

Defining a Sacred Landscape. The Archaic Sanctuary at Incoronata "Greca"

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ABSTRACT

The plateau of Incoronata "Greca", located on the Basento river along the Ionian coast, is a prominent indigenous Oenotrian settlement inhabited from the ninth century BCE. From the last quarter of the eighth-beginning of the seventh century BCE, an exceptional affluence of Greek pottery and the appearance of new technologies raise questions on the nature of the settlement and the modes of interaction between the Oenotrians and Greeks and suggest a form of cohabitation between the different groups under indigenous control of the territory. The settlement was abandoned circa 640-630 BCE, an event that was likely concomitant with the foundation of Metaponto. Across the following century, numerous sanctuaries developed across the *chora* of the Greek city. The hilltop at Incoronata "greca" was re-occupied, this time as a Greek sacred space dependent upon Metaponto. Votive deposits, including one sealed by a mass of architectural terracottas from a sacred building, indicate the existence of a small sanctuary starting from the second quarter of the sixth century BCE but surprisingly, sacred structures have never been identified. The reexamination of 1977-1978 excavations conducted by the Institute of Classical Archeology (University of Texas at Austin) and recent archaeological investigations conducted by the Metaponto Archaeological Project (McMaster University and Saint Mary's University) under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Culture, intend to clarify the plan of the sanctuary, its cult, and, more broadly, its relationship to local topography and its place in a system of sacred sites dependent from the *apoikia*.

Keywords : *chora*, Magna Graecia, Metaponto, sanctuary, votive deposits.

RIASSUNTO

L'altopiano dell'Incoronata 'greca', situato sul fiume Basento lungo la costa ionica, è un importante insediamento indigeno enotrio attivo dal IX secolo a.C. Dall'ultimo quarto dell'VIII-inizio del VII secolo a.C. un'eccezionale affluenza di ceramica greca e la comparsa di nuove tecnologie sollevano interrogativi sulla natura dell'insediamento e sulle modalità di interazione tra gli Enotri e i Greci suggerendo una forma di convivenza sotto controllo indigeno del territorio. L'insediamento fu abbandonato intorno al 640-630 a.C., evento probabilmente concomitante con la fondazione di Metaponto. Nel corso del secolo successivo numerosi santuari si svilupparono nella *chora* della città greca. La sommità della collina dell'Incoronata "greca" fu rioccupata, questa volta come spazio sacro greco dipendente da Metaponto. Mentre depositi votivi, tra cui uno sigillato da numerose terrecotte architettoniche, rivelano l'esistenza di un piccolo santuario dal secondo quarto del VI secolo a.C., l'edificio sacro non è stato identificato. Il riesame degli scavi condotti nel 1977 e 1978 dall'Institute of Classical Archeology (University of Texas at Austin) e le recenti indagini archeologiche condotte dal Metaponto Archaeological Project (McMaster University e Saint Mary's University) sotto l'egida del Ministero della Cultura, intendono chiarire l'organizzazione del santuario, il suo culto e, più in generale, la sua collocazione nell'ambito della topografia sacra dell'*apoikia*.

Parole chiave : *chora*, depositi votivi, Magna Grecia, Metaponto, santuario.

1. Introduction and Methodological Overview

The Metaponto Archaeological Project (MAP), a collaboration between McMaster University and Saint Mary's University with the consent of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio della Basilicata (Ministero della Cultura), aims at reconstructing settlement and other patterns of use of the territory along the frontier of the *apoikia* of Metaponto and at presenting a diachronic evaluation of both indigenous and Greek occupation before and after the foundation¹. These activities expand the research in the territory of the Achaean colony carried out from 1974 at the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Texas at Austin under Prof. J.C. Carter. The survey transect, investigated from 1981 to 2007, extends from the Bradano to the Cavone rivers (c. km 20 apart) and is divided by the Basento river covering a total of km² 90 c. (fig. 1)². Approximately 700 sites have been identified from prehistory to the late antiquity with the overwhelming majority (95% of them) dating from 625 to 25 BCE (about 665 sites)³. Such data show that the territory was densely structured with villages, farms, necropolises, and sanctuaries that dotted the countryside with an average of 16 sites per km². With the aim of completing the study of the *chora*, the MAP has recently resumed the survey between the Basento and Cavone rivers (Quadrants Three and Four, fig. 1), an area systematically investigated since 1992⁴. The focus on territory is complemented by archaeological excavation at Incoronata “greca” on the Basento river, one of the most important Oenotrian settlements starting from the ninth century BCE⁵. The site was abruptly abandoned circa 640-630 BCE, an event that was likely concomitant with the foundation of Metaponto⁶. The research on the south-eastern quadrant of the plateau, undertaken by Carter in 1977 and 1978, revealed that the hilltop was occupied again in the sixth century BCE, this time as a Greek sacred space dependent upon Metaponto. Following the city's foundation, Incoronata “greca” appears to shift from an indigenous stronghold into the sphere of the Greek city and fully integrated into the network of sanctuaries developed across the *chora* that were placed strategically to control roads, waterways, and freshwater springs as well as in opposition to bordering populations (fig. 2)⁷.

The sacred space is a lesser-known element of settlement dynamics at the site as the archaeological evidence is particularly evanescent and has been only partially published⁸. Notably, excavations yielded concentrated deposits containing architectural terracottas and votive figurines that indicate the existence of a sanctuary from the second quarter of the sixth century BCE. Based on stratigraphical features of the contexts and characteristics of the assemblages, the deposits have been interpreted as votive⁹. No structure corresponding to the terracottas has been located on the plateau. From 2019, the MAP has conducted research to clarify the characteristics of the votive deposits discovered in 1977 and 1978 and, more

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio della Basilicata (Ministero della Cultura) for its continuous support and to Prof. Carter for his guidance.

2 The research concentrated in the transect between Bradano and Basento rivers was published in 2011 (CARTER & PRIETO 2011).

3 For a synthetic overview of the sites surveyed in the Bradano-Cavone transect see CARTER 2011a.

4 POPE & SAVELLI in press.

5 The settlement at Incoronata “greca” has been extensively excavated by the University of Milan (*I Greci sul Basento; Incoronata 1; Incoronata 2; Incoronata 3; Incoronata 4; Incoronata 5; Incoronata 6*; CASTOLDI 2006) and Rennes 2 University (VITA, MANDIĆ & DENTI 2023 with bibliography).

6 GIARDINO & DE SIENA 1999, p. 339, 341. The chronology of the abandonment of Incoronata “greca” is contested. A later chronology between the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century BCE has been recently proposed by M. Denti following the excavation by Rennes 2 University (DENTI 2018).

7 For a comprehensive analysis of the sanctuaries in the *chora* of Metaponto, see CARTER 1994, CARTER & PRIETO 2011, and SASSU 2018. The sanctuary at Pantanello has been recently published in CARTER & SWIFT 2018.

8 The research has been presented in CARTER 1994; CARTER 2006, p. 74-78; RESCIGNO 2012; SAVELLI 2016; SAVELLI in press. Evidence from the sanctuary has been briefly discussed in SASSU 2018, p. 151.

9 Notes from the excavation recorded by T. Hale (July 1977).

broadly, the structure of the sanctuary, its location, and cult. The work aims to explore the sacred space in connection with the long-term history of the indigenous community residing at the site and the settlement dynamics of the *chora*. The analysis of the legacy data from Carter’s excavation represents the basis of the investigation complemented by the survey and the excavation at the site.

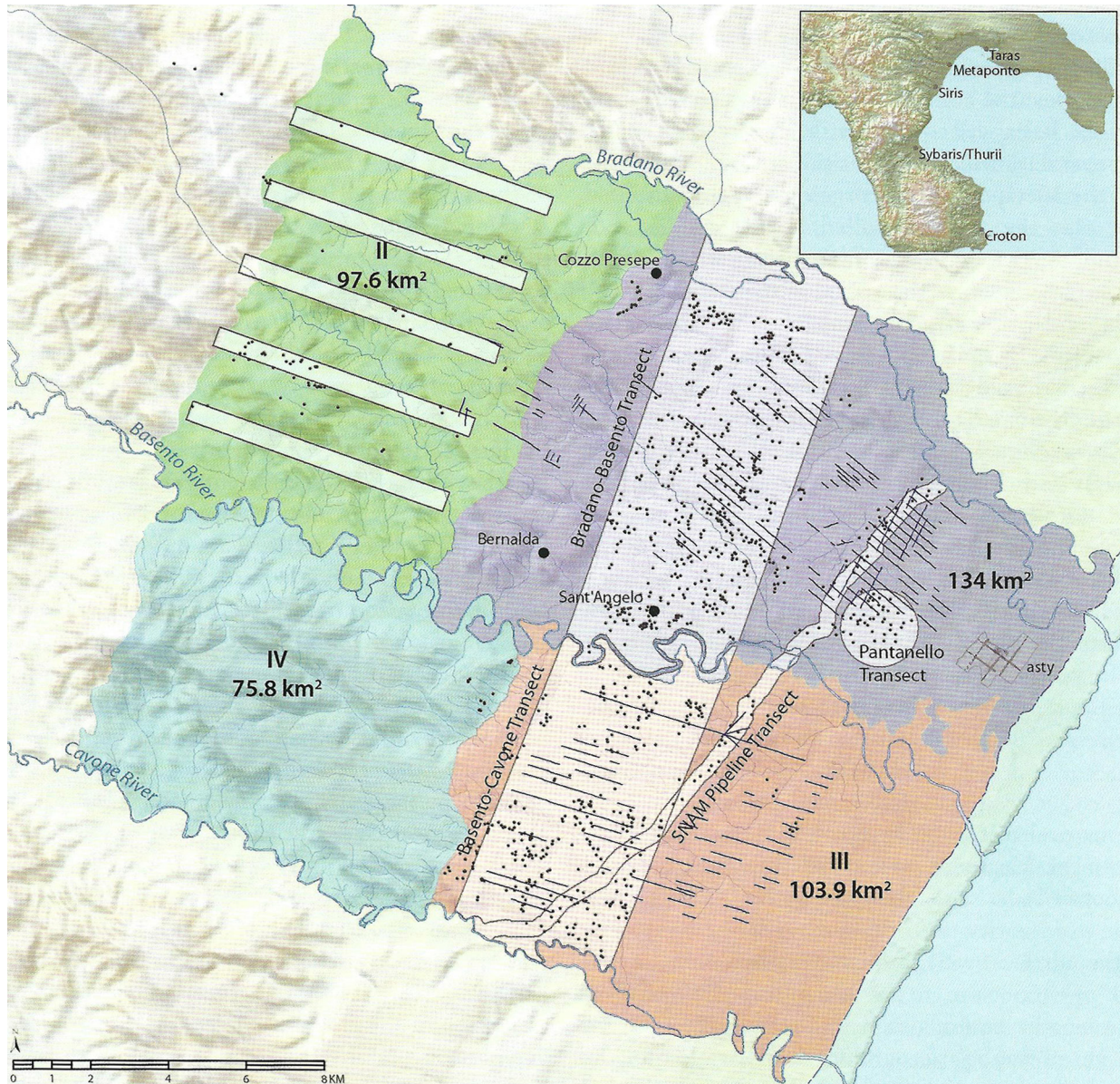


Fig. 1: The Survey Territory of Metaponto. The Bradano-Basento and Basento-Cavone Transects (courtesy of the Institute for Classical Archaeology, CARTER & PRIETO 2011, fig. 19.1).

2. Brief Settlement History at Inconata “Greca”

In the Early Iron Age, the Basento-Cavone region is of primary importance for discerning settlement patterns of the Oenotrian population. The plateau of Inconata-San Teodoro, located about km 8 inland from the coastline on an internal sea terrace with a flat surface approximately m 60-65 above sea level and overlooking the Basento river from the south, hosts one of the most significant indigenous

settlements on the Ionian coast¹⁰. In the Early Iron Age and throughout the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, the Oenotrian community was arranged in sparse enucleations of huts separated from each other by large open areas. Smaller indigenous settlements are attested at San Leonardo di Pisticci, perhaps Pisticci itself, and Ferrandina further inland. At the midpoint of the eighth century BCE, a radical transformation occurred in the organization of the settlement as the articulation of scattered nuclei of huts disappeared and the population concentrated on the plateau known as Incoronata “greca”. The central role of this zone in Oenotrian settlement dynamics is substantiated by findings of the survey. The majority of indigenous pottery, mainly matt-painted and undecorated indigenous ware, come from the area in question, in the hills overlooking the plateau¹¹. In the seventh century BCE, Greek material culture is attested across the region in indigenous communities scattered in the Basento-Cavone transect including Incoronata, San Teodoro, Lama San Nicola, Azienda Agricola, as well as other sites including Ferrandina and the area of Metaponto, with the site of Incoronata “greca” as the most structured and important¹². It has yielded Greek material deposits from the last quarter of the eighth century BCE documenting a remarkable capacity of the Oenotrian community for accumulation and redistribution of goods and ceramics¹³. The seventh century BCE witnessed the “reorganization” of the settlement; the site became the epicentre of encounters between the Indigenous community and Greek travelers frequenting the Ionian coast. The foreign component was integrated into the settlement dynamics under indigenous control of the territory. The current state of documentation indicates that the site was destroyed in 640-630 BCE, probably at the same time as the foundation of Metaponto. After this event, there are no traces of frequentation on the hill until the second quarter of the sixth century BCE, when the plateau was once again occupied as a place of worship.

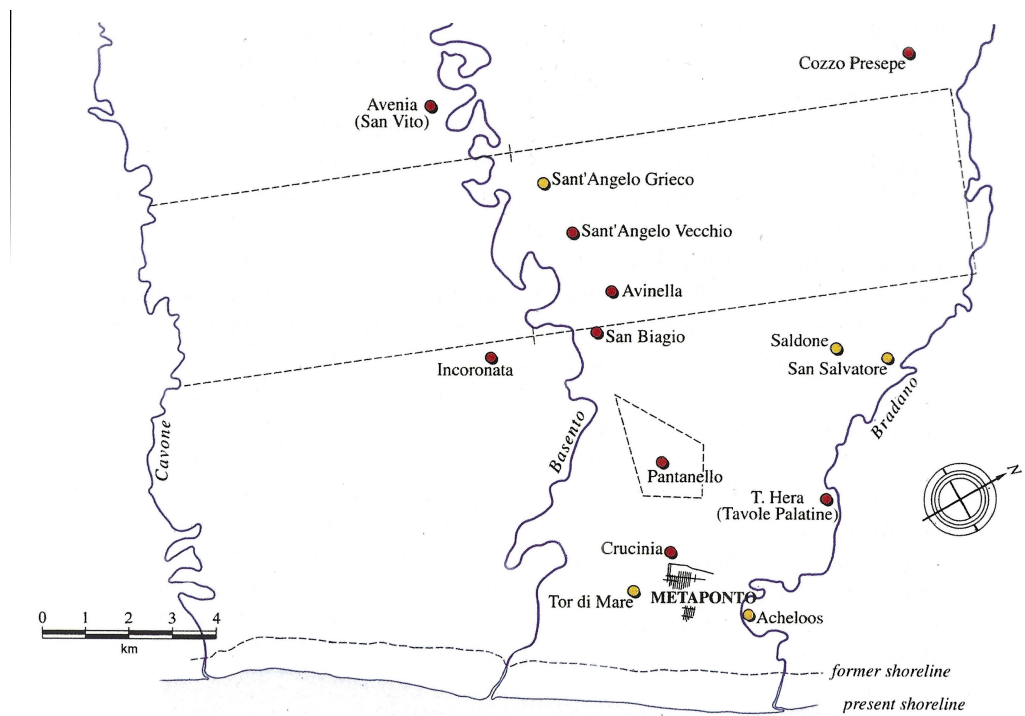


Fig. 2 : The *Chora* of Metaponto. Plan with Indications of the Most Relevant Sacred Areas (courtesy of the Institute for Classical Archaeology, CARTER 2006, fig. 4.29).

¹⁰ On settlement dynamics at Incoronata “greca” during the Early Iron Age, see DE SIENA 1999, p. 221-224. The Iron Age necropolis at Incoronata-San Teodoro is published in CHIARTANO 1994 and CHIARTANO 1996.

¹¹ This evidence is attested from Sites 840, 846 and 588 (POPE & SAVELLI in press).

¹² GIARDINO & DE SIENA 1999; BIANCO & PREITE 2014.

¹³ The complex debate around the interpretation of the site includes YNTEMA 1990, p. 159; DE SIENA 1990; DE SIENA 1996; DE SIENA 1999; ORLANDINI 1999; STEA 1999; DENTI 2019; DENTI 2020 (with bibliography); SAVELLI in press.

3. The Votive Deposits

The south-eastern spur is significant for the presence of votive deposits related to a sacred building in use in the archaic and classical periods¹⁴. Across Carter’s excavations in 1977 and 1978, archaeological evidence related only to the deposits and to the roof of the building were recovered, while the location of the building remains uncertain. The zones of accumulation of sacred material are located in squares D7, D8, E7, E8, in the so-called Tile Fall or Tile Concentration (“Votive Deposit 1”) area and squares I6, I7, J6 and J7, in the so-called Tile Scatter Area (“Sounding I, Sounding II, Sounding III, East Extension”) (fig. 3). The integrity of the archaeological context appears to be seriously compromised due to a modern deep ploughing operation that damaged the stratigraphy and led to the dispersion of the material throughout the entire excavation area.

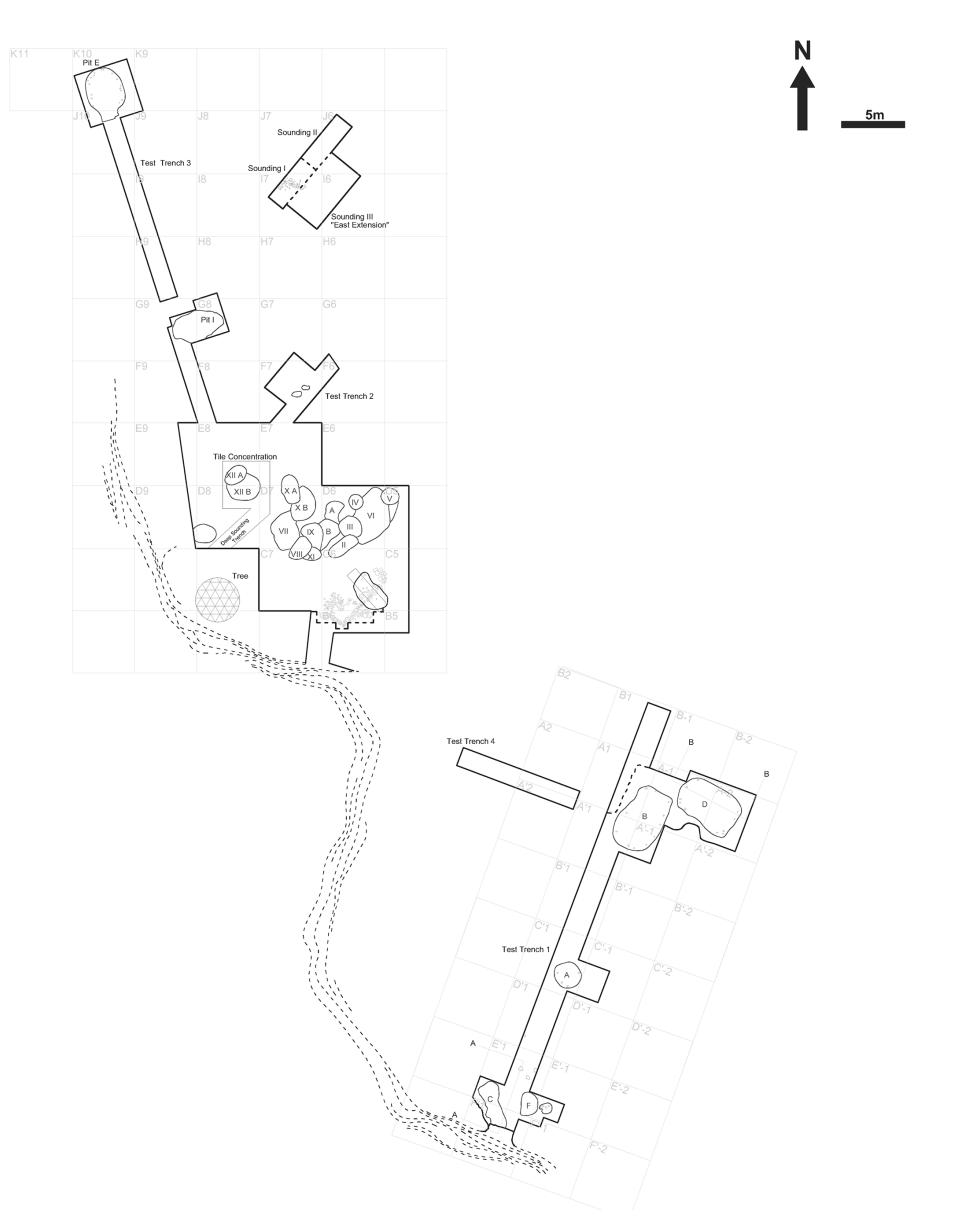


Fig. 3 : Incoronata “Greca”. Plan of the South-Eastern Plateau during 1977-1978 Excavation (courtesy of the Institute for Classical Archaeology).

¹⁴ Votive deposits are well attested in the area of Metaponto. A comprehensive analysis of the religious landscape is found in PARISI 2017, p. 393-415.

3.1. The “Votive Deposit 1”

The “Votive Deposit 1” (VD₁), placed within a large anthropogenic pit, contained figured terracottas, ceramics of various classes (in particular, miniature ware), textile production tools, charcoal, animal bones, and shells. It was sealed by a mass of architectural terracottas, building debris (including mudbricks and stones possibly related to the foundation of a building), and tiles (fig. 4). The material was scattered superficially over a very large area due to ploughing activity with the bulk of the finds concentrated in a plot approximately m 5x5. The difficulty in defining the context is exacerbated by the methods of investigation in the 1970s that did not privilege a careful stratigraphic reading of the archaeological evidence¹⁵. In the initial phases of research, the analysis of the context was misled by the interpretation of the architectural terracottas as a “Tile Fall”; it was, in fact, believed that the tiles, especially in view of the orderly arrangement in a horizontal position, collapsed on top of a load-bearing structure hypothesized below them¹⁶. However, the excavation soon revealed that no structure was included in the deposition of the architectural material. It was therefore ruled out that these were components of a collapse, and it became clear that the tiles and other materials were arranged neatly to seal a votive deposit in an action of ritual obliteration or closure of a sacred space¹⁷. The initial suggestion compromised the collection of data critical in defining the nature of the votive deposit; the exact arrangement of the archaeological materials, their spatial relationships and their association were overlooked¹⁸. Despite this difficulty, however, macro-stratigraphic units corresponding to deliberate actions were defined with some certainty. The deposit fills an anthropogenic pit located at the intersection of squares E8, E7, D8 and D7 called the “Votive Pit”. The fill of the cavity was composed of two strata. The upper stratum (so-called Tile Fall) contained most of the tile concentration and votive material and extended beyond the perimeter of the Votive Pit itself; it was found spread across the surrounding area in the southern portion of squares E7 and E8 and almost the entirety of squares D7 and D8. The lower stratum included fewer artifacts that were largely fragmentary. The cavity was ovoidal and irregular; it had a dimension of circa m 3x4 and a depth of cm 70 to 100. The pit cut through a large area characterized by seventeen cavities related to a preceding indigenous dwelling (so-called Dark Stained Area). The pit was sealed by broken roof tiles mixed with architectural debris. In the upper section of the deposit, tiles were positioned vertically due to plowing activity, while in the lower section they were neatly placed horizontally¹⁹. It is interesting to note that, as indicated in the excavation report, they came in “small pieces but great quantity”, likely broken on purpose; additionally, some were burnt²⁰. As tiles were not collected during the excavation, only partial data are available regarding their quantity; however, it is possible to deduce that their number was particularly substantial as the excavation notes record that in the m 1x1 square E7(11), 732 fragments of tiles were recovered and if a similar number was attested in the other squares included in the Votive Pit, we could hypothesize at least 8000 tile fragments. Flecks of charcoal were interspersed in the matrix that contains the debris. A stratum of pig and sheep bones was found directly under the tiles, in particular teeth and mandibles, while long bones were much less attested. This discrepancy could be due to a separate collection of bones, probably pertaining to sacrificial acts, that is common in votive

15 CARTER 2006, p. 74-78.

16 Notes from the excavation recorded by T. Hale (July 1977).

17 It is interesting to note how in the excavation notes, the definition as “Tile Fall” was discarded, and the context was subsequently described as “Votive Pit” (Hale’s excavation notes, June 1977).

18 The importance on the correct collection of data for the understanding and definition of a votive deposit is stressed in PARISI 2017, p. 21-24.

19 From Hale’s excavation notes (29 June 1977): in square E8(25) “it is also important to mention that the upper part had a higher frequency of tiles being found in a vertical position while in the lower half (especially at the bottom) the tiles were entirely in a horizontal position”.

20 Hale’s excavation notes, June 1977.

deposits²¹. The bulk of the finds recovered in the deposit date to between the second quarter of the sixth and the first half of the fifth century BCE with a few objects revealing a continuous frequentation at the site date to the second half of the fifth-first half of the fourth century BCE. Accordingly, the deposition of the material within the pit appears to have happened in one single deliberate action dated between the second half of the fourth and the beginning of the third century BCE. In the sphere of ritual objects, drinking vessels including forty-two fragmentary Ionian cups type B2 are the most represented while pouring vessels are practically absent²². Among miniature vessels, four cups, two *phialai mesomphaloi*, five *skyphoi*, three *krateriskoi*, one Ionian cup, and one *olpe* were recovered²³. It is interesting that the *hydriska*, a container used during rituals associated with water, is the most frequently represented votive material among miniatures but is not found in standard forms (fig. 5)²⁴. With the exception of miniaturistic ware, other shapes are in fragmentary state. Following the study by R. Ammerman, in VD1, the figured terracottas represent female figures, in particular types already known in the context of the Metapontine sanctuaries of the archaic period (fig. 6)²⁵. The high status draped female figure usually wears a tall *polos*, or sometimes a conical headdress. In some cases, the upturned forearms may reflect the gesture of proffering a votive gift. The figurine seated on an elaborate chair or throne is more likely intended as a portrait of a goddess. The Potnia Theron is also attested in VD1; a terracotta depicting the act of brandishing a spear may be connected to the figure of the *hoplosmia*, already documented at Pantanello²⁶.



Fig. 4 : Incoronata "Greca". Votive Deposit 1. View (courtesy of the Institute for Classical Archaeology).



Fig. 5 : Incoronata "Greca". Votive Deposit 1. *Hydriska* (courtesy of MiC-SABAP Basilicata).

21 PARISI 2017, p. 533-541. EKROTH 2009; EKROTH 2018-2019.

22 A discussion on Ionian cups type B2 in the *chora* of Metaponto in LANZA CATTI *et al.* 2011, p. 150-152.

23 Miniature votive vessels are frequent in sanctuaries and votive areas in the *chora* of Metaponto (AMMERMAN 2011, p. 507-509; PARISI 2017, p. 393-415).

24 A discussion on the use of the *hydriskai* from the Timpone della Motta, at Francavilla Marittima, an Oenotrian settlement that was claimed by Sybaris in the second half of the seventh century BCE is in KLEIBRINK MAASKANT 2003, p. 65-66; KLEIBRINK, KINDBERG JACOBSEN & HANDBERG 2004.

25 I wish to thank Dr. Ammerman for allowing me to discuss the results of her forthcoming research. For a recent discussion on terracotta figurines from the *chora* of Metaponto, see AMMERMAN 2011. For votive terracottas from the sacred urban area at Metaponto, see BARBERIS 2004. For terracotta figurines recovered in the sanctuary at Pantanello, see AMMERMAN 2018.

26 AMMERMAN 2018, p. 1170, PZ TC 14.



Fig. 6 : Incoronata "Greca". Terracotta Figurines (courtesy of MiC-SABAP Basilicata).

In relation to the methods and time of the creation of the deposit, votives - mostly dated from the third quarter of the sixth through the first half of the fifth century BCE - seem to be placed in a secondary position; the original location is unknown. The pit containing a mix of votives, and other objects connected with the life of the sanctuary, was sealed by architectural material belonging to the sacellum as part of the final act of attendance at the sacred space²⁷. Based on the chronology of the finds, the decrease in vitality of the sacred area began in the second half of the fifth century BCE; the frequentation at the site is minimal in the first half of the fourth century BCE. While the reasons for such disruption are still under investigation, the archaeological evidence points toward a progressive abandonment of the area. A general cleaning of the sacred space and the creation of obliteration deposit likely date in the second half of the fourth-beginning of the third century BCE.

3.2. The deposit in the "Tile Scatter Area"

In 1978, numerous tile fragments were noted lying on and sticking out of the ground in a spot circa m 23 to the north of the principal area of excavation, so a new trench was opened with the aim of researching the archaic remains within the squares I6, I7, J6, and J7 (Sounding I, Sounding II and Sounding III East Extension) (fig. 3). A concentration of late archaic and early classical material (the so-called Tile Scatter Area) was found here, including terracotta figurines, loom weights, spindle whorls, tiles, and miniature ware likely relating to multiple votive deposits. As at VD₁, tiles from the sacellum were intentionally arranged to seal the area before being dispersed by modern agricultural work; at the time of the excavation, the stratum of scatter was defined as the "Plow Zone".

²⁷ The analysis of votive deposits related to the dismissal of a sacred space is discussed in *PARISI 2017*, p. 544-549. See also *GLINSTER 2000*.

Four primary assemblages of miniature ceramics and weaving materials including spools, spindle whorls, and loom weights were isolated in a stratum defined as a “cache of loom weights and spindle whorls”²⁸. The four distinct lots (Lots 1-4) were located at increasing depths with apparently no direct stratigraphic relationships between them. The nature and morphological characteristics of these depositions are difficult to discern based on the records, but the excavation notes clearly indicated individual depositions in the same stratum. The complexity of the analysis of the context is that the assemblages are mixed with other material connected with the use of the sanctuary, in some cases votives, generally in extremely fragmentary conditions, located in the same area of the lots. The stratigraphy of the context was not clearly distinguished at the time of the excavation, and the relationship among the recovered finds was not clearly documented. Ceramic finds permit a dating of the deposition of sacred material from the sixth to the first half of the fifth century BCE. From the excavation notes, it can be assumed that these objects were likely dedicated by visitors at the sanctuary and accumulated over time; then, at the time of the decommissioning of the sacred space, the area of deposition was sealed by the architectural terracottas from the sacellum. From the point of view of the association of materials, the lots contain homogeneous material connected with the production of textiles, in particular spinning and weaving wool²⁹. These activities were crucial both in Oenotrian culture and practices and within Greek settler communities³⁰. Lot 1 contains seven fine-clay loom weights with a truncated pyramidal body, an impasto spindle whorl decorated with a meander pattern, and seven elongated cylindrical impasto spools. Lot 2 includes three spindle whorls and three impasto spools, one of them with an incised decoration with a pseudo-meander of Oenotrian production. In addition to an intact specimen of a *hydriska*, Lot 3 holds two impasto spools and a truncated pyramidal loom weight. Lot 4 features four truncated pyramidal loom weights, three spindle whorls and an impasto spool, all exposed to fire. It is not possible to specify whether the burning took place in the same place as the deposition, but it seems likely that it was related to the ritual activities in the sanctuary.

While the finds in the lots are functionally consistent, their characteristics and chronology vary. Loom weights fall under the common type with a truncated pyramid shape and present a fine clay fabric typical of archaic Greek production commonly found in examples from the chora of Metaponto³¹; as they have different sizes ranging between g 30 and 60 in weight, it is highly probable that they were utilized for weaving fine textiles³². The spools and the spindles whorls can be traced back to Oenotrian manufacture for their clay characteristics and find parallel with specimens dating to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE recovered at Incoronata-San Teodoro. In the necropolis, seventeen burials dated between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eighth century BCE included loom weights, with a range of three to ten examples per burial; in four tombs, loom weights were associated with spindle whorls³³. While the

28 Hale's excavation notes, June 1977.

29 The catalogue and analysis of textile finds were realized by M. Barretta whom I wish to thank. A comprehensive discussion of textile objects attested in votive deposits in Iron Age Italy is in GLEBA 2008, p. 178-187. A summary of the debate around the function of loom weights found in sanctuary contexts in Southern Italy is in SOFRONIEW 2011; SOFRONIEW 2016, p. 194-197.

30 On the relevance of textile activities in Oenotrian society, see the archaeological evidence related to Building Vb at the Timpone della Motta at Francavilla Marittina (GLEBA 2008, p. 185-186; SAXKJÆR, JACOBSEN & MITTICA 2017). A relevant case of textile production is documented in the apsidal residence at Torre di Satriano in the interior of Basilicata (QUERCIA 2017). On textile production in the indigenous settlement of Garaguso, see GARAFFA 2021, p. 127. On the peculiar characteristics of indigenous and Greek textile activities during the Iron Age, see GLEBA 2017.

31 The role of loom weights in the Metapontine region is assessed in FOXHALL & QUERCIA 2015. Loom weights and discoid weights have been recovered at Metaponto in a votive deposit near the external face of the archaic fortification wall adjacent to the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore; they are also attested at Timmari and Cozzo Presepe (GLEBA 2008, p. 180-181). An analysis of the distribution and function of loom weights in the chora of Metaponto is in FOXHALL 2011. For the loom weights recovered in the sanctuary at Pantanello, see FOXHALL 2018.

32 MÅRTENSSON, NOSCH & ANDERSSON STRAND 2009, p. 386-389.

33 The punctual analysis of funerary sets containing textile tools in the necropolis of Incoronata-San Teodoro is in QUERCIA

percentage of burials presenting loom weights accounts only for 2% of the total number, it is noteworthy that the funerary sets displayed in these tombs include fibulae, bracelets and pectorals suggesting a high social status for the deceased women³⁴. In addition to these considerations, the recovery of 2/2 chevron twill at Incoronata-San Teodoro indicates an exceptional quality of local textile production³⁵. As for the Oenotrian impasto spindle whorl with an incised pseudo-meander motif recovered in Lot 1, numerous comparisons are attested from Building Vb at the Timpone della Motta at Francavilla Marittima dated to the early Iron Age (800-725 BCE)³⁶. In our example, the lack of traces of use suggests that the object had not been used but instead was a purpose-made votive³⁷. Thirteen spools were brought to light in the lots in the “Tile Scatter Area”. These tools are very common in the Italian peninsula from the Late Bronze Age in areas associated with Villanovan culture³⁸; in the territory of Incoronata-San Teodoro, they are frequent in indigenous dwellings in the second half of the eighth and seventh century BCE but absent from burials dated to the ninth-first half of the eighth century BCE³⁹. Spools are at the center of a long debate by specialists focused on their function. They are generally interpreted as supports for threads but recently, a function as lighter loom weights associated with tablet weaving has been proposed⁴⁰. This technique was reserved to produce particularly valuable belts, bandages or decorative bands applied as borders for other textiles and was linked to a ceremonial production of fabrics⁴¹. While tablet weaving is not specifically attested at Incoronata-San Teodoro, it is otherwise documented in Oenotrian culture. In the necropolis of Alianello di Aliano, a sixth century BCE female burial that includes a large ornamental parure, also yielded example of tesserae pertaining to a loom used for tablet weaving⁴².

As mentioned, the spools and the spindle whorl from the “Tile Scatter Area” fall within an indigenous tradition of production and present an older chronological framework than that proposed for the formation of the votive deposits. A similar phenomenon that suggests the presence of indigenous textile tools as heirlooms in a more recent context is attested near Amendolara, in the Oenotrian necropolis of Uomo Morto excavated by J. de la Genière. Biconical and globular impasto spindle whorls including one decorated with a meander, similar to the one recovered in the “Tile Scatter Area”, were found in a limited group of burials belonging to the seventh century BCE; they generally present an older chronology and compare with specimens from the Timpone della Motta dated to the eighth century BCE. The attestation at Amendolara has been explained by the fact that these spindle whorls, imbued with a particular meaning in relation to indigenous textile production, were deposited in a later period in the funerary-set in order to represent “the old Oenotrian tradition of home spinning and weaving”⁴³. It will be interesting to explore the reasons of such a deposition at Incoronata “greca” and to verify whether a similar motive might have initiated the association of ancient Indigenous textile tools with settler objects in the context of the Greek sanctuary. The integral analysis of the excavation data at Incoronata “greca” will contribute to the appraisal of these dedications and the assessment of the identity of the devotees at the sanctuary. As a hypothesis

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34 QUERCIA 2021. Gleba hypothesizes that textile activity markers indicate a high social rank of women (GLEBA 2008, p. 174-175).

35 GLEBA 2017. Following Kleibrink Maaskant, the high-quality decoration of Oenotrian textile production is indirectly documented by decorative bronze buttons, rings and water birds attested in representation of textile bands (KLEIBRINK MAASKANT 2003, p. 61, n. 150).

36 KLEIBRINK 2017, p. 46-47, in particular, n. 18; in these specimens, the decorative motif is applied only on one side.

37 KLEIBRINK 2017, p. 8.

38 GLEBA 2008, p. 145-148.

39 *I Greci sul Basento*, p. 178-179, 184, nn. 142-143; *Incoronata* 3, p. 110, nn. 12-15, 112, figs. 124-126; *Incoronata* 5, 87, nn. 1, 90, 149, fig. 261.

40 The use of spools for tablet weaving is reiterated by Gleba (GLEBA 2008, p. 140-143; see also, RÆDER KNUDSEN 2012).

41 GLEBA 2008, p. 138-150.

42 BOTTINI 2000; see also RUSSO 2006, p. 144, n. 65.

43 KLEIBRINK 2017, p. 17.

to explore, we wonder whether these objects might directly relate to indigenous agency and, in particular, to the contribution of Oenotrian women in the ritual practices at a sanctuary located in an indigenous enclave; in this reconstruction, the sacred space would open to encounters among the communities residing in the chora of Metaponto and beyond⁴⁴.

In addition to the materials recovered in the lots, pottery, metals, and other weaving-related tools were discovered in the “Tile Scatter Area”. While they are not stratigraphically attributable to specific contexts due to the outdated excavation techniques, given their characteristics and chronology, it is safe to assume that the finds were connected with the frequentation of the sanctuary and were likely part of broader votive offerings. Among votives connected with the production of textile, a spool and four spindle whorls of Oenotrian production were recovered. Offers to the divinity also include a terracotta figurine representing a standing female figure extending her raised forearms that has comparisons from Pantanello⁴⁵. Miniaturist pottery is represented by two *hydriskai*. Vessels for drinking/libation (an Ionian cup type B2 and three black-gloss *skyphoi*) and for pouring (a banded *olpe*) are also attested. Materials that have maintained a functional use within the sanctuary consists of a group of late archaic and high classical period transport amphorae including two Corinthian A amphorae of type 6 of the Rificolaro-Camarina classification, dated to the last years of the sixth century-490/480 BCE⁴⁶, a Zeest’s Samian amphora from the second half of the sixth century⁴⁷, and an amphora from Chios of the Early Bulging type dated to the first decades of the fifth century BCE⁴⁸. In addition, fragments of *chytrai* were also recovered.

In conclusion, the “Tile Scatter Area” includes multiple depositions of sacred objects as they were likely formed during the life of the sanctuary; the area was sealed by architectural terracottas from the sanctuary at the time of its dismissal as a final act of intentional obliteration as at VD1.

4. The Sacellum: One or Two Temple Structures?

The existence of a structure connected to the votive deposits is indicated by the conspicuous quantity of tiles, architectural terracottas, and debris belonging to one or more roofing systems. The material sealing VD1 and the “Tile Scatter Area” come from the same roofing system(s). The documentary picture that can be examined today does not fully correspond to the one found at the time of discovery; while all architectural terracottas were collected, the common roof tiles were the subject of a selection and only those considered diagnostic were preserved after the excavation. This occurrence, together with the particularly fragmentary state of recovered materials, does not permit a reconstruction of the precise standards of module and shape.

In Carter’s initial analysis of the sanctuary, the shrine was described “as one of the earliest structures of any architectural pretension in the chora”⁴⁹. Reconstructed as a small structure with column in antis, the terracottas found in the votive deposits are connected as elements from the same roof. Following C. Rescigno’s reconstruction, based on a careful review of the excavation contexts, it is more likely that the archaeological finds belong to two distinct roofing systems⁵⁰. The first is a Laconian type roof with

44 On the difficulty of relating material culture and ethnic identity, see HALL 2000. For a discussion on the role of indigenous women in Southern Italy, including in sacred contexts, see GARAFFA 2021, p. 129-135.

45 AMMERMAN 2018, p. 1167, PZ TC09.

46 SOURISSEAU 2006.

47 COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 181, 184, pl. 23.12h.

48 DE MARINIS 2005, p. 190-191, fig. 98.5.

49 CARTER 2006, p. 74-78, fig. 2.36. See also CARTER 1978.

50 RESCIGNO 2012.

flat pan tiles and large convex cover tiles (152 fragments; some are painted in red and brown), the second roof has pan tiles (14 fragments) with a raised lip and pentagonal cover tiles. Two series of antefixes, one with a palmette, the other with a palmette motif and eyes were individuated. Two series of geisa were also identified; one presents a guilloche motif (type 1) and is confidently dated to the first half of the sixth century BCE and possibly the first 30 years of the sixth, the other with a simple band (type 2) finds comparison with a series from the palace of Torre di Satriano. Rescigno outlines that while from a purely technical point of view it is possible that the recovered material can be integrated into a single roofing system, it is more likely that it pertains to a building that has undergone a renovation or to two buildings in chronological sequence. The terracottas are classified as related to the first “western-Greek” type with a small module that is usually common in buildings that use wood and clay as its principal construction elements. They are characterized by a very small module equaling to about a third of those at Satriano (in this case the monumental structure had a stone plinth about m 1 thick, with elevation in *pisé* and brick)⁵¹. The geison with guilloche (type 1) has dimensions similar to a series from the Timpone della Motta at Francavilla Marittima. As noted by Rescigno, it is in fact the Building II at the Timpone della Motta consisting of a *pronaos*, *cella*, and *adyton* that offers the closest comparison to the sanctuary at Incoronata⁵².



Fig. 7 : Incoronata "Greca". Antefix with Palmette and Eye (courtesy of MiC-SABAP Basilicata).

5. The Location of the Sanctuary

A crucial issue, still to be clarified, is the location of this sacred building; the limits of the sanctuary are not known, nor is it possible to say anything about the presence of *temenos* walls. The plateau at Incoronata “greca” measures approximately m 400 long in its east-west axis and is about m 150 wide. It is divided into three spurs, one on the western side and two on the eastern side. The western plateau, extensively investigated by numerous soundings and excavations by both the University of Milan and

⁵¹ CAPOZZOLI 2009, p. 140; the slabs of terracottas are cm 26-28 high and cm 45-48 long.

⁵² RESCIGNO 2012. About the sacred structures at the Timpone della Motta, see MERTENS 2006, p. 49-52; LIPPOLIS, LIVADIOTTI & ROCCO 2007, p. 783-785.

Rennes 2 University, has not revealed traces of such a building, nor have the southeastern slopes, in the vicinity of the deposits, explored by the University of Texas at Austin, yielded structures compatible with the material evidence of the roof.

The pedological and geological characteristics of the site lend themselves particularly well to the presence of a sanctuary as the flat plateau, located at approximately m 60-65 above sea level, forms a wide protected and secluded area defined on each side by steep slopes. It is precisely the value of the strategic location of the hill of Incoronata in the context of the relations between Oenotrians and Greeks that supports its selection by Metaponto as an extraurban sanctuary. The site is placed in a position of control of the territory in the transect Basento-Cavone rivers and, in particular, on the valley of the Basento, directly on the right bank. It enjoys intervisibility with San Biagio, located on the opposite side of the Basento and only km 2.3 (straight-line distance) away. To this must be added that the investigations of the south-eastern spur by the Institute of Classical Archaeology were not extensive and that large spaces in which the sanctuary could have been placed still await exploration. Useful data for the location of the sacellum comes from the analysis of the archaeological materials; the south-eastern spur is the only zone of Incoronata “greca” to have returned a consistent presence of archaic ceramics and architectural elements. It is worth mentioning that in correspondence with the concentration of architectural materials in VD₁, numerous blocks were found scattered in the ground. They were not analyzed or preserved at the time of the excavation, but it is possible that they were directly linked to the sacellum or to an ancillary structure of the sacred area.

If we consider access roads to the hill, as noted by Adamesteanu, one is located on the north side by the valley of the Basento river; the other is located on the eastern side by a prehistoric sheep track (connected, to the north, to San Biagio and Cozzo Presepe and, to the south, to other indigenous sites in the area of the Basento and Cavone rivers, to the Sirtide and to the Crati river valley)⁵³. This latter route is still in use today and seems to be compatible with an access road to the eastern slopes where the sanctuary would be well visible to the communities residing on the interior. The resumption of the research at Incoronata “greca” by the MAP is centered on the investigation of the archaic sanctuary. In October 2018, geomagnetic analyses were conducted in an attempt to identify the location of the temple and investigation at the site is ongoing⁵⁴. In consideration of the modern agricultural activities recorded on the hill, it cannot be excluded that the structure has not been preserved to date, even at the foundation level, especially if it had been a structure in wood and mudbrick.

6. The Cult

The sacred context displayed at Incoronata “greca” has a strong association with the *mundus muliebris* celebrated adhering to practices and using votives typical of Greek religiosity. The terracotta figurines, with few exceptions, represent a draped standing or seated female figure and broadly portray the dedicant. As outlined by Ammerman, the same series of molds depicting standing female figurines are attested at most archaic sacred spaces at Metaponto and suggest that a female deity presided over the cult at Incoronata “greca”, but they are too generic to point toward a specific goddess. In the context of votive offerings, the most frequently attested shape is the *hydriska*, a small water jug, generally associated with spring cults and widespread in sanctuaries in Southern Italy and Sicily⁵⁵. In the Metapontine region,

53 ADAMESTEANU 1974, p. 67-68.

54 POPE, SAVELLI, PERCIANTE & ROSSI in press.

55 CARTER 2006, p. 76-78.

hydriskai are found in the Crucinia Deposit (600 to 450 BCE), connected to a sacred area probably dedicated to Artemis, which indicated the transition between urban and non-urban space⁵⁶. Numerous examples are known from the sanctuary at the Timpone della Motta dedicated to Athena, but those at Incoronata are miniature⁵⁷. They have been linked to rituals with libations and fertility-promoting practices (sacred nuptial and postnuptial baths). There is no primary goddess to whom these offerings are dedicated, but they are associated with the principal deities of the female pantheon⁵⁸. In the case of Incoronata, such a cult could be related to a spring reported on the slopes of the hill (although currently not functioning). At the foot of the plateau, on the Destra Basento, a small place of worship was found in an area rich with springs. Two basins for the collection and settling of water have been identified in the natural bank. When the area was abandoned, fragmentary votive materials (mainly in black gloss) and terracotta female figurines were deposited, including a figure with polos holding an oinochoe and a small sheep⁵⁹.

Other materials celebrate textile production, such as spinning yarn and weaving fabrics; textile activities are integral part of Greek female practices, but in this context, it is particularly interesting to assess their significance in Oenotrian culture and to note the association of both Greek and Oenotrian tools dedicated in the same location. Indigenous textile utensils might be dedicated as heirlooms of traditional weaving practices in a setting that appears consistently under the aegis of Greek settler agency. The selection of these indigenous tools might be an indicator of frequentation by the local population. This hypothesis could be substantiated by the location of the sanctuary at the border of the chora and enhance the value of the site as a meeting place between different culture groups⁶⁰.

7. The Sanctuary in its Territorial Context

Following the interpretation proposed by Carter, the sanctuary at Incoronata “greca” is “one of a network of small rural sanctuaries that had an integral part in the settlement of the chora by the Achaean colonists in the first half of the sixth century BC”⁶¹. Considering the role of the settlement in the interactions between indigenous peoples and Greeks, it was proposed that this sanctuary gave assent to a role of Greek predominance in the territory⁶². It is well known how the *asty* of Metaponto was carefully designed from the end of the seventh century BCE within a fortification wall and including space intended for public, religious, and private use in an area of 156 hectares⁶³. The agora was monumentalized with temples from the early sixth century BCE. The noteworthy sacred buildings in the agora were paralleled by multiple periurban and extraurban sanctuaries. Following the population dynamics in the *chora*, the earliest settlements in the Basento-Bradano region are nearly contemporary with the *asty*⁶⁴. Settlers established themselves on choice land soon, if not immediately, after arrival on the Ionian coast, probably because the territory was already known. The presence of sanctuaries at San Biagio, Pantanello, and on the Bradano at the Tavole Palatine

56 ADAMESTEANU 1975, p. 264; LO PORTO 1981, p. 292; OSANNA 1992, p. 52, 77; SASSU 2018, p. 152.

57 STOOP 1974-1976, p. 107-116; GENTILE *et al.* 2005, p. 663.

58 GENTILE *et al.*, 2005, p. 663.

59 OSANNA 2008, p. 925-926. See also OSANNA & BERTESAGO 2010, p. 443, n. 249.

60 CARTER 2006, p. 76, n. 94. See also, POLIGNAC 1991, p. 19-120.

61 CARTER 2006, p. 74.

62 CARTER 2006, p. 76.

63 MERTENS 2006, p. 47-49.

64 Five nucleated settlements, referred to as Early Village Clusters, were recorded in the *chora*; they are located at Giardinetto and Giampasquale along the Bradano river, Sant'Angelo and Avinella along the Basento river, along the Venella valley. Three of them included sanctuary space and therein demonstrate cultural forces binding them into communities (CARTER 2011b, p. 645-666).

was already attested by the end of the seventh century BCE defining precise strategies in the occupation of the territory⁶⁵. A different dynamic is documented in the Basento-Cavone rivers transect; so far, the survey has not revealed material from the late seventh or early sixth century BCE and the stable occupation of the *chora* dates back to the second half of the sixth century BCE. The installation of the sacellum at Incoronata “greca” is consistent with the expansion of the settlements in the *chora* in the archaic period; the sanctuary establishes the beginning of a new pattern of occupation of the land by Achaean settlers on the right bank of the river. Analysis of the survey material in the Basento-Cavone region reveals significant occupation from the second half of the sixth century BCE⁶⁶. Ionian cups type B2 - a major indicator for the attestation of human frequentation during this time frame - are particularly attested on the high marine terraces characterized by fertile soils and copious water resources. These sites overlook river valleys and generally enjoy broad viewsheds. Only a few examples of Ionian cups are documented at lower elevations, along the floodplains of the Basento and near the coast. It is possible to hypothesize that in the initial phase of occupation, Greek settlers decided to use the Basento river as a natural limit of the *chora* and, at least initially, refrained from attempting to settle this territory with a strong indigenous presence and tradition. With the emergence of an interest in expanding the *chora* eastward beyond the Basento river, Metaponto occupied the once-prominent indigenous settlement at Incoronata, placing on it a sanctuary overlooking the frontier. Archaeological evidence cannot be utilized to trace indigenous presence in the territory, but clearly these communities are prospering on the interior⁶⁷. In the second half of the sixth century BCE, when the entire area of the Basento-Cavone transect was occupied by Greek farmhouses and settlements, the sacellum had the function of a rural sanctuary and slowly started to lose its relevance until an almost complete abandonment in the midpoint of the fifth century BCE.

8. Conclusions

In the second quarter-middle of the sixth century BCE, the indigenous stronghold at Incoronata “greca” was included in the “sacred topography” and territorial expansion of the *apoikia* of Metaponto. Considering the quality of the offerings, the sacred space was dedicated to a female goddess, and it was associated with textile activities and the cult of water perhaps in connection with a spring. The common use of votive and ritual objects leaves open many possibilities on the titularity of the cult that we hope to address in further campaigns. The sacred area is located on the site of the most relevant Oenotrian settlement in the region that during the seventh century BCE became the epicenter of the proto-colonial relationship of indigenous communities and Greeks; the sanctuary is positioned on the right bank of the Basento river, the limit of the *chora*, and could be considered an early border sanctuary intended to physically mark the presence of the *polis* beyond the Basento river. The definition of this sacred space is problematic; from the architectural material it can be deduced that it must have been placed on the plateau, likely on the south-eastern slopes because this area reveals a concentration of votives and archaic pottery on the hill. There is little data on a possible configuration of the sacellum. While it is a place of worship of modest monumental importance, its location has a fundamental impact in the context of the

65 CARTER 2011b, p. 663.

66 The archaeological finds from the Basento-Cavone transect survey is currently under study by a joint team from McMaster University and Saint Mary’s University. I wish to thank E. Del Fabbro, a PhD candidate from McMaster University, for allowing me to discuss here the result of his research as presented at the conference “Eraclea. Tra Taranto e Roma. Giornate di Studio a conclusione della Mostra Le Tavole di Eraclea. Tra Taranto e Roma” (Policoro, Matera, June 17-18, 2022). For an analysis of the dating methods based on black-gloss and Ionian cups used in the study of the *chora*, see also CARTER 2011a, p. 626-639.

67 OSANNA 2014.

relationship between indigenous communities and Greeks. With the continued expansion of Metaponto's *chora* in the second half of the sixth century BCE, Incoronata was a rural space that became pivotal in the process of occupation of land.

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