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on Ancient Bronzes

edited by Dávid Bartus, Zsolt Mráv and Melinda Szabó

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Budapest 2024



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Budapest, 20–24 September 2022

Edited by
Dávid BARTUS – Zsolt MRÁV – Melinda SZABÓ

Budapest, 2024

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Small bronzes as votive offerings from the Sanctuary of Diana in Nemi

A preliminary analysis on their context and iconography

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Abstract: The Sanctuary of Diana in Nemi is one of the most important archaeological sites in central Italy: the complex, built on different levels, consisted of three terraces with a great temple, a theatre, a nymphaeum and also other facilities, dating from the VII century BC to the Severian Age, with traces of destruction in the IV century AD.

Since 2003, the University of Perugia carried on archaeological excavations in various parts of the Sanctuary, cooperating with both the Soprintendenza of Lazio and, from 2014, the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität of München.

A considerable amount of materials has been brought to light from the site, of which votive bronze small-casted figurines are just a small part. Many of them represent gods, heroes and normal human beings, but there are also parts of human bodies or gods features.

So, aim of this paper will be a preliminary analysis of these figurines, primarily to identify the subjects and then to describe their productive techniques. Finally, starting from the contexts of provenance, each one will be described and put in relation with parallels, not only to find a suitable chronology, but also to understand the meaning behind their use in such an important historical and archaeological place.

Keywords: Nemi, sanctuary, offerings, bronze, figurines

Introduction

The Sanctuary of Diana in Nemi is one of the most suggestive places related to roman Gods and nature. Studies and excavations prove that the site was known since the Neolithic era and in the Middle Bronze Age,¹ but it was surely during the archaic period that the sanctuary really developed and also became a political centre: as a matter of fact, after the battle of Ariccia in 504 BC, “[...] some of the Latin cities attempted to break away from the Roman dominion, taking advantage of the internal turmoil in the city following the end of the monarchy”.² Basing on a fragment of Cato, in Nemi there was an inscription with a list of Latin people who cleared and consecrated a space in the woods surrounding *Aricia*, called *lucus Dianius*, as a new headquarters to meet freely and far from the supremacy of Rome.³ Then, starting from the 5th–4th century BC, traces of cults have been discovered thanks to the excavations.⁴ During the 2nd century BC, various parts of the struc-

1 For the Neolithic period, [BRUNI 2014](#); for the middle Bronze Age, basing on samples coming from the middle terrace of the Sanctuary and calibrated with ¹⁴C ([BRUNI – CALDERONI 2009](#), 309–310).

2 [DIOSONO 2020b](#), 21.

3 [DIOSONO 2020b](#), 19–21.

4 [DIOSONO 2014a](#), 42–43.

tures were rebuilt and reorganized following the scenographic and monumental characteristics of Hellenistic architecture—like others sanctuaries in ancient Latium at the same time—and the Sanctuary kept growing—religiously and financially—until the 2nd century AD, when there are traces of restoration. It remained active until the 4th century AD, when Christianity took place and many ancient religious sites were abandoned, destroyed and forgotten⁵.

The main goddess of the sanctuary was Diana, in her triple aspect of huntress, protector of child-birth and guardian of the Afterworld,⁶ but there were also small deities like Orestes (son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra), Virbius (a local and bucolic god whose identity and connections with Hyppolitus are still controversial⁷), Egeria (ancient goddess of water sources linked with Diana and the site of Nemi⁸) and Isis with Bubastis (this is related to a large diffusion of Egyptian cults during the Empire and it is the reason why some very ancient roman goddesses were addressed and identified with her, like Fortuna or Fortuna-Tyche in *Praeneste*⁹).

The site of the sanctuary was known since the 16th century, but the first excavations took place a century after and went on for years. Some of the most important were the ones made by Lord Savile-Lumley at the end of the Nineteenth century: since he kept on finding a huge amount of objects, the Orsini family, who owned the land, decided to send him away with part of the materials and to proceed the excavation on its own.¹⁰ This led to the development of modern collections: Lord Savile-Lumley brought his objects to Nottingham,¹¹ England, while the Orsini family sold her findings, that went part to Denmark and part remained in Italy, not counting what ended in America, especially in Boston and Philadelphia.¹² Eventually, the most recent excavations started in 1989 thanks to the Soprintendenza Archeologica del Lazio and kept going on in cooperation with the University of Perugia since 2003, under the scientific direction of Professor Filippo Coarelli and, at a later time, with the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität of München since 2014, under the scientific direction of Doctor Francesca Diosono.¹³

The contexts

At this regard, speaking of the broader context, the Sanctuary of Diana extends along the northern side of Nemi lake, counting the lake itself, a very dense wood (the ancient *nemus*) and three artificial terraces full of buildings and structures. Part of the upper terrace consists of a large *nymphaeum* (the

5 DIOSONO 2014a, 44–45.

6 Diana *Trivia*, Diana *Triplex* or Diana *Triformis* has been investigated for a long time, starting from a *denarius* of *P. Accoleius Lariscolus* dating to 43 BC and passing through numismatic (ALFÖLDI 1960), religious (GREEN 2007, 112–144) and archaeological studies (DIOSONO 2014a, 44–45; LANCINI – DIOSONO 2023, 241–244).

7 DIOSONO 2014b.

8 DE MINICIS 2014.

9 A marble inscription dedicated to the *fana* of Isis and Bubastis and a lot of findings for the goddess have been found during the excavations, many of them dating to the first half of the 1st century AD and related to Caligula: the emperor was so fond of the Egyptian goddess to celebrate the *navigium Isidis* on one of his ship (GHINI – PALLADINO 2012).

10 BLAGG 1993, 103–109.

11 BLAGG 1983a.

12 It seems that, at the end of the Nineteenth Century, Professor Arthur L. Frothingham and Carl Jacobsen bought many finds coming from Nemi, that ended up at the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia and at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (GULDAGER BILDE 1998; MOLTESEN 2000).

13 I take the occasion to heartily thank Doctor Diosono, not only for including me in the awesome project regarding Nemi, but also for giving me the possibility to study all the metal objects coming from the Sanctuary.

other parts are private property, out of reach for every kind of excavation), that is connected to the lower terrace with a stair going through the middle terrace, the smaller one. On the contrary, the lower terrace consists of an enclosure, parts of different *porticus*, a series of parallel rooms traditionally known as ‘*celle donarie*’ since the 19th century, many other facilities with various functions and the temple. The Great Temple or Temple K, as it is also traditionally known, was a majestic structure with three building phases, dating from the end of the 6th century BC and the 5th century BC to the first half of the 1st century BC. It stands in the middle of the lower terrace and all the small bronze figurines that we are about to discuss here come from surrounding levels. The first building phase corresponds to the Latin period, dating from the end of the 6th century BC to the whole 5th century BC, while the second phase A starts from the end of the 4th century BC, after the dissolution of the Latin League in 338 BC. The second phase B dates to 270–225 BC and the third phase to the 1st century BC (75–50).¹⁴

A very large number of sondages has been done inside and outside the structures of the Sanctuary: as the plan shows (Fig. 1), there are different areas with the letters A, C, F, G1, G2, I and J for the inner rooms and others with the letters B, D, E, H and K for the outer spaces, all around the temple. From every single area comes a huge amount of various objects and materials and, for the bronze part, there are many interesting items like this nucleus of full-casted small figurines. The majority of them comes from the outer parts of the temple, right in front of it, but from levels that have many differences in chronology.

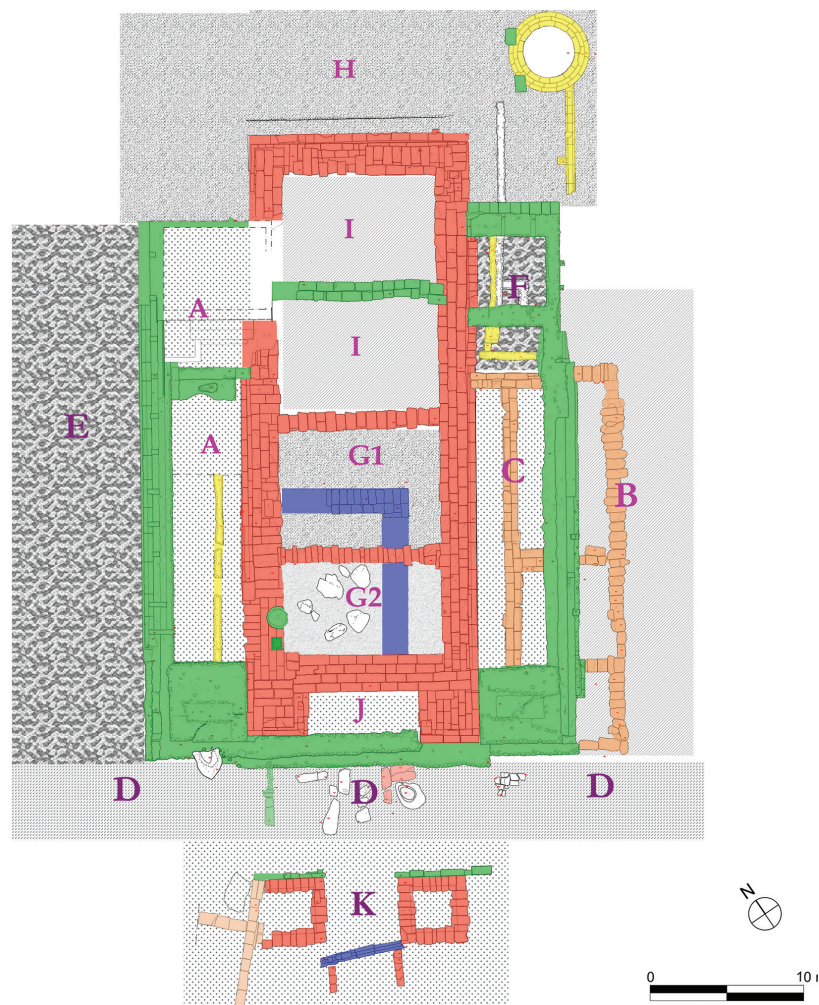


Fig. 1. Plan of the Temple of the Sanctuary in Nemi with the names of the different surveys (plan: F. Diosono).

Starting from the most ancient samples, this nucleus is composed by:

- two female standing figurines and part of a hand holding an attribute, coming from the destruction of the slide that probably gave access to the temple of the first phase (US 9544, US 9546);
- part of a foot from a level laying on the podium of the second phase, later included in the podium of the third phase (US 8930);
- three female standing figurines, one sitting female figurine with an infant and one male standing figurine, coming from the K area, probably from the second or even third phase (US 9070, US 9434, US 9512, US 9598);
- one male standing figurine and part of a hand holding an attribute from some levelling actions of the front area for the second or third phase (US 9165, US 9289);
- one female standing figurine coming from the levelling for a new floor in front of the temple during the Julio-Claudian period, but probably pertaining to a previous deposit (US 9427);
- one female standing figurine, one small herm with a pedestal, a very stylized male figurine, part of a hand, part of an arm and part of an arm holding a jug. These are more difficult to understand, because they have been found in a very large and heterogeneous level in the K area (US 8032), that was in some way connected to the third phase of the temple, but that was also devastated by modern excavations and other activities during the nineteenth century.

Finally, there are four more samples surely coming from non-reliable contexts and representing two standing female figurines and a stylized female figure (US 8945, US 9395, US 9413) that just dates to interventions and activities always related to the 19th century.

Iconography

In this heterogeneous group of items, we can distinguish four male figures, twelve female figures and nine parts of bigger objects, many of them clearly related to female subjects. None of them has been restored, so it may happen that some details, facial features and small attributes or objects are difficult to see—and understand—due to dirt and corrosion. I have summarized them in seven groups, based on their aspect, clothing, gesture and attributes.

The first group is the one obviously connected to the goddess Diana. She is recognizable in these six figurines by her usual outfit, consisting of a loose-fitting and knee-length chiton, pinned on the shoulders and tied with a belt under the breasts; she also wears boots and has her hair styled both with a knot on top of the head or with two braided-style locks around the face, finishing in a low ponytail on her back. According to the numerous representations of Diana, the *Lexicon Iconographicum* describes a lot of her characteristic positions, but with our items it is very difficult to define what she is acting for, because hands and attributes are missing and we can just try to infer case by case. For example, two of the figurines are represented standing with her left hand abandoned along the side and the right hand extended forward, maybe with some kind of attribute that now is missing, the posture and the gesture are similar to the representations of Diana offering a libation, standing with a *phiale* in her right hand¹⁵ (Fig. 2.c–d). Two other figurines portrait the goddess standing, with the right hand on the waist and the left hand holding something, maybe a torch: as a matter of fact, some parallels can lead to think of a Diana *Dadophora*,¹⁶ but also of an impetuous

15 LIMC II, 1, 695–696, nn. 387–389; LIMC II, 1, 645–649, n. 330. There are multiple types of this portrait, all basing on a statue—now in Paris—who is likely coming from Nemi (LIMC II, 1, 645, n. 250, Versailles Type). There are also a lot of similar examples in different kinds of action in roman small bronzes (LIMC II, 1, 813–814, nn. 67–98).

16 LIMC II, 1, 655–661, nn. 496–498.

Diana with a short spear in her raised hand, as she is also known from gems and coins¹⁷ (Fig. 2.a–b). Finally, two of them are recognizable as Diana but, at the same time, they are too worn and corroded or not as good in details, to understand what the goddess was up to (Fig. 2.e–f).



Fig. 2. Small votive bronzes representing the goddess Diana (Photo: F. Grossi).

The second group has just one item, representing a female subject wearing a long tunic with sleeves and also a long veil draped around her waist and head, laying on the shoulders. She is standing, with her left hand holding something similar to a plant or a flower¹⁸ and her right hand extended forward, probably holding some other kind of attribute. There is a lot to debate about this figurine, since the subject presents many different characteristics, starting from her aspect. Her clothes reflect kind of a sacral behaviour and her gesture—the gaze pointed above, the arm extended forward—indicate a more mature composure, a stronger awareness, if compared to the wilderness and freedom of the Dianas of the first group. Moreover, despite we can see the right hand is missing something, the presence of a flower or a plant as an attribute in her left one is really significant, because it could lead to a certain identification. Unfortunately, the figurine is really encrusted and all we can see are three stems, each one with its top enlarged in a shape similar to a pinecone. Regarding the general aspect of the figurine, there are some parallels with representations of Ceres, especially on gems and coins,¹⁹ but no one is a perfect match with this item and this goddess seems too far from the context of Nemi. However, there is the possibility of a thin link between Ceres and Diana: first of all, considering that, as already discussed, in Nemi the goddess has the triple identity of Diana, Selene and Hecate, she is somehow related to Ceres due to the fact that Hecate helped Demeter finding her daughter with flaming torches, as is described in the Homeric hymn to Demeter.²⁰ Considering also that Hecate, as the silent goddess of the Afterworld, has the asphodel as her

17 LIMC II, 1, 800–805, n. 19/2. For gems and coins, LIMC II, 1, 827–828, n. 259, and LIMC II, 1, 823–824, nn. 195, 204.

18 Like one of the figures that are represented on the *denarius* of P. Accoleius Lariscolus (see Footnote 4).

19 She is represented standing, with a torch in her right hand and ears of corn in the left one (LIMC IV, 1, 893–901, nn. 61–41; 112–119).

20 Homeric, Hymn to Demeter, 59–61.

symbol—because it was said to grow alongside the graves²¹—and that the flower is also dedicated to Demeter,²² maybe we can suggest a possible identification of the figurine with a rare small bronze representation of Diana/Hecate, holding three asphodels in her left hand as a symbol of her triple aspect and with a missing torch in her right one. Otherwise, she could also be a worshipper, *capite velato*, offering a flower to the goddess or maybe using a particular kind of flower that was relevant for the cult²³ (Fig. 3.a).

The third group consists of three items representing a female subject in a long chiton without sleeves and with a belt under the breasts, standing with her right hand holding a *phiale* and the left hand on the waist or either raised or bent forward with some kind of unreadable attribute. One of them is clearly wearing a *stephane* on her head, which is curious since this attribute has a particular connotation that varies if it is worn by a goddess or by a woman (Fig. 4.b), while the others have less detailed features and are difficult to identify due to their bad conditions. There are similarities with some representations of the roman goddess Juno (and here the *stephane* could be an indicative attribute)²⁴, but it is unlikely that a so different and powerful goddess was also worshipped with a secondary role in a sanctuary completely devoted to Diana herself, especially considering that there was an important sanctuary completely devoted to Juno in the nearby *Lanuvium*. So, a possible explanation could be the one who sees these figurines as simple representations of priestesses or female worshippers, standing for a libation in front of the goddess²⁵ (Fig. 4.a–c).

Also the fourth group has just a single item, that was clearly made with some artistic purposes, due to its flattering features and the pathos of the scene. The object represents a woman, sitting on something that is now missing, and firmly holding a baby with her left arm, while the right one is curved as to protect him or to cover herself while breastfeeding. She wears a long tunic that leaves her feet uncovered and has a veil that is draped around her waist and gets to cover head and shoulders. The presence of sleeves is not sure because there are some carved lines that resemble the collar of the tunic or maybe the craftsman ultimately tried to represent her breasts. The woman faces right



Fig. 3. Small votive bronze representing Diana/Hecate and bronze applique representing a nursing scene (Photo: F. Grossi).

21 Lucianus, *Cataplus* 2; *Menippus* 11 and 21.

22 For more associations between the asphodel and other chthonic deities, see REECE 2007, 396.

23 A very similar item is now in Nottingham Museum, identified probably as a priestess, with a patera in her right hand and maybe a fruit in her left hand (BLAGG 1983a, 56, N. 626).

24 BABELON – BLANCHET 1895, 20, nn. 41–43.

25 Some parallels are now in Nottingham (BLAGG 1983a, 54–56, N 615; N 627; N 631; N 632).



Fig. 4. Small votive bronzes representing female worshippers (Photo: F. Grossi).

and her expression seems to be stressed or fearing something, but while she is well executed and with some nice details, the infant she is holding is just approximately done, with the body barely visible within the folds of the fabric (Fig. 3.b). From the iconographic perspective, there are parallels with representations of *Mater Matuta*, Mother Earth (or *Tellus*) or the ancient *Diva Rumina*,²⁶ but especially with a generic *Dea Nutrix*,²⁷ recalling images of fertility and growth from the Greek concept of *kourotrophia*. As a matter of fact, a lot of clay figurines representing nursing mothers is known,²⁸ especially coming from the ancient *Latium*: some of them represent only mothers with their child—like the sample from Nemi²⁹—while others frequently portray mothers enthroned with also a male figure along their side, under the same veil or mantle, but also two female figures. They usually come from sanctuaries, like the one of *Mater Matuta* in *Satricum*, the one of Juno in *Gabii*, the one of La Vignaccia in *Caere* and also from Rome, *Veii Portonaccio* and *Veii Campetti*.³⁰ So, being *Diana Nemorensis* also protector of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding in part of her *triformis* essence (*Diana Lucina*), we can hypothesize that this figurine is not the representation of a goddess, but more likely of a thankful mother or *nutrix*.³¹ Furthermore, from a functional perspective, we can say that the object was probably not a votive offering *per se*, but just a part:

26 She is cited by Varro as an ancient goddess related to the *Ficus Ruminalis* (HADZSITS 1936).

27 LIMC VI, 1, 936–938, nn. 1–18. A very interesting study on the subject is a PhD Dissertation discussed by Matthew Fittock in Reading in 2017 (FITTOCK 2017).

28 They are known from Gaul and dating to the 2nd century AD, but also in Britain at the same time, probably as objects of trade or personal possession of immigrants (JENKINS 1957, 38).

29 There are also many votive terracottas like the ones now in Nottingham Museum (BLAGG 1983b, 46–52, N 66; N 133).

30 PEDRUCCI 2018; PEDRUCCI 2020.

31 This is not an isolated case: in 1895, a bronze spear point now in Villa Giulia (Inv. no. 6754) was found in a votive deposit near the Sanctuary, with an inscription by a *noutrix Paperia* (CIL I², 45; BARNABEI 1895; HOLLAND 2008).

as a matter of fact, it seems designed to be placed on top of something with a square angle, so maybe the mother/*nutrix* was sitting on a throne, now missing, or was a sort of *applique* or decoration for a wooden box or a *cista*.



Fig. 5. Small votive bronzes representing Mars, Priapus and Apollo (Photo: F. Grossi).

The fifth group has three items that represent male subjects: the first one is easily recognizable as a small herm of *Priapus* emerging from a pillar, covered with a hood but with the phallus erected and emerging by under his vest (Fig. 5.b). Parallels are known in different kind of objects such as gems, paintings and statues,³² but it is very interesting to note that there are also similarities with small chthonic deities like the *Genii Cucullati* that, in some cases, are represented with their phallus evident under the cape.³³ This similarity is quite interesting, not only because all these deities are related to wealth and fertility, but also because the *Genii Cucullati* are often interpreted as healing spirits thanks to their connection with *Hygieia* and *Aesculapius*.³⁴ So, finding an ithyphallic ex-voto like this in the sanctuary of Nemi could be both an auspicious gift to the goddess to obtain something in exchange or the sign of a thankful worshipper that has seen his prayers fulfilled. The second subject is most likely Apollo: we can see him standing, completely naked, with his right hand on his waist and his left arm missing, but with some remains of clothing on the shoulder, leaning on a pillar as

32 LIMC VIII, 1, 1028–1044, nn. 24, 28, 37, 55, 133, 147.

33 Despite being very often represented in a set of three (such as the *matres* or *matronae*), there are some lamps and statuettes of a single *genius cucullatus* in an ithyphallic mode, probably connected to a fertility cult (BOLLA 2000).

34 ANTAL 2014, 201.

he is frequently represented, especially in small terracotta votives³⁵ (Fig. 5.c). The third one is a little more difficult, since the subject is very encrusted, missing a lot of parts and not showing any detail. Francesca Diosono suggests an interpretation as Orestes, since the western *cella* of the temple—built in the second quarter of the 1st century BC—was dedicated to him,³⁶ but the figurine could also be recognizable as Mars. He is young and beardless, standing with his right arm up, originally holding a spear, and he is wearing an armour and a Corinthian helmet without crest (the statuette is missing it on the top of his head); he also seems to carry a *patera* in his left hand. Even though it is very curious to find an *ex-voto* representing a warrior god in Nemi, the identification seems convincing: this Mars can be related to the Type C (*Censorenfries*) described by Erika Simon in the *Lexicon Iconographicum*, basing on the figure of Mars on the relief with a *lustrum* scene pertaining to the altar of *Domitius Aenobarbus*, and it is extremely common in small bronze representations;³⁷ also, the addition of the *patera* as his attribute is documented in mixed types,³⁸ maybe to make him at the same time immediately recognizable and more suitable as a gift to Diana (Fig. 5.a).



Fig. 6. Parts of small votive figurines from the Sanctuary (Photo: F. Grossi).

In the sixth group there are all the small parts pertaining to bigger objects, some of them votive figurines, but some also statues of medium dimensions, like four arms and hands: two of them are female, very well done, polished and preserved, one holding a jug³⁹ and one with a bracelet; the third one is probably also female, with a bracelet, but in very bad conditions, and the fourth comes

35 Similar items for position and gesture can be seen in Nottingham, despite the identification is unsure or debated (BLAGG 1983b, 52, N 46; N 48; N 118).

36 DIOSONO 2020a, 96–97.

37 LIMC II, 1, 520–521, nn. 90–107.

38 LIMC II, 1, 520–521, nn. 108–117.

39 This one (Fig. 6.b) resembles the statuary type of the Pouring Satyr of Praxiteles for its position and for the gesture of pouring from the jug.

from a small figurine, but there are no elements to identify its owner (Fig. 6.a–d). There are also a foot, two torches (one of them is held by a hand) and two quivers (also held by a hand), so probably they were all parts of statues of Diana because the foot is wearing a characteristic boot while the torch and the quiver are attributes of the goddess (*Diana Lucifera*) (Fig. 6.e–i).

Finally, there are two more figurines that are really different in style and that do not seem to correspond perfectly to Roman gods but to more ancient deities. The first one is a stylized male subject with long legs and arms that are firmly pressed along the sides of the body, almost without shoulders; the head is very elongated too, with a face that shows incredible big and empty eyes, flat nose and round cheeks, with many hair and a beard. The object is very encrusted so it is not possible to see every detail, but the figure seems naked or, more probably, the stylization of its traits is also a choice to make it neutral, since there are no visible male attributes (Fig. 7.a). The second one is a female figure, also really stylized: she is thin and slender but with her calf muscles, breasts and bum prominent, with rough and undefined features. She seems to wear a partial hood or a headdress—her hair are coming out of it on the back—and a vest from her waist to feet, underlined just with some carved diagonal lines; her breasts, arms and shoulders seem to be naked (Fig. 7.b). In both cases, style, features and shape suggest an earlier chronology and similar parallels confirm that these two objects may refer to the Etruscan period. The first one could be read as a young *ephebus*,⁴⁰ with a slender and elongated figure⁴¹—and the absence of male attributes could also be part of his representation⁴²—, while the second one is very similar to the Etruscan bronze *korai*, representing young girls often with a pointed cap or *tutulus*. For this subject there are many convincing parallels coming from the whole Etruscan area, such as Vulci,⁴³ *Satricum*⁴⁴ and Arezzo. Basing on the description of this last deposit, now in the Archaeological Museum of Florence, there are two types of *korai*: while the recent one shows a little bit of movement with the left-hand rising part of the chiton, the ancient one consists of figurines with their arms firmly pressed alongside the body, probably dating to the half of the 6th century BC.⁴⁵ Surely, at the present moment of the studies, we cannot say that this is the exact chronology also for the item from Nemi yet, but it is a good starting point for making some hypothesis.

Conclusions

So, in conclusion, regarding the use and function of these figurines, the majority of them can be clearly read as a votive offering, because they were given to the sanctuary as a gift to obtain something in exchange or as a gift to thank for something they already obtained, probably praying one god or another basing on their needs. All the objects were made with the full casting technique and sometimes it is possible to see on them how the moulds were ruined or too worn out due to a long use, leaving less details or imperfections on the surfaces and making their traits difficult to interpret. Also, bronze was not the only metal used in this process: since many of them show a little protuberance under their feet (Fig. 2.a–b, Fig. 4.b, Fig. 5.c, Fig. 6.e, Fig. 7.a–b), it is reasonable to

40 MONACO 1942, 520–521, n. 3.

41 There are many interesting observations about this point, that can help to hypothesize why these subject were represented this way by the Etruscans (TERROSI ZANCO 1961), like the so-called ‘Ombre della sera’.

42 A similar figurine is now in Nottingham, dating back to the 6th century BC (BLAGG 1983a, 54–55, N 650).

43 GUARDUCCI 1936, 41–42.

44 BONACASA 1957, 561–563, nn. 17–19.

45 The votive deposit found in Arezzo has many bronze statuettes that are very similar to the one found in Nemi. They were probably pertaining to a sanctuary outside the city and were found in 1869 by the antique dealer Francesco Leoni along with pottery, small jewellery and *aes rude* (LAZZERI 1927; BOCCI PACINI 1980).

think that they had a pedestal that was carved with a hole on top to fix the figurine and that was also filled with lead to increase the grip. So, a religious purpose for all these items seems to be the right choice, basing on the context and the circumstances of their finding, except in the case of the mother and baby figurine, for which it is probably better an interpretation as an *applique* for something more complex, as previously discussed.



Fig. 7. Probably Etruscan votive figurines representing a stylized man and a kore (Photo: F. Grossi).

On the contrary, about a specific chronology, at the moment we can just infer some information basing on data coming from stratigraphy and on their different styles, starting from the fact that there are many standardized items. The most ancient among them are probably the two figurines with an Etruscan style (Fig. 7.a–b): despite the fact that they come from not very reliable layers destroyed by many excavations during the 19th century (US 8032, US 9413), they seem to have good parallels with other items dating to the 6th century BC. Two bronzes of Diana and a quiver come from the destruction of the slide that gave access to the temple of the first phase (US 9544, US 9546), so they are probably dating between the end of the 5th century BC and the beginning of the second phase A at the end of the 4th century BC (Fig. 2.d,f, Fig. 6.h). The figurines coming from the K area (US 9070, US 9434, US 9512, US 9598) can be related to the second or, most likely, to the third phase (Fig. 2.a,e, Fig. 3.b, Fig. 4.c, Fig. 5.a) and the same goes for the two samples (US 9165, US 9289) coming from some levelling actions of the front area (Fig. 5.c, Fig. 6.g); probably, also the single item from the Julio-Claudian layers is to consider residual and pertaining, at least, at the third phase (75–50 BC) (Fig. 3.a). Truth is that figurines like these were made in series, especially during roman times, and had a great market in the past, so it becomes essential to relate to other materials from the same contexts in order to obtain more reliable chronologies for each one of them. On the other hand, some of these items—like the stylized young man or the pseudo-Etruscan *kore*—are evidently more ancient, and their presence will be very useful to confirm, maybe, the chronology of other items in their contexts.

As a matter of fact, at the present moment, many further steps need to be done before trying to discuss the general outline of metal findings from the sanctuary, starting from an inventory of all the items, of which these figurines are just a part. Obviously, and luckily, a huge team of scholars is always working in and on Nemi—as it is expected for a complex like this—, so I hope that this short insight will be followed soon by new interesting and extensive researches.

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