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Relief with Orestes and Clytemnestra

550-525 BC

Expand All

Object Details

Catalogue Number	**52**
Inventory Number	81.AD.12
Typology	Relief
Location	Sicily
Dimensions	H: 26.4 cm; W: 35.5 cm; D: 8.4-9.0 cm

Fabric

Greenish yellow in the front (Munsell 2.5 y 8/3), with orange highlights in the back (Munsell 5 yr 7/6), gray and very coarse in the core, with a friable consistency, and numerous calcareous and carbonous inclusions.

Condition

The relief has been reassembled and consolidated from a number of fragments; there are fills in the upper frame, in the background of the relief, and in left side section. The lower left corner of the frame is missing, as are the corners of the upper frame in the back. The male figure is missing its head and right arm; the female figure is badly damaged, missing both arms and almost all of the body; all that survives of a third figure is the feet and the attachment of the garment.

Provenance

– 1981, Willard B. Causey (Santa Ana, Calilfornia), donated to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1981.

Bibliography

Unpublished.

Description

The relief is framed, at the base and at the top, by fillets supported on each side by a perpendicular element. The back is unworked and the top is slightly concave. The incomplete state of preservation of this artifact and the subsequent restoration attempts make it impossible to establish with precision its original typology and function; nonetheless, it can be conjectured that the relief was set against a wall or in a niche; the traces of detachment in the back section support this view.[1] There are no remaining traces of the polychromy that may originally have decorated this relief.

The figures were worked by hand and retouched to define the details and to ensure that they would adhere to the background. They project from the plane in full relief, as in many other *arulae* with mythological subjects found throughout Sicily and Magna Graecia during the Archaic period.[2] In particular, the right foot of the male figure and part of the corresponding leg emerge completely from the background; the torso adheres to the ground only on the left side; of the third figure, only the outlines can be discerned, and there are no traces of the part corresponding to the body.

Significant comparisons can be made with a series of figured reliefs from the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros at Selinunte, previously linked to *arulae* of medium and large format, but which might also have been part of votive aedicules. In most of these reliefs, one sees the same high-relief technique, which endows the images with great plasticity, though in these cases the figures completely fill the free space.[3]

The present relief depicts a nude male character shown in profile, walking toward the right, with his left leg striding forward; he has seized the hair of the central female figure with his left hand; his right arm must have been extending forward in order to strike her with a weapon, probably a sword, presumably positioned on a line with her chest.[4] The female figure is characterized by a slight torsion; her right arm must have extended down alongside her body; the left arm was probably bent toward the male character in an attempt at self-defense. She is wearing a long, tight chiton that extends down to her feet; her head is slightly tilted to the proper right. Her hair is brushed over her forehead in wavy-edged locks with no part in the middle, and hangs down on either side, forming three braids suggested by little spherical elements. Her face is oval in shape, the mouth is small with swollen lips, and the

nose is triangular. The large almond-shaped eyes protrude, with no distinction between the eyeball and the eyelids; her superciliary arches are large, close-set, and parallel, and extend out to the attachment of the ears. A third figure, stepping forward with the right leg, was a witness to the scene.

The male character is rendered through plastic modeling, especially in the legs and the strong, muscular buttocks; the torso is straight and elongated. The hair falls behind the shoulders in large convex braids, layered horizontally.

Due to a number of iconographic elements, the scene can be interpreted as Orestes killing his mother, Clytemnestra, in revenge for her murder of Orestes' father, Agamemnon. In the absence of other identifying features, the gesture of seizing the hair of a female character could be the key to this identification, though it occurs elsewhere in mythology as well. Notable in this connection are two fragments that can be assigned to a metope from Temple C at Selinunte, with the scene of Clytemnestra's murder.[5] The iconography of this metope is thought to reflect an Archaic motif already present in the shield band reliefs of Peloponnesian production, in particular from Olympia, in which, however, it is more often Clytemnestra's lover, Aegisthos, who is seized by the hair just before the mortal blow.[6] On the shield bands, this iconographic scheme can also be found in scenes of battle between such antagonists as Zeus and Typhon or Herakles and Geras. In a plaque from the Argive Heraion, datable to the middle of the seventh century BC, the myth of Orestes is reprised in a depiction that shows Clytemnestra killing Cassandra, gripping her by the hair with her left hand.[7]

In the colonial setting of the Archaic period, the iconography of a character seizing the hair or the head of a competitor or rival was also utilized for other subjects engaged in combat, as is documented in architectural sculpture and in *arulae*; examples include Perseus and the Gorgon in the metope of Temple C in Selinunte and, in coroplastic art, a fragmentary *arula* from Monte Saraceno, datable to the middle of the sixth century BC, in which the left arm of Perseus is raised to grasp the monster's hair, while the right arm is bent upward, holding a short sword.[8]

The scene on the Getty relief was completed by a third figure, of which only the feet, the edge of a long garment, and the outline of the lower body survive. The state of preservation makes it impossible to identify this figure with any certainty, but for narrative consistency, it may be Elektra, Orestes' sister, even though the depiction of this character before the beginning of the fifth century BC is uncertain. A female figure on a bronze lamina from Olympia has been identified as Elektra, and Beazley has recognized her as the character behind Orestes on a proto-Attic krater. In the relief decorating the neck of a Cretan *pithos* (storage jar), possibly

the first known depiction of the death of Clytemnestra, it has been suggested that the two female characters might represent the queen's two daughters, Elektra and Khrysothemis. In the colonial milieu once again, for Metope 7 of the Heraion at Foce del Sele near Paestum, it has been suggested, doubtfully, that the female figure urging forward the sword-bearing man might be Elektra.[9]

Orestes' matricide is a relatively uncommon theme in the Archaic period, and portrayals of heroes attacking female characters have been subject to varying interpretations.[10] In a gilded-silver lamina, now in the Getty collection and datable after the middle of the sixth century BC, there is a similar image showing the killing of Clytemnestra by Orestes: the hero, wearing a short chiton, holds his mother by the hair and is about to strike a blow with his sword, while she makes a gesture of supplication; at the feet of these two figures lies the mortally wounded Aegisthos. A southern Italian archaeological context has been proposed for this lamina, but the general Laconian traits that can clearly be identified in this group might also suggest the presence of bronze workers from mainland Greece in Magna Graecia.[11] An earlier Archaic bronze relief, mentioned in the previous paragraph and linked to a tripod from Olympia, is also comparable; it is datable to sometime around the end of the seventh century and the first quarter of the sixth century BC. In that depiction, Orestes strikes Clytemnestra with a sword while seizing her by the neck, as his mother touches his chin in a gesture of supplication; the scene also depicts other figures: Aegisthos, who is trying to hide behind a building, and perhaps Elektra or Erigone (Aegisthos's daughter) behind Orestes.[12] Another object that might attest to the diffusion of the Orestes myth and these iconographies in the Peloponnese, and particularly in Laconia, is a stele dating from the beginning of the sixth century BC, now in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta, was originally from the area of Magoula. It features two figures variously interpreted as Menelaus and Helen, Alcmaeon and Eriphyle, or Orestes and Clytemnestra; the latter hypothesis is supported by the violent gesture of the male figure as he seizes the woman by the neck.[13] This iconographic motif, therefore, was especially prominent in the Peloponnese, from whence it diffused to the West along with its possible ideological implications.

In the Archaic Peloponnesian context, Sparta was especially receptive to themes linked to the saga of Orestes; the *Oresteia* by Stesichorus emphasized the religious and social traditions of that city, which lay under the protection of Apollo and counted the House of Atreus among its legendary rulers. In the middle of the sixth century BC, the Laconian city was pursuing a "pro-Achaean" political line, in which renewed attention to the myth of the Atreides (Agamemnon, Menelaus, and their offspring, including Orestes) and the recovery of Orestes' bones served as effective propaganda.[14] The emphasis on Sparta's illustrious origins served to reinforce the city's hegemonic role in the Peloponnese and other areas of the Mediterranean,

such as Sicily. In northwestern Sicily, the saga of Herakles was put to similar use.[15] Particularly noteworthy is the role that Sparta played in the first half of the sixth century BC: in northwestern Sicily, the Sicilian poet Stesichorus, writing his *Oresteia* at this time, underscored the Spartan setting of the poem's legendary events. It bears mentioning, too, that at the turn of that century, first the Knidian leader Pentathlos and later the Spartan prince Dorieus were in northwestern Sicily to supervise the control of the Sicilian emporia.[16]

To return to another colonial context in which the Atreides saga figures—namely the frieze of the Heraion at the Foce del Sele, mentioned above, dating from the second half of the sixth century BC—a new reading of its figurative program raised a hypothetical identification of episodes linked to the *Oresteia* in some of the metopes. In this perspective, Metope 7 shows Elektra urging Orestes, armed with a sword, to commit matricide; Metope 24 shows Clytemnestra holding a double-headed axe; Metope 19 may depict Aegisthos seated on his throne as the hero attacks him; and finally, Metope 25 is variously interpreted as Orestes killing Aegisthos or as Achilles killing Troilus.[17] The various characterizations of Clytemnestra—"frightened and passive" in Selinunte, but "combative and furious" at Foce del Sele (note here, too, the aggressive stance of the heroes at Selinunte, such as Perseus in the metope of Temple C, or Herakles in the Temple E)—have given rise to a number of hypotheses regarding the derivation of sculpture from literary sources, Stesichorus first and foremost. This approach has recently been reconsidered in a study that analyzed in a more consistent manner the relationship between images and texts or "segments of stories," with a special focus on the oral tradition, on the articulation of themes in syntactic and hermeneutic terms, and on the social function of images in relation to the context of origin.[18]

Complex problems are involved in tracing literary sources that could have influenced sculptural cycles and in attempting to derive the various psychological articulations of the characters from these same sources. It is nonetheless evident that the story of Orestes would necessarily take on great significance within the *polis*, given that the legend is focused on the guilty responsibility of those who violate the moral rules of civil society—committing crimes that strike at the very *genos* (clan) to which they belong—and on the divine curse that struck the entire progeny and the obligatory series of purifications that was then required. In that sense, the mythological themes present in the monument's decorations reflected the values and cultural identities of the period and of that specific context.[19] In this light, the matricide committed by Orestes became a tragic but necessary condition for freeing the family from an inheritance of guilt, but only the intervention of Apollo allowed the hero, who was pursued by the vindictive Furies, to attain a final purification and to be readmitted to the community.[20] It is interesting to note that in Column B of the so-called *lex sacra* of Selinunte—for which a findspot in the sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios, contiguous with the Malophoros sanctuary, has

been proposed—instructions are provided for individuals concerning the purification rites to be performed in order to ward off the *elasteros*, a term whose definition is uncertain but which probably means the vindictive fury of a murder victim. On the same sheet (Column A), Zeus is cited in the *epiclesis* (invocation) of Eumenes, with a clear reference to situations of contamination and purification.[21] As part of this dual chthonic and purificatory role, Zeus would oversee the cathartic rites required of an individual who was guilty of grave crimes (such as the murder of a family member or a member of the same *genos*), in order to be freed from hostile *elasteroi* and readmitted to the community.[22]

The hypothesis linking the current relief with Selinunte is strictly conjectural, based on a reconstruction of the cultural context, stylistic comparison with the reliefs from the Malophoros sanctuary, and autoptic analysis of the clay, which seems to show the same characteristics as that from Selinunte.[23] If this link is sustained, the Malophoros sanctuary and, in particular, the area of Zeus Meilichios would suggest itself as a religious and cultural context well-suited to house a depiction of Orestes, given that the Meilichios cult was connected with heroic cults as well. The relief could have been placed with reliefs depicting other episodes of the same story in a consecrated space dedicated to the rituals of specific ancestral groups.[24] The myth of Orestes, it bears remembering, had great significance within the cultural and religious milieu of Selinunte; the theme is also present in a metope of Temple C in Selinunte, identified as an *Apollonion*. Here, the treatment of the myth in the frieze appears to have taken into account both the genealogy of the protagonist heroes, all of them intimately connected to Dorian and Peloponnesian contexts, and the geographic setting of their deeds. This criterion served as the tie between the metope of Perseus and the Gorgon and that of Herakles and the Cercopes (mischievous forest dwellers), perhaps linking the metope of the Dioscuri with the metope with Orestes and Clytemnestra that concluded the frieze on the left. Perseus is, in fact, the hero who stands at the root of the Atreides family tree, while Orestes marks its end. At the same time, the geographic setting of the narratives involves both Argos and Sparta.[25] It seems to be no accident that it was precisely Argos in the Archaic period that exerted a powerful influence upon Nisaean (mainland) Megara, where, according to Pausanias, the last king was Hyperion, a brother of Orestes. In this sense, Selinous (Selinunte), a subcolony of Nisaean Megara, affirmed its civic identity in part through an explicit reference to the memorable places and the origins of the community, in Argos and Sparta, in which the saga of the Atreides played a foundational role.[26]

It is through this thematic thread that the story of Orestes, drawn from the religious and cultural patrimony of the homeland, must then have constituted an ethical point of reference for the new *polis* as well.[27] Orestes, who in the wake of the matricide was obliged to undertake a process of purification at the behest of Apollo (the deity who oversaw family relations),

would find an appropriate place in the Malophoros sanctuary, in particular given that, among other things, individual groups of aristocratic families seem to have had special ties to the Meilichios cult and to the cult of ancestral spirits, as previously noted in the context of the *lex sacra*.[28] In addition, more recent studies have conjectured that the Atreides were connected to Selinous in part through the figure of Iphigenia, Orestes' unfortunate sister, who after her sacrifice by Agamemnon was transformed by Artemis into Hekate. According to Stesichorus in his *Oresteia* and the *Catalogue of Women* attributed to Hesiod, Hekate was the bride of Hades.[29] Iphigenia, thus associated with Hekate, would then have been the subject of a chthonic cult—also linked to nuptial rites—that was practiced in the enclosure at the eastern end of the Malophoros sanctuary, outside of the *temenos*.[30] In this case, as with the Malophoros sanctuary and perhaps also the sacred area of the Meilichios—whose existence is also hypothesized in Nisaean Megara—the cult of Iphigenia, a constant mythical element of the Megarean world, ultimately expressed a reprisal of the cults found in the Greek homeland.[31] Indeed, in Nisaean Megara, in the area around the agora, there was a *heroön* of Iphigenia founded, according to legend, by Agamemnon before the expedition to Troy: according to one version of the myth, the hapless girl's sacrifice took place in Megara and, as mentioned above, the last king of the city was a son of Agamemnon and a brother of Orestes.[32]

It would hardly suffice to construct an interpretive model that catalogued exact comparisons in mythological and cultural milieu between homelands and colonies without taking into consideration the complex processes by which the myth was redefined *in loco*. But it is clear that the reprisal of the homeland cults in the *apoikia* (colonies) underscored ethnic, cultural, and political affiliations with the land of origin; this tie was especially strong in the colonies of Megara.[33]

A stylistic analysis of the Getty relief shows the coexistence of elements of diverse derivations, which makes it problematic to place the piece in a clearly defined current. The same holds true for much of sixth-century sculpture from Sicily. The scene appears to be well-balanced in the composition of solids and voids, and the figures, aligned in a paratactic rhythm, seem to defy that spatial conception, observable in both Archaic metopes and *arulae*, according to which characters are imprisoned within the bounds of the figured field.[34]

The coroplast made a special effort to attenuate Clytemnestra's frontal view, placing the feet on different planes and tilting the head toward the viewer, to overcome the traditional Archaic view of front and profile, though the result is not entirely persuasive and the figure still appears slightly disorganized.[35] The characters, in almost full relief, jut sharply out of the background creating a well-defined chiaroscuro. It is easy to perceive the coroplast's skill in

defining volumes, such as the round plastic masses in the lower part of the male body and in the articulation of the knee.[36] Although the interdependence noted between metopes and *arulae*, as discussed above, is not well understood and may appear somewhat forced, it should be pointed out that, in the milieu of Selinunte, there is evidence of a stylistic affinity between the two.[37] Orestes, for example, is reminiscent of the Perseus in the metope of Temple C, though the proportions of legs to torso are inverted, while the tubular arms, which are proportionately too short and lack muscular definition, are tapered and slender in comparison with the legs; Orestes' small hands with stylized fingers are reminiscent of those in certain figures of the so-called small metopes at Selinunte, as for example in the Delphic Triad.[38] Additionally, the head of Clytemnestra presents a number of stylistic affinities with figures in the small metopes, especially in the cranial structure and a number of other details, such the small mouth and the large globular eyes, undefined in their details, which are also present in the figure of Apollo in the Delphic Triad.[39] The compact hair—with an undulating border, no center part, combed over a low forehead, and falling to the shoulders in a compact mass of curls, layered horizontally—recurs in the figures from an Archaic relief from Selinunte (Casa del Viaggiatore), such as the figure in the small metope of the Quadriga of Apollo. Some of these elements can also be found in small bronzes of Laconian inspiration imported in the West, which could have served as a source of stylistic inspiration for coroplastic production.[40] It is the metal objects that seem to determine the Peloponnesian formal koine that emerged in the wake of an artistic language developed by Sparta, and later by Corinth; this language is recognizable, for instance, in the solid, vigorous modeling, in the plasticity of the gestures, and in the clear, incisive outline.[41]

For the figure of Orestes, for instance, it is useful to refer to Laconian bronzes, such as a statuette of Hermes, datable to the middle of the sixth century BC. This work shows a comparable definition of the calf muscles and articulation of the knee, in contrast with the flat, elongated torso. The latter would be functional in the case of the small bronze statuette, facilitating the figure's attachment to an object such as a tripod.[42] The general composition of the figure and the large, undefined globular eyes hark back to characteristics of Corinthian art that are readily identified in the coroplastic art of Selinunte as well in some heads of Temple C.[43] In this confluence—a distinctive synthesis of varied cultural and stylistic features—traits belonging to the eastern Aegean milieu do not seem out of place: especially the flattened, elongated torso, which seems to contrast with the massive lower limbs and rotund buttocks in the Orestes figure.[44]

The Getty relief displays a stylistic language in which various influences, mostly Corinthian, integrate into a formal autonomous expression with references to the cultural roots of the homeland, which in the dynamic colonial setting find a fertile context for new elaborations.

Religious ties to the homeland were affirmed—with a certain adaptation to the local context—through an iconographic conservatism.[45]

For its figurative layout, compositional solutions, and stylistic characteristics, the relief seems to fit chronologically in the third quarter of the sixth century BC.

Notes

1. For the hypothesis that reliefs were either turned to a wall or embedded in a wall, see (for the Malophoros sanctuary) GABRICI 1927, coll. 118–19, 181–82; and TUSA 1984, pp. 124–25. Terracotta *pinakes* and votive reliefs are well documented in the sanctuaries of Selinunte and in other Demeter sanctuaries; see MARCONI 2009, pp. 200–202, for the stone votive relief depicting Persephone's abduction, which may have been displayed in the propylon of the sanctuary. Also in the *thesmophorion* of San Francesco Bisconti at Morgantina, some *sacella* were provided with wall niches; see RAFFIOTTA 2007, pp. 23–24. The presence of niches in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth has been variously interpreted: see N. Bookidis and R. Stroud, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Topography and Architecture*, Corinth 18, part 3 (Princeton, 1997), pp. 145, 178, 205, 229–30. In Olynthus, in a domestic setting, small altars and aedicules were set within niches: see D. Robinson and J. W. Graham, *The Hellenic House*, Excavations at Olynthus 8 (Baltimore, 1938), pp. 321–23. For examples of aedicules or altars set against a wall in Corinth, especially in domestic cult spaces, see C. K. Williams, "Corinth, 1978: Forum Southwest," *Hesperia* 48, no. 2 (1979), pp. 105–44. Less reliable is the hypothesis that the relief might belong to the front section of an *arula* created through the assembly of individual components before firing; in morphological terms, there seem to be no significant correspondences.

2. See, for instance, *arulae* from Gela that can be dated between the middle and the third quarter of the sixth century BC, with Herakles and Alkyoneus: MEIJDEN 1993, cat. MY 8, p. 299, two *arulae* with Herakles and the Triton (550–525 BC) and a depiction of the suicide of Ajax (530 BC) in FISCHER-HANSEN 1992, nos. 14–15, pp. 45–46; the *arula* with a Gorgon from Capo Soprano, in P. Orlandini, "Gela: Ritrovamenti vari," *NSc* 10 (1956), pp. 363–65, fig. 10; an *arula*, also from Gela, with opposing sphinxes, in LENTINI 1993, pp. 129–30; an *arula* with Achilles and Memnon from Locri, see V. Origlia, "Arule con iconografie varie," in BARRA BAGNASCO 1989, pp. 131–184, esp. no. 167, pl. XXVIII; from Hipponium, an *arula* with a figure of the *potnia theron* (mistress of animals) in LENTINI 1993, p. 30, no. 31. See also examples in T. Fischer-Hansen, "Some Sicilian Arulae and Their Significance," *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 8 (1977), pp. 7–18. For the iconography of *arulae*, see A. Calderone, "Il mito greco e le arulae siceliote di VI e V secolo a.C.," in *LE MYTHE GREC* 1999, pp. 163–204.

3. Some very close comparisons, for shape, clay, and style, are some fragmentary reliefs from the second half of the sixth century BC, as for example one with a winged figure, probably an Erinys, at the Museo Archeologico Regionale di Palermo (inv. 42343), in MEIJDEN 1993, FR 81; for another, unpublished, see C. Pecoraro, "Arule figurate di età arcaica e classica da Selinunte," Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Facoltà di Lettere Classiche (2001–2002), no. 24 (inv. 42341). See also a fragment found in the propylaeum of the sanctuary, which still preserves the feet of three figures walking toward the right: see GABRICI 1927, pl. XXXII, no. 4; a relief with two adjoining reclining figures, pl. XXXV, no. 3; a fragment with two standing female figures, probably imported from Ionia, pl. XXXII, no. 1; a fragment with two frontal busts, holding out their hands, pl. XXX, no. 4 (for this fragment, see also E. Gabrici, "Dedalica Selinuntina," *Memorie dell'Accademia di archeologia, lettere e belle arti di Napoli* 5 [1924], pl. II, no. 3); see also the fragments found in the excavations of 1898, incongruously filled, in GABRICI 1927, pl. XXX, nos. 1 and 1a, and PECORARO 2001, pp. 38–39, n. 18; the two fragmentary figures (a female head and a male bust, with a hand holding it by the arm), assignable to a relief, in GABRICI 1927, pl. XXXII, no. 3.

4. The sword is a customary attribute in the iconography of Orestes, as will be explored below; in this connection, see H. Sarian and V. Machaira, s.v. "Orestes," *LIMC* 7 (1994), pp. 68–76.

5. For a discussion of the Archaic metope and the relationship between style and function within the cultural and social context of Selinunte, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 161–68; and MARCONI 2006, fig. 374; see also L. Giuliani, *Die archaischen Metopen von Selinunt* (Mainz, 1979), p. 67ff., and ØSTBY 1996.

6. For the shield bands, see E. Kunze, *Archaische Schildbänder*, Olympische Forschungen 2 (Berlin, 1950), fig. 6, no. 1c, and pl. 8, no. 1f. See also: MARCONI 2007, pp. 104–9, figs. 45–47, 68–69. The relationship between iconographies on shields and a number of *arulae* from Selinunte was also emphasized in connection with the recurring motif of the quadriga, which is found both on *arulae* from the Malophoros sanctuary, and also in the metope of Temple C. For discordant considerations, see MARCONI 2006, p. 625–26. There are also two *arulae* from Himera, each decorated with a chariot, depicted frontally, and two grooms, one on either side, comparable with the chariots from Selinunte: in this connection, see BELVEDERE 1982, pp. 87–89, pl. XVI, nos. 2–3.

7. PRAG 1985, pp. 58–60, pl. 37a. The similarities between the materials found in Selinunte and those offered at Olympia suggest that metopes from the major religious centers of the homeland could, in some cases, have constituted a reference model, especially for the aristocratic classes of the Sicilian and Magna Graecian *poleis*. This would still be consistent with the dynamic local re-elaboration in the representation of myth that was evolving in Archaic Sicily. For relations between Selinunte and Olympia, see CURTI AND VAN BREMEN 1999, esp. nn. 29 and 30.

8. For the metope with Perseus and Medusa, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 142–50. For the *arula*, see E. De Miro, "Aspetti della coroplastica locale: Le arule," in A. Calderone and M. Caccamo Caltabiano, *Monte Saraceno di Ravanusa: Un ventennio di ricerche e studi* (Messina, 1996), pp. 177–81, pl. CVIII.

9. For the proto-Attic krater, see I. McPhee, s.v. "Elektra I," *LIMC* 3 (1986), pp. 709–19, esp. p. 717, no. 73; for the lamina and the *pithos*, see KNOEPFLER 1992, pp. 29–30, fig. 11, and pp. 23–24, no. 2. For the metope from the Heraion at Foce of Sele, see MASSERIA AND TORELLI 1999, pp. 239–40. See also Elektra in a bronze relief from Olympia, in MARCONI 2007, pp. 165.

10. For the iconography of the death of Clytemnestra, see Y. Morizot, s.v. "Klytaimestra," *LIMC* 6 (1992)," pp. 72–81, and PRAG 1985, pp. 35–43; on this problem, see also MARCONI 1999, p. 32.

11. The lamina, inv. 83.AM.343, has been published by F. Brommer, "Ein Silberstreifen," *GettyMusJ* 12 (1984), pp. 133–38; see also MARCONI 2007, pp. 164–66. The analysis of the relief was also pursued by P. G. Guzzo, "Una lamina d'oro arcaica d'incerta provenienza," *Studi Urbinati* 3 (1986), pp. 35–43, and by ØSTBY 1996, pp. 24–25.

12. In this connection, see KNOEPFLER 1992, pp. 29–30, fig. 11; ØSTBY 1996, pp. 24–25, n. 34; PRAG 1985, pp. 35–36, pl. 23a.

13. See M. Pipili, *Laconian Iconography of the Sixth Century BC* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 30–31; MARCONI 2007, pp. 165–66; ØSTBY 1996, pp. 20–21, n. 26; and R. Fortsch, *Kunstverwendung und Kunstlegitimation im archaischen und frühklassischen Sparta* (Mainz, 2001), p. 217, no. 1832, figs. 152–53.

14. This interpretation is analyzed by I. Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge [U.K.], 1994) pp. 57–64; and B. McCauley, "Heroes and Power: The Politics of Bone Transferal," in R. Hägg, ed., *Ancient Greek Hero Cult: Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Göteborg University, 21–23 April* (Stockholm, 1999), pp. 85–98. On the location of the *Oresteia* in Laconia, see CUSUMANO 1997–98, pp. 773–83; and G. Maddoli, "Il VI e il V secolo," in E. Gabba and G. Vallet, eds., *La Sicilia antica* 2, no. 1 (Naples, 1980), pp. 3–102, esp. pp. 28–29.

15. In this connection, see also the analysis in NAFISSI 1991, pp. 140–41, with bibliography, and M. Sordi, ed., *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico* (Milan, 1976). The special relationship between the Laconian area and a number of settings in the Siceliote world has already been identified for the *Oresteia* of Stesichorus, with its clear pro-Spartan tone; in this connection, see the essay by N. Luraghi, "Il mito di Oreste nel regno dello Stretto," pp. 333–46 in *Mito e storia in Magna Grecia: AttiTaranto 36, 1996* (1997); the findings of Laconian ceramics in Sicily attest to a flourishing market dating back as early as the end of the seventh century BC. From the Malophoros sanctuary, too, Laconian vases have been found dating from the middle of the sixth century BC; see P. Pelagatti, "Ceramica laconica in Sicilia e a Lipari: Materiali per una carta di distribuzione," *BdA* 54 (1989), pp. 1–62.

16. Knidos, at least beginning in 520 BC, was considered a Spartan colony; therefore Dorieus could consider himself the natural successor to Pentathlos; see Malkin, *Myth and Territory* (cited in n. 14 above), pp. 57–64.

17. For the metopes of the Heraion at Foce del Sele, see MASSERIA AND TORELLI 1999. See also P. Zancani Montuoro and U. Zanotti-Bianco, *Heraion alla foce del Sele*, part 2 (Rome, 1954); F. Van Keuren, *The Frieze from the Hera I Temple at Foce del Sele* (Rome, 1989); and M. C. Conti, *Il più antico fregio dell'Heraion del Sele: Scultura architettonica e comunicazione visiva* (Florence, 1994).

18. For this methodological approach, see MARCONI 1999, passim, and MARCONI 2007, pp. 161–69, 207–9. On the *Oresteia* of Stesichorus and its various versions, see A. Neschke, "L'Orestie de Stésichore et la tradition littéraire du mythe des Atrides avant Eschyle," *L'Antiquité Classique* 55 (1986), pp. 283–301; M. I. Davies, "Thoughts on the *Oresteia* before Aischylos," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 93 (1969), pp. 214–60; C. Mueller-Goldingen, "Tradition und Innovation: Zu Stesichoros' Umgang mit der Mythos," *L'Antiquité Classique* 69 (2000), pp. 1–19. On relations between the poetry of Stesichorus and the sculptural cycle at the Heraion at Foce del Sele, see MASSERIA AND TORELLI 1999, pp. 252–53. On Clytemnestra and the functional dynamics connected to the character, see M. Giuman, "Storie da un delitto: Clitemnestra l'uxoricida, questioni iconografiche," *Ostraka* 14, no. 1 (2005), pp. 35–66, in which the author hypothesizes the coexistence of two parallel narrative traditions, which determined the diverse characterizations of the protagonists and the equally diverse structure of the differing versions of Agamemnon's death, including those in iconography.

19. See MARCONI 2007, pp. 185–222.

20. On the myths in relation to its original contexts, see R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece: The Context of Mythology* (Cambridge [U.K.], 1994).

21. The inscription, dated by means of the epigraphic characters to the second quarter of the fifth century BC, has been published by M. H. Jameson, D. R. Jordan, and R. D. Kotansky, "A *Lex Sacra* from Selinous," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies Monographs* 11 (Durham, N.C., 1993). The *lex sacra*, an important work of great exegetic complexity, has been the subject of numerous interpretations and analyses; see, in particular, G. Nenci, "La Kyrbis selinuntina," *ASNP* 24 (1994), pp. 459–66; F. Cordano, "Review of Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky, 'A *Lex Sacra* from Selinous,' 1993," *Aevum* 70 (1996), pp. 137–41; CURTI AND VAN BREMEN 1999; K. Clinton, "A New *Lex Sacra* from Selinunte: Kindly Zeuses, Eumenides, Impure and Pure Tritopatores, and Elasteroi" (review of Jameson, Jordan, and Kotansky 1993), *Classical Philology* 91, no. 2 (1996), pp. 159–79. For the philological and epigraphic research, see L. Dubois, "Une nouvelle inscription archaïque de Sélinonte," *Revue de Philologie* 69 (1995), pp. 127–44. See also W. Burkert, "Private Need and *Polis* Acceptance: Purification at Selinous," in P. Flensted-Jensen, T. Heine Nielsen, and L. Rubinstein, eds., *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History* (Copenhagen, 2000), pp. 207–16; CUSUMANO 1997–98, pp. 780–82; and A. Brugnone, "Una laminetta iscritta da Selinunte," *SicArch* 30 (1997), pp. 121–30. According to another interpretation, the sacred law of Selinunte and the purification rites were not connected to bloodshed: see A. Giuliani, "La purificazione degli *elasteroi* nella legge sacra di Selinunte," *Aevum* 72 (1998), pp. 68–89; and C. Antonetti and S. De Vido, "Cittadini, non cittadini e stranieri nei santuari della Malophoros e del Meilichios di Selinunte," in A. Naso, ed., *Stranieri e non cittadini nei santuari greci: Atti del convegno internazionale* (Florence, 2006), pp. 410–51; A. Di Martino, "Omicidio, contaminazione, purificazione: Il caso della lex sacra di Selinunte," *ASNP* 8 (2006), pp. 305–49.

22. Both Myskos and Euthydamos, mentioned in the *lex sacra,* aside from being identified as local heroes, are interpreted as personifications of two concepts bound up, respectively, with an impure, negative situation and a positive situation. For this interpretation, see CURTI AND VAN BREMEN 1999, pp. 21–33. The authors place the tomb-*heroön* of Myskos in certain structures of the Meilichios sanctuary previously studied by Gabrici, and interpret the two terracotta cylinders beneath the foundation blocks as containers of the offerings to the Tritopatores (a trio of gods, currently little understood). For the meaning of *elasteroi* in connection with the mythical model of Orestes, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 207–9.

23. See, for instance, the comparable clay in reliefs of certain local provenience in GABRICI 1927, pls. XXXI, nos. 3 and 6; XXXII no. 3; and XXXIV, no. 4. It should be noted that the *lex sacra* became part of the Getty collection in 1981, the year in which some distinctive twinned stelai from the sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios were also acquired (inv. 81.AA.135, 81.AA.136,

81.AA.137, 81.AA.138, 81.AA.139a–d); this coincidence in dates may reinforce the hypothesis that the current object is also from Selinunte.

24. On the pertinence and significance of the subject in the Selinunte area, see also ØSTBY 1996, pp. 31–33. According to a hypothesis that merits further attention, a fragmentary terracotta relief from the Malophoros sanctuary might be a portrayal of the same subject: an armed male character faces a figure looking to the right; of a third character, perhaps Aegisthos, there remain only scant traces. If this identification holds, it would be further evidence of the presence in Selinunte of an ancient iconographic tradition linked to the hero; see GABRICI 1927, col. 188–89, pl. XXX, no. 1. On the hypothesis of a cult of Zeus Meilichios undertaken by *genoi* or *patriai* (birth or caste groups), see GABRICI 1927, col. 403–5; and A. Brugnone, cited in n. 21 above.

    Pausanias also mentions, along the sacred road to Eleusis, an altar of Zeus Meilichios where Theseus is said to have purified himself after killing his cousin Sinis in the course of his adventures (Pausanias 1.37.4). Sanctuaries dedicated to the purifying god were always situated near burial areas, as was the case in Selinunte; see GABRICI 1927, coll. 403–5; for the cult of Zeus Meilichios, see ZUNTZ 1971, pp. 101–4; G. Sfameni Gasparro, "Politica, religione e culti," in *LO STILE SEVERO* 1990, pp. 43–54; G. Manganaro, "Mondo religioso greco e mondo indigeno in Sicilia," in ANTONETTI 1997, pp. 71–82. See N. Cusumano, "Zeus Meilichios," *Mythos* 3 (1991), pp. 19–47; the author, after examining the evidence on the cult of Zeus Meilichios in the various areas of Greece and the Greek colonies, conjectured that a *genos* (descent, stock) or a *thiasos* (cult retinue) could procure a sacralized space in the rock for its purposes, carve a niche in it, and in that niche inscribe a dedication, as seen, for instance, in Thera and Cyrene. If that were the case, it is possible that the current relief might have enjoyed a similar placement in the Meilichios sanctuary at Selinunte.

25. See C. Marconi, "Due studi sulle metope figurate dei templi C e F di Selinunte," *RivIstArch* 18 (1995), pp. 5–67; MARCONI 1997, pp. 121–34; and MARCONI 2006, pp. 621–30.

26. For ties between Nisaean Megara and Argos, see K. Hanell, *Megarische Studien* (Lund, 1934); and PICCIRILLI 1975, pp. 86–90.

27. In this connection, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 204–5; and CUSUMANO 1997–98; on the presence of Orestes in Sicily and Magna Graecia, see also G. Camassa, "I culti dell'area dello stretto," in *Lo Stretto crocevia di culture*, *AttiTaranto 26, 1986* (Taranto, 1987), pp. 133–62; A. Coppola, *Archaiologhía e propaganda* (Rome 1995), pp. 161–73; see also the exegesis of the *pinakes* from Francavilla di Sicilia assignable to types IX and XI, interpreted as Orestes and Iphigenia, in U. Spigo, "I pinakes di Francavilla di Sicilia: Nuova classificazione e brevi note sugli aspetti cultuali," in *DAMARATO* 2000, pp. 208–20, esp. pp. 213–14.

28. For the role played by Apollo within family relationships, see MARCONI 1997, pp. 131–33.

29. Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* fr. 23a M-W. In this context, see the analysis and the hypothesis of recontextualization of several fragments from a figured white-ground lekythos with a scene of the sacrifice of Iphigenia found in the area of the Malophoros Sanctuary in Selinunte: C. Marconi, "Iphigenia a Selinunte," *Prospettiva* 75–76 (1994), pp. 50–54. For the account of Stesichorus, see M. Davies, *Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 1, frag. 215. For the presence of Iphigenia in Megara, see PICCIRILLI 1975, frag.15.

30. For the enclosure of Hekate, identified in some cases as the "Pasikrateia" mentioned in the inscription of Temple G (*IG* XIV 268), see GABRICI 1927, coll. 73–75; and DEWAILLY 1992, pp. 146–48.

31. In this connection, see CURTI AND VAN BREMEN 1999, p. 24.

32. See Pausanias 1.43.1; K. Hanell, *Megarische Studien* (Lund, 1934), p. 97; PICCIRILLI 1975, pp. 117–19.

33. On the relations between the homeland and the colonies regarding the cults, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 204–5. For the presence of the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros in Nisaean Megara, see Pausanias 1.44.3; C. Antonetti, "Megara e le sue colonie: un'unità storico-culturale?" in ANTONETTI 1997, pp. 83–94; and L. Pareti, "Per una storia dei culti della Sicilia antica: Selinunte e Megara Iblea," in his *Studi siciliani ed italioti* (Florence, 1920), pp. 227–72.

34. See the observations in A. F. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (London, 1990), pp. 115–16, and in MARCONI 2009, pp. 193–96, for a small Late Archaic relief from Selinunte in which the heads of the two figures are still frontal.

35. See also the high-relief Archaic female figure from the *temenos* of Hekate in the Malophoros Sanctuary, turned for a three-quarters view: GABRICI 1927, col. 91, pl. XXXI, no. 4. For the theme of the frontal face adopted in the Selinunte sculpture, which seems more connected to visual strategies than to chronological assessments, see MARCONI 2009, pp. 217–22.

36. For this aspect in terracottas, see also the massive legs of the male figure in the *arula* from Monte San Mauro, with sow and piglets, in LENTINI 1993, pp. 127–28, no. 32.

37. ØSTBY 1987, pp. 133–35, emphasizes the tendency both in stone sculpture and in terracotta to work the eyes as globular forms without details. For the relations between coroplastic production and sculpture in Selinunte, see E. Paribeni, "Profilo storico-critico delle sculture selinuntine,"in TUSA 1984, pp. 26–31; MARCONI 1994, pp. 215–19; and PECORARO 2001, which emphasizes an intentional incorporation, in certain *arulae* of the Malophoros sanctuary, of the iconographic themes of the small metopes. It may be that large-production terracottas can also provide significant evidence relative to phenomena of cultural conservatism and iconographic persistence, which are so characteristic of the artistic models used in the western Greek cities; an overall analysis of the reliefs and *arulae* from Malophoros and a general reconsideration of the sanctuary, with a broader view of its contextual and cult milieu, could test this hypothesis. More recently, consider the observations in PAUTASSO 2012.

38. For the stylistic problem of Temple C, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 176–84; for the small metopes, pp. 99–104. Tubular arms also characterize the winged figure in an Archaic metope, possibly from Gela; see FISCHER-HANSEN 1992, pp. 24–25, no. 1.

39. See MARCONI 2007, pp. 122–24. The same globular definition of the eyes can be found in the figures of Temple C; see, for instance, the female figure in the fragmentary metope in MARCONI 2007, p. 136, fig. 166. Similar characteristics are also found in other terracotta reliefs, such as the head, again from the Malophoros sanctuary, in GABRICI 1927, pp. 190–91, pl. XXX, no. 1, and a female figure, pl. XXXI, no. 3, especially for the rendering of the ears and the curls on the forehead. The mouth of Clytemnestra, with small, fleshy, horizontal lips, does not present the Archaic smile and seems like a distant heritage of the sub-Daedalic tradition, but the face, inscribed in an oval, belongs to the realm of Archaic sculpture; for this aspect, see G. Vallet and F. Villard, "Mégara Hyblaea: VIII: Remarques sur la plastique du VII siècle," *MÉFRA* 76 (1964), pp. 25–42.

40. For the rendering of the locks of hair at Selinunte, see the relief from the Casa del Viaggiatore in R. Camerata Scovazzo, "Soprintendenza Beni Culturali e Ambientali: Sezione per i Beni archeologici—Trapani: Aggiornamento attività 1988/1992," *Kokalos* 39–40 (1993–94), vol. II.2, pp. 1423–1456, esp. pp. 1436–40, pl. CCX. For the Quadriga metope, see MARCONI 2007, fig. 45. Orestes' hair is modeled the same way as that of the male figure in the Malophoros relief; see GABRICI 1927, pl. XXXI, no. 4. For comparisons with small bronzes, see the hairstyle of the bronze Siren from Edifice B of the sanctuary at Capo Colonna in Crotone, datable to just after the middle of the sixth century BC, which has been identified as a Corinthian production influenced by Laconian prototypes: see R. Spadea, "Oggetti figurati in bronzo," in R. Belli Pasqua and R. Spadea, eds., *Kroton e il suo territorio tra VI e V secolo a.C.: Aggiornamenti e nuove ricerche: Atti del Convegno di studi, Crotone, 3–5 marzo 2000* (Crotone, 2005), pp. 25–41; and STIBBE 2001, fig. 7.

41. The cultural context is described by M. Torelli, "La cultura artistica dell'età arcaica," in R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Storia e civiltà dei Greci*, vol. 2 (Milan, 1979), pp. 688–720. On the importation into the west of Peloponnesian metal artifacts, see GABRICI 1927, col. 346–47, fig. 145; see also BELVEDERE 1982, pp. 88–89, n. 110.

42. C. M. Stibbe, *The Sons of Hephaistos: Aspects of the Archaic Greek Bronze Industry* (Rome, 2000), pp. 122–27, figs. 80–82.

43. On the Corinthian influence on Sicilian and Selinuntine sculpture, see MARCONI 2007, pp. 176–84; U. Spigo, "Corinto e la Sicilia: Gli influssi dell'arte corinzia nella cultura figurativa dell'arcaismo siceliota: Alcuni aspetti," in *Corinto e l'Occidente*, *AttiTaranto 34, 1994* (Taranto, 1995), pp. 551–83, esp. pp. 566–69; STIBBE 2001, pp. 27–28; ØSTBY 1982, pp. 15–16; and PAUTASSO 2012.

44. On Aegean influences on the plastic arts of Selinunte in the middle of the sixth century BC, see ØSTBY 1987, pp. 127–28. For the role and influence of the Samians in Sicily, ROLLEY 1994–99, vol. 1, pp. 299–300. See also F. Croissant, "La diffusione dei modelli stilistici greco-orientali nella coroplastica arcaica della Grecia d'Occidente," in *Magna Grecia e oriente mediterraneo prima dell'età ellenistica, AttiTaranto 39, 1999* (Taranto, 2000), pp. 417–55. The elongation of the figures is also present in the Archaic Laconian plastic arts in which Eastern influences can be detected; see P. G. Guzzo, "Gioie clandestine," *RM* (1987), pp. 162–81, fig. 1.

45. For this aspect, see MARCONI 2009, pp. 195–99, and C. Antonetti, "Megara e le sue colonie: un'unità storico-culturale?," in ANTONETTI 1997, pp. 83–94. For more on relations in general between the colonial experience and the mother cities, see M. C. Parra, "L'arte greca in Italia meridionale, tra scoperte, riscoperte, ricezione," in CATONI AND SETTIS 2008, pp. 79–91; and P. Orlandini, "L'arte in Magna Grecia e in Sicilia: Aspetti e problemi," in *Les Grecs et l'Occident*: *Actes du colloque de la Villa 'Kerylos' (1991)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 208 (Paris, 1995), pp. 123–39.