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Dr. Bilge YILMAZ KOLANCI

Yazışma Adresi

Arkeoloji Enstitüsü, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Kınıklı Yerleşkesi 20070 Denizli/TÜRKİYE
Tel. + 90 (258) 296 38 95 Fax. + 90 (258) 296 35 35 E.mail: lycus@pau.edu.tr

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Lycus Dergisi uluslararası hakemli ve bilimsel bir e-dergi olup yılda iki kez (Haziran ve Aralık) yayımlanmaktadır. Dergide yayımlanan çalışmaların tüm sorumluluğu yazarlara aittir. Pamukkale Üniversitesi'nin yazılı izni olmadan derginin tamamı veya herhangi bir bölümü kopya edilemez.

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LYCUS DERGİSİ'NİN AMACI, KAPSAMI VE YAYIN POLİTİKASI

Amaç

Lycus Dergisi, her yıl Haziran ve Aralık aylarında olmak üzere yılda iki sayı olarak yayımlanan, bilimsel ve hakemli bir e-dergidir. Lycus Dergisi; başta Anadolu Arkeolojisi, Antik Dönem Tarihi Coğrafyası, Prehistorya, Protohistorya, Önasya ve Klasik Arkeoloji, Müzecilik, Eskiçağ Tarihi, Epigrafi, Nüvizmatik, Antropoloji, Arkeometri, Koruma-Onarım, Mimarlık Tarihi gibi alanların konularını kapsayan, disiplinler arası çalışmaları yayımlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Kapsam

Lycus Dergisi, Anadolu Arkeolojisi, Tarihi Coğrafyası olmak üzere Prehistorik Dönem'den başlayarak, günümüze kadar olan kültür mirası, buluntular, arkeolojik kazı ve yüzey araştırmalarının sonuçları, restorasyon, konservasyon, müzecilik, antropoloji, epigrafi, etno-arkeoloji gibi bilimsel çalışmaları kapsar. Bunların dışında ilk defa yapılan tespitler, uygulamalar ve analiz çalışmalarının yer aldığı yazıları içerir.

Yayın Politikası

- Lycus Dergisi, Haziran ve Aralık ayı olmak üzere yılda iki sayı olarak yayımlanır. Hakem değerlendirme sürecinden olumlu görüş alan makaleler, yıllık yayın için belirlenen hedefi aşması durumunda bir sonraki sayıda yayımlanması amacıyla havuzda bekletilir. Makalelerdeki öncelik, yazar tarafından çalışmanın gönderildiği tarih ve makale niteliği göz önüne alınarak belirlenir.
- Lycus Dergisi'ne gönderilen çalışmaların daha önce herhangi bir yayın organında yayımlanmamış olması ve sisteme eklendiğinde bir başka yayın organının değerlendirme aşamasında bulunmaması gerekir. Yayımlanmak üzere gönderilen çalışma, yazarın tezinden (lisans/yüksek lisans/doktora) üretilmişse veya bilimsel bir kongre/toplantıda sunulmuşsa bunun başlığa konulacak dipnot ile açıklanması gereklidir. Bu çalışma, yayın kurulu tarafından uygun görüldüğü takdirde tarih ve yer bildirmek şartı ile kabul edilebilir.
- Başvurunun yapılmasından, yazının yayımlanma aşamasına kadar geçen süreçteki bütün işlemler elektronik ortamda (<https://dergipark.org.tr/lycus>) gerçekleşir. Herhangi bir yazının elektronik sisteme eklenmesi, çalışmanın yayımlanması için başvuru olarak kabul edilir ve değerlendirme süreci başlar. Yazarlar yayımlanmak üzere gönderdikleri çalışmaların yayın haklarını, Pamukkale Üniversitesi Arkeoloji Enstitüsü bünyesindeki Lycus Dergisi'ne devretmiş olurlar. Lycus Dergisi'nde yayımlanan çalışmaların telif hakkı dergiye ait olup referans gösterilmeden aktarılamaz, çoğaltılamaz ve dergi yönetiminden izin alınmaksızın bir başka yayın organında yayımlanamaz. Yayımlanan çalışmalar için yazarlara telif ücreti ödenmez.
- Lycus Dergisi'nde yayımlanmış yazılardan kaynaklanması muhtemel herhangi bir bilimsel, etik ve hukuki sorumluluk, yazar/yazarlara aittir. Bu hususta Dergi, herhangi bir hükümlülük kabul etmez.
- Dergiye gönderilen yazıların dergi kurallarına göre düzenlenmiş olması gereklidir. Yayın alt komisyonu, yazım kurallarına uymayan yazıları yayımlamama veya düzeltmek üzere yazar/yazarlara iade etme yetkisine sahiptir. Lycus Dergisi'nde yayımlanacak makalelerin yazarlarının TELİF HAKKI DEVRİ FORMU'nu eksiksiz doldurarak, ıslak imza ile adresimize göndermeleri gerekmektedir. Çalışma Dergi'ye gönderildikten sonra, hiçbir aşamada, Telif Hakkı Devri Formu'nda belirtilen yazar adları ve sıralaması dışında yazar adı eklenemez, silinemez ve sıralamada değişiklik yapılamaz.

YAYIN İLKELERİ

1. Makaleler World ortamında, Times New Roman harf karakteri kullanılarak yazılmış olmalıdır. Yunanca alıntılar dışında tüm metin tek yazı karakteri ile oluşturulmalıdır.
2. Metin 11 punto; özet, dipnot, katalog 9 punto; kaynakça 10 punto olmalı, tek satır aralıkla yazılmalıdır.
3. A4 boyutundaki yazılarda, sayfanın solundan ve üstünden 3 cm, sağından ve altından 2 cm boşluk bırakılmalıdır.
4. Ana başlık metnin yazıldığı dilde, 11 punto, düz ve kelimelerin ilk harfi büyük harfler ile ortalanarak, koyu yazılmalıdır. Yabancı dildeki başlık, ana başlığın bir alt satırında, 12 punto, italik ve kelimelerin ilk harfi büyük harfler ile ortalanarak, koyu yazılmalıdır.
5. Başlık altında, ortalanarak yazar/yazarların isimleri, 10 punto ve koyu yazılmalıdır. Yazar isimleri yıldızlı dipnot (*) ile dipnotta gösterilmeli, dipnotta ise yazarın akademik unvanı, çalıştığı kurumun adı, adresi ve e-posta adresi ile ORCID numaraları belirtilmelidir.
6. Yazar isimlerinin altında, 200 kelimeyi aşmayacak şekilde, ancak en az 150 kelimelik özet yazılmalıdır. Özette çalışmanın amacı, içerik ve sonuçları hakkında kısa ve açıklayıcı bilgiler bulunmalıdır. Özeti en az 4, en fazla 6 kelimedenden oluşan anahtar kelimeler verilmelidir. Yabancı dildeki çalışmalarda metnin kaleme alındığı dilde ve Türkçe özet, Türkçe yazılmış çalışmalarda ise metin dilinde ve İngilizce özet yer almalıdır.
7. Dipnotlar sayfanın altında verilmeli ve makalenin başından sonuna kadar sayısal süreklilik izlemelidir.
8. Metin içerisindeki alt başlıklarda kelimelerin ilk harfi büyük, diğer harfleri küçük olmak üzere 11 punto olmalı ve koyu yazılmalıdır.
9. Çalışmanın tamamı, özet, kaynakça ve figürler ile birlikte 20 sayfayı geçmemeli, sağ alt köşeye sayfa numarası eklenmelidir. Bu sınırlamayı aşan çalışmalarda, editörlerin takdir hakkı göz önüne alınacaktır.
10. Makalede kullanılacak fotoğraf, resim, çizim ve harita gibi görsel verilerde "Fig." kısaltması kullanılmalı, numaralandırmada süreklilik gözetilmelidir. Metnin içinde kullanılan "Fig." ibaresi parantez içerisinde yer almalıdır. İki'den fazla figür belirtiliyorsa, iki rakam arasına boşluksuz tire (Fig. 2-4) konulmalıdır. Figür çözünürlükleri 300 dpi'den aşağı olmamalı ve JPEG formatında gönderilmelidir. Figürlerin listesi metnin sonunda, kaynakça bölümünün öncesinde yer almalıdır.
11. Kaynakça, makalenin sonunda bulunmalıdır. Kaynakçanın devamında, varsa figürler yer alır.
12. Makaleler, editörlerin önerileri doğrultusunda seçilen çift taraflı-kör hakemlik (gerektiğinde 3. hakeme gönderilebilir) ilkesine uygun olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Yazarın kimliğinden bağımsız olarak değerlendirilen yazılar için hakemlerin gerekli gördüğü düzeltme ve görüşler yazara iletilir. Yazım kurallarına uygun olmayan makaleler ise işleme konulmadan, yazarına iade edilecektir. Yazar, hakemlerden gelecek değişiklik, düzeltme ve ilaveleri yapmayı taahhüt etmiş sayılır.
13. Yayımlanan yazıların bilimsel sorumluluğu yazar/yazarlara aittir. Bu çalışmalar doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak Lycus Dergisi'nin görüşü niteliği taşımaz.
14. Dipnot kaynakları aşağıdaki kurallara göre hazırlanmalıdır;
Tek Yazarlı Kaynak Gösterme: İnan 1987, 121.
İki Yazarlı Kaynak Gösterme: Şimşek – Duman 2007, 75.
İki'den fazla yazarı kaynak gösterme: Hobbs v.d. 1998, 358.
Birden fazla kaynaktan yapılan alıntıyı gösterme: Kadioğlu 2006, 152; Ismaelli 2009, 25.
Birden fazla soy ismi taşıyan yazarı kaynak gösterme: Dönmez-Öztürk 2006, 95.
*Dipnotlarda sayfa numaraları verilirken, tam aralık verilmeli (İnan 1987, 121-125), "vd., vdd." gibi kısaltmalar kullanılmamalıdır.

15. Kaynakça aşağıdaki kurallara göre hazırlanmalıdır;

• Kitap kaynak gösterme:

Bailey 1980

D. M. Bailey, *Roman Lamps Made in Italy, A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum II*, London, 1980.

Demirhan-Erdemir 2015

A. Demirhan Erdemir, *Prehistorik ve İlk Çağlarda Tıp*, İstanbul, 2015.

Humann v.d. 1898

C. Humann – C. Cichorius – W. Judeich – F. Winter, *Altertümer von Hierapolis*, Berlin, 1898.

• Çeviri Yapılmış Kitabı Kaynak Gösterme:

Deighton 2005

H. J. Deighton, *Eski Atina Yaşantısında Bir Gün*, Çev. H. Kökten-Ersoy, İstanbul, 2005.

Magie 2001

D. Magie, *Anadolu'da Romalılar I, Attalos'un Vasiyeti*, Çev. N. Başgelen – Ö. Çapar, İstanbul, 2001.

• Editörlü Kitapta Bölümü Kaynak Gösterme:

Atila – Gürler 2010

C. Atila – B. Gürler, “Bergama Müzesi'nde Bulunan Roma Dönemi Cam Eserleri”, *Metropolis İonia II Yolların Kesiştiği Yer Recep Meriç İçin Yazılar/The Land of the Crossroads Essays in Honour of Recep Meriç*, Ed. S. Aybek – A. K. Öz, İstanbul, 2010, 47-53.

• Makale Kaynak Gösterme:

Başaran 1990

S. Başaran, “1988 Yılı Enez Kazısı Çalışmaları”, *11. Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, Cilt 2, Ankara, 1990, 107-123.

Kaya 2009

M. A. Kaya, “Anadolu'da Roma Egemenliği (İÖ 205-25)”, *Doğu Batı Dergisi* 49, Ankara, 2009, 195-234.

Murat 2003

L. Murat, “Ammihanta Ritüelinde Hastalıklar ve Tedavi Yöntemleri”, *Archivum Anatolicum* 4/2, 2003, 89-109.

Şimşek – Duman 2007

C. Şimşek – B. Duman, “Laodikeia'da Bulunan Ampullalar”, *Olba XV*, İstanbul, 2007, 73-101.

• Yayınlanmamış Tez Çalışmasını Kaynak Gösterme:

Söğüt 1998

B. Söğüt, *Kilikya Bölgesi'ndeki Roma İmparatorluk Çağı Tapınakları*, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Konya, 1998.

Erön 2007

A. Erön, *Anadolu'da Roma Dönemi Tapınaklarında Görülen Bezemeli Frizler*, Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Aydın, 2007.

• Antik Dönem Metinlerini Kaynak Gösterme:

Antik döneme ait edebi bir metinden yapılan alıntılar, dipnot yerine metin içerisinde ve parantez içerisinde “Plinius (*nat.* V.105)”, “Strabon (XII.8.16)” verilmelidir. Metin ya da dipnot içerisinde kullanılan antik dildeki terimler ya da kısa cümleler italik olarak verilmelidir. Antik kaynaklar *Der Neue Pauly*'de verilen standartlara uygun olmalıdır.

16. Dipnot ve kaynakçada bir yazarın aynı yılda yayımlanmış birden fazla eseri kullanılacaksa, yıldan sonra alfabenin başlangıç harfinden başlayarak küçük harf ekleyerek (Şimşek 2002a, 3; Şimşek 2002b, 231) numaralandırılmalıdır.

17. Başvurular <https://dergipark.org.tr/lycus> adresi üzerinden yapılmalıdır; bununla birlikte gerektiğinde lycus@pau.edu.tr e-posta adresinden de yapılabilir.

Materiality of Greek Religion: Votive Practices and Rituals in the Sanctuaries of Gela, Sicily

*Yunan Dininin Materyal Kültürü: Sicilya Gela'daki Kutsal Alanlarda
Adak Uygulamaları ve Ritüelleri*

Tommaso ISMAELLI*

Abstract

The paper focuses on an Archaic-Classical sanctuary in the Rhodian-Cretan colony of Gela, on the southern coast of Sicily. Thanks to a new attention to the materiality of votive objects, as well as to their reciprocal associations, the study aims to reconstruct the local votive practices and their transformation from mid-7th century to the late 5th century BC. During a first phase, the rite was based on the lighting of oil lamps and the dedication of unguent containers. After a systematic change in ritual practice occurred around 550 BC, the consumption of beverages and libations was accompanied by the systematic dedication of terracotta protomai. Great attention is paid to the identification of social actors and the symbolic functions played by the objects as media of a ritual communication with the divinity and the community of worshippers. The complete analysis of the archaeological evidence revealed a clear functional specialisation of the sanctuary with regard to a religious community of young women in a phase of transition towards marriage.

Keywords: Sanctuary, Ritual Practice, Marriage, Sicily, Gela.

Özet

Bu çalışma Sicilya'nın güney sahilindeki Rodos-Girit kolonisi Gela'da yer alan Arkaik-Klasik bir kutsal alanı irdelemektedir. Adak objelerinin materyal özelliklerine ve de karşılıklı ilintilerine odaklanan yeni ilgi sayesinde bu çalışma MÖ 7. yy. ortalarından MÖ 5. yy. sonlarına kadarki dönemde yerel adak uygulamalarını ve dönüşümlerini rekonstrükte etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Saptanan ilk evrede rit, kandil yakılması ve unguent kapları adanmasına dayanıyordu. MÖ 550 civarında ritüel uygulamasında sistematik bir değişiklik gerçekleştikten sonra içecek tüketimi ve libasyonların yanı sıra sistematik şekilde pişmiş toprak protomlar adanıyordu. Sosyal aktörlerin ve tanrısal varlık ile ibadet eden cemaat arasında ritüel bir iletişim mecrası olarak objelerin oynadığı sembolik işlevlerin teşhisine büyük önem verilmiştir. Arkeolojik bulguların tam bir analizi ile kutsal alanın evliliğe geçiş evresinde bulunan genç kadınlardan müteşekkil bir dini grupta ilgili kesin işlevsel ihtisaslaşması bulunduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kutsal alan, Ritüel Uygulaması, Evlilik, Sicilya, Gela.

* Dr., CNR-ISPC National Research Council Institute of Heritage Science Campus Universitario Lecce/ITALY. ☎ 0000-0002-6159-8945 | tommaso.ismaelli@cnr.it

Introduction

The sanctuaries of Greek Sicily deserve a key place in the current debate on archaeology of religion¹. The extraordinary evidence, from votive deposits containing thousands of artefacts, provides researchers with an opportunity that has few parallels in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, the material culture of these sacred contexts speaks to us of the complexity, variety and specificity of such phenomena in ancient Sicily. Furthermore, thanks to new approaches, it has revealed a religious landscape that is far richer and more nuanced than the traditional picture, which was dominated by the cults of Demeter and Kore.

The study of a sanctuary in the Rhodian-Cretan colony of Gela, on the southern coast of Sicily, aims to shed light on the materiality of religion from an archaeological perspective². Thanks to their materiality and visibility, as well as to their reciprocal associations and combinations, the objects represent suitable instruments for reconstructing the religious system of the sanctuary. The analysis of the artefacts looks at their real and symbolic functions, as media of ritual communication and identity. The research also foregrounds the social players who made up the community of worshippers, seen to be in a continuous dialogue among themselves in a context of evolving norms of ritual behaviour.

Specifically, the research focuses on a sanctuary discovered in 1959 on the southern slopes of the city of Gela, on land belonging to Mr A. Sola, from whom the site derives its conventional name of *Predio Sola*³ (Fig. 1, n° 2). The basis of the following theories is the recently published systematic description of the votive materials found in this place of worship⁴, which previous publications by the archaeologist who discovered them, P. Orlandini, had presented only in part⁵.

The Sanctuaries of the Rhodian-Cretan Colony of Gela

The Rhodian and Cretan colonists who founded Gela in 688 BC⁶ chose a narrow, elongated plateau at a modest altitude almost in the centre of the broad gulf that characterises the southern coast of Sicily. The city, located in a bend of the river Gelas, controlled a broad and fertile plain, famous for the cultivation of cereals⁷.

The eastern end of the site was occupied by the acropolis, where the poliadic sanctuary of Athena with two large peripteral temples stood (Fig. 1, n° 7). Further west, the settlement spread over the summit of the plateau and the slopes of the hill. As far as can be ascertained, it was characterised by a network of streets bisecting each other at right angles. On the western side of the natural constriction in the plateau there were extensive necropolises. The emporium of the city is

¹ The present paper focuses on archaeology and rituals in Magna Graecia and Sicily. I am glad to offer these considerations about ancient Italy to the colleagues and friends of the Institute of Archaeology of PAÜ - Pamukkale University. In particular, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Celal Şimşek and Prof. Dr. Bahadır Duman for their invitation to contribute to the first issue of *Lycus Journal*.

² For a historiographical discussion of material culture and ritual practice, see Boivin 2009.

³ For the discovery, see Orlandini 1962, 3-4.

⁴ Ismaelli 2011 presents a detailed description of the artefacts, with comparisons and bibliography; numbers in the present text refer to the catalogue in that publication.

⁵ Some classes of artefacts are described by Meola 1971; Uhlenbrock 1989; Ingoglia 1990; Ingoglia 1999.

⁶ Thukydides VI.4.3-4.

⁷ For a general description of monuments and sanctuaries, see Panvini 1996; Panvini 1998; for the new discoveries regarding the urban layout, see Spagnolo 1991, 60, 69; Wilson 1995-1996, 99; Spagnolo 2012. For the *chora* of Gela, see Bergmann 2010.

recognisable towards the coast, near the mouth of the river Gelas, in the district now known as Bosco Littorio⁸ (Fig. 1, n° 5).

In addition to the *Athenaion*, the other large sanctuary of the colony was the *Thesmophorion*, located outside the settlement in the district now known as *Bitalemi*, to the east of the river Gelas (Fig. 1, n° 6). Here, small shrines and numerous votive deposits containing thousands of objects were discovered. The sanctuary can with certainty be ascribed to the cult of Demeter thanks to the epigraphic evidence.



Fig. 1: Sanctuaries of Gela

1: *Heraion*; 2: Sanctuary of *Predio Sola*; 3: Remains in the *Castello federiciano*; 4: *Heroon* of Antiphemos 5: Emporion of *Bosco Littorio*; 6: *Thesmophorion* at *Bitalemi*; 7: *Athenaion*; 8: Architectural remains of temples in *Via Apollo* and *Via Eschilo*; 9: Roof terracottas of a temple from *Giardino Cali*; 10: Sanctuary of *Carrubazza*; 11: Sanctuary of *ex scalo ferroviario*; 12: Sanctuary of *Via Fiume*; 13: Sanctuary nearby *Madonna dell'Alemanna* Church. Aerial photograph of Gela, 1938

Regarding the settlement's other places of worship, the picture is rather fragmentary however: they consist mostly of small sanctuaries found on the slopes of the hill, evidenced by either architectural remains or votive materials⁹. In

⁸ Panvini 2009.

⁹ For *Madonna dell'Alemanna*, see Orlandini – Adamesteanu 1956, 384-392; Orlandini 1968, 42-44; Panvini 1996, 63; Hinz 1998, 68. For *Carrubazza*, see Orlandini – Adamesteanu 1956, 242-252; Orlandini 1968, 33-34; Panvini 1996, 62; Hinz 1998, 66. For *Via Fiume* and *ex scalo ferroviario*, see Orlandini – Adamesteanu 1956, 252-263; Orlandini 1968, 34-37; Panvini 1996, 63; Hinz 1998, 66-67; Spagnolo 1991, 65-66; Spagnolo 2000, 182-193.

contrast to what has frequently been argued¹⁰, these structures do not lie outside the area of the ancient settlement. On the contrary, they are more likely to have formed a complex network of small sanctuaries used for specific functions in the various districts of the city, as the results of the systematic research into the votive material of *Predio Sola* seem to confirm.

The sanctuary of *Predio Sola* is situated on the southern slopes of the hill of Gela, 150 m west of the narrow access to the ancient acropolis (Fig. 1, n° 2). It makes use of a natural terrace that interrupts the slope leading down from the summit of the plateau towards the sea. This sacred area is now believed to have been an integral part of the ancient urban fabric¹¹: around the site were structures of various kinds, including other small sanctuaries¹², wells¹³, the landing place on the sea shore, the emporium and the paths leading up from the sea towards the acropolis.

Sanctuary of *Predio Sola*: Stratigraphy and Phases

The excavation of the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* led to the discovery of the architectural remains of a *naiskos* and numerous artefacts (752), mostly ceramics (1-643), coroplastics (85, 644-728), a few small objects in terracotta (a spindle, 7 loom weights and an *oscillum*, 729-737), a piece of iron slag, 3 bronze rings, a scarab in faïence, an *alabastron* in alabastrine gypsum (741-750), and a few osteological finds (751-752). In terms of their place of production, the ceramics, which account for 85% of the material discovered, are local (263 pieces), Corinthian (185), Attic (61), East-Greek (30) and Laconian (2). Apart from a few fragments of large containers and amphorae used for transport, the deposit is formed almost entirely of fine pottery¹⁴.

The artefacts were recovered in two different stratigraphic contexts, indicated as layers I and II, corresponding to two successive and distinct phases of occupation of the sanctuary (Fig. 2).

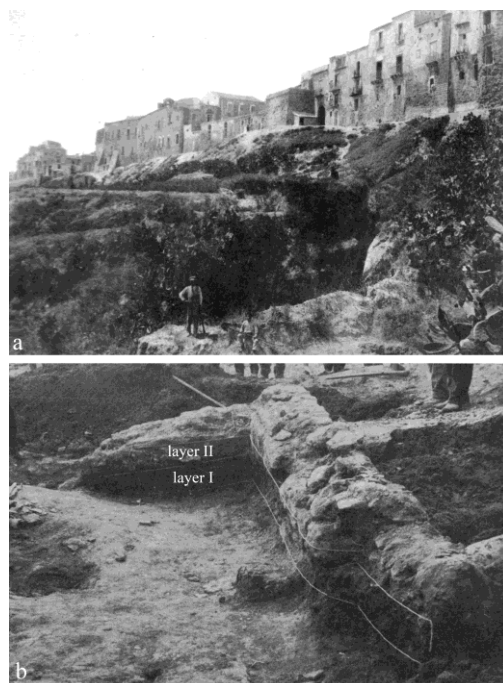


Fig. 2a-b: The southern slope of the hill of Gela where the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* lied and the remains of the *naiskos*

Layer I is made up of an extensive mass of materials (between 0.25 and 0.40 m thick) and corresponds to the first phase of use of the sacred space. For this period no traces of walls or architectural terracottas were discovered but the limited size of the excavation means that the presence of structures cannot be excluded¹⁵.

¹⁰ Orlandini 2008; Torelli 2011, 93-94.

¹¹ Topographical features in Ismaelli 2011, 15-18. Orlandini 1962, 3, 76 ascribed it to an extra-urban position.

¹² Inside the *Castello federiciano* (Amata 1993-1994, 869-870), below the *Calvario* (Orsi 1906, 542, 588-589, fig. 372; Orlandini 1968, 44-45, fig. 27) and in the *Cementizia* area (Orlandini – Adamesteanu 1956, 273-274; Orlandini 1968, 32, fig. 10).

¹³ Orsi 1906, 561.

¹⁴ For the excavation, stratigraphical data and finds, see Ismaelli 2011, 19-32.

¹⁵ Orlandini 1962, 76-77 considered it to be a *sub divo* cult.

This first phase began around 650/640 BC, as shown by some Corinthian (LPC-TR, 1-5), Attic (325) and local ceramics (428). This dating, which is confirmed by the coroplastics (645, 647, 651, 653, 654-656), is particularly significant: the occupation of *Predio Sola* appears to have been begun only a generation after the foundation of the city itself¹⁶, and this indicates the centrality of the cult for the community of the newly established colony. Phase I lasted until the middle of the 6th century. The composition of the votive objects from the first phase of the sanctuary is characterised by:

- 1) the dominance of ceramic artefacts (536) over coroplastics (16),
- 2) the prevalence of local (227) and imported Corinthian artefacts (278), with much smaller numbers of Attic (6) and East-Greek (23) imports.

Analysis of the ceramic forms shows the highly structured character of this more ancient deposit, which from the functional point of view is distinguished by:

- a) the large number of oil lamps: 178 exemplars, compared to only 7 fragments from layer II;
- b) the abundance of perfume containers and pots for cosmetics (*aryballoi*, *alabastra*, *amphoriskoi*, *lekythoi*, *exaleiptra* and plastic containers, *pyxides*): 136 pieces that account for 98.6% of the class from both phases.

Layer II, between 0.10 and 0.25 m thick, was discovered along the internal walls of a moderately sized building (4.6 x 2.3 m), to a height of 0.30-0.40 m and built of irregular stones¹⁷. The architectural type, which plausibly had walls made of unfired bricks and fictile roofing with polychrome *kalypter hegemon* (738-740), is similar to other small Archaic temples of Gela in terms of both technique and dimensions¹⁸.

This *naiskos* was built in direct contact with the materials of the first phase¹⁹ in around 550 BC, as shown by the chronology of the *kalypter hegemon* (738-739) and the most ancient materials found inside it, datable to just after the middle of the 6th century BC. Given the chronological coincidence, it is a plausible hypothesis that the burial of the materials of layer I is linked, possibly in a ritual sense, to the construction of the temple. The good state of conservation of the finds from layer II and the concentration of the votive objects along the internal wall suggest that ceramics and terracottas were originally placed at the foot of the walls of the temple.

The evidence from layer II is datable to a period from the middle of the 6th century BC to the end of the 5th century. After 480 the votive clay figurines disappear and the ceramic artefacts, both local and imported, become less frequent: this reflects the gradual decline of the sanctuary, which ceased functioning altogether with the Carthaginian conquest of the city in 405 BC.

The second phase of the sanctuary appears to be characterised by:

- 1) a much lower percentage of ceramic artefacts (105 pieces) and a correspondingly greater proportion of coroplastics (70 pieces);
- 2) the prevalence of Attic (55) and local (36) production, with only sporadic Corinthian (7) and East-Greek (7) artefacts;

¹⁶ For the coeval beginnings of the *Thesmophorion* in *Bitalemi*, see Orlandini 1968, 34.

¹⁷ Orlandini 1962, 4, 9, figs. 4-6.

¹⁸ Orlandini 1968, 22-23, pl. 2; De Miro – Fiorentini 1983, 65-68, figs. 4-5; Spagnolo 1991, 57.

¹⁹ A similar situation was found in Locri, Sabbione – Milanesio-Macri 2008, 198, figs. 9-10.

- 3) the almost total disappearance of the oil lamps and containers for perfumes and the continued presence of drinking vessels (bowls, *kotylai*, *skyphoi*, *kotyliskoi*) and pots for containing, mixing and serving drinks (*oinochoai*, *hydriai*, amphorae, craters).

The Interpretation of the Sanctuary and the “pan-Demetriac” Model

Since the discovery of the minor sanctuaries of Gela in the 1950s and 60s it has commonly been assumed that the various cult sites situated around the summit of the plateau were dedicated to “chthonian goddesses”. This notion is based on their presumed “extra-urban” position and a few specific types of artefact, arbitrarily selected from among the thousands of objects discovered in the various contexts²⁰. This interpretation was also applied to the religious area of *Predio Sola*²¹, especially in reference to the presence of oil lamps and fictile *protomai*.

This interpretative paradigm was heavily influenced by the impressive discoveries made in the 1960s in the *Bitalemi* district²² in the sanctuary that has been identified as the *Thesmophorion* of Gela, thanks to various inscribed dedications to Demeter *Thesmophoros*. Indeed, the position of this sacred area (outside the city beyond the river Gelas) and the discovery of statuettes of pig holders, fictile *protomai* and oil lamps were used by the archaeologist Orlandini as diagnostic clues for interpreting the other sanctuaries of Gela for which no dedicatory inscriptions could be found.

The figures of Demeter and Kore were both summarily associated under the heading “chthonian goddesses” and were considered to be perfectly identical and interchangeable entities from the point of view of the functions of the cult and their areas of responsibility (human and natural fertility). A “pan-Demetriac” interpretation of religion in Gela thereby arose, based on a superficial reading of the literary sources and an extremely limited selection of the copious archaeological evidence. In recent years new considerations have been advanced, regarding individual aspects of these sanctuaries such as their topographical distribution, the social groups involved and the various functions of the cults, without however substantially weakening the “pan-Demetriac” paradigm²³.

With respect to the approaches described above, the methodological basis of the research presented here is the systematic analysis of *all* the votive material of the sanctuary of *Predio Sola*. This represents the key to generating a reliable picture of the context and its specific features. The votive materials were not analysed solely as individual objects, in accordance with the traditional typological and art-historical approaches. Rather, the emphasis was on the significance of the *assemblages* of artefacts, in order to assess the real statistic weight of the various classes and highlight the continuities and transformations in a diachronic framework²⁴.

²⁰ For this interpretative model, see Ismaelli 2011, 207-209.

²¹ Orlandini 1962, 29-32, 76-78.

²² Orlandini 1966; Orlandini 1967.

²³ For a topographical approach to the “chthonian sanctuaries”, see De Miro 1985, 569-570. Other interpretations of these cult sites may be found in Le Dinahet 1984, 150-151 (groups linked to descendants of colonial contingents); Ardivino 1999, 179-181 (different social groups or different liturgical calendars); Holloway 2000, 56-60 (various aristocratic families); Torelli 2011, 93-94 (different familial and cult groups such as *phratrīai*).

²⁴ For assemblages see Osborne 2004, 3-4; for votive practices see Linders – Nordquist 1987; van Straten 1992; Insoll 2011, 704-705 and the pioneer Rouse 1902. For the placing of offerings see Bouma 1996, 43-51; White 2007.

A significant part of the research focused on the functional aspects of the ceramic material, whose forms are used as precise indicators in the identification of ritual practices in the sanctuary²⁵. The coroplastic offerings were analysed in the same way, emphasising their role as social instruments. What was the function of the coroplastics in the symbolic interactions between participants in the cult? What do the morphology and iconography of the objects tell us about the way they were used?

Looking at the entire spectrum of the material evidence, the main focus is on the identity of the social actors of the cult, in terms of gender, status and age²⁶. From this reading of the social dynamics of the religious phenomenon, the specific characteristics of ritual communication within the local context begin to emerge: a central role is played by the symbolic dialogue between individual worshippers, the ritual community and the divinity²⁷. These symbolic interactions between human groups and divine entities in the two chronological phases are described below, highlighting the dynamic nature of the forms of ritual communication²⁸. Parallel to this, a synchronic reading of the data makes clear the established and shared norms of ritual behaviour. At the same time the deviations and alterations to these models reveal the tensions within the community that frequented the sanctuary.

Ritual Practice in Phase I: Lighting the Lamps

The most distinctive feature of the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* is the extraordinary deposit of almost two hundred exemplars of oil lamps²⁹. The number of items for this class is particularly significant considering the much more limited quantity found in the *Thesmophorion* of *Bitalemi*³⁰, to which our context has been compared in the past. As well as the Corinthian, Attic and East-Greek imports, the core of the class is made up of oil lamps produced by the workshops of Gela itself (187). Of these, the most representative type is the one conventionally referred to as Syrophenician because it had appeared in the Syro-Palestinian area as early as the 3rd millennium BC (Fig. 3). They are small plates created on a potter's wheel, with a very flat bowl, the walls of which are pinched to form one or more nozzles³¹. The standardisation of the form makes it hard to discern the chronology of the individual exemplars, which are datable only by their discovery within layer I (approximately 650/640-550 BC). More than sixty oil lamps show clear traces of smoke around the nozzle. They are therefore assumed to have been actually used for lighting and then left in the sanctuary, having become the inalienable property of the divinity³².

Quite different to these simple oil lamps is the large triangular lamp (645), one of the most ancient objects in use in the sanctuary (approximately 650-630 BC). Of

²⁵ Bouma 1996, 104-117.

²⁶ Bouma 1996, 284-297.

²⁷ Offerings (*anathemata*) activate a "circuit d'échanges symboliques" between worshippers, religious community and the god; see de Polignac 2009. For rituals as a form of communication, see the papers collected by E. Stavrianopoulou Ed., *Ritual and communication in the Graeco-Roman world*, Liège, 2006.

²⁸ See papers collected by A. Chaniotis Ed., *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean. Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*, Stuttgart, 2011.

²⁹ For lamps and rituals in *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 211-213. For literary and archaeological sources concerning the ritual use of lamps, see Nilsson 1950, 98-101; Parisinou 2000a, 158-161; Hermanns 2004, 20-26.

³⁰ For the lamps of *Bitalemi*, see Orlandini 1966, 22, 25; Kron 1992, 630; Hinz 1998, 61-62.

³¹ For the origin and distribution of finds, see Provoost 1976, 22-26.

³² Kron 1988, 147; van Straten 1992, 272-274. For lamps found close to altars, *bothroi* and *escharai*, see Parisinou 2000a, 145-147.

considerable dimensions (8.2 cm high and 14.8 cm along the side), the lamp had two superimposed bowls for the oil and an external decoration consisting of bearded human protomes alternating with rams' heads³³ (Fig. 4). The dimensions and decoration indicate that this was an exceptional object, used for ceremonial purposes: the rings around the top of the bowl were for hanging the artefact, for example to illuminate the cult statue³⁴, while a rod may have been inserted in the hole in its base, allowing oil lamp to be used dynamically.

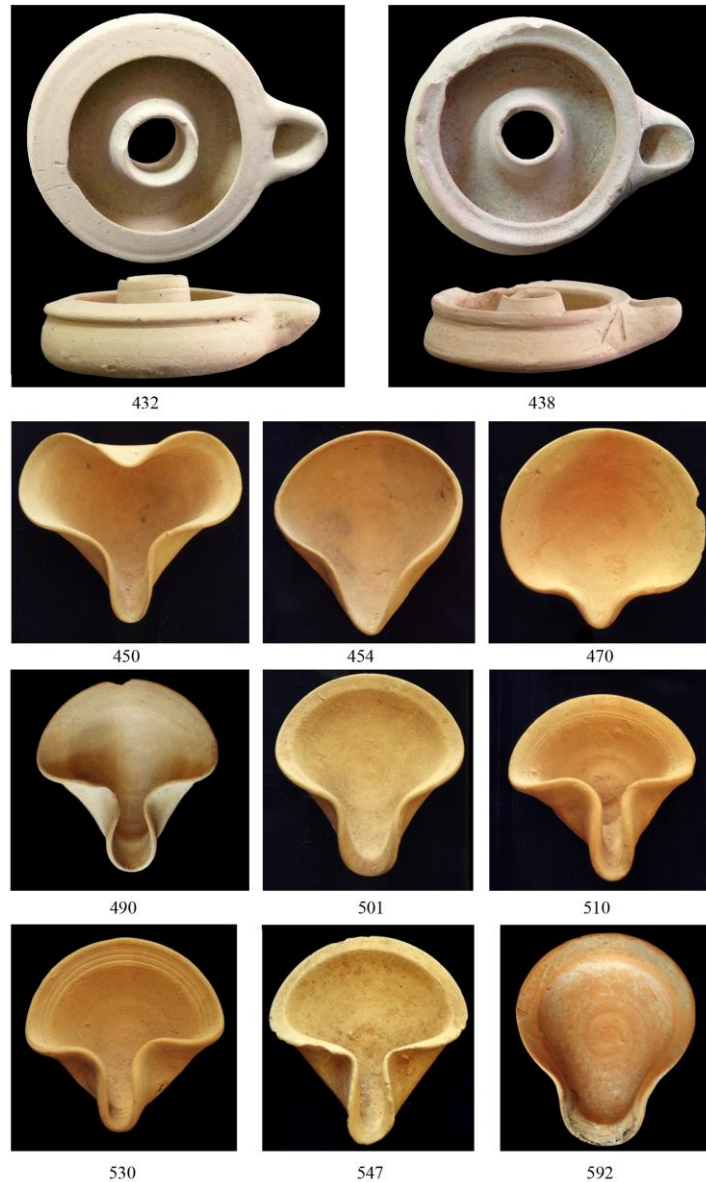


Fig. 3: Oil lamps of Geloan production from phase I, East-Greek type (432, 438) and so-called Syrophenician type (450-592), Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

³³ The artefact has been compared to the circular and semicircular marble lamps exported from the Cyclades to Sicily (Beazley 1940; Hermanns 2004, 90-91, 330); the superimposed bowls for oil and the plastic projection of human and animal heads suggest a metal model: for instance see a bronze lamp in Berlin (Valenza 1972, 135, fig. 7) and a lamp from *Timpone della Motta* (Croissant 1994, 557, pl. 46, 2, late 7th century).

³⁴ Parisinou 2000a, 17, 139-140; Hermanns 2004, 24.



Fig. 4: Ceremonial lamp 645 with bearded human protomes and rams' heads, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

Although we do not possess a description of the ritual use of these objects, the oil lamps indicate rites held at sunset, dawn, or during the night. They also clearly provide important clues regarding the way in which they were used:

- 1) They are highly standardised artefacts in terms of form and dimensions, perhaps made and sold for a specific ritual function inside the sanctuary. These objects depict a highly regulated community of worshippers, upon whom shared and uniform behaviour within the ritual context was imposed.
- 2) Unlike torches, oil lamps are not mobile objects and, as seen in the ceramic iconography, they were used only for lighting indoor spaces³⁵. Even the morphology of the exemplars is indicative here: they do not have handles or a stem³⁶, and were thus not transportable and could not be used in processions or dances. Rather, the oil lamps must have been ritually lit inside the sacred area and then placed on the ground or on benches.

³⁵ Parisinou 2000b, 19-28, 38.

³⁶ For processional lamps, see Parisinou 1997, 100-101.

What is the significance of the offering of oil lamps for the community of worshippers of *Predio Sola* as a whole? Is it possible that the act itself of lighting the flame and making the offering in the sacred area constituted the crucial moment³⁷ in a dramatic performance held before the community? What is the relationship between this gesture and the rest of the ritual sequence?

Ritual Practice in Phase I: The Dedication of Containers for Cosmetics

Containers for perfumed oils found in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* include hundreds of vessels (*aryballoi*, *alabastra*, *amphoriskoi*, conical *lekythoi*, small plastic pots), mainly of Corinthian production, but also East-Greek, Laconian and Attic³⁸ (Fig. 5). As with the oil lamps, in the sanctuary's first phase of life the dedication of perfume containers in *Predio Sola* is a distinctive feature of the sanctuary that contrasts strongly with the evidence found in *Bitalemi*³⁹.

The significance of the presence of these perfume containers in the sanctuary remains to be clarified. What scenarios can be imagined for the use of these objects? A part of the perfumed substances may have been used for the periodical anointment of the cult statue (*agalma*): as is known, the handling of cult images (from the lavacrum to the vestition⁴⁰) was a common practice, designed to ensure the good conservation of the object and at the same time re-activate its powers. In addition, the fragrances recall the theophany of the divinity, when the perfume emanating from the divine bodies wafts through the air⁴¹. By means of perfumes and incense the living presence of the divinity in the temple is thus evoked via a multi-sensory experience.

It has also been suggested that these substances⁴² were used for purification before participating in the rituals. However, this appears to be less convincing, given that there were other common methods of purification, such as fumigation or sprinkling with spring water or blood.

Regarding these hypotheses, given the high number of these discoveries, it is plausible that the containers of unguents represent a collective offering on the part of a large community of female worshippers. The female identity of this community is also manifested by the presence of objects used for grooming (*pyxides* and *exaleiptra*), ornaments (bronze rings 743-746, the scarab in vitreous paste 741) and instruments for spinning and weaving (the spindle-whorl 729 and the loom weights 731-736, Fig. 6)⁴³. Although the offering of the unguent pots by male worshippers cannot be excluded, in this chronological phase the *aryballoi* had not yet been codified as objects used exclusively by men (before the physical exercise) nor the *alabastra* as exclusively female appurtenances (for erotic seduction and use in funerary practices⁴⁴).

³⁷ Parisinou 2000a, 140.

³⁸ For perfumes and rituals at *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 213-216. For perfumes and their containers, see Gras 2000, 155-156; Parko 2001; Frère 2008, 210.

³⁹ Lambrugo 2008, 189.

⁴⁰ Dillon 2002, 131-136; Linant de Bellefond 2004; Kauffmann-Samaras – Szabados 2004; Neils 2009, 140, notes 16-18.

⁴¹ Prost 2008, 100-102; Bodiou – Mehl 2008, 142-145.

⁴² Torelli 2011, 115. For purification with perfumed oils, see Paoletti 2004, 19.

⁴³ For exotic objects in Greek sanctuaries see Bumke 2007; Saint-Pierre 2009.

⁴⁴ For the differentiation of functions between *aryballoi* and *alabastra* at the beginning of the 5th century, see Frère 2006, 208-211. For *alabastra* and female activities, see Reeder 1995, 197; Badinou 2003, 59-72.



Fig. 5: Containers for perfumed oils and cosmetics from phase I, of Corinthian (1-215), Laconian (377) and East-Greek (349, 351) origin, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela



Fig. 6: Plastic perfume containers from phase I, of Corinthian (166, 215), East-Greek (352) and Geloan production (381); scarab in faience (741), bronze rings (743-746), clay loom weights (730-733), Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

The heterogeneous composition of the unguent vessels enables us to make other important deductions regarding their provenance. Whereas the oil lamps are standardised and clearly made in series at Gela, the *aryballoi* and *alabastra* do not seem to have been purchased at the sanctuary itself specifically as votive objects. It is more likely that they were personal items used in the daily lives of the worshippers. In this hypothesis, such objects were associated with symbolic acts designed to achieve beauty as an instrument of seduction. Numerous studies of female imagery on ceramics show that perfumes are associated with the sphere of eros, especially in connection with wedding ceremonies. In the rites of bathing and nuptial *kosmesis*, the use of perfumes by the bride marked the passage from girlhood, smelling of wild flowers, to full sexual maturity, which required additional

substances⁴⁵: these were intended to increase a woman's erotic charms, ensuring the consummation of the marital union (*gamos*), and thus the birth of legitimate children. Bride and perfume formed an inseparable unit, as mentioned many times in the literary sources⁴⁶ (Aristoph., *Plut.* 529-530; Xen., *symp.*, II, 3.).

Worthy of special attention in this framework are the plastic perfume containers, which need to be seen in reference to the hopes of the worshippers who dedicated them (Fig. 6): the phallic exemplar 381 seems to evoke the preparations for the sexual act by massaging the genitals with perfumed substances alluded to by Aristophanes⁴⁷ (*Lys.* 938-950); the hare-shaped vessel 251 may recall the hope for numerous offspring, while the little bird 166 is linked to the world of childhood and adolescence, since maidens are often shown stroking small birds⁴⁸. Particularly interesting is the case of the East-Greek *squatting comast aryballos* 352: the ostentatiously large belly expresses the theme of a yearned-for abundance of food⁴⁹.

To summarise, in line with recent readings proposed for other sanctuaries⁵⁰, the discovery of numerous perfume vessels may be linked to religious offerings of personal objects by young women in the context of coming-of-age and marriage rituals that were rigidly prescribed by the social context⁵¹.

Continuity between Phase I and II: Libations, Drinking and Community

Drinking vessels, of which here are 172 exemplars including bowls, *kotylai*, *kotyliskoi* and *skyphoi*, characterise both phases of the sanctuary and indicate shared rituals such as libations and the collective consumption of drinks⁵².

These artefacts characterise the sanctuary from its very beginnings, but unlike the oil lamps and unguent pots, they continued to be used even after the middle of the 6th century BC. During phase II, *skyphoi* and bowls of local and Attic production replace the multicoloured Corinthian *kotylai*. Also linked to the preparation and consumption of liquids are *oinochoai*, *hydriai*, amphorae and craters, and these forms also continue throughout the period of use of the sacred area. The much smaller quantity of these latter vessels (used for mixing, keeping and pouring liquids) with respect to those used for drinking can be explained in various ways:

- a small number of common vessels may have been used to serve a large number of participants⁵³;
- it is possible that only the vessels used for individual consumption (bowls, *kotylai* etc.) were consecrated after use, while the rest of the ceramics (craters,

⁴⁵ Bodiou – Mehl 2008, 150-152. For the bride's ritual *kosmesis*, see Oakley – Sinos 1993, 16-21; Verilhac – Vial 1998, 293-295, 297-299.

⁴⁶ See Oakley – Sinos 1993, 16; Bodiou – Mehl 2008, 155-156.

⁴⁷ See Detienne 1975, 83-84. See also the inscription on the bottom of a Rhodian *squatting comast aryballos* in Pautasso 2007, 27-28.

⁴⁸ Huysecom-Haxhi – Muller 2007, 238-239; Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 575-576, 596. For bird figurines in graves and their meaning, see Huysecom 2003, 95-96, 98.

⁴⁹ For the type and its origin, see Dasen 2000 and Pautasso 2007, 20-26. See also the meaning of the East-Greek figurines of fat daemons in Sinn 1983, 88-90; Dasen 2000, 94; Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 588-589.

⁵⁰ See the *Heraion* of Perachora (Baumbach 2004, 38-39), the *Artemision* of Thasos (Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 598-599) and the *Artemision* of Metaponto, San Biagio (Dufeu-Muller *et al.* 2010, 445).

⁵¹ Recent discussion about the rites of passage in Graf 2003; Insoll 2011, 261-284.

⁵² For libations and drinking practice at *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 216-218.

⁵³ In the sanctuary of Parapezza the ratio of the *kotylai+kotyliskoi* (20000) to the *hydriai+hydriskoi* (400) is 50:1; see Sabbione – Milanesio-Macri 2008, 214-215.

oinochoai, hydriai etc.) were used on a number of occasions⁵⁴. In the code governing the practice of offerings, only the object used by the individual is needed to demonstrate, before the divinity and the community, one's participation in the collective ceremony.

These explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, concern a phenomenon that would have varied depending on the occasion.

The miniature exemplars, including 53 *kotyliskoi* and the miniature *hydria* 257 also have a mainly symbolic function. As offerings, these are not mere substitutes for larger exemplars but have a special value in themselves, deducible from their size (which excludes any everyday use) and the fact that they were imported from far away (many are of Corinthian manufacture)⁵⁵.

What functions are suggested by the forms of the vessels? The selection of types highlights the predominance of beverage consumption which is not associated with the use of solid food: plates are extremely rare (201, 356, 620-621), and there are no knives, spits or stoves for cooking and cutting meat. There is only one ceramic cooking pot (*chytra* 394) and the osteological finds are limited to the canine of an adult pig 752 (an animal used in sacrifices and purification rites⁵⁶) and a few elements of joints from sheep and goats (751a-d). The consumption of meat did not therefore constitute a common practice in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola*. The presence of wine is suggested by the craters and by certain types of amphora used for transport⁵⁷. However, there may also have been other mixtures such as the *melikraton* or *hydromeli*, made of honey with water or milk, which could have an alcoholic percentage because of the fermentation of the honey⁵⁸.

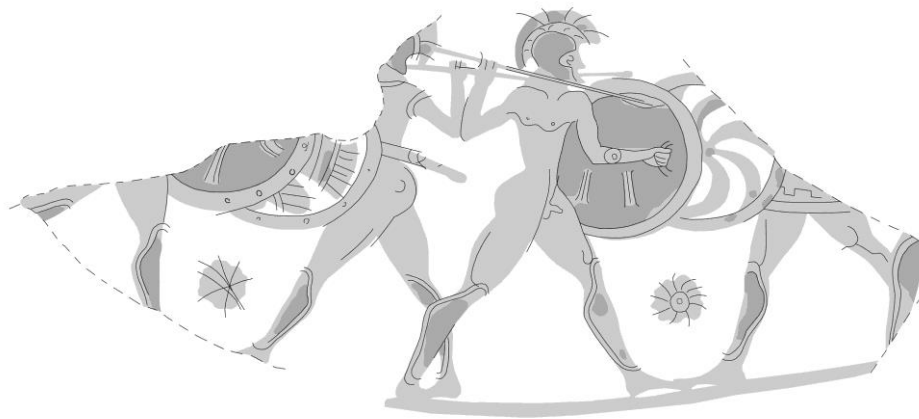


Fig. 7: Monomachy scene on the Corinthian crater 206, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

In this regard, the presence of alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks has implications above all concerning the identity of the participants, since the norms governing

⁵⁴ Pemberton 1989, 15 suggests this solution for the Corinthian sanctuary of Demeter.

⁵⁵ Bouma 1996, 106; Ardovino 1999, 175; Ekroth 2003, 36.

⁵⁶ Clinton 2005.

⁵⁷ See the Chian and the Samian amphorae 354-355 (Cook – Dupont 1998, 151, 167-168).

⁵⁸ See Graf 1980, 212; Albertocchi 2012, 70-72. For the ritual use of wine, see Graf 1980, 219-220. For libation rituals, see Lissarrague 1995.

access to wine are known to have been particularly restrictive for women⁵⁹. However, it should also be considered that the archaeological material may be associated with various ritual events: the sanctuary may have been used by groups differing in terms of gender and composition depending on the occasion. It is possible that the use of alcoholic beverages was controlled by the male component of the ritual community⁶⁰; the participation of men in the cult in *Predio Sola* is indicated by some distinctive imagery present on the craters:

- the padded dancers of crater 204, shown in the typical dancing pose, appear to evoke – via an extremely vague figurative language – the festive character of the ritual performance, which implies wine and dancing⁶¹;
- the sequences of horsemen and monomachies in craters 204-206 are a reference to male ἀρετή (Fig. 7). In a context associated with female initiation, these scenes of war may allude to the competitive and even violent character of Archaic Greek marriage⁶².

A Radical Shift in Cult Practices

The two stratigraphic contexts show the extent of the changes in the forms of ritual communication that took place in the mid 6th century BC. The burial of votive material in phase I, the construction of the *naiskos* and the reconfiguration of the rituals constitute evidence of a radical renewal. Indeed, the archaeological evidence makes it very clear that the types of object seen in phase I (oil lamps and unguent pots) disappear abruptly from the record: this is not a progressive transformation but a systematic change in ritual practice⁶³.

What were the factors that led to this transformation around 550 BC? In order to view the specifically local features of ritual dynamics in the correct historical context, it is essential to consider the impact of external socio-economic factors, which strongly influenced the selection of votive material. Indeed, preferences based on purely religious norms had to be balanced against social criteria⁶⁴ and the actual availability of votive materials, which was dependent on local craft production and commercial imports⁶⁵. In this sense, the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* was affected by certain tendencies that were common to the broader Mediterranean context at that time: 1) the high percentage of ceramic products imported from Corinth and eastern Greece in phase I⁶⁶; 2) the reduction in ceramic containers for cosmetic products and the increase in drinking vessels from Corinth from about 575 BC onwards⁶⁷; 3)

⁵⁹ Schmitt-Pantel 1995, 98 note 35. For gender, feasting and drinking regulations, see Insoll 2011, 186-187.

⁶⁰ A similar interpretation is given in Dufeu-Muller *et al.* 2010, 400.

⁶¹ Isler-Kerényi 2007, 86-87.

⁶² The link between marriage and war, the image of woman as war booty, and the need to prove one's virility in battle before marriage are discussed in Pironti 2007, 52-53, 135-136, 150-151, 191, 225-231.

⁶³ For ritual dynamics in *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 226-227.

⁶⁴ The desire on the part of certain individuals and social groups to affirm their identity and status within the sacred space was a key driver in the consumption of luxury and semi-luxury items; see Foxhall 1998.

⁶⁵ Uhlenbrock 1985; Albertocchi – Pautasso 2009.

⁶⁶ Compare Selinous (Dehl-von Kaenel 1995b, 346, note 5), *Bitalemi* (Orlandini 1978, 93-94) and Tarentum (D'Andria – Semeraro 2000, 476, fig. 7).

⁶⁷ See Benson 1983, 311-313 for this new trend in the Corinthian workshops.

the collapse of Corinthian imports during Late Corinthian I (575-550 BC)⁶⁸; 4) the arrival of Attic imports after the mid 6th century.

In addition to these developments, which were seen on the Mediterranean or at least the Sicilian scale, other aspects of the archaeological evidence reflect specifically internal factors:

- a) the Attic pottery that replace the Corinthian imports after 550 BC does not reproduce the entire range of previous forms. Specifically, the Corinthian *aryballoi* and *alabastra* are not replaced, not even with the small Attic *lekythoi*⁶⁹, which were widely exported, even as far as the western Mediterranean. The Attic imports include only vessels for drinking, mixing and serving;
- b) the abandonment of the oil lamps in the second phase is not dependent on commercial considerations, given that the artefacts were almost all locally produced.

We are thus dealing with a comparatively sudden overhaul of religious customs entailing the abrupt abandonment of the practice of dedicating unguent pots and oil lamps and the corresponding introduction of a new strategy of ritual communication centred on coroplastic artefacts.

The Coroplastic Offerings

The sanctuary of *Predio Sola* yielded 86 coroplastic artefacts; from the typological point of view they consist of *protomai* (58, or 69.0%) and statuettes of female figures both standing (10, or 11.9%) and sitting (7, or 8.3%). In quantitative, typological and iconographic terms, the artefacts of the first and second phase differ strongly⁷⁰.

From phase I there are only 15 coroplastic artefacts, as the vast majority of the dedicated objects (536, equivalent to 97.1% of the materials from layer I) are ceramic pottery. The coroplastic offerings from phase I include an imported Corinthian exemplar of a plank-style seated female figure (644, 600-575 BC), similar to other finds made in Gela itself and other sites of Sicily⁷¹. The other artefacts, of local production, are based on iconographic models from Crete, Corinth and the eastern Aegean (Samos, Rhodes, Cyprus). They are statuettes of standing female figures, either with raised forearms (647-648), arms spread (649-650) or arms draped along the body (651-656). There is also a fragment of an *arula* (724) with part of the dress and the hair of a female figure, and a fragment of the dress (728) of a statue of large dimensions (Fig. 8).

Also worthy of attention are statuettes 654-656, made from the same mould, which are believed to have been lined up on a single base⁷². Reconstructed in this way, this votive object shows three figures who are not necessarily representations of goddesses associated with the sanctuary, but possibly representative of a community of worshippers in their festive clothes, the number suggesting the collective nature of the subject.

⁶⁸ For the crisis of Corinthian production and pottery exports, see Roebuck 1972, 124-125; Benson 1985, 17-18; Dehl-von Kaenel 1995a, 326, notes 755-756.

⁶⁹ For Attic *lekythoi*, see De La Genière 1984; Gras 2000, 151-152; Frère 2008, 210, 212.

⁷⁰ For coroplastic offerings in *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 167-174, 218-219.

⁷¹ Quoted in Ismaelli 2011.

⁷² Possibly similar to a figurine group from Agrigento, see De Miro 2000, 99-100, n° 1474, pl. 49. For multiple clay figurines, see Hadzisteliou-Price 1971.

As for the other items, whether the figures represent worshippers or divinities remains obscure, at least to our eyes: indeed, the details of the clothes (*polos*, cloaks, necklaces) are extremely common in Orientalising and early Archaic production⁷³.



Fig. 8: Orientalising and early Archaic coroplastic figurines from phase I, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

In phase II the change in the ratio of ceramics to coroplastics is striking: the more recent layer contains 105 ceramic fragments and 70 coroplastic elements, or 40.0% of the artefacts in the layer. The success of coroplastics in the context of *Predio Sola*

⁷³ The old theory that the *polos* represented a sign of divine identity (Müller 1915) is criticized by Bell 1981, 28-29, 31-32; Lippolis 2001, 230, note 28; Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 578-579.

reflects a phenomenon seen in many sanctuaries of western Greece and Sicily after the mid 6th century BC⁷⁴. The question that arises is what new rituals were behind the exponential growth of these coroplastic offerings.

Coroplastic Materials in Phase II: Irregular Gifts

From the iconographic point of view, the coroplastic materials of phase II show a certain variety. Some types are attested purely episodically and constitute atypical offerings. They may be described as “irregular gifts”, to distinguish them from recurring and constant types, which form the main body of the votive system⁷⁵. Specifically, the irregular gifts include the *arulae*⁷⁶ (725-727), the life-size fictile statues (664-665)⁷⁷ and the generic female figures seated on thrones (657-660)⁷⁸.

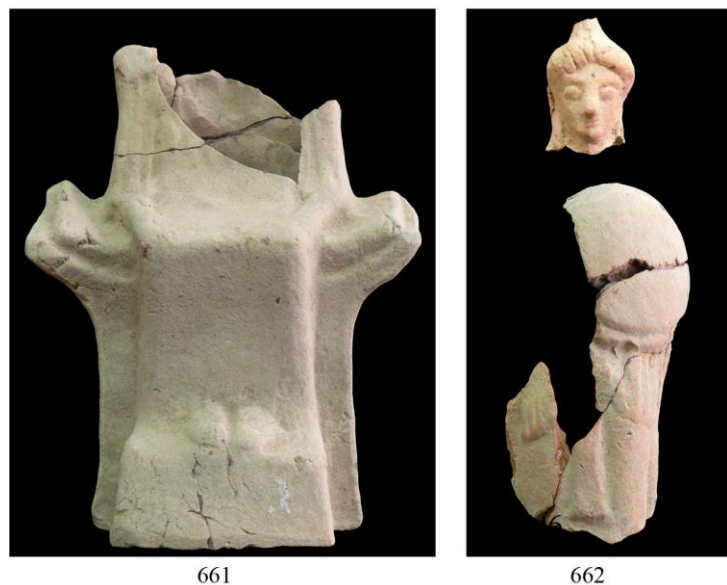


Fig. 9: Coroplastic “irregular gifts” from phase II, “Athena Lindia” type (661) and standing armed Athena (662), Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

Figurines 661 and 662 deserve special attention (Fig. 9). The latter represents a standing female figure (662) with a round shield and helmet and is datable to the beginning of the 5th century BC. The statuette, which plausibly represents Athena, has no parallel among the votive objects found in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola*. It perhaps belongs to the class of *visiting gods* described by B. Alroth⁷⁹, a term used to

⁷⁴ For *Bitalemi*, see Croissant 2000, 434-435; for the *Malophoros* sanctuary, see Dehl-von Kaenel 1995b, 349, note 11.

⁷⁵ For these artefacts, see Ismaelli 2011, 224-226. In Bouma 1996, 151-152, the irregular gifts (“intermittent and coincidental objects”) are seen as a class of non-traditional objects which appear only in some chronological phases.

⁷⁶ See van der Meijden 1993.

⁷⁷ Two hands are preserved. Comparisons may be made with items in Gela, *Bitalemi* (Orsi 1906, 690-691, figs. 514-516; Orlandini 1966, 21-22, pl. 12, 1) and Corinth, sanctuary of Demeter (Bookidis 2009).

⁷⁸ Figurine 659 reproduces a type of Medmean or Locrian origin, well known in Sicily (Bertesago 2009, 61).

⁷⁹ Alroth 1987; Alroth 1989-1990, 309-310. For the interchangeability of votive offerings see Croissant 1983, 4; Albertocchi 1999, 366, note 66. For the relationship between votive images and the gods, see Plato, *Phaedr.* 230B; Merker 2000, 325; von Hesberg 2007, 288; Baumbach 2009, 205.

refer to dedicated images of divinities in sanctuaries associated with other gods, often placed there for individual reasons that are hard to determine. In the case of Gela, its presence is probably linked to the centrality of the cult of Athena within the settlement's religious system.

Just as anomalous is statuette 661, with a *polos* and a flattened body decorated with rows of pendants, of a type known as "Athena Lindia" or "statuette *aux parures*"⁸⁰. The image has been seen by some as a Siceliot Demeter⁸¹, but from an iconographic point of view the link with Demeter is not immediately obvious. On the other hand, the details of the dress and the posture (seated on a throne with foot-rest displaying the typical rigidity of the *xoanon*, the high *polos*) convey the majesty of a divine figure, while the necklaces on the chest show the κόσμος of the goddess, i.e. the jewels that the devotee hang on the simulacrum by way of thanksgiving or in fulfilment of a vow. These precious objects are part of a deliberate strategy of persuasion: they allude to the wealth that the divinity can guarantee⁸² and at the same time they visualise the effectiveness of divine action and the consequent prestige of the goddess among the community. In conclusion, though the image may be generic in terms of identity, it is the reflection of a precise conception of the divine.

However, its one-off presence in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* indicates that the type was not considered by worshippers to be entirely congruent with the local cult. The coroplastic types described as irregular gifts were thus not selected systematically for dedicatory acts and their role in the reconstruction of the local votive system should not be overestimated.

Coroplastic Materials in Phase II: *Protomai* as Regular Gifts

In phase II fictile *protomai* are the most numerous votive object (58). This rich trove of *protomai*, together with that of the *Thesmophorion* of Gela, is one of the largest in Gela, differentiating the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* from all the other sanctuaries of the city⁸³.

The term *protome* refers to a statuette made from a mould representing the head and part of the bust of a female veiled figure⁸⁴. As iconographic type, *protomai* arrived in the western Greek colonies towards 560-540 BC thanks to imports from Samos and Miletus, which set off large-scale production of local imitations in the settlements of Sicily. By the end of the 6th century BC, this local production had completely replaced the eastern Greek imports. In Gela, this production began in about 540 BC, peaked in the last quarter of the 6th century and ended in the first decades of the 5th century⁸⁵.

⁸⁰ For the type, see Dewailly 1992; Albertocchi 1999; Albertocchi 2000; Albertocchi 2004. For the name, see Pautasso 1996, 46; Albertocchi 2004, 4. For finds in Gela, see Albertocchi 2004, 125-140.

⁸¹ Albertocchi 2004, 158-168, 170-173. See also Hinz 1998, 39; Dewailly 1992, 135, 156; Bertesago 2009, 57-59.

⁸² Dewailly 1992, 157; Hinz 1998, 39.

⁸³ For *protomai* at *Predio Sola*, see Ismaelli 2011, 169-174. The actual quantity of *protomai* in the sanctuaries of Gela is not known, given the lack of a complete catalogue of fragments in Uhlenbrock 1989.

⁸⁴ The ancient name was πρόσωπον and not προτομή, while the term "mask" should be avoided, see Croissant 1983, 2, 16, note 3; Uhlenbrock 1989, 19, note 3; Pautasso 1996, 23.

⁸⁵ For the *protomai* of Gela, see Uhlenbrock 1989; Bertesago 2009, 55-57. For Western imitations, local religious motives and handicraft dynamics, see Croissant 1983, 27, 374-375; Sguaitamatti 1984, 56-57; Uhlenbrock 1989, 146-149; Croissant 2000, 430-437, 442-443, 454; Albertocchi 2004, 167-168.

From the morphological and iconographic point of view there are certain constants (Fig. 11). The lower margin is just below the neck or, in a few rare cases, the shoulders. The head is always covered by a veil that sometimes completely hides the hair. In a few exemplars the veil is the only ornament (704). More frequent is the presence of head-scarves (*poloi* and *stephanai*). Other accessories include necklaces (717), disc-shaped earrings (696, 697, 707, 708, 717), in rare cases applied using a different material (712). Originally, colour was used to enrich the details of the cheeks, the *polos* and the veil. The best and largest exemplars appear to be made with particular care and expertise: they rank among the best sculptures of the Greek world and demonstrate the high level of quality achieved by the city's craftsmen.

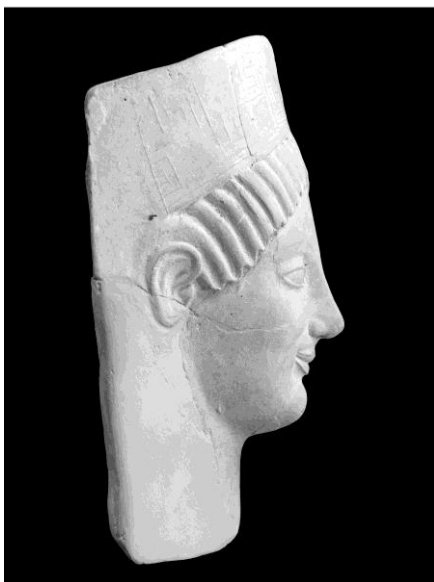


Fig. 10: Protome 673, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela



677



687



690



680



707



609



706



717

Fig. 11: Protomai from phase II, Museo Archeologico Regionale di Gela

Protomai: Old Theories and New Perspectives

Who do these images of female faces represent⁸⁶? The question of the identity of the *protomai* is at the centre of a long debate, especially regarding the western Greek colonies in Sicily and Magna Graecia, where large quantities of these artefacts were made in series. From the 19th century a broad historiographical current confidently identified the *protomai* as representations of Demeter or Kore. The origin of this interpretation is the notion that the form of the *protome* is an allusion to the ascent (*anodos*) from the soil of a divinity linked to the seasonal cycles of the natural world⁸⁷. The identification of the *protome* with Demeter or Kore would appear to be supported by the discovery of large quantities of these objects in the sanctuaries of the two divinities in Sicily and Magna Graecia. The presence of these artefacts in other sanctuaries, in smaller concentrations, has led to suggestions that the *protomai* may occasionally have been dedicated to other divine figures, although these would have had similar functions to those of Demeter⁸⁸.

Can a specific identification with Demeter be seen in the generic features of the iconography? Alternatively, is it possible that the divinity represented was given a name only at the moment of the offering⁸⁹, depending on the intentions of the worshipper who dedicated it?

Given these issues, the traditional interpretation of the *protomai* was thrown into serious question by A. Muller and S. Huysecom-Haxhi, who in contrast saw the *protomai* (at least those with no special attributes) as the symbolic representation not of the divinity but of the worshipper making the offering. In this new approach, it is essential to understand the specific iconographic features of the *protomai* in terms of the symbolic code of forms that was common to all Archaic figurative production (fictile figurines, statues and reliefs). The *protome* may thus be recognised as the partial representation of the seated female figure type⁹⁰ who, given the position of the body and the veil on her head, is recognisable as a woman of matronly status. Indeed, given the attributes of the veil and the *polos*⁹¹, the *protome* can be understood by worshippers as the representation of a woman who, having reached sexual maturity, is ready for marriage or is already legitimately married. Indeed, the veil plays a central role in weddings, in the ceremony of the *anakalypteria*⁹². Muller and Huysecom-Haxhi's theory, that *protomai* reproduce worshippers making a dedication, provides a useful hermeneutic tool for clarifying the extraordinary success of this specific type of votive item.

The Success of the Protomai

The affirmation of the *protome* as the main votive offering in the phase II of the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* is the result of a number of concomitant factors. A detailed analysis of this class of votive objects will assist in understanding its success, i.e.

⁸⁶ For more details, see Ismaelli 2011, 218-220.

⁸⁷ Bell 1981, 85-86; Huysecom-Haxhi – Muller 2007, 242-243; Muller 2009, 82-84. For the *anodos* theory, see bibliography in Hinz 1998, 37, notes 181-182.

⁸⁸ Hinz 1998, 37-38.

⁸⁹ Kron 1992, 627; Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2006, 24-28.

⁹⁰ Huysecom-Haxhi – Muller 2007, 243; Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 580, 582, 584-587; Muller 2009, 93-94; Dufeu-Muller *et al.* 2010, 399. The new interpretation arises from the analytical study of the figurines of *Artemision* and *Thesmophorion* in Thasos, see Muller 1996; Huysecom-Haxhi 2009.

⁹¹ For the connection between veil and bride, see Reeder 1995, 239-240. For the *polos* as "*Brautkrone*", see von Salis 1920-1924; Simon 1972, 214-215; more recently Huysecom-Haxhi 2009, 578-579 (with bibliography).

⁹² Cairns 2002, 76; Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 109-110, 227-247. For *anakalypteria*, see Oakley – Sinos 1993, 25-26; Verilhac – Vial 1998, 304-312; Ferrari 2003, 32-35.

what made the *protome* such a ductile and dynamic ritual instrument and why it was so popular with the community⁹³. From an iconographic point of view, its most characteristic detail is definitely the veil, which in all the exemplars from Gela covers the head and descends to the sides of the face. The nuptial meaning of the veil, mentioned above, is however only one element of the semantic spectrum of this attribute; in the perception of Gela's inhabitants, it was a medium that conveyed a number of messages:

- a) belonging to a specific age group: the veil was imposed on female members of the community at the moment of transition from childhood to puberty⁹⁴. Its presence on the *protomai* places the image of the worshipper making the offering within a given age group that went from adolescence to full maturity: for the girls, childhood was over, sexual maturity had arrived and precise behavioural restrictions were imposed;
- b) part of a non-verbal code, the veil constitutes a means of affirming the woman's social status. The veil allowed women to show that they had accepted the values of modesty, docility, reserve and self-control (*aidos* and *sophrosyne*) that the moral system required of girls of high-ranking families. By covering herself in the presence of strangers, a woman communicated her adherence to this behavioural code and simultaneously demanded for herself and her family the respect that was due to them, an essential value in what may be termed a "shame culture"⁹⁵;
- c) innocent seduction: in combination with earrings and necklaces, the veil can also be seen as "sexually charged". This semiotic inversion results from the fact that chaste and modest deportment in a woman can be alluring to men, regardless of her true intentions. Thus the veil is a guarantee offering protection to the female body but can also become part of a non-verbal discourse centred on themes of innocence and erotic appeal⁹⁶;
- d) social status: the veil is an instrument of social distinction⁹⁷ in terms of the material it is made from, its quality and the way in which it is worn. In the *protomai* the veil does not hide the earrings or necklaces: together with jewellery, hairstyle and a crown or *polos* it served to signal a woman's attention to her appearance in public settings.

The iconographic details of the *protomai* of Gela thus allow us to reconstruct a precise symbolic system. By means of this code, young women chose to present the divinity with an image of themselves that was not neutral but carefully constructed. Well groomed and dressed in festive garb, the worshipper projected herself as a young woman who had reached sexual maturity and was respectful of the moral rules imposed by the social context, without foregoing her beauty and her grace (*charis*): an image that skilfully combined seduction with rigid respect for behavioural codes.

Other important elements can be derived from observing the morphological features inherent in the *protomai*'s production, particularly the relationship between the repetitiveness of the iconographic aspects and differences in quality and size (Figs.

⁹³ For the *protomai* and their symbolic value, see Ismaelli 2011, 220-222.

⁹⁴ Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 109-110, 215-219.

⁹⁵ Carson 1990, 160-161; Reeder 1995, 123-124; Cairns 1996, 78-81; Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 156-173. The use of veils in the public sphere is discussed by Galt 1931; Oakley – Sinos 1993, 30; Llewellyn-Jones 2003. On "shame-culture", see Dodds 1951, 28-50.

⁹⁶ Redfield 1982, 195-196; Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 283-293; for the nuanced situations depicted in Attic pottery, see Reeder 1995, 125-126.

⁹⁷ Llewellyn-Jones 2003, 122-137.

10-11). Indeed, the *protomai* include finely made artefacts, exceptional in terms of their size and attention to detail, but also objects of smaller dimensions, simpler and of lower quality, often created in large numbers using worn moulds. The success of the *protomai* thus also lies in the flexible nature of their production standards, which made them accessible to worshippers characterised by sharp differences in purchasing power.

The point may be illustrated with reference to *protome* 673, which has a high *polos* decorated with a maeander and a face of extraordinary beauty, the large exemplars 666 and 707 and above all *protome* 717, which is 47.6 cm high, loaded with jewels and earrings, and rightly called the *Colossal Type* by J.P. Uhlenbrock (Fig. 11). This is a particularly important offering, made not from a mould but by hand, in response to a specific request. Given its large dimensions and the details of the jewels, at the moment of its discovery it was assumed that it was a representation of the divinity itself⁹⁸. However, exemplar 717 has all the traditional features of the *protome* type and can also be recognised as the representation of a worshipper making an offering. The object must therefore correspond to the exceptional *anathema* of a girl of the upper Gela aristocracy. By accepting the iconographic customs of the *protome* type, the person making the offering shows that she abides by the ritual behaviour prescribed for her entire age group. In contrast, the object's exceptional features, such as its size and the necklaces in relief, express a clear desire for distinction and self-affirmation, demonstrating her position of absolute prestige⁹⁹.

Thus the comparison of exemplar 717 with the small *protomai* of the *Wide Face Group* (681-695) demonstrates the great semantic potential of the coroplastic type: it reflects, neatly and effectively, the composite internal stratification of the micro-society that frequented the sanctuary. At the same time, it illustrates the egalitarian principles that govern the ritual *communitas*¹⁰⁰.

Offering a *Protome* to the Goddess

The way in which the offerings were made constitutes another aspect of the *protomai*'s success. Was the act of dedicating the object performed by individuals on their own or as part of a collective event¹⁰¹? As with other coroplastic types, with *protomai* it may be assumed that the act of offering was a collective ritual within codified festivities organised for a given group of worshippers¹⁰². In the case of the sanctuary of *Predio Sola*, it is possible that the offering of the *protomai* was a ritual shared by the young women of the city, on the occasion of rites linked to the transition to adulthood and marriage¹⁰³.

Observation of the morphological features of the type yields other elements that help to assess the value of the offering. All the *protomai* possess a central hole, located above the hair, to enable them to be hung. It is thus clear that the *protomai* were completed with lengths of cord, by which they could be carried: the practice is seen in some later terracottas from Iasos and Theangela¹⁰⁴, which show a worshipper moving forward with the *protome* by her side (Fig. 12). Once they had

⁹⁸ Orlandini 1968, 38.

⁹⁹ For the "mediale Qualität" of the big clay statues, see Doepner 2007.

¹⁰⁰ On egalitarian principles and *communitas*, see Turner 1969.

¹⁰¹ For the *protomai* and the gesture of offering, see Ismaelli 2011, 222-224.

¹⁰² Lippolis 2001, 236-237, 240; Lippolis 2005, 92; see also Merker 2000, 323-324, 334.

¹⁰³ Collective wedding rituals are described in Ephorus, *FrGrHist* 70F n°149, ls. 77-79; see also Lupi 2000, 82-83.

¹⁰⁴ For Theangela, see Işık 1980, 112-239, n°182, pl. 25; for Iasos, see Levi 1967-1968, 573, fig. 42, d.

arrived in the sanctuary, the worshippers could hang the *protomai* from trees or on the walls of the building itself. This detail is suggested by a famous funerary painting from Aineia (museum of Thessaloniki) and by a *protome* from Granmichele (Gela) that conserves part of the nail used to hang it in the hole at the top. A small number of exemplars have no such hole (687, 688, 701, 707); these were left at the foot of the walls of the *naiskos*, perhaps on benches or on the ground¹⁰⁵.



Fig. 12: Clay figurines of worshippers holding protomai from Theangela and Iasos (after Işık 1980 & Levi 1967-1968)

The dedicatory ritual thus entailed the transport of the *protome* by the worshipper and subsequently the hanging of the image inside the sanctuary. The repetition of this series of gestures strongly affected the sacred landscape. Indeed, the sanctuary was densely populated with images, the faces of the worshippers crowding around the statue of the divinity. One can imagine the emotional charge produced by the *protomai* hanging in the half-light of the sacellum: they generated a visual dialogue composed of many gazes and glances between the living participants in the rite and their terracotta equivalents.

¹⁰⁵ For the hanging of votive objects, see Alroth 1988, 196 and note 5; van Straten 1992, 250-253; von Hesberg 2007, 286-287, fig. 1; White 2007, 270, note 22. For the painting from Aineia, see Baldassarre *et al.* 2002, 24-25; for the Granmichele *protome*, see Uhlenbrock 1989, 150.

Protomai as New Media of Communication

To summarise, during the first phase of the sanctuary, the most frequently donated artefacts were oil lamps (instruments used in a ritual that took place inside the sacred space) and objects associated with *kosmesis*. As we have seen, the value of these unguent pots lies in their being linked to the person and their individual habits: a personal object created a link between the divinity and the persons making the donation, who left in the sanctuary an artefact that had belonged to them and thus symbolically represented them¹⁰⁶. This strategy of ritual communication may be referred to as the personalisation of the votive object. In contrast, the offering of *protomai* marked a shift towards a new communicative strategy. The new form of ritual communication was founded on the direct identification of the votive object and the person dedicating it. The worshippers left with the divinity an image that visually represented them and displayed their bond with the goddess beyond the moment of the ritual itself. The passage from personalisation of the votive object to direct identification with the person dedicating it was achieved by means of coroplastic representation. This image had high symbolic potential, since the iconographic type of the *protome* constituted the expression, carefully formalised, of the moral and behavioural norms that established the identity of the person making the offering¹⁰⁷.

The success of the *protome* lies in its iconographic and material characteristics and its standardisation, but also in its flexibility and infinite nuances. To sum up:

- thanks to the selection of certain iconographic details, the *protome* conveys the moral and behavioural norms prescribed for worshippers; the *protome* is thus a ritual instrument for constructing the cultural identity of the person making the offering;
- thanks to the generic iconography, the *protome* refers to the person not as an individual but as part of a ritual group and reflects that community's shared characteristics;
- the cost of the *protomai* varied widely, thanks to small alterations in their dimensions, craftsmanship and details, making them affordable to all but also enabling them to reflect distinctions in the socio-economic status of the persons who offered them;
- thanks to standardisation, the *protomai* were suitable for collective ritual use¹⁰⁸;
- the communicative power of the *protome*, as well as its ability to build links between the individual, the community and the divinity, was best expressed in the context of the festivities: by means of the iconographic code, the image reaffirmed to the individual the specific values to be absorbed, while the public gesture of dedication enabled the worshippers to take their place in the broadest possible grouping of their peers¹⁰⁹.

Which Goddess was behind the Religious System?

What divinity can be recognised as the interlocutor of the worshippers in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola*?¹¹⁰ In the absence of specific iconographic types and

¹⁰⁶ von Hesberg 2007, 296-297; Prêtre 2009, 11-13.

¹⁰⁷ For the dedication of figurines and wedding rituals, see Merker 2000, 337-338; Rumscheid 2003, 161.

¹⁰⁸ For standardized iconography and ritual practices, see Chaniotis 2011, 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ See also Lippolis 2001, 243-244; von Hesberg 2007, 306-309.

¹¹⁰ The question is discussed in Ismaelli 2011, 227-235.

inscribed dedications, any proposals must remain hypothetical in nature; once again it is the overall system reflected in the votive objects that helps to identify the ritual functions and divinities that preside over them. The young women of Gela who frequent the sacred site of *Predio Sola* are clearly venerating a female divinity. However, the absence of explicit references to the themes of procreation and bringing up children is definitely not consistent with the cult of Demeter that has always been claimed by studies. In this sense the differences with respect to the *Thesmophorion* of *Bitalemi*, the one place of worship in Gela that is indisputably dedicated to Demeter¹¹¹, are undeniable. Indeed, the *Bitalemi* sanctuary is strongly characterised by the theme of fertility, be it of the soil (ploughshares, hoes and sickles¹¹²) or of women¹¹³, and by *kourothrophia* (female statuettes with child¹¹⁴). The ceramic artefacts use in the sanctuary of *Bitalemi* were also quite distinct from those of *Predio Sola*, and appear to be closely linked to the bloodthirsty sacrifice of animals and the consumption of their meat (cooking pots, spits and knives¹¹⁵).

We may conclude that the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* and the *Thesmophorion* represent distinct ritual spheres¹¹⁶, corresponding to two successive phases in the biological and social development of women:

- the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* is used by a community of girls who are in a phase of transition to adulthood, from unmarried maidens (*kore agamos*) to women of marriageable age (*nymphe*¹¹⁷);
- the *Thesmophorion* responds to the needs of a broader group encompassing married women with specific expectations and hopes regarding maternity and reproduction.

Therefore, the traditional interpretation which saw the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* as dedicated to Demeter is no longer tenable and other divinities must be sought. Numerous female divinities are associated with the task of overseeing rites of passage and transitions of status among the young women of the community, including Artemis, Aphrodite, Hera, Persephone, etc., depending on the local *panthea*¹¹⁸.

The figures of Hera and Athena, present in other sites in Gela¹¹⁹, cannot be excluded *a priori*, although, in the context of *Predio Sola*, we are dealing at the very least with a specialisation of their cult. Attribution of the sanctuary to Artemis also appears plausible: although the earliest currently available evidence of the goddess

¹¹¹ Orlandini 1966; Orlandini 1967; Kron 1992; Orlandini 2003; De Miro 2008, 47-53; Orlandini 2008.

¹¹² Orlandini 1968, 39, 41; Kron 1992, 636-639; Ardovino 1999, 171-172. For the allusions to the *bios hemeros* and human reproduction, see Detienne 1975, 148-149; Baumbach 2004, 185-187.

¹¹³ Figurines of pig-holders are generally associated with thesmophoric rituals (μεγαρίζειν), but piglets could also allude to human fertility, see Sguaitamatti 1984, 52-64; Pautasso 1996, 88-90; Merker 2000, 117-124; Portale 2009, 19, note 1. For the *megarizein*, see Detienne 1982, 135-136; Sfameni-Gasparro 1986, 259-277.

¹¹⁴ Orlandini 1968, 39, fig. 22; Kron 1992, 628-629, fig. 7.

¹¹⁵ Kron 1992, 640-643; Albertocchi 2015. For the sacrifices during the *Thesmophoria*, see Detienne 1982.

¹¹⁶ Lambugno 2008, 188-190.

¹¹⁷ Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica*, XI, 56.

¹¹⁸ See Verilhac – Vial 1998, 287-293; Dillon 2002, 215-219. For the “divine overlap between areas of responsibility”, see Baumbach 2004, 183-190. For the post-wedding rituals suggested by inscriptions and archaeological evidence, see Verilhac – Vial 1998, 327-330.

¹¹⁹ For the *Heraion*, see Orlandini – Adamesteanu 1956, 264-273; Orlandini 1968, 31-33; Panvini 1996, 27, 58-59; Panvini 1998, 109-115. The votive system of Athena on the acropolis is characterized by weapons (Panvini – Sole 2005, 70-71), images of owls (Orlandini 1968, 26, fig. 5; Panvini – Sole 2005, 56) and figurines of Athena (Orlandini 1968, 21, 25, figs. 2, 4).

in Gela dates back to the last few years of the 5th century¹²⁰, in Sicily as a whole and especially in the Chalcidian area, Artemis plays a significant role as the protector of children and young men and women in their transitions towards adult status¹²¹. However, the research has so far discovered none of the elements that are shared by the other manifestations of Artemis attested in Sicily, such as the liminal location of the sanctuaries or certain specific ceramic forms (e.g. the *krateriskoi* of Contrada Alaimo)¹²².

In contrast, the two divinities who the archaeological evidence seems to indicate most convincingly are Kore and Aphrodite, although firm evidence for the latter has yet to be found in Gela. Aphrodite is known to specifically protect the process of physical maturation after the end of childhood, and presides over the intimate union of male and female genders¹²³. It follows that she has a specific responsibility in the area of matrimony: Diodorus Siculus writes that “To Aphrodite was entrusted the youth of maidens, the years in which they are expected to marry, and the supervision of such matters as are observed even yet in connection with weddings, together with the sacrifices and drink-offerings” (V, 73, 2)¹²⁴. The nuptial responsibilities of Aphrodite also emerge in some other significant western Greek contexts, as in some fictile *pinakes* from the Mannella sanctuary in Locri¹²⁵ and the sanctuary of area VI in Morgantina¹²⁶.

In the case of *Predio Sola*, the link to Aphrodite via the theme of seduction and *kosmesis* could be demonstrated by the containers for perfume¹²⁷. Even the oil lamps are not extraneous to a cult system centred on Aphrodite, as shown by some other Siceliot contexts¹²⁸. As part of the rites of passage, oil lamps are associated with *aphrodisia*, darkness and initiation ceremonies, in accordance with a model documented for Aphrodite *Melanis* in Corinth, Thespieae and Mantinea, and for Aphrodite *Skotia* in Crete¹²⁹.

The other divine entity that can plausibly be recognised in the sanctuary of *Predio Sola* is Kore (Persephone), as was recently proposed on the basis of the offerings of oil lamps¹³⁰ and pots for unguents and perfumes¹³¹. In the traditional “pan-Demetriac” approach, the goddess had no real autonomy of her own and was completely absorbed in the identity of her mother Demeter. In contrast, it makes more sense to see the two figures, their personalities and biographical details as quite distinct, evaluating their respective areas of responsibility. Specifically, the attribution of the *Predio Sola* sanctuary to Kore is linked to the paradigmatic myth

¹²⁰ See the so-called *Artemis sicula* figurines in Spagnolo 2000, 270-271, fig. 1a-b, pl. 57, 5-7; Portale 2009, 11, note 6.

¹²¹ For the cult of Artemis in the Chalcidian colonies, see Grasso 2010; for the features of the Artemis cult, see Dufeu-Muller *et al.* 2010.

¹²² Grasso 2008, 154-156; Grasso 2010, 255-257.

¹²³ Marinatos 2003; Pironti 2005, 137-141; Pironti 2007.

¹²⁴ Translation from Loeb Classical Library edition, 1939. See Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 421-422, 432-433; Pironti 2007, 126-130. Literary sources describe the pre-nuptial rituals in Hermione, Sicyon, Trezene (Verilhac – Vial 1998, 292; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 183-188, 401, 422-424) and Athens (Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 15-25; Pirenne-Delforge 2005, 280-282).

¹²⁵ Torelli 1977, 177-178; Sourvinou-Inwood 1978, 118-121.

¹²⁶ The sanctuary is generally attributed to Persephone but the name of Aphrodite is engraved on a *skyphos* from the area close to the round baths, possibly used for nuptial bathing, see Allen 1974, 372-382, figs. 11-12.

¹²⁷ For perfumes as instruments of Aphrodite, see Andò 1996, 57-58; Bodiou – Mehl 2008, 147-148.

¹²⁸ See Palaiokrassa 2005, 367; in Sicily see Isler 1984, 105-106. For Aphrodite in Sicily and Magna Graecia see Schmitt 2016.

¹²⁹ Farnell 1971, 650-653; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 395-396, 439-440; Pironti 2007, 80-85, 194-195.

¹³⁰ Hinz 1998, 68.

¹³¹ Lambrugo 2008, 188, 190.

of the goddess: on reaching sexual maturity, the young deity was given in marriage by her father Zeus to his brother Hades, who abducted her, taking her away from her mother and attendants to make her the queen of the underworld¹³².

It is important to stress that the exemplary nature of the myth played a particularly significant role in Sicily (where a part of it is said to have taken place), as emerges from some interesting references in the literary sources and even the archaeological evidence. Diodorus Siculus recalls the feast of the transportation of *Kore* (*Katagogè tes Kores*), which was celebrated in Syracuse with a large *panegyris* and sacrifices on the occasion of the summer harvest. The name of the feast seems to allude to Kore's descent to the underworld, understood as the goddess's nuptial journey (*agogé*) to her groom's home¹³³. It is plausible that these festivities celebrated the mythical story of Kore, perhaps accompanied by ritual drama; the stirring story would probably have drawn a highly empathetic response from the young women: indeed, the sharing of feelings would have been indispensable for a complete identification with the divine Kore, facilitating acceptance on the part of the human *korai* of their new identities as brides¹³⁴.

This nuptial aspect of Persephone is evidenced in Magna Graecia by the fictile *pinakes* of the Mannella sanctuary in Locri and the sanctuary of Francavilla in Sicily¹³⁵. In Morgantina, the American excavations have highlighted numerous small sanctuaries attributed to Persephone, characterised by structures for ritual bathing: these have been interpreted as the location of prenuptial ceremonies performed by the small communities of each district¹³⁶.

As in these contexts, in *Predio Sola* the act of dedicating perfume containers or terracottas can perhaps be contextualised as part of collective celebrations and festivities similar to the *Theogamia*, perhaps based on the parallels between divine and human initiation¹³⁷. Particularly relevant to this hypothesis is oil lamp 645, with six lights, three bearded protomes and three ram's heads, the association suggesting an identification with Hermes, a divinity frequently found with Persephone in the *pinakes* of Locri and Francavilla¹³⁸. In those contexts, the god plays a mediating role in the passage from one phase of existence to another and, in the myth of Kore, he guides the goddess from the dark subterranean world towards the light¹³⁹. Is it possible to interpret the ceremonial lamps as an important instrument for ritual representations of this mythical journey by the goddess on the occasion of her divine wedding? Do the simple oil lamps play a concrete role in the celebration of these ritual dramas? Do these oil lamps constitute the tools of a ritual strategy that prompts the girls to identify with the divine Kore¹⁴⁰?

¹³² Lincoln 1979; Reeder 1995, 287-289. For the relationship between Kore and *korai* (maidens), see Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica*, XI, 56; Andò 1996, 47.

¹³³ For the nuptial meaning of that feast (Diod. V,2-6) see Bell 1981, 100-101; Polacco 1986, 26, note 14; Sfameni-Gasparro 2008, 35-36. The Sicilian feasts of *Anakalypteria* (Pind. O. VI,160) and *Theogamia* (Pollux I, 37) also had a nuptial character, see Bell 1981, 99; Polacco 1986, 26-27; Martorana *et al.* 1996, 87-88.

¹³⁴ For emotion as an instrument for enhancing ritual efficacy, see Chaniotis 2006; Chaniotis 2010. For the emotional community in rituals, see Chaniotis 2011.

¹³⁵ For Locri, see Torelli 1977, 156-179; Dillon 2002, 221-228; Mertens-Horn 2006; Marroni – Torelli 2016. For Francavilla, see Spigo 2000a, Spigo 2000b.

¹³⁶ Bell 2008. For the nuptial iconography of figurines from these contexts, see Bell 1981, 29-33, figs. a-b.

¹³⁷ Bell 1981, 10.

¹³⁸ For Hermes in Locrian *pinakes*, see Torelli 1977, 169; Spigo 2000b, 18-31, 54.

¹³⁹ Hom. *h.* 2, 334-386.

¹⁴⁰ On the connection between torches, performances and the myth of Persephone, see Parisinou 2000a, 60-61. Some Imperial age lamps from Crete show the inscription γάμου, see Verilhac – Vial 1998, 329.

The complexity of the material and the fragmentary archaeological evidence of the context raise a number of unanswered questions, but at the same time shed new light on many aspects of the religious practices that took place there. The sanctuary of *Predio Sola* was built only one generation after the foundation of the Rhodian-Cretan colony of Gela, inside the urban area. The rich trove of materials, which document the use of the sacred area from the mid 7th century to the end of the 5th century, indicate its importance within the *polis*. The complete analysis of the evidence has revealed a clear functional specialisation of the sanctuary with regard to a religious community of young women in a phase of transition towards matrimony. These women expressed themselves by means of dedications that were highly codified in terms of their adhesion to a common language, the votive objects including a small number of items of exceptional value, such as large Corinthian unguent pots and the more sophisticated *protomai* in terms of decoration and dimensions. As well as certain fixed features, the votive system appears to have undergone some substantial changes in the media and forms of ritual communication. During the first phase (650/640-550 BC), the rite was based on the lighting of oil lamps and the dedication of unguent containers, which bound the worshipper making the dedication to the divinity by means of the object's personal value. In phase II (550-405 BC) the consumption of beverages and libations was accompanied by the systematic dedication of fictile *protomai*: their communicative efficacy was guaranteed by the power of the image, which selectively displayed features establishing the social identity of the members of the religious community.

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