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ARTEMIS, THE BEAR AND THE MOTHERS OF ENGYON

Reception of the Ionic *Kourotrophos*' Model in Ancient Sicily between Mythic Survivals and Cultic Revivals

Giuseppina Paola Viscardi

ABSTRACT

The Sicilian *polis* of Engyon was famous for the *epiphaneia* of the Goddesses called *Meteres*, whose temple was considered a Cretan foundation. In the literary sources the Mothers of Engyon are defined as the *korai* or *nymphai* identifiable with the bears who were nurses of Zeus on the Idaean Mount in Crete, afterwards associated with a single goddess, the *Mater Idaea* (Rhea/Cybele). The aim of the paper is to analyze the possible incidence of the Ionic *kourotrophos*' model on the Mother(s) cult of Engyon, as it could be inferred by considering the peculiar relationship between Artemis and the Bear, subject to subsequent forms of cultural contamination.

1. *The Mothers of Engyon: Accounts of Cult's Foundation (Plutarch and Diodorus)*

From the lost historical and ethnographic work of Posidonius of Apamea (c. 135 BC – 51 BC) Plutarch of Chaeronea (46 AD – c. 122 AD) drew the source of the 20th chapter of his *Life of Marcellus*, a work dedicated to the historical figure, the Roman general who was known to have repressed the revolt of Syracuse,¹ bringing this ancient city of Doric foundation (733 BC), situated in the south-eastern part of Sicily, back under the influence of Rome.² The facts date back to 212 BC, as reported by

¹ After the victory of Cannae, following the example of Philip V king of the Macedonians, Hieronymus, tyrant of Syracuse, had fallen under the influence of the Carthaginian agents Hippocrates and Epicydes,.

² The entire south-eastern area of the island was probably finally completely conquered by the Carthaginians in 241 BC, at the end of the First Punic War, following the defeat suffered by the Romans in the renowned battle of the Egadi.

Plutarch (derived, in turn, from Posidonius), and narrate the escape of Nicia—a supporter, unlike his fellow-citizens, of an open philo-Roman policy—from his opponents’ attempts to eliminate him. At that time, Nicia was the leading citizen of Engyon, a town “not large, but very ancient”,³ variously identified by scholars with Gangi or Nicosia⁴ or, according to the hypothesis accredited to Moses I. Finley, with the present day Troina, in the province of Enna,⁵ a high-elevation village (1121 metres of altitude) in the Nebrodi Park. In classical antiquity Engyon was a military centre *par excellence*, located on a communication route between western and eastern Sicily. It was therefore also particularly sought out by people who eventually settled there on the island as conquerors or liberators.

Since ancient times, Engyon was famous for the appearance (ἐπιφάνεια) of certain goddesses called *Meteres*, who were the object of a special public worship not only by the local population but also by the inhabitants of near-by areas, as well as of other Siceliot cities. All these people travelled to Engyon to honor the Mothers with the offer of rich votive gifts, as had been suggested by the oracles of Apollo. The sanctuary dedicated to the goddesses was therefore extremely popular and caused wonder not only because of its excellence in size, but also because of the expense incurred in its construction. Diodorus, in a passage from the *Bibliotheca Historica*, wrote:

“for since the people had no suitable stone in their own territory they brought it from their neighbors, the inhabitants of the town of Agyrium,⁶ though the cities were nearly one hundred stades apart and the road by which they had to transport the blocks were rough and altogether hard to traverse” (*trans. by C.H. Oldfather 1989*).

³ Plut. *Marc.* 20. 1; cf. Posidonius. *FGrH* 87, F 43 Jacoby.

⁴ Bérard 1957: 315, 366, 408-409, 411-412 (Engyon = Gangi); Sfameni Gasparro 1973: 153.

⁵ Finley 1968: 125.

⁶ The birthplace of Diodorus Siculus.

The temple of the Mothers was traditionally considered to be a Cretan establishment. Inside the sanctuary, “certain spears and bronze helmets” were exhibited as trophies. Some objects of such a votive set were engraved with the names of Meriones, a Cretan hero known as the legendary colonizer of Sicily, and of Odysseus, “who had consecrated them to the goddesses.”⁷ A particularly enthusiastic aspect of the cult also emerges from Plutarch’s account. It was clearly identified as a cult of possession, with which Nicia pretended to have been affected in order to escape unharmed from the city, along with his family, and to find refuge with Marcellus in Syracuse. Plutarch writes:

“Just as they were ready to arrest him, an assembly of the citizens was held, and here Nicia, right in the midst of some advice that he was giving to the people, suddenly threw himself upon the ground, and after a little while, amid the silence and consternation which naturally prevailed, lifted his head, turned it about, and spoke in a low and trembling voice, little by little raising and sharpening its tones. And when he saw the whole audience struck dumb with horror, he tore off his mantle, rent his tunic, and leaping up half naked, ran towards the exit from the theatre, crying out that he was pursued by the Mothers. No man ventured to lay hands upon him or even, out of superstitious fear, to get in his way. All avoided him as he ran out to the gate of the city, freely using all the cries and gestures that would become a man possessed and crazed” (*trans. by B. Perrin 1917*).⁸

The Mothers would appear to individuals while they were immersed in a trance and would harass all those who (as Nicia had publicly done) denied seeing their apparitions.⁹ The features of these goddesses, however, remains unknown. Other

⁷ Plut. *Marc.* 20. 1.

⁸ Plut. *Marc.* 20. 5.

⁹ Cf. Rouget 1980.

significant data regarding the religious cult are found in an extract from Diodorus' 4th book of his encyclopaedic work, which, in addition to being inspired most probably by a passage from Posidonius—as Arnaldo Momigliano suggested¹⁰—also appears to be based on local traditions, perhaps derived from *Sikelikai Historiai*, written by Timaeus of Tauromenium (c. 350 - 260 BC).¹¹

A re-reading of this passage (IV. 79-80) in the *Bibliotheca Historica* takes one back, first, to Sicania and to the middle Platani Valley where the legend of Daedalos, Minos and King Kokalos and the saga of the Cretans in Sicily is specifically set. The story, as it is told in detail by Diodorus, was already known by Herodotus, who, in re-narrating the death of Minos, recalled what had happened “three generations before the Trojan war” (Hdt. VII. 170-171).¹²

2. The Cretan Legend of Minos and Kokalos

The Cretan myth of Minos and Kokalos is well known.¹³ The Cretan King Minos, Lord of the seas, went to Kamikos—in the area where Agrigento was later founded—and resided at the Sicanian King Kokalos's court in order to take revenge on Daedalos, the craftsman who built the famous labyrinth and invented many tricky devices. Daedalos, in fact, after having fled with his son Icaros on mechanical wings which he himself had created, was said to have found refuge in Sicily. “Minos, then, in the search for Daedalos in Sicania—now known as Sicily--died a violent death” (*trans. by C.H. Oldfather 1989*). As the story is told, Minos, having been falsely led to a hot bath by Kokalos's daughters, fell into a deathly trap ordered by Kokalos himself. Stranded, without a guide, and unable to return to their homeland due to the burning of

¹⁰ Momigliano 1975: 36-38.

¹¹ Diod. Sic. IV 79-80.

¹² Trans. by A.D. Godley 1920.

¹³ For the first complete discussion of the literary sources, see Bérard 1957: 407-413.

their ships, the Cretans who had followed Minos landed on the coastal settlement of Sicily, that was named Minoa after them. There they gave a proper burial to their king's corpse, which thereafter was placed in a tomb with an adjacent or, rather, overlying temple dedicated to Aphrodite, and which eventually became a very popular place of worship, highly venerated by the native people. After an unsuccessful attempt to avenge Minos' death by means of a five-year siege of the city of Kamikos, the members of a subsequent expedition of Cretans were thought to have moved towards the island's hinterland in order to build in Engyon a sanctuary dedicated to the worship of the triad of *Meteres*. This sanctuary was venerated not only by the local inhabitants but also by those from neighbouring areas.

As Carla Guzzone¹⁴ rightly observed,¹⁵ credit is due to Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli who first "re-read" the story written by Diodorus, which tells of the Cretans in Sicily, not so much as a late version of the myth forged by the Cretans as founders of Gela, who aimed to give credence to existing bonds with the geographical area of the Sicania, but more as an echo of the real relationships that occurred in the most distant past between the Aegean world and the southern coast of the Tyrrhenian island. It is in fact plausible that, as Pugliese writes, at the basis of the connection between Minos and Kamikos has been a persistent memory of relationships between that place and the world with which, for the Greeks, the name of Minos was intimately connected. For Carratelli, in sum, the Achaean colonial migration to the West must be related to the one which went towards Anatolia.¹⁶

These relationships testify to the extensive network of exchanges that occurred in the Aegean world in the proto-archaic age, according to two main directives. One was related to the Phoenician-Greek connection (the 'sea-route' = Phoenician mediation), and, the other, to the Microasiatic-Ionic connection (the 'land-route' =

¹⁴ Superintendant of Cultural and Environmental Heritage of Caltanissetta.

¹⁵ Guzzone 2006: 26-33.

¹⁶ Pugliese Carratelli 1956: 97-99: "... La zona sud-occidentale dell'isola, rimasta immune da movimenti di popoli, si sia presentata più agevolmente penetrabile a quei «Micenei» che dopo la dissoluzione degli stati achei del Peloponneso ... cercavano nuove sedi in Oriente e in Occidente, lungo le vie tracciate da navigatori e mercanti egei".

Anatolian mediation) that was supposed to have given rise to the wider phenomenon of the Mediterranean *koinè*, which included the Persian, the Assyro-Babylonian, and the Egyptian civilizations.¹⁷

The interaction between Sicilian and the Aegeo-Anatolian populations (the “Achaean of Crete”),¹⁸ was initially launched by sea for commercial reasons between the fifteenth and fourteenth century BC. Over the passage of time it changed, and is thought to have evolved and reached real and proper settlements of small nuclei of escapees and defectors from collapsed Mycenaean kingdoms that were recorded around the thirteenth century BC. Eventually, from the interactions between these culturally dominant peoples and the co-eval local communities, a cultural Sicanian character, strongly pervaded with Aegean-Mycenaean traditions and aspects, may have arisen, that was then preserved in time and reappeared periodically, culminating in a fully historical age.¹⁹

Before the suggestions of Pugliese Carratelli, Emanuele Ciaceri had downplayed the active function of the eastern, Phoenician-Punic element,²⁰ whereas Biagio Pace and his disciple Paolo Enrico Arias emphasized the

¹⁷ Mazarino 1947: 248: the Greek cultural loans coming from the Near East “si distinguono in chiaro modo a seconda che si spieghino con l’attività commerciale fenicia (*sea-route*) o con le esperienze comuni a Greci e barbari in Asia Minore (*land-route*)” (281-285). See, also, Burkert 1998: 55-73, reprint in Burkert 2000: 93-116. On the chance of loans “from the Luwian-Aramaic-Phoenician sphere” that could have supplied Greeks with “the eastern models” from whom they were affected “to a significant degree” in religion as well as literature, cf. Burkert 1992: 6-9; Id. 1999: *passim*. On the “pelasgian question” in Italy (and Sicily), see also the recent work by Nizzo 2013, spec. 31f.

¹⁸ Cf. Stavrianopoulou (1993: 161-175): a *lex sacra* from Eleutherna (*SEG* 41, 744; *EBGR* 1991, 226) attests the cult of Materes in this Cretan city; the identity of these Materes is not clear, and an identification with Demeter and Persephone is not probable. The new epigraphic find confirms that the cult existed on Crete and suggest a Cretan origin for the cult in Engyon. In view of the legends about Minos’ adventures and death in Sicily, the possibility of close contacts between Crete and Engyon before the age of colonization should not be excluded.

¹⁹ This was due to the geographical isolation of Sicania with respect to the cultural flows of Italic-peninsular origin (that were at the same time recorded in central and eastern Sicily), and to the belated impact of the colonial phenomenon in the same area, that was characterized by the foundation of Phoenician settlements (such as the *emporion* of Motya, Panormus, Soloeis, Birgi, and Lilybaeum). The north-western coast of Sicily, also including extended inland areas, was inhabited at least from the end of the eighth century BC, according to Thucydides (VI 6.2), by Elimi (who settled in the west) and Sicanians (who settled in the central west). The large coastal areas were reached at a later date, both in the North and in the South, by the expansion of the Greeks towards the west of the island with their founding of Himera and Selinus.

²⁰ It should be specified that despite the radical “pro-nativism” of subsequent years (*Storia della Magna Grecia* 1924-1932), in his first written work of 1911 Ciaceri does not particularly insist on the propulsive function of the indigenous substrate, instead stating that “indigenous gods and heroes almost completely disappeared at the time of the Hellenic religion influence”. Cf. Casadio 2005: 248-249, and n. 20.

influential presence in Sicily of an autochthonous pre-Greek religious stratum, embracing a thesis which later was sharply criticized by Angelo Brelich.²¹

As regards the Mothers of Engyon, it was therefore assumed that their cult, presumably of Cretan origin, had been grafted onto a pre-existing cult. Relying on a *dictum* from Pythagoras—quoted by Timaeus—in which the Mothers were assimilated to the Nymphs and Korai,²² the Goddesses of Engyon were identified in nymph-triads represented on Siceliot reliefs and coins.²³ The Posidonius and Diodorus passages, however, seem to refer to specific deities. There have been attempts to identify them with the three small female figures wrapped in a cloak that were found in a tomb in Cyprus as well as with those of a larger size which were represented in a bas-relief found at Camaro, near Messina. Moreover, the same Mothers were recalled in connection with the nymphs portrayed in some votive offerings discovered at the Thracian sanctuary of Saladinovo.²⁴

3. Artemis, the Nymph(s), and the Bear(s): the Greek Mythico-Ritual

Background

Diodorus's testimony focuses especially on the identification of the *Meteres* with the *Nymphai*. This, added to the claim of a Cretan foundation of the sanctuary, clearly refers to the mythical tradition concerning the birth of Zeus in one of the caves of the Cretan Mount *Aigaios*, subsequently identified with Ditte or with Ida, the last

²¹ Brelich 1964-1965: 35-54. In this regard see, also, the recent work of Pedrucci (2009: 42-43), who basically accepts the hypothesis of the indigenous and pre-Hellenic origin of the worship paid to not better-specified female deities ('a jumble of indigenous female deities', in the words of the authoress) by a mainly fertile and chthonian nature; these goddesses were generically designated as Paidēs, Meteres, Korai, and then they were identified, because of the Greek influence, with Nymphai. In her reading, Pedrucci is openly influenced by the thesis of Guarducci (1936: 31): "Appare molto logico, e direi quasi naturale, che i Greci distinguessero con dei nomi generici divinità locali ch'essi male comprendevano." Cf. Martorana 1985: 16-17. In my opinion, even if it is unquestionable that the indigenous setting furnished the suitable religious *humus* for the reception of a specific cultic settlement, one has just to take into major account the set of beliefs that the Greek colonizers took with them and the related phenomena of mutual acculturation.

²² Timaeus. *FGrH* 3b, 566, F 17 Jacoby (*apud* Diog. Laert. VIII 11): Τίμαιός τε φησιν ἐν δεκάτῳ Ἱστοριῶν λέγειν αὐτὸν (*scil.* Πυθαγόραν) τὰς συνοικούσας ἀνδράσι θεῶν ἔχειν ὀνόματα, Κόρας, Νύμφας, εἶτα μητέρας <καὶ μαίας> καλουμένας.

²³ Ciaceri 1911: 241; cf. 5-7., 120-123, 306-309; Arias 1935: 605-608; Pace 1945: 486-488.

²⁴ Putorti 1922-23: 203-210; Zuntz 1971: 69.

one also recalling Microasiatic scenarios in reference to the homonymous mount in the Troad.²⁵ According to the myth, Rhea took refuge in Cretan Mt. Ida to take the infant Zeus away from the sight of Kronos, devourer of children, until he was able to dethrone him.

The new-born god was thought to have been brought up by two nymphs or two she-bears—according to different versions—Helike and Kynosoura, who were then transformed by a grateful Zeus into the two constellations, the Great Bear and the Little Bear, also known as the “Big Dipper” and the “Little Dipper”. Thanks to them, “the Achaeans predicted the routes to follow.” The Phoenicians (those very Phoenicians who, according to Plutarch, highly venerated the Mothers), especially the men from Sidon, directed their own vessels on the right path, as recalled by Aratus of Solis in his *Phaenomena*.²⁶

On either side the Axis ends in two Poles, but thereof the one is not seen, whereas the other faces us in the north high above the ocean. Encompassing it, two Bears [Ursa Major and Minor] wheel together—wherefore they are also called the Wains. Now they ever hold their heads each toward the flank of the other, and are borne along always shoulder-wise, turned alternate on their shoulders. If, indeed, the tale be true, from Crete they, by the will of mighty Zeus, entered up into heaven, for that when in olden days he played as a child in fragrant Diktaeon, near the hill of Ida, they set him in a cave and nurtured him for the space of a year, at what time the Diktaean Kouretes were deceiving Kronos. Now men call the one by name Kynosoura, and the other Helike. It is by Helike that the Achaeans on the sea divine which way to steer their ships, but the Phoenicians put their trust in the other when they cross the sea. Helike,

²⁵ Hes. *Theog.* 484. The “goats’ mount”, ὄρος Αἰγαῖος, is onomastically related to the Αἰγαῖος πέλαγος (Aesch. *Ag.* 659), or the Αἰγαῖος πόντος (Pl. *Eleg.* IX 1; Arist. *Meteor.* 354a.14; etc.), as well as to the title of Poseidon (Pherecyd. *frg.* 115 *apud* Schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* I 831).

²⁶ Aratus *Phaen.* I 25-40.

appearing large at earliest night, is bright and easy to mark; but the other is small, yet better for sailors: for in a smaller orbit wheel all her stars. By her guidance, then, the men of Sidon steer the straightest course.

(Aratus *Phaen.* I 25-40, *trans. by A.W. Mair & G.R. Mair* 1921)

Diodorus, therefore, explicitly referring to the informative astronomical treatise drawn up by Aratus around 275 BC, identifies the Mothers of Engyon with the two bears that were supposed to have nursed the infant Zeus on Cretan Mt. Ida, while Kronos was distracted by the noise produced by the Curetes' spears. The Curetes were mentioned for the first time by Homer as a people from Aetolia;²⁷ in later tradition, they were seven brothers native to-Euboea, sons of Soco and Combe (or Chalcis). These brothers, after having been driven out of Euboea, were thought to have first landed in Crete, then in Phrygia (where they raised Dionysus), eventually arriving in Attica, from where they finally returned to their homeland.²⁸ It is to be noted that the Curetes were also considered the oldest inhabitants of Crete,²⁹ and were typically associated with the worship of Bacchus/ Dionysus Zagreus before being confused during the Hellenistic period with the Corybantes, who were the priests of Kybele in Phrygia and ministers of Hekate in Samothrace.³⁰ The figure of the infant Zeus brought up by animals (later anthropomorphized)—such as the nymph/ goat Amaltheia (who was also transformed into a constellation), the dog, the sow, the swarm of bees³¹—is very far from the image of the Olympic sovereign of Indo-European origin.

Cretan myths are generally thought to refer to an older cultural background,³² where the same issue of the kourotrophic relationship between the animal and the god

²⁷ Homer *Il.* IX 529, 532, 549, 551, 589.

²⁸ Strabo X 3.1.

²⁹ Ister. *FGrH* 334, F 48 Jacoby = Porph. *De abst.* II 56.

³⁰ Cf. Soubiran 1981: 185, n. 8. In the paraphrastic report of the Aratus's *Phaenomena* compiled by the Latin writer Avienus there is also a reference to the Arcadian myth of Callisto (vv. 99-101).

³¹ Cf. Neustadt 1906; Verbruggen 1981.

³² Nilsson 1950: 533ff. and 1967³: 319ff.; Aly 1912: 457ff.; Chantraine 1953: 65-66.

seems to acquire a structural functionality, which is analogous to the role covered by the theriomorphic or hybrid entities in the Minoan and Mycenaean culture, and generally in the Near-Eastern tradition of the second millennium BC (compare ancient Cretan myth of the birth of the Minotaur from Minos).³³ As previously mentioned, the reference to Cretan traditions on the birth of Zeus evokes eastern-oriented mythical scenarios, especially the caves of the Asian Ida where the Corybantes (Asiatic equivalent of the Curetes) performed their orgiastic dances in honor of the *Meter* (the Phrygian Rhea, Cybele). But there is much more.

Near Cyzicus, in the Propontis (present-day Sea of Marmara), there was a “Mountain of Bears” (Ἄρκτων ὄρος), which is mentioned in Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*.³⁴ The scholiast of the text indicates that this mountain was so-named in memory of Zeus’s nursing bears. In a mountainous and isolated region of the Peloponnesus, such as Arcadia, Cretan myths were also interwoven with local traditions recorded by Pausanias, according to which Zeus was not born in Crete but in a region of Arcadia known as “Cretea,” located on Mount Lycaeus. The Arcadians called this mountain “Olympus” or “Sacred Peak”. It was at a short distance from a sanctuary dedicated to the *Despoina* or “Mistress”, where it seems there was an Artemis statue, wrapped in deer skin, with a quiver on her shoulders and lighted torches in her hands, and she was positioned next to Demeter.³⁵ Still, according to some Arcadian versions of the myth, one of Zeus’s nurses, Helike, was actually the daughter of the Arcadian king Lycaon; according to some versions she was also identified

³³ As regards the structural relationship between hybrids and sovereignty, cf. Cultraro 2001: 359-360.

³⁴ Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* I 936.

³⁵ Paus. VIII 37.1-10, and 38.2: “On the left of the sanctuary of the Mistress is Mount Lycaeus. Some Arcadians call it Olympus, and others Sacred Peak. On it, they say, Zeus was reared. There is a place on Mount Lycaeus called Cretea, on the left of the grove of Apollo surnamed Parrhasian. The Arcadians claim that the Crete, where the Cretan story has it that Zeus was reared, was this place and not the island” (transl. by W.H.S. Jones). The same epithet Δέσποινα is attributed to Hecate (Aesch. *frag.* 388 Nauck) as well as to Artemis (Soph. *El.* 626; etc.), and especially to Persephone, the virgin Lady of the realm of the dead.

with the nymph Phoenix, who was seduced by Zeus and turned into a bird by Artemis. Here a contamination can be seen, one already reported by Callimachus, between the myths related to the birth of Zeus in Crete and the Arcadian myths of Kallisto, the “most beautiful” daughter of Lycaon who in some versions of the myth was a lover of Zeus and the mother of the eponymous hero of the Arcadians, Arcas; she was transformed into a bear, and then killed by Artemis and finally lifted into the sky to become the Bear constellation.³⁶

The Arcadian-Cypriot dialect, among the Greek dialects, is the one that shows the strongest affinity with the language of the peoples who conquered Crete around the middle of the second millennium BC, that is to say the Linear B of the Mycenaean populations. The joining of the two groups of myths—Cretan and Arcadian—would suggest a very ancient set of contacts between the two Cretan and Arcadian cultures. This would be confirmed by the recurrence of the main narrative elements in both groups of myths: bears-nymphs-Zeus-*Catasterismi*. What varies are their combinations and immediate functions.

Through the myth of Kallisto—a true myth of re-foundation—the Pelasgians had become Arcadians,³⁷ whose name, according to a popular etymology, recalls that of the bear (ἄρκτος, ἄρκος). For a long time Kallisto was seen as a hypostatic form of Artemis, and the metamorphosis of the king’s daughter-nymph into a bear was considered a clear reference to the ancient theriomorphic nature of the goddess, connected to the kourotrophic function with which Artemis was credited in the myth as well as in the ritual (through her role of tutelary deity for rites of passage). In fact, the bear—like the deer—is an animal closely related to Artemis’ sphere due to its association with the female fertility and, in particular, with the moment of birth. Although one should be prudent in handling concepts such as theriomorphism and

³⁶ Cf. Reinach 1906: 150-160; Lévêque 1961: 93-108; Sale 1965: 11-35; Borgeaud 1979: 41-43; Henrichs 1987: 254-256.

³⁷ Paus. VIII 3.7.

hypostasis,³⁸ yet one cannot avoid taking into account some indisputable documentary data. In the first place, the presence of the worship dedicated to Artemis *Kalliste*³⁹ in Athens was identified in a late gloss of Hesychius with the “Hecate venerated at the Kerameikos”.⁴⁰ Second is the ritual practice celebrated in Brauron by the Athenian *parthenoi*, who acted or “mimicked” the bear to honor the goddess before the wedding.⁴¹

As regards the rite of the bears in Brauron, in particular, it is worth remembering the hypothesis put forward—in a diffusionist perspective—by Elinor Bevan in an article published in 1987⁴² about the possible spread of a bear-ritualism originating in the Peloponnese, established in Brauron and then merging with the worship of a pre-existing *Kourotrophos* divinity. It is connected to the cult of Iphigenia, first priestess of the temple of Artemis in Brauron to whom the robes (*pepla*) of women in labor were consecrated.⁴³ In my opinion, the diffusionist hypothesis of Bevan, who sees the Peloponnese as the centre of spread of a certain type of ritual linked to the figure of the bear, gains value if we consider again the gloss of Hesychius. The hesychian gloss argues that *Kalliste* is not only an epithet shared in Athens by Artemis and Hecate but also is the ancient name of Thera,⁴⁴ the island of volcanic origin (just like Nebrodi Park where Troina is located), eighty kilometres from Crete. Crete was formerly inhabited by people descended from Phoenician Cadmus. According to Herodotus, this population “inhabited the island named Kalliste

³⁸ Vedi Arrigoni 1984.

³⁹ Paus. I 29.2. It’s probably that the same goddess was cried out for help by pregnant women, as it could be inferred by the typology of the *ex-voto* coming from the excavation *area* of the sanctuary, whose *peribolos* – where the *xoana* of *Ariste* and *Kalliste* were located—is mentioned by Pausanias.

⁴⁰ Hesych. s.v. <Καλλίστη> [...] καὶ ἡ ἐν τῷ Κεραμεικῷ ἰδρυμένη Ἑκάτη, ἣν ἔνιοι Ἄρτεμιν λέγουσιν.

⁴¹ Aristoph. *Lys.* 638-647 and related *scholia*; cf. Photius and *Suda*. s.v. <ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίως>.

⁴² E. Bevan, “Artemis and the Dedication of Bears in the Sanctuaries,” *ABSA* 82 (1987) 17-21.

⁴³ Eur. *IT* 1462-1467.

⁴⁴ Hesych. s.v. Καλλίστη· ἡ Θήρα τὸ πρότερον.

for eight generations,” before the arrival of the eponymous hero, Thera, from Sparta.⁴⁵

On the island of Thera/ Kalliste, there was also the ancient Minoan settlement of Akrotiri, of the same name as Cape Akrotiri, located along the west coast of Crete, where it seems there was a Mycenaean city called Kynosoura, that is, the name of one of Zeus’s nursing bears. It is still possible to see there a “Cave of the She-bear” (*Arkoudia*), so-called from the impressive stalagmite whose shape precisely evokes the figure of a bear. Fragments of Artemis and Apollo images dating back to the classical and Hellenistic period were also found in this cave.⁴⁶

4. (Re)elaborating a Transfunctional Deity of Greece, Asia Minor, and Rome: From Plures to One in the Interpretation of a Roman Writer (Cicero)

To return to the figure of one of Zeus’ nursing goddesses (with the ancient bear shape), the name of Adrasteia (“the inescapable,” that is also a title of Nemesis)⁴⁷ must not be forgotten. She was a Thracian-Phrygian divinity, the object of cult in Athens alongside the Thracian goddess Bendis, who also becomes a hunter at night and therefore a companion of Artemis.⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that in Athenian religious lore, both Bendis and Adrasteia were related to Artemis.⁴⁹ In the eyes of Greek observers, it was necessary for various foreign female deity figures to call the name of the goddess, qualified with the epithet *tauropolos*—she “who drives cattle mad” (according to the *Suda*’s etymology).⁵⁰ She was thus automatically placed, in mythical representations, in “other” regions beyond the Aegean, specifically in the country of

⁴⁵ Hdt. IV 147.4.

⁴⁶ Faurè 1960: 209-215; Id. 1964: 144-146; Willetts 1962: 275-277; Antoniou 1981: 291-296. Today, in the same place, the “Virgin of the cave of the she-bear” (*Panaghia Arkoudiotissa*) is venerated: according to a local legend, the Virgin Mary, once entered the cave to refresh herself, came across a bear which was inside the cave and turned it into a stone.

⁴⁷ Aesch. *PV* 936; Pl. *Rep.* 451a.

⁴⁸ Photius s.v. <Βενδῖς> Θρακία δαίμων ὀπαδὸς Ἀρτέμιδος.

⁴⁹ Hdt. V 7; Paus. X 27, 8.

⁵⁰ *Suda*. s.v. <Ταυροπόλα> ἡ Ἄρτεμις ἢ ἐν Ταύροις τῆς Σκυθίας τιμωμένη. ἢ ἀπὸ μέρους, τῶν ποιμνίων ἐπιστάτις. ἢ ὅτι ἢ αὐτὴ τῇ σελήνῃ ἐστὶ καὶ ἐποχεῖται ταύροις· ἦν καὶ Ταυροπὸν ὀνομάζουσιν. ἢ ῥά σε Ταυροπόλος ὤρμησεν ἐπὶ βοῦς ἀγελαίας. τοὺς πολλοὺς γὰρ τῶν μαινομένων ἐκ σελήνης νοσεῖν ὑποτίθενται, διὰ τὸ τῶν νυκτερινῶν δεσπόζειν φαντασμάτων.

anthropofagous Tauri and Scythian archers, that is to say in the barbarian region of the Thracian Chersonesus. Here were set the myths related to the Goddess *Parthenos*, bloodthirsty murderer, terrifying and chaste, also evoked by the title *Hagne*,⁵¹ the “Pure”, because she turns away from the altars anyone who is polluted, “impure,” but she also is pleased with the blood poured in the sacrifices, particularly human sacrifices celebrated in her honor,⁵² as in the mythical account of the sacrificial event experienced by Iphigeneia at Aulis.

The reference to Tauris and Scythia widens once again the geographic perspective. This takes us back to the places of worship for the Phrygian *meter* Cybele, also called *Meter Megale* (the “Great Mother” or “*Magna Mater*”) or *Theon Meter* (“Mother of the Gods”). As regards the latter, Cicero’s passage about the worship paid in the *augustissimum et religiosissimum templum* of the *Magna Mater* of Engyon, the *sanctissima mater Idaea*, “the most sacred Idaean Mother,” must be taken into account:⁵³

“There is a temple of the mighty mother Idaea at Enguinum [...]. In this temple that same Publius Scipio, a man excelling in every possible good quality, had placed breastplates and helmets of brass of Corinthian workmanship, and some huge ewers of a similar description, and wrought with the same exquisite skill, and had inscribed his own name upon them. (Cic. *Verr.* II 4, 97, *trans.* by C.D. Yonge 1903)

... Oh, most holy mother of Idaea, whom he left among the Enguini, in your most august and venerated temple, plundered to such an extent, that the name only of Africanus, and some traces of your worship thus violated remain,

⁵¹ Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 135: Ἄρτεμις ἄγνά.

⁵² Eur. *IT* 380-391.

⁵³ Cic. *Verr.* II 4, 97 and 5, 186.

but the monuments of victory and all the ornaments of the temple are no longer visible.” (Cic. *Verr.* II, 5, 186, *trans.* by C.D. Yonge 1903)

In Cicero’s *interpretatio romana* one can see a real *reductio ad unum* of a divine triad, whose worship, if we accept the hypothesis of the Cretan “import,” must have joined a local cult, finding fertile ground in a region where the existence of an “indigenous goddess of life and death, protectress of the dead and fertilizer of living beings”,⁵⁴ had probably boosted the predominance of Metroac-Demetrian cults, which in turn were linked to the pair Demeter-Persephone, who were particularly rooted in Sicily and in southern Italy. Here the spread of such cults and the Hellenization of related practices appears as a result of the Syracusan policy enforced by Gelon in the first half of the fifth century BC.⁵⁵

As for the number of deities worshipped at the sanctuary of Engyon, a fluctuation similar to the one attested by the literary sources between the singular (*Mater Idaea* in Cicero) and the plural (a group of three *Meteres*, in Posidonius and Plutarch, a pair of two *nymphai/ korai/ arktoi* in Diodorus) seems to be attested also by archaeological evidence from eastern Sicily. These consist of two lead bullets (*glans plumbea*), dating back to the second servile war (lasted from 104 BC until 100 BC) and discovered in Syracuse and at Leontini, upon which a “victory of Mothers” (*nike meterōn*) and a “victory of the Mother” (*nike materos*) are respectively

⁵⁴ Hadzisteliou Price 1978: 171, n. 5. According to Ciaceri (1911: 31-32), Demeter and the *Meteres* are possibly related to local goddess Hybleia, deriving her name from ancient Hybla, like Lindia from Lindos. This scholar also associates her with the goddess Aphrodite, called with the Sicilian-Greek epithet *Gereatis*, from the root of *gerra, gerrai*. This term was used by ancient Sicilians to indicate the male and female “genitals” from which the term *Gereatis* derives which was subsequently transformed into *Geleatis* or *Galeotis*, namely “mother”.

⁵⁵ Alfieri Tonini (2012: 187-209, particularly 191f., and n. 26) recently suggests paying attention once again to the reading of Manganaro (1992: 484-486) who associated the *Meteres* of Engyon to the *Paidēs* of the Buscemi caves in Acrai (present day Palazzolo Acreide in Syracuse, built in 664/663 B.C. by the Corinthians of Syracuse) who were linked to the cult of Apollo and Anna. The latter is clearly identifiable with the local goddess-mother as well as assimilated to Anna Perenna of the Romans. Commonly considered indigenous deities and in this case Nymphs (Pugliese Carratelli 1951: 68-75), the *Paidēs* were in turn considered to be closer to the “Pure Goddesses” of Colle Orbo, near Akrai (linked to the oracular cult of Maia). Even these were apparently religious entities of the culture of the Sicilians, and of Italic origin, but their name can also remind us of the epithet ἄρνη given on Greek soil both to Artemis (as it was said) and to Demeter. However, according to Manganaro the example of the Mothers of Engyon is particularly appropriate for a better understanding of the worship paid to these local deities in Sicily.

mentioned.⁵⁶ In the same dossier, cited by Carlo Ginzburg, a reference to a votive inscription is also included, perhaps from the first century BC, stored in a *sacellum* at Allan in Dauphiné (historical French region in Roman times belonging to Gallia Narbonensis). In this inscription a certain Niger, probably a slave, addressed the *Matres* in rough Latin (*Matris V[ic]tricibus*), calling to mind the words of good wishes written upon the lead bullets used by the Sicilian slingers during the servile wars.⁵⁷ The same phenomenon of doubling and subsequent tripling from a single divine entity is well documented in the Mediterranean area and beyond.⁵⁸

The Mothers or Nymphs of Engyon bring about prosperity and growth not only in terms of physiological development, but also in terms of increased authority and of greatness (= victory, triumph, glory). This is an aspect to which the same name *Engyon* seems to allude. The name derives from the neuter adjectival form of ἔγγυος, in the sense of “safe from danger, guaranteed, protected, reliable” (Ἐγγυον: ἀσφαλές, “not liable to fall, immovable, steadfast”),⁵⁹ referring to the place which the goddesses were in charge of, given their specific kourotrophic nature.⁶⁰

The same Metroac connotation on the one hand refers to the connection with the Demetrian environment, and on the other hand to the foreign presence of the goddess “coming from an outer area,” the Anatolian *meter* Kybele, whose myth—as that of Demeter in relation to Persephone—centers around an intolerable

⁵⁶ Ginzburg 1989: 101-105; cf. De Minicis 1944: 60.

⁵⁷ Vallentin du Cheylard 1957: 67-72.

⁵⁸ Sfameni Gasparro 1973: 153-154. Cf. Ferrando 1993: 16-17. The shape of the «three» that permeates the entire ancient world both in the West and in the East and that, unlike the «two», does not seem to have been dictated by man’s immediate experience of the immanent dualism of cosmic laws, appears somewhat disguised in Christian worship to emerge then in the plots of all Indo-European fairy tales. The shape of the «three», subsequent to that of the «two», actually represents the overcoming of the binary system introduced by the principle of the double solving its dichotomy, should the «two» be thought of as opposition and difference, or amplifying the strength of the original one of which it reiterates the essence, should the «two» be thought of as duplication of the identical.

⁵⁹ *Suda*. s.v. <Ἐγγυον:> ἀσφαλές, καὶ <Ἐγγυος,> ὁ ἐγγυητής (“one who gives security, surety, guarantor”). καὶ <Ἐγγυωμένη,> ἀσφαλιζομένη (from ἀσφαλίζω, “fortify”).

⁶⁰ See the double etymological link between the term κουροτρόφος and the verbs κουρο-τρέφω (“cause to grow, or increase, bring up, rear”), and κορέννυμι > κορώνη = στεφάνη (“culmination, crown, diadem”).

grief as a consequence of Attis's death. This goddess, because of her orgiastic nature⁶¹ (and even more because of her claims of cosmic sovereignty)⁶² also recalls the figure of Hecate. This would be the tri-functional or trans-functional Hecate of Hesiod, the primigenial nurse (ἐξ ἀρχῆς κουροτρόφος) to whom Zeus granted the highest honors and power on earth, on the unfruitful sea and also in a part of the starry sky.⁶³

Hecate herself was associated with Artemis as the underground guardian, carrier of the torch and dispenser of light (καὶ νῦν Ἄρτεμις καλεῖται καὶ Φύλαξ καὶ Δαδοῦχος καὶ Φωσφόρος καὶ Χθονία), as in Callimachus' fragment (466 Pfeiffer) on the birth of Hecate from Demeter and Zeus (probably by Orphic influence) that was reported by the Scholium Ambrosianum to Theocritus (*Idyllia* 2. 12):⁶⁴

Callimachus literally says that Zeus, after having had intercourse with Demeter, sired Hecate, who distinguishes herself among the gods by strength and greatness. As he [Callimachus] says, Hecate was sent by her father beneath the earth for seeking Persephone. Therefore, she is still today called Artemis and Watcher and torch-Bearer and light-Bringer and Goddess of the nether world. (Schol. Ambros. Theocr. 2. 11/12c, *the translation is mine*)

⁶¹ In popular thought, at the end of the fifth century BC, mental and psycho-physical disorders are generally connected to a series of divine powers listed in Euripides (*Hipp.* 141-144), and ps.-Hippocrates (*Morb. Sacr.* I 80-90). In both lists there is the reference to Hecate and the "Mother of the Gods" or "Mother of the Mountain" (Cybele); Euripides adds Pan and Korybantēs, whereas in the pseudo-Hippocratic text Poseidon, Apollo and Ares Nomios appear. Cf. Dodds 1951: 122-124, nr. 88-91.

⁶² See Hymn of Epidauros of about the fifth century BC: "I shall not come back to the gods if not after I got the parts – τὰ μέρη – that I'm due: half of the sky, half of the land, a third of the sea. Then I will return". For the edition and comment of the text, cf. Wagman 1994: 108-142; Pizzocaro 1991: 233-251.

⁶³ Hes. *Theog.* 411-452. Cf. Pfister 1928: 1-9; Boedeker 1983: 79-93; Clay 1984: 27-38.

⁶⁴ Callim. *frag.* 466 Pfeiffer (F42 Kern) = *OF* 113 Bernabé = Schol. Ambros. Theocr. II 11/12c: <τᾶ χθονία Ἐκάτα>· Καλλίμαχος κατὰ λέξιν ὧδέ φησιν· ἑτῆ Δήμητρι μιχθεῖς ὁ Ζεὺς τεκνοῖ Ἐκάτην διαφέρουσαν ἰσχύϊ καὶ μεγέθει τῶν θεῶν· ἦν ὑπὸ γῆν πεμφθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς Περσεφόνης ζήτησιν <... φησιν· διὸ > καὶ νῦν Ἄρτεμις καλεῖται καὶ Φύλαξ καὶ Δαδοῦχος καὶ Φωσφόρος καὶ Χθονία. The series of epithets mentioned is substantially composed of two pairs of synonyms in chiasmic position (δαδοῦχος–φωσφόρος and φύλαξ–χθονία) where each of the two terms has the function to explain and legitimize the nature and function of the other: as a "torch bearer" Artemis/ Hecate appears as the goddess "bringer of light", as well as, as a "watcher", she oversees the threshold of which she is the "underground lady."

Thus, through overlapping Artemis with Hecate,⁶⁵ Callimachus' fragment contributes to the outline of an **epicletic** [??explain?] environment, oscillating between the development of individual shapes and the Panhellenic evolution of Artemis.⁶⁶ The same attribute of the torch, characterizing the functional nature of both goddesses who were qualified as *phosphoroi* in Callimachus, is related to older mythical traditions, alien to the traditional pantheon wherein the virgin daughter of Leto, through the epithet *phaesphoros* is placed in contiguity with Upis/ Oupis—"fair-eyed" (or "fair to look on") Queen, great goddess of Lydia, "bringer of light".⁶⁷ This is the maiden or nymph daughter of Boreas, whose mythical event was closely related to the worship of Apollo at Delos, where the association between Artemis and Hecate is particularly attested. The name of Upis/ Opis is also mentioned in the same poet's *Hymn to Artemis*, as an epithet of Artemis at Ephesus,⁶⁸ where the statue of the goddess was honored under an oak tree trunk according to the rite established by the Amazons, who may have founded the cult along micro-asiatic shores.

5. Reception of a Cultural Model in the Religious Setting of Sicily: Artemis and the Local Worships of Kourotrophic and Chthonian Goddess(es)

As regards Artemis's bond with the Eleusinian pair, Demeter and Kore, and the worship paid to the goddess in Sicily, Pausanias and Diodorus recall the ancient myth according to which Artemis of Syracuse (the most ancient and

⁶⁵ One has to remember that Artemis and Hecate are also strictly associated by the common traditional genealogy, for that both of them would be descended, through their mothers, from the same uranian progeny of Helios Hyperionides as born, respectively, by Letò and Asteria, the two sisters daughters of Phoebe and Keos, the brother of Hyperion (Hes. *Theog.* 409-411).

⁶⁶ Cf. Brulé 1998: 25-27.

⁶⁷ Callim. *Dian.* 204-205. Within the sanctuary of Artemis situated on a small plain just east of the Sacred Harbor of Delos, lies a tomb dating from Minoan times which remained holy throughout most of antiquity. Modern investigators call it the *sema* of the Hyperborean Maidens, identifying it with a tomb located "on your left as you enter the Artemisium" (Hdt. IV 34). Here lay the remains of two maidens, Hyperoche and Laodice, who had once brought a tribute to the goddess Eileithyia from the Hyperboreans and had died on the island. Callimachus, writing around 270, seems to know of this tomb; he does not mention it, but he says that the Delian girls offer their hair to the daughters of Boreas, Upis, Hecærgæ, and Loxo, who once brought a tribute from the Arimaspians (*Del.* 278ff.). And Pausanias says that the Delian maidens used to cut their hair in honor of Hecærgæ and Opis (I 43.4). Upis is quoted as "bringing sheaves" (ἀμαλλοφόρος) in Euphor. *frag.* 103 Powell. As regards the Hyperboreans, cf. Hdt. IV 33; Callim. *Del.* 282 (πολυχρονώτατον αἶμα); Hecateus Abderita. *FGrH* 264, F 12 Jacoby; Str. XV 1.57; Paus. I 31.2.

⁶⁸ Callim. *Dian.* 237-247.

main place of worship to the goddess on the island)⁶⁹ was supposed to have received, as a present from Demeter and Kore, the island of Ortygia, where the nymphs created a great spring for her, which was named Arethusa.⁷⁰ On the coins issued in the period of Timoleon (middle of the fourth century BC), the same goddess of Syracuse is called *Soteira*.⁷¹ This name was connected to the traditional Elikeia Festival of Flowers held in Aegion, the second largest city of Achaia, where the priests of the sanctuary of *Soteira* tossed into the sea special buns taken from the altar in order to send them to Arethusa in Sicily.⁷² In Syracuse, there was also a temple of Artemis *Agrotera*,⁷³ perhaps identifiable with the sanctuary discovered by Orsi,⁷⁴ whose archaeological remains cover a period of time between the fifth century BC and the early Roman age (third century BC) in a cave of Scala Greca, a district located in the northern area of the city. Excavations here have uncovered clay figurines of the goddess holding in her arms dogs, hares, deer, wild boars and figures of dancers and musicians playing timpani and double flutes alongside female figures, with a piglet clearly related to Demeter and Kore.⁷⁵ To this rural (and wild) aspect of the goddess' worship it is possible to relate the popular Syracusan festivals of Artemis *Lyaia* ("the loosener or

⁶⁹ Cordano 1986: 97.

⁷⁰ Paus. VIII 31.2; Diod. Sic. V 3.5.

⁷¹ Kahil 1984: 680, nr. 764, Pl. 507.

⁷² Paus. VII 24.3. Cf. Alfieri Tonini 2012: 194, nn. 45-47. The Archaeological excavations carried out in the course of time on the island of Ortygia showed, on the basis of a number of indigenous remains, before the foundation of the Greek colony, and the first traces of Greek presence (Orsi 1889: 369-390; Id. 1905: 381-402; Voza 1999: 77-79), the continuity of the sacred character of the highest part of the island and, above all, the importance of the cult of Artemis since the earliest stages of life of the city. In the *oikos*, a house of worship dating from the end of the eighth century BC, fragments of a Protocorinthian *oinochoe* (ca. 670 B.C.) were found which depicted the Potnia Theron. For a detailed description of this representation, the oldest evidence of the cult of Artemis and the first image of the goddess worshipped on the island, see Pelagatti 1999: 29-35 (cf. Voza 1999: 79; Fischer-Hansen 2009: 209ff., nn. 11-13). The temple of Diana (Artemis), mentioned by Cicero, together with that of Minerva (Athena) as the most important of the island (*Verr.* II 4.53), is not really that of Artemis, which at the time of Cicero was no longer visible, but that of Apollo (Cordano 1986: 98). The cult of the goddess fully spread at the end of the sixth century BC, after the area was provided with monuments thanks to the construction of the Ionic temple situated under the present Palazzo Vermexio and probably dedicated to the goddess, followed, in the early fifth century, by the nearby Athenaion, the great Doric temple built by Deinomenides in celebration of the victory of Himera (480 BC), whose remains were incorporated into the modern cathedral (Voza 1999: 79; cf. Bietti Sestieri, Lentini, and Voza 1995: 215-217).

⁷³ Schol. Homer *Il.* XXI 471.

⁷⁴ Orsi 1900: 353-387.

⁷⁵ Pace 1945: 550-552; cf. Fischer-Hansen 2009: 214.

deliverer”, from λύω)⁷⁶ in remembrance of the intervention of the goddess to loosen the town from the plague at the time of Deinomenides, in the first half of the fifth century BC. During the Syracusan festivals, shepherds offered animal-shaped loaves to the goddess and sang vulgar songs, which later Alexandrian scholars argued was the origin of bucolic poetry.⁷⁷

In ancient times, however, the belief that there was a connection between Artemis and the pair Demeter-Kore was widespread.⁷⁸ As for Hecate, the goddess appears to be rather connected to the Siceliot myth of the abduction of Kore/Persephone.⁷⁹ This is confirmed by the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, that leaves no doubt about the close connection between Demeter, Persephone and Hecate,⁸⁰ as well as by a metope from Selinus dating to the first half of the sixth century BC, in which three female figures are portrayed—each carrying an object that seems to be a small torch or a spike of wheat, and is therefore identified with the three goddesses.⁸¹ Moreover, in Syracuse Hecate is fully identified with Artemis in Theocritus’ evidence.⁸² In addition, according to the *scholium* to the above-mentioned passage by Theocritus (*Idyllia* 2. 12), reporting a note of the Syracusan mimographer

⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that Λυαία was a typical epithet of the Great Mother (κακῶν λυαία, cf. Tim. Pers. 132) as well as the corresponding male form Λυαῖος (cf. Lat. *Lyaeus*) was a well-attested epithet of Dionysos.

⁷⁷ Orsi 1915: 192-193.

⁷⁸ For example, according to Pausanias (VIII 37, 6), Artemis must have been the daughter of Demeter. In the Homeric scholia (*ad Iliadem* XXI 471), she was instead identifiable with Persephone, while Cicero considers her the daughter of Proserpina (*N.D.* III 58: *Dianae item plures, prima Iovis et Proserpinae, quae pinnatum Cupidinem genuisse dicitur, secunda notior quam Iove tertio et Latona natam accepimus*). See Ciaceri 1911: 97.

⁷⁹ Plut. *Timol.* 8.8: εἶναι γὰρ ἱερὰν τῆς Κόρης τὴν Σικελίαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν αὐτόθι μυθολογοῦσι γενέσθαι, καὶ τὴν νῆσον ἐν τοῖς γάμοις ἀνακαλυπτῆριον αὐτῇ δοθῆναι. In Plutarch there is the reference to Sicily offered as a ‘wedding gift’ to Kore/Persephone and therefore sacred to the goddess, since on the island the kidnapping would have taken place.

⁸⁰ *Hymn. Dem.* 51-53 (“But when the tenth enlightening dawn had come, Hecate, with a torch in her hands, met her [Demeter], and spoke to her and told her news...”) and 438-440 (“Then bright-coiffed Hecate came near to them, and often did she embrace the daughter of holy Demeter: and from that time the lady Hecate was minister and companion to Persephone”, *trans. by Hugh G. Evelyn-White* 1914). See Sfameni Gasparro 1986: 37.

⁸¹ Cf. Tusa 1969: 153-171. For the interaction Demetra-Kore-Hecate see also Berg 1974: 128-140.

⁸² Theocr. 2, 14-36. The identity of Artemis-Hecate – a not unusual feature in the ancient Greek world, and sometimes even the result of some confusion – can be found in various literary, epigraphic and figurative sources. Cf. Farnell 1896: 516-519; Kraus 1960: 15-17; Berg 1974: 136; Marquardt 1981: 256; Sfameni Gasparro 1985: 66, n. 6.

Sophron, the same Hekate chthonia—born from the union of Zeus and Hera—seems to have been worshipped in Syracuse by the epicleris Ἄγγελος:⁸³

Chthonia: it refers to Hekate in so far as rearer of Persephone, or inasmuch as Lady of the dead, according to Sophron; Hekate is said to be goddess of the nether world and Lady of the dead, as it is reported by Sophron: ‘Hera, after having had intercourse with Zeus, gave birth to a maiden, who was called Angelos.’ (Schol. Theocr. 2. 11/12a, *the translation is mine*)

The epicleris “Angelos” immediately brings to mind the mediating role of the goddess in the opening lines of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, where Hekate is defined as Demeter’s messenger, ἀγγελεύουσα, since she first announced and revealed to her mother in pain the sad fate allotted to her daughter kidnapped by Hades.⁸⁴

According to the rhetorician Athenaeus from Naukratis, the announcement of Hekate to Demeter of the abduction of Persephone was performed in Syracuse with an Ionic dance called *angelike* (ἀγγελικὴ ὄρχησις) in festivals in honor of Artemis Chitonea.⁸⁵ The gloss of Hesychius attesting the cult of an Artemis Angelos in Syracuse (as the Syracusans themselves said)⁸⁶ should be added to the *scholium in Theocritum* quoted above.

In Sicily, the presence of the worship of a deity characterized by the epicleris Ἄγγελος is also attested in Selinus, as evidenced by an inscription dating from the middle of the fifth century BC from the temple of *Malophoros*, the “fruit-bearer”,⁸⁷ on the basis of which the hypothesis of a possible relationship between Syracuse and

⁸³ <Χθονίαν> δὲ τὴν Ἑκάτην φησί, παρόσον Περσεφόνης τροφός, ἢ παρόσον <νερτέρων> πρύτανιν αὐτὴν τέθεικε Σώφρων (*frg.* 7 Kaibel, *Com. graec. frg.* I 1, 155); <τᾶ χθονία θ' Ἑκάτα:> τὴν Ἑκάτην χθονίαν φασὶ θεὸν καὶ νερτέρων πρύτανιν, καθὰ καὶ Σώφρων· Ἦραν μυχθεῖσαν Διὶ γεννηῖσαι παρθένον, ὄνομα δὲ αὐτῇ θέσθαι Ἄγγελον.

⁸⁴ *Hymn. Dem.* 51-59.

⁸⁵ Ath. *Deipn.* XIV.629e: Χιτωνέας Ἀρτέμιδος ὄρχησις τίς ἐστὶν ἴδιος καὶ αὐλησις. ἦν δὲ τις καὶ Ἰωνικὴ ὄρχησις παροίνιος, καὶ τὴν ἀγγελικὴν δὲ πάροιον ἠκρίβουν ὄρχησιν; cf. Poll. IV.103. See Farnell 1896: 518; Ciaceri 1911: 98.

⁸⁶ Hesych. s.v. Ἄγγελον· Συρακούσιοι τὴν Ἄρτεμιν λέγουσι.

⁸⁷ IG XIV 270 = IGLP 53. Cf. Manganaro 1977: 148-164.

Selinus has been proposed.⁸⁸ Thus, in the religious landscape of this Sicilian area, an encroachment and merging of various figures of goddesses with a distinct chthonian morphology seems to take place. The resulting divine-figure-goddess assumes the names and characteristics of the triad Artemis-Hekate-Persephone/ Kore, of which the epiclesis Ἄγγελος highlights the role of intermediary, as it has already been suggested,⁸⁹ but is also very likely to refer to the special relationship with the sphere of dreams and to the role of messenger and bringer of nocturnal visions,⁹⁰ which also characterizes the maddening nature of the *tauropolos* goddess mentioned above.

I think, for example, of the verses of the *Helena* by Euripides, in which Menelaus evokes Hekate *phosphoros* imploring her to send him “well-disposed visions” (φάσματα εὐμενῆ), or even to the passage of Dio Chrysostom’s fourth prayer where there is a reference to “multiple and many colored ghosts” (φάσματα πολλὰ καὶ ποικίλα) sent by the goddess to the priests in charge of the rites of initiation and purification in her honor.⁹¹ The presence of a triadic-deity-bearer of delirium and night visions makes us think, again, of Engyon with her three Mothers or of Magna Mater Idaea (as in Cicero), thus calling into question the power of an “ancestral foreigner”, to use Borgeaud’s phrasing, that is, Kybele, whose name appears for the first time engraved on the façade of a Phrygian shrine.

As Borgeaud reminds us, from the sixth century BC until the sixth century AD, within the dense network of circulation and exchanges connecting Phrygia and Asia Minor to Greece and Rome, a god-like figure exists that is precisely identifiable, explicitly designated as the Mother or Mother of the

⁸⁸ Ciaceri 1911: 97-99, with a different integration of the inscription. On the worship of Hekate in Sicily, see Manni 1975: 174-195; on Artemis Angelos, see in particular Panofka 1833: 172-175; Id. 1842: 333-382; Pareti 1914: 249; Sokolowski 1960: 225-229.

⁸⁹ Manni 1975: 179.

⁹⁰ Miller 1980: 131: “Hekate can be called also Angelos which means «messenger», suggesting thereby that she brings visions and dreams.”

⁹¹ Eur. *Hel.* 569-570; Dio Crys. IV 90.1-4.

Gods,-whose emergence and establishment it is possible to observe by exploring a field in which coherence is ensured by the proximity of times and places.⁹² The re-evaluation—especially since the last decades of the fifth century BC—of such a motherly and divine figure, representative at the same time of Justice and Earth, shows the need to reaffirm the ethnic and social cohesion of the polis. But very soon we can recognize in this power—relevant to the political sphere (“*potenza del politico*”)—the prestige of a great foreigner, behind which there is a concern for integration at a social level combined with the need for affirmation of an original warranty. Both national and exotic, native and Asian, the goddess becomes double, if not plural, thereby avoiding—like Pan, the Arcadian god of mountain wilds, born to Kallisto in Aeschylean tradition—the constraints of the genealogy framework in which the great Olympic family unfolds.⁹³

Such a political power seems to hover on the worship of Engyon itself, whose sanctuary, as recalled by Cicero, overflowed with beautiful ornaments and war trophies: *hostium spolia, monumenta imperatorum, and monumenta victoriae, decora fani* (“spoils won from the enemy, memorials of commanders” serving as “insignia of the victory and decorum of the temple”). Thinking back to them, the power of the Mothers at Engyon is once more similar to the power of the goddess which was called in question by Euripides in the passage of his *Phoenissae* where, on the eve of the battle between Eteocles and Polynices at the gates of Thebes, at the sight of the battlefield, in the glare of bronze weapons, a desperate Antigone evokes the presence of the “Mistress Hecate, child of Letò” (πότνια παῖ Λατοῦς Ἑκάτα).⁹⁴ The same political power that hovers over Engyon, finally, gives us back the most completely syncretistic portrait of Artemis, the great “foreigner” who is terrifying and deadly in her Thraco-Scythian appearance as *tauropolos* and *phosphoros*, but also the Queen

⁹² Borgeaud 2002: 91.

⁹³ Ibid.: 83-86. About Pan as Callisto’s son, see Aesch. *frg.* 65b-c Mette = Schol. Eur. *Rh.* 36.

⁹⁴ Eur. *Phoen.* 109-110 = Bacch. *frg.* 40 Bergk. On the ancient power of Hecate who ensures victory and triumph in the battles as well as in the contests, guaranteeing glory and lasting fame to her *protégé*, see Hes. *Theog.* 431-438.

and the savior, *hegemone* and *soteira*, in her aspect of tutelary deity who presides over processes of-transition and transformation of status concerning both the discourse of social intermediation and integration and the path of the cult's foundation and re-foundation.

SOURCES COLLECTION:

Plutarchus, *Marcellus* 20: Πόλις γάρ ἐστι τῆς Σικελίας Ἐγγύϊον οὐ μεγάλη, ἀρχαία δὲ πάνυ καὶ διὰ θεῶν ἐπιφάνειαν ἔνδοξος ἃς καλοῦσι Ματέρας. ἴδρυμα λέγεται Κρητῶν γενέσθαι τὸ ἱερόν, καὶ λόγχας τινὰς ἐδείκνυσαν καὶ κράνη χαλκᾶ, τὰ μὲν ἔχοντα Μηριόνου, τὰ δ' Οὐλίξου, τουτέστιν Ὀδυσσέως, ἐπιγραφὰς ἀνατεθεικότων ταῖς θεαῖς. ταύτην προθυμότητα καρχηδονίζουσαν Νικίας, ἀνὴρ πρῶτος τῶν πολιτῶν, ἔπειθε μεταθέσθαι πρὸς Ῥωμαίους, ἀναφανδὸν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις παρρησιαζόμενος καὶ κακῶς φρονούντας ἐξελέγχων τοὺς ὑπεναντίους. οἱ δὲ φοβούμενοι τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν δόξαν, ἐβουλεύσαντο συναρπάσαι καὶ παραδοῦναι τοῖς Φοίνιξιν. αἰσθόμενος οὖν ὁ Νικίας ἤδη καὶ παραφυλαττόμενον ἀδήλως ἑαυτὸν, ἐξέφερεν ἐν φανερῷ λόγους περὶ τῶν Ματέρων ἀνεπιτηδεύουσας, καὶ πολλὰ πρὸς τὴν νομιζομένην ἐπιφάνειαν καὶ δόξαν ὡς ἐπιστῶν καὶ καταφρονῶν ἔπραττεν, ἠδομένων τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὅτι τὴν μεγίστην αἰτίαν αὐτὸς ἐφ' ἑαυτὸν ὧν πείσεται παρεῖχε. γεγονότων δὲ τῶν πρὸς τὴν σύλληψιν ἐτοιμῶν, ἦν μὲν ἐκκλησία τῶν πολιτῶν, ὁ δὲ Νικίας μεταξύ τι λέγων καὶ συμβουλευῶν πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἐξαίφνης ἀφῆκεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὸ σῶμα, καὶ μικρὸν διαλιπὼν, οἷον εἰκὸς ἠσυχίας σὺν ἐκπλήξει γενομένης, τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐπάρας καὶ περιενεγκῶν ὑποτρόμῳ φωνῇ καὶ βαρεῖα, κατὰ μικρὸν συντείνων καὶ παροξύνων τὸν ἦχον, ὡς ἑώρα φρίκη καὶ σιωπῇ κατεχόμενον τὸ θέατρον, ἀπορρίψας τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ περιρρηξάμενος τὸν χιτωνίσκον, ἠμίγυμνος ἀναπηδήσας ἔθεε πρὸς τὴν ἔξοδον τοῦ θεάτρου, βοῶν ὑπὸ τῶν Ματέρων ἐλαύνεσθαι, <καὶ> μηδενὸς τολμῶντος ἄψασθαι μηδ' ἀπαντῆσαι διὰ δεισιδαιμονίαν, ἀλλ' ἐκτρεπομένων, ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας ἐξέδραμεν, οὔτε φωνῆς τινος οὔτε κινήσεως πρεπούσης δαιμονῶντι καὶ παραφρονοῦντι φεισάμενος. ἡ δὲ γυνὴ συνειδυῖα καὶ συντεχνάζουσα τῷ ἀνδρὶ, λαβοῦσα τὰ παιδιά πρῶτον μὲν ἰκέτις προσεκυλινδεῖτο τοῖς μεγάροις τῶν θεῶν, ἔπειτα πλανώμενον ἐκεῖνον προσποιουμένη ζητεῖν, κωλύοντος οὐδενὸς ἀσφαλῶς ἀπῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ διεσώθησαν μὲν οὕτως εἰς Συρακούσας πρὸς Μάρκελλον· [...] ταῦτα μὲν οὖν Ποσειδώνιος ὁ φιλόσοφος ἰστόρησε.

Diodorus Siculus, IV 79-80: [COCALUS AND THE DEATH OF MINOS] [79, 1] Μίνως δ' ὁ τῶν Κρητῶν βασιλεὺς θαλαττοκρατῶν κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους, καὶ πυθόμενος τὴν Δαιδάλου φυγὴν εἰς Σικελίαν, ἔγνω στρατεύειν ἐπ'

αὐτήν. παρασκευασάμενος δὲ δύναμιν ναυτικὴν ἀξιόλογον ἐξέπλευσεν ἐκ τῆς Κρήτης, καὶ κατῆρε τῆς Ἀκραγαντίνης εἰς τὴν ἀπ' ἐκείνου Μίνωαν καλουμένην. ἀποβιβάσας δὲ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πέμψας ἀγγέλους πρὸς Κώκαλον τὸν βασιλέα ἐξήτει τὸν Δαίδαλον εἰς τιμωρίαν. [79, 2] ὁ δὲ Κώκαλος εἰς σύλλογον προκαλεσάμενος καὶ πάντα ποιήσῃν ἐπαγγειλάμενος ἐπὶ τὰ ξένια παρέλαβε τὸν Μίνω. λουμένου δ' αὐτοῦ, Κώκαλος μὲν παρακατασχὼν πλείονα χρόνον ἐν τῷ θερμῷ τὸν Μίνωα διέφθειρε, καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀπέδωκε τοῖς Κρησί, πρόφασιν ἐνεγκὼν τοῦ θανάτου διότι κατὰ τὸν λουτρῶνα ὠλίσθηκε καὶ πεσὼν εἰς τὸ θερμὸν ὕδωρ ἐτελεύτησε. [...] [79, 5] οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' οἱ κατὰ τὴν Σικελίαν Κρήτες μετὰ τὴν Μίνωος τελευτὴν ἐστασίασαν διὰ τὴν ἀναρχίαν, τῶν δὲ νεῶν ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ τὸν Κώκαλον Σικανῶν ἐμπυρισθεισῶν τὴν μὲν εἰς τὰς πατρίδας ἐπάνοδον ἀπέγνωσαν, κρίναντες δ' ἐν τῇ Σικελίᾳ κατοικεῖν, οἱ μὲν ἐνταῦθα πόλιν ὤκισαν ἣν ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν Μίνωαν ὠνόμασαν, οἱ δὲ διὰ τῆς μεσογειοῦ πλανηθέντες καὶ καταλαβόμενοι χωρίον ὄχυρὸν ἔκτισαν πόλιν ἣν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν τῇ πόλει ῥεούσης πηγῆς ὠνόμασαν Ἑγγυον. [79, 6] ὕστερον δὲ μετὰ τὴν τῆς Τροίας ἄλωσιν Μηριόνου τοῦ Κρητὸς προσενεχθέντος τῇ Σικελίᾳ, προσεδέξαντο τοὺς καταπλεύσαντας Κρήτας διὰ τὴν συγγένειαν καὶ τῆς πολιτείας μετέδοσαν, ὀρμώμενοι δ' ἐξ ὄχυρᾶς πόλεως καὶ καταπολεμήσαντες τινὰς τῶν περιοίκων ἱκανὴν κατεκτήσαντο χώραν. [79, 7] αἰεὶ δὲ μᾶλλον αὐξόμενοι, καὶ κατασκευάσαντες ἱερὸν τῶν Μητέρων, διαφόρως ἐτίμων τὰς θεάς, ἀναθήμασι πολλοῖς κοσμοῦντες τὸ ἱερὸν αὐτῶν. ταύτας δ' ἀφιδρυθῆναί φασιν ἐκ τῆς Κρήτης διὰ τὸ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Κρησί τιμᾶσθαι τὰς θεὰς ταύτας διαφερόντως. [THE IDAEAN NYMPHS] [80, 1] μυθολογοῦσι δ' αὐτὰς τὸ παλαιὸν θρέψαι τὸν Δία λάθρα τοῦ πατρὸς Κρόνου, ἀνθ' ὧν αὐτὰς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβιβασθῆναι καὶ καταστερισθεῖσας ἄρκτους προσαγορευθῆναι. [80, 2] περὶ ὧν καὶ τὸν Ἄρατον συμφωνοῦντα τούτοις τεθεικέναι κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἄστρον ποίησιν, ἔμπαλιν εἰς ὦμους τετραμμέναι· εἰ ἐτεόν γε Κρήτηθεν κεῖναί γε Διὸς μεγάλου ἰότητι οὐρανὸν εἰσανέβησαν, ὃ μιν τότε κουρίζοντα Δίκτῳ ἐν εὐώδει ὄρεος σχεδὸν Ἴδαίῳ ἄντρῳ ἐγκατέθεντο καὶ ἔτρεφον εἰς ἐνιαυτόν, Δικταῖοι Κούρητες ὅτε Κρόνον ἐψεύσαντο. [80, 3] οὐκ ἄξιον δὲ παραλιπεῖν τὴν περὶ τὰς θεὰς ἀγνείαν τε καὶ τὴν κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἐπιφάνειαν. τιμῶσι δ' αὐτὰς οὐ μόνον οἱ ταύτην τὴν πόλιν οἰκοῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τινες τῶν ἄλλων περιοίκων θυσίαις τε μεγαλοπρεπέσι καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις τιμαῖς ἀποσεμνύνουσι τὰς θεάς. [80, 4] ἐνίαις δὲ πόλεσι καὶ πυθόχρηστοι χρησμοὶ προσέταξαν τιμᾶν τὰς θεάς· ἔσεσθαι γὰρ τοῖς τοιούτοις τοὺς τε τῶν ἰδιωτῶν βίους εὐδαίμονας καὶ τὰς πόλεις εὐθηνῆσαι. τέλος δὲ προβαινούσης ἐπὶ πολὺ τῆς κατὰ τὰς θεὰς ἐπιφανείας, οἱ μὲν ἐγχώριοι πολλοῖς ἀναθήμασι ἀργυροῖς καὶ χρυσοῖς διετέλεσαν τιμῶντες ἄχρι τῶνδε τῶν ἱστοριῶν γραφομένων. [80, 5] νεῶν μὲν γὰρ αὐταῖς κατεσκευάσαν οὐ μόνον τῷ μεγέθει διάφορον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ πολυτελείᾳ τῇ κατὰ τὴν οἰκοδομίαν θαυμαζόμενον· οὐκ ἔχοντες γὰρ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν χώραν λίθον ἀξιόλογον παρὰ τῶν ἀστυγειτόνων Ἀγυριναίων ἤγαγον, τῶν μὲν πόλεων διεστηκυῶν ὡς ἑκατὸν σταδίους, τῆς δ' ὁδοῦ δι' ἧς ἀνάγκη κομίζεσθαι τοὺς λίθους ὑπαρχούσης τραχείας καὶ παντελῶς δυσπορεύτου· δι' ἣν αἰτίαν κατασκευάσαντες ἀμάξας τετρακύκλους ἑκατὸν ζεύγεσι βοῶν ἐκόμισαν τὸν λίθον. [80, 6] διὰ γὰρ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων εὐπορούμενοι, τῇ δασιλείᾳ τῆς εὐπορίας ὑπερεῖδον τῶν

ἀναλωμάτων· βραχὺ γὰρ πρὸ ἡμῶν εἶχον αἱ θεαὶ βοῦς μὲν ἱερὰς τρισχιλίας, χώρας δὲ πλήθος ὥστε λαμβάνειν μεγάλας προσόδους.

M. Tullius Cicero, *In Verrem II, 4-5*: [4, 97] *Matris magnae fanum apud Enguinos est [...]. In hoc fano loricas galeasque aeneas, caelatas opere Corinthio, hydriasque grandis simili in genere atque eadem arte perfectas idem ille Scipio, vir omnibus rebus praecellentissimus, posuerat et suum nomen inscripserat. [...] Omnia illa, iudices, abstulit, nihil in religiosissimo fano praeter vestigia violatae religionis nomenque P. Scipionis reliquit; hostium spolia, monumenta imperatorum, decora atque ornamenta fanorum posthac his praeclaris nominibus amissis in instrumento atque in supellectile Verris nominabuntur. [...] [5, 186] [...] Sanctissima mater Idaea, quam apud Enguinos augustissimo et religiosissimo in templo sic spoliatam reliquit ut nunc nomen modo Africani et vestigia violatae religionis maneant, monumenta victoriae fanique ornamenta non exstent.*

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