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CULT MATERIAL
FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS TO INTERPRETATION OF EARLY GREEK RELIGION

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Interpreting Votive Offerings from Early Archaic Deposits at the Artemision of Ephesos

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Introduction

Our picture of Geometric and early Archaic sanctuaries is characterized by the large number of votive offerings: the range of humble and precious artefacts given to the gods by the worshippers.[1] In that period, the architectural appearance of these sanctuaries was usually still quite simple or sometimes even not evident, and relevant written sources are scant. The actual, discovered votive offerings, therefore, remain one of our most important – albeit not always easily accessible – sources of information on the cult traditions at a sanctuary. The problem of defining and interpreting votive offerings has already been discussed in great detail, particularly in recent years.[2] In this article I present some additional, more general observations on this question based on finds from the early Archaic Artemision at Ephesos, followed by a discussion of this sanctuary as a special case which explores whether or not these finds allow us to draw conclusions about the character of the cult and the honoured deity.[3]

All of the small finds from the Artemision mentioned in this paper come from deposits beneath the level of the Archaic marble dipteros, therefore providing a *terminus ante quem* for their deposition to around 575–570 BC.[4] This dipteros covered several small structures from the early Archaic period that, until then, had been in use simultaneously or successively.[5] The nature of these structures, and especially the accompanying finds,

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[1] The manuscript was submitted in 2009; publications since then are not incorporated. I wish to thank Walter Gauß and Svenja Soldovieri for their help and comments. This paper follows the terminology proposed by Van Straten 1981, 66, 70 using the term 'votive offering' for durable objects offered to the gods, whereas the term 'sacrifice' refers to transient objects intended for consumption; see also R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 270 using the term 'dedication' in the same sense as Van Straten uses the term 'votive offering'; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 270–271 for the ancient terminology used in the context of dedicating gifts. A further differentiation between 'votive/votive offering' ('Votiv/Votivgabe') – an object offered in connection with taking a vow or redeeming a vow – and 'dedication' ('Weihegeschenk') – a pure deposition of a gift for the gods without being connected with a vow – is discussed especially by German-speaking scholars: e.g. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2002, 202–203; *NPauly* 12.2 (2002) *s.v.* Votivkult (Haase) 345. This seems not very useful, however, as it usually cannot be understood any more whether or not a worshipper connected his gift with a vow, and the dividing line between thanking generally for the god's favour and thanking for the fulfilment of a more orless general or specific request by redeeming a vow might be fluid; see also Frevel 2007, 201: 'Votive müssen nicht – das sei ausdrücklich betont – mit Gelübden verbunden werden, sind aber immer mit Heiligtümern oder besonderen (heiligen) Orten verbunden'.

[2] One of the earliest and still useful studies is by Rouse 1902; for more recent studies, see among others Van Straten 1981; Simon 1986; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2002, 201–229; von Hesberg 2007; R. Parker and J. Boardman et al. in *ThesCRA* 2004, 269–318 with a detailed bibliography.

[3] I will mainly use the results of my own research on the bronzes from this site but, as far as they are available, also the research results from the other find groups: for the bronzes see Klebinder-Gauß 2007; for other find groups, see e.g. Muss 2001; Muss 2008; Seipel 2008; Pülz 2009 with further references.

[4] For this date of the beginning of the construction, see most recently Ohnesorg 2007, 127–129.

[5] Bammer and Muss 1996, 39–41, 43–44; Bammer 2008, 75–86 figs. 5–6; for the sequence of these structures, see also Weißl 2002.

prove their function as cult-places. There are two particularly important areas, each of which yielded numerous small finds of different shapes and materials. The first is the surroundings of a rectangular base in the interior of a small peripteros erected in the second quarter of the seventh century BC; the base was probably for a cult image.[6] The second interesting find spot is a square base from the late seventh or early sixth century BC flanked by a thick, ashy layer containing many small finds and animal bones;[7] this is most likely a 'black layer' as discussed by S. Bocher in this volume. Artemis is mentioned as patron of the sanctuary from the time of the erection of the Archaic marble dipteros. At present it is unclear whether or not this goddess had already played a dominant role in the earlier sanctuary or if, as suggested by the excavator, she replaced one or several other deities who were worshipped simultaneously at the several small areas for cult.[8]

Classification of Artefacts Discovered at Sanctuaries

Most of the small artefacts discovered in the early Archaic Artemision can be interpreted as votive offerings because of their shape, their often precious materials and, especially, their find context at an existing sacred place.[9] For some, it is possible to ascribe use as a votive offering simply by judging their specific type which suggests no meaningful use in everyday life. This category of votive offerings, which might best be labelled 'primary votives', can include objects like a horn, a barleycorn and eye-masks made of gold,[10] large bronze cauldrons with griffin protomes[11] and a hemispherical object with a lead core covered by a decorated sheet of bronze (the exact meaning of which is unclear).[12] Figurines representing goddesses or priestesses also fall within this category.[13] The same is true for the numerous representations of birds of prey, which in the Artemision appear especially among the gold finds as figurines, heads of needles, fibulas, decorated sheets and pendants. This points to a close connection between birds of prey and the honoured deity, and one must also keep in mind later sources mentioning the buzzard as a holy

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[6] For the architecture of the peripteros and its period of use, see most recently Weißl 2002, 321–327 with further references; Kerschner 2005, 134–142; Bammer 2008, 75–80.
[7] For this base, see Bammer 1988, esp. 2, 23, figs. 1–3; Bammer 1998, 37, fig. 9.
[8] Muss 1994, 26–27, 48; Bammer and Muss 1996, 41, 76–77.
[9] R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 274: '... dedication was primarily accomplished by the simple act of deposition in a sacred place'.
[10] Seipel 2008, 156–157 nos. 97–101; the golden barleycorn is interpreted as reminder of an offering of agricultural products.
[11] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 270–271 nos. 869–876, pls. 77–82, 113–117; see *ibid*. 150–151 for the meaning of bronze cauldrons with griffin protomes as votive offerings; see also J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 302–303.
[12] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 190, 275 no. 966, pls. 97, 119; the object might be a miniature imitation of an omphalos or just a dedication of the precious metal presented in an appealing way.
[13] In the early Archaic Artemision a notable number of (with very few exceptions) female figurines made of gold, silver, bronze, ivory and clay were found; Bammer and Muss 1996, 41. Some of them have special attributes, like an ivory figurine standing on the head of a panther, an ivory figurine holding two birds of prey in her hands and another one carrying such a bird on a pole on her head (for the meaning of birds of prey, see below note 14); other ones are depicted simply with chiton and veil, without special iconographic details. The figurines are differently interpreted as goddesses or priestesses: for this question, see Muss 2007 with further references and Muss 1999, 598–601, who regards these figurines as the worshiped goddesses.

animal of Artemis as well as the sparrow hawk as a holy animal, first of the Anatolian Kubaba and later of Kybele.[14]

Usually the type of an object does not immediately indicate its function as a votive offering. At a sanctuary, objects frequently occur that could have been used just as well in everyday life and that are also found in settlements or graves. These include simple jewellery,[15] toiletry,[16] arrowheads,[17] horse-trappings[18] and flutes[19] as well as clay loom weights and spindle whorls.[20] Very simple artefacts of minor value, like humble wood carvings or naturalia, also might have been dedicated.[21] Ultimately only the context – meaning, the use and finding spot in a sanctuary – demonstrates that these objects were votive offerings. Whether these objects were primarily produced for the specific purpose of dedication or, rather, were dedicated personal belongings, is a question that usually cannot be answered.[22] One may assume that simple mass-produced objects found in great numbers at a sanctuary were most often not intended for personal use but were purchased by the donor to be dedicated.[23] The same would be true for miniatures or oversize models, as well as for models made of fragile, impractical materials.[24] In addition, some objects found at Greek sanctuaries show intense traces of use and may thus be regarded as gifts of personal belongings actually used by the owner before dedication.[25] The inventory lists of the fourth century from the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia demonstrate that also worn clothes could be offered, and one can imagine that the accompanying jewellery was likewise not new.[26]

In some cases it is difficult to decide whether an object found at a sanctuary was a votive gift or a part of the ritual equipment of the sanctuary, for example musical instruments could be played at celebrations, vessels used for libations or cultic meals, and wreaths worn at the sanctuary feasts.[27] Furthermore, these objects could also have been dedicated after use in a cultic ceremony. This question is especially well demonstrated

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[14] Bühler and Pülz 2008, 173–174 and Simon 1986, 37–38.
[15] Like simple bronze fibulas, needles, bracelets and earrings in Klebinder-Gauß 2007, pls. 1–42.
[16] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 169–170 nos. 886–888, pls. 85–86.
[17] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 171–175 nos. 890–897, pls. 86, 119.
[18] Klebinder–Gauß 2007, 175 nos. 898–899, pl. 87.
[19] Seipel 2008, 184 no. 161.
[20] Seipel 2008, 230 nos. 278–279; Brein 1978, 131–132, pl. 45, 30–32; Bammer 1984, 191, fig. 69; Hogarth 1908, 201, fig. 42.
[21] E.g. a tooth of a dog wrapped with a golden wire from the Artemision: Seipel 2008, 185 no. 163; for this issue, see especially Kyrieleis 1988 on offerings of special bones, a piece of a stalactite, a rock crystal, natural pine-cones and their imitations in clay found in the Heraion at Samos.
[22] Snodgrass 1989–1990, 291–292 differentiates between 'raw offerings' – objects of real, secular use, which might have been in use for a considerable time before their dedication – and 'converted offerings' – objects acquired and mostly also produced for the specific purpose of dedication thereby converting a part of the donor's wealth; see also R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 276.
[23] See Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 203 for the numerous uniform mass-produced fibulas, needles, bracelets and earrings found in the early Archaic Artemision of Ephesos.
[24] See e.g. miniature fibulas, bracelets and earrings from the Ephesian Artemision: Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 203, pls. 5, 68–69; 24, 329, 331; 37, 477; for the offering of simulacra, see Simon 1986, 202; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 316.
[25] See e.g. a bronze pendant with a rubbed off eye: Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 203, pl. 59, 797; for traces of use on belts, see below note 33; for the dedication of used objects, see also Philipp 1981, 19–20; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1981, 375; Strøm 1995 66–67 with n. 219.
[26] Romano 1988, 131–132.
[27] See also J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 281.

by two find groups from the Ephesian Artemision. Several bronze fragments and an imitation in clay show that round-bottomed bowls with ring handles and banded rims existed at the sanctuary.[28] An ivory figurine interpreted as either a priestess or a goddess with a hawk standing on a pole on her head and holding a jug in one hand and a bowl of the above type in the other.[29] The fact that such a bowl is depicted together with a priestess or goddess stresses its special function in the cult of this sanctuary, and the discovered bronze bowls might, therefore, have been used in cultic ceremonies or meals. Observations of this kind can also be drawn from the solid bronze belts which have been discovered in the Artemision in considerable numbers:[30] a similar belt adorns one of the Roman copies of the cult image of Artemis Ephesia.[31] If this belt is – as one can assume with some certainty – a decorative element that was passed on over several centuries,[32] one may conclude that at least some of the Archaic bronze belts found were not merely votives but also could have belonged to the adornment of the cult image. This assumption is supported by the existence of several repairs on some of these belts that might derive from their repeated attachment to and removal from the cult image.[33]

These examples demonstrate very well that a clear and unambiguous distinction between the above-mentioned categories, namely 'primary votives', objects of secular use, offerings of private belongings and, finally, objects of cultic use, is often impossible and probably not the crucial point in the study of votive offerings. In any case, these objects were belongings of the sanctuary and of the deity, respectively, and are, therefore, proof of cultic activities in their sacrificial surroundings. More interesting for our discussion is the symbolic meaning of the objects found at a sanctuary which might allow us to draw conclusions about the nature of the goddess and her cult.

Interpreting Votive Offerings

We should, therefore, focus on the possibilities and problems in interpreting votive offerings. In the Geometric and early Archaic periods, inscriptions and other written sources or depictions are hardly available to provide us with information about the cult. The oldest texts that deal with the offering of votives appear in the first half of the seventh century as inscriptions on the dedicated objects. One of the earliest known examples is a male bronze figurine from early seventh century Thebes, dedicated by Mantiklos to Apollo as a tithe.[34] In the course of the following centuries, the written documents are numerous and show increasingly concrete connections between a certain occasion,

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[28] For the bronze bowls, see Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 140–143; for the imitation in clay see Kerschner 2008, 126, fig. 81.
[29] C. Smith, 'The Ivory Statuettes' in Hogarth 1908, 156–157 nos. 1, 172–176, pls. 21.6, 22; for an interpretation of the figurine as goddess, see Muss 1994, 55–56 with n. 384.
[30] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 93–108 nos. 710–759, pls. 43–53, 108–109.
[31] Klebinder 2001, 119 fig. 7; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 106–107; Fleischer 2008, 30.
[32] See below p. 116.
[33] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 107–108 261 no. 710, 1–3; no. 711, 2–3, pls. 43–44, 46, 108; 263 no. 732, pl. 51; for traces of use on jewellery offered showing that they had been used private belongings, see also note 25 above.
[34] 'Mantiklos dedicated me to the Far-Shooter, the Silver-Bowed one, from his tithe; to you, Phoibos, give him a gracious return': R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 277 no. 30; see also Van Straten 1981, 73; Grottanelli 1989–1990, 52; Parker 1998, 110–111; Bremer 1998, 130–131; for the figurine, see Boardman 1978, fig. 10.

a certain votive type and a certain deity.[35] It seems, however, that votive traditions were not particularly differentiated in the Geometric and early Archaic periods;[36] thus, for an analysis of the preceding period, later written sources should be used very cautiously. Consequently, we depend mainly on the actual votive offerings for information of the cult traditions at the Geometric and early Archaic sanctuaries.

One can assume that the choice of a certain votive offering – its type, shape and material, in other words – was carefully considered or at least influenced by certain circumstances. Thus, a votive offering symbolizes a certain content or contains a certain message and the analysis of votives should provide us with information about the character of the cult at a sanctuary.

First of all, the interpretation of objects discovered at a sanctuary depends on the point of view of the modern observer who might employ religious, psychological, anthropological, economic or sociological approaches.[37] The economic consequence of the regular offering of small gifts, for example, is that the donor bestows a part of his personal belongings upon the deity. The sanctuary and, respectively, the community would, thereby, be in possession of a great part of the existing wealth. Yet, as the ancient sources show quite well, if an object, once transferred to the god's possession, remained there forever,[38] it was effectively out of circulation and no longer available.[39] Such a large accumulation of more or less valuable goods might, therefore, have been intended to demonstrate not only the significance and splendour of the sanctuary, but the piety, wealth and power of the community as well.[40] This was surely a reason for a sanctuary to be interested in lively cult activities and, consequently, in receiving plentiful votive offerings; to what extent the sanctuary encouraged people to make offerings remains unanswered. Because the religious community as a whole was involved in the activities of a sanctuary, a donation also had a certain public and social character. The public nature of dedicating might have given rise to conventions that encouraged, or even forced, the worshipers to visit the sanctuary to make offerings. Later written sources reveal how the donors judged not only the positioning of their own gifts, but also the appearance of someone else's gifts:[41] This may indicate the representative significance of a votive gift, and it is perfectly conceivable that already in the early Archaic period the community's opinion on

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[35] See Van Straten 1981, 69–77 and R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 271–278 with a representative selection of texts relating to dedication.

[36] See e.g. Simon 1986, 410–420, esp. 418; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2002, 214; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 316–318.

[37] See, among others, Burkert 1987, 43–44 who discusses various theories regarding offering gifts such as psychological, sociological and economic models as well as his own historical-anthropological perspective; for an economic perspective, see Linders 1987, 115–156; for the religious and symbolic functions of gold offerings in the Artemision of Ephesos, see Pülz 2009, 202–206.

[38] Linders 1987, 116: '... everything in the temple inventories, from the prescripts and the administrative formulas to the manner of registering the items, intimates that once the offerings had entered the god's possession, they were regarded as staying there to the end of time'. Linders 1987 argues convincingly against assumptions that the true motive for dedicating votive offerings of precious metal was an economic one, whereas piety was only used as a pretext; Van Straten 1992, 272; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 281.

[39] For that see Langdon 1987, 110, 112–123.

[40] See also Linders 1987, 121–122; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 280: 'A temple rich in dedications was the temple of a powerful god ...'

[41] Van Straten 1992, 269; von Hesberg 2007, 283–285; see also Van Wees 1998, 30 emphasizing that by offering a gift the giver presents also his identity and with that his position in society is affected.

the votive behaviour of other individuals was an important motive for regularly bringing offerings to a sanctuary. Maintaining rituals and being included in common activities of the community probably also played an important role in the individual's need for security as well as the overall stability of the society.[42] The extent to which different aspects (the sociological, for example) influenced or determined a decision to make an offering to a deity can hardly be assessed. However, according to most scholars, the main impulse for making an offering was purely religious and individual: votives, like prayers and sacrifices, were a means through which to come into direct and personal contact with the worshipped deity, to establish and to keep up a relationship with him or her.[43] Numerous votive inscriptions and other written sources show that with the donation of a gift, the donor could request something from the deity or could express thanks for received favours.[44] The request and thanks could be of a very general nature, for example simply receiving the god's favour and benevolence; or it could pertain to a special matter. A votive offering could be presented on the occasion of a major change in life, the so-called 'rites de passage' such as marriage or childbirth for women or the transition to adulthood or retirement for men.[45] It could also be made for redeeming a vow,[46] as a memento of something[47] or as part – the god's share – of a profit or yield that the donor had obtained with the deity's assistance.[48] Votive inscriptions clearly demonstrate that the worshipper felt the obligation to give something to a deity in exchange for the favour he had received and possibly asked for, but they demonstrate as well that in exchange for the gift, the donor naturally expected something in return.[49] In this way a continuous cycle of requests, thanks for their gratification and new requests was created.[50] The unconcealed expectation of positive reciprocity seems to be a basic characteristic of early Greek

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[42] Simon 1986, 410: 'In part the offering of small gifts took place because it was important for the stability of the society that sanctuaries should flourish and that the whole community should take part, and should be seen to take part, in a varied number of activities within the sanctuary'; see also Langdon 1987, 109 for this problem.
[43] E.g. Van Straten 1981, 65; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 270; Grottanelli 1989–1990, 48.
[44] For the different reasons for offering a gift, see esp. Van Straten 1981, 70–77; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 278–280; see also Burkert's interpretation from an anthropological and historical perspective: He puts the development of offering to the gods with the notion of reciprocity at least partially far back in time in the evolution of life to the 'aboriginal device of surrender, of partial sacrifice in order to ward off major danger', so giving up or leaving behind something in a situation of threat and anxiety; Burkert 1987, esp. 44–45.
[45] See Van Straten 1981, 88–91; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 279.
[46] See Van Straten 1981, 70; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 276.
[47] See Van Straten 1981, 76–77; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 276.
[48] For offerings of the 'first-fruit' or 'tithe', see Van Straten 1981, 92–93; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 275–276; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 308.
[49] See Parker 1998, 106–114 for the basic significance in Greek cultic practice of the belief or hope that reciprocity between men and gods really existed with sources supporting this assumption; for the fundamental significance of gift exchange between humans in archaic societies, for the obligation to return the gift one has accepted and for the validity of the same rules in the exchange of gifts between man and deity, see Mauss 1999, esp. 18. 46; see Grottanelli 1989–1990, 45–48 for various theories about the meaning of exchange between humans and gods.
[50] See esp. Grottanelli 1989–1990, 53 referring to an Athenian votive inscription from the late 6th century, where the donor promises further dedications in the case of a grateful acceptance of his gift by the deity; see also Parker 1998, 110–111; R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 276, 280: '... as an ideal, votives belong within a cycle of gift and countergift which is potentially endless, whether the cycle was initiated by god or man'.

votive traditions.[51] Offering gifts to a god is, therefore, also explained as an investment in symbolic, imaginary capital by creating long-lasting ties, obligations and dependences, especially when a gift was not immediately returned.[52] The gift was a symbolic equivalent for the god's assistance and favour, and even if it was obvious that in reality the value of the offering could by no means be equivalent to whatever the donor received, he must have been convinced that the deity regarded his gift as adequate and appropriate.[53]

Regarding the religious aspect of an offering, the current meaning of a votive gift as a source of information about the honoured deity, the nature of her or his cult and about the donor him- or herself depends upon the quality of the gift relative to one of the following three components: the donor, his or her motives and the honoured deity.[54] The crucial point in the interpretation of votive offerings is, therefore, to analyse the circumstances that influenced the choice of a certain object; this means considering who offered the object, the reason for making the offering and identifying the deity receiving it. However, it is clear that these circumstances are usually difficult to determine. The male bronze figurine mentioned above offered by Mantiklos to Apollo as a tithe[55] demonstrates very well that the donor did not literally have to offer a certain share of the yield, but rather could bring a symbolic votive of any shape which did not necessarily have an obvious connection with the particular yield.[56] Consequently, almost anything could be presented as symbol for the share, for making a request, for thanking or for redeeming a vow, and it is precisely this freedom in the choice of an offering that makes the interpretation of a votive gift most difficult.[57]

The choice of a donation could be determined by the donor's wish to represent his personality or to improve his image by handing over a part of his material property to the deity. In this case, the votive offering would allow a conclusion to be drawn about his gender, his social and ethnic background and his profession. Under these preconditions, an arrowhead might be presented by a hunter, a fishhook by a fisherman, whorls and jewellery by female donors as these objects are usually associated with women. Craftsmen could

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[51] For the nature and definition of reciprocity, see Seaford 1998, esp. 1–4 and van Wees 1998, 15–20; see also Van Straten 1981, 72–73; Parker 1998; Frevel 2007, 201; Burkert 1987, 44, 47, 48–49 for the question of how the expectation of reciprocity could prevail regardless the return by an 'unclear' partner is by no means being guaranteed; Grottanelli 1989–1990, 48: '... humans and gods both give and take', 52: '... in the Greek inscriptions the divine and human sphere interact according to a simple, crude scheme of giving and returning, and the reciprocity is stressed even though the hierarchy is never forgotten.'

[52] Bammer 1984, 146–147; Burkert 1987, 43–44.

[53] See Parker 1998, 119 arguing that the value of an offering was not judged from a commercial point of view but was seen as a symbolic value; pp. 122–124 on the asymmetry within the reciprocal relation between gods and humans which the Greeks were thoroughly aware of but did not contemplate when offering a gift; see also Bremer 1998, 127, 133; Mauss 1999, 46: '... jene Götter, welche geben und erwidern, sind dazu da, etwas Großes für etwas Kleines zu geben'; Burkert 1998, 174–175 arguing that wealthy worshippers with rich donations were not supposed to have better chances for a good relationship with the gods.

[54] See also Van Straten 1981, 80–104.

[55] See above note 34.

[56] For this see also R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 275; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 308: 'Many tithes were simply converted into money, used to buy or have made offerings of various standard types such as tripods, or simply given as money'; see Hdt. 4.152.4 for the Samian Kolaios who made high profits in trade from his voyage to Tartessos and dedicated to the sanctuary of Hera on Samos as a tithe of these profits a large bronze vessel with griffin protomes and beneath kneeling giant bronze figures.

[57] See already Rouse 1902, 352: 'Neither is there anything in the world which cannot become a votive offering'; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 282: 'Virtually any object could be taken as suitable for dedication'.

offer a product of their own work.[58] Simple and inexpensive objects might have indicated less prosperous donors, whereas horse figurines could reflect wealth and status, as horses were usually connected with an aristocratic life-style.[59] This category also includes grand dedications made by prominent and wealthy people, such as the golden cows and the columns for the temple dedicated by the Lydian king Kroisos at the Artemision of Ephesos.[60] Gifts of this kind seem to have been presented mainly – or even exclusively – to demonstrate the donor's wealth and power, while the given sanctuary simultaneously gained some importance by displaying these valuable dedications.[61] However, the shape of an offering need not have referred, necessarily, to the donor's personality, but could have also represented the request made or the thanks given in his prayer. This is, for example, quite obvious for simulacra of parts of the body, probably offered to ask for health or in thanks for healing.[62] Similarly, the dedication of an animal figurine might be interpreted as a symbolic request for the protection of the whole herd or in gratitude for its well-being, just as the text on an arrowhead might ask or thank for a successful hunt and a craftsman's product might ask or thank for the deity's support of his work. Less obvious connections are also conceivable, for example, a bronze scarab could be interpreted as a request for flourishing, as scarabs are symbols for the protection of descendants and life.[63] It is also possible to imagine the shape of an offering as independent from the donor's personality and his or her request, and instead being exclusively related to the deity to whom it was offered, either by representing the deity itself, as with figurines, or an attribute of the deity, such as birds of prey in the case of the Artemision, or perhaps a particular characteristic of the deity, like special influence in the realm of birth, nature or warfare.[64] Consequently, regardless of the gender or profession of the donor, animal figurines would have been offered mainly to deities seen as protectors of nature or as rulers over the animals.[65] Jewellery would have indicated a female deity, with belts in particular offered to goddesses responsible for birth[66] and weapons to a deity closely connected with warfare or hunting.[67] A votive can also refer to sacrificial rites carried out at a sanctuary: Animal figurines like goats or piglets, especially those with slit bellies or feet bent together, might be seen as a substitute for real sacrificial animals or as a memorial of a sacrifice.[68] Special types of vessels, like the round-bottomed bronze bowls

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[58] Van Straten 1981, 92–96.
[59] Kyrieleis 1988, 215 for the manifestation of the donor's social position in a gift; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 201–202 for possible conclusions on the social position and ethnic background of the donors of bronze votives in the Ephesian Artemision; Simon 1986, 371–372 and J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 308 for the meaning of the offering of horse figurines.
[60] Hdt. 1.92.
[61] Linders 1987, 118; Klebinder-Gauß and Pülz 2008, 201.
[62] Van Straten 1981, 100. 103. 105; B. Forsén in *ThesCRA* 2004, 311–313.
[63] Mitsopoulos-Leon 2006, 90–92 for a bronze scarab found in the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi.
[64] For the meaning of birds of prey in the Ephesian Artemision, see above note 14; for interpretations of female figurines from this sanctuary, see above note 13; see also Van Straten 1981, 81.
[65] Bol 1976, 35.
[66] For the offering of jewellery, see Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 199–200 with further references; for the offerings of belts, see pp. 106–108 and here below p. 116.
[67] For the offering of weapons, see Simon 1986, 253, 411.
[68] See Van Straten 1981, 87–88; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 308; Bammer and Muss 1996, 64, fig. 27 for an ivory ram with the front leg bound backwards.

with ring handles in the Artemision, could have been offered after ritual ceremonies or meals.[69]

These examples demonstrate quite well that there are virtually no general criteria for how to interpret an individual votive offering. It seems, therefore, more promising to identify the characteristics of the cult and its specific meaning for worshipers by starting from certain focal points of the complete spectrum of votive offerings discovered at a sanctuary.

Some Observations on Finds from the Artemision of Ephesos

In order to illustrate this, let us now use the example of the bronze finds from the Ephesian Artemision to discuss the degree of information we can acquire by interpreting them.[70] Jewellery by far dominates the bronzes: bracelets, earrings, needles, fibulas and rings – mostly mass-produced small simple shapes – were found in large numbers, as well as belts, pearls and pendants, and among those, several in the shape of birds and other animals. East Aegean, Ionian and West Anatolian shapes dominate by far, whereas imports are relatively rare.[71] The number of other kinds of bronzes is small in comparison to the jewellery; the share of vessels, including griffin cauldrons, is not very large. Other materials, such as gold and ivory, were preferred for free-standing animal and human figurines. Toiletries, such as ear-spoons, and household appliances, like ruffles, are also only rarely found. No weapons occurred aside from some arrowheads, and tools like fishhooks are completely lacking. A comparison between the bronze artefacts represented in the Artemision and those from other sites in Ionia and beyond makes clear that in the late Geometric and early Archaic periods there is some agreement in the general range of shapes of bronze votive offerings, independent of the honoured deity. Jewellery appears regularly as do double axes, ruffles, mirrors, arrowheads, miniature wheels, griffin protomes and omphalos bowls. It seems that at that time most shapes were considered to be appropriate gifts for different deities and that the votive offerings generally had no unambiguous relation to a specific receiver.[72] But it is also possible to detect special characteristics and significant concentrations of shapes in the different sanctuaries with certain shapes represented in great numbers and others rarely or not at all. This different approach to the evaluation of shapes probably reflects not only the nature of the cult but also the specific location of a sanctuary as well as typical customs of the region.

Among the small finds from the Artemision the previously mentioned large amount of jewellery is quite a remarkable feature, worthy of discussion in further detail. In addition to vast quantities of bronze jewellery also objects made of other materials

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[69] For these bowls, see above p. 110; for vessels found in sanctuaries see Simon 1986, 314–319, esp. 317; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 281, 305–308.

[70] The ca. 5,000 bronzes studied in Klebinder-Gauß 2007 are of course just a part of the real number of bronzes actually offered in the sanctuary, but nevertheless they can give an approximate idea of the range of shapes represented.

[71] For imported bronzes in the Ephesian Artemision, see Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 205–212.

[72] E.g. Simon 1986, 410, 412, 418–420; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2002, 214; Sinn 1988, 150; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 194–197.

such as gold, amber, ivory or glass have been discovered.[73] The large number of pieces, but also the extensive uniformity and the mostly simple style, suggest that these jewellery offerings refer less to the person of the donor than to a characteristic of the deity or a specific aspect of her cult. The frequent repetition of the same shapes can emphasize and reinforce their meaning and message.[74] Later written sources emphasize the importance of dress and adornment in the cult of the Ephesian Artemis and support this interpretation: several inscriptions mention the office of the κοσμήτειρα, the holder of which had to dress and adorn the cult image of Artemis.[75] Another inscription describes a festival called *Daitis* where the cult image of Artemis Ephesia was carried in procession and presented a new wardrobe; a σπειροφόρος and a κοσμοφόρος – persons carrying the clothes and the jewellery – also participated in this procession.[76] The ritual dressing and adorning of a cult image in certain intervals or at special occasions, together with the offering of clothing and jewellery, was a widespread tradition in ancient Greece.[77] The related practices in the Ephesian Artemision mentioned by later sources might have older roots hence can explain the strong tradition of jewellery offerings in the early Archaic sanctuary. The original cult image was probably made of wood and dressed with real clothes and adornment, and it is likely that at least a part of the jewellery found in the sanctuary belonged to the accoutrement of the cult image or was offered with the intention to be worn by it.[78] Belts obviously had a special meaning in the cult activities of the Artemision: parts of at least twenty examples have been found in the Archaic layers. Later ancient sources mentioning dedications of belts mainly refer to female deities and to women who offered their belts on the occasion of their marriage or after having given birth – the latter tradition can even be traced in Christianity.[79] Furthermore, a Roman copy of the cult image of Artemis Ephesia is depicted with a belt that includes elements of this type:[80] since belts of this type were not produced after the seventh century, it must be concluded that the artist of the Roman statue reproduced one of these belts, based either upon actually preserved ones or depictions that were passed on over the centuries through the cult image of Artemis Ephesia. The depiction on the cult image stresses the significance of these belts as a characteristic accessory of the deity worshipped in the Artemision, probably pointing to specific aspects of birth and marriage in her cult.

Another question should also be addressed briefly in connection with the offering of jewellery: how were these quantities of small objects offered and placed? While the ancient sources give accounts of particular dedications and special occasions for the offering of jewellery, not much is known about the practice or the act of offering it in general.[81] One can imagine that the objects were brought separately and laid down on

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[73] See e.g. Seipel 2008, 130–146 nos. 8–66 (gold), 182–183 nos. 146–156 (ivory), 187–190 nos. 167–191 (amber), 193–199 nos. 200–208 (glass, stone, faïence, clay).
[74] See also von Hesberg 2007, 306–307.
[75] Engelmann 2001, 38.
[76] Engelmann 2001, 39; Romano 1988, 128–129 and nn. 12, 14.
[77] Romano 1988; Scheer 2000, 55–57.
[78] See also Romano 1988, 130 and n. 30 for later sources suggesting that the Ephesian Artemis was a wooden xoanon; Fleicher 2008, esp. 26–27; Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 200–201 with nn. 1395–1396.
[79] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 106–108 with further references.
[80] See above p. 110 and note 31.
[81] See R. Parker in *ThesCRA* 2004, 270–271; Alroth 1988, 195.

the altar or pinned on the cult image, or that they were offered as a complete set of jewellery and even together with dresses, as is well known from different inventory lists.[82] In any case, the impression of a cult-place or a cult-image covered layer upon layer with jewellery must have been overwhelming and demonstrated lively cult activity in the sanctuary.[83] Today's examples of richly adorned Christian figurines of the Virgin Mary or of Greek churches thickly hung with votive tablets might offer a suitable parallel.[84]

Taken together the above-mentioned facts and what later written sources reveal, a certain dominance of female elements in the early Archaic cult of the Artemision can be observed. The obvious importance of belts in particular suggests that the honoured deity was linked with female interests such as marriage and childbirth. This impression is also underscored by the fact that objects usually connected with the male sphere, such as tools and weapons, are almost absent, and aspects of warfare, hunting and fishing obviously were not matters of prime interest in the cult of this sanctuary. However, it can by no means be assumed that jewellery was exclusively offered by women and to female deities, as it is also found in sanctuaries of male deities or can bear votive inscriptions mentioning a male donor.[85] This question is again closely connected with the discussion of what, precisely, determined the choice of an offering: the honoured deity, the nature of the request or the personality of the donor.

Summary

Considering the range of possibilities and difficulties that arise in determining how to interpret a single votive offering, only rather general conclusions should – and can – be drawn about the donor, his motives for making the offering or the character of the deity. Rather, it is more informative and useful to analyse the main focal points within the complete spectrum of votives in a deposit or sanctuary and, thereby, derive a general idea of the nature of the cult.

The bronze votive offerings in the early Archaic Artemision show a specific focus in the female sphere. This indicates that already in the late Geometric and early Archaic period the deity worshipped at the sanctuary was female, despite the fact that the analysis of the bronze votives allows no unambiguous conclusions to be made regarding the name or number of the honoured deities. The range of shapes implies rather less-prosperous dedicators of local origin, and one might suggest that they belonged to different ethnic groups of immigrated Ionians and originally resident West Anatolian people. The general picture of the bronzes found in the early Archaic Artemision parallels nicely what we know from several other sites in Ionia and beyond. Furthermore, it confirms the impression that in this period analysis of votive offerings provides hardly more than a general idea of the nature of the cult in a specific sanctuary.

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[82] Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 200 and nn. 1387–1391 with further references.

[83] Descriptions of later authors like Strabo and Pausanias give a vague idea about how crammed with votive offerings the sanctuaries were sometimes resulting in the establishment of certain rules which restricted the placement of votive offerings; Van Straten 1981, 78; Van Straten 1992, 270–271.

[84] E.g. Van Straten 1992, 270; Muss 1999, 602.

[85] See Klebinder-Gauß 2007, 199–200; J. Boardman in *ThesCRA* 2004, 296.

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