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Kari Dodson and Violaine Jeammet

- 1 The Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts has in its collection two Canosan statues of orantes, which along with a third one from a private collection, were displayed in a small focus exhibition *Ancient Statues from South Italy* from June 22 to December 1, 2013, at the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) in Worcester, Massachusetts. A mini symposium “Orantes from Canosa” accompanied the exhibition at the Worcester Art Museum on October 25, 2013, hosted by the Jeppson Idea Lab, in order to assemble scholars in the field with the future goal of organizing a more ambitious exhibition on the artistic production of Canosa in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. We are pleased to share with the members of the Association for Coroplastic Studies a summary of our discussions at this symposium.
- 2 The Director of WAM Matthias Waschek and Objects Conservator and exhibition organizer Paula Artal-Isbrand introduced the participants and explained the concept behind the Jeppson Idea Lab and the project “Ancient Statues from South Italy.” Paula explained how the exhibition came together and how the symposium grew out of all the collaborative research.
- 3 Christine Kondoleon, the George D. and Margo Behrakis Senior Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston detailed how she discovered the first of the orante statues (Fig. 1) in 1995, in storage at WAM and in fragments, when she was the director there. She immediately thought of Orpheus and the Sirens from the J. Paul Getty Museum and realized that she was looking at fragments of a 3rd century south Italian figure. The figure had come to WAM from London in 1927 with another figure (orante two). Paula wrote grants, and both the Kress and Mellon Foundations helped to support the project and the restoration of the statues.

Orante 1, from Canosa. WAM, after restoration.

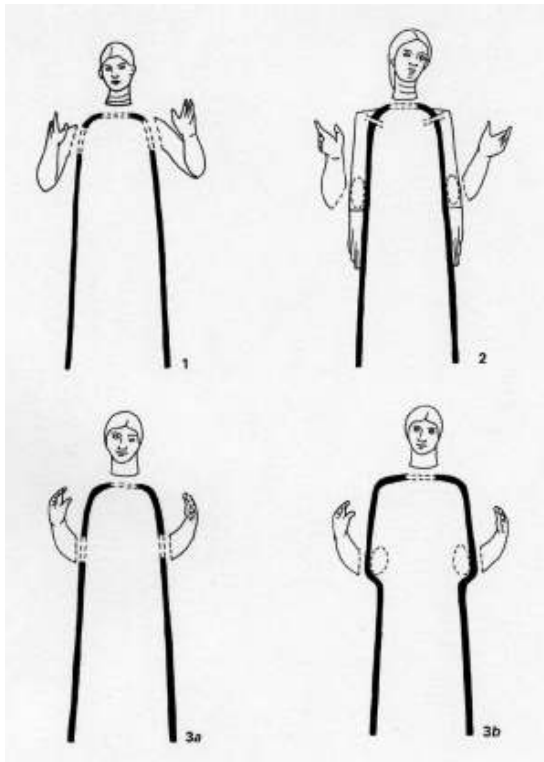


- 4 Andrew Oliver, an independent scholar based in Washington, D.C., and author of the only book on south Italian orantes (*The Reconstruction of Two Apulian Tomb Groups*, 1968, Franke Verlag, Bern) told of his encounter with orantes from Canosan tombs that began when he was at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. There he was directed to Paul Jacobsthal's book on early Celtic ornament and its relation to painting on Greek vases. A helmet and cuirass found in a tomb in Canosa were pictured there, as were photographs of groupings of objects found in Canosan tombs that were subsequently sold to collectors. He recognized among them some objects in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum— a bronze Celtic helmet in particular. It was later reunited with the cuirass that had wound up in Hamburg. In 1970, he recognized in an auction an orante (orante two), today in the collection of WAM.
- 5 Tiziana D'Angelo, the Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow, Department of Greek and Roman Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, ("Painting Death with the Colors of Life : Polychrome Paintings in Pre-Roman Tombs from South Italy") spoke on Canosa and its Daunian Tombs. She noted that even though none of the approximately 50 existing orantes are actually in Canosa di Puglia, in the local Museo Archeologico di Palazzo Sinesi, it is thanks to the collaboration of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Puglia and the Fondazione Archeologica Canosina, and on special occasions they are even kept open to the public at night, with the restaging of certain ancient rituals (Notti degli Ipogei). The Daunian civilization flourished between the 9th and the 3rd centuries B.C. in northern Apulia. Daunian aristocrats commissioned the majority of the Canosan monumental tombs in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., which were cut into the bedrock with flat, two faced, or vaulted ceilings. They were underground burials, but their architecture, decoration, and location made them quite visible and monumental. Some tombs had a painted pediment that was left above ground as a sort

of grave marker. In addition, they were nearly all located along two main roads and they were organized in clusters (both inside and outside the city walls). These tombs played a fundamental role in their communities. Their façades and vestibules were sometimes decorated with figural paintings that featured mourning women similar to the orantes, the deceased traveling to the underworld, and processional scenes including fantastic creatures. These monuments seemed to have a public and, to a certain extent, political function. During the late 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., the city faced internal turmoil and was also involved in broader conflicts, such as the Samnite and Punic Wars. In 318 B.C., the city was captured by the Romans, but this defeat was not immediately followed by a process of assimilation of Roman culture. Could the tombs and the public statement they made be a reaction to these events—a way to consolidate a strong image of power and independent identity? None of the tombs was built after the 3rd century B.C., but the existing ones continued to be used into the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., and funerary chambers were sometimes added. These funerary monuments served families and clans, not just individuals, and often had several building phases.

- 6 Violaine Jeammet, Senior Curator in the Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Louvre Museum (“Quelques particularités de la production des pleureuses canosines en terre cuite, *Revue Archéologique*, 2003/2, p. 255-292) gave a talk entitled “Female statues of Canosa : “Orantes” or Mourners ?” She presented 6 Canosan statues (H. 60 cm to 100 cm.) that are in the Louvre Museum’s collection. They had all been patched and overpainted in the 19th century. Three of them were restored in order to be displayed in the Venus de Milo Gallery along with jewelry, glassware, and a vase adorned with figurines, all coming from Canosa. The restoration revealed that the statues had been fabricated in a very particular way : they were basically conical structures made of large slabs of clay, pressed outwards from the inside to create essentially breasts and knees. Hair and details of clothing were added to the outside. The head was the only part created in a 2-part mold following the Greek technique. After having been fired, the statues were covered in a white layer in preparation for being painted—red, pink, and black. Canosan statues have been classified into groups corresponding to fabrication techniques and details of clothing. These classifications led the author to propose new combinations for the Canosa tombs, and also to stimulate reflection on the function of the statues (Fig. 2).

Study of fabrication : techniques and clothing of the orantes.



- Group 1 statues are dressed in a simple chiton : (subgroup a) are smaller, have loose hair, and young, chubby faces ; (subgroup b) are larger, and older.
- Group 2 statues wear a short himation over chiton. Arms are bent.
- Group 3 statues wear a chiton and long himation.

- 7 What were the functions of the statues ? Greek influence is obvious in the art and architecture of the 4th century in Canosa, an interesting example of cultural assimilation, but the orantes are very typical of this city, and there are no Greek equivalents in this scale for personal use. It is clear that the three small holes left in the bottom of the statues may have served to attach them to a platform for a funerary procession where they always appeared in pairs. The gestures of lamentation and the wrinkled foreheads are appropriate for mourners.
- 8 Cliff Schorer, President of the Board of the Worcester Art Museum, added information about the provenance of Orante 3, which is currently in a private collection.
- 9 Susan Costello, Objects Conservator of the Straus Center at the Harvard University Art Museums spoke on the conservation and the technical study of the two orante statues in WAM. The first orante was in many fragments and subsequently was disassembled into over 100 pieces. Grime and restoration materials covered much of the surfaces. Susan cleaned the surfaces with a laser, which preserved the original layer and archaeological patina. Some pink coloration was found on the back of statue, which could have been the original color, and fluorescence under UV light suggested rose madder. The pieces were reassembled, and losses were filled and painted. The previous restoration fragments were retained as part of the object's history and in order to present a unified whole. During her treatment Susan found mention and photos of the other WAM statue that had been deaccessioned in 1946. Through a connection at Sotheby's, the statue was rediscovered on the art market around 2008, and was

(re)purchased in a private sale by WAM. The second orante was much dirtier and more heavily restored. It also was disassembled. Overfill material and the lacquer coating on the statue were removed with solvent gels, and then the surface was cleaned with a laser. No polychromy was found. The statue was reassembled, filled, and painted. On the second orante, no restoration fragments were retained, as the losses were not distracting enough to warrant this. Repairs were dated by TL to within the last 200 years, but photograph revealed that they happened before 1927. The too-small head of the first orante was later removed. In comparing the two orantes, it was determined that they were made differently. The first orante was made in two halves that had an abundance of toolmarks and fingerprints. The second orante was made as a single piece.

- 10 Philip Klausmeyer, Conservation Scientist and Painting Conservator at WAM, reported on comparative technical analysis. Cross-sections brought up questions regarding fabrication techniques, and also informed conservation treatments. Orante one : Fired terracotta was coated with kaolin, then plaster made of calcium sulfate (an early restoration layer ?), then three layers of a smaller particle size—definitely restoration layers. No grime appeared under restoration layers in the cross-section sample—perhaps suggesting that what remained of the original surface was heavily cleaned or scrubbed prior to restoration. Thermal Gravimetric Analysis (TGA) showed the kaolin layer to be unfired. SEM-EDX elemental analysis revealed that the upper three restoration layers all contained lead white. The lead white presence was critical in the success of the figure’s laser cleaning. The second orante did not have the same layers. Here a relatively thin lead white layer was found under what is thought to be the original kaolin. This raises the question whether or not an initial thinly applied white lead preparation layer is unique to certain types of orantes, perhaps even indicative of a specific workshop, function, or specific production period. Cross-section analysis of the third orante did not show evidence of the initial thin, white lead preparation layer. The kaolin of the second and third orante had more significant staining than the first orante, although this is likely due to their post-production /treatment history.

ABSTRACTS

It is worthwhile to visit Canosa to get a sense of the archaeological contexts—the rock cut tombs within which the figures were found. The history of these tombs comprises a series of discoveries, losses, and rediscoveries. Most of the tombs can be visited today.

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