

APHRODITE AND THE COLONIZATION OF LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII

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Introduction

The Greek colonial foundations along the Ionian Sea coast of southern Italy may generally be divided into Achaian and non-Achaian cities (fig. 1). Of the Achaian cities, Sybaris and Croton were founded first, towards the end of the 8th century BC, followed by Caulonia to the south and Metapontum to the north. These latter cities were settled by Croton and Sybaris in order to create a buffer with the non-Achaian settlements of Locri Epizephyrii (south), and Siris and Taras (north).¹ The shared identity of the Achaian colonies can be seen in both their cultural assemblages (the ceramics and architecture) and their foundation legends, which associate each of the western settlements with cities in Achaia.² Moreover in the middle of the 6th century Metapontum, Sybaris,

¹ Antiochos of Syracuse [*FGrHist* 555] fr. 12) records the enmity in particular between Sybaris and Taras. For a discussion of Antiochos' comments, see Morgan and Hall 1996, 210-211.

² For a review of this evidence see Morgan and Hall 1996. Morgan and Hall conclude that at the time the colonies were founded there is almost no material culture that would connect them with mainland Achaia, despite the fact that the colonies "have a great deal in common" with one another (p. 213).

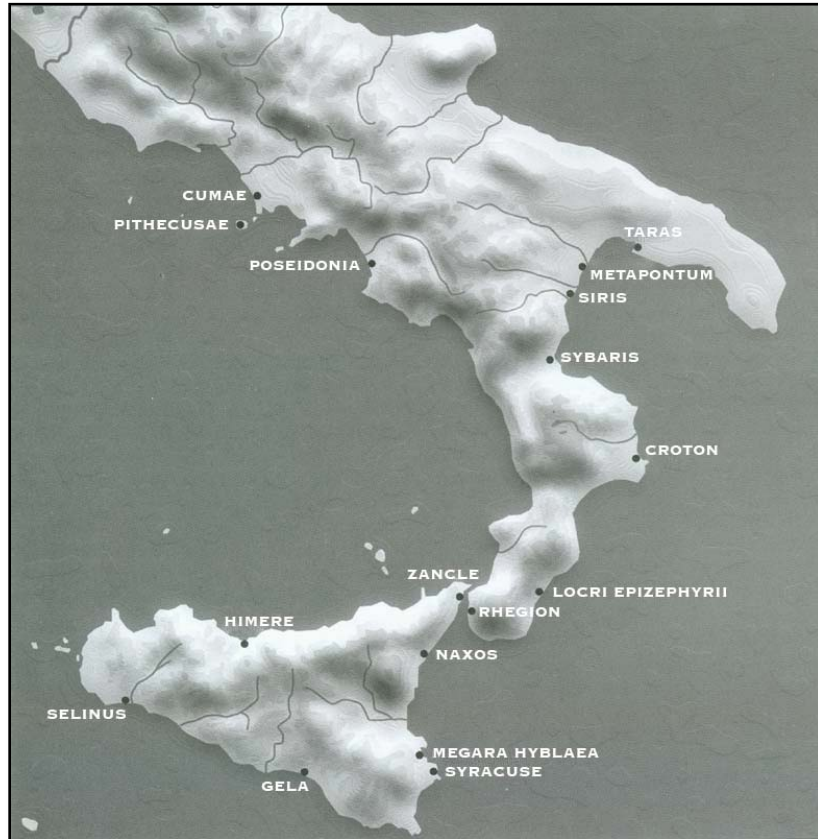


Figure 1: Map of Southern Italy showing the colonies established by the 7th century BC.

and Croton formed a monetary and commercial alliance that was designed to extend Achaian influence along the coast. Indeed this policy of expansion resulted in the destruction of Siris, an Ionian colony.³ The Achaian alliance, however, did not last and Croton destroyed Sybaris in 510 BC. The economic and military pressure that Taras and Locri Epizephyrii felt from the Achaian colonies led those two non-Achaian settlements to 'bond' with one another, despite their own distinct backgrounds: Taras was a Spartan foundation and Locri Epizephyrii was

³ See Mele 1984 for a discussion of Croton's history in relation to the surrounding Greek *poleis*. For the topography and some history of the entire region see Strabo VI.1.7-15.

founded by colonists from mainland Locris.⁴ In response to the Achaian threat, however, both cities promote an association with Sparta.⁵

One means of establishing cultural and ethnic affinity is through the foundation and development of cults. Hera and Apollo are the deities most often associated with the Achaian colonies. Indeed Hera has been considered the preeminent goddess of southern Italy.⁶ Within the Achaian colonies she had temples at Metapontum (both urban and extra-urban), literary evidence suggests she had a temple at Sybaris, and her most famous sanctuary, the temple of Hera Lacinia, was in the territory of Croton. When the Achaians established a new city at Poseidonia on the Tyrrhennian coast, major urban and sub-urban sanctuaries were established for Hera. Her significance for the Achaian colonies probably derives from the northeast Peloponnese, rather than any cult in Achaia itself.⁷ Morgan and Hall have argued that the cult of Hera Lacinia served as a nexus for Achaian identity in Southern Italy, an identity that gains strength from its distinction with the Dorian identity of Taras.⁸ It is notable, therefore, that cults of Hera are absent at Taras and Locri Epizephyrii. In those cities, Aphrodite emerges as a prominent deity and takes on characteristics usually ascribed to other gods and goddess, including Hera. In this paper I will focus on Aphrodite's character at Locri Epizephyrii, where we have a rich assemblage of iconographical and archaeological evidence for her cult.

Aphrodite's presence at Locri Epizephyrii has not gone unnoticed. However, discussions of her character there have generally focused on her appearance on the famous *pinakes* from the Mannella sanctuary, a site primarily dedicated to the worship of Persephone.⁹ The rich iconography of the *pinakes* makes them a valuable and unique resource

⁴ Locri was probably founded by colonists from Ozolian Locris (Strabo VI.1.7). Later myths about Locri's foundation suggest that the Italian city was founded by elite women from Locris and their male slaves. This is similar to Taras' foundation myth. For a discussion of the sources on Locri's foundation and the significance of the myth see Van Compernelle 1976.

⁵ See Sourvinou-Inwood 1974 for discussion of the Spartan associations. She argues that the Locrians latched on to Taras's more defined ethnos.

⁶ See Giangiulio 2002.

⁷ Lévêque 1997.

⁸ Morgan and Hall 1996, 213.

⁹ Zancani-Montuoro 1938 and 1964, Sourvinou-Inwood 1978. Mannella was Persephone's most famous sanctuary in Magna Graecia (see Livy XXIX.18.3-18).

for examining cult activity, myth, and women's lives in this Greek colony. In seeking to explain the presence of Aphrodite at this sanctuary, previous scholars have tended to define Aphrodite's role there in relation to Persephone.¹⁰ There is no doubt that the two goddesses complemented each other in some way. However, it is also clear that Aphrodite's presence at Locri extended beyond the Mannella sanctuary, and that her role there may have been related to and even dependent upon her other cult functions at Locri. In order to understand more fully the Locrian character of Aphrodite, it is necessary to take in to account all the evidence for her worship in this western Greek city.

Aphrodite's Cults at Locri Epizephyrii

Numerous sanctuaries, both urban and extra-urban, have been excavated at Locri. In the Archaic and early Classical periods, Aphrodite may have received worship at three of those sites: the extra-mural sanctuary at Centocamere/Marasà Sud on the seaward side of the city (which includes the Stoa ad Ù and the Casa dei Leoni); the temple at Marasà, just inside the city gates on the east; and at the extra-mural sanctuary of Mannella on the *chora* side of the city (fig. 2). In the 4th century BC there is also evidence for her worship at the Grotta Caruso outside the city wall on the north. At the other three sites the earliest evidence for cult activity, although not necessarily for Aphrodite, dates to the 7th century BC. Locri was founded in the late 8th century BC, probably between 720 and 715 BC. Thus, we would expect evidence of the earliest cults soon after that. All three sanctuaries have a different architectural character and assemblage of dedications, reflecting the different ritual activities that took place at each and, hence, the different aspects of the deity or deities worshipped there.

¹⁰ Prückner 1968 is an exception to this. He argued, based on limited access to only certain types of *pinakes*, that Aphrodite was the principle deity at the Mannella sanctuary. This conclusion has not been widely accepted.

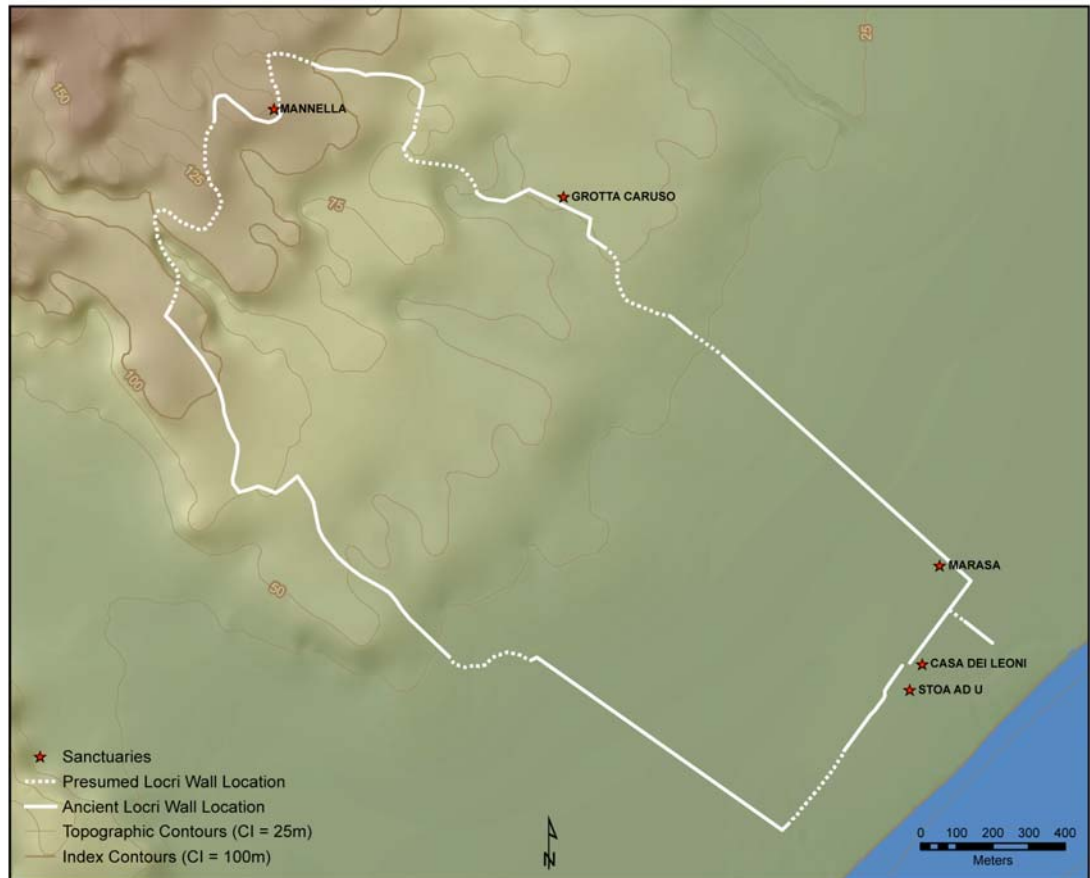


Figure 2: Topographic map of Locri Epizephyrii showing the city walls and the locations of the sanctuaries where Aphrodite was worshipped.

Centocamere/Marasà Sud

We will start with the two sites from which we have secure evidence of Aphrodite's worship at Locri: Centocamere/Marasà Sud and Mannella. The extra-mural sanctuary of Centocamere/Marasà Sud consists of a large U-shaped stoa (The Stoa ad Û) and a small shrine to the northeast (fig. 3).

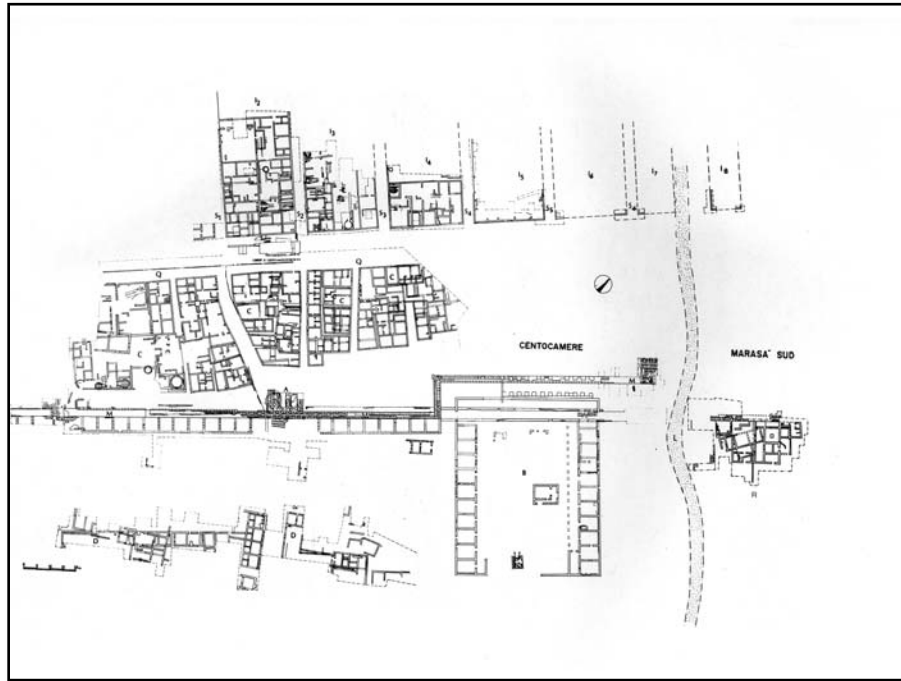


Figure 3: Plan of the Centocamere region of Locri Epizephyrii. (From Barra Bagnasco 1992, reprinted with permission.)

The earliest phase of both the shrine and the stoa date to the 7th century BC. In the 6th century the stoa was reconstructed and enlarged. Also in the 6th century the city wall was constructed and the stoa was intentionally left outside, as evidenced by the jog in the wall. Each of the rooms in the stoa is the appropriate size for a Greek dining room. Three-hundred and seventy-one bothroi excavated in the center of the stoa attest to the sacred nature of this building. The bothroi contained remains of meals, as well as votive cups and terracotta figurines. An inscription from the late 7th or early 6th century BC, suggests that Kybele may have been the initial patron of that sanctuary.¹¹ However, votives from the 6th century onward include dedicatory inscriptions to Aphrodite on drinking cups (fig. 4) and terracotta figurines of men reclining on *kline* (fig. 5).¹²

¹¹ Guarducci 1970.

¹² Lissi 1961.

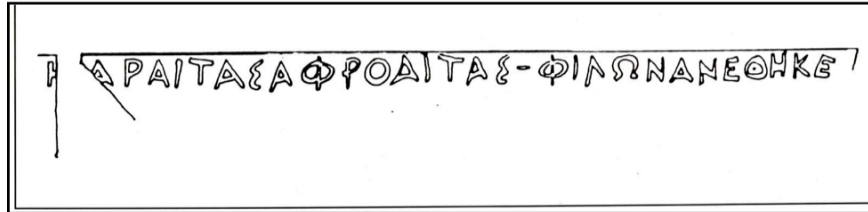


Figure 4: Inscription painted on a black-glaze kotyle from the Centocamere sanctuary at Locri Epizephyrii dated to first quarter of the 4th century BC: Η[Ι]ΑΡΑΙ ΤΑΣ ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΑΣ-ΦΙΛΩΝΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ. (From Lattanzi 1996, 30; reprinted by permission.)

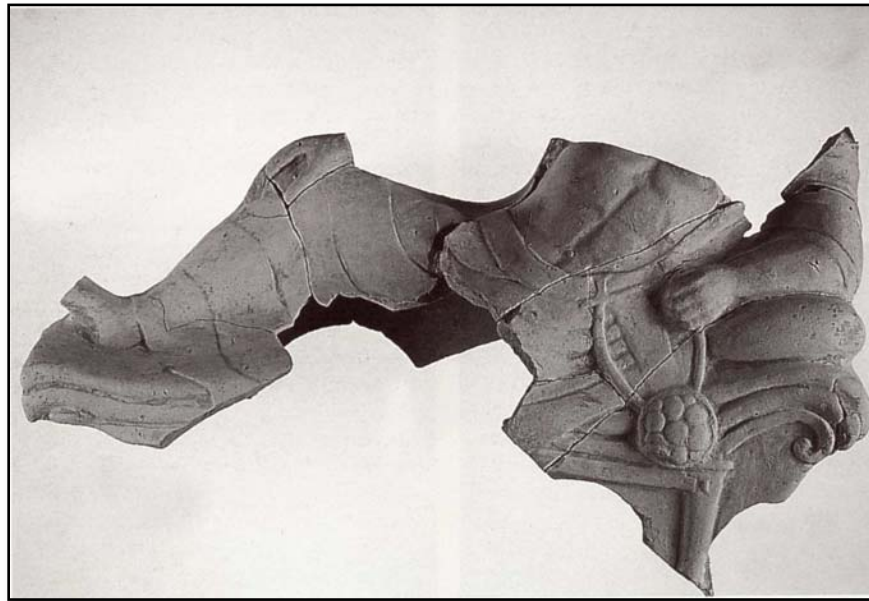


Figure 5: Terracotta figurine of a banqueter reclining on a *kline* from the Centocamere sanctuary dated to the first half of the 5th century BC. (From Lattanzi 1996, 30; reprinted by permission.)

In addition, a limestone inscription on a square block from the small shrine also attests to the worship of Aphrodite.¹³ The votives from the

¹³ Barra Bagnasco and Pugliese Carratelli 1990. The inscription reads: Παντά[ρης] ἀνέθ[ηκε] Ἄφροδί[τῃ] (Pantares dedicated this to Aphrodite). Based on the epigraphic characteristics, Pugliese Carratelli dates this inscription to the first half of the 5th century BC.

stoa range in date from the middle of the 6th to the 4th century. The stoa went out of use in the 4th century. At the same time the small shrine was destroyed and then rebuilt in the form of a *pastas* style house. Called the “Casa dei Leoni” by the excavators, this building was not a private residence. It continued to be associated with the worship of Aphrodite, as well as the cult of Adonis.

The Aphrodite sanctuary in the Centocamere/Marasà Sud region of Locri thus consists of a shrine and associated *hestiatorion*. The sanctuary is located outside the city wall along the seacoast. Between the Stoa ad Û and the small shrine is the 'Porta di Afrodite' and to the north of the shrine (about 200 m) is another entrance to the city, the 'Porta "portuense"', leading to the Marasà sanctuary inside the city, which was also likely to have been dedicated to Aphrodite (see below). The area between the two gates is most certainly the 'port' of Locri.¹⁴

To the south of the Aphrodite sanctuary, also outside of the city wall, is a series of shops. Thus, the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Centocamere/Marasà Sud is intricately connected with maritime activity as well as commerce. Merchants arriving from the sea would have had to pass by, or possibly through the sanctuary in order to reach the shops. On entering the city visitors would have had to pass through the extra-mural sanctuary to reach the 'Porta di Afrodite', or, if entering through the 'Porta "portuense"', they would have arrived almost immediately at the Marasà sanctuary.

The cups, terracotta figurines, and dining remains from the *bothroi* indicate that the patrons of this cult were primarily men. Lacking a complete study of the material from the *bothroi*, it is difficult to make any assessment regarding the identity of the patrons, that is, whether they were primarily local Greeks, non-local Greeks, non-Greeks, or some combination of the three. The location of the sanctuary would suggest that the Locrians made an effort to attract visitors engaged in trade. Aphrodite cults are regularly found at ports, or close to or within sight of the sea. Such sites include her famous sanctuaries at Paphos, Kythera, and Corinth (both on Acrocorinth and at the port of Kenchreai), as well as Eryx in Sicily. At some of those sanctuaries her temples could have served as beacons for approaching ships. Aphrodite also has less well-known sanctuaries associated with ports, for example at Patras¹⁵ and

¹⁴ On the port of Locri and the excavations between the 'Porta di Afrodite' and the 'Porta "portuense"', see Barra Bagnasco 1999.

¹⁵ Pausanias VII. 21. 10-11.

Satyriion (Taras).¹⁶ In the Greek East, Aphrodite's Milesian cults are also often connected to the sea.¹⁷ A number of Aphrodite's cult epithets connect her to the sea and maritime trade, for example, *Kypria*, *Kytheria*, and *Euploia*.

Parallels for the particular form (a small shrine with a facility for ritual dining) of Aphrodite's seaside sanctuary at Locri are harder to come by. The Stoa-ad-Û has no precise parallels, especially given its early foundation date. A parallel for its function, however, may be found just to the north of Locri at the Achaian colony of Croton. In the sanctuary of Hera Lacinia at Capo Colonna (about 12 km from the city of Croton) there is a building within the *temenos* identified as a *hestiatorion*. It was built in the 4th century BC and has been reconstructed with fourteen rooms that held seven couches each, which would allow for 98 banqueters.¹⁸ The overall character of the Hera Lacinia sanctuary is different than that of the Centocamere/Marasà Sud sanctuary at Locri. Hera Lacinia boasts a large Doric temple and a treasury that contained rich dedications attesting to an international set of patrons.¹⁹

It should also be noted that the Stoa-ad-Û has also been associated with the practice of ritual prostitution within Aphrodite's cult at Locri.²⁰ The question of whether ritual prostitution was a regular practice at Locri has been much debated and it is not my intention here to rehash those arguments. However, I believe that it is reasonable to suggest that if men were banqueting in the Stoa-ad-Û and engaging in drinking and music (as evidenced by the votive dedications) that they would have been accompanied by *hetairai*, as elsewhere in the Greek world, and that these women would have fallen under the protection of Aphrodite.

Taken together these factors connect Aphrodite's worship on the eastern side of Locri with the sea and mercantile activity, perhaps to attract outside business to the area. The fact that the Locrians went to some length to keep the business of this sanctuary outside the walls of the city suggests that its patrons were not all citizens of Locri and that the function of this sanctuary may have been to attract outside business to

¹⁶ Lippolis, et al. 1995, 84-86.

¹⁷ Greaves 2004.

¹⁸ Seiler 1996, 253 and Spadea 1997, 239.

¹⁹ Spadea 1996.

²⁰ For the arguments regarding prostitution within the cult of Aphrodite at Locri see Torelli 1988, 599.

the city; analogous, but on a smaller scale, to the extra-urban sanctuary of Hera Lacinia at Croton.

Mannella

The sanctuary in Contrada Mannella is another extra-mural shrine located just outside a city gate, in this case on the northwest side of the city in one of the low ravines that characterize the topography of Locri (fig. 2). Paolo Orsi excavated the site in 1908-1909.²¹ He uncovered a small rectangular building and a single large bothros. The bothros contained thousands of pinax fragments as well as other votives. The material in the bothros dates from the late 7th or early 6th century BC to the 4th century BC (although the deposit itself was not stratified). However, the *pinakes*, a series of terracotta relief plaques, were only produced from the end of the 6th century down to ca. 470 BC. The majority of these terracotta plaques depict scenes of Persephone: her abduction and rape by Hades, preparations for her marriage, and the enthroned king and queen of the underworld. A small group of plaques from the deposit depict episodes from Aphrodite's mythic history, some of which is obscure to us, and scenes relevant to her cultic sphere. There are also numerous plaques for which the figures cannot be securely identified and various arguments have been made in support of Persephone or Aphrodite or even mortal women participating in ritual activities. Here we shall consider only those plaques that either clearly show Aphrodite or may be associated with her divine realm.²²

1. Aphrodite's Birth from the Sea

In the first example (type 10/3), we see a young, or at least small, female figure standing on waves flanked by two larger women, one of whom stretches out her arms to greet the central figure, the other holds a cloth, suggesting she is about to wrap the young woman in the garment

²¹ Orsi 1909.

²² On identifying plaques that are associated with Aphrodite, but do not necessarily show the goddess, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1978.

(fig. 6).²³ The plaque is similar, although by no means identical, to Aphrodite's birth on the Ludovisi Throne, which was probably produced at Locri around the same time as the *pinakes*.²⁴ The scene suggests Aphrodite's Hesiodic birth myth – the foam-born Aphrodite, offspring of Ouranos' castrated genitals and hence Aphrodite *Ourania*. This story, of course, connects Aphrodite with the sea and with the islands of Kythera and Cyprus. It also recalls her divine aspect as the goddess of heavenly love, the love necessary for marriage, and hence with the fertility and stability of society.

2. Aphrodite and Hermes

In a more mundane version of her character, a number of the *pinax* types depict Aphrodite in association with Hermes. Mythologically Aphrodite and Hermes may be connected as the parents of the Hermaphrodite. However, we know little else about them as a divine couple. Although, they rarely appear together in Greek art, they do share a number of cults around the Mediterranean, most notably within the Heraion on Samos²⁵ and at Kato Syme on Crete.²⁶ They may also have shared a cult at Locri. Indeed, on two *pinax* types they appear together as cult statues.

In one example of this type (10/1), Aphrodite stands facing Hermes, extending the offering of what appears to be a lotus blossom (fig. 7).²⁷

²³ Pinax type 10/3. Zancani-Montuoro (1938) originally grouped the *pinakes* thematically (the first number) and then by individual scenes (the second number). Subsequent studies have tended to follow her numbering system even when disagreeing with her groupings.

²⁴ On the Ludovisi Throne and its connection to Locri see Gullini 1982.

²⁵ See Buschor 1957.

²⁶ See Lebessi 1985.

²⁷ The type of flower is difficult to identify. Prückner says that it is a rose (Prückner 1968, 15–17) but others have identified it as a lotus blossom (Oldfather 1912, 323).

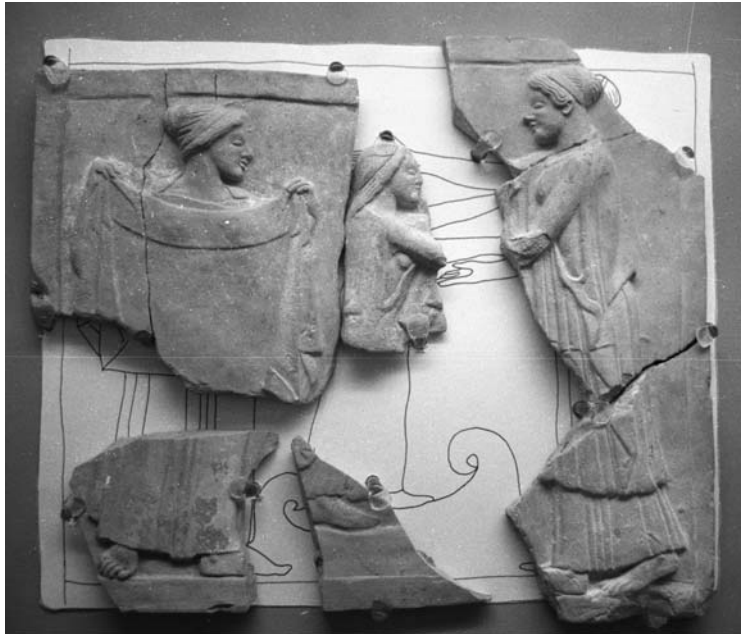


Figure 6: The Birth of Aphrodite. Pinax type 10/3. (Photo by the author; printed with permission.)



Figure 7: Aphrodite offering a blossom to Hermes. Pinax type 10/1. (Photo by the author; printed with permission.)

Eros stands on her outstretched right forearm, mimicking her gesture with his own extended right arm; he holds a tortoise shell lyre in his left hand. Hermes holds the *kerkyreion* in his right hand and there is a *thymiaterion* between the divine pair. The scene appears to represent a meeting between the two divine lovers but we have no mythological context in which to place the scene. The figures' posture, as well as the presence of a *thymiaterion*, indicates that this is taking place within a cultic setting. Indeed it has been suggested they are meant to represent cult statues.²⁸ Even if this is the case, the goddess' attributes – the flower blossom, the lyre, and her son as an agent of her power – recall Aphrodite's powers of seduction. This charming and peaceful scene belies the erotic nature of Aphrodite and Hermes' relationship. They are not a married couple and Aphrodite appears here as *Pandemos*, the common and erotic side of her sexual powers.

On the next example (type 3/6), Aphrodite and Hermes are clearly shown as cult statues inside a temple of mixed Ionic and Doric orders (fig. 8). The statue of Hermes is nude except for a *chlamys* draped over his shoulders and his *petasos*, travelling hat. He holds a *patra* in his right hand. Aphrodite is clothed in a *peplos* and her hair is worn down with a filet at the top.²⁹ She appears to be holding a dove in her right hand but most of the remaining examples are badly damaged at this point.³⁰ In front of the temple, a bare-foot young woman and young man are pouring a libation on an altar.

The plaque is iconographically rich and suggestive of Aphrodite and Hermes' cultic "personality" at Locri. The seemingly somber libation being performed by the mortal couple is subtly undermined by the erotic relief on the altar – a satyr copulating with a hind. This complicates the interpretation of the plaque. In the overall context of the *pinakes* the mortal couple would seem to be either betrothed or married. However, they are pouring a libation to an unwed divine couple on an altar

²⁸ Prückner 1968, 16–17. Prückner also notes that Hermes is not looking directly at Aphrodite. However, the details were probably painted and it is possible that he could have been shyly glancing at her. I see this interpretation as unlikely given Aphrodite's gesture.

²⁹ Aphrodite is always shown in the *pinakes* with her hair down, as an unwed maiden.

³⁰ Zancani-Montuoro (1938, 212) suggests that it could also be the legs of a cock, but this is likely based on analogy with the numerous examples of Persephone holding a cock on other *pinakes* and is not necessarily appropriate in the context of Aphrodite.

depicting an erotic sexual act that stands outside the bounds of the civic intercourse necessary for reproduction. I would argue, therefore, that this *pinax* type would have been a dedication made by worshippers of Aphrodite who fall outside the bounds of ‘civic society’ but who also recognize the overall power of the Mannella sanctuary to protect all women within Locrian society.



Figure 8: Aphrodite and Hermes as Cult Statues. Pinax type 3/6. (Photo by the author; printed with permission.)

The depiction of Aphrodite and Hermes in an architectural and cultic setting also implies more than an abstract association in myth and suggests that the two shared a temple at Locri. The temple in the plaque has Ionic columns and a Doric frieze. At the pediment’s peak, a gorgoneion sits over a *sima* decorated with palmettes. The Ionic order is rare in the West, known only at Locri, in the Marasà sanctuary (see below), at Hipponion, a sub-colony of Locri, and at Syracuse for the

Temple of Artemis. The coroplast's use of the Ionic order in this *pinax* type would be unusual if he was not making reference to a specific monument. A careful examination of the triglyphs in the Doric frieze shows that they are actually *tetraglyphs*, a detail that would create technical difficulties for the coroplast, and unnecessary unless based on an actual monument.³¹

Another plaque showing an architectural setting with mixed Ionic and Doric elements (type 3/5) also appears to relate to the sphere of Aphrodite (fig. 9).³² The type is fragmentary, but we can identify two female figures, one playing an *aulos* with her hair tied up in a *sakos* and the other with her hair down. We cannot see whether the second figure is holding any attributes. In the pediment, two doves flank a central metope. The oddity of the central metope aside, similarities with the *pinax* depicting Aphrodite and Hermes as cult statues and the doves, suggest that we are within Aphrodite's sphere.

The final example (type 10/2) moves away from the cultic sphere and into mythological narrative. It shows Aphrodite in a chariot being pulled by two winged genii, one male and one female (fig. 10). One holds an *alabastron*, the other a dove – both symbols of Aphrodite's powers. Behind Aphrodite, Hermes is attempting to step into the rear of the chariot as it is lifting off the ground; however, his rear foot is still firmly planted on the ground. Aphrodite is turning around to look Hermes as he mounts the chariot. Zancani-Montuoro, trying to link this scene with the *pinakes* as a whole, identified Aphrodite and Hermes as a divine couple travelling to the wedding celebration of Persephone and Hades.³³ G. Zuntz also connects the scene with the overall theme of the *pinakes*, suggesting that Aphrodite, as the goddess of love, was a necessary attendant at Persephone's wedding and that Hermes, as *psychopompos*, had to show Aphrodite the way.³⁴

³¹ Zancani-Montuoro 1938, 214 and Prückner 1968, 28. Zancani-Montuoro argued that the temple in the plaque represented the cult building of the Mannella sanctuary and that the cult statues are those of Persephone and Hades. Prückner, on the other hand, associated the temple in the *pinax* with the Marasà temple at Locri. No elements from the frieze of the Doric phase of that temple survive. However, another temple at Locri, Casa Marafioti, had *pentaglyphs* (see Gullini 1988, 367).

³² Prückner 1968, 66–67, pl. 11, figs. 2 and 4; Orsi 1909, fig. 13; Quagliati 1908, fig. 81.

³³ Zancani-Montuoro 1964, 395.

³⁴ Zuntz 1971, 165–166.



Figure 9: Temple of Aphrodite (?). Pinax type 3/5. (Photo by the author; printed with permission.)

Erika Simon, however, suggested that the scene is not related to Persephone at all, but rather shows the birth of Aphrodite. Her conclusion is based on a similar scene depicted in relief on two Tarantine altars. These show Aphrodite in a chariot being pulled out of, or perhaps over, the sea by two winged figures, a male and a female.³⁵ Although the composition of the Locrian *pinax* is similar to the Tarantine altars, there are a number of reasons why an identification of the birth of Aphrodite does not fit.³⁶ First, Hermes has no place in Aphrodite's Hesiodic birth myth. Moreover, Hermes is not an innocent bystander, but an integral part of the scene. There is also no indication that they are rising up out of

³⁵ Simon 1959, 28–31, figs. 13 and 14. One of these altars (now in Trieste) is published by Willeumier (1939, 4334, pl. XLI, 5), who identifies the winged male figure as Eros and Aphrodite as a young bride; the opposite long panel of the altar shows the goddess assisting in a bridal chamber (pl. XLI, 6).

³⁶ For objections to Simon see Prückner 1968, 23–4.

the water.³⁷ While, it is possible that such a detail could have been added in paint this would be awkward considering the location of Hermes' feet.



Figure 10: Aphrodite and Hermes in a chariot. Pinax type 10/2. (Photo by the author; printed with permission.)

Finally, as we have seen, another *pinax* type, (type 10/3) clearly depicts Aphrodite's birth from the sea.

This *pinax* appears to represent a narrative scene from Aphrodite's mythic history, but one that is now lost to us. In addition to the Tarantine altars, the best parallels for this scene are wedding processions on Greek vases of the 5th century BC. In such example, it is not uncommon to see a bride in her chariot with the groom, who is holding the reins, stepping in behind her.³⁸ In this case, however, Aphrodite is clearly in control as she is the one holding the reins, and rather than heading for the house of the groom, the chariot is headed up towards Aphrodite's heavenly house. Whether this is a true marriage procession, and therefore a big gap in our

³⁷ Waves are prominently indicated on the Tarantine reliefs.

³⁸ See, for example, a red-figure pyxis by the Marlay Painter (London, British Museum: 1920.12-21.1), Beazley Archive #216210, illustrated by Boardman 1989, fig. 243.

knowledge of Aphrodite and Hermes' mythic history, is perhaps not as important as the fact that this was a votive dedication made by Locrians who had a good reason to propitiate Aphrodite and Hermes together for powers that they represent as a couple. Nevertheless we are left with the sense that there are particulars of Aphrodite's (and Hermes') mythic history that are not preserved to us but that were of particular importance to the colonists at Locri Epizephyrii.

There are also a number of *pinax* types that refer to Aphrodite's role within the context of the wedding and marriage but which do not depict the goddess herself. We have already mentioned the two female figures within the temple. Other *pinakes* include those which show a woman preparing for her wedding (*kosmesis*) (type 6/1-9) and scenes of young women picking fruits in a garden setting (type 4/3), which has been related to Aphrodite's connections with gardens (particularly at Athens) but which could also relate to Persephone. One difficult *pinax* type to interpret (9/1-7) depicts a young woman lifting the lid of a basket that contains a male child. The identity of the child has been much disputed.³⁹ I would argue that the child in the basket represents Adonis, whom Aphrodite gave to Persephone for safe keeping and over whom the two goddesses later fought. We should recall that Adonis himself receives worship at Locri in the 4th century sanctuary at Centocamere/Marasà Sud.⁴⁰ The *pinax* may be an early indication of his place within Locrian cult. Moreover, he serves to forge a connection between Aphrodite and Persephone at the Mannella sanctuary. It is less clear, however, who would be offering such *pinakes* at the sanctuary.

Taken together the *pinakes* reflect a number of different aspects of Aphrodite's Locrian cult. She is a goddess of love and sexuality, both pure (for marriage) and erotic (for other needs). Together Aphrodite and Hermes may also represent the protection of travelers and merchants, a role that fits with Aphrodite's sanctuary on the seaward side of the city. They may also be seen as gods of initiation – Aphrodite for girls entering womanhood and Hermes for boys entering manhood.⁴¹ At the Mannella sanctuary, a cult that seems exclusive to women, Aphrodite may have received worship from a variety of patrons, and when she appears with

³⁹ Suggestions include Dionysus, Iakchos, and Erichthonios. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1978, 116, n. 113 for a complete bibliography on the identity of the child. Sourvinou-Inwood herself believed that the child was not divine but a symbolic dedication to Persephone to place the child under her protection.

⁴⁰ Barra Bagnasco 1994.

⁴¹ On Aphrodite and Hermes as gods of initiation see Marinatos 2003.

Hermes he adds another dimension to her cultic personality there. The depiction of the two of them within a temple as cult statues, however, suggests that they received worship at Locri independent of Persephone's cult

One other find from Mannella deserves some attention. Among the numerous terracotta figurines from the *bothros* the bust of an armed female figure stands out. It was identified by the excavators as an Armed Aphrodite (Aphrodite *Armata*).⁴² Although unusual, the type is not unheard of in Greek art, nor is the association of Aphrodite with military affairs.⁴³ This supports the idea that Aphrodite served as much a military role at Locri as a civic one. It also suggests a connection with Sparta, where Pausanias (III.15.10) describes another Aphrodite *Armata*.

Marasà

Just inside Locri's northeast city gate, only 250 meters from the shrine at Marasà Sud, is the Marasà temple (fig. 2). The earliest building here dates to the end of the 7th century BC. This so-called "Primitive Oikos" was a rectangular building with a short pronaos and cella.⁴⁴ Large terracotta plaques painted with geometric designs covered the outside of the building. This phase is contemporary with the earliest shrine constructed at Marasà Sud and it is possible that the two structures were conceived and built together. In the 6th century the building was enlarged with a peripteros. And then, in the second quarter of the 5th century, it was rebuilt as an Ionic temple.

No inscriptions and few votive materials were found in association with this temple. Despite this lack of information, a number of scholars have associated the Marasà temple with the worship of Aphrodite. Paolo Orsi first made this suggestion in the late 19th century. In 1890 he claims to have found a deposit of terracottas in close proximity to the temple that included female figures holding either a dove or a pomegranate. Orsi identified these figures with Aphrodite.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, both the finds

⁴² Museo Nazionale di Reggio Calabria inv. #6034.

⁴³ See Osanna 1990.

⁴⁴ The sanctuary was originally excavated by P. Orsi in 1889–90 (Orsi 1890, 248–62) and subsequently by A. de Franciscis in the 1950's, see various entries in the *Fasti Archeologici* and De Franciscis 1979. The phases of the temple were reconstructed by G. Gullini. For a full discussion and plans see Gullini 1980, 11–110, pls. 3–15.

⁴⁵ Orsi 1890, 262.

from the deposit and its location are now lost. Another noteworthy find from the area is a terracotta statuette of a female figure holding two geese by their necks, dated to the 6th century.⁴⁶ Geese are sacred to Aphrodite and this “*potnia theron*” type may be further evidence of Marasà’s association with the goddess.⁴⁷

Two scholars, G. Gullini and M. Guarducci, have argued that the Ludovisi Throne came from the Marasà temple and that the temple was dedicated to Aphrodite.⁴⁸ The ‘throne’ has sculpted figural reliefs on three sides: the one long side shows the birth of Aphrodite from the sea, one short side shows a *hetaira* playing double flutes, and the other depicts a veiled matron burning incense. It has been dated to 460-450 BC, contemporary with the Ionic phase of the Marasà temple. Gullini argued that the Ludovisi Throne would have been on the southern end of the large altar at the east side of the Ionic temple and that the Boston throne would have been on the northern end.⁴⁹ This theory is problematic; not least because the measurements of the two pieces do not match the width of the altar and the marble of the throne does not show signs of having been exposed to the elements for a long period of time.⁵⁰

Guarducci also believed that the Ludovisi and Boston Thrones came from the Marasà temple. However, she placed them inside the temple as a parapet for the stone-built *bothros* in the cella.⁵¹ Based on the dimensions of the *bothros* reported by D. Mertens, Guarducci demonstrated that the ‘Thrones’ could have fit on top of this feature. The pit created by the stone feature was not, in fact, a *bothros*. No votive objects or sacrificial remains were found inside of it and its true function remains obscure.

⁴⁶ See Costabile 1991, 137. The piece is unpublished but on display in the Museo Nazionale di Reggio Calabria.

⁴⁷ Bodson 1978, 97. For representations of Aphrodite riding a goose see *LIMC* s.v. Aphrodite 903–46. See also Simon 1959, who associates this imagery with the birth of Aphrodite; and Dessenne 1949.

⁴⁸ The authenticity of the Ludovisi Throne, and its supposed companion piece the Boston, has at various times in the past century been called into question. For a recent review of the problem see R. Newman and J.J. Herrmann 1993, 103-112.

⁴⁹ Gullini 1982.

⁵⁰ For objections to Gullini’s hypothesis see Guarducci 1985, 5.

⁵¹ See Guarducci 1985 and Costamagna and Sabbione 1990, 196–210. This is not a novel suggestion. Prückner (1968, 90) suggested that the squared feature in the center of the temple at Marasà was a base for the Ludovisi Throne and the Boston Throne, and that this served to protect some sort of sacrificial pit.

The only other indication for the identity of Marasà's patron deity is the pedimental sculpture. Costabile has reconstructed the find-spots of these pieces and hypothesizes that the eastern pediment would have displayed a scene with a central draped female figure alighting and the Dioskouroi on either side.⁵² The Dioskouroi figure prominently in Locri's military history. During the war against Croton in 540 BC, the Dioskouroi are said to have appeared at the battle of Sagra, saving the day for the Locrians.⁵³ This pedimental group may commemorate the Locrians' victory at the battle. The female figure in the pediment has no identifying characteristics and Aphrodite does not appear to have played a role at Sagra. However, as we have seen from the evidence at Mannella, Aphrodite at Locri may have been considered a *polis* deity with military functions. Moreover, she does figure prominently in another military engagement.

In 477/6 BC, when the Locrians were under attack from Rhegion, they swore an oath to Aphrodite, invoking her to save them. The oath is reported by Justin (21.3.2-5), based on Pompeius Trogus, as an example of the Locrians' immorality because they promise to prostitute their daughters in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in return for redemption from the attack. The practice of prostitution within the cult of Aphrodite at Locri is controversial and the meaning of the reference to such acts in the oath has been debated. However, the oath itself may be taken as evidence that the Locrians considered Aphrodite a *polis* deity with military powers. In the moment of their greatest need, she was the deity to whom they turned. Ultimately, the Locrians were saved from Rhegion's attack by Hieron of Syracuse. Gullini, has suggested that the Locrians built an Ionic temple to Aphrodite as a substitution for the vow of prostitution. This is, of course, entirely speculative.⁵⁴ However, the Marasà temple shows certain architectural affiliations with the Ionic temple of Artemis on the island of Ortygia in Syracuse and it appears that it served as a place to commemorate Locri's military victories. Although not conclusive, there is also some compelling evidence to suggest that Aphrodite was its patron deity. If this is the case, then Marasà would have been the urban seat of Aphrodite's cult at Locri Epizephyrii.

⁵² Costabile 1995.

⁵³ Strabo IV.1.10.

⁵⁴ Gullini 1996. On the possible connections between the Marasà temple, Aphrodite, and the *pinakes* from the Mannella sanctuary, see also Torelli 1988.

Aphrodite and Colonization in Southern Italy

From the evidence presented here we may conclude that Aphrodite served a variety of functions within the Locrian *polis*. She was a protectress of sailors, travelers and thus a patron of commercial activity; she is a *potnia theron*, as well as military goddesses; and she was protectress of marriage, as well as women who may have fallen outside the traditional roles of family and marriage. While individually these aspects of Aphrodite's cultic personality are found elsewhere in the Greek world, they are not often found altogether in one *polis*. It is thus necessary to attempt an explanation for the way variety of ways in which the Locrian colonist chose to worship Aphrodite.

It is typical when looking for the origins of a particular cult among the Greek colonies to turn to the mother city. However, it rarely holds true that Greek colonists adopt wholesale the cults of their mother cities. In the case of Locri, we know too little about the cults of mainland Locris to draw any comparisons, but it is doubtful that Aphrodite's cult at Locri was based on some homeland version. It more likely grew out of the immediate needs of the Locrian colonizers in response to their particular western circumstances. On the Ionian Sea coast, Taras, the other non-Achaean colony, also has affinities with Aphrodite. The original colony was established there at the site of Satyrion, just to the east of the later town. A sanctuary dating to the 7th century BC at Satyrion has been identified with Aphrodite. A 6th century BC inscription, on a vase by Exekias, is dedicated to '*Basilis*'. Osanna argues convincingly that this is the same *Basilis*, i.e., Aphrodite *Basilis*, reported by Pausanias on the acropolis of Sparta. This conclusion is not surprising as Taras was a Spartan colony.⁵⁵

Taras and Locri, however, share more than an interest in Aphrodite as a *polis* deity. According to her foundation legend, Taras was founded by Spartan women and their male slaves, possibly helots, who had gotten together when the Spartan men were off fighting the Messenians. The Locrians have a similar foundation legend. Their city, too, was founded by women who had fled with their male slaves while their husbands were off helping the Spartans against the Messenians.⁵⁶ For the Locrians, the adoption of this foundation legend may have been a way of both

⁵⁵ Osanna 1990.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of both these legends see Pembroke 1970.

strengthening ties with Sparta, while at the same time distancing herself from her Achaian neighbors, in particular Croton.

That Locri and Croton were in competition with one another in the second half of the 6th century BC is indicated by descriptions of the Battle of the Sagra River. Although the date of the battle is uncertain, several sources recount the event in more or less detail, including Strabo (VI.1.10), Timaeus (preserved in Justin 20.2.10-3.9), and Diodorus (8.32). Strabo tells us that 10,000 Locrians, with help from Rhegion, fought against 130,000 Crotoniates and that the Locrians miraculously won. Other sources attribute Locri's victory to the Dioscuroi, who were sent to assist by Sparta. We have already seen that the Dioscuroi appear on the pediment of the Marasà temple at Locri. The suggested date for the battle ranges from the early 6th century to ca. 510 BC.⁵⁷ Timaeus connects this battle to the joint attack of the Achaian colonies Metapontum, Sybaris, and Croton against Siris, an Ionian colony. He suggests that Croton turned around and attacked Locri as well, perhaps because they had tried to assist Siris. But it is also possible that the Locrians were the aggressors, taking advantage of Croton while she was occupied by the war with Siris. Strabo concludes that the loss of life suffered by Croton led to a serious decrease in her population (VI.1.12). Whatever provoked this battle, and whenever it occurred, it is a clear example of animosity that existed between Locri and Croton.

It is not hard to understand then that the Locrians would attempt to distinguish themselves from Croton, as well as the other Achaian colonies, through their cults, in particular by promoting Aphrodite as a significant *polis* deity. Many of Aphrodite's functions at Locri overlap with those traditionally associated with Hera. For example, her role in marriage at the Mannella sanctuary. Moreover there are some structural similarities between the Crotoniate sanctuary of Hera Lacinia at Capo Colonna and Aphrodite's Locrian sanctuary at Centocamere/Marasà Sud. They are both outside the boundaries of the *polis* and they are both situated on the sea, probably to attract merchants. Although the architecture at Capo Colonna was carried out on a much grander scale, both sanctuaries have a temple building with subsidiary structures for ritual dining. Studies of Hera's cultic personality at Croton attribute to her many of the same characteristics as Aphrodite at Locri: *potnia theon* and *hoplosmia*, a protectress of women and children (*kourotrophos*), and

⁵⁷ On the date of the battle see Bicknell 1966.

a goddess of manumission.⁵⁸ Like Aphrodite at Locri, Hera at Croton appears to have taken on aspects of several other goddesses.⁵⁹

In conclusion, the colonists of Locri Epizephyrii were conscientious of the fact that they were not 'Achaian'. The richness and complexity of Aphrodite's cult at Locri may be seen as a direct result of the role that this particular cult played in establishing Locrian identity on the Ionian Sea coast.

⁵⁸ Maddoli 1984, 313-319.

⁵⁹ Maddoli (1984, 321) suggests that, in addition, to Aphrodite, Hera at Croton has aspects of Artemis and Athena.

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