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Hamutal Suliman-Wolf

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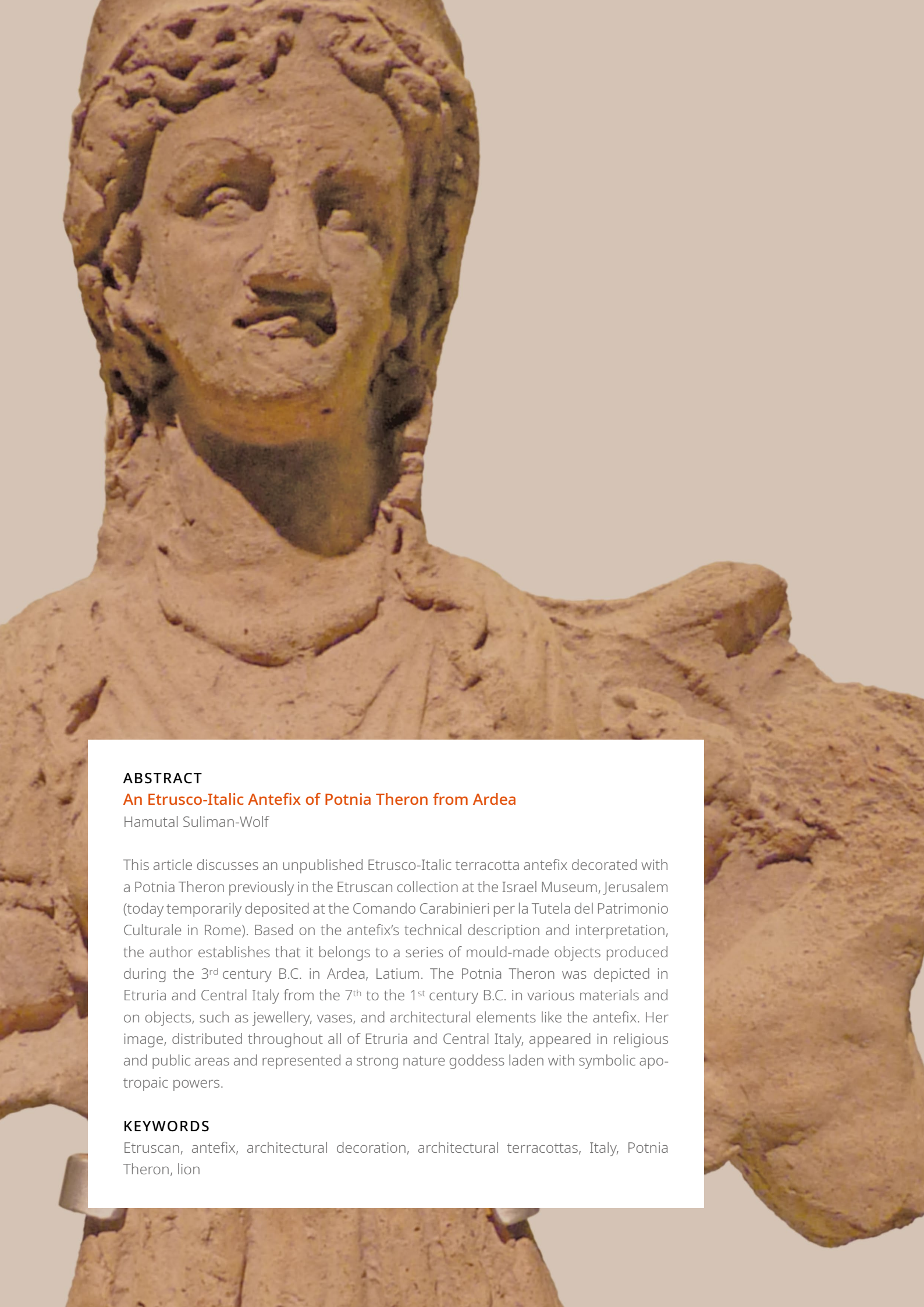
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ABSTRACT

An Etrusco-Italic Antefix of Potnia Theron from Ardea

Hamutal Suliman-Wolf

This article discusses an unpublished Etrusco-Italic terracotta antefix decorated with a Potnia Theron previously in the Etruscan collection at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (today temporarily deposited at the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale in Rome). Based on the antefix's technical description and interpretation, the author establishes that it belongs to a series of mould-made objects produced during the 3rd century B.C. in Ardea, Latium. The Potnia Theron was depicted in Etruria and Central Italy from the 7th to the 1st century B.C. in various materials and on objects, such as jewellery, vases, and architectural elements like the antefix. Her image, distributed throughout all of Etruria and Central Italy, appeared in religious and public areas and represented a strong nature goddess laden with symbolic apotropaic powers.

KEYWORDS

Etruscan, antefix, architectural decoration, architectural terracottas, Italy, Potnia Theron, lion

An Etrusco-Italic Antefix of Potnia Theron from Ardea

Introduction

¹ This article discusses a 3rd century B.C. Etrusco-Italic terracotta antefix of a Potnia Theron, which was formerly part of the Etruscan collection at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, that I studied as part of my M.A. thesis (formerly Israel Museum, inv. 90.39.73, Fig. 1. 2. 3. 4)¹. The antefix was donated to the Israel Museum by the Rubin Beningson Gallery, New York, in 1990. It was presented in an exhibition titled »Italy of the Etruscans«, held in the Israel Museum in November 1991, but it does not appear in the exhibition catalog².

² Before focusing on the main issues of the present research on the antefix, i.e., its identification, style, meaning, and date, I will relay the more recent and interesting story of its arrival to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, from the Beningson Gallery. I discovered, with the help of Rudolf Känel³, that the antefix was previously cited in an exhibition catalog from 1983 on archaeological finds excavated in *Ardea*, at Latium⁴. The antefix was discovered in the early 1980s in a large excavation project held in Ardea, and in 1983 the findings were presented in Rome in a special exhibition titled »Ardea: immagini di una ricerca«⁵. It seems that later, while transferring the Ardea findings to a warehouse in Tivoli, a few of the findings were stolen, including the antefix. It eventually arrived at the Rubin Beningson Gallery and was later donated to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Following this shocking discovery, the Israel Museum authorities contacted the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale in Rome, and they generously decided to loan the antefix to the Israel Museum for four

¹ I thank Dr. Sonia Klinger, my M.A. advisor, for encouraging me to pursue this project and publish it, and Dr. Silvia Rosenberg and Ms. Galit Bennett-Dahan, the former and present curators, of Rodney E. Soher, classical archaeology, at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, for their permission to study and publish this antefix.

² For the exhibition catalog, see: Jucker 1991.

³ I am grateful to Dr. Rudolf Känel for his help in identifying the item in the catalog and for discussing the find with me, and to Dr. Mario Iozzo, who introduced me to him.

⁴ Tortorici 1983, fig. 122 no. 62–63.

⁵ Tortorici 1983.

additional years, where it was displayed in the Museum's section devoted to Etruscan art. The antefix was subsequently returned to Italy and is temporarily deposited at the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale in Rome, awaiting a final destination.

Formal Analysis

3 *Dimensions:* Height: 56 cm (from head to pedestal); maximum width: 28 cm (in the widest part, from lion to lion); depth: 3.5–7 cm (7 cm includes the ridge tile in the back).

4 *Material:* Terracotta, very pale brown (*Munsell* 10 YR 7/4), with segments from brownish soil called pozzolana. The pozzolana color turned red after firing.

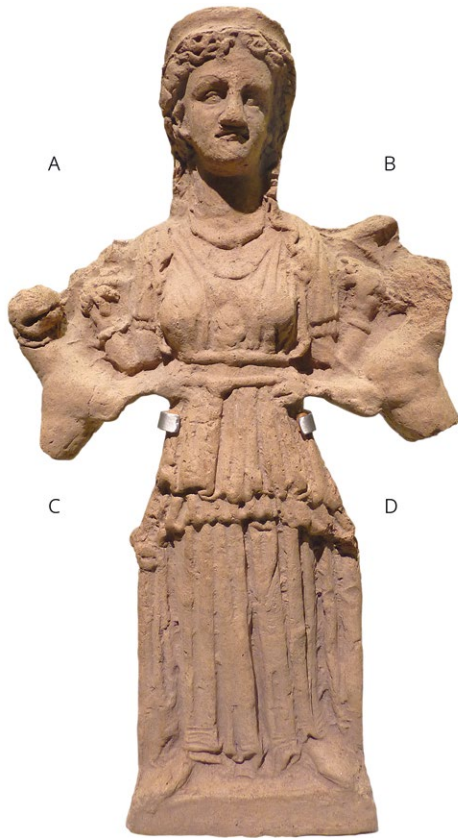
5 *Condition:* The antefix is well preserved, but four areas are broken and damaged: above both shoulders of the antefix (Fig. 1 A–B); both animals are broken from their waists down (Fig. 1 C–D); in the middle of the backside is a break of struts or of a handle that was used to attach the antefix to the ridge tile (Fig. 2); and most of the ridge tile is broken (Fig. 2) with only its arched end remaining. The antefix has been restored lightly on the neck and the right arm was damaged and reattached. Evidence of red paint (*Munsell* 7.5 R 3/8) appears on the left part of the dress.

6 *Description:* The antefix is composed of a frontal figure and a ridge tile on the antefix's reverse that is attached to the goddess' lower backside. The figure represents a goddess, the so-called Potnia Theron (Πότνια Θηρῶν), holding two felines, one in each hand. The goddess is in a frontal stance with her head turned slightly downwards and to the right, and her legs straddling a pedestal; she wears an undecorated polos on her head and a long peplos down to her ankles. A hole, made before the firing in the middle of the polos' top, was presumably for a meniskos, a small, pointed bronze rod whose function was to repel birds. Her long, curly hair flows from the center of her head and falls on both sides of the forehead to her shoulders. Her face is oval, about 6 cm in height, and in its center, the eyes, nose, and mouth are placed on the same axis. Above the eyes are bulging eyebrows that curve downward; beneath them are almond-shaped eyes, 2 cm in width. In the center of each eye, a small circle represents the iris set against the upper eyelid. The nose sprouts between the eyes and widens in its lower part toward the mouth. The mouth is closed, the lips are thin, and an ingrained line separates the upper and lower lips. The ears on each side of the face are partially hidden under the curls.

7 The long peplos of the antefix has short sleeves, up to the elbows, a wide belt at the waist, and double apodygma, i.e., draped folds emerging from folding the woman's peplos. The apodygma is not symmetrical; therefore, the height of her right side (Fig. 1 C), 3.5 cm, is greater than the left (Fig. 1 D), 1.5 cm. The goddess' hands are close to her body and bent upward; in each hand, she holds one front paw of a feline animal, a lion, or a lioness. The felines' other front paw is placed on the goddess' waist, one on each side; their hind legs are missing but were placed on the goddess' apodygma. The goddess wears a necklace and two undecorated bracelets, one on each wrist.

8 Two aspects help establish the object's role in the building as an antefix: a ridge tile on the backside (Fig. 2) and a hole in the polos' upper part (Fig. 4), presumably for the meniskos. They testify that the antefix was a decorative architectural element in a building. In his early but essential study on architectural terracotta from Etrusco-Italic temples, Andrén presented an example of an antefix affixed to a ridge tile⁶. In Andrén's book, an image depicts a semicircular ridge tile and strut or handle that was attached to the antefix and thereby provided more support for bigger antefixes. Similarly, visible

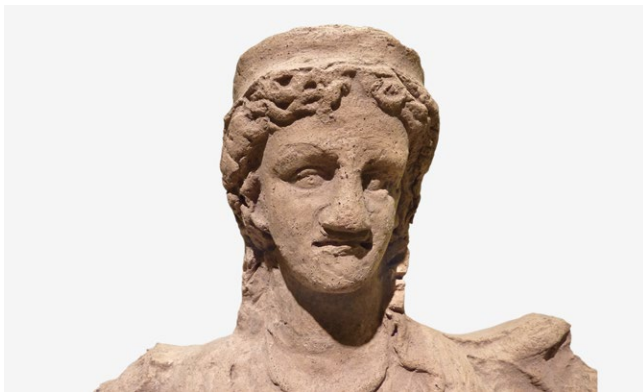
6 Andrén 1940, pl. G.



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on the back of our antefix are two fractures (Fig. 2 E–F), probably where the strut or handle and ridge tile were attached, as suggested in Fig. 5. As Andrén noted, the antefix was an ornament born from the desire to mask and decorate the end of the final cover tiles above the eaves⁷. Christiansen and Winter added that the antefixes covered and protected the eaves whose role was to collect rainwater⁸. The meniskos was placed in the top of the polos. Though much discussion has been dedicated to the meniskos' name, form, size, and height, its location in a hole at the upper part of a statue or antefix is certain⁹. In addition to these two technical aspects, the position of the antefix's head, slightly downwards, also reinforces its role as a decorative element in the building that was supposed to be seen from below.

Fig. 1: Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 90.39.73, front

Fig. 2: Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 90.39.73, back

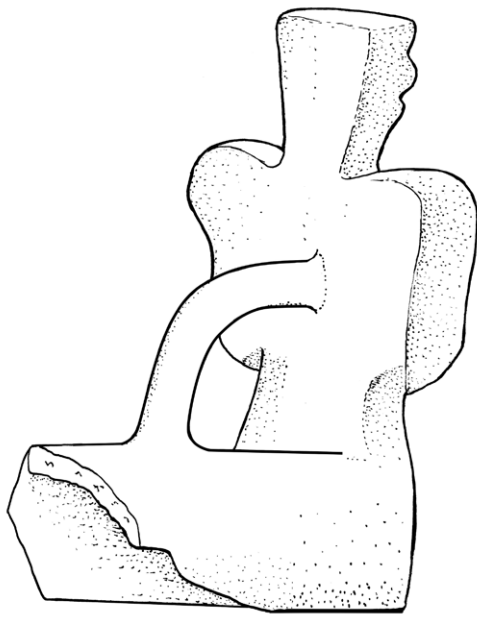
Fig. 3: Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 90.39.73, head

Fig. 4: Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 90.39.73, upper part of the back

7 Andrén 1940, clxii.

8 Christiansen – Winter 2010, 14.

9 For further reading about the meniskos, see: Maxmin 1975; Cook 1976; Ridgway 1990.



5

Fig. 5: Illustration of the proposed attachment of a handle and ridge tile to the antefix

9 The back part of the antefix is smooth and without signs of handprints (Fig. 2), therefore indicating that the terracotta was stuffed into a mold and smoothed with tools or a wet cloth before firing. As Winter noted, the basic tools used in terracotta decoration manufacture were mallets, paddles, and wood frames, but above all, molds¹⁰. Lehmann commented further that the Potnia Theron antefix from Central Italy was rarely made by hand but rather cast in molds that could be used for a long period of time¹¹. In Etruscan architectural decoration, molds were used widely and mostly for two reasons. First, they enabled quick and multiple manufacturing of architectural decoration. Second, the molds could be filled with terracotta by other workers, not just skilled craftsmen specializing in architectural decoration, thereby facilitating manufacture. In addition, the molds were kept and reused later when the antefix was damaged or needed to be replaced¹². As Biella explained, molds that were used to produce architectural decorations often were located near the sanctuary area to ensure that the public authority could easily replace damaged items, or to create a collection of molds to be reused, and by doing so, lower economic impact for the community during construction¹³.

Interpretation

10 I now discuss the antefix's origin, date, the image of Potnia Theron in Latium and Etruria, its iconography, and its possible iconology. The antefix comes from Ardea, a town in Latium 40 km south of Rome that today is part of the Lazio region. The territory of the Rutuli, the ancient people of Ardea, extended from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Alban Hills (Colli Albani)¹⁴. Because of its location between the sea and the main roads to the Latin area and Rome, Ardea was an important city in antiquity¹⁵. Ardea remained one of the Latin League's important centers even in the 4th century B.C. when the Romans conquered vast parts of the Latium area¹⁶.

11 The Rutuli were in close contact with neighboring communities, which were mainly the Greeks, the Etruscans, and later the Romans¹⁷. The influence of the neighboring cultures on the Rutuli is evident in literary sources and various findings discovered in Ardea from the 6th century B.C. onward¹⁸. The exchange of commerce, ideas, and even persons, between Latium-Etruria and other regions produced a common culture among various places and peoples¹⁹. This extensive exchange affected the artistic ideas in Latium and Ardea; therefore, the antefix style, called Etrusco-Italic, integrated the local Italic tradition with that of Etruria²⁰.

10 Winter 2009, 512.

11 Lehmann 2020, 1.

12 For more about Etruscan molds, see: Andr n 1940, cxix; Winter 2013, 904. Palone 2009, 50.

13 Biella 2019, 30. Biella studied the falisci city Falerii in southern Etruria.

14 Di Mario 2007, 9.

15 For more on Ardea and its importance, see: Andr n 1940, 437; Morselli – Tortorici 1982, 27; Tortorici 1983, 17–22; Di Mario 2007, 9–20.

16 For the literary source, see: Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 5.44–45.

17 For some literary sources that mention the Rutuli in Ardea, see: Cato, *Orig.* fr. 58; DionHal, I.72; Strab, 5.3.2; Ov, *Met.* 14.565–580; Livy, 1.57; Plin, *NH.* 3.9; Serv, *ad Aen.* 7.412.

18 For Greek, Etruscan and Roman findings that were discovered in Ardea, see: Morselli – Tortorici 1982, 34; Stopponi 2000: 189; Colonna 2003: 347; Di Mario 2007, 9. 17. For literary sources, see: Ov, *Met.* 14.565–580; Verg, *Aen.* 7.406–413.

19 Cornell 2000, 163–164.

20 For the study on Etruscan presence in Ardea from 500 B.C., see: Colonna 2003, 346; Di Mario 2007, 17.

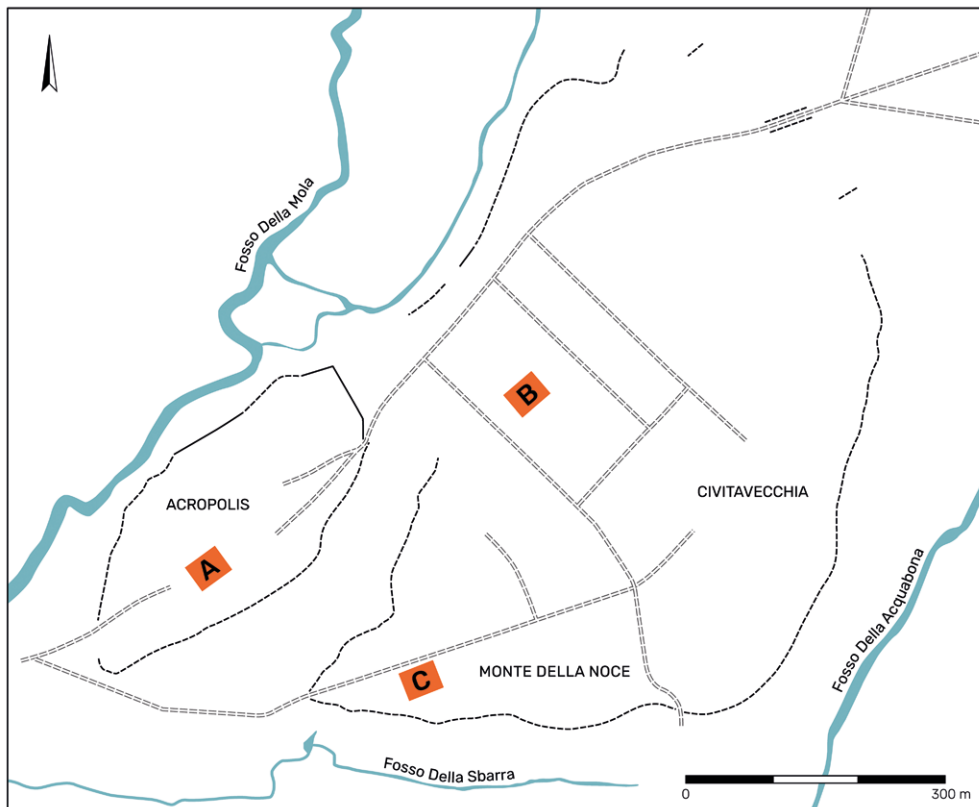


Fig. 6: Map of the ancient city of Ardea with the location of its three temples: (A) Acropolis; (B) Civita Vecchia; (C) Monte della Noce

6

12 Evidence of Ardea’s religious importance comes from literary sources and archaeological finds that indicate that the city had three temples in three different areas: Acropolis, Civita Vecchia, and Colle della Noce (Fig. 6)²¹. The antefix was found buried in a pit near the temple of Colle della Noce. Di Mores noted that in Ardea, all three temples were in use in the 4th and 3rd century B.C. and similar architectural decoration appeared in all of them, including antefixes of Potnia Theron²². In light of Biella’s explanation discussed above, it seems possible that molds were used in Ardea antefix production and were especially suitable for the Potnia Theron decoration that was found in all three temples, as a quick and perhaps cheap means of replicating and replacing them in all three temples.

13 The Colle della Noce temple was discovered during an excavation held in Ardea between 1981–1982 (Fig. 6 C)²³. Many objects were found during this excavation, including terracotta architectural decorations, the earliest of which dated back to the end of the 6th – beginning of the 5th century B.C.²⁴. The dating of the earliest architectural decoration helped establish that the temple was constructed around the same time²⁵. Tortorici noted that although the latest architectural decoration of the temple dates to the 1st century B.C., most of the findings are dated to the 3rd and 2nd century B.C., the same date as our antefix²⁶. During the 1st century B.C., the temple of Colle della Noce was

21 The three temples are mentioned in literary sources, although it is unclear to whom they were dedicated. For the literary sources on Ardea temples and their gods, see: Cic, *Da. Nat. Deor.*, 3.47; Livy, 22.1.19 and 32.9.2; Plin, *NH*, 35.17; Serv, *ad Aen.*, 1.44.

22 Di Mores 1993, 313 n. 18.

23 For the excavation, see: Tortorici 1983, 29–42.

24 Tortorici 1983, 36; Palone 2009, 31.

25 For the temple foundation, see: Colonna 1984, 409; Palone 2009, 31.

26 Tortorici 1983, 36.

renovated and the earlier architectural terracotta from the 3rd and 2nd century B.C. were buried in pits as our example²⁷.

14 Three decorative phases have been recognized from the architectural decoration in Colle della Noce: the first, from the second half of the 5th to the first quarter of the 4th century B.C.; the second, from the second half of the 4th century to the first quarter of the 3rd century B.C.; and the third, in the 2nd century B.C.²⁸. The antefix in the present study belongs to the second decorative phase of the temple and was made by mold as discussed above in the formal analysis. Palone argued that the architectural terracotta from the second phase is characterized by lower quality and poor relief, and in many cases, lost its original sharpness due to the use of worn molds²⁹. Therefore, Palone's conclusion also possibly helps establish the antefix date, since the details of the antefix face are not sharp and it appears as if it was made in a worn mold (Fig. 3). Nonetheless, the dating of the antefix to the 3rd century B.C. is mainly established by its material, condition, and stylistic comparisons. Establishing the antefix date is critical since it was found buried in a pit near the temple of Colle della Noce with an unclear stratigraphy, along with many other architectural elements dated to various other periods³⁰.

15 One factor for determining the antefix date is based on the pozzolana, the volcanic sand from which it was made³¹. Andr n classified and dated the architectural decorations from Central Italy according to their sediment³². As he explained, from the 3rd century B.C. onward, terracotta was produced primarily from pozzolana sand that turned red after firing, as in our example. Another factor that contributes to fixing its date is the absence of, or faded, red paint, visible on the left part of the dress of the antefix. Architectural elements from earlier and into the 3rd century B.C. were colored before firing; thus, the colors were fixed to the terracotta and are still visible. On the other hand, from the 3rd century B.C. onward, the objects were colored after firing³³, and as a result the colors almost completely faded, as in our example.

16 Another important factor establishing the date is based on its best stylistic comparison, namely, a female head antefix, dated to the 3rd century B.C., also from an area near the temple of Colle della Noce in Ardea (Fig. 7)³⁴. This antefix depicts a female head wearing an undecorated polos. Her hair is curly and flows down from the center of her head on both sides of the face. Her face is oval and in its center are the eyes, nose, and a mouth that is broken and no longer visible. The eyebrows above the eyes are bulged and curved downward; beneath them are almond-shaped eyes. The nose sprouts between the eyes and widens in its lower part toward the mouth. The ears placed on each side of the face are hidden under the curls. Comparison of the head antefix to the figure antefix reveals several similarities: the undecorated polos shape and the curly hair that flows from the forehead down both sides of the face in similar curves; the oval face shape and in its center, the eyes, nose, and what remains of the mouth. Nevertheless, there is some difference, mainly in size: the height of the head antefix is 15.8 cm in contrast to the height of the head on our figure antefix which measures 9 cm. The difference in size enables us to conclude that they were not made from the same mold. The appearance of similar antefix decoration in various sizes on the same building is possible, being that often in Etruria, architectural decorations were



7

Fig. 7: Head of a female antefix from Ardea

27 Tortorici 1983, 33; Palone 2009, 31.

28 Palone 2009, 36.

29 Palone 2009, 50.

30 The presence of other elements from various periods in the same pit nullifies the possibility of dating the antefix according to its stratigraphic location. For more on Ardea excavations and their problematic stratigraphy, see: Palone 2009, 68.

31 For the definition of pozzolana, see: Curl 2006, 600.

32 Andr n 1940, cxxiii.

33 For more about the coloring of the architectural elements in Central Italy, see: Andr n 1932, 15.

34 The antefix location is currently unknown, but it is illustrated in the catalog Tortorici 1983.

not all made and applied at the same time; they were created from different molds and replaced as needed according to the weathering of each section³⁵.

17 The antefix figure depicts the goddess Potnia Theron and is composed of a central female figure with two animals, one on each side³⁶. The image of Potnia Theron appeared in Etruria and Central Italy from the 7th century B.C. onward in varied materials and techniques, such as jewelry, bucchero vases, and architectural decorations³⁷. Her iconography was diverse: she could appear in full figure or as a bust, with or without wings, with animals next to her or in her hands, and the animals could be real or fantastic creatures³⁸. The interpretation of her figure, especially on jewelry, is associated with apotropaic power since it was believed that she protected the wearer or owner³⁹. In the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., her image appeared on bucchero vases from central and northern Italy. Here, the iconography was slightly changed, and most of the animals were felines or birds⁴⁰. Their representation continued the earlier tradition seen in jewelry, but unlike the jewelry, she is also interpreted as a nature goddess related to fertility⁴¹.

18 During the 6th and 5th century B.C., Etruria witnessed an increase in building construction, and the image of Potnia Theron appeared on architectural decorations manufactured to decorate and protect the buildings⁴². Christiansen and Winter stated that the Etruscan roofs were the most decorated in the ancient world⁴³. In the earliest architectural decoration of Etruria and Central Italy, the Potnia Theron is represented by a female head flanked by animals, mainly felines' heads⁴⁴. This representation is similar to the image on jewelry with the head of the goddess flanked by feline heads⁴⁵; both symbolize the goddess' connection to nature and the wild. During the 5th century B.C., her image appeared on full figure antefixes as individuals or couples, but only a few examples survived from that period that suffered from conflicts and political changes in Italy⁴⁶. That said, most Potnia Theron antefix examples are from the 4th century B.C. onward, and they represent similar iconography to our antefix, in a full-figure frontal position, winged, and holding two felines, one in each hand⁴⁷.

19 The Potnia Theron antefixes represent two versions of the same iconography, called Archaic and Classic types⁴⁸. The main differences between these two are apparent in the number and position of wings, the arms posture, and the feline location⁴⁹. The two

35 For more on the Etruscan practice of replacing architectural decoration gradually, see: Tortorici 1983, 56.

36 For more on the name and composition of the Potnia Theron, see: Studniczka 1890,153–165; Valentini 1969, 416; Icard-Gianolio 1997, 1021–1027.

37 For an early representation of Potnia Theron in Central Italy and Etruria, see: Andersen 1992/1993; Nielsen 1994; Tuck 2010; Camporeale 2015.

38 For examples of jewelry, see: Krauskopf 1984, 786; Andersen 1992/1993, fig. 3; De Grummond 2006, fig. v.31; London, British Museum inv. 1872,0604.851; Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano inv. 668.670; Paris, Louvre inv. BJ 954.

39 Marinatos 2000, 12; Cornelius 2004, 61. For the possible connection between the Potnia Theron and the dead, see: Flusche 2001, 173.

40 For example, on the bucchero vase, see: Valentini 1969, 415–416; Nielsen 1994, fig. 6.7; 6.9; 6.13; Murlo Museum inv. 71-569. For examples of architectural decoration, see: Winter 2009, fig. Ill, roof 5–7; Tortorici 1983, fig. 121.

41 Henrichs 1981, 206.

42 For the temple building in Etruria, see: Izzet 2001, 186; Winter 2009, 1 and 535–537.

43 Christiansen – Winter 2010, 11.

44 For examples of architectural decoration, see: Nielsen 1994; Winter 2009, fig. Ill, roof 5–4 and roof 5–7; Murlo, Antiquarium of Poggio Civitate inv. 68-482.

45 For example, see: London, British Museum inv. 1872,0604.851.

46 Tortorici 1983, 17; Christiansen – Winter 2010, 94–95.

47 For examples from the 4th century B.C., see: Andrén 1932, pl. 2, 2; Tortorici 1983, figs. 18, 116 and 121; for examples from the 3rd–2nd century B.C., see: Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 106246L.

48 Andrén 1940, ccxxviii; Lehmann 2020, 2.

49 For examples of the Archaic type, see: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 97, no. 352; pl. 117, no. 414; also see iDAI.objects: <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1194088>. For examples of the Classic type, see: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 21, no. 71; pl. 118, no. 419–420; also see iDAI.objects: <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1178342>.

versions held the same meaning and appeared in the same period in different places, in Central Italy and Etruria, and therefore cannot testify to the antefix chronology⁵⁰. As Lehmann noted, both types were very popular in Central Italy, and many variants can be seen from this period onward⁵¹. This popularity is also evident in Ardea, where antefixes of both types of Potnia Theron were used⁵². All things considered, it can be said that our antefix is a variant of the Archaic type since the Potnia holds the feline up on her waist with her hands bent upward; but unlike other versions of the Archaic type, she used to have only one set of wings extending from her shoulders, rather than three like other examples⁵³.

20 Since the Potnia Theron image was widespread, especially on an antefix like our example, it is essential to understand her role. As Izzet stated⁵⁴, in the Etruscan sanctuaries every architectural element was intentional for a specific place in the building, down to the decoration of the roof⁵⁵. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the image of the Potnia Theron on the antefix held some religious meaning or an apotropaic power. Dedicated studies of the Potnia Theron have proposed various explanations for her role. One interpretation referred to her as an ancient nature goddess related to fertility and is therefore testimony to the importance of agriculture and the terror of wild nature⁵⁶. Another interpretation refers to her as a goddess with apotropaic power⁵⁷. There is a possible connection between the two explanations since her control over wild nature probably gave her apotropaic power.

21 It is impossible to talk about the Potnia Theron in Central Italy and Etruria without considering her earlier iconography from the Near East and Greece. Both cultures had connections with Etruria and Central Italy, so understanding the similarities and/or differences and possible interconnections is relevant⁵⁸. In the Near East, several goddesses, such as Ishtar, Atirat, Ariat, Attart, Tanit, and Baalath, were represented as a naked female goddess, wingless, standing in a frontal position, and flanked by two animals with similar iconography to the Potnia Theron⁵⁹. They appear on jewelry, cylindrical seals, bronzes, and pendant, and they symbolize the goddess' connection to nature, fertility, and apotropaic powers⁶⁰. All these interpretations are also characteristic of the later Etrusco-Italic antefix. In Greece, the image of Potnia Theron is often identical to that of Artemis and appears on many vases from the 6th century B.C.⁶¹. In Central Italy, this is not the case, and the image of Potnia Theron differs from Artemis⁶². Moreover, in Greece, the winged Artemis appears mainly on small objects, and not on

50 Iaculli 2006, 167. For examples of the Archaic type from Luni: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 97, no. 352; from Nemi: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 117, no. 414; for examples of the Classic type from Caere: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 21, no. 71; from Alatri: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 118, no. 419 and 420.

51 Lehmann 2020, 2.

52 For examples of the Archaic type in Ardea, see: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 135, no. 476; for examples of the Classic type in Ardea, see: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 135, no. 477; pl. 136, no. 482.

53 For examples of the Archaic type with three sets of wings, see: Andrén 1940, vol. II, pl. 97, no. 352; pl. 117, no. 414; pl. 135, no. 476.

54 Izzet 2001, 185.

55 For other studies, see: Van Buren 1914, 192; Andrén 1932, 107.

56 Henrichs 1981, 206.

57 Andrén 1932, 107; Culican 1971, 3; Nielsen 1994, 65.

58 For some studies that discuss the possible connection between Greece, Etruria, Latium, and the Near East, see: Dunbabin 1957; Burkert 1992; Morris 1992; Dickinson 2006; Gunter 2009; Gunter 2016.

59 Cornelius 2004, 133; Tuck 2010, 211.

60 Marinatos 2000, 1; for Near Eastern examples, see: Barnett 1957, 76 fig. 1; Marinatos 2000, 20–24 fig. 1.19; Cornelius 2004, 9. 133; Marinatos 2000, 12.

61 For a study that compares the two in Etruria, see: Nielsen – Rathje 2009, 268; for examples of the Potnia Theron or winged Artemis on Greek vases, see: BAPD 12507, 300000, 310477, 350471.

62 For studies that discuss the difference and connection between Artemis and Potnia Theron in Etruria and its origin, see: Andersen 1992/1993, 74; Flusche 2001, 173; Simon 2006, 57; De Grummond 2006, 99–100.

architectural decoration such as in Central Italy. Jannot explained that, although Greek influence is apparent in the Etruscan temples, their decoration was pure Etruscan and their subjects differed from the Greeks⁶³. Nevertheless, the Greek iconography of the winged Artemis was known in Etruria and Central Italy as is evident from numerous objects found on Etruscan sites⁶⁴. In sum, although the Etrusco-Italic antefix is not the same iconographical type as that of the Near East and Greece, her iconography and interpretation were probably influenced by both⁶⁵. As suggested by numerous scholars, the early Archaic period was a time of extensive trade in the entire Mediterranean region, especially between Greece, Etruria, and the Near East, with mutual influences⁶⁶.

Conclusion

22 In this paper, I have clarified the date and discussed the iconography and iconology of an unpublished Etrusco-Italic terracotta antefix of the Potnia Theron. First, I established that it belongs to a series of mold-made objects produced during the 3rd century B.C. in Ardea. The parallels from the same temple clarify that in the 3rd century B.C., the Potnia Theron antefixes were used, and their mold manufacture enabled their production in vast numbers. Second, I have identified the figure as Potnia Theron, as evident from the parallels presented in this paper. Her image was depicted in Etruria and Central Italy from the 7th until the 1st century B.C. in various materials and on various objects, such as jewelry, vases, and architectural elements like the antefix. This image was distributed throughout all of Etruria and Central Italy and appears in religious and public areas such as temples and burial sites. As summarized in this paper, the Potnia Theron represented a strong nature goddess possessing symbolic apotropaic powers, like her counterpart from the Near East and Greece. This image as an apotropaic figure, especially on an antefix, had a physical and metaphorical purpose. Physically, the antefix as an architectural decoration was affixed to protect the wall and the gutter hatch. Metaphorically, the Potnia Theron goddess was a guardian of the sanctuary, its deities, and its visitors. The importance of the Potnia Theron antefix in the temple decoration is also suggested by the fact that it was manufactured by using a mold that would have enabled the production of the same antefix in vast numbers. These would have been installed along the Colle della Noce temple roof to express the goddess' role as the temple guardian.

63 Jannot 2005, 110.

64 For examples, see: BAPD 12507, 300000.

65 For studies that discuss the outside influence on the Etruscan artists, see: Turfa 1986; Shapiro 2000; Osborne 2001; Steingraber 2006, 41–63; Krauskopf 2016, 393. 395; Bundrick 2019, 89.

66 For studies that focus on the connections between Italy-Greece-Near East, see: Yalouris 1953; Dunbabin 1957; Carter 1985; Burkert 1992; Morris 1992; Frankfort 1996; Morris 1997; Dickinson 2006; Gunter 2009. For studies that connect the Greek Potnia Theron to the Near East, see: Andersen 1992/1993; Marinatos 2000; Cornelius 2004.

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CONTACT

Dr. Hamutal Suliman-Wolf

Department of Art History, University of Haifa

Mt. Carmel

Haifa 31905

Israel

shamutal@gmail.com

ORCID-iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0691-4471>

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