The indigenous Iron Age Elymi of western Sicily produced a diverse assemblage of pottery vessels for domestic uses. The arrival of Greek and Phoenician colonists in the seventh century BC introduced new products, transforming the regional economy. The material remains of these populations, often found in domestic and mortuary contexts, have been the subject of numerous stylistic analyses providing the basis for the identification of various temporal phases, cultural associations, and ritual practices. The exchange of goods has largely remained a qualitative endeavor focused on attributing vessels to socio-temporal phases. Yet numerous questions remain to be discussed; for instance where was such pottery produced and where was it traded? How did the exchange of indigenous pottery change after the establishment of the foreign colonies? How might modern compositional examinations alleviate analytical deficiencies facing past archaeological interpretation?

This paper presents the preliminary results of a study of pottery from ten sixth and fifth century BC indigenous Elymian, colonial Greek, and Phoenician communities in western Sicily. Over 400 vessels were analyzed using a portable energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence (ED-XRF) instrument. Three research questions are addressed: 1) can such pottery be successfully examined compositionally, 2) did production technologies remain compositionally continuous between the two periods, and 3) what role did local imitations of foreign pottery play in the regional economy? Results of this study suggest the exchange of Iron Age contact period western Sicilian pottery can be successfully tested using compositional methods to reveal the nuanced relationships between population centers in western Sicily, including the exchange of imitation vessels.