Pottery to the people. The production, distribution and consumption of decorated pottery in the Greek world in the Archaic period (650-480 BC)

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XVI Pottery and other vessels in sanctuaries
The large numbers of pots and other finds ranging over considerable periods which have regularly come to light in sanctuary excavations are especially suitable for tracing long-term developments within assemblages and for comparing data between sites and periods. In addition, inventories and accounts inscribed on stone give some precise information about temple holdings comprising vessels of precious metal and other treasure which have rarely survived. In combination, the two kinds of evidence give better insight into the nature of the vessels which were housed in sanctuaries than is available for any domestic site.

On the other hand, sanctuary data are not amenable to the precise spatial and functional analysis which is sometimes possible for houses. Assemblages of sanctuary pottery combine dedications and other purchases by many individuals which end up together more or less independently, unlike the intentional assemblages of household pottery. Moreover, almost all sanctuary pottery has been discovered outside its direct context of use: it is buried in mixed strata or, occasionally, in specially made votive deposits which tell nothing about the significance and functions of the vessels before their being buried. Furthermore, sanctuary pottery tends to be published as objects without context, which is not helpful for linking archaeological material to the activities of individuals or groups. Similarly, inscriptions reveal little about the donors and the use of vessels of precious metal. Historical sources compensate for this lack only in part. As a result, the study of sanctuary vessels necessarily centres on the objects themselves, more or less detached from their contexts and uses.

Another difficulty regarding sanctuary vessels, which also applies to the evidence for domestic contexts, is that the excavation data and the picture sketched by historical and epigraphical sources hardly overlap. Whereas the texts refer almost exclusively to metal vessels, mainly plate, archaeologists unearth little else than pottery. Fortunately, the direct and abundant evidence at sanctuaries allows for closer scrutiny of this marked contrast, which remains more elusive in the domestic domain. To an even greater degree than the indirect evidence from the private sphere, the results of the following inquiry will test the hypotheses of Gill and Vickers, who argue that vessels of precious metal were common in Archaic and Classical Greece.\textsuperscript{1105} In passing, such a test will give an impression of the role of precious-metal vessels in Greek sanctuaries, the kinds of vessels involved, and the possible connections between plate in both the religious and the private sphere.

Other possibilities for viewing sanctuary pottery from a wider perspective are quite limited. Obviously, sanctuary assemblages can be compared to domestic ones, to see whether different kinds of sites indeed required different types of pots, which I assume to be so. But due to the lack of use-contexts for sanctuary material, an explanation for the differences and similarities between the pottery from households and from sanctuaries must often remain tentative. Yet even while we know little about the functions of individual pots in sanctuaries, the sheer mass of the material, encompassing the whole Archaic period, enables us to trace developments in consumption patterns and to see how preferences for shapes and types of pottery alter in time and differ between sites. The result is no more than a few glimpses into the motivation of those who acquired the pots and brought them into the sanctuaries, and of the tradesmen who supplied the market.

XVI.2 The sanctuaries with extensively published pottery assemblages and some
general problems they pose

While architecture and sculpture are usually extensively published, pottery and other minor
objects from sanctuaries generally receive less attention. Even the most thorough publications
generally concentrate on specific categories of figured and fine pottery only, omitting less notable
fragments of the same wares. If black gloss is treated at all, very little is catalogued; coarse and
cooking wares are generally ignored completely, and plain miniatures are often dismissed as too
numerous to count. Although these practices, which are, of course, widespread in Mediterranean archaeology, influence the publication of domestic sites too, the abundance of the
material from sanctuaries makes the contrast between the amounts of excavated and published
objects especially marked.

As a consequence, the nature of nearly all the publications of sanctuary excavations makes it
impossible to realise a complete coverage of the pottery in my sample of sites. Therefore I
decided to consider sanctuaries for which full catalogues of fine wares only are available. Even so,
as it proved unexpectedly difficult to collect a meaningful body of sufficiently published
assemblages, I had to include a few catalogues of sites which treat decorated wares only, ignoring
other fine wares, or which present slightly selective listings of decorated pottery and somewhat
less extensive coverage of black gloss. In the presentation of my results below I shall return to
some consequences of these choices. A more precise evaluation of the state of publication of each
site in my sample accompanies the presentation of their assemblages in Tables XVI.1-14.

Despite the quality of the data, the selection of sites gives a good general impression of
sanctuaries with large pottery assemblages. Altogether, the sites range over a substantial part of
the Greek world and the whole Archaic and Classical periods. In addition, the selection comprises
a wide variety of sanctuaries dedicated to various gods. Most of them are shrines of secondary
importance, but the Athenian Akropolis (Table XVI.14), the religious centre of a very major city
with several monumental temples, forms an important exception. Its pottery is part of a
remarkably rich and varied body of finds containing many costly metal and stone votive
offerings. Among the other sites under consideration, only Megara Hyblaia (Table XVI.13)
may also yield material from the town’s religious centre with its main sanctuaries, but the scale is
of course much smaller. The only other site with a monumental temple is the sanctuary of Aphaia
on Aigina (Table XVI.1), but here the preserved building is later than most of the pottery found in

1106 This is particularly evident in the monumental publications from the 1930s and earlier, like Curtius
and Adler 1890-1897; Furtwängler 1890; 1906; Waldstein 1902; 1905; Gabrici 1927; Dawkins 1929; Dörpfeld
1935; and the first volumes about Delphi (Fouilles de Delphes, Paris 1927-) and Delos (Exploration
Archéologique de Délôs, Paris 1909-). Regarding the publications of the latter two sites, the situation has not
changed much, however, and other continuing series of reports, like those of Thasos, Ephesos and, to a
somewhat lesser extent, Cyrene, Samos and Olympia, also follow the old formulas. As will be seen below, less
prominent publications often present less biased pictures.

1107 See the limited publication of pottery from, for example, Ephesos (only Gasser 1989); Olympia
(recently only Gauer 1975; Kunze-Götte, Heiden and Burrow 2000) and Samos (recently only Walter 1968;

1108 See e.g. Williams 1983a, 156; 1987, 629, 647; Antre 1984, 27; White 1985, IX-X; Guettel Cole 1988,
165; Kron 1988, 144-145; Sinn 1988, 155; Gasser 1989, 11-13, 87-101; Felsch 1996, esp. 217; Kreuzer 1998,
31-32.

1109 See Bather 1892-1893; De Ridder 1896; Schrader 1939; Raubitschek 1949; Touloupa 1972; IG I3; and
also, more generally, Hurwit 1999, esp. 99-153.
its surroundings. The remaining assemblages all belong to smaller sanctuaries, often located on the outskirts of towns or outside the walls; the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros, Selinus (Table XVI.2), is a good example. On such sites, pottery and terracotta figurines may always have been the main category of non-perishable objects.

As expected, the contrast between a monumental temple hill of international standing and a small, locally oriented shrine is reflected in the pottery assemblages. The links between the patterns of finds and the context naturally offer interesting possibilities of interpretation, revealing differences in the prestige and the use of sanctuaries. On the other hand, it is often difficult to deduce variations in the status and the scale of cult places from sites showing different layouts related to various religious practices. The sanctuaries studied here, for example, comprise a variety of areas, with or without buildings, serving various purposes for different groups of people (worshippers and staff). The diversity of the sanctuaries and their pottery assemblages can make it difficult to compare sites on an equal footing. Similar problems obviously play a role in my domestic and funerary samples as well, but the situation regarding the sanctuaries seems more problematic. Particularly the domestic assemblages discussed above show limited variations in size and composition, although they come from different geographical areas and include finds from houses of varying size and location as well as from wells without any meaningful architectural context. It is nearly as if they all represent a common ‘middle class’ kind of household; perhaps the primarily practical role of most domestic pottery is relevant too.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the sanctuaries and the associated finds, and selection on the basis of the availability of publications, my sample turns out to contain a clear core of sanctuaries yielding comparable find assemblages which can be traced in some detail over long periods and in different categories of pots (grouped by shape, provenance, kind of decoration). The sanctuaries of Aphaia on Aigina, Demeter Malophoros in the Greek colony of Selinus, on the southern coast of Sicily, and Demeter and Kore in Tocra (Taucheira), on the Libyan coast, all seem to provide Archaic pottery assemblages of more or less similar size and composition. They can be classified as average, non-monumental shrines.

The sanctuary of Aphaia (Table XVI.1) is surely the most famous of the three, primarily for the architecture and sculpture of its late-Archaic temple. The excavations around this building, however, have also brought to light remains of a smaller, earlier shrine, and much pottery dating from prehistory to the Roman period, with the bulk in the 6th century. The sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros (Table XVI.2) is one of the minor temples of Selinus. It consists of an extended, but not very monumental, building complex around a simple shrine, which belongs to a cluster of three small sanctuaries. Although the oldest buildings of the sanctuary area date to the early 6th century, the pottery starts in the late 7th century. The buildings were abandoned after the destruction of the city by the Carthaginians in 409. Tocra (Table XVI.3) is well known among specialists of Archaic pottery owing to its detailed publication. The site, excavated in 1963-1965, consists of the scanty remains of a small sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, partly eroded by the sea,

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which lack a clear architectural structure. The pottery dates from the mid 7th century to the Roman period, but, once again, is mainly from the 6th century.  

The data from these three, extensively published Archaic sanctuaries can be supplemented with evidence from two comparable sites for which partial, but detailed, pottery catalogues are available. Especially the anonymous site at Santa Venera, directly outside the ancient city of Poseidonia, better known as Paestum, in southern Italy (Table XVI.4), is quite similar to the sanctuaries at Selinus and Tocra. It consists of a small sanctuary of an unknown deity, perhaps Demeter, or, in view of the later cult on the spot, Aphrodite, or even a local variant of one of them. The pottery dates from ca. 600 onwards, although the earliest buildings appear not until a few decades later. Perhaps this pottery is all that marks the beginning of the shrine which must have been in use as such till at least the Hellenistic period, or perhaps up to the Roman period when sanctuary remains recur on the spot. The sanctuary area at Gravisca, near Tarquinia, in Etruria (Table XVI.5), is exceptional, as it consists of a cluster of shrines dedicated to Aphrodite, Demeter and Kore, Hera and, perhaps, Adonis. From the early 6th century to sometime in the 5th, these shrines seem to have served as a religious centre for Greek traders who visited this harbour town and possibly sometimes stayed there for longer periods. Both the layout, which might be paralleled in Naukratis, and the find assemblage are very likely influenced by the status of the sanctuary area and perhaps part of the surrounding site as a foreign enclave in Etruscan territory. As yet, however, nothing is known about the organisation of cult and devotion under such circumstances, which may have demanded special solutions.

Other, less elaborate supplementary data from similar local shrines, to which I occasionally refer, are provided by famous older excavations like the Heraion of Perachora and the sanctuary area of Naukratis as well as by some recent publications of selected groups of sanctuary pottery. Particularly with regard to Sicily, the publication of a few detailed find reports of ‘votive dumps’ is under way. All these data are mostly limited to figured wares, however. Moreover, the older reports include selective catalogues only, while the newer ones, though more complete, remain limited to one shape or one fabric and usually present little information on the excavation contexts. A site deserving special mention is the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in

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1112 See, for the site and the pottery, Boardman and Hayes 1966; 1973.


1114 See, for the site, Pedley and Torelli 1993. On the pottery, for the moment, Menard 1990, who presents a selection of fine wares and rough counts of all pottery finds. Miller Ammerman 1989-1990 offers a preliminary publication of the terracottas. More volumes of the final publication are in preparation.

1115 See, for the site, Torelli 1971; 1977; 1982; on the pottery, Valentini 1993 (Greek black gloss); Boldrini 1994 (‘Ionian’); Huber 1999 (Attic red figure); Johnston and Pandolfini 2000 (inscribed fragments); Pianu 2000 (Etruscan bucchero); Gori and Pierini 2001 (undecorated wares). More volumes of the final publication are forthcoming.


1117 This mainly regards finds from Gela (Ingoglia 1999; see also Kron 1992; Hinz 1998, 55-70, both with references) and Catania (Fichera 1997-1998; La Spina 1997-1998; Marino 1997-1998; Grasso 1998; see also Rizza 1960). See also the overview of sites in Hinz 1998, 55-168.
Cyrene, Libya. Although not all the excavated pottery was kept and a small portion of it will be treated in excavation reports which must yet appear, the unique publication of a list of all the kinds of pottery counted in one sample of 1 m$^3$ of soil offers interesting material for comparison with the selective general pottery catalogues (Table XVI.6). This sanctuary, which functioned from the late 7th century till the Roman period, is somewhat larger than the others discussed above, but its extramural setting and its general layout as a cluster of buildings without a monumental shrine surrounded by a temenos wall suggest that it had a comparable role and relative status – Cyrene was a prosperous polis.

Besides the core of average, medium-sized sanctuaries, my sample mainly comprises sites of smaller scale. These not only widen the range of the kinds of sanctuaries and deposits, but also extend the chronological and geographical coverage. The Thesmophorion of Eretria (Table XVI.7) consists of a small building (ca. 30 m$^2$) within a sacred precinct of only 230 m$^2$. It is the smallest shrine considered here, while being otherwise comparable to the sanctuaries of Demeter noted above. The completely published finds fall into two categories: largely complete pots from the so-called apothetes, an apparently closed deposit of vessels probably used mainly for ritual feasting, dating to around 500-480/70; and the more fragmentary remains (6th-3rd centuries, but mainly 4th) found all over the enclosed area. The latter category seems to have more material of a strictly votive character, but as no meaningful stratigraphy or distribution of finds seems to exist, a more detailed interpretation is not possible.

The deposit lying in one of the Mycenaean tombs (I) in Thorikos, Attica, is of an entirely different order (Table XVI.8). This closed dump, containing material from ca. 700 till the late 4th century, appears to be a true votive deposit. Although no trace of a sanctuary space can be discerned in the area, the reuse of an old tomb, the limited range of fine-ware shapes and the absence of any functional context or human remains are clearly indicative of a ritual assemblage. As the excavation data have not been published adequately, nothing can be said about the exact circumstances of deposition. Another purely votive assemblage is formed by the finds from the Korykian Cave in the mountains above Delphi (Table XVI.9). The cave acted as a sanctuary of the Nymphs and (later?) Pan from the 7th century or possibly somewhat earlier. Until the Roman period, pilgrims and, later, also tourists coming to Delphi visited the cave, leaving for the most part small offerings at the altar near the entrance. Thousands of these offerings have survived owing to their protection by the cave.

My fourth assemblage from a small sanctuary, the Vrysoula deposit (Table XVI.10), is more problematic. It consists of a dump, dated 450-415/10, situated in the urban periphery of ancient Corinth, in an area without other known archaeological remains. Although it was originally regarded as a votive deposit, the presence of some test pieces, moulds and a misfiring led

1118 See, for the site and its finds, White 1984; 1985; 1987; 1990; 1993; 1997; and for the contents of the sample, White 1985, XXI; 1987, X.

1119 Metzger 1985.

1120 Metzger 1985, 9.

1121 Devillers 1988; see also Antonaccio 1995, 110-111.

1122 A short preliminary report can be found in Mussche 1968, 30-33, 37-39.

1123 See, for the site and its post-prehistoric finds, Antre 1984.

1124 Robinson 1965, 144-145; see also Pemberton 1970, 269.
Elisabeth Pemberton to identify it as a pottery workshop dump in the final publication.\textsuperscript{1125} The pieces of workshop refuse are few however (19 of a total of almost 800 registered finds),\textsuperscript{1126} and there is hardly anything else that could link the finds to pottery production. Only the close stylistic affinities of many of them might argue in favour, provided they can be ascribed to manufacture in a single workshop. However, the assemblage also contained other pottery, including a few imports. Moreover, both the range of shapes, among others, some impractical but lavishly decorated oinochoai, lekythoi and goblets, and the generally complete preservation of the pots are not what one expects from a workshop dump, but very well suit a votive deposit instead.

Besides the preceding four assemblages from small sanctuaries, which have been completely published, I also consider two, more selective reports for supplementary evidence. The so-called Agamemnoneion (Table XVI.11) is a small shrine in the vicinity of Mycenae, apparently, but not definitely, dedicated to the mythical king of Homeric Greece. It was in use from the late 8\textsuperscript{th} century till the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{1127} Despite the limitations of its publication, the site supplies a useful illustration of a typical ‘provincial’ countryside sanctuary. In contrast, the pottery dating from Late Geometric to ca. 350 dumped directly below the walls of the main ancient town of the island of Keos (Table XVI.12) appears to be the cleared contents of a minor sanctuary in a small town.\textsuperscript{1128}

As a final example of material from small-town sanctuaries, I list the votive pottery from Archaic Megara Hyblaia (Table XVI.13), which existed from 728-483. Since the publication is restricted to imported pottery, mainly decorated, and comprises finds collected all over the excavated town centre, the assemblage is only partly comparable to those of other sanctuaries treated here.\textsuperscript{1129} The value of Table XVI.13 is also limited by uncertainties regarding the precise find contexts of the material classified as votive. The irregular chronological spread and the strong variation in the range of the votives of shapes may even indicate that some sanctuary material has been published among the domestic finds. I nevertheless include Megara Hyblaia in my tables because it offers the unique possibility of making direct comparisons to the ‘domestic’ finds from the same place and period, and because the number of finds is impressive.

In contrast to the large ceramic assemblages of the chiefly extramural or peripheral sanctuaries of lesser deities which form most of my sample and supplementary evidence, the major Panhellenic sanctuaries of Olympia, Delphi and Delos and the large central temples of important poleis yield relatively little pottery. This is probably partly explained by scholarly focus on architecture and sculpture, but there seems to be more involved. Recent catalogues of Corinthian and Attic pottery from Olympia, the Artemision of Ephesos and the Heraion of Samos\textsuperscript{1130} suggest that, unlike the extraordinary monuments, the pottery assemblages are not particularly notable, especially when one considers the excavated volumes. Though sometimes impressive for their

\textsuperscript{1125} Pemberton 1970, 268-269. See also Appendix I and section IV.8.

\textsuperscript{1126} Pemberton 1970, 269, 302, nos. 146-151.

\textsuperscript{1127} Cook 1953; see also Antonaccio 1995, 147-148.

\textsuperscript{1128} Butt 1977.

\textsuperscript{1129} Vallet and Villard 1964.

\textsuperscript{1130} Olympia: Kunze-Gotte, Heiden and Burow 2000; see also Furtwängler 1890, VI, 198-205; Gauer 1975; Ephesos: Gasser 1989; Samos: Kreuzer 1998; see also Walter 1968; Walter-Karydi 1973 and Table XXII.3.
absolute numbers, the catalogues of fine wares from these major sites are not much longer than many of those for the minor sanctuaries treated above.

It remains to be seen, however, whether this is a general pattern, as some apparent exceptions can be cited. The amounts of pottery mentioned in the old publication of the Argive Heraion look astounding, and seem to include much Archaic material. The extremely summary published catalogue, however, does not permit a quantitative evaluation.\footnote{Waldstein 1905, 60-61.} A better case may be offered by the Artemision of Thasos, if it can rightly be regarded as a ‘major’ sanctuary.\footnote{Personal communications, Kees Neeft 1998-2000; see also Kahil 1960; Maffre 1990.} The sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia surely qualifies as ‘major’, yet here the quantities of finds, though unusually large, may not be impressive enough to be truly exceptional.\footnote{See, for the moment, Arafat 1999; Morgan 1999a; 1999b, 237-238.} In both instances, the final publications, which are in progress, should help to clarify the situation.

The sole remaining major temple, or rather sanctuary area, with an exceptionally large pottery assemblage which has been published in some detail is the Athenian Akropolis (Table XVI.14). The thousands of Attic figured fragments from the top of the hill and the slopes form one of the largest single bodies of decorated pottery from the Archaic-Classical Greek world.\footnote{See, for the site, most recently Hurwit 1999, with references; for the pottery, Graef and Langlotz 1925-1933; Pease 1935; 1936; Bronner 1938; Roebuck 1940a; \textit{ABV}; \textit{ARV}²; \textit{Para}; \textit{Addenda}²; Boardman 1954; 1956; Callipolitis-Feytmans 1974; see also, for some of the find contexts and other small finds, Bather 1892-1893; De Ridder 1896; Bronner 1933; 1935; 1936; 1940; Morgan 1935.} Although the publication of the pottery and other finds is outdated and incomplete, so that my tables are less representative and reliable than those for most other sites treated here, the documented assemblage can be informative to a sufficient degree to be of some use. The huge number of fragments in itself is certainly helpful. Another reason for not leaving out the Akropolis is that the finds are mainly concentrated in the time span ca. 550-480, precisely when pottery in sanctuaries declines in numbers elsewhere. Moreover, Athens offers the only opportunity to study domestic, sanctuary and funerary pottery assemblages from the same period and from the same site. Finally, I note that figures for the Akropolis finds, though differing from mine, have previously been cited in studies of the distribution and consumption of Attic pottery, to which I will refer below.\footnote{Hannestad 1988; repeated in 1996; followed by Tuna-Nörling 1995, 131. The count seems based on a selection of readily identifiable material from Graef and Langlotz 1925-1933 only. See also my review of Tuna-Nörling: Stissi 1999a, and chapter XXII.}

### XVI.3 Some characteristics of sanctuary pottery assemblages

Before interpreting my data, I must review some general aspects of pottery finds at sanctuaries which surely influence my figures and conclusions. A particularly important point concerns the selection of sites which provide the data I work with. The choice certainly is not a representative sample of all Archaic-Classical Greek sanctuaries. As already said, my tables show a bias towards non-monumental, minor sanctuaries of lesser deities, basically because relatively little pottery has turned up in the temples of the major gods. A possibly related aspect of the core of similar sites and most other sanctuaries treated or referred to here is that they belong to female deities, remarkably often Demeter. Although further research is certainly required, the correspondence...
seems to represent a general pattern in Greek votive offerings. As far as I can establish, sanctuaries with much pottery or large find assemblages in general indeed tend to belong to female deities, above all Demeter and Hera. As the probably more common category of shrines with less pottery is not represented among my sanctuary assemblages, the data analysed here are thus more a selection illustrating pottery consumption than one representing typical sanctuary life.

The focus on pottery, and therefore on minor sanctuaries of goddesses, may also have some implications for the groups of consumers, i.e. the people who handled pots at the sanctuaries covered by my investigations. Although the evidence is not straightforward and there are certainly exceptions, worshippers in the smaller sanctuaries of female deities are most likely to have been predominantly female as well. Perhaps even the staff was less male-dominated than was usual in Greek temples. Evidently, sanctuary pottery had a gender connotation, which may have influenced its status as well. It is probably not accidental that the major Panhellenic sanctuaries which received relatively little pottery in comparison to many more prestigious gifts all belong to male deities (Apollo at Delphi and Delos, Zeus, though accompanied by Hera, at Olympia, Poseidon at Isthmia), nor that the very many votive statues from the Akropolis seem to have been offered almost exclusively by men. Inscribed bronze votives appear to be marked by a similar male bias. As the status of either the deity or worshipper – which are partly gender related – decreases, the volume of pottery seems to increase.

An entirely different, typical aspect of sanctuary assemblages concerns the state of preservation of sites and finds and its implications. Although it is tempting to consider sanctuary deposits more or less closed primary or secondary deposits, and although one would like to think that the gods’ old pots were less thoroughly cleared away than domestic rubbish, the finds in sacred areas are not comprised only of (almost) complete pots; in fact, the pottery is often surprisingly fragmented and incomplete. Moreover, as briefly mentioned, the stratigraphies of many sanctuary excavations are extremely messy, full of disturbed layers and mixed deposits. Even in situ dumps are rare. The remaining bits and pieces are thus hardly ever found on the spot where they were originally placed or dumped.

1136 See Simon 1986, 314; Hinz 1998, 48-49. Perhaps the Nymphs should be added as deities particularly fond of ceramics. See, in addition to the Korykian Cave, the sites mentioned by Van Straten 1981, 79, and the Athenian Nymphaion, from which only a fraction of the finds has been published yet (see esp. Papadopoulou-Kanellopoulo 1997).


1138 Dawkins 1929, 353-377 (stone, 1 female only); Raubitschek 1949 (bases of stone and bronze objects, 18 recognisably female against hundreds of male dedications); Antre 1984, 307-337 (stone, 4 male, 1 possibly female); IG I², nos. 526-583 (bronze, ca. 34 male, ca. 13 female, and ca. 57 unclear/unspecified). It should be noted that the names in votive inscriptions on pottery, which I briefly probed in Graef and Langlotz 1925-1933, II 115-129, nos. 1287-1551; Torelli 1982, 314-315; Johnston and Pandolfini 2000 are also mostly male. In the case of pottery, the donor’s knowledge of writing probably plays a part, but on bronze and stone objects, where the handwriting would probably rarely be that of the donor, women should have found no difficulty in mentioning their names. I plan to return to this subject in the near future.

As a consequence, the spatial context of the use and deposition of sanctuary pottery is very unclear. The most I can say is that some sanctuaries seem to show concentrations of votives either around altars or in a nearby area which is out of the way. This suggests that the votives were at some point in time simply removed or cleared away after first having been placed as close to the focal point of devotion as possible. However, a few exceptional deposits of well-ordered rows or piles of pots found in situ show that sanctuary pottery was sometimes cleared and deposited in more orderly fashion. Yet despite the confused state of the evidence one would expect more deposits of this kind if such a practice was truly common: most dumping of votive pottery was evidently much less orderly. Also exceptional are primary deposits which contain the remains of cult meals, usually a pile of pots, animal bones and ashes which were swept together and covered with earth. They are attested in a few Demeter sanctuaries in sandy areas, perhaps mainly in early layers (ca. 625-550). It is impossible to know whether such practice was exceptional or whether the same kinds of rituals took place in sanctuaries where such remains could not be so easily buried or covered on the spot.

These remains of cult meals lead to an additional complication: functional context. It is obvious that not all pots at sanctuaries, not even those found in closed and dense dumps, are votives in the strictest sense. Besides actual gifts to the gods, substantial parts of sanctuary assemblages may consist of groups of vessels and other objects which were buried as votives immediately after a ceremony, like the meal remains just mentioned, or which were used repeatedly and slowly broke over a period of time, like pottery needed for the feasts which were an important aspect of Greek religious life. Sanctuary priests and authorities would also have needed pottery for cult purposes, casual day-to-day ceremonies, including the purification of worshippers, and more occasional rites. In some sanctuaries, moreover, pottery would have been required for the daily activities of the resident or non-resident 'staff' or of other people who worked there; and, of course, visitors could have accidentally left some (broken) pots behind too. It is very difficult to distinguish these categories of vessels in the poorly ordered deposits, partly because many shapes, including common ones like cup, bowl, kotyle, skyphos and oinochoe, could have the different functions of votive offering or service for ritual feasting or just for daily eating and drinking. Only inscriptions and the find context might reveal which application is relevant, but as will become clear below, such differentiation is rarely possible.

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1142 V. Tusa 1984b, 11-14 (Malophoros, Selinus); Kron 1992, 620-621, 646-648; Hinz 1998, 56-64 (Bitalemi, near Gela); Hinz 1998, 111-116 (Heloros, Santuario Vecchio). See also Menard 1990, 35-36 (Santa Venera), for another possible case. Boardman and Hayes 1966, 10-12; 1973, 6, suggest to me that Tocra had similar remains, but the authors think instead that they are traces of habitation. Some sanctuaries appearing in the 5th century also have primary offering deposits, but with less meal remains and more votives. It is unclear whether these deposits should be seen as a continuation of the earlier tradition, or as something new. See Cipriani and Ardovino 1989-1990, 339-342; Hinz 1998, 176-178 (San Nicola di Albanella, near Paestum); Cipriani 1997, 215-216 (Paestum, 'santuario meridionale'); Hinz 1998, 197-201 (Santa Maria d'Anglona); Hinz 1998, 102-107 (Syracuse, Piazzale della Vittoria). The last site apparently has only votives around offering places, without meal remains.

Related to the foregoing, another implication of the confused state of our evidence is that the manner in which many pots at sanctuaries were actually handled and used is less clear than that of vessels belonging to other contexts. The roles of pottery in daily sanctuary life, at feasts and in ceremonial meals can easily be imagined, of course, as they are necessarily similar to many of those in domestic life. Indeed, although quantitative studies are not yet practicable, the composition of feasting dumps seems closely to resemble that of the domestic assemblages examined above.\[1144\] The roles of vessels in ceremony were presumably confined largely to pouring libations or, perhaps, to acting as containers or platters; evidence is limited to depictions of offering scenes, even though they mostly seem to illustrate metalware.\[1145\]

However, the exact practice of offering pots to the gods, which may often have formed the majority of the vessels housed in a sanctuary, remains a mystery.\[1146\] For instance, we do not know whether votive vessels were meant as dedications in their own right or whether they usually contained a substance which was offered as the main gift to the deity. If some votive pots were indeed containers for offered substances their value would be reduced as evidence for ceramic distribution and consumption, lessening the possibilities of comparing their figures with those for other pots and other contexts.

As will come as no surprise in view of the poor state of preservation of sanctuary deposits, direct evidence for organic offerings in votive vessels of the Archaic and Classical periods is rare. Insofar as I am aware, pots with food remains are documented only at the Thesmophorion of San Nicola di Albanella, near Paestum, alongside inverted votive pots.\[1147\] A few containers standing upright amidst a majority of vessels (oinochoai and cups) placed upside down in primary deposits at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Bitalemi, near Gela, are suggestive of food or drink offerings, though no more certain proof seems to exist here.\[1148\] In addition, a number of terracotta representations of food platters have come to light in the sanctuaries of Demeter and Kore at Corinth and elsewhere, and they appear in depictions.\[1149\]

Most of this evidence relates to the 5th

\[1144\] See Kron 1984; 1988, esp. 145, 147; 1992, 643-647; Menard 1990, 31-38; Bookidis and Stroud 1997, 402; Bookidis et al. 1999 (with further references).


\[1147\] Cipriani and Ardovino 1989-1990, 339, 341, 346; Hinz 1998, 176-177. Hinz 1998, 61-62, 65, 198 also reports finds of grains of wheat inside inverted miniatures in some other Demeter and Kore sanctuaries of the Classical period, but offers no photographic evidence. In any case, it seems impossible to distinguish inverted vessels in layers with stray organic remains from vessels inverted with their contents. Perhaps, extremely careful excavation may offer conclusive results, if no offerings were spilt before and during the deposition of vessels – which seems unlikely. In fact, inverting a vessel with grains of wheat without loosing the contents seems impossible, but possibly vessels were placed over offerings already put on the ground, or over traces of libations.

\[1148\] Kron 1992, 643-644; other kinds of offerings have been found in vessels, though (Kron 1992, 631-633). See also Hinz 1998, 61-62.

\[1149\] Van Straten 1981, 84-87; Bookidis et al. 1999; see also Cipriani and Ardovino 1989-1990, 342-343; Bookidis and Stroud 1997, 427.
century though, and with the partial exception of San Nicola di Albanella it does not involve the most common types of votive pottery: cups, skyphoi, miniatures and small oil containers. The inverted placement of most votive vessels of those more regular types at both San Nicola di Albanella and Bitalemi, which is paralleled in a later primary deposit of skyphoi on the North Slope of the Athenian Akropolis and less well documented finds elsewhere, strongly suggests that at least drinking vessels were left empty when dedicated to gods.\footnote{See Bronner 1940; Cipriani and Ardovino 1989-1990, 339; Kron 1992, 643-644; Hinz 1998, 61-64, 176-178, 198; Stissi forthcoming. Note that the Bitalemi vessels occurred in layers which also contained terracottas and other votives which certainly had no practical function.}

A few kinds of typical votive vessels supply additional indirect evidence against their use for offerings of food or drink. Many of the ubiquitous miniatures are so small that they could barely contain a crumb or a drop of anything, provided they have a cavity at all. Thus, the symbolism found in their small size may extend to the possible contents as well. Ring-shaped kernoi showing drinking vessels and plastic aryballoi amidst other offerings, including food and statuettes, as found in the Samian Heraion, suggest that the pots themselves counted as offerings, even if the kernoi might have contained food and fluids. One-piece imitations of stacks of cups, found at the Samian Heraion and at Naukratis, make most sense if votives were piled up empty straight after offering, or even dedicated in piles.\footnote{Stissi forthcoming.}

The decorative value or iconographic content of especially figured vessels could also have played a role, even though looks might have been less relevant than we would like to think now: some of the multiple cups just mentioned are decorated, and show parts of ornaments and figures ‘disappearing’ in the stack. Nevertheless, some decorated plates show holes for suspension. As an offering would spoil the aesthetic effect of the figure drawing, which is always on the upper surface, it is tempting to regard such plates as the equivalents of the purely decorative votive plaques or statuettes.\footnote{Callipolitis-Feytmans 1974, 17-22; see also Dehl-von Kaenel 1995a, 316.}

It is unclear, however, whether this could apply to plates with simple floral ornaments as well. Figured cups offer similar possibilities: they can easily be hung from their handles, displaying the outside which usually bears the most decoration. On the other hand, cups with elaborate tondos may have been placed upright and, if the decoration mattered, left unstacked and empty. Less elaborately ornamented cups are problematic, as are the open shapes without interior decoration in general (skyphos, kantharos, krater), not to mention the black and plain votive pottery which was clearly considered fine enough by many people, perhaps out of necessity.

An entirely different category of indirect evidence relating to the use of votives is offered by prosaic environmental considerations. Are we really to envisage sanctuary areas full of open vessels containing evaporating fluids and rotting food? Especially during the hot Mediterranean summer, with insects everywhere, the effect would soon become unpleasant, even if organic vessel contents, like other food and drink offerings, were possibly redistributed or disposed of by the sanctuary staff.\footnote{See Van Straten 1981, 86.} Perhaps, a smelly, zooming sanctuary was not considered problematic, but, altogether, I would prefer to suppose that, as a rule, open vessels were not offered for their contents, even though the donors may have used them for feasting or pouring libations before dedication.
Closed vessels, particularly food and oil containers, are more ambiguous as evidence. The lidded pyxides and lekanides offered in quantities in some sanctuaries could have been more or less sealed and filled with foodstuffs, like fruit, cakes or bits of meat, whereas the pyxides types not suitable for that purpose might have held wool, cosmetics or other manufactured products, or even shells and special pebbles or stones,\textsuperscript{1154} contents which have been discovered in pyxides in graves. A drawback to offering contents in closed vessels is that they remain hidden, nor can they be inferred from the vessel’s shape. Although this circumstance counted little in graves, it conceivably influenced the choice of publicly visible sanctuary gifts.

Small oil containers (alabastra, aryballoi, lekythoi, etc., including statuette bottles) seem the only vessels which would readily make sense as votives with contents, as these contents must have been obvious without showing, and well protected too, although it is a mystery what happened to all that oil in the long term.\textsuperscript{1155} Even if not perceptible to sight and smell, evaporating and rotting offerings, as said, conjure inelegant images of circumstances at sanctuaries, but perhaps this is not significant in the world of religious devotion, just as it does not seem to disturb modern scholars who generally see the supposedly precious contents of perfume vessels as the real offering. However, the fact that small oil containers appear to fit well into the general developments in ceramic assemblages, which, as will be seen below, are marked by substantial and apparently interconnected shifts in the relative popularity of shapes and wares, seems a strong argument against the contents being the actual offering or at least against them having a crucial impact on pottery consumption.\textsuperscript{1156} In other words, small oil containers seem to be an integrated part of ceramic consumption patterns, which show no impact of possible contents. Therefore it cannot be a coincidence that the rare votive inscriptions on pots that refer to the gift itself mention the vessel, but not its contents.\textsuperscript{1157}

All in all, despite the many qualifications and difficulties, sanctuary assemblages indeed seem a reliable guide to pottery consumption in religious spheres, even if some particulars of use remain obscure and relatively little can be said about the actual consumers.

**XVI.4 Sanctuary pottery assemblages: the general picture**

One of the most impressive features of pottery finds in sanctuaries is their sheer numbers. Even small-scale excavations produce thousands or tens of thousands of fragments and pots, usually including hundreds of figured items. During the large-scale excavations of the Argive Heraion in 1892-1895 around 250,000 sherds were recovered, of which more than 40% were then classified, belonging to an estimated 50,000 vessels.\textsuperscript{1158} The recorded finds on the Athenian Akropolis number at least 6,000 black figure and more than 1,300 red figure pots or fragments (Table


\textsuperscript{1155} The absence of ceramic stoppers among Greek sanctuary pots is not necessarily significant, as there were probably other means of sealing small containers, which leave no archaeological traces.

\textsuperscript{1156} Contra Dehl-von Kaenel 1995a, 316-317, 420, 423.

\textsuperscript{1157} Simon 1986, 315-316.

\textsuperscript{1158} Waldstein 1905, 57, 60-61. The 1949 excavations have added another 900 vessels, 400-500 fragments and 15 baskets of pottery (Caskey and Amandry 1952).
At the lower end of the range even the mere 230 m² of the eroded precinct of the Eretrian Thesmophorion contained more than 1,161 pots and over 1,600 terracottas (Table XVI.7), and the Korykian Cave, high in the mountains above Delphi, around 16,000 fragments of pottery and 50,000 of terracottas (Table XVI.9). That the pottery density in sacred areas can be very high is also illustrated by the 4,014 fragments counted in the 1 m³ test sample at Cyrene (Table XVI.6) and by the over 60 baskets (at ca. 9.5 kg) of pottery collected in an area of 13 m² and about one metre deep at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth. Such density figures go beyond anything encountered in domestic or funerary areas, even if the generally relatively much longer formation period of sanctuary deposits is taken into account. Although differences in deposition and survival rates between contexts surely play a role, and although there obviously were fewer sanctuaries than houses, it is tempting to conclude that religious life was a significant factor in the pottery market, at least in the Archaic period, to which most sanctuary pottery belongs.

The heterogeneous character of sanctuary pottery finds is not what one expects considering the large amounts of items involved. Whereas some individual kinds of vessels are rather common, the numbers of different shapes, origins and types of decoration and finish are usually large, and the quantities in each category accordingly small. Moreover, a closer look at the decorated pottery from sanctuaries reveals that very little of it can be gathered into distinct batches of vessels made at one time by a single producer. Even within the enormous mass of Akropolis pottery there is a surprising degree of variation: few important painters seem to be missing, and though some are represented by dozens of fragments, sometimes of a few shapes only, actual duplicates or closely similar pots are mostly limited to careless and repetitive late black figure.

However, clusters of several similar pots by one painter, though rare, seem less exceptional at sanctuaries than among domestic finds. Most well-studied assemblages contain at least a few such lots, possibly brought in at one time. Typical examples are a series of 16 lekanides and 9 other vessels by the Polos Painter or his ‘group’ in Tocra, many groups of Lakonian cups in Naukratis (Table XXII.9), many of the black figure loutophoroi and plates from the sanctuary of the Nymphs on the South Slope of the Akropolis, and, in Corinthian, the ca. 20 plates by the Painter of the Thasos Plates or 14 alabastra by the Erlenmeyer Painter in the Malophoros.

Regarding the Akropolis, the fact that few of the items as listed in Beazley’s ABV and ARV² comprise combinations of fragments that are separately catalogued in Graef and Langlotz 1925-1933 strongly suggests that the number of vessels represented is not much lower than the number of recorded fragments.

In addition, more than 23,000 bone astragals and over 1,000 bronze rings were collected, as well as small numbers of other metal objects and sculpture fragments. See Table XVI.10; and Antre 1984, 27, 153, 183-379, 422.

In total, this sanctuary has yielded 543 crates of pottery. See White 1985, xxi; 1987, x-xi.

Bookidis and Stroud 1997, xx-xxi, where it is also noted that in the 1964-1965 seasons alone 1,080 baskets of pottery were retrieved from an area of about 3,000 m². In addition, Guettel Cole 1988, 165, mentions that hundreds of thousands of miniature hydriae were found.


See Boardman and Hayes 1966, 97, 104-105.

See Venit 1985, esp. 391.

sanctuary. Of course, it is impossible to ascertain how large these batches were originally. Likewise, one cannot be sure that all the pots of an apparent series are exactly contemporaneous, and if so, whether they were offered or brought in by one individual or by several who bought them at the same shop (or at different shops supplied by the same producer, and so on). Yet, if the apparent series were indeed production batches, they usually seem to have been rather small, for they do not exceed 20-25 pots and centre on one shape each. On the other hand, series of several votive pots with a complementary (and not repetitive) iconography by one painter have not been identified.

The exception that seems to prove the rule is found in the Aphaia sanctuary, which has yielded a large batch of at least 68 or 69 banded Chian kantharoi with a pre-firing votive inscription by Aristophon and Damonidas, and several other vessels with similar inscriptions. In view of the shape and numbers, the kantharoi have convincingly been interpreted as the remains of sets used for ritual feasting. They may have been broken during use or smashed afterwards, perhaps intentionally. The presentation of such vessels to a temple would probably be a public act, a gift to not only the goddess but also to those organising and attending her feasts, namely the citizens of Aigina. Even if, strictly speaking, they would be votive offers, they are not comparable to the usual, private donation. In any event, the Aigina sets are not paralleled in other sanctuaries. Their large size may have to do as much with their donors, possibly merchants who had good connections with potters, as with their destination and purpose.

Very possibly, the Aigina sets are linked to a practice such as the acquisition of pottery by sanctuary boards, about which, however, hardly anything is known. The unequivocal evidence is confined to a large group of vessels with painted inscriptions from the Heraion of Samos which, probably being the official cult and feasting vessels, were owned by the sanctuary. It is as yet unclear how the vessels were acquired, and in what numbers. Possibly, they were made in a workshop connected to the sanctuary, for which there is some evidence. Interestingly, both here and at Aigina basic plain and banded vessels are involved. Perhaps official sanctuary pottery was preferably simple, but it is also possible that use was another relevant factor. Judging from the meagre evidence, primary cult meal deposits often contain high proportions of undecorated

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1167 See Dehl-von Kaenel 1994, 65-69, 74-77; 1995a, 30-31, 420, where also other, more doubtful examples are mentioned. These mainly concern items attributed to very loose stylistic categories which probably relate to more than one workshop, like the Chimaera Group or the Scale-Pattern Group.

1168 Kreuzer’s identification of a series of vessels by the KX Painter at the Heraion of Samos as a single votive service is interesting, but requires additional evidence (Kreuzer 1998, 33-34); moreover a truly functional symposion set would have to include kraters and oinochoai, which are missing in the series.

1169 Williams 1983a, 183-184.


1171 See Williams 1983a, 184-186.

1172 See Kron 1984, esp. 296-297; 1988, esp. 144-145; Brize 1997, 127, and Appendix I (no number). A few similarly marked vessels were also recorded at the Heraion of Naukratis, which was closely connected to the Samian Heraion, and at Perachora and Samothrake (Kron 1984, 296; 1988, 145).

1173 Kron 1988, 147; Sinn 1988, 154; see also Kron 1984, 295-296.
pottery. But since the present state of publication of black, plain and coarse wares from the usually mixed deposits does not allow for the identification of possible sets and consumption patterns, this impression cannot yet be confirmed and specified.

All in all, it seems probable that, apart from official pottery, sanctuaries and donators of votives usually acquired pots, or at least decorated vessels, one by one or in small groups only, and shape by shape, which, as explained above, would also apply to domestic pottery. The heterogeneous composition of sanctuary assemblages caused by the highly individualistic nature and small scale of votive offerings and sanctuary purchases, as further strengthened by the fragmentary preservation of the pottery in mixed and disturbed deposits, poses clear limitations of interpretation. Even though many main trends emerge surprisingly clearly and uniformly, it is not always easy to distinguish individual fancy from shared consumption patterns, nor to draw the line between a meaningful cluster of pots and a scatter of loose, unrelated items. Many details thus remain to be filled in. Moreover, because of the varied character of my sample of sanctuaries and the unequal coverage of the finds in publications, even the general picture retrieved from combining the pottery assemblages in my sample still has some fuzzy parts.

Especially problematic are the figures for the kinds of decoration or finish. In most sanctuaries studied, figured pottery, mainly Corinthian and Attic black figure, appears to be relatively popular, generally being at least 15-20% of the total assemblage, whereas plain and coarse wares often are almost completely absent, not even 10%, chiefly consisting of cooking pots or transport amphorai. Pots with simple, patterned decoration and black gloss show less consistent figures, usually in the range of about 10-30% and 30-50%, respectively. Apart from the last, the figures differ strikingly from those given above for domestic contexts, in which decorated pottery (figured or not) is very rare, usually comprising less than 5% or even 1% of assemblages, and in which coarse wares are much more common, usually reaching about 30-40%. This contrast between domestic and sanctuary assemblages seems to reflect the distinction between the mainly practical function of pottery in the domestic domain and its more representative or symbolic role at a sanctuary. Despite the inclusion of some symbolic miniatures and other offerings, the figures for undecorated wares, especially black gloss, are substantial, and seem to confirm that ‘sacred’ pottery was not for ceremonial and votive purposes only, but also comprised the ‘household’ pottery of the shrines.

A few sanctuaries, however, produce different figures which more closely approximate the typical domestic situation. At the Thesmophorion of Eretria (Table XVI.7), decorated pottery (all figured) forms only 3% of the assemblage, at the Vrysoula Deposit (Table XVI.10) not even 2.5% (but 19% is simply decorated), and at Santa Venera (Table XVI.4) again 3% (and 16% imported simply decorated or imported banded ware). Similarly, the dump at Keos (Table XVI.12) has less than 2% figured, and less than 7% simply decorated. Black gloss at these sites is 70-80%, coarse between 6% and 18%. Since the counts for these sanctuaries (except for Keos) are the most complete available, it seems highly probable that my other figures are somewhat distorted by selective publication, as certainly applies to the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros at Selinus (Table XVI.2) and, very likely, to that of Aphaia (Table XVI.1), the publication of

1174 See V. Tusa 1984b, 11-14 (Malophoros, new excavations); Kron 1988, 144-145, 147 (Samos and more general); Menard 1990, 30-38 (Santa Venera; see also Table XVI.4); Hinz 1998, 48-49, 53 (general), 56-57, 61-62 (Bitalemi), 111-112 (Heloros); perhaps also Boardman and Hayes 1966, 10-11 (Tocra). I disagree with Kreuzer’s hypothesis that figured pottery played a prominent role in cult and feasting, because it is not based on excavation evidence, but seems to rely mainly on present-day appreciation and interpretation of the vessels in question (Kreuzer 1998, 34-39).

1175 Compare the ‘complete’ totals in Dehl-von Kaenel 1994, 58, 60-62; 1995a, 417 (and 424-426); 1995b, 346-347, n. 5, with the figures derived from the excavation diaries in Table XVI.4, which are based on
which has not yet been completed. At the latter site, which had no less than 72% of decorated pottery, the virtual absence of coarse vessels used for preparing food and drinks also looks suspicious in view of the abundance of fine wares associated with ritual feasting.

Yet the varying levels of documentation do not seem to be the only explanation for the variations in the volumes of the differently finished wares. The completely counted test sample comprising 1 m³ of soil from the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene (Table XVI.6), though yielding 60% of coarse and plain fragments, apparently had only ca. 20% of black gloss and indeterminable fine wares as well as nearly an equal percentage of decorated pottery, including much Corinthian and a little Attic. These figures come somewhat closer to the average in my sample. Thus, it is likely that the larger sanctuaries forming the core of my sample attracted relatively more figured pottery than the four smaller sites for which complete counts are available, though certainly less so than their publications would suggest.

Chronology is probably another factor here. Whereas all the large assemblages belong almost exclusively to the Archaic period, the Cyrene sample and the lists for Santa Venera and the Keos dump, though primarily Archaic, include substantial amounts of pottery of later date. The assemblage from the Eretrian Thesmophorion is mainly Classical and (early) Hellenistic in date, and the Vryssoula Deposit dates to 450-420/15. This evidence suggests that the amounts of decorated pottery at the sanctuaries diminished from the early 5th century onwards. If classical and later material could be sifted out, the percentages of decorated wares at Cyrene, Santa Venera and Keos would surely be higher than they are now.

The shift towards relatively less decorated and figured pottery in Classical sanctuaries is not an isolated phenomenon. It can hardly be coincidental that the large assemblages that constitute the core of my sample appear to dwindle in size during the same period without being compensated for by finds from other, comparable sanctuary sites. The sanctuaries that indeed continue or newly emerge in the Classical period like Santa Venera, Demeter Malophoros, the Eretrian Thesmophorion and the Korykian Cave, have not only much simpler vessels, but also fewer of them, or high percentages of miniatures (Tables XVI.4; XVI.2; XVI.7; XVI.9).

Even outside my sample, I have not been able to find any substantial sanctuary assemblage of pottery that extends to a significant degree after 450 or even 480/475. Although the special regard usually enjoyed nowadays by Archaic pottery and the relatively larger amount of decorated fragments have possibly somewhat distorted the publication record, it seems unlikely that any major excavated deposit of figured or even black gloss pottery has escaped my notice. Unexplored sanctuaries may still bring surprises, but since most of those with temple areas containing


1176 See also the lists in Waldstein 1905, 60-61, relating to the Argive Heraion. It is difficult to interpret these figures which are based on basketsful, thus the volume of pottery; nevertheless, it is clear that proportions of one-third for plain wares and one-fifth for black gloss are relatively high in comparison with the published figures of the sites in my sample. Yet, the decorated wares of the Archaic and Classical periods form about 17% of all baskets, and probably about a quarter to a third of the contemporary material. However, the material from the later excavation by Caskey and Amandry seems to include more plain wares and less decorated pottery: see Caskey and Amandry 1952.


1178 See also Gasser 1989, 100 (Artemision at Ephesos); Cipriani and Ardovino 1989-1990, 341-342 (San Nicola di Albanella); Kron 1992, 614, 629-630 (Bitalemi); Felsch 1996, 229 (Kalapodi); Hinz 1998, 61-62 (Bitalemi), 64-65 (Gela, Akropolis), 176-177 (San Nicola di Albanella), 198 (Santa Maria d'Anglona).
monumental buildings are generally well known, they would probably be limited to relatively smaller sanctuaries and assemblages, like the Eretrian Thesmophorion.

An implication of the disappearance of large pottery assemblages from sanctuaries in the late 6th and early 5th centuries is that Attic red figure is surprisingly rare in Greek sanctuary contexts. The only apparent exception is the Athenian Akropolis. Upon closer scrutiny, however, Langlotz's impressive 1,300 red figure catalogue entries are not so much in comparison to the more than 6,000 black figure items mentioned (but not always catalogued) by Graef and his assistants. Most red figure from the Akropolis, moreover, is, in fact, Archaic, and very little postdates 450. The situation is quite typical: almost all the extensive catalogues of figured pottery from other sanctuaries list much Corinthian and Attic black figure, somewhat less Archaic red figure, and much less red figure of the later 5th century. On some sites there is a short recovery of red figure from about 400, but the absolute numbers always remain low.

As to the distribution of shapes, the tables for sanctuaries are, at first sight, more similar to those for domestic contexts than to those regarding finish and decoration. As may be expected in assemblages built up during long periods by many people, at all but the smallest sanctuaries, the extent of variations in shape, finish and origin is greater than in houses. Nevertheless, almost all shapes found in houses also recur in sanctuaries and vice versa, though neither in the same proportions nor with the same frequency. For instance, cooking pottery is obviously less common in sanctuaries, and miniatures and libation vessels are rare in houses. Yet large sanctuary deposits usually comprise a full range of shapes; more restricted assemblages with a more specialised selection of vessels are only encountered at the smaller sanctuaries.

With few exceptions, moreover, the sanctuaries share the domestic preference for drinking pottery, mainly skyphoi/kotylai and cups and associated (symposion) types like krater, oinochoe and amphora. Drinking vessels generally form over a third of a sanctuary assemblage, often more than half. Pottery associated with drinking, on the other hand, is less popular, sometimes as little as 5%, but more usually 10-20%. This proportion of the larger associated vessels to the smaller drinking vessels themselves thus seems somewhat lower than at domestic sites, but just as in the latter, the combined proportion of drinking vessels and associated forms rarely falls below 50%. Many of these vessels are likely to be votives, and ritual feasting is probably another reason for the presence of so much symposion pottery in many sanctuaries. In order to qualify this picture, a detailed comparison of the series of probable feasting vessels and the representative part of domestic assemblages would be most welcome.

I have, of course, taken into account that Archaic red figure ranges over 50 years only, whereas black figure spans a longer period. In addition, although quite a bit of Akropolis black figure may have been dedicated after 480, it would not be enough to change the general proportion just sketched.

A problematic factor is the role of drinking vessels in cult, for example, pouring libations. Despite the absence of convincing evidence, scholars often simply accept that much sanctuary pottery figured in cult, often without explaining what they exactly mean. Sometimes feasting or ritual dining seem to be included, sometimes it is apparently not. Quite possibly, a proportion of the votives, perhaps nearly all of them, were used to pour a single libation before being dedicated, but such practice does not, in my view, automatically make them cult vessels (as evidently accepted in Dehl-von Kaenel 1995a, 318). According to my definition (see also Stissi forthcoming), cult vessels were regularly employed for ‘purely’ religious rites and ceremonies, like pouring libations, sacrificing, processions and, perhaps, soothsaying. Depictions of sacrifices (there is no good recent collection, but see e.g. Von Bothmer 1984, 10, 12; Van Straten 1988, 58, 61-67) and inscriptions (section XVI.6) suggest that many such vessels were made of metal, and that they often had specialised shapes, like the phiale, perirrhanterion or thymiaterion. The act of offering votives, which is essentially an occasional and individual activity, the communal feasts held during festivals, with its strong social connotations, and perhaps more intimate ritual meals are essentially different categories in the sacred context (see Stissi forthcoming).
Leaving the domain of drinking, however, we can draw more general comparisons which demonstrate that the apparent similarity between pottery assemblages from sanctuaries and houses does not stand up to closer scrutiny. Pottery for ordinary meals and in any way associated with food consumption is virtually absent at shrines. As many such vessels were black or plain, they might have been the victims of selective publication, which could equally apply to pots for cooking, food processing and other basic household activities which also hardly show up in my tables, even in those sanctuaries where feasting must have taken place, like Aigina. The appearance in sanctuary publications of transport amphorai (Tables XVI.1 and XVI.5, Aigina and Gravisca), which are considered archaeologically more interesting than other kinds of less refined pottery, acts as reminder that plain and coarse wares have almost certainly been weeded out. On the other hand, the few relatively fully published assemblages indicate that pottery related to the storage, processing and consumption of food definitely played a small part at some sanctuaries (Tables XVI.2-4; XVI.7; XVI.9-10). So it might be safe to conclude that little pottery for such uses has been omitted from the published records after all. Moreover, all shapes that can be assigned to my ‘eating’ category and associated with eating were not necessarily used for the purpose: plates, as said, may often have functioned purely as decorative votive offerings, and lekanides were not necessarily associated with food offering or consumption.

Leaving aside the ubiquitous drinking vessels, the remaining functional categories form the most characteristic part of sanctuary pottery assemblages. Either small oil containers, mainly aryballoi and alabastra, and, later, lekythoi, or ritual vessels, mostly miniatures, constitute the second largest section of pottery in almost every sanctuary, about 20%-30% of all vessels. In total, these usually account for 30%-50% of the assemblage. In a few sanctuaries with many ritual vessels, the luxury household types, largely pyxides, sometimes exaleiptra, take the place of small oil containers as the third most frequent category, 10%-15%. Finally, during the 5th century, lamps appear in some sanctuaries partly to replace small oil containers and luxury household vessels as votive offerings (Tables XVI.1-2; XVI.9). Unfortunately, the evidence for increasing numbers of lamps in my mostly Archaic sample is limited, to which I shall return below.

Each of these four categories primarily characterising sanctuaries is relatively rare at domestic sites, where their numbers would be limited by practical considerations. After all, storage boxes, perfume containers and the like are largely for individual, private use, and are thus not needed in large amounts. Compared to showy items like presentable drinking sets, which form a large proportion of domestic pottery, small cosmetic pots and boxes for trinkets are a simple, intimate form of luxury item for the people in the house, not their guests. Exactly this combination of limited practical use, status and confinement to the private sphere perhaps explains their appropriateness as votive offerings, which might have had to be both personal and special.

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1181 It may be helpful at this point to recall that, in my tables, the category ‘ritual’ includes all vessels specifically shaped or decorated for use in religious ceremonies and other kinds of sacred activities, including votive offering and ritual feasting.

1182 See, for the role of pyxides in religious contexts, also Dehl-von Kaenel 1995a, 315-317.

1183 Unfortunately, the two sites where assemblages of domestic and sanctuary pottery from the same period and the same excavated area can be directly compared, Megara Hyblaia and Athens, offer no straightforward evidence (Tables XV.1-11; XV.16; XVI.13-14). At Athens, reliable figures are limited to figured pottery, which is always heavily dominated by symposion vessels. Nevertheless, a significant number of ceremonial vessels were found on the Akropolis. At Megara Hyblaia, where the evidence is confined to imported, decorated pottery, the relatively large amounts of small oil containers and the high proportions of drinking vessels, perhaps including miniatures, stand out in an assemblage which otherwise differs little from the domestic finds from the site.

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An interesting aspect of the typical votive vessels is the considerable extent of the variation of their occurrence over time and between sites. Part of this variation is related to the functional compositions of assemblages. A clear case is offered by the Thorikos votive deposit, where about three-quarters of the pots are small oil containers and about 10% miniatures (Table XVI.8). It is likely that this specific distribution of shapes is related to the site's being a 'pure' votive dump, without any trace of a sanctuary building or a sacred or ritual area. A comparable pattern is seen at the Korykian cave, with over 75% of miniatures and another 8% of small oil containers (Table XVI.9). At these places, the selection of precisely the characteristic sanctuary vessels like aryballoi, alabastra and, later, miniatures indicates that these shapes were considered especially suitable as offerings in sanctuaries where feasting, pouring libations or other ceremonies or traditions involving wine or water were absent. The predilection for small oil containers is also visible, in less extreme form, at Megara Hyblaia during the last half of the 6th century (Table XVI.13) and at the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros in Selinus (Table XVI.2). Miniatures were popular at the temple of Aphaia, Tocra and, once again, Selinus (Tables XVI.1-3). Somewhat exceptionally, the Athenian Akropolis (Table XVI.14) has yielded much ritual pottery other than miniatures, including phialai, loutrophoroi, lebes gamikoi and, perhaps, plates as well as plaques. All these variations in the types preferred for dedication at sanctuaries, however, seem to show neither meaningful geographical patterns nor associations with specific deities. They might simply be related to local traditions of votive offering or religious ceremony.

In sanctuaries, vessels for drinking, on the other hand, generally seem to remain unaffected by local preferences. The only possible exceptions are small Corinthian kotylai and sometimes Attic cups (both black and decorated) and very large skyphoi. Their extreme popularity at sanctuaries like Megara Hyblaia, the Athenian Akropolis, Gravisca and, particularly, Keos (Tables XVI.13-14; XVI.5; XVI.12) suggests, though, that many of them were primarily employed as votives, and not as pottery for ritual feasting which would require more accessory vessels (i.e. the category 'associated with drinking'). In fact, many kotylai found at sanctuaries are too small for convenient drinking, and quite some cups and skyphoi too large. There thus seems to be a division between the part of an assemblage intended for practical use, including ceremonial dining and drinking, which is similar everywhere, and the part related to votive offering and perhaps religious practice, which shows much local variation.

This contrast between votives and pottery apparently for feasting is not limited to geographical variation. Chronological developments show a largely similar pattern, with changes concentrated in the characteristic sanctuary categories, while also including a section of the drinking vessels. Despite local differences in the choice of relevant shapes and the speed and impact of developments, the general direction and outcome of the changes appear to be universal. In other words, all Greeks purchasing pottery for sanctuaries sooner or later selected locally from the same general range of types. A very clear illustration is the quickly declining popularity of small oil containers, mainly Corinthian aryballoi, during the first half of the 6th century. Although the process starts at a different moment at each sanctuary, progressing slowly in some and at dramatic speed in others, small oil containers have all but disappeared everywhere by 550. In the meanwhile, cups and miniature vessels rise in popularity. Even though this increase appears to be less marked than the decline of small oil containers, all the Late Archaic and Classical sanctuaries in my sample have high proportions of drinking and ritual vessels. Only the relatively small

1184 See also, for other sites, Simon 1986, 314-315 (general overview); Guettel Cole 1988, 165 (sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, Corinth); Kron 1992, 629-630 (Bitalemi); Hinz 1998, 61-62 (Bitalemi), 176-177 (San Nicola di Albanella), 198 (Santa Maria d’Anglona).

1185 See Simon 1986, 410-419.
category of luxury household vessels shows no evident pattern of change. At sites where they appear in some numbers, however, pyxides seem to peak in the decades around 600. Clearly, many individual developments, though easily detectable at single sites and ultimately emerging everywhere in the long run, are quite irregular in detail over such a large sample.

A further complication is that the changing currency of shapes closely coincides with that of vessels from certain production centres and the decorative systems that go with them. Thus, the small oil containers that fall out of favour, as noted directly above, were mostly painted Corinthian aryballoi. Their disappearance, however, gives only a very partial view of the best-known and most dramatic example of a multifaceted trend: the waning of Corinthian fine ware and the simultaneous flight of Attic in Greek pottery markets during the 6th century. Attempts to explain this shift concentrate on the artistic and technical decline of Corinthian in this period. Yet, at least at the sanctuaries, the changes are not only a matter of appearances or technical quality of whatever kind, but also of shape, size and amount. The Attic pottery, which, as it were, replaces Corinthian, centres more on the activities of drinking and, especially, serving, and consists of bigger shapes, but also fewer vessels. In short, large numbers of small Corinthian kotylai, aryballoi, alabastra and sometimes pyxides are replaced by lower numbers of larger Attic cups, skyphoi and, much later, lekythoi; and instead of mainly oinochoai, as typically exported by Corinth, Athens also provided big, elaborate kraters and amphorai. Lekanides, which remain rare, might be regarded as the replacements of pyxides.

The major Attic advance fits in well with the general pattern of the rise of styles that I have noted above in the chapter on domestic pottery, starting with the Megara Hyblaia finds. At first there is a small amount of a few large, elaborately decorated shapes, and then, with increasing numbers, the range of vessels and kinds of decoration widens. The decline, that is, the latest Corinthian from sanctuary sites, also follows a familiar path. From Late Corinthian onwards, the exporting potters slowly specialise in a few niche markets for simple-looking pots, manufacturing ‘debased’ versions of their previous commercial successes: notably, patterned, banded and black kotyliskoi (instead of figured kotylai), and banded oinochoai, pyxides and kothons (instead of larger, elaborately decorated vessels).

Less important pottery centres like Lakonia, Chios, Rhodos and various other Ionian producers find their place in these export patterns as well. Again, specialisation seems to be the key word: whereas Corinthian and Attic producers, after a specialised start, widened their range of shapes and decoration, each of the smaller producers seems mostly to have remained limited to a few types of pots. The best example is, of course, the Chiot chalice, a unique local speciality that formed the bulk of the island’s fine-pottery exports in the Archaic period. Lakonian kraters, Lakonian and ‘Rhodian’ decorated cups, banded ‘Ionian’ cups and amphorai and other closed shapes of many Cycladic and Ionian production centres can also be cited. In addition, most lesser producers initially manufactured elaborately decorated vessels, but they soon turned largely to simpler pottery, of even fewer shapes than before. This development clearly seems analogous to the fate of Corinthian: the niche market products that remain, like black Lakonian kraters and banded Chiot chalices, seem to fill accidental or intentional gaps in the Attic repertory.

Besides the imports from the various overseas production centres, local pottery was obviously important as well. Plain and course wares, which are not so well perceivable in most publications, must have been mainly local. The relatively full pottery records and publications of the shrine at Santa Venera, the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros in Selinus, the Thesmophorion of Eretria

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(Tables XVI.4; XVI.7) and at Bitalemi\textsuperscript{1187} suggest that also a large proportion of their banded and black gloss wares was usually local made. As to decorated pottery, the role of most local workshops seems confined to the occasional imitation of imported pottery, mainly Corinthian and, later, Attic. Only during the first half of the 6th century some sanctuaries show a range of locally produced fine wares comparable to that of the minor exporters: shapes are few and specialised, and often include specific, local favourites (Tables XVI.2-3; XVI.11, and Bitalemi\textsuperscript{1188}). What happens afterwards is difficult to follow from the scarce records, but I have the impression that at most sanctuaries a decline in the local decorated wares coincides with a rise in the production of a growing range of black, plain and banded shapes.\textsuperscript{1189}

Interestingly, the foregoing developments seem to mirror those in the imported sections of assemblages: while the various local manufacturers are successful at the bottom end of the shape range (in terms of decoration, finish and technical quality), Attic takes over, slowly but steadily, the upper end, including, from the late Archaic period onwards, the better black gloss. At the same time, after first yielding to Attic in the figured category, also the simpler pottery of Corinth and the minor exporters all but disappears from sanctuary assemblages in the final decades of the 6th century, as if overcome by the predominance of Attic on one side of the range and by local products on the other. Meanwhile, as seen above, the volume of decorated pottery decreases considerably. Most likely, all these changes over such a short period, which appear to fit together so well, are somehow causally interconnected.

\textbf{XVI.5 From changing pottery assemblages to consumption patterns}

Oddly enough, the drastic changes in the size and the composition of sanctuary pottery assemblages in the late Archaic and early Classical periods seem to have gone unnoticed by archaeologists, and thus remain to be explained. This appears all the more curious because the sudden shifts are exceptional movements in an otherwise rather stable sequence of similar find patterns, and are evidently introduced by a period of extraordinary confusing and unprecedented diversity in the record of imported pottery at sanctuaries. Perhaps the explanation for these changes can be found in the consumption patterns marking the find assemblages, most significantly the contrast between the peculiarities of the period of the major shifts and the more stable sequences occurring before and after.

As a rule, during a certain period at an individual sanctuary, all, or at least the large majority, of the pots of one shape and with one kind of decoration – the combination is vital – come from the same pottery centre. The case is particularly clear with regard to some special or less common shapes like chalice, ‘fruit-stand’, aryballos, alabastron and a few kinds of pyxis and krater, each of which apparently remained more or less the exclusive domain of one production centre from beginning to end. During the periods of absolute predominance by Corinthian or Attic, before and after the major shifts, most common kinds of vessels were either supplied by one of these main centres or locally produced. Some other standard categories, like banded cups during the earlier Archaic period or a section of the miniatures at the end of it, also often have a limited range of origins. Simplifying, one could even translate all this into rough functional associations. ‘Perfume’ seems first to be the exclusive market of Corinth and then, much later, of Attica. The ‘luxury

\textsuperscript{1187} Kron 1992, 614.

\textsuperscript{1188} Hinz 1998, 57-61.

household’ category, which at the sanctuaries has a strongly votive character, is mainly a Corinthian matter, whereas ‘ritual’ pottery is transferred from Corinth to local producers. Likewise, simple drinking or libation vessels, including kotylai and presumably many oinochoai, come first from Corinth and then, for some time, from minor centres, whereas the more elaborate symposion gear seems to be mostly Attic.

However, precisely the decades around the middle of the 6th century form the one period to which all these more or less neat distinctions and patterns seem to be non-applicable, that is, the transitional time when imports from Corinth rapidly decrease, Attic ware starts to become internationally preferred, and other production centres enjoy a brief peak. Many producers, it seems, competed with each other by exporting the same or similar kinds of vessels: decorated and banded cups from Attica, Lakonia, Rhodos and even sometimes Corinth; decorated amphorai from Attica and East Greece; oinochoai from Corinth, East Greece and Attica; plastic vases from Corinth and Rhodos; and Corinthian and locally made miniatures. The only significant exceptions to this ‘clash’ seem to be aryballoi and alabastra, which remain mostly Corinthian (even though some were imported from Lakonia and East Greece), and also the pyxis is a nearly exclusively Corinthian category (barring a few Attic specimens).

It can hardly be a coincidence that exactly the last three shapes rapidly and almost entirely vanished from the export markets soon afterwards, whereas most of the typical shapes of the minor producers, for example cups, are well represented in contemporaneous or later Attic, but not in Corinthian. This suggests that either the upcoming pottery exporters and local producers did not dare to compete with Corinth directly, or that they saw or accidentally tapped a demand for new shapes. In any event, the choice for change proved a success and soon Corinth, from the consumers’ point of view, provided, as it were, the wrong shapes, whatever their quality. For some reason, the Corinthian potters could not manage or made no attempt to turn the tide. The success of Attic, on the other hand, seems no less surprising, as it started to appear in the sanctuaries in some numbers only in the 560s, when the amount of East Greek imports had already been on the rise for a few decades.

The basic questions are therefore threefold. What was the shortcoming of Corinthian pottery that its makers were unable to improve? What was so special about Attic? Why could other producers not keep pace with Attica’s success? Before attempting to find answers, we can first note that ways of distribution could hardly have played a role, for the same circumstances prevail in sanctuaries all over the Greek world during the same period, but not each of them emerges everywhere at exactly the same time as would most likely happen if a distribution channel had abruptly been interrupted or created.1190 Indeed, all the shifts occur gradually, starting with changing percentages of kinds of vessels before individual types entirely disappear. Similarly, the replacement of some categories (like figured Corinthian) by others from the same pottery centre further indicates that availability could not have been a problem.

Less easily eliminated as a relevant factor is quality. It is probable that the generally confusing picture resulting from the import of similar pots by different producers around the mid 6th century, as just sketched, conceals some patterns in details that cannot today be perceived as relevant. Similar pieces by various manufacturers that may look to us as more or less equivalent, like Attic, East Greek and Lakonian cups, differ slightly in size, quality of finish and refinement of decoration, and we cannot judge how such differences influenced Greek consumers. Conceivably, minor traits were decisive in the long run, in a way which cannot now be traced. On the other hand, if such things mattered, one could expect that producers would respond by conforming to consumer preferences as far as possible. But no reaction is evident, apart from the slight imitation

1190 Contra Salmon 2000, 246-249.
of Attic by the use of orange slips and the copying of shapes. Such solutions failed in the long term, however.

Gradually we can discern where, I think, the real explanations must lie: the interactions between producer and consumer. As to the producers, the stable patterns of large sanctuary assemblages before and after the major shifts in the middle of the 6th century suggest that the mechanisms of production and consumption somehow ensured that pottery centres tended to export mutually exclusive selections of shapes. Possibly, the growing demand at the sanctuaries and the appearance of new shapes and producers started to destabilise the old balance. A fundamental factor, however, seems to be that Attic potters encountered fewer problems than their counterparts in minor pottery centres in replicating types of vessels which were previously exported by other producers, like cups, amphorai and oinochoai. Apparently, the ability to absorb the competitors' best-sellers was a primary element of Attic success.

It remains to be seen how this ability operated, however, as the provision of a growing range of shapes could be not only the cause of sales going well but also the result. Another relevant issue must be the relative status of the pottery centres: Corinthian, Attic, imports in general and even local wares surely each had a specific negative or positive ring to them, simply for being exotic or too common, or for having a reputation for quality (which is not the same as the actual quality itself). Obviously, this is something that can hardly be traced after 2,500 years. However, the shifts, as sketched above, indeed suggest that origins played an important role in the sale and purchase of pottery. Thus, changing preferences for specific producers would mostly go hand in hand with new favourite kinds of shapes, whereas imitations of the latter by the old providers, like Corinthian cups and other figured symposion ware, never proved successful. In fact, the main, broad changes sketched above, like the shift from Corinthian aryballoi and kotylai to Attic cups and symposion vessels, could have succeeded so drastically only if the 'losing side' was unable to find a means of emulating the 'winner'. In short, it was not the intrinsic quality of the product that counted most, but the wish of consumers to buy something novel.

The shift from Corinthian to Attic further entails the typical deterioration in the quality of pottery by producers who are losing their markets. If the declining standards of figured Corinthian in the 6th century are indeed the result of economic pressures and the need to produce more in order to keep up with the growing demand, as is sometimes maintained, one might expect a counter-movement towards improved quality when Corinthian begins to disappear so quickly from the large sanctuary deposits. Instead, standards keep going downhill and, finally, Corinthian figurework vanishes altogether from the export markets. It is therefore more likely that cursory production was considered a way of making up for the loss of the upper end of the market by trying to find a foothold further down, in the hope that greater sales would make up for the lower prices and status. This applies to not only Corinthian and minor producers: the same tactic clearly worked well for the makers of late Attic black figure, which remained popular alongside red figure despite the declining quality of the painting. It seems hardly fortuitous that the disappearance of black figure in the decades before 450 coincides with the beginning of a decrease in the quality of Attic red figure, which, by the way, set in well after the period of the strongest presence of Attic red figure at sanctuaries.

All in all, I must conclude that pottery consumption patterns were determined by production strategies on the one hand, and consumer preferences on the other. As far as can be seen, producers seem more dependent on consumers than the other way round, but it remains largely unclear what guided the consumers, beyond vague trends of status and fashion. Nevertheless, distribution systems could easily have also played a part. For although the mechanisms of transport and marketing appear not to have caused practical problems of availability, consumer

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1191 E.g. Salmon 1984, 111-115; Benson 1985; Robertson 1987, 22.
preference for certain types of pots may ultimately have depended on the choices of distributors or on changes in the trading routes. It is quite possible, for example, that individual types of pots became so quickly and widely popular at certain times basically because merchants decided to introduce them into the trading network, not primarily because of local demand. In any event, the evidence from the sanctuaries indicates that consumers had a relatively active part in deciding their needs and thereby posed limitations on the suppliers.

At the most general level, the apparently large proportion of all Greek pottery that ended up in sanctuaries implies that religious destinations were important in the organisation of production and distribution. The relative prominence of decorated, and (therefore) of imported, pottery at the sanctuaries underscores the tendency to an even greater degree. In addition, the ‘religious market’ may have been comparatively more demanding for producers and distributors, as the developments and regional differences in sanctuary pottery appear to be more extreme than those seen in houses. Moreover, the clearest geographical and chronological variations in the popularity of pottery at sanctuaries generally concern shapes that seem least closely connected to daily life and relatively unimportant in domestic contexts, like large figured cups, small oil containers, pxyides and miniatures. In turn, this suggests that local religious practices played an important role in defining the traditions and fashions regarding pottery in sanctuaries, and suggests that producers and distributors had to cope not only with changes over time, but also with a geographically and functionally differentiated demand. If their influence had been greater, consumer demand would probably have been more uniform at the various sanctuaries and in the differing contexts of use.

Further confirmation of the consumers’ prominence is offered by the fact that the varying contents of pottery assemblages are not an isolated phenomenon at sanctuaries. Finds of other materials undergo considerable shifts as well, some of which seem synchronous with the alterations in the patterns of pottery consumption. Bronze statuettes abound in shrines of the Geometric period, while quickly disappearing afterwards. Bronze vessels and decorated shields enjoy a similar peak which, while lasting somewhat longer, is also followed by a decline. The slow decrease in the numbers of such bronze objects from the late 8th century to the late 6th strikingly coincides with growing volumes of sanctuary pottery from the mid 7th century onwards. Although some pre-Archaic sanctuaries already yield substantial quantities of pottery, the Archaic period is marked not only by steadily increasing numbers of sanctuaries with large assemblages, but also by previously unseen amounts of pottery at individual sites.

The Classical period probably shows opposite trends: while the amounts of pottery fall to unprecedented lows, the evidence, though meagre, suggests that, at least in Athens and later

1192 See e.g. the catalogues of bronzes in Furtwängler 1890; Waldstein 1905, 189-331; and to some extent also De Ridder 1896.


1194 See Bookidis and Stroud 1997, 16-17.

1195 E.g., the Polis cave and Aetos on Ithaca (Benton 1938-1939; 1953; Robertson 1948; Anderson 1953); the sanctuary of Isthmia (Morgan 1999b); the temple area in Tegea (Voyatzis 1990); the sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Hymettos in Attica (Langdon 1976); the Argive Heraion (Waldstein 1905, 60-61; Caskey and Amandry 1952; Billot 1997, esp. 14-15); and the temple of Artemis Orthia, Sparta (Dawkins 1929, 52-116). See also Brize 1997, about the Samian Heraion.
Delos, offerings and ritual vessels of precious metal perhaps became more frequently and more widely spread in sanctuaries than before (section XVI.6). Interestingly, the unique, detailed epigraphic records of the many, mainly small silver gifts to the Athenian Asklepieion in the 3rd century indicate that most of them would fall in the same price range as a good large pot. Perhaps the growing volume of circulating silver, or even the spread of coinage itself, caused people to prefer smaller votives of precious metal to pottery.

Although sculptural dedications and stelai cannot easily be quantified owing to the present inadequate state of publication, they would probably reveal significant patterns as well. For the moment, it seems evident that most of the 6th century generally shows steadily increasing numbers, but what happens from the Late Archaic period onwards is unclear, except for Athens: Raubitschek’s catalogue of stone dedications from the Akropolis reports continuously high numbers over much of the 5th century. The same period sees, of course, many famous masterpieces of Classical art, amongst which quite a few dedications, like Pheidias’s Athena Lemnia and probably Myron’s Athena Marsyas.

To return to lesser votives, the consumption patterns of terracotta figurines and other small plastic objects are more easily comprehended. They continually grow in popularity from the Early Iron Age onwards, with a clear peak in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. A correlation with the low numbers of (decorated) pottery in the same period is, once more, very likely, and could probably be elucidated by further investigation of evidence from sites which have large assemblages of both pottery and terracottas, like the Demeter Malophoros sanctuary, the Korykian Cave and some of the Thasian shrines. In some sanctuaries, lamps show a pattern similar to that of the terracottas: although they occasionally turn up among Archaic finds, they start to occur in some numbers only in the 5th century, and then remain relatively prominent until Roman times. The conclusion that they replace pottery vessels as votives is attractive.

The continual changes in pottery find assemblages at sanctuaries, which are apparently, at least in part, interrelated, make clear that pottery consumption at shrines cannot be viewed on its own, as may be possible with regard to domestic contexts where alternatives to pottery were less readily available and practical considerations were presumably uppermost. The complex patterns of change defy a general explanation, however. The producers and distributors of any single category of sanctuary objects, like pottery, could hardly have controlled the broader shifts. As to the consumers: it is likely that at least some of the shifts sketched above reflect changes in religious rites and ceremonies or in traditions of votive offering, but such changes, in turn, require explanation.

Aleshire 1989; 1992. Although they lack the same degree of detail and mention very few private gifts explicitly, the well-known Classical and Hellenistic treasure records of Athens and Delos, already mentioned above, may conceal similar patterns of individual offering in the many small groups of odd coins and other irregular silver and gold objects mentioned. It should be kept in mind, though, that most bronze objects and most offerings which could not be recycled, including pottery, were not recorded in the inscriptions.

Raubitschek 1949, passim.


See generally Simon 1986, 331-336; Hinz 1998, 49, and more specifically Tables XVI.1 (Aphaia); XVI.2 (Demeter Malophoros: the excavation context of these undated items, as given by Dewailly 1992, 29-32, suggest they mostly belong to the 5th century, although some may be somewhat earlier); Simon 1986, 336 (Gravisca); Kron 1992, 614 and Hinz 1998, 61-63 (both Bitalemi).
A possible cause of change, however difficult to grasp archaeologically, would be fashion or a simple wish for variation, perhaps stimulated by the producers and distributors of votives and ritual objects. The cyclical nature of some of the shifts, including the emergence and disappearance of large pottery assemblages, might offer an indication, but is hardly avoidable in historical processes. Political developments are another likely but elusive factor. Could it be coincidental that the turbulent, formative years of the typical structure of the Greek polis and the most drastic shifts in sanctuary assemblages all fall within the Archaic period? Such hypothetical connections, which may be extended to include economic development in the Greek world, are difficult to substantiate, however, as shown by a unique, daring attempt by Anthony Snodgrass, which founders on insufficient or unreliable evidence and a tendency to oversimplify.1200

Concentrating on pottery consumption patterns, I nevertheless wish to end this section with two tentative, connected hypotheses on the status of the different kinds of votive gifts in society. Their common starting point is the occurrence of the late 7th-6th-century peak in sanctuary pottery between two periods with relatively larger numbers of more prestigious gifts, like bronzes and plate. The rising quantities of pots suggest that during the Archaic period more and more people visited sanctuaries. This perhaps means that, as religion became a concern of a wider section of society, the small elites exerted less control over religious matters, perhaps owing to a general decrease in their extreme wealth, but it is also possible that ideological limits on the value of votive offerings lowered the profile of the wealthy and the mighty, causing them to remain largely invisible to us while not actually vanishing. The end of the Archaic period would then see a break in this seemingly communitarian or even egalitarian situation. The rich, it seems, now took advantage of the growing opportunities to display their faith more conspicuously by offering precious metalware and sculpture, financing architecture or, possibly, also sponsoring liturgies. Conceivably, these tendencies were stimulated by a rising level of wealth which permitted greater expenditures than before. At the same time, those who were less well off seem not to have been able or willing to maintain the high standards of ceramic offerings marking the Archaic period. In other words, from about 500 onwards, the sections of society that originally gave votives of decorated pottery might either have become too rich and self-conscious or too poor and modest to continue the practice at the same level.1201 Some support for this hypothesis is perhaps found in the phenomenon that the sanctuaries where pots continue to be dedicated in some quantities during the Classical period seem to be small and minor, whereas many major architectural sites of the period apparently receive little pottery.1202

Architecture leads to my second hypothesis. While monumental stone temples start to appear before pottery votives diminish, they continue to be built in growing numbers in the later Archaic and Classical periods. Even if building programmes were probably mainly financed from savings and income from sacred property, sometimes augmented by state contributions (see chapter XIV),

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1200 Snodgrass 1989-1990. Many of the trends Snodgrass discerns are not confirmed by the excavation reports I have consulted (both to compile my sample and to gather supplementary evidence; see section XVI.2). Moreover, his main thesis (esp. 290-291) that most votives before the early 5th century are 'raw', i.e. objects taken from daily life, whereas most later ones are 'converted', i.e. produced and acquired as votives, is simply untenable: many, if not most, early metal offerings, especially the larger ones, seem to be made expressly as votives, and typical 'converted' products like decorated pottery and terracottas are very popular long before the 5th century. His conclusions on the increasing value of prestige gifts in the Classical period (292-293), however, seem to be confirmed by the evidence presented here. See also the comments in Hodkinson 1998, 60.

1201 See, for a similar line of argument about votives in general, Snodgrass 1989-1990, esp. 292-294.

private donations and small cashable votives perhaps also helped to cover costs, whereas pottery could not give much assistance in this respect. In the background, processes of the ‘democratisation’ of society and the parallel replacement of private prestige and display with public status symbols were possibly significant too, especially in the larger centres. It is conceivable that the large-scale display of monumental temples, representative of the whole polis, made small-scale individual dedications of decorated pottery (and perhaps other artisanal votives) less attractive.1203 Black and plain wares perhaps suffered less, precisely because they are less intended to impress by their appearance or value and may thus belong to a more narrowly religious sphere, bound by stronger traditions.1204

Of course, such reasoning remains speculative as long as we lack a substantial sample of material based on adequate reports of sanctuary excavations, including comprehensive and integrated accounts of architectural remains and small finds, as well as, preferably, historical and epigraphical data. At the same time, however, hypotheses such as those above seem a way of making clear how most present publications on sanctuaries are inadequate, and of suggesting the possibilities of a wider approach, which will certainly require also a more thorough theoretical foundation.

XVI.6 Metal vessels in the sanctuaries of Greece: written sources and extant remains

Exactly like pottery, the alternative sanctuary votives, from lamps and terracottas to sculpture and metal objects, have rarely been studied as integral parts of find assemblages or even as groups of votives. Although this is not the place to fill the gap, a closer look at one category seems worthwhile: plate. Its position in sanctuaries is relatively well documented by inscriptions which give detailed insights into the role of plate votives, which possibly pertain to pottery as well. In addition, a comparison of the written and excavated evidence for vessels of precious metal with the archaeological data on pottery helps to clarify the hotly debated relative importance of these two categories of objects and the patterns of their consumption.


1204 Aside from matters of fashion, status and use, building activities may have had a more basic effect on the archaeological record by sealing off older buried votives and preventing the deposition of more recent ones. After a long period of almost continual building, renewal and destruction, with presumably the Persian invasion as the climax in both the smashing of pottery and the stimulation of new building projects, much of the later 5th century and the 4th century appear stable and calm. Many sanctuaries more or less reached their completed architectural state some time in the Classical period when, as less violence and digging of foundations occurred, it would have happened less often that sanctuary pottery was broken, discarded and somehow deposited (see also, for a slightly different argument along these lines, Snodgrass 1989-1990, 289-290). The increasing durability of floor levels, by being built over or covered with pavements, would also have hindered pottery’s accidental burial. In fact, the Keos and Vrysoula dumps might suggest that discarding unwanted pottery outside the sacred area was not a strict taboo anymore. Moreover, much of the pottery that was buried in the Classical period may have been dug up and (re)dispersed in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods when large-scale sanctuary building was resumed. The older deposits, lying deeper and partly under buildings, were probably better protected, as is clear, for example, in Santa Venera. However, the chief problem with hypotheses that link shifts in the pottery record to building activities is that the pottery assemblages supply no direct connections. On the Athenian Akropolis, the decline in the amount of decorated pottery starts long before the Periklean building programme, possibly even before the Persian invasion. Similarly, at Aigina, the Persian destruction and the subsequent (re)building took place well after the apparent decrease in pottery deposition. At Selinus and Santa Venera the time span between the decrease in pottery and the violent destruction of the sites is even longer. On both these sites, moreover, the continual stream of non-decorated, local pottery, lamps and figurines seems independent of any building activity.
In comparison to the attention received by sanctuary pottery, votives and ritual vessels of silver and gold remain neglected topics in the study of ancient Greek religion. As known, large quantities of coins, pieces of jewellery, plate, statues, plated furniture and metal bullion were dedicated to the gods by pious kings, tyrants, states and private individuals. The temples themselves acquired objects which they financed from their own income. Almost all these items, which were carefully registered and stored or publicly exhibited, have since disappeared. Looters, in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and later treasure hunters left behind only some of the less precious votives of bronze alongside the pottery which, until about two centuries ago, had no monetary value. Apart from the few exceptional pieces of precious metalware found in sanctuaries, no more than descriptions by ancient authors or temple administrators remain.

Only recently, some scholars have attempted to give a more comprehensive account of the offering and subsequent management of votives of precious metal. Little has been done, however, to place them in the wider context of sanctuary vessels or to compare historical and epigraphical evidence with archaeological data, which are almost exclusively limited to pottery. Although this contrast cannot have gone unnoticed, Gill and Vickers were the first to draw attention to it, rightly stressing that the picture sketched by ancient sources is much richer than anything known from excavations. However, the simplified explanation put forward by them - ancient Greece was substantially wealthier than most scholars now think - hardly brings us much further. A fresh look at the evidence is therefore needed, starting with the historical evidence, then turning to archaeology and, finally, considering the copious epigraphic material.

The first historically attested votives of precious metal are those mentioned by Herodotos in his stories about the Lydian kings of the 7th and 6th centuries: 'Gyges, as soon as he had taken over power, sent not a few votives to Delphi; indeed so many silver votives, that his are the majority of them in Delphi. And in addition to the silver he gave a vast amount of gold, of which the most worth remembering are the six kraters he dedicated. They stand in the Corinthian treasury and weigh 30 talents in total.'

Next, Alyattes (ca. 610-560), the third king after Gyges, is said to have dedicated a huge silver krater and a hypokrateridion (a large stand) of welded iron. Herodotos pays most attention to the splendid gifts of Alyattes's son Kroisos (ca. 560-547 or 546). After a huge sacrifice to Apollo, consisting of 3,000 animals and a pyre containing gilt and silver plated dining couches, gold phialai and purple clothing, and after ordering other Lydians to sacrifice,
he melted down an enormous quantity of gold into ingots, six palms long, three wide and one thick, to a total number of 117. Four of those ingots were of refined gold, each weighing two and a half talents, and the other ingots were of electrum, and weighed two talents. He also ordered the statue of a lion to be made, of refined gold, weighing ten talents. This lion, when the Delphian temple had burned down, fell off the ingots – on which it stood – and now lies in the Corinthian treasury, weighing only six and a half talents [...]. Kroisos also sent to Delphi together with all those objects two enormous kraters, one made of gold and one of silver. The gold one was placed to the right of the entrance to the temple, the silver one to the left. These also were moved during the fire; the gold one [now] stands in the Klazomenian treasury and weighs eight and a half talents and 12 minai, the silver one, which holds 600 amphorai (it is used for mixing by the Delphians during the Theophania) stands in the corner of the pronaos. The Delphians say it is a work of Theodorus the Samian, and I believe this [...]. Kroisos also sent four silver pithoi, which are in the Corinthian treasury, and he gave two perirrhanteria, one of gold and one of silver [...]. And at the same occasion Kroisos sent many other gifts, not so remarkable, and also round silver bowls [cheumata] and a statue of a woman, three palms high and made of gold [...]. Moreover he dedicated some of the necklaces and girdles of his own wife.1213

Continuing, Herodotos tells of various precious gifts from Kroisos to the Delphians, the Amphiaraion in Boeotia, the Spartans and Ephesos. Of them, only a gold tripod dedicated to Isemnenian Apollo and kept in Thebes consisted of plate.1214 However, one should probably add some of Kroisos's votive offerings at Branchidai near Miletos, 'which, as far as I am informed, are similar in weight and kind to those at Delphi', and some of those 'which have now disappeared' in various Greek places.1215

Although they are detailed and have not been questioned, Herodotos's historical accounts of the dedications must have depended on local information which could easily be 'mythologised' by the authority that is regularly exerted by famous personages of the past. It is very possible that some, though probably not the most splendid, of Gyges's and Kroisos's gifts were, in fact, given by then forgotten individuals, and being claimed by no one, ascribed to a renowned donor – a practice comparable to the attribution of anonymous works of art to famous names and places by some present-day tourist guides and art dealers. By Herodotos's time, in any event, these dedications must already have been antiques. It can further be supposed that they stood in the sanctuaries for much of the 5th century and at least the last part of the 6th, and that some of them regularly had a place in ritual.

Furthermore, the most splendid silver and gold dedications Herodotos mentions, it seems, were given not by Greeks, but by Lydians. This corresponds well with the large proportion of Archaic Greek or Greek-style plate discovered in Turkey, much of which has probably come to light in the
Lydian homeland. Herodotos’s stories are, of course, anecdotal and most likely centre on especially impressive and, therefore, atypical votives. He probably overlooked the simpler silver and gold phialai and other precious objects that Greek donors might have offered, although it is not likely that any Greek equivalent to the Lydian gifts would have gone unnoticed. Moreover, Herodotos’s description of Gyges’s treasures as equalling more than half of all silver gifts in Delphi, though possibly a rhetorical exaggeration, suggests that the amount of silver involved widely surpassed the means of any Greek dedicant, at least from a 5th-century vantage point. The hypothesis that 7th-6th-century Lydia, with its powerful kings and large electrum resources, was much richer in plate than Greece ever was seems self-evident.

In contrast to Herodotos’s anecdotes, the actual remains of votive offerings of precious metal are very scanty. Only five to seven Archaic-Classical specimens dedicated to the gods are known. The oldest is probably the gold bowl or phiale found in Olympia, inscribed ‘the sons of Kypselos dedicated this, from [the spoils of] Herakleia’. Neither the dedicants, members of the Kypselid clan, which ruled Corinth from ca. 625 to the 580s, nor the battle can be placed in a more precise historical context, so that the date of the phiale can only be approximated. Dedicated possibly at the end of the 7th century and surely before ca. 550, it is one of the oldest pieces of full-size plate yet found in the post-Mycenaean Greek world (except for Cyprus). Alongside its being a very lucky find, the combination of its date (particularly if late 7th-century), dedicants, material (the sole known gold phiale from before the 4th century) and find-place (in status comparable to Delphi) might not be entirely coincidental: could the phiale be a Greek ‘equivalent’ to, or even an ‘imitation’ of, the gifts of Gyges and his successors?

About as old as the Kypselid bowl, but rather less impressive, is the silver miniature tripod discovered, together with some jewellery, in a sanctuary at Kato Phanai on Chios. All the other surviving plate votives are silver phialai dating certainly or probably from the Archaic period. One comes from Olympia (not precisely dated), another from the sanctuary of Hera at Perachora. The latter was found with a mid 6th-century deposit which contained more than 200 bronze phialai and many other offerings, some going back to the 7th century. A third votive phiale lay in a 4th-century grave in Kozani (Macedonia), although the votive inscription states it was dedicated to

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1216 See e.g. the Archaic items in Von Bothmer 1984.

1217 Records of which have survived in other sanctuaries; see Lewis 1986, 71.

1218 Gill and Vickers ignore this aspect of Herodotos’s narrative and are thus able to present Kroisos’s gifts as more or less typical, which is surely misleading. See Vickers 1990; 1992, 58; Vickers and Gill 1994, 55-56.

1219 Strong 1966, 55.

1220 My count excludes the very small gold miniature tripod and the three rims of other gold miniature vessels found in the Idaian Cave on Crete (Sakellarakis 1988, 174-178). Although some of them may be Archaic, they more likely belong to the Early Iron Age; the rims might be even earlier. See, for preserved Archaic plate, also Vickers and Gill 1994, 57-59.


1222 See Lewis 1986, 76-77. Luschey 1939, 22, mentions only five other gold phialai, two from Asia Minor, presumably found in graves, and three from Skythian tombs.

1223 Lamb 1934-1935, 149-152.

1224 Payne 1940, 121, 148-150; see also Strong 1966, 56; Tomlinson 1988. 

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Athena in Megara. Perhaps this phiale, which was made around 500, ended up in Macedonia as loot. Finally, there are two undated silver gilt phialai, at least one of which is a miniature, from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta. In addition, Perachora and Olympia have also yielded some loose handles and scraps. Leaving jewellery aside, we can also note the famous sheet silver bull from Delphi (6th century), and a silver disk of 570 grammes found in the ‘Santuario Meridionale’ of Paestum, where also a silver plaque was found.

Although the vast majority of precious metal dedications have certainly been melted down, the extremely low number of surviving items may not entirely lack significance. Votive bronzework, including vessels, is less rare, which suggests that the proportion of silver to bronze phialai at Perachora, possibly preserved in an undisturbed context, is not exceptional. And the fact that more plate is recovered from graves than from sanctuaries might also be relevant, provided the difference is not simply a reflection of the greater difficulty of locating and plundering graves.

With neither ancient written sources nor archaeology supplying anything more than uncertain and incomplete anecdotal information, the inscribed data on the amount and use of plate in sanctuaries are most welcome, even though references to the Archaic period are scarce. Apart from a few short dedicatory examples, the extant inscriptions start in the 430s. They are inventories and accounts referring to temples in Athens or to ones controlled by Athens. This historical context suggests that they refer to an exceptionally rich situation: the decades around


1226 Dawkins 1929, 384. In view of the other known finds of this kind and the general composition of the Artemis Orthia assemblage, these unillustrated phialai are very likely Archaic, although a somewhat earlier or later date is possible too.

1227 Olympia: Furtwängler 1890, cat. nos. 9, 650, 693, 710, 1190, 1247; see also Strong 1966, 58. Perachora: Payne 1940, 185 (nondescript fragment), 286 (oinochoe handle).


1229 Jeffery 1990, 252, 260, no. 3; Cipriani 1997, 217, 222. See also the silver plaque and ingots Jeffery 1990, 339, 344, no. 53; 457, G.

1230 See e.g. Furtwängler 1890, esp. VII; Willemsen 1957; Herrmann 1966; 1979; Maaβ 1978; Gauer 1991 (Olympia, totalling well over 20,000 recorded items); Bather 1892-1893; De Ridder 1896; Broner 1938, 248-249; Touloupa 1972 (Akropolis, almost 1,000 selected items); Waldstein 1905, 189-331 (Argive Heraion, 5,738 cat. nos. and thousands of additional items; see also Strøm 1988); Furtwängler 1906, 390-423; Maaβ 1984; Maaβ and Kilian-Dirlmeier, forthcoming (Aphaia, Aigina); Dawkins 1929, 196-202; Hodkinson 1998 (Artemis Orthia, Sparta); Payne 1940, 121, 148-149, 156 (Heraion, Perachora); Guide 1991, 139-189, 195-199, 222-226, of which esp. 141, 146-147, 153-160, 165-168, 195-197, 223-226 (Delphi); Antonaccio 1995, 160-161 (Menelaion near Sparta); and the bronze vessels in my Tables XVI.2 and XVI.9.

1231 The figures elsewhere are more or less comparable: Artemis Orthia has 2 silver vessels against 24 bronze ones (but about as many pieces of gold and silver jewellery as published bronze finds; Dawkins 1929, 196-202, 381-384; Hodkinson 1998, 57, 59). The old excavations of Olympia yielded only 6 silver items against over 14,000 bronze ones (see Furtwängler 1890, VII). At the Korykian Cave, the proportion of silver to bronze rings is about 2:200, and of silver to iron rings 2:800 (Antre 1984, 183). See Strong 1966, 58, 62.

1232 See Lewis 1986, 71.

the middle of the 5th century were the glory years of the Athenian empire, with income flowing in from different sources – silver mines, tribute of numerous allies, booty and, probably, taxes and trade. The inscriptions nevertheless contain no indication of a break in the practices of cult and offering votives, thus evidently confirming the evidence of the historical and archaeological sources. It seems highly likely, however, that offering and sanctuary management were less strictly organised at an earlier time, especially before coinage became widely used.\textsuperscript{1234}

The dedicants form the obvious starting point for a treatment of votive offerings. The scanty data, mainly derived from a few exceptionally well-studied votive groups,\textsuperscript{1235} suggest that the act of offering was not subject to strict rules or traditions. Some gifts were offered to the gods on special occasions or for specific reasons or goals, whereas others apparently had a more incidental character; just as some people seem to have been generous to the gods only sporadically, others gave more regularly.\textsuperscript{1236} Nothing is known about the relation between economic status and the frequency of offering, but, not surprisingly, richer people seem generally to have dedicated more expensive items, although, of course, exceptions apparently exist.\textsuperscript{1237} One problem is that the relative value of different kinds of gifts is not always evident; especially the cost of sculpture is elusive.\textsuperscript{1238} In the case of metalware, the bullion value would give a good indication of the price, as production costs seem to have been relatively low.\textsuperscript{1239} Likewise, the prices of ivory objects possibly depended on weight.

After being offered, most metal votives were probably simply placed on the floor or hung or nailed to a wall in the temple or the surrounding sacred area.\textsuperscript{1240} Apparently, the more important and costliest ones, including gold and silver sculpture, vessels and ornaments, were stored somewhere in the temple buildings themselves or, at the big Panhellenic sanctuaries, in specially built treasuries. Some of these articles, particularly larger plate basins or containers, would regularly have served in cult or at festivals; presumably, less appealing pieces, including many phialai, may have been kept as a financial reserve with the bullion and coin.\textsuperscript{1241} A steady stream of offerings made the temples increasingly rich. Overcrowding was avoided by weeding out the less desirable votives to make space for new ones. Pottery, terracotta statuettes and even stone sculptures were simply removed to bothroi, votive pits, or perhaps just dumped. At least from the Hellenistic period onwards, but most likely also earlier, small, broken or outdated metal offerings would, every now and then, be collected and melted down, thus providing the means or the raw

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1234} Linders 1992, 11-12; Harris 1995, 11-15; see also Lewis 1986, 71-73.
\item \textsuperscript{1235} Raubitschek 1949; Aleshire 1992; Harris 1995, 222-244.
\item \textsuperscript{1236} Aleshire 1992, 87-92; Harris 1995, 228-241; see also Lewis 1986, 71-72, 78.
\item \textsuperscript{1237} Aleshire 1992, 85-92.
\item \textsuperscript{1238} Aleshire 1992, 92, 95-97; Vickers 1992, 69.
\item \textsuperscript{1239} Lewis 1986, 79; Vickers 1992, 69; Vickers and Gill 1994, 98-100. However, 4th-3rd-century inscriptions mentioning probable production fees of one-sixth to one-third of the bullion value of very small objects, that is, weighing a few drachmai or so, would indicate that cheap gifts were relatively expensive to make (Aleshire 1992, 95-97).
\item \textsuperscript{1241} Harris 1995, 27; Linders 1997-1998, 163.
\end{itemize}
material for new, even more splendid sanctuary treasures. Sometimes many small gifts of precious metal (and bronze) were transformed into a few large and more impressive objects like libation bowls, containers or even sculpture.\textsuperscript{1242}

Private offerings of silver and gold were not the only sources of plate. Sanctuaries received ‘sixtieths’, ‘tenths’ and other religious duties paid by the state and private citizens on many of their structural and incidental revenues, including booty, and on transactions needing divine approval.\textsuperscript{1243} In addition, sanctuaries made profit on the land and other properties they owned and leased out. They may have further increased their income by providing loans, although these were probably not always meant to be lucrative.\textsuperscript{1244} Some revenue from all these sources could be converted into plate. The steady accumulation of income and votives was, however, often disrupted by the pressure and violence of war. When other sources of cash were exhausted, war-faring states then turned to the sanctuaries for financial help.\textsuperscript{1245} Worse still, enemy troops sometimes plundered holy places, although Greeks generally seem to have avoided the practice as sacrilegious.\textsuperscript{1246}

The process of growth and decline in temple wealth is well illustrated by the preserved treasury inventories of the major Athenian temples (Tables XIV.1-3).\textsuperscript{1247} Although their exact purpose is unclear, the registration of items implies that some sort of control or overview was desired.\textsuperscript{1248} Since the major inscriptions of this kind all seem to date from 434/3 and later, they might somehow be linked to the impending war.\textsuperscript{1249} Earlier, however, there must have been some other method of registration (on paper or wood) which would have enabled Athens to tighten its


\textsuperscript{1243} Boersma 1970, 7; Lewis 1986, 72, 75; Kallet-Marx 1989, 265-266; Giovannini 1990, 133, 139-142; Linders 1992, 9-12; Samons 1993, 135; Harris 1995, 12, 204-206; see also Aleshire 1992, 98-99.

\textsuperscript{1244} Examples of loans: IG I', nos. 248, 363-382, 385, 402; see Meiggs and Lewis 1988, 144-146, no. 53; 149-151, no. 55; 167-168, no. 61; 169-171, no. 62; 205-217, no. 72; 229-236, no. 77; 250-251, no. 81; 255-260, no. 84; and also Kallet-Marx 1989, 259; Giovannini 1990, 132-137, 142-143; Linders 1992, 11; see also chapter XIV.

\textsuperscript{1245} Lewis 1986, 72-75; Samons 1993, 132-135; see also chapter XIV.

\textsuperscript{1246} Linders 1975, 84, n. 46; 1996, 123; Lewis 1986, 78; Giovannini 1990, 132-133. Vickers and Gill (1994, 59-62) attempt to argue that the looting of temples in ancient Greece was normal war practice, although the examples they cite seem to prove the contrary. Until the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century, it seems, the only looters in the Greek world were foreigners, mainly Persians. Of the later occurrences cited, the Phokian plundering of Delphi more closely resembles official theft, disguised as a loan, than looting (see Giovannini 1990, 133), and the pillaging of Agylle and Pyrgi concerns Greeks who steal from non-Greeks. Thus their only remaining example, the looting of Perachora by the Spartan king Agesilaos in 390, appears wholly exceptional. Thucydides is perhaps silent on the matter not because he considered it trivial, as Vickers and Gill suggest, but because the crime was not common.

\textsuperscript{1247} IG I', nos. 292-362, 383, 385; see Meiggs and Lewis 1988, 227-229, no. 76; and also Linders 1975; Lewis 1986; Harris 1995.

\textsuperscript{1248} Harris 1990-1991, 77; 1995, 9-11, 16-17, 28; Linders 1997-1998, 163.

\textsuperscript{1249} Lewis 1986, 72; see also Linders 1975, 2, 7-18, 68-69; 1996, 122, arguing against this hypothesis.

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financial grip if required. It is also far from certain that the registered treasures were primarily regarded as cash reserves, even if it is clear that the possibility was contemplated, and that most treasure was eventually employed as such in the final years of the Peloponnesian War.

Obviously, cash value was an important factor in registration. Usually, only precious objects which could be melted down were noted. They were carefully weighed, if possible, but, at least in the 5th-century inventories, not described. Aesthetic judgement and exact identification were evidently irrelevant. The rarity of bronze votives in the lists, including expensive sculptures, clearly indicates that even they were — literally — not worth registering. Not only money mattered, though. The registration of precious votive gifts continued after the end of the Peloponnesian war in 404. In the 4th century, some lists even have more elaborate descriptions of the precious objects. More importantly, from the start, the lists mention some articles of precious metal which have little monetary or functional value, or refer to merely a few obols of silver.

The fact that even such tiny quantities were sometimes noted, whereas bronze vessels worth dozens of drachmai are rarely mentioned, suggests that the perception of value and the feelings people had for certain objects and materials greatly influenced the bookkeeping of sanctuaries, regardless of the demands of the polis. A conspicuous example comprises the many odd bits and pieces mentioned in the inventories of the Hekatompedon and the so-called Parthenon, a few of which survived the crisis of the final war years. They were probably regarded as trophies with historical value, as parts of venerable old gifts, or as cult furniture.

However, most entries in the treasury inventories refer to silver drinking and libation vessels. At first sight, they add up to an impressive amount of wealth, but second thoughts may temper this impression. The largest recorded series of a single shape is the probably 141 phialai kept in Eleusis in 408/7, weighing some 14,429 drachmai, which must have been collected over many years. The latter also applies to the maximum total of 197 silver objects, weighing around 20,000 drachmai, kept in the Pronaos from 412/1; their number had rather quickly increased from 121 vessels in 434/3.

It seems that the richest treasury, the Hekatompedon, possessed plate and other objects with a total value of more than 90,000 drachmai (15 talents). But such amounts of votives of precious metal are not very impressive in comparison to the gifts of Gyges and Kroisos, as reported by Herodotos.

Moreover, instead of the big pithoi, basins and kraters of the Lydian kings, which are not paralleled in the 5th-century treasury lists, Athenian temples housed an abundance of small

1250 Harris 1995, 17, 22; Samons 1996, 98.
1252 See Harris 1995, 2, 23.
1253 See Luschey 1939, 22; Harris 1990-1991, 77. For exceptions, possibly related to the use of the vessels in question in cult, see Linders 1975, 25-26; Lewis 1986, 71.
drinking and libation vessels. Most of the inventoried plate by far (over 90% in numbers, somewhat less in weight) consists of phialai.\textsuperscript{1258} The other recorded items include a substantial proportion of poteria and karchesia and a few kylikes, all drinking vessels which were possibly used for offering libations as well. Until 403, in fact, two silver oinochoai are the only vessels which fall outside this category, apart from some pieces of cult equipment (two lamps, an aporranterion, two thymiateria).\textsuperscript{1259} In subsequent years, silver hydriai start to appear, not to be followed by other large vessels until much later.\textsuperscript{1260} This selection of shapes corresponds well with that of the preserved precious metal vessels and with the information available about domestic plate. Furthermore, it suggests once again that, apart from a few exceptional votives and pieces of cult equipment, large vessels of precious metal were never really common in Classical (and by extension Archaic) Greece.

A comparison of the types of metal vessels in the temple inventories (Tables XIV.1-3) with the pottery assemblages from 5\textsuperscript{th}-century sanctuaries (Tables XVI.1; XVI.4; XVI.7; XVI.9-10; XVI.14) leads to comparable conclusions. Leaving aside miniatures, we see that usually drinking vessels, which are also suitable for pouring libations, form the majority of the pottery votives. In shape, however, they are not the exact counterparts of sanctuary plate. Instead of phialai, which are extremely rare, kylikes, skyphoi and kotylai predominate, and there is a much wider range of shapes, including large symposion vessels like kraters and amphorai. In addition, many of the pottery vessels, even cups and skyphoi, are much larger than the small, standard 100-drachmai phialai or the yet more delicate poteria. Therefore, within the same symbolic or functional ritual context, precious metal and pottery appear each to have independent traditions regarding shape and size.

The distinction may be partly dictated by financial motives, as pottery, on the one hand, could compensate for its relative cheapness by greater size, while, on the other hand, the amounts of precious metal needed to manufacture votives of equal size to some larger pots were, it seems, hardly ever available. Few people or institutions could afford to give away large quantities of silver, even to please the gods. The choice between the two materials was therefore, at least in part, socially determined, related to status and prestige. Moreover, the impossibility or the undesirability of replicating all the functional traits of pottery vessels in precious metal is indicated by the limited range of shapes in the latter material, just as the strong ritual connotations of the phiale\textsuperscript{1261} seem to be so narrowly associated with metal and perhaps its monetary value that pottery could not provide an adequate replacement.\textsuperscript{1262} Thus, in addition to differences of status and price, pottery and plate also seem each to have their own use context and, as a result, consumption patterns, which were neither interchangeable nor directly interdependent.

\textsuperscript{1258} Lewis 1986, 76; Linders 1996, 121, n. 7.

\textsuperscript{1259} I disregard the argyrides and chrysides, undefinable objects, possibly not vessels but sheets, and the kana, ‘baskets’, probably in this case flat trays. See, for the latter, Linders 1996, 121, n. 7.

\textsuperscript{1260} In 403/2 or 402/1, 20 silver hydriai are noted in the Parthenon inventories. They were probably made from (or financed with the revenue of?) the confiscated property of the thirty tyrants, the oligarchs who were imposed by the victorious Spartans but soon overthrown. In the following years, seven more hydriai were added. See Lewis 1986, 75; Harris 1990-1991, 79-80; 1995, 29, 47; Linders 1996, 122. It might be more than coincidental that at about the same time large plate objects start appearing in Macedonian graves.

\textsuperscript{1261} See Lewis 1986, 76; Vickers 1990, 616; Harris 1995, 27.

\textsuperscript{1262} See Payne 1940, 152; Lewis 1986, 76; and also Simon 1986, 324-326, who offers a list of bronze and clay phialai.
A third contrast to the Lydian gifts described by Herodotos is the apparent rarity of gold objects in Athenian temple treasuries. Most of them are relatively light crowns; the list of vessels is confined to phialai, one cup and one karchesion. This further confirms the pattern emerging from the evidence for domestic plate and the extant plate from sanctuaries: silver was the common precious metal for vessels in Athens. This is not to say, however, that sacred gold was nonexistent. From sometime before 434/3 until 407/6, the Parthenon housed a small collection of probably up to eight gold Nikai, each containing almost certainly about two talents, that is, 12,000 drachmai, of sheeting.\(^{1263}\) In addition, 44 talents - 264,000 drachmai - of gold seems to have embellished the Parthenon’s chryselephantine statue of Athena.\(^{1264}\) Objects like these statues, not the vessels and other items recorded in the inventories, would be the true successors to the magnificent offerings of Gyges and Kroisos.

Another way of looking at the treasuries is to relate them to the private wealth of individuals, and to compare the quantity of plate kept in the major temples with that needed for an imaginary luxury symposion set. Surely, the 141 phialai of Demeter at Eleusis would be more than enough for a good number of symposiasts, were it not that the larger vessels for mixing and serving water and wine are missing, except for the two already mentioned oinochoai. A silver hydria weighed at least 1,000 drachmai, a krater, though a silver specimen has not yet come to light, would be in the same price range, like an amphora, while an oinochoe may have cost between 200 and 600 drachmai or more. With the typical phiale priced at 100 drachmai, the value of all the necessary symposion equipment would equal a large portion of the Eleusian treasure.\(^{1265}\) Taking the total weight of all the vessels in the Athenian and Eleusian inventories as starting point, we get similar results. Supposing we estimate that the price of a plate symposion set was one talent,\(^{1266}\) which is a rather modest sum, the Eleusian treasuries could, at most, finance only a few dozen sets. If private plate was really so abundant at Athens, would the major Athenian sanctuaries have conceivably held such small numbers of gold and silver vessels as mentioned in the inventories? Instead, both their own assets and the elite votives would more likely have amounted to a far greater quantity of plate.\(^{1267}\) Once more, the evidence suggests that vessels of precious metal were quite rare at Athens, even during the empire’s heyday. As already pointed out above (chapter XIV), most precious metal was probably kept as a reserve in the form of coin or bullion.\(^{1268}\)

It is equally revealing to consider plate in the light of pottery and bronze. The quantities of plate mentioned in the treasury lists are negligible compared to the numbers of bronze and ceramic

\(^{1263}\) Burr Thompson 1944; Thompson 1970: Lewis 1986, 75; see Harris 1995, 272-275.


\(^{1265}\) See, for these standard weights, Lewis 1986, 73 (hydria, oinochoe, phiale, poterion); Luschey 1939, 20 (phiale); Harris 1995, 78 (phiale); and, for the existence of silver kraters, Diodorus Siculus, XIII.3.2.

\(^{1266}\) See chapter XIV: say, for instance, 1 hydria of 1,000, 1 krater of 1,000, 4 oinochoai of 500, 10 phialai of 100 and 30 poteria of 33 drachmai.

\(^{1267}\) It is unclear whether the 5th-century sanctuary inventories include many private dedications of plate. Only a few donors’ names are explicitly mentioned, but the other vessels in the lists may be less anonymous than they seem. See Harris 1995, 28, 228-236; Linders 1997-1998, 166.

\(^{1268}\) It can be further noted that even if these reserves are included, the amount of precious metal kept in the Athenian sanctuaries, with the exception of the extremely rich treasuries and savings of Athena on the Akropolis, hardly seems compatible with a society comprising many rich families with private capital of several dozens of talents.
votives which have actually turned up on the Akropolis and at other large sites. Despite the great amount, however, the finds must represent only a small fraction of the original numbers. It is hard to give definite figures, but hundreds or even thousands of bronze vessels and fragments are recorded at major sites: the Argive Heraion, the Athenian Akropolis, Delphi and, especially, Olympia. As seen above and in my tables, pottery is usually counted by the thousands and the tens of thousands.

Reckoned in monetary value, of course, the amounts are obviously differently weighed: at half a drachma a piece, the cost of purchasing the more than 7,000 recorded Attic figured pots from the Akropolis would amount to some 35 silver phialai, equalling only about 10% of the value of all the metal phialai listed in the temple inventories. But in view of the low survival rate of pottery and the unpublished mass of black and plain wares it seems quite possible that the total monetary value of the pottery votives brought to the Akropolis in the peak years from 550 to ca. 480 (or somewhat later) approximates that of the inventoried plate, which was probably collected mainly over the following 70 years. If bronzeware is considered, it may well lead to similar results. All this suggests that even when we look solely at monetary value it is very easy to overestimate the importance of precious metal in offering practices at sanctuaries. In short, plate, however luxurious, is only a small component in the much larger general picture of votive offerings.