

## CRETAN EARLY IRON AGE TERRACOTTAS. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The conference in Catania had two major implications: it made an important contribution to the study of Early Iron Age Crete and also to the study of Greek terracotta figurines in general. The organizers and hosts of this conference, Antonella Pautasso and Oliver Pilz, combined their scientific interests in a joint enterprise. Both have a particular interest in Crete and coroplastic studies, and both are active members of the Association for Coroplastic Studies (ACoSt). The results will be a stimulus for further studies.

The conference brought together nine speakers, who presented different aspects related to the topic. One group dealt with material from the Italian excavation at Priniàs in Central Crete: the director Dario Palermo, the field director Antonella Pautasso together with Katia Perna and Rossella Gigli Patanè, members of the team and Andrea Babbi. Dario Palermo gave a splendid overview of the study of Cretan Daedalic terracottas during the last 50 years, since the publication of the masterly article by Giovanni Rizza «Dedalo e l'origine della scultura greca» in 1963. The paper provides a comprehensive introduction to the study of Cretan terracottas, which once again makes clear that this would not have been possible without the important Italian excavations at Axos, Gortyn, Priniàs and Arkades and the successive major publications regarding materials from these sites. Given the lack of external criteria for dating the terracottas of Gortyn and Axos, Rizza applied the methods of the *Strukturforschung* in order to establish the typological and chronological sequences. The study of material from both sites side-by-side allowed comparisons and the investigation of possible connections. On the other hand, the paper by Dario Palermo gives an introduction to the study of the Cretan Daedalic style in general.

The terracotta figurines dating to the transition of the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age from Priniàs denote the topic of Katia Perna's contribution. The types are well known from other LM III C cult sites – the goddesses with upraised hands, snake tubes, *pinakes* and *kalathoi*. The only hints of sets of these votive objects can be found on the eastern margins of the Patela of Priniàs, indicating the existence of a cult site, although ceramic fine-ware of the same period is missing. Still, the question as to whether the fragments of bovine figurines belong to the same sanctuary (which would be unusual for other cult sites of that date in Crete) or if there was more than one sanctuary site. The terracottas themselves show similarities with other central Cretan regions, which should be considered as an indication of an exchange of workmen and patterns.

Andrea Babbi has been dealing extensively with Early Iron Age terracotta figurines in Italy and Greece, both in terms of iconography and their find contexts. In this contribution, he analyzes a specific type, namely the small columnar figurines of Priniàs, which he dates to the PG period. One of them has been found below the floor of the cella of Temple A, others in different areas of the excavation site. They show peculiar Mycenaeanizing features, which are known in Crete, but for the time being only Priniàs shows these intense Mycenaean connections.

As regards to the number of cult sites identifiable during that time on the Patela, Babbi strongly argues for not one, but two ritual *foci* (the area of temple A, and the region of road TS). Furthermore, he does not see a gap beyond the LMIIIC/SM horizon before the advanced G/EO, but emphasizes a rather lively PG horizon and a continuity in the ritual significance of the two *foci*.

In the following periods, more indications for the contexts and functions of the figurines in Priniàs occur. This topic has been explored in Antonella Pautasso's contribution. She is currently engaged with the publication of the southern area of the Patela of Priniàs, where no architectural phases earlier than the Archaic have been found. In the area of Archaic building C, traces of an earlier base-like structure have been uncovered. This base has been incorporated in the later building, which obviously had a double function both as a private and a communal place. Nevertheless, an older «ceremonial» context of PGB/AG date with fine-ware, bronzes, and other material including terracotta figurines is feasible. The terracottas found here are of local clay, presenting in fact as four fabrics.

A peculiar class of Cretan terracotta production are the relief *pithoi*. Rossella Gigli Patanè is currently engaged with the publication of the relief *pithoi* from the excavations in Priniàs. This material is not numerous and there are close similarities to the material from Gortyn, but as it shows some artistic peculiarities, it is clear that it was produced locally.

The other four contributions are dealing with different topics. Technical aspects are discussed by Oliver Pilz, who gives the example of anthropomorphic vessels from the sanctuary at Kako Plaï close to Anavlochos and parallels. Pilz argues for a close examination of technical aspects (including detailed drawings), even of smaller fragments, which can often lead to a better understanding of the function of the objects.

Nicola Cucuzza deals with the terracotta objects from the excavations in the villa of Kannià at Phaistos. In the ruins of the Protopalatial villa, later remains belonging to well known LM IIIC cult sets have been found which suggest the presence of a cult nucleus during that time. Cucuzza emphasizes the types of the goddesses with upraised arms and stresses the need for an in-depth study of the type, which to date has been actively pursued in parts<sup>1</sup>.

The only paper dealing with terracottas in funerary contexts is by Laura Rizzotto. As opposed to other areas in Greece, wheel-made terracottas did not become common place as grave goods even in the Early Iron Age (though, Antonella Pautasso remarked during the discussion that some finds have turned up in graves of Priniàs). In general, supplying the dead with terracotta figurines and appliques never became a wide-spread habit in Crete, but since these have been mainly found in constructed tombs, the indication that these goods were given to somewhat higher status grave owners seems to arise. Starting from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, there are no more terracotta figurines in Archaic Cretan graves – the habit experiences a limited revival only in the Late Classical period<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, Marina Albertocchi and Silvia Bertesago have been dealing with the relation between the Daedalic style in Crete, on the one hand, and Southern Italy or Sicily, on the other hand. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, terracotta figurines, as opposed to ceramics, do not seem to

<sup>1</sup> F. GAIGNEROT-DRIESSEN, Goddesses Refusing to Appear? Reconsidering the Late Minoan III Figures with Upraised Arms, in *AJA* 118, 2014, pp. 489-520.

<sup>2</sup> See the unpublished Master thesis by D. FRANK,

Terrakotten als Beigaben auf Kreta in archaischer und klassischer Zeit. Ein Vergleich zwischen Heiligtümern und Gräbern, University of Salzburg 2015.

have been imported from Crete to Sicily on a large scale. The Daedalic style of Magna Graecia, on the other hand, owes more to Peloponnesian than Cretan influences.

Terracottas have thus been treated in the conference as material objects, on the one hand, and as signs of material culture, on the other. It has become clear that many more things remain to be done. Let me first comment on terracotta figurines as objects. Although fabrics have been distinguished in a macroscopic manner, it is hoped that microscopic analysis will follow. Another rather larger field is the Minoan tradition versus new influences through Mycenaean or Near Eastern cultural contacts in terms of technical aspects and typology. The problem of a finer chronology in the 7th century BC is not yet solved and cannot, of course, be resolved on the basis of the terracotta figurines alone. As long as no sufficient externally dated contexts with figurines in Daedalic style are identified, a stylistic analysis for dating will continue.

Regarding terracottas as signs of material culture, the terracottas have been analyzed as artefacts/objects found in different contexts in Early Iron Age Crete: these are – as far as the evidence is clear – mainly cultic/ceremonial and to a lesser extent funerary contexts. It would seem that figurines during that time were not kept or used in private houses, but our knowledge of private houses during that time on Crete is, of course, very limited.

In terms of the archaeology of cult and ritual, no clear idea as to the function of terracotta figurines has so far been established. The goddesses with upraised hands can reach a height of up to 80 cm, and only an analysis of find spots and contexts can show whether some of them were used differently to others, e.g. as cult statues or for carrying, e.g. in processions (as examples of finds with handles from Kannia indicate). The same applies, of course, to the use of *pitthoi*: were they simply containers or were they made in such a delicate and fine manner so as to serve as votives, in other words, was their use as containers of goods for the gods secondary? The paper by Nicola Cucuzza on the villa in Kannia/Phaistos has reminded us once more of the importance to analyze different sets of finds. Since different sets of types were found in the different rooms, this could mean that different gods were worshipped in different rooms.

In the final discussion of the seminar, we turned to the fact that we had not been talking about imports from other areas to Crete at all. This was a conscious decision in order to focus on the Cretan terracotta production, but of course the imports have to be taken into account in order to reach an overall understanding of the period and the exchanges. Furthermore, Nicola Cucuzza reminded us that we should direct more attention to the dynamics of use of terracotta figurines. It seems that they have played a different role in Early Iron Age Crete compared to the Late Bronze Age. As a person dealing mainly with the later Greek phases of Crete, I also consider the study of the use of earlier material in later Cretan contexts and the dealing with the changes in Cretan terracottas from the 5<sup>th</sup> and mainly 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards as rather important. This would make a good topic for another conference.

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