

who came across the place before the historical Greek settlement was founded.⁵³ Strabo, however, does claim, similarly to Aristotle, that it was the Achaeans who founded Sybaris and he also describes the mother colony, Sybaris, and mentions the name of its founder: Is of Helice.⁵⁴

The Greeks flourished at Poseidonia for some 200 years. The city enjoyed the status of an autonomous Greek *polis* and was endowed with a defensive wall with four gates, probably built in phases. Inside the city walls three Doric-style temples were erected in the sixth and fifth centuries. There has been some disagreement on which gods the temples were dedicated too, however, even though within the scope of this study they are referred to as Hera I, Hera II and the Temple of Athena, they might as well have been dedicated to more than one god. A Greek *agora* was also laid out north of the sanctuary of Hera (Fig. 6). It was adorned with a variety of Greek features; among them a *bouleuterion* or possible *ekklesiasterion*.⁵⁵ An intriguing structure identified as a *heroon*, a place that has been interpreted as being dedicated to founder of the city, was built on the western edge of the *agora* around 510-500 BC.⁵⁶ Outside the walls of the city a possible harbour, its existence and position is however debated, several *nekropoleis* and extramural cult sites were located; of which one will be the focus of this study: The Sanctuary of Santa Venera south of the city wall. Poseidonia came to enjoy intense cultural and commercial exchange with the rest of the Greek world as well as non-Greek populations like the Etruscans to the north and other Italic tribes from the hinterland. The Etruscan influence combined with the Greek and local Poseidonian style can for example be seen in the very famous fifth century tomb known as *Tomba del Tuffatore*, the Tomb of the Diver.⁵⁷ Altogether Poseidonia prospered and continued doing so. When its mother colony, Sybaris, fell in 510 BC Poseidonia along with other colonies filled the gap as a commercial and cultural centre.⁵⁸ However, as the fifth century closed, changes loomed on the horizon and the Greek settlement at Poseidonia was to be forever marked by what was to come.

2.1.2. The Lucanian period

There were many subdivisions of the Italic population and among them were the Lucanians; an Oscan-speaking people with an already established close contact with the Greek cities of Magna

⁵³ Pedley 1990, 30.

⁵⁴ Strab¹. 6.6.13.

⁵⁵ Pedley 1990, 79.

⁵⁶ Pedley 1990, 38-39.

⁵⁷ Mello 1985, 14.

⁵⁸ Mello 1985, 14.

Graecia.⁵⁹ The Lucanians, the local name for the south Italian Samnite people, occupied the inland area between the Ionian and the Tyrrhenian coast in the fourth century BC. Samnite people were expanding in numbers and in need of new homes, and therefore looked to the prosperous Greek and Etruscan coastal cities. At the end of the fifth century cities like Cumae and Capua had been captured by the Samnites and around 400 BC also Poseidonia came to be under control of the Lucanians.⁶⁰ This is the traditional interpretation among scholars. However, in the final discussion of this study I hope to nuance this interpretation a bit. Consequently, there has been a strong belief among many scholars that a “profound cultural change took place in the second half of the fifth century” at Poseidonia as a result of this Lucanian invasion.⁶¹ However, recent research has showed us otherwise. It is clear that Poseidonia at some point became a Lucanian city and that this happened gradually and peacefully. Much of the earlier historical interpretation of the Lucanian overtaking of Poseidonia derives from a statement made by Aristoxenos of Tarentum, a pupil of Aristoteles writing in the fourth century BC. He claims that the Greeks were essentially enslaved by the “Tyrrhenians”. This have led scholars to blame the Lucanians for this supposed regression in culture, politics and economy. The “Tyrrhenians” in this case have been interpreted as the Lucanians but it might as well refer to the Romans, Campanians, another Samnite people or the Etruscans; the latter have in fact in ancient literature been generally referred to as “Tyrrhenians”.⁶² The pessimistic literary evidence concerning the new trends in Poseidonia does, however, not have much support in the archaeological material. The supposed subjugation of the Greeks and the violent conquest of the city may in fact rather be a reflection of Greek attitudes in Tarentum or maybe even part of a larger process going on in Southern Italy at the time: Lucanization.⁶³ But the evidence from Poseidonia suggests that the Greek practises continued; the *bouleuterion* and the *heroon* remained in use and so did the Greek sanctuaries and the Greek language.⁶⁴ Some scholars claim that the change of the Greek name Poseidonia to Paistos or Paistom (later Paestum) can be seen as evidence of a conflict between Greeks and Lucanians, if this renaming happened under the Lucanian rule. The exact time of the change is however unsure, it might as well be a result of the later Roman conquest.⁶⁵ Pedley does, on the contrary, not agree with the renaming

⁵⁹ Fracchia & Gualtieri 1989, 217.

⁶⁰ Pedley 1990, 97.

⁶¹ Pedley 1990, 97; Horsnaes 2002, 11.

⁶² Isayev 2007, 17-18.

⁶³ Isayev 2007, 18-19; Zuchtriegel 2016, 14.

⁶⁴ Pedley 1990, 97.

⁶⁵ Mello 1985, 15.

and states that the city continued to be called Poseidonia during the Lucanian period.⁶⁶ In the present study I too will continue to use the name Poseidonia, in line with most scholars.

During the fourth century BC and up to the establishing of the Latin colony in 273 BC Poseidonia prospered as revealed in the archaeological record. Although there were no major large-scale building programmes to match the constructions of the Greek temples and sanctuaries those places continued to be looked after and the gods were worshiped by the new inhabitants.⁶⁷ However, two *stoai* were built at the Greek agora as well as an Asklepieion (Table). The changes that came along with the Lucanians are to be seen in the agriculturalization and the density of settlement of the territory of Poseidonia as well as new burial practices in terms of extraordinary decorations.⁶⁸

2.1.3. *The Latin colony*

In 273 BC the expanding city of Rome had reached past the river Sele and stood at the gates of the Greek/Lucanian city of Poseidonia. Rome had been expanding for years, and the Republic was founding colonies, *ex novo* or, in the case of Poseidonia-Paestum, taking over already established settlements, all over the Italian peninsula. The Roman colonies, perhaps especially the ones that were founded during the late Republic, were behaving in a strikingly uniform way. The Roman, or the Latin, colony, is well known for its formulaic way of structure and features; in other words, we know the nature of a Roman colony without having to see one. The foundation ritual has been described in ancient literary sources and is said to originate from the time of Rome's mythological foundation when Romulus, 753 BC, with permission of the gods laid out the sacred boundary, *pomerium*, around the city.⁶⁹ The founding ritual of the colonies is describes by Bispham in the article '*Coloniam deducere*: how Roman was the Roman colonisation during the middle Republic?':

Firstly, the *deductio*, or marching out, of the colonists from Rome to the site of the colony; the *deductor* (founder), in ritual dress (the *cinctus Gabinus*), ploughs the sulcus *primigenius* (the original furrow), tracing the line of the future walls and instantiating a ritual barrier, the *pomoerium*.⁷⁰

In other words, it is clear that there was a model for Roman colonization and that the newly founded colonies were using the same set of rules and rituals to express their relationship, as

⁶⁶ Pedley 1990, 97.

⁶⁷ Pedley 1990, 112.

⁶⁸ Pedley 1990, 97.

⁶⁹ Plut. *Vit. Rom.* 11.1-4.

⁷⁰ Bispham 2006, 74.

well as their obedience and loyalty to their mother colony: Rome.⁷¹ However, Poseidonia, renamed Paestum after the founding of the Latin colony inside its walls, being an early example of Roman colonization as well as an already established city with all its functions and features, this ‘model of colonization’ cannot be applied in the same way. As the following analysis of Poseidonia-Paestum will show, Rome was the model for the colony’s political system. The rôle of the city was, however, adapted to fit its purposes as a colony as well as a product of new and previous influence and it was thus not a direct replica.⁷²

After the founding of the Latin colony the city was altered radically (Table). The Greek/Lucanian *agora* ceased to be in use and instead a Roman forum was laid out in the southern part of the old *agora*. Traditional Roman buildings, especially those relating to political and juridical aspects, were constructed at the new forum and simultaneously the buildings with similar functions at the *agora* were demolished. The sanctuaries, however, remained in use, both the intramural and the extramural. They were respected by the new settlers and continued to be objects of worship.⁷³ A striking continuity of divine worshipping is analysed in detail in the further analysis of the Sanctuary of Santa Venera.

The bonds with the mother colony, the city of Rome, were strong; both in a juridical and political sense as well as affectional. Paestum supported Rome in times of need and aligned itself with its mother colony politically and diplomatically. When the Carthaginian general Hannibal was roaming around southern Italy during the second Punic War, 218-201 BC, and literally breathing down the necks of the Paestans, the city still remained loyal to Rome. However, the many wars and the feeling of unsafety these times must have given rise to might have been a hard blow on the Paestan society. That said, it is a well-known fact that nothing binds a society together like a common enemy, and Paestum was thus rewarded for its loyalty. A certain degree of autonomy was given to the city and also the privilege of striking its own coins.⁷⁴ Thus, Rome continued to be a strong influencer on the Paestan society although it is evident, which is shown in the further analysis of some aspects of the nature of Roman influence, that the city never forgot its Greek and Lucanian roots. In 133 the via Popilia, running to the east of Paestum, was constructed and as a result of this the city was unfortunately cut off from principal routes connecting the city to the rest of the peninsula.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Bispham 2006, 73-74.

⁷² Sewell 2010, 86.

⁷³ Pedley 1990, 113.

⁷⁴ Pedley 1990, 113.

⁷⁵ Pedley 1990, 113-114.