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OF PAST AND PRESENT IN THE
MALLOURA VALLEY, CYPRUS

edited by

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Chapter 10

The Ritual Context of the Malloura Terracotta Figurines

by Erin Walcek Averett

Dedicating votive gifts to deities was an integral part of most ancient Mediterranean religious systems (Rouse 1902; van Straten 1981; 1992; 2000; Bergman 1987; Connelly 1989; Snodgrass 1989–1990; Gill et al. 1998). These objects, often displayed in sanctuaries for generations, enhanced the sacred space through the repetition of religious imagery that created and affirmed socio-religious traditions and values (Renfrew 1985: 13–14, 22–24; 1994: 53–54). Votive offerings served as permanent displays of dedicatory gestures and as lasting visual reminders of ephemeral rituals, such as animal sacrifice, feasting, prayer, dance, music, and celebrations (fig. 10.1).

Terracotta figurines were among the most popular votive offerings in the eastern Mediterranean. Crafted of a humble material, clay, figurines are deceptively simple. The coroplasts who produced them, whether by hand, in a mold, or on the potter's wheel, imbued the artifacts with values meaningful to both producers and users. The figurines excavated from the rural sanctuary at Athienou-Malloura are a part of the larger Mediterranean and island tradition, but at the same time reflect local cult and society. The popularity and imagery of the figurines are invaluable for reconstructing ancient

cult and ritual behavior, especially when the cult is unattested in the textual and epigraphic record.

Votive figurines were the direct result of a cultic gesture whose primary motivation was communication with the divine. Ancient worshippers invested their gifts to the gods with meaning, though defining the precise significance is challenging. Votives and their dedicants, however, were part of a social structure with culturally determined systems of belief and ways of expressing this belief. Despite the variety of personal motivations for offering, votives followed patterns of standardized types with a repetition of meaningful symbols expressing the desires, hopes, and concerns of the worshippers in a dramatic and visual way. Local and comparative investigation of these symbols brings us closer to reconstructing this ancient Cypriot cult.

THE MALLOURA FIGURINES IN CONTEXT

Worshippers offered terracotta figurines throughout the life of the Malloura sanctuary. The rural sanctuary was an open-air *temenos* (sacred precinct) defined by *periboloi* (enclosure walls) that encircled a series of small buildings and an altar. In Cypriot sanctuaries, votive statues were often



FIG. 10.1 Votive relief with worship and banqueting scene, allegedly from Golgoi, fourth century BC. H: 31.8 cm (photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY).

displayed around the altar or along the walls (Senff 1993; see also Alroth 1988), and it is likely that many of the Malloura figurines were originally deposited in a similar fashion. Unfortunately, most figurines were removed from their original display location.

More than 600 figurines and figurine fragments have been excavated to date. Like many votives, most of the figurines from Malloura were discovered in secondary depositional contexts, which provide little stratigraphic evidence for dating since most of these deposits include a broad range of chronological material. During the late-fourth-century BC reorganization of the sanctuary, most of the earlier votives, including the figurines, were buried as fill for the new floor or built into new walls. Many of the figurines were also found in contaminated contexts, especially in the abundance of 20th-century looters' pits scattered throughout the sanctuary. The lack of closed deposits necessitates dating the figurines broadly based on style.

While there are no inscriptions that identify the deity or deities worshipped at Malloura, the abundance of votive offerings provides insight into the nature of the cult and deity. An analysis of individual votive types as well as a comparative approach to the material remains of the Malloura cult suggest that there was a meaningful pattern of religious iconography. An investigation of the types, quantities, and relation of the figurines to other religious objects from the sanctuary facilitates reconstructing past systems of activities (Hodder 1986: 3, 6; Glassie 1999: 47) and understanding the religious significance of the figurines, their dedicators, and the practice of Cypriot religion in this rural center. As Joyce Marcus (Hamilton et al. 1996: 286) asserts in her study of figurines and women's ritual in ancient Oaxaca, Mexico, we can learn a great deal about ancient rituals by studying the pattern of artifacts in the places where they were performed. Ritual is defined as a religious action repeatedly performed in prescribed ways. Objects

involved in ritual, therefore, display patterns of use and discard that coincide with the rites performed (Rappaport 1979: 176). The study of such objects provides evidence for the nature of ritual.

The Malloura figurine types correspond to assemblages from Cypriot sanctuaries dedicated to male deities throughout the island. Male deities received figurines depicting male worshippers, priests, warriors, and horsemen, while goddesses received figurines of elaborately garbed women, nude females, and pregnant and kourotrophic figures (Ulbrich 2008: 65–102). The sanctuaries of the Mesaoria follow this islandwide pattern; the male votives from the Malloura shrine contrast with the female votives from the nearby goddess sanctuaries at Akhna, Arsos, and Idalion (Ulbrich 2008: 305–6, 313–14, 447–48). Despite regional stylistic and manufacturing preferences, the cultic iconography suggests there was an islandwide visual religious vocabulary.

The Malloura sanctuary functioned as an inland rural shrine, closest to the urban centers of Golgoi and Idalion. Several studies have examined the political implications of artistic styles and workshops on Cyprus, linking stylistic schools with the political boundaries and cultural identities of the royal kingdoms (for figurines, see Monloup 1984; Yon and Caubet 1988; Caubet and Yon 1989; Caubet 1991; 1992; Winter 1991; 1996; Fourrier 1999; 2004; 2007; Nys and Recke 2004). Sabine Fourrier's (2007) study of Archaic figurine production identifies nine distinct coroplastic workshops, whose distribution, she argues, marks the boundaries of the kingdoms. The coroplastic style of Idalion dominates the central region of Cyprus, including the Malloura valley (Fourrier 2007: 39–51, 113, fig. 9), and it is possible that the Malloura sanctuary



FIG. 10.2 Bearded face and neck from life-size terracotta statue from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 3600: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

was among the religious centers in the territory of the kingdom of Idalion in the Cypro-Archaic and early part of the Cypro-Classical periods (see Fourrier, Ch. 9, and Cova, Ch. 13). The iconography and style of the Malloura figurines suggest that this extra-urban sanctuary, far from being isolated, operated within the general religious traditions of the island, which are found in urban and rural centers, coastal and inland sites.

The coroplastic dedications at Malloura include handmade, wheel-made, and mold-made figures and figurines. Recent excavations have unearthed several fragments of terracotta statues and statuettes, including two slightly under-life-size early Cypro-Archaic heads (fig. 10.2). The Malloura sanctuary has additionally yielded a rich collection of anthropomorphic and grotesque votive masks, which will be the subject of a forthcoming study. This chapter, however, focuses on the small-scale handmade terracotta figurines.



FIG. 10.3 Handmade terracotta chariot model with charioteer and two accompanying warriors (joined) from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 1218 + 1459 + 2007: Athienou Municipal Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

CHARIOT GROUPS

Terracotta chariot groups are among the most popular and elaborate of the votive figurines found in Cypriot sanctuaries. Chariot groups have been found at Marion (Serwint 1991), Ayia Irini (Gjerstad et al. 1935: 683, 706–14, 736–48), Kourion (Winter 1996: 100–106, 117–20; Young and Young 1955: 54–169), Meniko (Karageorghis 1977: 26–27, pls. 8, 25), Tamassos (Bossert 1951: no. 137; Masson 1964: 235, fig. 20), and Ayios Therapon-*Silithkia* in the Limassol District (Karageorghis 1995: 111). Although war chariots seem to be used on the island in the Late Bronze Age until the end of the fifth century, terracotta depictions of chariot groups begin in the Cypro-Archaic period and continue through the Hellenistic period. Most date to the seventh and sixth centuries (Littauer and Crouwel 1977: 72–73; Crouwel 1987: 101; Karageorghis 1995: 100–120; see also Herodotos 5.111–13). Chariots also had a funerary symbolism suggested by the presence of model as well as actual chariots in burials. Based on artistic representations and real chariots excavated from the royal necropolis at Salamis, Crouwel (1987:

115) concludes that Cypriot chariots were similar in form and function to those from Assyria, the Levant, and Urartu.

At the Malloura sanctuary, chariot groups are the most common and ambitious of the terracotta dedications, with at least 100 fragments of chariot groups retrieved to date. The groups are small and handmade; no examples of larger chariot groups or wheel-made models, such as those found at the Apollo Hylates sanctuary at Kourion (Young and Young 1955: 54–56, pl. 18, no. 1047), have been found. The Malloura chariot groups, none of which is completely preserved, consist of a handmade base, either a roughly modeled platform or pedestal, the chariot box with two or three occupants (a charioteer, a warrior, and sometimes a third attendant), and two or four draft horses attached by poles. The chariot boxes consist of a single compartment, open at the back, with a charioteer and one or two accompanying warriors (fig. 10.3). One preserved chariot box (fig. 10.4) is more elaborate: a central partition, a distinctly Cypriot element, divides the box into two sections, and is also found on the chariot models from Ayia Irini and on actual chariots unearthed from the Salamis burials

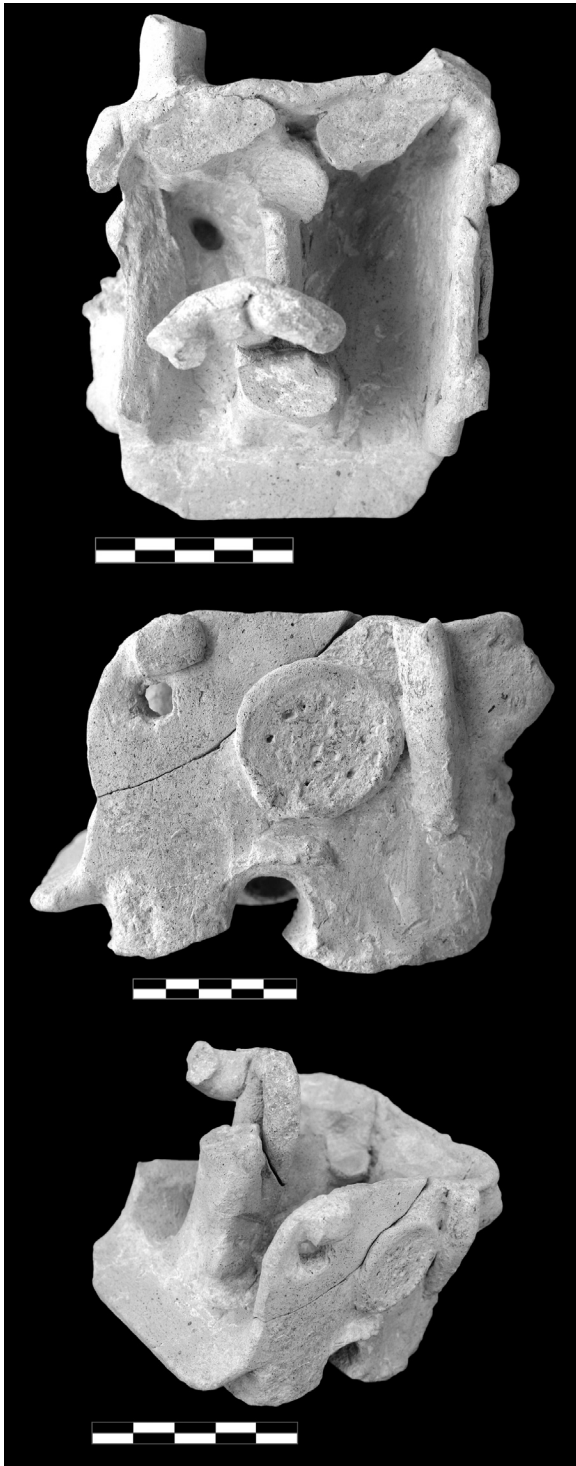


FIG. 10.4 Handmade terracotta chariot box divided into two sections, with remains of three riders as well as a vertical loop inside from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 589 + 1193; Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

(Karageorghis 1973: 73, pls. 28, 29; Crouwel 1987: 102, 104, 115). The central partition abuts a vertical loop in the center rear of the floor, which would have served as a brace for the front breastwork and additionally would have aided in mounting the chariot, served as support for the occupants while driving, and could have supported a shield (Littauer and Crouwel 1977: 69; Crouwel 1987: 102, 104–5). The remains of two passengers, perhaps both drivers, stand in the front of the box on either side of the central partition, while a lower torso of a third passenger remains next to the rear loop (for a preserved example with two drivers from Meniko, see Karageorghis 1977: 26–27, no. 12, pl. 8). The exterior of the chariot was modeled in detail as well, with a preserved hole for the axle and wheels.

The Malloura chariots contain one to three passengers; the presence of three or sometimes even four occupants is not uncommon in artistic depictions of chariots on Cyprus (Crouwel 1987: 104). The Malloura occupants are often bearded and wear peaked caps that fold over or conical helmets, some with ear caps. The chariots from Ayia Irini often contain three occupants, including a driver and archer or spear bearer in the front (the driver usually on the right), with a shield bearer standing at the rear of the chariot (Crouwel 1987: 112, pls. 37–38). Fragmentary charioteers can be identified as drivers by their arm position, stretched forward with fists clenched to hold the reins (figs. 10.5–6). The bodies of the front occupants are more summarily modeled as cylinders attached directly to the floor or wall of the chariot box. The armed crews of the Malloura chariots indicate that these are war chariots, in keeping with other chariot depictions on Cyprus, and reference the actual use of chariots in warfare in the Cypro-Archaic period (Crouwel 1987: 112–13; Herodotos 5.113). The horses are attached to the chariot by one or two poles joined to yokes (figs. 10.7–8). They wear harnesses, bands, blinkers, and breastplates or dangling tassels (Crouwel 1987: 112–13).

INDIVIDUAL WARRIORS

There are just over twenty excavated fragments of handmade warrior figurines from Malloura



FIG. 10.5 Handmade terracotta charioteer from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 3535: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



FIG. 10.6 Handmade terracotta charioteer from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 653: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



FIG. 10.7 Terracotta chariot horse with remnants of yoke from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 1690: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



FIG. 10.8 Terracotta chariot horse with remnants of blinkers and yoke from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 1858: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

(figs. 10.9–10). Handmade warrior figurines were dedicated at other sanctuaries of male deities, including Ayia Irini (Gjerstad et al. 1935: nos. 699, 705, 709, 717, 745, pl. 231:3, 7, 232:7; Karageorghis 1995: 31, nos. 32, 35; 33, no. 42; 34, nos. 1–3; 36, no. 10) and Meniko-Litharkes (Karageorghis 1977: 26, 37, pl. V6, no. 9; 1995: 32, no. 40). They were also found in tombs at Kourion-Kaloriziki (Young and Young 1955: 27, pl. 61, nos. 404–5, 749–50; Karageorghis 1995: 29–30, nos. 25–29) and Amathous (Karageorghis 1995: 35, no. 5).

At Malloura, the warriors are armed with shields, helmets, and weapons. No complete standing warrior has been found, but the upper bodies and heads of several male figurines are preserved. Like the chariot passengers, the Malloura warriors wear

tall, folded caps or conical helmets. Two torsos (see figs. 10.9–10) preserve warriors with conical helmets wearing shields strapped to their backs. Details of the figurines, including facial features, dress, and shields, are painted in red and black. Because these warriors are fragmentary, it is likely that some of the warriors rode in chariots.



FIG. 10.9 Handmade terracotta warrior with shield from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 2100: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

→ FIG. 10.10 Handmade terracotta warrior with shield from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Achaic. AAP-AM 2675: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



HORSE-AND-RIDER FIGURINES

Horse-and-rider figurines are especially popular in Iron Age Greece (particularly in the Argolid and Boeotia), the Near East, and on Cyprus and appear roughly contemporaneously in all three areas (for transmission of type, see Monloup 1984: 41ff.; Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988). The tradition of horse-and-rider figurines on Cyprus dates back to the Cypro-Geometric I period (Monloup 1984: 37–46; Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 77; Karageorghis 1993a: 65–67, 88–90), but the numbers drastically increase in the eighth and seventh centuries (Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 77; Karageorghis 1995: 61–93).

Horse-and-rider figurines have been found at Marion (Serwint 1991), Ayia Irini (Törnkvist 1970: nos. 921–22), Idalion, and Salamis, and the nearby Cellarka necropolis (Karageorghis 1970: 230; Monloup 1984: nos. 149–243), but the type was especially abundant at the Apollo Hylates sanctuary at Kourion (Young and Young 1955: 191–233; Monloup 1984: 37–46; Winter 1996). Horse-and-

rider groups were also popular as grave goods, and are found in tombs at Amathous and Salamis (Karageorghis 1987: 24–25, 33–34).

There are approximately a dozen horse-and-rider groups from Malloura, and most are not well-preserved. Although many horse-and-rider figurines from Cyprus are armed, the Malloura riders are not overtly militaristic and none are shown in “action” poses, brandishing spears or weapons, as do some of the Kourion riders (Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 81). One fragment (fig. 10.11) preserves most of the horse with a bridle and harness with tassels hanging at the neck, as well as the saddlecloth and the legs of the rider. Another, smaller example (fig. 10.12) from Malloura depicts a handmade horse with rider pressed onto its back, with no saddlecloth or legs modeled but perhaps originally painted. The horse is short and simple, with a short snout, pointed ears, and forelock of hair; the rider’s torso is attached directly to the horse’s back, with no legs modeled and hands smoothed to the horse’s neck. The rider has a prominent nose, long hair, and pronounced ears.

With the advent and greater skill of equitation in the Archaic period, horses were increasingly used in cavalry units in contemporary warfare. In Assyria, from the ninth century onward, mounted warriors rode alongside chariots, which served primarily as mobile platforms for archers (Littauer and Crouwel 1977: 130–39; Crouwel 1987: 112; Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 83). Cavalry was superior to chariots because it was cheaper, more mobile in various terrains, and could be used both to protect infantry on the march and as scouts and messengers (Crouwel and Tatton-Brown 1988: 83). The dedication of armed horse riders at other sanctuaries and tombs suggests a link to a contemporary military elite. The simple and seemingly unarmed Malloura riders, however, perhaps suggest ceremonial use.

FEMALE FIGURINES

Female iconography is rare at Malloura. While male imagery dominates both the limestone and terracotta assemblages, a few female figurines have been excavated, including a Cypro-Archaic handmade female head and a Cypro-Classical mold-made female head originally attached to a vase. The only well-preserved figurine from Malloura is a so-called Astarte figurine (fig. 10.13). This female figure stands on a small, rounded base and holds both hands cupped beneath her breasts. The figurine was pressed into a mold, resulting in a flat back with detailed front. The woman depicted wears a Greek-inspired garment and dons a simple conical-shaped headdress and veil. She is bejeweled with a pendant necklace and a longer beaded necklace with a pendant hanging between her breasts. Bracelets adorn both arms. There is another figurine torso from Malloura of a similar bejeweled female that is likely from the same mold as figure 10.13. Mold-made female figurines in this pose are common at goddess sanctuaries and tombs throughout the island, including Kition, Idalion, Tamassos, Arsos, Akhna, and Lapithos, but are most numerous at Amathous (Karageorghis 1999: Type I, 1–67, pls. 1–18; Ulbrich 2008: 70–77, pls. 11–12). They were likely inspired by Near Eastern examples, perhaps imported to

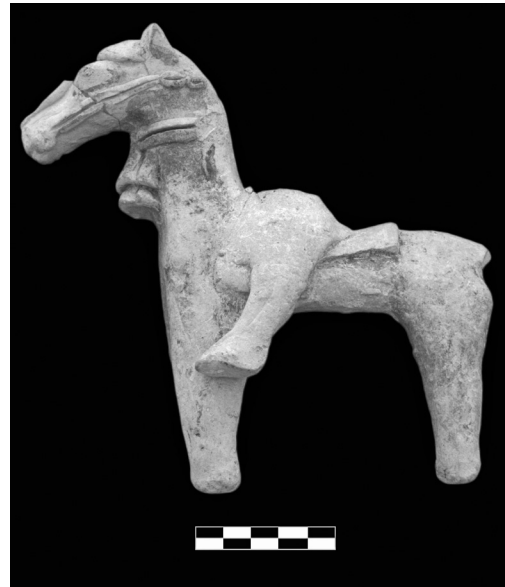


FIG. 10.11 Handmade terracotta horse and rider from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 1099: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



FIG. 10.12 Handmade terracotta horse and rider from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 1530: Larnaka District Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).



FIG. 10.13 Mold-made terracotta “Astarte” figurine from Athienou-Malloura, late Cypro-Archaic–early Cypro-Classical. AAP-AM 1366 + 1595: Athienou Municipal Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

the island by the Phoenicians (Karageorghis 1999: 1–2). The type first appears in the early seventh century and continues into the Cypro-Classical period.

The two mold-made female figurines from Malloura are closest in style and dress to female figurines from a sanctuary in the region of Chytroi and from tombs in Nicosia and Amathous (Karageorghis 1987: 36, pl. 38; 1999: 67, 189–90, nos. 184, 128–30; Ikosi 1993). These figurines are dated to the end of the Cypro-Archaic/beginning of the Cypro-Classical period. The overall rarity of female votive or divine iconography at Malloura suggests there was no official or popular goddess cult at the sanctuary (for Artemis at Athienou-Malloura, see Counts and Toumazou 2003). The few female dedications represent rare offerings.

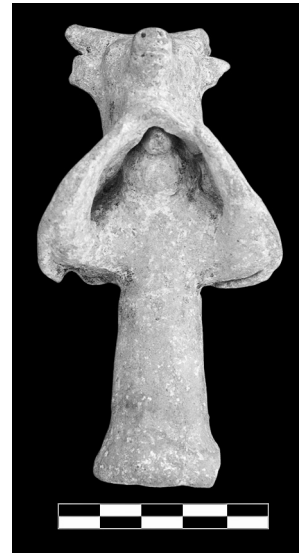


FIG. 10.14 Handmade terracotta figurine depicting a man wearing a bull mask and cape from Athienou-Malloura, Cypro-Archaic. AAP-AM 1170: Athienou Municipal Museum, Cyprus (© AAP).

MASKED MEN

Rituals involving a variety of masks were a component of the Malloura cult. In addition to several votive mask fragments, two terracotta figurines depicting masked men have been found at the sanctuary. An especially well-preserved figurine of a man wearing a bull mask, headdress, and cape is one of the best examples of this type from Cyprus (fig. 10.14). Another fragmentary anthropomorphic torso with the head of a ram, perhaps a masked man, was unearthed in 2007.

The tradition of zoomorphic masks on Cyprus, especially bull masks, is well-known and began at least as early as Late Cypriot III, when altered bucrania were displayed at the 12th- and 11th-century sanctuaries at Enkomi and the Late Cypriot III sanctuary at Kition (Karageorghis 1971: 262–63; Caubet and Courtois 1975; Courtois 1982; Karageorghis and Demas 1985: 260; Nobis 1985; Karageorghis 1988; 1993b: 118–22; 1995: 55–57; Belgiorino 1993; Rice 1998: Ch. 15; see also Karageorghis 2006: 160, for

a possible earlier example). Not all scholars accept that these bucrania were used as masks (see Nys 1995: 26–27; contra Karageorghis 1996). It is possible that the backs of the bucrania were smoothed to facilitate hanging of the masks on walls, benches, or poles (see Burkert 1983: 2). Nys notes the fire marks and pieces of charcoal associated with the Enkomi skulls, suggesting that they were offered as burnt sacrifice.

The bucrania masking tradition continued or revived in the Iron Age as evidenced by similar worked bull skulls from Toumba tou Skourou (Vermeule 1974: 149–50, fig. 29; Vermeule and Wolsky 1990: 390–91, ill. 9) and from the Iron Age sanctuary of Astarte at Kition (Karageorghis 1993a: 70; Smith 2009: 120–25). These horned bovine skulls were carefully worked, suggesting an important ritual use, likely worn as masks, and/or displayed on sacred architecture (Karageorghis 1971: 161; 1996; Nys 1995; see also O'Bryhim 1999).

Images of animal-masked men and bull masks are not unique to Cyprus. Iron Age bull-skull masks similar to Cypriot examples have been found at Megiddo (May and Engberg 1935: 23, pl. 19), and a seventh-century terracotta figurine of a man wearing a bull mask was found at Sidon (Contenau 1921: 314, fig. 102; for other examples, see Smith 1990: 134–35 n. 47; O'Bryhim 1999: 11). However, Cyprus has produced an abundance of masked figurines. Terracotta figurines clearly depicting men wearing anthropomorphic and zoomorphic masks have been found at the sanctuaries at Ayia Irini, Golgoi, Idalion, Kourion, and Peyia-Maa, as well as in tombs at Salamis, Ormidhia, and Amathous dating from the Cypro-Archaic through Cypro-Classical periods (Sjöqvist 1933; Young and Young 1955: 40–41, nos. 814–16, 823, 825–29, pl. 11; Karageorghis 1971; 1987: 16, pl. 2; 1995: 54–57, 136; 1990; Hermay 1979; 2000). A Hellenistic statue of a man holding a bull protome that likely references bull masks, allegedly from the temple at Golgoi, suggests a continuation of this practice into the Hellenistic period (Karageorghis 2000: 249, no. 403). O'Bryhim (1999) controversially proposes that the memory of this masking practice survived even until the Roman period, as evidenced in Ovid's story of the Cerastae from Cyprus. In addition to the masked

bull figurine, the number of incised cattle bones found at the sanctuary suggests a cultic role for this animal at Malloura (see Reese, Ch. 18).

Ethnographic studies demonstrate that masking rites strengthen the relationship between mortals and the divine in a tangible way (Napier 1986; Pernet 1992; Pollock 1995). The physical act of donning a symbol of the deity temporarily blurs the lines between the divine and mortal worlds in a literal and dramatic way. The ritual dramas enacted with masks, whether anthropomorphic, grotesque, or animal, enhanced the sacred aura and heightened religious experience for the participants.

ANIMAL FIGURINES

Animals are among the most popular terracotta dedications at Mediterranean sanctuaries, and Malloura is no exception. Terracotta rams, bulls, birds, and possibly a lion were dedicated at Malloura. The overwhelming majority of zoomorphic figurines, however, represents horses, with more than 100 horse figurines and fragments from the sanctuary. The preponderance of horses is consistent with the sudden increase in equine and decrease in bovine figurines beginning at the end of the eighth century at Greek and Cypriot sanctuaries (Zimmerman 1989). Almost all Malloura horse figurines are handmade with cylindrical bodies, tapered legs, and long necks; the snouts are either tapered or flare out toward the muzzle, and many have painted facial details in red and black.

Given the high number of chariot group fragments, it is likely that many of the horse figurines originally belonged to chariot groups, and some possibly had riders. Many of the horses have either painted or plastically added reins or harnesses, suggesting that they belong to either chariot or rider groups. Regardless, the prevalence of the horse as a single animal, in chariot groups, and with riders among the coroplastic dedications at Malloura is significant. Despite the agricultural richness of the Mesaoria, agricultural animals are not prominent among the zoomorphic figurines from the Malloura sanctuary.

FIGURINES AND THE MALLOURA CULT

The plethora of votives, especially the figural works in limestone and terracotta, visually defined the Malloura cult. The votives vividly displayed sacred iconography through repetitious symbols. Religious imagery along with monumental architecture and the altar were hallmarks of the sacred space of Malloura. The terracotta and limestone votives were the most abundant and visible offerings there, yet there are interesting differences between the two groups. While the limestone votives depict worshippers and deities (see Counts, Ch. 11, and Cofer, Ch. 12), the terracottas primarily represent worshippers, with some possible exceptions. While the limestone dedications span the Cypro-Archaic through Hellenistic phases of the sanctuary, the terracotta figurines were a distinct part of the Malloura cult only in the Cypro-Archaic period, a pattern typical of Cypriot cults. The dedication of terracotta figurines is drastically reduced at Malloura and other cults in the Cypro-Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The Malloura figurines have a social significance that belies their simple manufacture. The emphasis on the horse and its activities (horse riding, war, and chariots) suggests that the Malloura Valley occupants desired to stress elite military status over agricultural concerns. Regardless of the actual status or occupation of the dedicators, their visible display at a popular sanctuary advertised an elite

message. The terracotta warriors and their animal par excellence thus paralleled the message sent by more monumental votives.

Sanctuaries were places where political ideologies and conflicts often played out. In Greece and on Cyprus, the critical period of state development (eighth and seventh centuries) also witnessed a proliferation of sanctuaries (de Polignac 1984; Rupp 1987; Snodgrass 1988; Fourrier 2007; Iacovou 2008, with earlier bibliography). Rural sanctuaries were especially important in demarcating zones of control and political power. Thus, far from functioning as isolated shrines visited only by farmers and shepherds, extra-urban sanctuaries like the one at Malloura could be key players in establishing socio-political power structures. Figurines, despite their humble medium and low intrinsic worth, could be active agents in constructing and maintaining social systems and values.

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