 Gras 2010.
34 Horden & Purcell 2000, 392; Malkin 2011, 164.
36 For an overview of these theoretical constructs, see Malkin 2011, 45-48.
37 Hodos 2010.
awareness of identities) process taking place simultaneously. This is what happened in Sicily in the late Archaic and Classical periods; Sikels appropriated parts of Greek culture and made it their own. This was, however, undertaken in a selective way, and only traits that were interesting to Sikel culture were selected for adoption. It has even been stated that the Sikels were not Hellenised; they Hellenised themselves. This way of putting it highlights the Sikels as active agents, not as passive receivers.\(^{38}\) The choice to import only certain ceramic shapes that were connected with the *symposion* is perhaps the most obvious sign of this active selection, which signaled a cultural identity that was different from that of the Greeks. That the Sikels at Caronia Marina, just as those at Cittadella\(^ {39}\) and other late Archaic Sikel sites, actively chose drinking vessels connected with wine drinking is evident: cups and *skyphoi* are the dominant categories (10 fragments each), with *kraters* and *hydriai* in second place (4 each). Non-drinking categories are represented by a mere six fragments, just over 10% of the total fragments, while vessels connected with drinking constitute almost 90%.\(^ {40}\) The sample from Caronia Marina is too small to be statistically significant, but follows the pattern from other Sikel sites with a strong dominance of imported drinking vessels. If the high share of *krater* fragments can be confirmed, this may suggest that the Sikel community at Caronia not only drank a lot of wine, but was more influenced by Greek drinking culture compared to other known Sikel settlements, probably as a consequence of its location by the sea, on a busy Greek shipping lane. Sikel settlements are all situated in the interior, and they seem to have been interested primarily in drinking vessels, not vessels used for the mixing of wine, such as *kraters*,\(^{41}\) which were an integral part of the Greek way of drinking wine, the *symposion*. It is therefore possible that the Sikel community at Kale Akte was more ‘Hellenised’ and had less interest in defining a proper cultural identity than the settlements of the hinterland. No doubt, the process of ‘homogenisation’ of Sikel with Greek culture would have been more rapid at a site like Kale Akte than in less accessible areas with more restricted contact with Greeks.

The harbour at Caronia Marina welcomed incoming ships, and goods and commodities were loaded and unloaded here. For practical reasons, the area of the harbour would also have constituted the marketplace where economic transactions took place. Consequently, it is possible to regard the harbour before the founding of the polis as a kind of informal trading post, perhaps with some small buildings for storage. In this way, the harbour was a neutral space in which traders could freely exercise their economic activities, which would not be possible in the same way in the

\(^{38}\) Walsh 2014, chapter 4.

\(^{39}\) On material from Cittadella, see Lyons 1996; Walsh 2011-12; Walsh 2013.

\(^{40}\) Calculated from the list of finds in Collura 2016, 321-323.

\(^{41}\) This is the case at Cittadella (Walsh 2013, 242). At Serra Orlando (founded c. 450), Attic Black Gloss kraters are more common than its precursor Cittadella (3% compared with none), where only a few fragments have been found (Walsh 2013, 238-39, figs. 4-5). At a thoroughly Greek settlement such as Himera, not far from Kale Akte, kraters constitute about 5% of the drinking-related material.
settlement on the hill, where the inhabitants were bound to conservative rules of social behaviour and tradition. The ‘neutrality’ of the harbour was of course only partial, since the area was controlled by the nearby Sikel settlement.

The Sikel elite resided in small settlements, many of which were showing signs of early urbanisation in the Archaic period. Wine and the interest in the drinking of wine using Greek drinking vessels was a major reason why Sikel elites began importing Greek commodities and pottery. The banquet became a very attractive form of ‘feasting’, which served as a display of power, influence and status. Through the drinking of wine and its paraphernalia, it was possible to create a self-identity and to become a member of the elite. It is in the second half, and especially the last third, of the sixth century BC that the trade in wine and wine-related vessels expanded in scale in Sicily. This trade was motivated not least by the huge demand from the Sikel elites. It should be expected that the exchange that took place at Caronia Marina from the late sixth century BC was the result of this demand in combination with that from the Greek settlements of raw materials such as timber, wool and hides. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of the small sample of pre-Ducetius pottery finds from Caronia Marina are vessels connected with wine-drinking such as wine amphorae, kraters, skyphoi and cups. The large number of krater fragments (four, all from different vessels) from such a limited sample is interesting, since it is a much higher proportion (almost 10%) than in comparable Sikel-Greek and even Greek domestic contexts. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the imported pottery was not from a domestic context, but was stored in the harbour area, awaiting transport to the hill settlement, and maybe also for further transport and exchange to neighbouring communities.

The discovery that the harbour at Caronia Marina functioned as a trading post in late Archaic and early Classical times is one of some importance; to my knowledge, there are no known Sikel trading posts situated by the sea in Sicily. This stretch of coast was the only one that for a long time was not occupied by Greek or Phoenician settlements, due to its mountainous character and lack of good harbours. The few trading posts that we know of in Sicily from this period were all established by Greeks, in territories dominated by Greek poleis. The site of Caronia Marina, still not completely swallowed up by modern buildings, its western outskirts being protected as an area of archaeological importance, may give future archaeological research a

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42 Albanese Procelli 2003, 146-147.
45 Lindhagen 2006, 137.
46 The finds are listed in Collura 2016, 319-323.
47 For comparison, in the domestic contexts of a closely situated Greek site like Himera, 5% of the Attic pottery belonged to kraters; at the inland Sikel sites Cittadella and the Sikel-Greek Serra Orlando (Morgantina) they represent only 0.37% and 2.6% respectively (Walsh 2006, 184-185, table 14; 219, table 15).
unique opportunity to better understand the character of Sikeland cultural interaction with the Greek world in this period.

The invitation of the Ionians
In his Histories, Herodotus speaks of the year 494 BC and the invitation from the city of Zankle to the Ionians from Samos and Miletos, who were threatened by the Persians, to settle a site on the north coast of Sicily, known as Kale Akte (which may be translated as ‘Fair Coast’, ‘Fair Promontory’ or ‘Fair Point’). The Ionians accepted the invitation and undertook the voyage towards Sicily. However, when they stopped on their way at Locri Epizephyrii, they were persuaded by the tyrant of Rhegion, Anaxilaos, to abandon the project and instead take over Zankle, when his enemies, the Zankleans, were busy besieging a Sikeland town. The Ionians accepted the offer and abandoned their voyage towards Kale Akte, and with treachery took instead control over Zankle with the help of the tyrant of Gela, Hippokrates. From the text it is not certain if Herodotus intended Kale Akte to refer to the coast in general, or as a precise toponym. The Ionians certainly would not have accepted the founding of a settlement so distant from their motherland and to undertake such a long voyage if the Zankleans had not offered them a precise geographic site to settle. The latter would have had a very good knowledge of the north coast between their own city and their daughter settlement Himera in the west.

The archaeological finds from Caronia Marina leave little doubt that a small trading port existed here already in the sixth century BC, probably as a consequence of the intense maritime traffic between Zankle, Himera and Lipari, which passed this part of the coast. The representatives from Zankle who were sent to Ionia probably had detailed information regarding this existing port and settlement on the north coast of Sicily. It seems probable that the Sikels at Kale Akte in 494 BC had had intense contacts with Greek merchants, especially from Zankle, for at least a century, probably even back to the seventh century BC and the foundation of Himera in the west. We know that an important inland site like Morgantina was strongly characterised by Greek cultural influence by the early fifth century, and the process of cultural hybridisation of the Sikeland population is likely to have been more intense in a coastal community, which had the character of a middle ground open to cultural negotiation. This capacity of Kale Akte as a middle ground and gateway community is key to understanding why the site was chosen for the settling of the Ionian fugitives first in 494 BC, and half a century later for the Sikels and Corinthians of Ducetius. By the

48 Hdt. 6.22-23.
49 Hdt. 6.22-23.
50 The presumed Sikeland settlement at Caronia must have been very small, and would have had few options to impede a Greek settlement foundation. Herbita may have controlled this coast later in the fifth century, but hardly at this early time. The recent finds from Monte Alburchia near Gangi in central Sicily, consisting of elements of monumental architecture, strengthen the hypothesis that this site can be identified with Herbita (Wilson 1990, 149; Farinella 2010). Herbita was accordingly in reality very distant from Kale Akte.
time of the Ionian settlement project, we should thus expect the Sikel inhabitants here to have adopted many important aspects of Greek culture, both material and spiritual. A project to found a Greek city here may have been in the interest of the local elite, which would have profited from increased trade and communication. The Sikel elite was still ‘Sikel’ in aspects of their identity, but shared with the Greeks, to an increasing degree, material culture, drinking customs and burial customs. The higher level of comfort that Greek materials and architecture could provide would probably also have been a reason for Sikel elites to join interests with the Greeks. We should therefore not be surprised by the fact that Greek settlers were invited by Zankle to settle a site already inhabited and controlled by Sikels.

The translation of Καλὴ Ἀκτὴ to ‘Fair Coast’ or ‘Beautiful Coast’ has been the most common one in previous studies. However, the most accurate translation would be ‘Fair Promontory’ or ‘Fair Point’: the meaning of the word ἀκτή is actually ‘point where the waves break’ or ‘promontory’. The name would consequently have

51 This translation is most recently found in Strassler 2009, 435. It is interesting to note that a promontory near Carthage is also called ‘Fair Promontory’ (τὸν Καλὸν Ἀκρωτήριον) in a treaty between the Romans and Carthaginians in 509 BC, mentioned by Polybius (Plb. 3.22.5).
indicated a precise site, rather than the much more generic and imprecise ‘Fair Coast’, and this interpretation is certainly underpinned by the discovery of the late Archaic trading post at Caronia Marina. ‘The point’ or ‘the Promontory’ would have been the promontory of Caronia Marina in its entirety with the harbour, the plateau of contrada Todaro, the so-called ‘Piano dei Puppiddi’, and the hill above it. This promontory with its hill would have constituted an easily identifiable landmark for the Greek merchants (Fig. 9). The name would presumably have existed already in the sixth century BC among the Greek emporoi who traded with the trading post at Caronia Marina, long before the Ionians were invited to settle here, since the site was by then known to the Zankleans by that name. Since no buildings have yet been identified that date to before the late fifth century BC at Caronia Marina, it is uncertain whether the harbour at this time possessed warehouses and other infrastructure connected with a harbour. However, despite the lack of evidence, it seems probable that such buildings existed. Only further excavation, focusing to a greater extent on deep soundings, will be able to prove or disprove this point.

52 See Horden & Purcell 2000, 124-127 regarding the importance of landmarks as points of reference for navigation in antiquity.
53 Warehouses are known from a contemporaneous trading post near Gela, see Albanese Procelli 2003, 203.
The Ionians lived in *poleis* that were situated on large plains, not on inaccessible hills; both Samos and Miletos were situated on fertile coastal plains. It therefore seems probable that the Zankleans had the plateau of cda Todaro in mind for the planned Ionian settlement. Flat, with a relatively large area (c. 15 ha), and halfway between sea and hill, it would have been well adapted for a regular urban plan of Greek type (Figs. 5, 9-10). Moreover, it had a good defensive position, if strengthened with fortifications, and had easy access to the harbour. The similarity with the topography of Himera, situated on a similar kind of plateau, by a river, makes the plateau of cda Todaro the probable intended location for the planned settlement. It is necessary to keep in mind that the Greek cities in Sicily and in other parts of the Greek world were always planned with the harbour and the maritime connections as prime concerns.

*Fig. 11* Coin from the mint of Kale Akte with Dionysus and bunch of grapes. Private collection. Photograph: Francesco Collura.
Somewhat less attention was given to the defensive position, which was usually reinforced with strong fortifications.

The archaeological evidence from Caronia

With the archaeological material available to us today from excavation and prospection, it is finally possible to confirm the identification of the settlement founded by Ducetius in 446 BC with the hill-town of Caronia. The numismatic evidence is of particular importance in drawing this conclusion. The coins from the mint of Kale Akte (22 coins) comprise more than a quarter of the identified Hellenistic coins found at Caronia Marina and Caronia, and all five of the series known to have been minted are represented (Fig. 11a–b). Other poleis are represented by only one or two coins with the exception of Syracuse (19 coins). In addition, two brick-stamps with letters that have been interpreted as an abbreviation of the name of the town have been found here, one at Caronia Marina and another in the vicinity of Caronia (Fig. 12). This clear numismatic and epigraphic evidence can be added to the testimony of the Roman itineraries; the distances given here fit well with Caronia.

As I have suggested above, the plateau of cda San Todaro may have been the intended site for the planned Ionian settlement in 494 BC, and could of course theoretically also have been the intended site for Ducetius’ Kale Akte. However, core drilling undertaken here has ruled out any ancient urban settlement. It is therefore certain that Ducetius’ followers settled exclusively on the above-lying site of the Sikel hill-settlement, which was situated according to Sikel custom, probably with the addition of a regularised street-grid of Greek type.

54 Bonsignore & Trifirò 2008, 63 (12 coins); Lentini et al. 2002, 101-102, figs. 35-36 (4 coins); Carroccio & Collura 2016 (6 coins). The dominance of coins minted at Morgantina was a main argument for identifying Serra Orlando with Morgantina (Erim 1958).

55 IG XIV, 2393, 340; Scibona 1971, 21-25, tav. VII, 1-3; IG XIV 2395, 7 (Museo Mandralisca); Bonanno 2008, 44-45, tav. XIX, fig. 30 and following, lacking number (!).

56 Tab. Pent. 7,1; Itin. Anton. 92, 4-5.

57 Bonanno 1997-1998, 433. The traces from antiquity consist essentially in wall remains from sparse rural establishments from the Hellenistic period, and part of a necropolis dating to the third to first centuries BC in the south-east part of the plain (fig. 2, B2). The necropolis was looted by tombaroli in the middle of the last century (Scibona 1987, 11).

58 The site of Paliké has remains of a regular street-grid (Pope 2006).
The small and limited trenches that have been excavated at the hill-town of Caronia have not yielded any ceramic material from before the end of the fourth century BC, due to the fact that only Hellenistic and early Roman contexts were excavated, and to the difficulty of the sloping terrain, which did not allow for deeper trenches. However, sherds of pottery from the late fifth century have been found on the ground, indicating a settlement from at least this time. The urban settlement would have extended from outside the south gate of the medieval town, the Porta Torre or Arco saraceno, since a necropolis extended from the Building of the Comune immediately south of the gate, and southwards in the contrade Pozzarello and Trappeto (Fig. 3, B1). Consequently, the ancient settlement extended only on the northern half of the hill. The plateau is crowned by a hill, occupied by the Norman castle since the twelfth century, and would have constituted an acropolis of sorts (Fig. 13). This was probably the site of the sanctuary of Apollo, which we know existed at Kale Akte in Hellenistic times. The settlement would have used terraces from at least the late fourth century BC, in this way using the steep slopes of the hill towards the east and north to expand the city.
From excavation and prospection it has become evident that the city was organised according to an orthogonal city plan, with stenopoi extending in a roughly E-W direction (Fig. 14).\(^59\) The few traits of stenopoi discovered measure 1.5-1.8 metres in width and were cobbled with small, rounded riverbed stones. Some of the stenopoi had steps in areas where the hill is sloping, a trait also found at nearby Halaesa. Whether there was a central plateia is not known with certainty, but the orientation of such a hypothetical main axis may be calculated from the probable position of the agora. The latter is likely to have been situated in the flat area immediately beneath the acropolis/hill of the Norman castle, judging by the many finds that can be connected with a public area identified on the eastern slope of the hill, immediately below this area (Fig. 15).\(^60\) A marble slab with reliefs which is found in the eastern wall of the Chiesa Madre, at the centre of this area, has not earlier been properly identified; it is probably a fragment of a monumental altar or of an architectonic frieze with garlands and acanthus leaves, in all probability from the Augustan period-first century AD (Fig. 16). It must have

\(^{59}\) Bonanno 1993-1994, 961-962; 967-968; Collura 2016, 121-122.

\(^{60}\) See Lindhagen 2020, 46-47.
belonged to one of the Roman altars or sanctuaries of the agora/forum of Kale Akte. Assuming that the *plateia* constituted the central axis of the urban layout from the area of the medieval gate and passing the agora, it seems probable that it followed roughly the course of today’s Via Calacta and Via Ducezio, which is still the main north-south thoroughfare of the medieval part of the town. The city can only have had one single *plateia*, since the plateau is too narrow for any additional broader streets. A very peculiar trait of the urban plan of Kale Akte is that it appears not to have possessed any city walls. The hill slopes in the east, north and west are much too steep for the construction of city walls. The only place where it would have been possible to construct fortifications is in the south, where the southern medieval fortifications ran. Since this was the only truly weak and exposed point of the hill, it seems probable that the medieval wall in the south was constructed atop an ancient predecessor, possibly originally from the time of the foundation by Ducetius.

The only other alternative to this hypothesis would be that the walls in the east, north and west at the time of foundation would have surrounded only the uppermost plateau of the hill, and not its slopes. However, this idea can be ruled out, since prospection in recent years discovered a small room on the upper part of the eastern

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61 Acanthus leaves and garlands with sacred ribbons were a typical feature of Augustan altars, most typically in the Ara Pacis of Rome, but may also be present in temple friezes.
62 Collura 2016, 122.
slope, cut out in the rock and with a wall of baked bricks, dating at least to the end of the fifth century BC. It seems probable that the settlement at the time of foundation did not need urban walls in the east, north and west due to the steep slopes. This area of the north coast still had not yet witnessed major military forces, and the position of the hill would have been sufficient to impede attacks from forces of limited size and military technology.

**Topography of the site**

The ridge of Caronia is similar to those of Mineo and Cittadella at Morgantina, both originally Sikel settlements of great strategic importance, and the choice of such a site seems reminiscent of the first foundation by Ducetius at Menai (Figs. 17-18). Cittadella is the site with the closest parallels: the area of the plateau is very similar (7 ha compared to Caronia’s 9 ha), and both have a higher part, an ‘acropolis’. The ridge (c. 9 ha), including slopes, on which we can now confidently say that Kale Akte was founded, was clearly smaller than the flat area on which today’s Mineo is built (c. 17 ha), but more than four times larger than the size of the urban area of Paliké – Rocchicella (2 ha). It was well protected in the east, north and west by steep slopes, but was more exposed and accessible in the south.

As we have seen, Kale Akte seems like the other Ducetian settlements also to have been inhabited prior to its foundation, and we can thus consider it another

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63 Collura 2016, 29; 97-102, figs. 80-94.
‘refoundation’, where the newcomers probably had to adapt to an already existing settlement. How, then, should the first layout of Kale Akte be imagined? The profoundly Greek character of the architecture of the sanctuary at Paliké, as well as the Greek element among the settlers, indicates that the city layout of Kale Akte would have undoubtedly been Greek in character, probably with a regular street grid. It is impossible, however, to discern how much of such a layout was realised in the course of six years, and if the project continued after the death of Ducetius.

Diodorus notes that in the year 440 BC Ducetius ‘founded the native city of the Calactians’, although he earlier described the events of the foundation as taking place in 446 BC.64 He also adds that ‘when he (Ducetius) had established many settlers there, he laid claim to the leadership of the Siceli’, but that he shortly thereafter died, it seems, unexpectedly.65 It is difficult to know what we should make of this passage, since it seems somewhat surprising that Ducetius, after having been pardoned by Syracuse and allowed to found his own settlement, with the participation of Corinthian settlers and with the benediction of a Greek oracle, and isolated in a remotely situated part of the island, would once again take up arms against Syracuse.66 Certainly, it is

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64 Diod. Sic. 12.29.1.
65 Diod. Sic. 12.29.
66 It has been suggested that Diodorus based his story on two different sources, Timaios and Ephoros (Chisoli 1993, 21, 26). This seems quite probable, since the author speaks about the foundation twice, in two different sections, and, most importantly, in somewhat different ways.
inconceivable that the Corinthian settlers would have had any interest in forging war together with the Sikels against their powerful daughter city, Syracuse.\textsuperscript{67} The Sikels that participated in the settlement project would also no doubt have been much more positive towards Greek culture than the Sikels of the rebellion at Trinakie.\textsuperscript{68} We are told that Syracuse controlled all the Sikel towns, except Trinakie (probably to be identified with Palikê), which was razed to the ground.\textsuperscript{69} Kale Akte is not mentioned, something that would certainly not have been the case if it had played a leading role in the rebellion, being the base of Ducetius, and would in any case have been punished harshly by Syracuse if it had committed such an act. It is possible to exclude the year 440 as the date of the foundation, since the war that according to Diodorus broke out between Syracuse and Akragas as a consequence of the foundation is recorded for the year 446 BC.\textsuperscript{70}

The only way to acquire more detailed knowledge about the settlement of Ducetius would be to make deep soundings in the area immediately below the castle and on the uppermost, flat area of the hill of Caronia, which corresponds to the

\textsuperscript{67} It is true, for example, that Kamarina in the sixth century BC, and Korkyra in the fifth century BC were in armed conflict with their mother cities, Syracuse and Corinth respectively, but under very different circumstances.

\textsuperscript{68} Malkin 1987, 86.

\textsuperscript{69} Diod. Sic. 12.29.1-4.

\textsuperscript{70} Diod. Sic. 12.8.3-4.
medieval part of the town. Finding traces of the fifth-century settlement is obviously extremely difficult, since above the Archaic/Classical contexts are the thick layers of Hellenistic, early and late Roman, medieval and modern buildings. However, the small number of finds from the fifth century from survey and excavations in the harbour area at Caronia Marina, and the absence of Kale Akte from the ancient sources in connection with events of the fourth- and third centuries, especially compared with Halaesa, clearly speaks against Kale Akte having been a centre of political importance. It is inconceivable that Halaesa would have grown so quickly to become an important centre if Kale Akte, only 17 km away, had a strong political influence in the region. It is even less likely that Apollonia, just a few kilometres away, would have gained such a strong position so close to Kale Akte in the fourth century BC if the latter had a very dominant position.

**Size and political importance**

If Kale Akte had been an important urban centre by the last decades of the fifth century BC, before any other urbanisation began in the area, it seems likely that it would have played a more important role in the events on the north coast, and would have been leading rather than behind the other towns in terms of degree of urbanisation and size of population. There is also no doubt, judging from the quantity of archaeological material from the harbour area, that the population of the late Republican/early Imperial hill-town Kale Akte would have far exceeded that of the earlier period. The archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates that the flourishing of Kale Akte begins in the third century BC with the First Punic War and the conquest of the major part of the island by Rome.

The hypothesis that the absence of Kale Akte from the sources of late Classical and Hellenistic Sicily would indicate a lack of political strength is not just an argument *ex silentio*, since there are several different sources suggesting the same thing. Coinage is one such source of particular interest. Haluntium seems to have issued coins by the first half of the fourth century BC and in the Timolean period, although on a very restricted scale. Halaesa minted bronze coins by the middle of the fourth century

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71 However, it should be emphasised that the urban area of Halaesa is more or less identical to that of Kale Akte (c. 10 and 9 ha respectively), and when including the vast harbour area at Caronia Marina (c. 20 ha), the total area of Kale Akte is larger. This means that the number of inhabitants of both cities would have been very similar, despite the clear superiority in status enjoyed by Halaesa.

72 See also Burgio 2008, 241.

73 Head of Athena / octopus, ΑΛΟΝΤΙΝΩΝ; Corinthian helmet / octopus, ΑΛΟΝΤΙΝΩΝ; Head of female / anthropomorphic bull, ΑΛΟΝΤΙΝΩΝ (Facella 2010, 46). Carroccio (2004, 53) dates the first issues of bronze coins to 280-270 BC: female head with wreath / standing or kneeling bull. Later coins from the late third century BC on: man with Phrygian helmet / anthropomorphic bull with water coming out of the mouth; bearded Heracles / club, bow and quiver; young Dionysus / ΑΛΟΝΤΙΝΩΝ within laurel wreath; bearded Heracles / eagle with prey.
BC, which reflects its connection with the *symmachia* of Timoleon. Kale Akte began minting coins as the last of the hill-towns, only in the late third- or early second century BC as part of the ‘Roman’ currencies which were introduced then, but it seems, never in the same quantity as Halaesa. Halaesa (269 BC) and Apollonia (307 BC) are both mentioned in connection with sieges and war campaigns in the area, but not Kale Akte. Another source is epigraphy: several monumental inscriptions have been found both at Halaesa (more than 20) and San Marco d’Alunzio (c. 15), but at Caronia only one small inscription has been found to date. That Halaesa had a higher status than Kale Akte, and thus would have been more monumental and had more inscriptions, is indisputable. In addition, most of the ancient site has been excavated unlike those of San Marco d’Alunzio and Caronia, which are covered by modern urban settlements. The great difference in numbers of inscriptions between San Marco d’Alunzio and Caronia is telling, since both sites have similar preconditions, although excavation has been somewhat more extensive at San Marco than at Caronia.

The constrained area on the hill-top also indicates that the number of inhabitants must have been limited. The area of the medieval centre of Caronia, adding the slopes to the east and north, i.e. the area of the town’s major expansion in the early Imperial period, measures at maximum c. 9 ha. R. Wilson has calculated that in Roman times a normal insula would measure c. 1 ha, and that each insula could house 100, perhaps more, individuals. Using the higher figure of 150 inhabitants per ‘insula’ for Kale Akte due to the very intensive use of land through the use of terraces, and then subtracting the area of the hill of the Norman castle, which would have been the acropolis of the city, and not inhabited, the total inhabited area would be approximately 8 ha, with a maximum population of 1,200 inhabitants. Added to this would have been a small suburbs to the south, which may have housed a few hundred inhabitants. The maximum total for the late Hellenistic-early Imperial hill settlement would then be around 1,500 inhabitants. We must then add the inhabitants of the maritime settlement, which cannot have included more than a few hundred individuals at most, since the harbour settlement was composed mainly of the harbour’s infrastructure such as warehouses and various industries. The total number of inhabitants of both hill- and maritime settlement may then have amounted to hardly more than 2,000 inhabitants. The total number of inhabitants including all rural settlements of the territory of the polis is impossible to calculate, but a figure of not more than 3,000 for the entire polis and its territory seems reasonable, given the small size of the rural establishments. The settlement of Ducetius, which we can tell with some certainty did not expand further than the upper part of the eastern and northern slopes in contrast to the late Hellenistic town, must have had a considerably lower

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75 Wilson 1990, 171.
76 Collura 2016, 127.
77 This may be on the high side: Lipara and Tyndaris, which were Roman colonies and certainly more important, would according to Wilson have had populations of around 1,500-1,800 inhabitants (Wilson 1990, 171).
population than in the late Hellenistic/early Imperial periods. The area of the upper plateau, identical to the extent of the Medieval town, minus the castle hill, measures about half of the area of the late Hellenistic town, just over 4 ha, and thus would have been able to house a maximum population of 600-700 inhabitants.

The foundations of Ducetius prior to Kale Akte
In order to better understand the reasons behind the fifth-century settlement on the hill of Caronia and whether it can be attributed to Ducetius, it is necessary to compare it with the settlements founded by Ducetius prior to Kale Akte, e.g. to see whether their topographical characteristics are similar to those of Caronia. However, I would like to first comment more generally on the phenomenon of the ‘foundation of colonies’. There is a long tradition of historians and archaeologists following the ancient Greek literary sources, which mention foundations of cities under the guidance of an oikistes, as if a city were born in an instant, or in the words of Braudel, ‘un’événement’. Archaeology has shown that this idea is a simplification of reality; instead, for the most part, the Greek cities were the result of a gradual process over a

78 I have chosen not to use the term ‘colony’ when discussing Kale Akte and other Greek settlements in Sicily, since this term has too many modern connotations, primarily the idea of a city controlled directly by a state with the aim to enrich the latter. The word ‘colony’ is much more appropriate for describing the Roman settlements, the coloniae.
long period of time. Many of the Greek settlements were founded on the ruins of a pre-existing Sikel settlement, and thus had a prehistory. This fact forces us to think about the problem of where to draw the line between a pre-existing settlement and a new one, if at all. As we will see, this is a recurrent problem in the foundations of Ducetius.

Diodorus informs us about two foundations by Ducetius prior to Kale Akte. The first was Menai, founded on the site of the city of origin of Ducetius in 459 BC. Since this was the origin of the Sikel leader, a settlement must have existed prior to the foundation, something which has been confirmed by archaeological investigation. However, the remains are covered by the modern city of Mineo, and no traces of the urban layout of the fifth century BC have been uncovered.

The only archaeologically well-documented alleged foundation by Ducetius is that of Palikê, the religious and political centre of the Sikels, where a settlement had existed since the sixth century BC. Consequently, Palikê was not founded ex novo. Palikê is the only foundation by Ducetius where the urban layout has been excavated and is known to some extent. The city was built on a volcanic outcrop, surrounded by a city wall, and controlled the sanctuary beneath, which extended on terraces (Fig. 19). Interestingly, the recent excavations show no sign of a settlement from the mid-fifth century BC, but only remains of a phrourion dating to the time of Dionysius I and the early fourth century BC. The urban area is very small (2 ha), and the street-grid is characterised by narrow alleys and small insulae. The absence of traces from the fifth century does not rule out a settlement foundation by Ducetius. It is not unusual for archaeological evidence of the Greek ‘colonial’ foundations to date about a generation after the supposed date of foundation. The question must be left open until more data are available. However, the evidence from Palikê shows that if this really was a refoundation by Ducetius, it was on a very small scale. It is probable that the settlement was more a symbolic one, built on the hill above the most sacred Sikel sanctuary, rather than a city that was supposed to play an important economic and/or political role. Judging both by the archaeological evidence and from the description

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79 Regarding this debate, see Owen 2005 and Malkin 2008.
80 Diod. Sic. 11.78.5.
81 Diod. Sic. 11.78.5; Fischer-Hansen et al. 2004, 178. The urban settlement of Mineo continues clearly in the Hellenistic period, something which suggests that this was the Menai founded by Ducetius. Diodorus says that the city was moved to the plain and then called Menainon (Diod. Sic. 11.88.6), but this must be a misunderstanding of the original text (see Fischer-Hansen et al. 2004, 178 and Messina 1967 who treat Menai and Menainon as one and the same polis). The misunderstanding has probably been influenced by the fact that the hill-towns Menai and Palikê on the plain were situated very closely to each other.
82 Diod. Sic. 11.88.6; Fischer-Hansen et al. 2004, 178-179.
83 Maniscalco & McConnell 2003; Pope 2014, 350-351.
84 Pope 2014, 350-351.
given by Diodorus Siculus, the sanctuary was explicitly Greek with regard to both architecture and layout.  

In addition to the three cities known from the literary sources to have been founded by Ducetius (Menai, Paliké and Kale Akte), it has been suggested that Morgantina, located in the interior of eastern Sicily, may also have been founded by Ducetius.

The first Morgantina (Cittadella) was taken and sacked by the Sikels in 459 BC, and theoretically, it would be possible that he was the instigator of the large-

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85 Diod. Sic. 11.89.8.
86 Bell 1984-1985, 505-506.
87 Diod. Sic. 11.78.5.
scale regular street grid at Serra Orlando, which has been dated to c. 450 BC, before his defeat at Nomai the following year. However, the hypothesis of a Ducetian foundation has now been discarded in favour of the idea that Morgantina was a co-foundation of local Sikels and Greeks from Kamarina.88 This hypothesis fits well with the fact that the city layout was of much larger dimensions than that of any of his known settlement projects, especially that of Paliké.89 In addition, Morgantina has a completely Greek-style urban layout, founded ex novo on a flat plateau, whereas both Menai and Paliké seem to have been refoundations of already existing Sikel hill-settlements. All evidence thus points to Morgantina not having been founded by Ducetius.

The neighbouring cities
Having compared Kale Akte with the other foundations by Ducetius, it may now be compared with its neighbours on the Nebrodi coast. It is only through the study of the archaeology in combination with literary sources, and a careful consideration of the geography and topography of the city and its territory, that it becomes possible to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the character of urbanisation in the Nebrodi area. All urban centres on the stretch of coast between Capo d’Orlando and Tusa were

88 Bell 2000; 2008; Walsh 2011-12, 129.
89 Walsh 2011-12, 129.
laid out on hills close to the coast. The position of Halaesa — on a slope, facing the valley of the river Halaisos — shows how important the control of this artery towards the interior was for this city (Figs. 2 and 20). Although controlling the coast slightly less directly than Caronia, the hill was less steep and was more accessible from the coastal road.

The other urban centres on this coast were Apollonia and Haluntium, both situated on much higher hills that were more difficult to reach compared with Kale Akte and Halaesa. Moreover, the former cities were more distant from the coastline, and had a clear priority of defence. The tract of coast beneath these settlements completely lacked natural harbours, although there is some slight archaeological evidence of small maritime settlements. The main reason these cities declined at the beginning of the Imperial period must relate to their difficult access in combination with the lack of good harbours. Apollonia had been destroyed in 307 BC by Agathocles; it seems that it was a very small centre in the late Hellenistic period, and was abandoned for good in the early Empire. It is not mentioned in the itineraries of the third–fourth centuries AD.

Haluntium, today’s San Marco d’Alunzio (Figs. 2 and 21), on the other hand, was a centre of some importance in the late Hellenistic period and had the status of municipium in the Augustan era. But, it seems to have been mostly abandoned after the early Empire, and is, like Apollonia, absent from the itineraries. The distance from the coastal road, the inaccessibility and the absence of good harbours were the reasons for the loss of attraction of such settlements in the Imperial period, when the Pax Romana and flourishing maritime commerce made the coastal maritime settlements, with excellent communications both by land and sea, the preferred choice.

Apollonia, between Kale Akte and Haluntium, situated about 10 km west of Haluntium (Figs. 2 and 22), west of S. Agata di Militello, on the top of Monte Vecchio (near modern San Fratello), had the most attractive defensive position on a vast plateau at the height of c. 500 m.as.l. The plateau had the capacity to feed the population for a long period of time, and consequently would be able to resist a siege for an extended period (Fig. 23). It is not a coincidence that the tyrant of Engyon tried to control this stronghold from the interior, and that Agathocles considered it of such military importance that he sought to control it. It was only with certain difficulty and the collaboration of a traitor that he was able to take Apollonia, and then sacked the city and sold its inhabitants into slavery.90 The destruction was so terrible that the city never completely recovered after the disaster, and became a small and insignificant settlement.

Kale Akte and its geographical context
The foundation of Kale Akte was probably above all a project of commercial character. The vicinity of the sea and the harbour are the most characteristic features of the topography of the polis Kale Akte. The site in its entirety is more adapted to

90 Diod. Sic. 20.56.4.
commerce and trade than as a military stronghold. The crucial point in Kale Akte’s development is its growth contemporaneous with a wider expansion of maritime trade in the late Hellenistic period. Its economic flourishing is attested by the minting of coins from the end of the third century BC and an increase in building- and commercial activity in the port area. The hill-town was largely abandoned after the first century, when the maritime settlement became the centre of economic activity. The vicus around the port functioned until the fifth century AD, when the settlement began to shrink, and industries such as the production of wine amphorae were relocated to smaller, rural units in its periphery.91

As we have seen, there is today evidence for a harbour at Caronia Marina prior to the foundation by Ducetius. Whether the harbour served exclusively as a centre for the exchange of goods and commodities, or if it also included a settlement, has not been ascertained. We know little about Sikel settlements and hardly anything about their harbours, which are completely unknown. The area of the Nebrodi coast was the only one not to be controlled by the Greek cities. Recently, small Sikel settlements from the late Archaic-early Classical period in the territory of Caronia – Santo Stefano di Camastrea have been identified, underlining the Sikel cultural identity of this coast. The foundation of Himera by Zankle around 648 BC, and the Knidian foundation of Lipara in the early sixth century BC, were without doubt the beginning of an

91 Lindhagen 2006, 14, 80.
increasingly flourishing trade between Greek settlements on the north coast, but also with the Phoenician settlements, and in all probability also with their Sikels counterparts. Such trade would have influenced the Sikels, who were interested in the exchange of raw materials for specialised Greek products. It seems probable indeed that the interest the Greek ἐμποροὶ had in Kale Akte began in this very period, as a port of call for the Zanklean ships, more or less halfway between Zankle/Mylai and Himera. A more intense commercial exchange between Sikels and Greeks begins in the second half or third quarter of the sixth century BC among the Sikels of the interior, and this development must have begun earlier in the coastal settlements, which had already been exposed to Greek culture for an extended period. The fact that the Zankleans invited the Ionians to settle Kale Akte was in my opinion due to the commercial contacts that existed between this city and the Sikels trading post. In 494 BC, Greek ships had navigated regularly along the coast of the Nebrodi for a century and a half. The settlement of Lipara must have been an important stimulus for the growth of trade on the Nebrodi coast. Lipara can easily be viewed from Caronia, a distance of only 65 km as the crow flies.

The commercial character of the city and its harbour is evident from the growth that Kale Akte witnessed in the last centuries BC under Roman rule, and the flourishing of the harbour during the entire empire. It is possible that a large portion of the goods and commodities destined for Apollonia and Haluntium arrived through
the harbour of Kale Akte, which was larger and safer than the small beach landings that the two former cities could offer.  

During the entire period under Roman rule the fate of Kale Akte and its sister cities depended on the empire and a flourishing Italian economy. When these disappeared, insecurity on the coasts followed, together with economic and demographic decline, with the consequence that the urban culture also declined. It should be underlined that urban culture never set deep roots in this area. None of the Nebrodi towns possessed a theatre, for example, and all of them except Halaesa disappeared after the first century AD as urban settlements. Not even Halaesa, at the apex of its power and wealth in the first century BC, was more than a polichnion. The conclusion must be that the area was not well adapted for urban culture. The urban concept here was characterised by the hill-towns, extending on limited hill plateaus, and with a limited agricultural territory. Nearly all major towns in Sicily with a rich urban culture had developed on plains with good agricultural land, with immediate access to a good harbour. Exceptions, such as Tyndaris or Tauromenion, combined a very good defensive position and a more extensive plateau with easy access to a good harbour.

At Caronia, the hill, probably never completely abandoned during late antiquity, became a refuge in the Medieval period. The hills of San Marco d’Alunzio and San Fratello, which had been abandoned, also became settled again because of their defensive qualities. Halaesa, however, was abandoned in favour of the more easily defended Tusa. This shows how the fate of this latter city had depended mainly on advantageous conditions. On the contrary, the topographical positions of Kale Akte/Caronia, Apollonia/San Fratello and Haluntium/San Marco d’Alunzio were such that they remained attractive as sites for settlements in more unstable periods as well. Kale Akte/Caronia is clearly the centre of the Nebrodi coast with the longest continuity, with no caveats. This circumstance depended on the combination of hill and protected harbour, attractive at any juncture in history.

The foundation of Kale Akte and the return of Ducetius

Having reviewed the archaeological and topographical evidence for the site of Kale Akte and its harbour, it is instructive to turn to the historical sources in order to see how these different kinds of evidence fit together.

According to Diodorus Siculus, the foundation of the settlement in 446 BC was a collaboration between Sikels and Corinthians, guided by Ducetius in conjunction

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92 It should not be excluded that the Medieval successors to Kale Akte and Haluntium, Caronia and San Marco d’Alunzio, had a similar relationship. San Marco became one of the most important residences of the Norman kings on the north coast in the twelfth century, and from the same period we have the witness from al-Idrisi of a flourishing harbour at Caronia Marina (Al-Idrisi, in *Il libro di Ruggero*). There is no mention of a harbour at San Marco.

93 Strabo 6.2.82.
with the *dynaste* of Herbita and Archonides, and legitimized by an oracular reply. After having settled 'not few settlers' at Kale Akte, Ducetius suddenly died in 440 BC.  

A response from the oracle to found a settlement την Καλήν Ακτήν was supposedly given as a kind of pretext for having broken the pact between Syracuse and Akragas, which said that Ducetius was to remain at Corinth in exile. ‘The oracle’ has usually been interpreted as that of Apollo at Delphi, but the oracle of Zeus and Dion at Dodona in Epirus was recently hypothesized in an alternative interpretation. The first scholar to suggest that Ducetius ‘broke the agreement’ was Adamesteanu. He regarded the foundation of Kale Akte and the alliance between Ducetius and Archonides, the latter probably the father of the founder of Halaesa, as being part of a policy to challenge the Greek expansion towards the west. Adamesteanu argued that the distance from the Greek cities was one of the main reasons for the choice of the site. He argued that here, on the north coast, dominated by Sikels, and far from the Greek poleis, Ducetius would have been outside the political sphere of influence of Syracuse or Akragas, with the mountain chain of the Nebrodi formed a barrier against the Greeks. Adamesteanu concluded that the aim of Ducetius would have been to reunite what was left of the Sikel nation, abandoning the eastern parts of the island, which were now under complete Syracusan dominion.

There has been a debate regarding whether Ducetius acted with the consensus of Syracuse or on his own behalf. The scholars who have chosen to interpret the foundation of Kale Akte as a break with Syracuse underline the expression used by Diodorus, that Ducetius ‘broke the agreements’, τας όμολογίας έλυσε. The verb λύω can be translated into ‘break’, in the strongest meaning, but also into the less aggressive ‘undo’ or ‘dissolve’. If one chooses the softer meaning, this would simply imply that

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94 Diod. Sic. 12.8.2; 12.29.1.
95 Prestiani Giallombardo 2006. There are arguments that favour both interpretations. The strongest argument put forward by Prestiani Giallombardo is the fact that the text by Diodorus says that Ducetius consulted the oracle of ‘the divinities’ which arguably would fit better with the site of Dodona which was protected by both Zeus and Dion. Moreover, the Corinthians founded the major part of their settlements (Kerkyra, Epidamnos) with the support of the oracle at Dodona. However, the geographical situation of Dodona close to the Adriatic Sea, where almost all the Corinthian settlements were founded, may explain this historical fact. On the other hand, the safest sailing route from Corinth to Sicily may have been to first follow the north-western coast of Greece and then cross over to the heel of Italy and further south along the Calabrian coast to Sicily. In this case, Dodona would be a natural choice. Delphi is situated close to the Bay of Corinth, on the very same route that Ducetius necessarily would have taken on his journey towards Kale Akte, and if we are to follow Pausanias (Paus. 5.7.3), Syracuse itself was founded by Corinth with the support from the oracle at Delphi. There is no trace of a cult of Zeus at Kale Akte, which seems odd if this divinity had supported the foundation of the settlement. The cult of Apollo, on the other hand, seems to have been one of the most important at Kale Akte, perhaps the most important, and also at Halaesa (see Lindhagen 2020, 48). In addition, the close neighbour of Kale Akte was called Apollonia, and all cities in the Nebrodi area minted coins depicting Apollo.
96 Adamesteanu 1962.
97 Adamesteanu 1962, 195-196.
the agreement was declared invalid, presumably with the consensus of Syracuse.\footnote{Several scholars are of the opinion that the foundation of Kale Akte was supported by Syracuse: Rizzo 1970; Musti 1988-89, 220-221; Asheri 1992; Prestiani Giallombardo 2006; Micciché 2014, 244, n. 10. Those who like Adamesteanu (1962) and Meister (1992) are of the opinion that the foundation would have taken place without the consensus of Syracuse have read the text as 'broke the agreement’ instead of considering the less aggressive alternative of ‘undoing the agreement’.} That the question of the return of Ducetius and the foundation of Kale Akte was a very delicate political issue can be deduced from the fact that immediately afterwards a war broke out between both strong powers of the island, Syracuse and Akragas, the latter accusing the former of having allowed their common enemy to return to Sicily from Corinth, and to found a settlement on the central part of the north coast, which Akragas considered to be its area of interest.\footnote{Diod. Sic. 12.8.3-4. It has been suggested that Ducetius had bonds with the Syracusan aristocracy; this would explain why the Sikel leader was punished in a relatively mild way, being allowed to return from his exile to found a settlement of his own. See Maniscalco & McConnell 2003, 176, note 177.}

However, as several scholars have noted, it is not very probable that Syracuse would have tolerated the return of the exiled Sikel leader to Sicily in order to found an anti-Syracuse settlement, on the north coast, which was of major strategic importance. Instead, there are two strong arguments that can be given in favour of the idea of cooperation between Ducetius and Syracuse: firstly, the fact that a war broke out immediately after the return of Ducetius shows how Akragas was irritated with Syracuse for acting without having involved them in the decision. Akragas had strong interests in Himera and the western part of the north coast. The central part of this coast would have been a kind of buffer zone between the areas of influence of Akragas and Syracuse, and it is no wonder that Akragas regarded the foundation of a settlement friendly to Syracuse as an open provocation. The settlement was probably intended by Syracuse as a Greek beach-head on the north coast, cultural and economic, in this way avoiding the foundation of an entirely Greek settlement of its own, which would have been an even bigger provocation against Akragas, and perhaps also against the Sikel inhabitants.\footnote{Rizzo 1970; Asheri 1992.} Through the Sikel leader, Syracuse would have been able to make the Sikel population accept the settlers arriving from its own mother city, Corinth, and at the same time indirectly 'Hellenise' it through a massive exposure to Greek culture.\footnote{Rizzo 1970, 160.} Moreover, the Corinthian settlers would have had little interest in founding a settlement in a potentially hostile territory completely dominated by Sikels if the project had not been supported by Syracuse. The involvement of Syracuse in the foundation of Ducetius’ settlement would also have had profound implications for the situation of the future city. Syracuse obviously would not have allowed the foundation of a settlement that could become a potential threat. Therefore, Kale Akte was established by the sea, on a restricted hill with limited possibilities for demographic expansion. In addition, the town was not as well protected by nature as
its neighbours, Apollonia and Halontion in the east, which are better characterised as inaccessible military strongholds.

As has already been touched upon, Ducetius was a very ‘Hellenised’ Sikel,\(^{102}\) in that he acted in many ways as a Greek. He was probably pragmatic rather than a rigid idealist in his dealings with the Syracusan aristocracy, shown by his successful attempt to achieve asylum after his military defeat at the hands of Syracusans and Akragantinians in 449 BC. The foundation of Kale Akte is a very clear example of his Greek behaviour: the Sikel leader uses an oracle (whether at Dodona or Delphi is uncertain) in order to legitimise the foundation of a settlement, and a significant portion of the settlers are Greeks. Diodorus in fact says that ‘some Sikels’ participated, and judging from this it would seem that the major part were Greeks.\(^{103}\) Some scholars have even depicted Ducetius as imitating Greek tyrants in his activities as oikistes founder of new settlements and deporter of populations. However, it is probably not correct to describe Ducetius as a tyrant of Greek type; he acted strategically in the same political context of the fifth century BC of both tyrannical regimes as that of the democratic poleis.\(^{104}\) His hybrid identity is reflected in his actions: he uses partly Greek strategies in order to achieve a Sikel political goal. He is neither a Greek tyrant nor an ideological leader of Sikel independence. He is a pragmatic power politician in a political landscape where ethnic identity was just one of many factors.

The fact that after the death of Ducetius Kale Akte is not mentioned by the sources until the late Republican period, is a clear indication that the town did not have real political importance, especially compared with neighbouring cities, which are all mentioned by the sources. Since Ducetius was authorised to return to Sicily thanks to the clemency and good will of Syracuse, the Sikel leader would not have had much room for politics. It seems that he instead tried to control the Sikel sentiments and impede Sikel hostile actions against Syracuse. The hostilities between Syracuse and the Sikels commenced only after the death of Ducetius in 440 BC, which is probably indicative.\(^{105}\)

The restricted political importance of Kale Akte becomes obvious through a comparison with Halaesa and the circumstances of their respective foundations. While Kale Akte was founded as a trading town by a Sikel leader who had already lost his political power, Halaesa, from the very beginning, was destined to become a strategic stronghold, independent and sometimes even in opposition against Syracuse: the city was a refuge for mercenaries who were in the service of Archonides after the war against Dionysius I and Syracuse. It was a strong Sikel power base, founded from a centre of the interior, Herbita, with the aim to harvest the riches of the Tyrrenian trade, which was in rapid growth in this period. The fast development of Halaesa in

\(^{102}\) Hellenisation is today an obsolete term; the process of change of cultural or ethnic identities was very complex, and certainly not unilateral as this term would suggest. See for example Antonaccio 2001, 125-127.

\(^{103}\) Malkin 1987, 86.

\(^{104}\) Demand 1990; Jackman 2006, 41.

the first half of the fourth century BC was a consequence of the support of an economically, politically and militarily strong power, something that Kale Akte lacked. Archonides had been a mere statist in the foundation of Kale Akte; he realised that he could draw economic advantages from the establishment of a trading settlement in his area of influence. Kale Akte was distant and difficult to reach from the horizon of Herbita, situated far away in the hinterland at Monte Alberghia near Gangi. The great advantage of Halaesa was that it was situated on the coast, while at the same time controlling the only major communication artery towards the interior and its rich grain fields through the Nebrodi mountains.

The foundation of Halaesa on a strategic site on the most important route between the central part of the north coast and its hinterland, and with direct connection with the powerful Herbita, puts the disadvantages of Kale Akte as a base of political power in relief. Both individuals named Archonides, probably father and son, may have exerted influence on Kale Akte after the death of Ducetius. We know that Archonides I cooperated with Ducetius in the foundation. It seems probable that the incapability of Kale Akte to become an important agent on the political scene was a consequence of Ducetius’ lack of power after his defeat. This is perhaps also the best argument against the idea that Ducetius would once again have led the Sikels in a rebellion. The Sikels leader was now geographically isolated, far away from Paliké and the core of the Sikel territory, where the rebellion once was born. He controlled a small polis, newly founded and not ideal as a stronghold, which was in addition vulnerable to attacks from the sea. Archonides of Herbita, tyrant of one of the major Sikel centres, was (contrary to Ducetius) a strong and autonomous leader, capable of resisting even Syracuse. Accordingly, he could act without restrictions, and founded Halaesa, a city that would soon become the most important in the Nebrodi area, and one of the most important on the north coast.

This was the last in a series of ethnically mixed Sikel-Greek settlement foundations in the second half of the fifth century BC, the other cities being Kale Akte and Morgantina, and they together provide clear evidence that differences between these ethnic groups began to disappear.

106 Wilson 1990, 149.
108 The Archonides of Herbita that founded Halaesa can hardly be identical to the dynastes of Herbita who cooperated with Ducetius in the foundation of Kale Akte forty years earlier. It is probable that we are dealing with father and son.
109 Diod. Sic. 14.78.6. This fact illuminates the difference between the political projects of Ducetius and the Archonides. Lately, Simonetti Agostinetti (2012) and Arena (2016) have followed the hypothesis of Adamesteanu without considering this important difference. Both scholars have used the known philo-Athenian position of Archonides as an argument in favour of Ducetius having held an anti-Syracusan stance, something that does not take into consideration the very particular historical context of the foundation of Kale Akte and the political impotency of Ducetius at that time. On the same lines as the position argued for here, see Miccichè 2014, 244, n. 10.
Conclusions
The foundation of Kale Akte by Ducetius and the particular historical context that surrounded it was to be decisive for how it later developed as an urban settlement. Ducetius had no real political power and the settlement foundation was supported by Syracuse, which had interests in a commercial trading port, but not a strong polis that potentially might turn against it. All these circumstances ensured that, from the outset, Kale Akte did not have the capacity to become an important political agent in the region. It is not the topographical characteristics that impeded a politically important settlement here. On the contrary, the plain of cda San Todaro presents an excellent site for a large-scale urban plan of Greek type (and was probably where the Ionians were invited to settle in 494 BC). The hill above it, with its presumably pre-existing Sikel settlement, better suited the limited ambitions of a politically impotent Ducetius in exile. An urban settlement on the Caronia ridge could have expanded towards the south, on the plateau, just as the modern Caronia did in the post-war period. Instead, the settlers at Kale Akte chose from the beginning to concentrate the settlement on the northern part of the hill, occupying at least the upper part of its slopes. It seems obvious that the whole idea of the settlement was to be able to visually control the sea and the coastline beneath with its harbour. This becomes even more evident when in the Hellenistic and early Imperial period the settlement expanded onto the hill-slopes facing the sea, rather than on the plateau towards the south. The hill of Caronia is not adapted to housing a classical Greek-style urban settlement; except for its northernmost part, the plateau is too narrow. We can conclude that although Ducetius was clearly a very Hellenised Sikel, he still retained many Sikel-cultural leanings. All three of his foundations seem to adapt to pre-existing Sikel settlements, hill-sites that would not have been attractive choices for an ethnically Greek settlement. Ducetius is accordingly a good example of an individual with a hybrid Sikel-Greek identity and culture. On the one hand, he acted in many ways as a Greek, and was clearly strongly influenced by Greek culture. He moved civic populations, founded new cities, once even with the support of a Greek oracle, and seems to have used regular city plans in his foundations according to Greek tradition. On the other hand, he chose Sikel sites for his settlements, even when he had the opportunity to choose a more typically Greek type of site (the plain of cda San Todaro below Caronia), something that reveals that part of him was still firmly rooted in Sikel culture and tradition. Not least important, he seems not to have had the economic or logistical means to found anything other than relatively limited urban settlements. With the information we now have of his settlements from Paliké and Kale Akte, although still limited, it seems increasingly certain that Ducetius cannot have been the instigator behind the urban plan of Morgantina. The hybrid nature of Ducetius reflects the rapidly accelerating acculturation between Sikels and Greeks in the fifth century BC, and also shows that the enmity between these ethnic groups was not based on cultural differences that were impossible to bridge, but rather on differing geopolitical interests.

Syracuse, which must have supported the foundation of Kale Akte, probably decided what function the new city would have. The Syracusans saw in the exiled
Ducetius an opportunity to have a ‘Hellenised’ port of call on the north coast in an otherwise completely Sikel-dominated area. This historical context divides Kale Akte from the other urban centres which grew up around it from around 400 BC, which were all expressions of territorial domination and political influence. Kale Akte became a city specialised in production and exchange, while other cities like Halaesa, Haluntium and Apollonia (the latter only until 307 BC) achieved higher political status due either to their good defensive position (Apollonia, Haluntium) or a strong political power backing it in combination with a superior strategic position (Halaesa). Kale Akte as an urban site was probably not significantly smaller than Halaesa or Haluntium in total number of inhabitants, but its comparatively weak defensive position and lack of fortifications meant that it could be captured relatively easily in times of military conflict. It is probable that Haluntium and Apollonia used Kale Akte as their main harbour, since they lacked harbours of their own. Since they could take advantage of this harbour, they could also add significantly to their economic wealth. But Kale Akte could not compensate for its relatively weak defensive position. It is thus natural that Halaesa and Haluntium issued coins early, and later became Roman municipia, whereas Kale Akte did not. Kale Akte’s urban area is equal or identical in size to that of Halaesa and Haluntium, and if we add the quite large harbour area, it even becomes the largest centre in terms of area, if not in inhabitants. This underlines the fact that from a Nebrodi perspective, the low political status of the town was not due to its total size, but rather to the factors mentioned above. Kale Akte was a polis specialised in production and commercial exchange, and as such, it probably played a more important role than the literary sources, its official status in the early Imperial period, or the size of its hill-town settlement would suggest.

Adam Lindhagen
PhD Classical Archaeology and MA Law
Senior Adviser, Viken County Council
Section for Cultural Heritage
Oslo, Norway
E-mail: adam.lindhagen@gmail.com
Riassunto in italiano

Il porto arcaico a Caronia Marina
È chiaro che il porto arcaico, situato nell’area di contrada Pantano a Marina di Caronia, non fu un *emporion* greco. È poco probabile che un insediamento greco senza protezione potesse esistere in un sito così strategico e soprattutto confinante con un’area dominata dai siculi. Per ora non c’è nessuna indicazione che a Caronia Marina ci fosse un insediamento in età arcaica, al massimo si può ipotizzare la presenza di edifici relativi all’attività del porto per lo stoccaggio delle merci. Tutto il materiale archeologico qui ritrovato, databile al periodo arcaico, è di produzione greca e finora non è stato recuperato alcun oggetto ceramico di produzione sicula. Le importazioni di ceramica sono soprattutto legate al simposio greco, costume comune in molti centri siculi. Possiamo considerare la Caronia Marina dell’età arcaica come una 'comunità di accesso' ('gateway community'), un punto di incontro tra mercanti siculi e greci. La funzione del porto come foco delle importazioni spiegherebbe la dominanza di ceramica greca qui.

I ritrovamenti a Marina di Caronia contrastano fortemente con quelli di Pizzo Cilona dove si trovano prevalentemente *pithoi* (grandi contenitori per l’olio, il vino e il grano), molta ceramica sicula, pochissimi oggetti di importazione greca, mentre completamente assente è la ceramica attica e corinzia. Questa situazione contraddice l’idea che Pizzo Cilona fu l’insediamento siculo principale dell’area prima della fondazione di Duzezio; i ritrovamenti a Pizzo Cilona avrebbero dovuto rispecchiare la situazione esistente a Caronia Marina, invece appare chiaro che a Pizzo Cilona dominavano non importazioni greche, ma semplici suppellettili. Questo fatto rinforza l’interpretazione di quest’ultimo come una fortezza per il controllo dell’interno e non un’insediamento vero e proprio.

Anche se non ci sono certezze, sembra molto probabile che la collina di Caronia, dove fu fondata più tardi la città di Duzezio, fosse in origine un insediamento siculo. La vista che spaziava dal porto a vaste porzioni della costa e la linea diretta con Pizzo Cilona, fortezza di importanza strategica, rendevano il sito ideale per un insediamento. La parte settentrionale della collina con la sua acropoli ha delle somiglianze topografiche con l’insediamento collinare di Cittadella, il precursore siculo di Morgantina.

Paragoni con Menai e Palikék
Se si paragona il sito di Caronia con gli altri siti presumibilmente fondati da Duzezio, Menai (Mineo) e Palikék, si evince che il sito collinare è topograficamente simile a Menai e ad altri siti siculi, tranne per il fatto che Kale Akte fu fondata vicino al mare. È invece poco chiaro se Duzezio abbia anche fondato una città sulla rocca di Palikék, per ora non ci sono indicazioni. Ad ogni modo in caso di futura conferma, l’insediamento doveva essere molto più piccolo di Menai e Kale Akte. La sola certezza è che Duzezio fondò il santuario ai piedi della rocca. Sia Menai che Kale Akte sembrano essere state
fondate su già preesistenti insediamenti siculi. La scala ridotta dei progetti di Menai e Kale Akte, insieme al santuario di Paliké, suggerisce che l’hegemon siculo non possa essere stato il fondatore del monumentale piano urbano di Morgantina.

Città vicine a paragone
Paragonando Kale Akte alle altre città nebroidee si arriva alla conclusione che la città di Halaesa si distingue dalle altre poiché fu fondata come insediamento ex novo con uno scopo assolutamente strategico da una forza politica radicata nel territorio. Al contrario Kale Akte fu probabilmente fondata in un sito già abitato, non da una forza politica che controllava il territorio stesso, ma da poteri esterni che avevano l’interesse di fondare una base puramente commerciale su questa costa. Questa intenzione originale che fu dietro la fondazione aveva profondi implicaioni per lo sviluppo urbano e carattere futuro della città. Come gli altri insediamenti vicini di Apollonia e Haluntium, anche Kale Akte aveva le caratteristiche di una città che si sviluppava gradualmente e lentamente; le sorti di questa dipendevano dal controllo sul porto e dal suo successo commerciale. Il sito di Halaesa fu scelto invece come centro del potere da una forza politica radicata nel territorio ed il suo successo dipese dal commercio del grano e dal potere acquisito controllando tale commercio. Con molta probabilità Kale Akte funzionava come porto commerciale anche per le vicine Apollonia e Haluntium, e poteva anche essere un porto di ausilio per Halaesa, che aveva un’area portuale ridotta rispetto alla sua importanza come centro per l’esportazione del grano. Partendo da questa ipotesi il porto di Kale Akte diventa il punto nevralgico commerciale per un’area più estesa, con un numero di abitanti maggiore rispetto al proprio territorio.

L’area dei Nebrodi aveva una posizione perfetta per l’esportazioni verso Roma ed inoltre era sulla rotta tra l’Italia e il Nord Africa; forniva materie prime come legno e lana, prodotti come il vino, tonno salato e probabilmente anche navi.

Alla luce di tutto questo si può verosimilmente affermare che il ruolo del porto commerciale di Kale Akte sotto il dominio romano sia stato molto più importante del ruolo politico giocato dalla polis collinare.

La Fondazione di Kale Akte
Secondo Diodoro Siculo, nel 446 a.C. il capo siculo Ducezio, di ritorno dall’esilio di Corinto insieme a coloni corinzi e siculi, fondò l’insediamento di Kale Akte. Sembra chiaro che Ducezio fondò la città con l’approvazione e il tacito supporto di Siracusa e, in conformità con le tradizioni greche, con l’approvazione di un oracolo; non si sa se quello di Apollo a Delfi o quello di Zeus a Dodona.

Gli scavi recenti non hanno dato informazioni sul suo piano urbano nel V secolo. Questo fatto dipende dai diversi strati di insediamento urbano costruiti dal periodo ellenistico fino ad oggi. Finalmente l’identificazione di Caronia con la Kale Akte di Ducezio è ormai certa, confermata sia da mattoni con il probabile monogramma della città, sia dalla presenza di numerose monete bronzee coniate dalla polis ellenistica.
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