

The shrine and the goddess. Cultural contacts in Soluntum during the Hellenistic age

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Several studies have dealt with the persistence of Levantine roots within the Punic settlements of the Hellenistic and Roman age in Sicily. One particular context is the site of Soluntum, in Western Sicily, founded during the 4th century BC, after the destruction of the earlier settlement by Dionysius I of Syracuse. Despite the overall Hellenistic aspect (houses with peristyle, theatre, stoa, *bouleuterion*), it is possible to identify Phoenician and Carthaginian influences in the building techniques, as well as in the sanctuaries and in certain simulacra and cult installations. Such a persistence is evident in the bipartite shrine and the statue of enthroned goddess, discovered in 19th century AD. After a brief history of the studies, this paper aim to provide a reconsideration of the shrine and the statue. Finally, it suggests innovative comparisons for both, in order to stress the cultural contacts between Soluntum, Carthage and the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.