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**Maria Clara Conti, *Le terrecotte architettoniche di Selinunte: Tetti del VI e V secolo a.C. Museo civico di Castelvetro e parco archeologico di Selinunte. Biblioteca di Sicilia antiqua, 5.* Pisa; Roma: Fabrizio Serra editore, 2012. Pp. 341. ISBN 9788862274326. €225.00 (pb).**

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This important volume consists of the publication of 325 fragments of architectural terracottas from Selinunte, with excellent descriptions, technical analyses, b/w photos and scale drawings. Dated between the Archaic period and the end of the fifth century BCE, these fragments, nearly all unpublished, have been identified by the author in the deposits of the Archaeological Park of Selinunte and the Civic Museum of Castelvetro, and come, for the most part, from excavations carried out between the 1950s and the 1980s on the Akropolis, the Manuzza and the Western Hill. Not published here are the finds from the Eastern Hill, in particular the roof of Temple E1, which is included in the general discussion.

Overall this body of material is representative of the local tradition of architectural terracottas. Although the evidence is limited to geison revetments, simas, ridge tiles, akroteria, and antefixes, and it does not include pan tiles and cover tiles, discarded in older excavations, it allows for a significant, general reassessment on the part of the author, who has taken into account the well-known published fragments in the Archaeological Museum of Palermo, excavated between the 19th to early 20th century. These, along with hundreds of unpublished fragments in the storerooms of that museum, are now the object of a new investigation by the reviewers, as part of the IFA-NYU mission on the Akropolis of Selinunte.

Chapter One (13–26) deals first with the history of scholarship on this material within the context of the increasingly specialized field of Greek architectural terracottas. Next comes a discussion of the provenance of the fragments. Unfortunately, much of the information consists of loose, topographical information (such as “NE of Temple C”), which sometimes includes levels/layers, but not stratigraphic units. In general, the author observes that, on the Akropolis, the terracottas were found in the upper levels,

associated with 4th–3rd century BCE materials. We would suggest that we are dealing with deposits comparable to the large-scale leveling (ca. 300 BCE) identified by the IFA-NYU mission in the southern sector of the main urban sanctuary, which served as the base for the Hellenistic buildings. This deposit is marked by the systematic use of architectural terracottas at the top layers, now often corresponding to the present ground level, as a result of the 19th–early 20th c. excavations. Within this state of affairs, the provenance of the architectural terracottas from the Akropolis and Manuzza would have more to do with the intensity of rebuilding in the various areas of Selinus during the revived mixed Greek and Punic occupation beginning in the last quarter of the 4th c., than—as assumed by Conti and earlier literature—with the location of the buildings to which these roofs once belonged. Unfortunately, provenance from this upper, Early Hellenistic level cannot be used as an indicator of the original location of corresponding buildings. Finally, the author outlines the criteria followed in the division of the material, and the identification of the various roofs: including fabric (based on autopsy, in the absence of archaeometric analysis), structural considerations, size, form, decoration, and provenance.

Chapter 2 (27–262) discusses the Archaic roofs, organized by provenance/location (respectively, those from the Akropolis and Manuzza, from the Western Hill, and in Castelvetro), and arranged by type, namely Geloan (we would refrain from the use of the term “Sikelote,” used by the author), Corinthian, and Selinuntine.

As for the Akropolis and Manuzza, the earliest roof considered (hardly the earliest produced at the site, for the reviewers) is Roof 1 (Scichilone A), an early representative of the Geloan type, for which the author has identified two fragments belonging to a later repair (more unpublished repair pieces exist in Palermo). Based on the discovery (IFA-NYU, 2011) of a fragment of the geison revetment right against the main front of Temple R, in the 409 burning layer of this building, this roof may now be associated with that construction, archaeologically datable to ca. 580, which is also the date assigned by the author to this roof. Roof 3 (ca. 575) consists of the well-known “Large Terracottas,” to which belong what are usually considered the largest geison revetments and simas at the site. (An even larger, unpublished geison revetment may be documented in Palermo.). The numerous, generally small fragments published here document, along with repairs, slight variations in the dimensions and profile of individual elements, which can be explained by the division of the production of this large roof among several workshops. Also in consideration of the range of dispersion of the fragments, the author leaves open the problem of the location of this building. A handful of fragments from the geison revetment (one more unpublished in Palermo) and one sima fragment belong to Roof 6 (ca. 570–560). The author suggests an original location of the corresponding temple on Manuzza, based on the provenance of three fragments from this area. One, however, comes from N of Temple C.

Of Roof 8 (Scichilone B) (ca. 560–550), several new fragments are published here, including pieces of the geison revetment (previously unknown), the sima (where variations in the rendering of the meander are attributed to the execution by different workshops), and, possibly, the ridge tile. This roof is attributed to the same workshop as that of Temple M. To Roof 13 (ca. 540–510) belong fragments of the geison

revetment (notable for the incised guidelines for the application of the polychrome decoration) and, possibly, of the ridge tile. Better known (both geison revetment and simas) is Roof 14 (Scichilone C) (ca. 525), with its bead-and-reel in relief decorating the lower part of the horizontal sima.

In contrast to these better documented examples, only one element attests to the existence of “roofs” (here we regard the term to be a misnomer) 2 (geison revetment, similar to Roof 1), 4 (geison revetment, whose proposed restoration might be seen as problematic when compared with Dörpfeld’s reproduction of the—now apparently lost—fragment in Palermo), 5 (geison revetment: more unpublished fragments in Palermo), 7 (ridge tile), 9 (sima), 10 (geison revetment), 11 (geison revetment), 12 (geison revetment), 15 (geison revetment: more unpublished fragments in Palermo).

The evidence for the Corinthian type (“roofs” 16–17) is slim: it consists of the fragment of an antefix with a palmette above a pendant lotus (ca. 540–530), comparable to the second type of antefix of the Temple of Apollo at Corinth, but definitely with a local inflection; and in the fragment of a ridge palmette (ca. 530).

The presentation of Selinuntine roofs—first documented with Temple E1 (dated here ca. 550–540)—begins with Temple C. The numerous fragments published here for the first time, although they do allow for interesting new technical observations, do not add substantial new information. (The reconstructions of the various elements by Gàbrici are in need of revision, based on the unpublished fragments in Palermo.) The fragments confirm the use of different fabrics (five according to the author, based on autopsy) and colors, and variations in the rendering of the anthemion frieze. Differences noted by previous scholars are best explained by a variety of factors, including the execution of this large roof by different workshops, the delay in the construction of the temple, and later repairs. By contrast, the author prefers to explain these variations by suggesting an execution of this roof ca. 530, followed by a substantial repair of the main facade ca. 510. This is perhaps a weak proposition, considering that the differences concern the anthemion frieze on the flanks in particular. Last but not least, we would not agree on the attribution of the lion head waterspout num. 135 to this roof, on account of the different rendering of the mane and the slightly different fabric from the two fragments safely attributed to Temple C.

The only evidence for “roof” 19 (ca. 525–500) is the fragment of a geison revetment, similar to that of Temple C. An important new proposition concerns the terracottas assigned by Gàbrici to Temple Y: the author not only denies this association based on the later dating of the terracottas (we agree with her), but also divides them among two different roofs (we prefer to suspend our judgment on this matter), respectively roofs 20 (remarkable figures painted on the back of the anthemion) (ca. 530) and 22 (ca. 525), produced by the same workshop (also responsible for “roofs” 21 and 23). One fragment of anthemion is all that is left of “roof” 24 (there are possibly more unpublished fragments of this element in Palermo). The presentation of the roofs from the Western Hill—all of Geloan type—is limited to the fragments found in and around Temple M. “Roof” 25 is documented by only one sima fragment, which speaks to its antiquity. The lion’s share of fragments belong to the roof of Temple M (Roof 26) (dated by the author to ca. 550), with the publication of numerous fragments excavated

in the 1950s, which allow for a complete reconstruction, including repairs. Only two fragments of the geison revetment attest to “roof” 27. At the end of this chapter are presented the fragments in Castelvetro (from roofs 8, 18, and Temple E1).

We may add that in Palermo we have found evidence for nine more types of geison revetments and at least six types of simas.

Chapter 3 (263–307) discusses the roofs dated between the late sixth century and 409. Beginning in the late 6th century, the practice of casing the geison of monumental temples is abandoned, and stone becomes the material for simas. The use of terracotta becomes limited to pan tiles, cover tiles, ridge tiles, akroteria, and (in the absence of a sima) antefixes. The relevant fragments, almost all from the Akropolis, include a type of apex antefix with the Gorgoneion (ca. 475–450), lateral antefixes with Gorgoneia (three types, of which the last, archaizing, represents a new type; we have to add one more, unpublished type in Palermo), the Silen-head (two types: for the style of the first, another new entry, we may add, as the main comparison, the metopes of Temple F) and youthful heads, including two remarkable types (ca. 425–409), which the author suggestively identifies with rivers.

Chapter 4 (309–329) summarizes the observations regarding the various roofs, and discusses the local tradition of architectural terracottas within the development of monumental architecture. The adoption of the Geloan type (ca. 580) shows a dependence on external models, in the absence of a local tradition; this type is subsequently adopted for large and smaller temples and survives down to the last quarter of the sixth century. The use of the Corinthian type roof (ca. 550–525), better attested at Selinunte than at other centers in Sicily, is easily explained by the particularly strong ties between these two centers. Finally there is the creation of the Selinuntine type roof (ca. 550–540: the author prefers to leave the issue of the primacy of either Metapontum or Selinus in this creation unresolved), characterized by the anthemion frieze, which was in use down to the end of the sixth century. The discussion of fifth century roofs is followed by a technical discussion of the local production of architectural terracottas, which concludes this volume.

The polychrome terracottas decorating sacred buildings are one of the distinguishing features of monumental architecture at Selinus throughout the Archaic period, their production being characterized by a particular level of creativity and exuberance. For this reason, some might regret the lack in this volume of color pictures of these important documents of ancient polychromy. Nevertheless, we are particularly grateful to Maria Clara Conti for this excellent study, which represents an important contribution to our knowledge of one of the main forms of artistic expression of this Greek center in Western Sicily in offering a new assessment of a large body of material and detailed technical observations.

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