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CONSTRUCTION OF A GEOGRAPHICAL DATABASE OF CLASSICAL-ARCHAIC MANUFACTURES, FOUND IN THE SURVEY OF THE GREEK COLONY HIMERA (SICILY, ITALY). APPLICATION AND METHODOLOGIES FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

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Abstract. This research has analysed the distribution of ceramic finds from classical and archaic ages in the territory of the ancient Greek colony Himera, a town situated near Termini Imerese, in the province of Palermo (Sicily, Italy), which has been the site of systematic excavations carried out by the University of Palermo since the Sixties. The study of about 1500 ceramic fragments, dated back to the 6th-5th century B.C., has allowed to develop an approach to the understanding of the role played by ceramics in the relations between different societies and cultures. Besides the most common analysis factors for the ceramic manufactures, such as their production and distribution, a major factor is the way the manufactures were used. From this wider perspective, a new methodology has been developed about information potential of functional analysis. The interpretation of data about the manufacture distribution was made by means of GIS methodologies, querying the alphanumerical classification database and relating the manufacture typological data to the geo-cartographic ones by means of applying intersite-level spatial analysis. Thus, each archaeological piece of information about the finds can be analysed in relation to the territory geo-morphological features and the obtained data can be processed with specific software environments, in order to suggest reconstruction models for the anthropic landscape, based on the relation between coeval sites and distance from specific environment features — for example, distance from water sources, raw materials, road condition etc. The computer application used for data handling, presentation and analysis, becomes this way a tool of research aimed at the comprehension of settlement dynamics in the historical scenery. This study is the occasion to propose such an analysis system of cultural heritage as a new tool to promote it and to increase its value, applying a territorial context related methodology founded on scientific evidence.

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