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De-Monumentalisation and Disempowerment of the Chiefly House in Late Archaic Monte Iato (Western Sicily, 460/50 BCE)

Abstract: *Zwischen 460 und 450 v. Chr. erfuhr der ca. 30 km südwestlich von Palermo gelegene Monte Iato eine umfassende De-Monumentalisierung seines kolonialen Zentrums beim ‚Aphrodite-Tempel‘. Das spätarchaische Haus wurde als Residenz des regionalen Chiefs rituell zerstört, die hydrotechnischen Anlagen als Manifestationen kolonialen Wissens de-funktionalisiert und das Kultbild im ‚Aphrodite-Tempel‘ als Ausdruck kolonial-religiösen Synkretismus zerschlagen. Statt Anzeichen eines gewaltsamen Aufstandes deutet alles auf ein zeremonielles Großereignis hin. Dieses feierte das Ende des spätarchaischen Hauses und betonte durch archaische Riten die Rückkehr zu einer vorkolonialen Lebensweise. Dieser Vorgang symbolisierte einen Bruch mit der kolonialen Vergangenheit. Die Ruine des zerstörten spätarchaischen Hauses wurde in der folgenden postkolonialen Ära selbst zu einem Monument, das sowohl den Niedergang des kolonialen Chiefs als auch das Wiedererstarken der traditionellen Identität der lokalen Bevölkerung symbolisierte.*

1 Introduction

Monte Iato is located in the western interior of Sicily, around 30 km southwest of Palermo, and it marks the end of a mountain range that extends into a valley basin between the Iato River and the Belice River (Fig. 1). The settlement on the hilltop dates back to the seventh century BCE, situated on the edge between Phoenician migration

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and Greek colonisation, which made it a vital location for transport routes and trans-regional exchanges. It played a crucial role in the process of ‘Mediterraneanization’, both in terms of colonial power-building and the subsequent re-indigenisation.¹

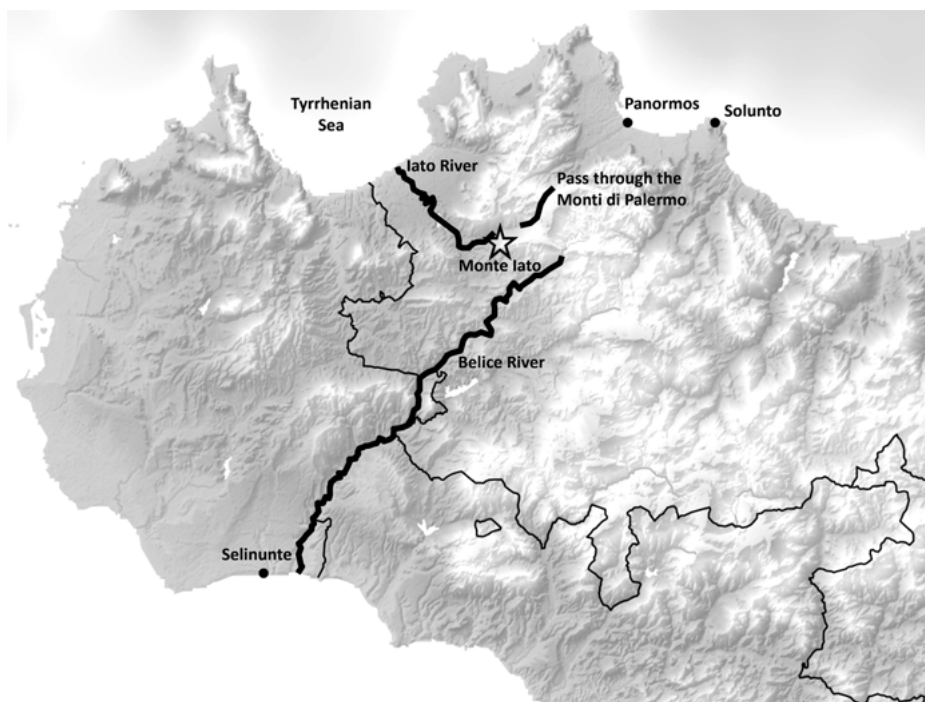


Fig. 1: Ancient Western Sicily, with referenced sites.

During the early sixth century BCE, the open-air cult site in the middle of the mountain's high plateau became increasingly central to the lives of the Iaitines and the sur-

¹ Ian Morris, “Mediterraneanization,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18, no. 2 (2003): 30–55; Erich Kistler, “Lokal divergierende Antworten auf die Kraterisierung West- und Mittelsiziliens (6./5. Jh. v. Chr.) – Perspektiven des Binnenlandes,” in *Fragmenta Mediterranea – Contatti, tradizioni e innovazioni in Grecia, Magna Grecia, Etruria e Roma: Studi di onore di Christoph Reusser*, ed. Luca Cappuccini et al. (Florence: All’Insegna del Giglio, 2017): 111–31; Tamar Hodos, *The Archaeology of the Mediterranean Iron Age: a Globalising World, c. 1100–600 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Erich Kistler, “The Archaeology of Globalisation Bottom up – Focusing on the Local End of the Scale,” *Ancient West & East* 22 (2023); Carla M. Antonaccio and Timothy Shea, “Colonial Moments: the Locality of Morgantina,” in *The Production of Locality and Empowerment in the Iron Age and Archaic Western Mediterranean*, ed. Erich Kistler et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press).

rounding villages, leading to a socio-religious synoecism.² This process of centralisation reached its first monumental stage around 525 BCE with the first phase of the construction of the Aphrodite Temple, which functioned as a meeting and feasting house for the heads of the prominent households. In the first two decades of the fifth century BCE, the temple was transformed into a proper cult shrine, with an adytum encompassing the cult statue as a divine epiphany, and sacrifices were offered on a newly built altar in the forecourt.³

The transformation of the former meeting house into a proper cult shrine necessitated the construction of a banqueting hall, thus leading to the creation of a monumental building known as the Late Archaic house (LA house), which was erected to the west of the Aphrodite Temple. This palace-like residence in Greek architectural style featured banquet rooms upstairs that were decorated with red and white coloured plaster and furnished with elegant reclining couches (Fig. 2). Together with its spatial facilities and furnishings on the ground floor, this mansion exhibited facets of economic surplus, sumptuous living, diacritical feasting, and patron-client relationships. The LA house physically embodied the new power and authority of the person or household that built it, and symbolised regional leadership. By directing and orchestrating the ceremonies and rituals at the Aphrodite Temple, the new Iaitinian chiefly House was able to demonstrate its power to include or exclude people from participating in the chiefly cult, thus becoming the new central arena for the fabrication of social positions within and between the regional communities.

The act of building monuments to establish a colonial power structure and create a hierarchical imbalance among the Iaitines has previously been reported.⁴ This arti-

2 Birgit Öhlinger et al., “Monte Iato: Negotiating Indigeneity in an Archaic Contact Zone in the Interior of Western Sicily,” in *Sicily: Heritage of the World*, ed. Dirks Booms and Peter John Higgs, British Museum Research Publication 222 (London: British Museum Press, 2019): 9–12; Thomas Dauth and Erich Kistler, “‘Einheimisch’-Werden auf dem Monte Iato (West Sizilien): Die frühe Phase des Heiligtums beim ‘Aphrodite-Tempel’ (575/50–460/50 v. Chr.),” in *Montafoner Gipfeltreffen 5: Religion in den Bergen*, ed. Michael Kasper et al. (Vienna: Böhlau, 2023): 193–222.

3 Erich Kistler et al., “Zwischen Aphrodite-Tempel und spätarchaischem Haus II: Die Innsbrucker Kampagnen 2015 und 2016 auf dem Monte Iato (Sizilien),” *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien* 87 (2018): 282–87; Öhlinger et al., “Negotiating Indigeneity in an Archaic Contact Zone”: 12–14; Birgit Öhlinger et al., “Lifting the Lid: Cooking Pots and Ritual Consumption Practices at Monte Iato (Western Sicily, Sixth–Mid-Fifth Century BC),” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (2021): 165–92; Erich Kistler et al., “Feasting on the Edge – Cosmopolitan Versus Traditional Consumptionscapes in Archaic Monte Iato (Sixth to Fifth Century BC),” in *Feasting with the Greeks: Towards a Social Archaeology of Ritual Consumption in the Greek World*, ed. Xenia Charalambidou et al. (Oxford: University Press, in press).

4 Erich Kistler and Martin Mohr, “Monte Iato: Two Late Archaic Feasting Places between the Local and the Global,” in *Sanctuaries and the Power of Consumption: Networking and the Formation of Elites in the Archaic Western Mediterranean World: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, 20th–23rd March 2012*, ed. Erich Kistler et al., *Philippika* 92 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015): 385–415; Erich Kistler and Martin Mohr, “The Archaic Monte Iato: Between Coloniality and

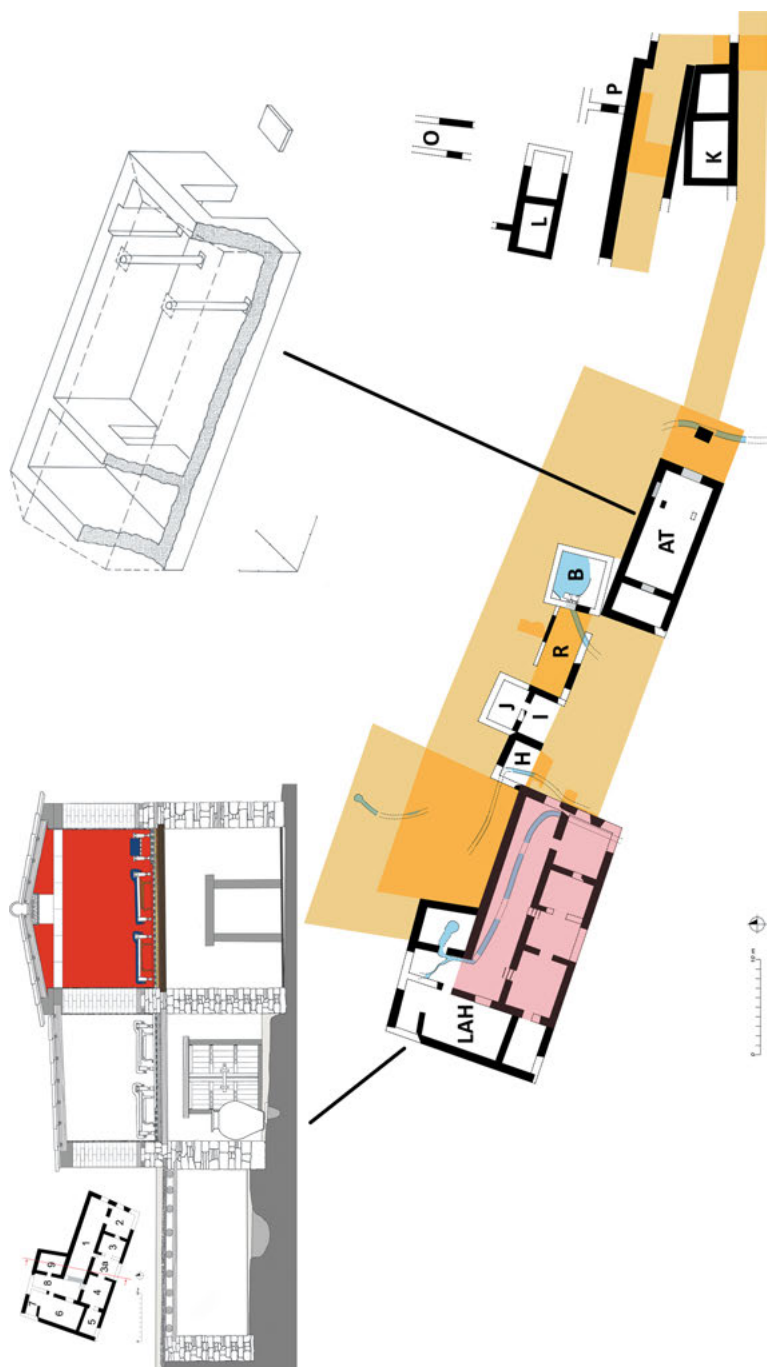


Fig. 2: Plan of the monumentalised area surrounding the Aphrodite Temple (500/480 BCE–470/460 BCE).

cle will not focus on the Greek-influenced empowerment of the LA house⁵ as a chiefly House, however.⁶ Instead, its aim is to discuss how the deconstruction of the LA house through punitive rituals reveals a return to traditional authorities and a seemingly precolonial and more equal social order. This paper will examine the rituals that ended the chiefly power of the LA house by destroying its physical structures around 460 BCE. These rituals involved the use of old and old-fashioned items that reclaimed a precolonial past without central authorities. Thus, this article proposes to consider the ritual closure of the LA house and its surrounding monuments as a pseudo-return to ancestral authority and precolonial segmentarity. This contribution will also survey the archaeological and literary evidence of ritually demolished houses in archaic Latium and Etruria to emphasise the importance of terminating chiefly households in order to return to former, more equal social orders.

In the field of post-colonial studies, scholars have examined the destruction of power structures – whether in literature, art, sculpture, or architecture – as a means of de-monumentalisation, or the dismantling of monuments as focal points around which power seekers create and legitimise their foundational myths, identities, and claims to power, land, and resources.⁷ Finally, drawing on this concept, I will argue that the demol-

Locality,” in *Materielle Kultur und Identität im Spannungsfeld zwischen mediterraner Welt und Mitteleuropa / Material Culture and Identity between the Mediterranean World and Central Europe: Akten der Internationalen Tagung am Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum Mainz, 22.–24. Oktober 2014*, ed. Holger Baitinger, Römisch Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) – Tagungen 27 (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2016): 81–98; Erich Kistler, “The Late Archaic House at Monte Iato: Greek Style Architecture, Ritual Abandonment, and the Politics of Indigeneity in Western Sicily (500–460/50 BC),” *Ancient West & East* 19 (2020): 43–78; Birgit Öhlinger et al., “Lifting the Lid”: 165–92; Erich Kistler, “The Late Archaic House on Monte Iato: Structuring a New Political Identity in Western Sicily’s Interior (ca. 500 BC),” in *Mistaken Identity: Identitäten als Ressourcen im Zentralen Mittelmeerraum*, ed. Veronika Sossau and Kai Riehle, RessourcenKulturen 19 (Tübingen: University Press, 2022): 137–56.

5 The term “house” beginning with a lower case letter is always used here to refer to the built environment as the physical setting of a household. Therefore, the “Late Archaic” house will henceforth be abbreviated as “LA house.”

6 The term “House” beginning with a capital letter refers to the household as a social unit living in a specific physical dwelling. Therefore, the household residing in the “LA house” is called the “chiefly House.” In social architecture theory, the concept of “the house” embodies the social structure of a household (here, “the House”). As a type of actant, it provides a physical space that serves as a “home” for specific action patterns and consequently influences the reactions within its social environment. To delve deeper into this topic, see Bruno Latour, *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 123–24, 180–90 and Theodor Schatzki, “Society as Material Phenomenon,” in *Sociality – Materiality – Practice: Sozialität – Materialität – Praxis*, ed. Tobias Kienlin and Richard Bußmann, Cologne Contributions to Archaeology and Cultural Studies 3 (Bonn: Habelt, 2022): 55–70 on the subject in general, and Kistler, “Structuring a New Political Identity”: 148 on the LA house in Monte Iato in particular.

7 George Steinmetz, “Colonial Melancholy and Fordist Nostalgia: The Ruinscapes of Namibia and Detroit,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schoenle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,

ished LA house itself created a new kind of monument, one that transformed the experience of its ruination into a memorialisation of the return and re-empowerment of a supposed precolonial era. This new post-colonial way of life, which emerged after 460 BCE, is characterised by dispersed settlements, shared resources, and political segmentation.

2 The Ritual Termination of the Monumental Power Matrix in Monte Iato (460/50 BCE)

The central aspect of the monumentalisation of the colonial power system, which was projected and implemented through the LA house as the new chiefly House (Fig. 2: LAH), included the construction of the mansion itself and its annex with Rooms H, I, and J (Fig. 2). It also involved the rebuilding of the Aphrodite Temple as a cult shrine with an adytum and open-air altar, and the ramp to the retention basin (Fig. 2: R and B). The retention basin was located northwest of the Aphrodite Temple (Fig. 2: AT), and it collected stormwater runoff, which was then gradually released to prevent landslides and damage to the rebuilt Aphrodite Temple.

The construction of the spillway had occurred before other structures, such as the ramp and the Aphrodite Temple, were built, making it the first step in the monumentalisation of the power complex between the precursor of the LA house and the Aphrodite Temple's initial phase of construction in the early fifth century BCE.⁸ Around 460 BCE, the decommissioning of the drainage channel, which functioned as an outlet of the retention basin, was a crucial moment in the dismantling of the monumentalised structures of the colonial power matrix. This involved closing off the mouth of the drainage channel with stones (Fig. 3 a–b) and a ritual act that entailed smashing a matt-painted amphora (I-K 6666: Fig. 3 c) made in a regional style (*ceramica dipinta*).

Sherds of the amphora were found on the channel bed by the spillway of the retention basin and between the stones used to close off the outlet structure (Fig. 3 a). Additionally, sherds of a matt-painted jug (I-K 5024: Fig. 3 d) were also discovered, which fit together with another sherd from the same jar that was unearthed in the backfill used in the ritual for covering and closing the ramp (Fig. 3 e: no. 4). The de-

2010): 294–320; Daniel Herwitz, “Monument, Ruin, and Redress in South African Heritage,” *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 86, no. 4 (2011): 232–48; Daniel Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics in the Postcolony* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Manuela Badilla and Carolina Aguilera, “The 2019–2020 Chilean Anti-Neoliberal Uprising: A Catalyst for Decolonial Demonomentalization,” *Memory Studies* 14, no. 6 (2021): 1226–40.

⁸ Erich Kistler et al., *Risultati della settima campagna di scavi dell'Università di Innsbruck sul Monte Iato* (2018) (Innsbruck: Institut für Archäologien, 2018): 7–8, https://www.uibk.ac.at/projects/monte-iato/working-papers/downloads/grabungsergebnisse.2018_italienisch.pdf [accessed 24.04.2023].

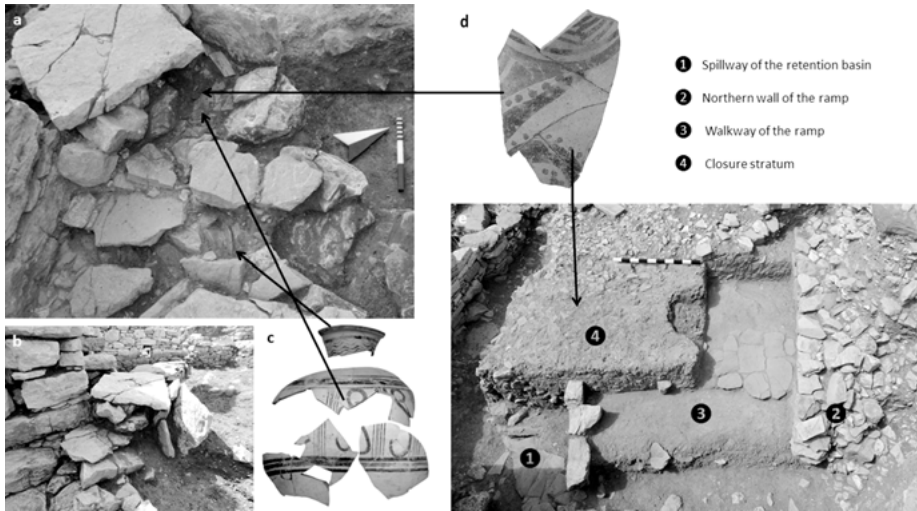


Fig. 3: **a)** Sherds on the channel bed at the spillway of the retention basin; **b)** Stones closing the mouth of the drainage channel; **c)** Matt-painted amphora IK-6666; **d)** Matt-painted jug I-K 5024; **e)** The ramp built over the drainage channel of the retention basin.

commissioning of the retention basin, the drainage channel, and the ramp involved a ritual in which the amphora and the jug played a central role.⁹

The round clay hearth (Fig. 4 a: no. 2) that was placed on the ramp's walkway was likely connected to the ritual for closing the ramp. In the layer of ash resulting from a ritual meal prepared on the hearth, fragments of a local ceremonial drinking and pouring vessel called *atingitoio* (I-K 2405, Fig. 4 b) were found, crushed by the weight of the backfill used to close off the ramp (Fig. 4 a: no. 3).¹⁰ In the same closure stratum,¹¹ a fragment of a miniature clay hut with an incised decoration (I-K 5151, Fig. 4 c) was discovered, intentionally broken as part of the ritual for burying the ramp. After the shattering of the hut model, the left end of the lintel was removed from the pile of sherds; it was subsequently placed in the earth fill covering the ramp as part of the entire hut model (Fig. 4 a: no.3, and Fig. 4 c). The final act of ritually closing the ramp involved displaying and shattering a *dinos* (I-K 3737) and a bowl (I-K 3738), both matt-painted in a regional style, along with a North Aegean transport amphora (I-K 3739).

⁹ Kistler et al., *Risultati della settima campagna di scavi*: 13–15.

¹⁰ Erich Kistler et al., “Zwischen Aphrodite-Tempel und spätarchaischem Haus II: Die Innsbrucker Kampagne 2014 auf dem Monte Iato (Sizilien),” *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien* 84 (2015): 132, 141–42.

¹¹ In Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagne 2014”: 135–36, still misunderstood as part of the backfill beneath the walkway of the ramp.

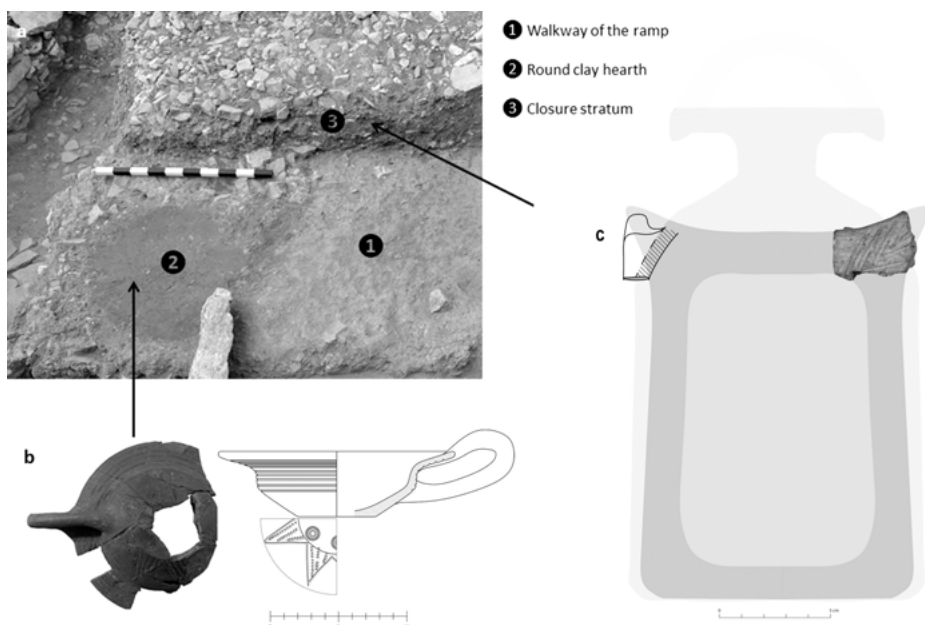


Fig. 4: **a)** The circular clay hearth on the ramp covered by the closing stratum; **b)** *Attingitoio* I-K 2405; **c)** Fragment of a miniature clay hut I-K 5151; **d)** Reconstruction drawing of hut model I-K 5151.

The pile of sherds appeared on the surface of the closure layer (Fig. 5 a–d).¹² Within an alluvium layer (Fig. 5 a) immediately above the backfill used to close off the ramp, sherds of an Attic black-gloss mug (I-K 1157, Fig. 5 e)¹³ were discovered, dating the ritual for closing the ramp to the period before 450 BCE.¹⁴

At about the same time, around 460/50 BCE, the annex of the LA house, which included Rooms H, I, and J, was equally ritually demolished (Fig. 2). This is confirmed by the discovery of fragments of the *attingitoio* (I-K 7331; Fig. 6 a–b) in Room I. These fragments had been unearthed, shattered, and pressed upside down into the floor, indicating that the collapsing walls had crushed them. It appears that the incised and

¹² Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagne 2014”: 135.

¹³ Height: 2.8 cm; base diameter: 8.1 cm; made of orange clay, with black glaze both inside and outside. A clay-ground strip grooved over the clay ground base. On the latter, a central black-glazed dot as well as two black-glazed concentric circles. Similar mugs of Oinochoe Form 8B can be compared with those in: Copenhagen, Musée National Inv. Chr. VIII519: CVA Copenhagen (4) 123 with pl. 185, 10; in Adolphseck, Schloss Fasanerie inv. 63: CVA Adolphseck (1) 28 with pl. 41, 7; in Berlin, Antikensammlung inv. F2608 and F2609: CVA Berlin, Antikensammlung (1) 64 with pl. 40, 4–5; in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 00.339.

¹⁴ Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagne 2014”: 137.

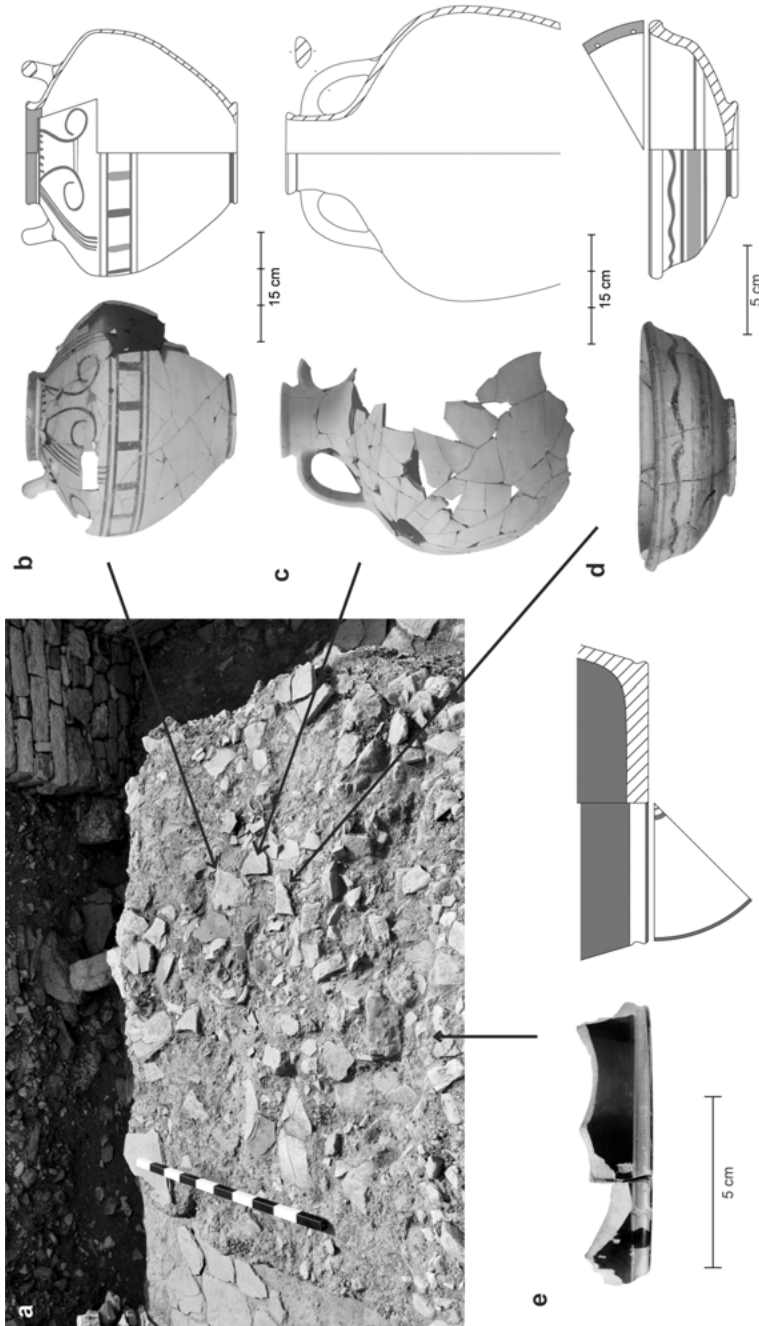


Fig. 5: a) Piles of sherds appeared on the surface of the closure layer; b) The matt-painted *dinos* I-K 3737; c) The north Aegean transport amphora I-K 3740; d) The matt-painted bowl I-K 3738; e) The Attic black-gloss mug I-K 1157.

stamped cup was used in a ceremonial performance and then placed headfirst on the ground shortly before Room I was ritually closed.¹⁵

A small group of single sherds of deliberately broken ceramics was also discovered on the floor of Room H (Fig. 2) in close proximity to each other, consisting of the fragments of an incised *atingitoio* (I-K 7375; Fig. 6 f), a so-called *tazze-atingitoio* with incised decoration (I-K 7470), two sherds from two matt-painted bowls in a regional style (I-K 7378 and I-K 7465), and the lintel of a hut model (I-T 40; Fig. 6 e). These findings suggest the performance of a termination ritual in which the vessels and hut model were used and intentionally broken. Later, as Room H was ritually abandoned, individual fragments were removed from the piles of broken pieces and placed in Room H as representative pieces of the whole.¹⁶ After the ritual abandonment, the not-quite-rectangular stone construction inside Room H was built, as evidenced by the *pars pro toto* pieces mentioned earlier (I-K 7375, I-K 7378, I-K 7465, and I-K 7470), which were discovered beneath the southern row of stones on the quasi-rectangular platform (Fig. 6 c–d). Among these fragments, one notable find was a piece of the red-coloured floor from the upper storey of the LA house. This finding suggests that the platform was erected only after the LA house had been destroyed.

The intentional destruction of the LA house around 460 BCE has been discussed extensively elsewhere.¹⁷ Overall, the ritual closure of the LA house involved three primary acts. First, after systematically dismantling all reusable materials, valuable Greek and regional ceramics were used to represent the house's life and glamour; these were placed on the floors of the upstairs banquet rooms. Additionally, fragments of a deliberately broken terracotta statue of a female deity in the *kore* type (T 252) and a female terracotta bust (T 292) were deposited in the upper rooms.

The second act involved the deliberate breaking of the vessels used in the abandonment festivities, ranging from prestigious drinking cups from Athens to locally handmade cooking pots. These fragments were then selected as representative pieces and distributed across the mortar pavements of the upstairs rooms. From these smashed vessels, a freshly broken sherd of each was selected and distributed across the mortar pavements of the upstairs rooms after a lavish feast to mark the termination of the LA house.

Finally, in the third act, the actual demolition of the house itself was carried out. In one of the three ritual acts, an incised *atingitoio* (K 26018/I-K 418) was also used.¹⁸ This calls to mind the corresponding rituals involving the use of such old-fashioned

¹⁵ Erich Kistler et al., *Risultati dell'ottavo campagna di scavi dell'Università di Innsbruck sul Monte Iato* (2019) (Innsbruck: Institut für Archäologien, 2019): 5–10, https://www.uibk.ac.at/projects/monte-iato/working-papers/downloads/grabungsergebnisse.2019_italienisch.pdf [accessed 29.04.2023].

¹⁶ Kistler et al., *Risultati dell'ottavo campagna di scavi*: 5–10.

¹⁷ Kistler, "Greek Style Architecture, Ritual Abandonment": 63–68.

¹⁸ Kistler, "Greek Style Architecture, Ritual Abandonment": 71.

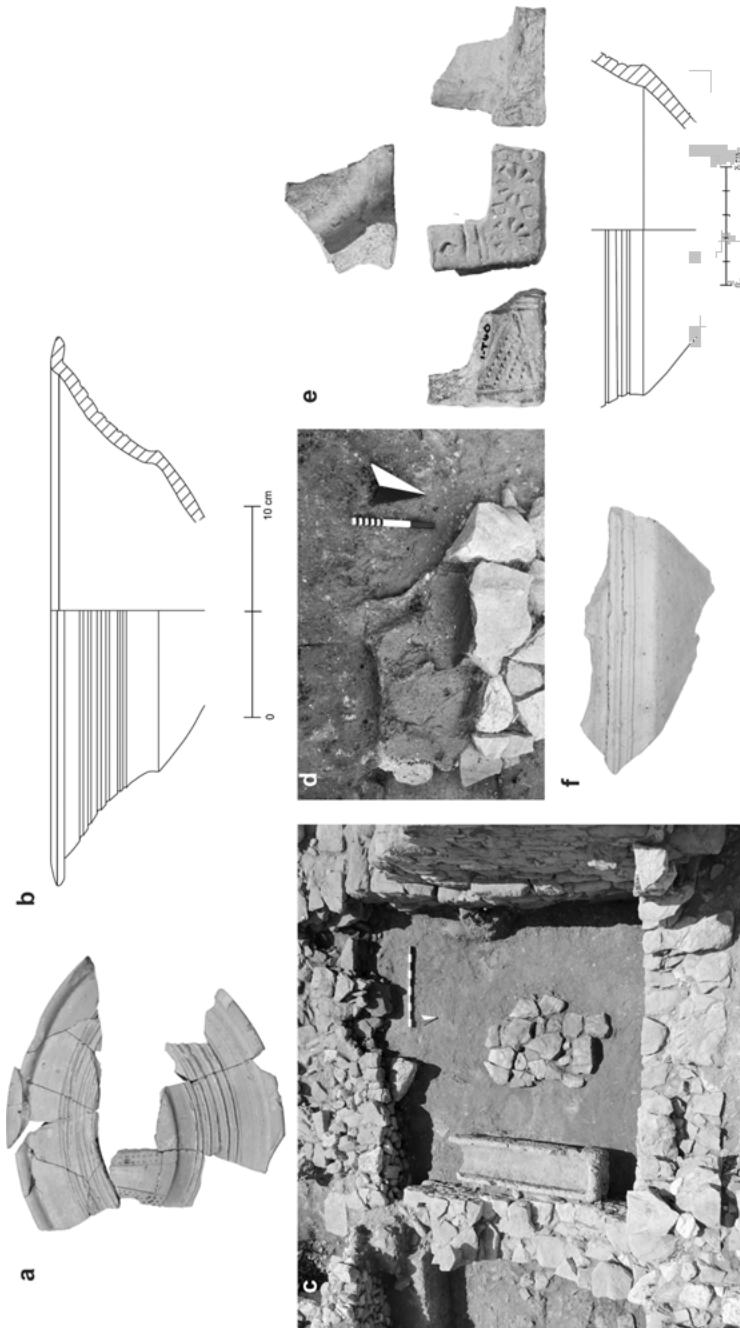


Fig. 6: a) *Attingitoio* (I-K 7331); b) *Attingitoio* (I-K 7331); c) The quasi-rectangular platform of stones in Room H; d) The quasi-rectangular platform after removal of the first row of stones; e) The lintel of a hut model; f) *Attingitoio* (I-K 7375).

ladling and drinking vessels, performed during the closing off of Rooms H and I as well as the ramp.

Given the grand Greek-style architecture of the LA house and the accompanying haute cuisine with Greek influences (featuring seafood, fish, and sophisticated dipping sauces), it is surprising that the use of old and old-fashioned *attingittoi* as well as hut models played such a significant role in the ritual termination of this cosmopolitan living space.¹⁹ This apparent contradiction between colonial cosmopolitanism and local traditionalism requires explanation. Therefore, in the next section, I will discuss to what extent these antique(d) items and the performances associated with them represent the reclaiming of a precolonial past, which gives a particular meaning to the de-monumentalisation that occurred in Monte Iato around 460 BCE.

3 Reclaiming a Precolonial Past – *Attingittoi* and Hut Models as *Archaika* (Fig. 7)

By the time *attingittoi* were used as ladling, pouring, and drinking vessels in the rites of abandonment around 460/50 BCE, they had already been replaced a century before by the more ‘modern’ *ceramica dipinta* as the typical tableware of the protohistoric western Sicilians. This new *dipinta* ware had painted decoration and was influenced by Greek and Phoenician culture in its shapes and range of vessel styles, but it still adhered to local taste preferences.²⁰ Therefore, by the middle of the fifth century BCE, the incised and stamped *attingittoi*, with their old-style decoration, were seen as a cultural inheritance from an ancestral pre-Greek world, whether they were genuine heirlooms or reproductions (Fig. 7 b-e). These old-fashioned objects were called *archaika* and, when used in rituals, evoked the idea of a precolonial past through their prehistoric appearance, creating a feeling of being pre-Greek or Indigenous.²¹ This feeling

19 Öhlinger et al., “Cooking Pots and Ritual Consumption Practices”; Kistler, “The Archaeology of Globalisation”; Kistler et al., “Feasting on the Edge.”

20 Catarina Trombi, *La ceramica indigena decorata delle Sicilia occidentale: Tipologia e produzione* (Mantova: Universitas Studiorum, 2015); Alfonsa Serra, *La ceramica a decorazione geometrica dipinta da Segesta nel quadro delle produzioni della Sicilia occidentale*, BAR International Series 2770 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2016); William Balco, “Thinking Beyond Imitation: Mixed-Style Pottery in Ancient Western Sicily,” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (2018): 180–202.

21 Erich Kistler et al., “Archaika as a Resource: The Production of Locality and Colonial Empowerment on Monte Iato (Western Sicily) around 500 BC,” in *ResourceCultures: Sociocultural Dynamics and the Use of Resources – Theories, Methods, Perspectives*, ed. Anke K. Scholz et al., Ressourcenculturen 5 (Tübingen: Universität Tübingen, 2017): 159–78; see also Christian Mühlenbock, “Expanding the Circle of Trust: Tradition and Change in Iron Age Communities in Western Sicily,” in *Tradition: Transmission of Culture in the Ancient World*, ed. Jennifer Fejfer et al., Acta Hyperborea 14 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015): 239–68; Emma Buckingham and Carla M. Antonaccio, “Incised and Stamped

of indigeneity was essential to the people of Western Sicily due to their need for self-authentication as Indigenous in a cultural contact zone that was becoming increasingly colonial during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.²²

The hut models likewise objectified an ancestral pre-Greek world: they represent huts for feasting and gathering, which were at the centre of social interaction within and between the extended households and villages of pre-Greek western Sicily. Remains of such original intra- and interfamily meeting huts have been discovered at various sites such as Thapsos, La Muculufa, Monte Pollizzello, Monte Maranfusa, Colle Madore, and Montangolia di Menfi.²³ The miniature clay replica V 2618 (Fig. 7 a) found in Monte Iato²⁴ gives an idea of the once richly decorated wattle and daub architecture of the original huts.²⁵

In the strongly Greek-influenced and cosmopolitan world of the first half of the fifth century BCE, the use of such indigenous-looking items like hut models in performances during ceremonies gave the feeling of having shared customs with the past. This feeling created a sense of identity among the established inhabitants of western Sicily, keeping alive the quality of indigeneity despite the increasing influence of colonial powers and their promise of a more cosmopolitan lifestyle.²⁶

In the context of re-indigenisation as a means of building local identity, the use of hut models in ritual acts can be interpreted as a way of reclaiming a precolonial past. By representing ‘wattle and daub’ architecture, self-sufficient subsistence, and decentralisation as the fundamental principle of social organisation, the display of hut models recalls aspects of an egalitarian ethos, or what J.D. Hill called ‘societies with

Ceramics from Morgantina: Taking the Long View,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 63/64 (2018/2019): 1–34; William Balco, “Negotiating Social Entanglements through Feasting in Iron Age and Archaic Western Sicily,” *Layers* 8 (2023): 24–27.

22 Kistler et al., “Archaika as a Resource”; Öhlinger et al., “Negotiating Indigeneity in an Archaic Contact Zone”; Kistler, “Greek Style Architecture, Ritual Abandonment”: 71–72; Erich Kistler et al., “The Multiple Productions of Locality at Archaic Monte Iato (Western Sicily, Sixth to Fifth Centuries BCE),” in *The Production of Locality and Empowerment in the Iron Age and Archaic Western Mediterranean*, ed. Erich Kistler et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press).

23 Francesca Spatafora, “Modellini di capanna/sacello nella Sicilia occidentale,” in *Studi in onore di Stefano Vassallo*, ed. Monica Chiovaro and Riccardo Sapia (Palermo: Regione Siciliana, Assessorato dei Beni Culturali e dell’identità siciliana, Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali e dell’Identità Siciliana, 2020): 46–55; Birgit Öhlinger, “Architectural Terracotta Models as Cultic and Ritual Identity Creators in Archaic Sicily?” in *Mistaken Identity: Identitäten als Ressourcen im Zentralen Mittelmeerraum*, ed. Veronika Sossau and Kai Riehle, *RessourcenKulturen* 19 (Tübingen: University Press, 2022): 179–200.

24 Archaic house E 1600, see Hans Peter Isler, “Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato in archaischer Zeit,” *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 124 (2009): 158–59.

25 Öhlinger, “Architectural Terracotta Models”: 182 Fig. 1 a.

26 Öhlinger, “Architectural Terracotta Models”: 185–92; Kistler, “The Archaeology of Globalisation.”

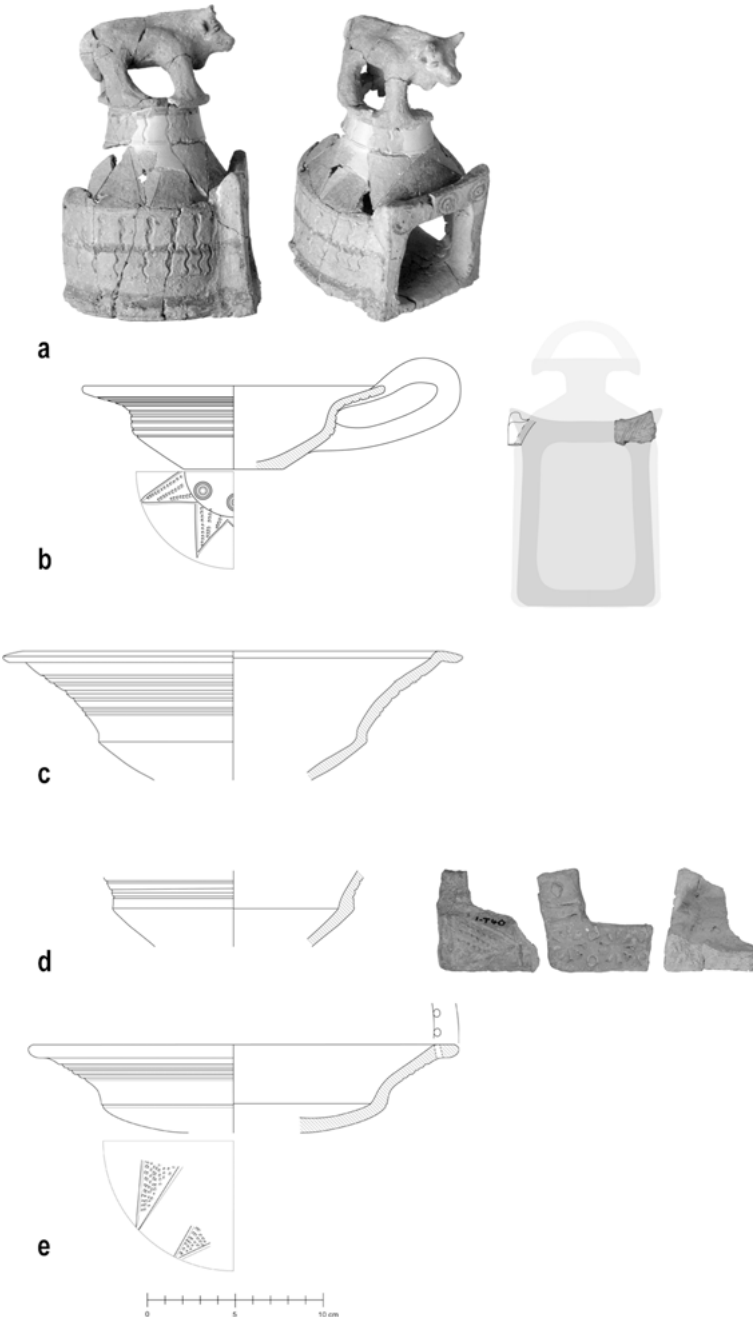


Fig. 7: Synopsis of *archaika* discovered in abandonment debris in Monte Iato.

leaders but not rulers'.²⁷ It is an essential question whether this idea of egalitarianism and indigenising traditionalism led to the ritual termination of the chiefly House in Late Archaic Monte Iato. The discussion around de-monumentalisation as a tool for empowering indigenous communities by dismantling colonial structures, as it has recently emerged in postcolonial studies, provides valuable insights and a deeper understanding of the demolition of the LA house in Monte Iato, which I will explore in the following two sections.

4 The De-Monumentalisation of the LA House as Punitive House Demolition

Recent articles in post-colonial studies have examined the process of dismantling colonial power structures through the concept of de-monumentalisation. This involves undoing monuments in literary, pictorial, sculptural, or architectural forms, which act as focal points for ambitious individuals and power-seeking groups who aim to establish their identities and legitimise their claims to power, land, and resources. The latter goal is especially relevant for monuments designed to embed new power structures that arose with the arrival of settlers in areas already occupied by indigenous inhabitants. In such colonial contexts, monumentalisation means the structuring of power and domination in the hard currency of stone, whether it be in the cities of the settlers or the indigenous landscapes of the hinterland. By contrast, de-monumentalisation is the reverse process that liberates individuals and groups from colonial supremacy by unmaking its monuments. Thus, de-monumentalisation empowers decolonial forces and movements, creating new post-colonial identities that break away from the colonial past and alter the way cultural heritage and origin narratives are reconstructed.²⁸

The concept of de-monumentalisation as a means of restoring old political authorities and pseudo-traditional orders has not been exclusively discussed in recent post-colonial studies; in fact, ancient Greek and Roman authors from the late Republican and Imperial periods wrote of draconian measures taken to disempower

²⁷ Jeremy D. Hill, "The Dynamics of Social Change in Later Iron Age Eastern and South-Eastern England c. 300 BC–AD 43," in *The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond*, ed. Colin Haselgrove and Tom Moore (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007): 21; concerning Late Bronze and Early Iron Age western Sicily, see Erich Kistler, "Wohnen in Compound: Haus-Gesellschaften und soziale Gruppenbildung im frühen West- und Mittelsizilien (12.–6. Jh. v. Chr.)," in *Communicating Identity in Italic Iron Age Communities*, ed. Margarita Gleba and Helle W. Horsnæs (Oxford: University Press, 2011): 130–54.

²⁸ Steinmetz, "Colonial Melancholy"; Herwitz, "Monument, Ruin, and Redress"; Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics*; Felix Levenson and Heike Delitz, "The Social Meaning of Big Architecture or the Sociology of the Monumental," in *Size Matters – Understanding Monumentality Across Ancient Civilizations*, ed. Federico Buccellati et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2019): 115–20; Badilla and Aguilera, "Chilean Anti-Neoliberal Uprising."

leading households that had been on their way to becoming ruling Houses and condensed them into the literary topos of the ‘demolished house’.

M.B. Roller has demonstrated how this topos reflects an archaic rite that punished aspirants to kingship in early Rome if they enlarged their houses into power centres for an expanding household and clientele. The obliteration of the houses of such would-be rulers also dismantled the basis of their political networks, thereby preventing a transformation into autocracy. This topos argues that the demolition of such oversized Houses not only restored the endangered heterarchical order of the Republic, but also created a deterrent that would bind ambitious aristocrats to the heterarchy of their senatorial colleagues in the future.²⁹

It is, of course, a matter of debate as to what extent the topos of the ‘demolished house’, which was particularly prevalent in the age of Cicero and Augustus, was based on actual memories of punitive house-razing in the early Republic of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. However, the discovery of the ‘regia’ on the *arx* in Gabii, the home of a powerful household that was ritually obliterated around 530 BCE, has recently provided archaeological evidence dating back to the late sixth century BCE in support of the late Republican and early Imperial topos of the ‘demolished house’.³⁰ Walls measuring 20–34 metres in length enclosed the razed ‘regia’ remains, and a massive tumulus of stones was erected on top, turning the momentum of the punitive house demolition into a monumental memorial that was visible from afar. Another example of the commemoration of the dismantling of a house as a punishment is the tumulus that once covered the remains of the ‘palazzo’ in Poggio Civitate (Murlo), which was ritually destroyed around 525 BCE.³¹

Both archaeological examples, especially when considered in the light of the literary references to ‘demolished houses’ in late Republican and early Imperial Rome, clearly demonstrate the significance and purpose of this ancient form of punishment:

²⁹ Matthew B. Roller, “Demolished Houses, Monumentality, and Memory in Roman Culture,” *Classical Antiquity* 29, no. 1 (2010): 117–80; see also Hans Beck, “From Poplicola to Augustus: Senatorial Houses in Roman Political Culture,” *Phoenix* 63, no. 3/4 (2009): 361–84.

³⁰ Marco Fabbri, “A Seat of Power in Latium Vetus: The Archaic Building Complex on the Arx of Gabii,” in *Sanctuaries and the Power of Consumption: Networking and the Formation of Elites in the Archaic Western Mediterranean World: Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, 20th–23rd March 2012*, ed. Erich Kistler et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015): 187–203; Marco Fabbri, “La regia di Gabii nell’età dei Tarquini,” in *The Age of Tarquinius Superbus: Central Italy in the Late 6th Century: Proceedings of the Conference ‘The Age of Tarquinius Superbus, A Paradigm Shift?’ Rome, 7–9 November 2013*, ed. Patricia S. Lulof and Christopher S. Smith, *Babesch Supplement* 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017): 225–39.

³¹ Kyle M. Jr. Phillips, *In the Hills of Tuscany: Recent Excavations at the Etruscan Site of Poggio Civitate (Murlo, Siena)* (Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1993): 48–49; Ingrid E.M. Edlund-Berry, “Ritual Destruction of Cities and Sanctuaries: The ‘Un-Founding’ of the Archaic Monumental Building at Poggio Civitate (Murlo),” in *Murlo and the Etruscans: Art and Society in Ancient Etruria*, ed. Richard Daniel De Puma and Joyceline Penny Small (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994): 16–28; Anthony Tuck, *Poggio Civitate (Murlo)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021): 135–42.

the destruction of powerful and overambitious houses was a ‘public’ act that eliminated the threat of autocracy. Imposing this sanction dismantled not only the house of the would-be *rex* as his residence, but also as the physical centre of his power and network. The public display of such deprivation of a House’s power on its way to rule did not only restore the endangered heterarchical order by dispersing central power among different powerful Houses, but it also commemorated the inflicting of punishment by house demolition and the restoration of the traditional (republican) concept of order as monumental events in the history of the local community.

In order to preserve this memory, the ruins of the punished Houses in Gabii and Poggio Civitate were transformed into topographical landmarks by burying them under mounds, thus creating monuments that would warn future generations against their excessive ambitions for power.

Robinson Krämer shows that the archaeological evidence from central Italy during the sixth and early fifth centuries BCE reveals several other instances of powerful houses being dismantled through the obliteration of their residences. What is noteworthy about these other examples is that their ruination was not commemorated by the erection of a monumental topographical marker, as was the case at Gabii and Poggio Civitate. Instead, communal buildings such as temples and public squares were built on the sites of the demolished houses. These became focal points around which rival clans were united as a segmented but shared political community, promoting and legitimizing the restoration of a traditional (heterarchical) order that had been updated to a republican form of government.³²

Overall, the dismantling of power structures converted into the hard currency of stone, as documented in Archaic Latium, Etruria, and Sicily up to recent times, can be seen as the razing of the colonial power matrix, mainly occurring in conjunction with an epochal shift towards re-indigenisation as a gesture of decolonisation. The ruins of the former colonial era themselves then become a monumental representation of ‘re-conceptualizing the precolonial past as a heritage, finding a way to claim that past as the origin of one’s future’.³³ Consequently, the precolonial is turned into a fiction that reinserts customary elements into a new, re-indigenised setting and through which the feeling of being Indigenous is re-enacted. In doing so, the de-monumentalisation of the colonial would mean (re)-monumentalising this being Indigenous as a strategy for claiming the locals’ own rights.³⁴

32 Robinson Peter Krämer, “The Cleansing of a Political System: Obliterations, Burials and ‘Reuse’ of Palaces and Seats of Power in Central Italy (Seventh–Fifth Centuries BCE),” in *Cleaning and Value: Interdisciplinary Investigations*, ed. Isabel Bredenbröker et al. (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2020): 195–211, and Krämer in this volume.

33 Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics*: 21.

34 Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics*: 10; Chamila T. Attanapola and Ragnhild Lund, “Contested Identities of Indigenous People: Indigenization or Integration of the Veddas in Sri Lanka,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 34 (2013): 173–75.

In the light of such decolonial de-monumentalisations, the *archaika* used in the ritual termination of the colonial power matrix in Monte Iato around 460/50 BCE appear as the material expressions of a kind of re-indigenisation through the re-imagination of a precolonial world. As re-enactments in miniature of a purportedly shared pre-Greek past, the *attingittoi* and hut models mythologise the claimed precolonial as the driving force behind the re-inauguration of ancestral heritage and the revival of indigenous values and segmentarity, which reinstalls the living in dispersed hamlets and the family elders as old political authorities.

5 The Demolished LA House and the Aftermath of the Iaitines

In the second quarter of the fifth century BCE, de-monumentalisation processes, such as the razing of the LA house, could be observed elsewhere in western Sicily. This is often explained as a decline of indigenous settlements after the Battle of Himera (480 BCE). According to this narrative, the victory of Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse, and Theron, tyrant of Akragas, upset the balance of power between the western Sicilian Greeks, the Phoenicians, and the Indigenous, thus causing the economic and cultural collapse of the inland communities.³⁵ However, in contrast to this narrative, recent surveys suggest a homogeneous dynamic in the settlements in the Iato and Belice valleys during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.³⁶ Therefore, the demolition of the LA house was not the result of the collapse of indigenous communities that led to economic isolation and cultural impoverishment. Rather, the de-monumentalisation of the LA house was caused by the communal decision and effort to dismantle the colonial power centre on the mountain and to return to a precolonial way of life.

Following the ritual destruction of the LA house, which served as the heart of the colonial matrix, a domino effect occurred in the 460s. This included, in addition to the razing of the LA house, the ritual closure of the retention basin as a hydro-technical measure to protect the Aphrodite Temple from stormwater. Therefore, the Aphrodite Temple itself, as a shrine for the divine power protecting the LA house as the chiefly

³⁵ Concerning this narrative, see the very important paper of Stefano Vassallo, “Abitati indigeni ellenizzati della Sicilia centro-occidentale dalla vitalità tardoarcaica alla crisi del V sec. a. C.,” in *Terze Giornate Internazionali di Studi sull'Area Elima: Gibellina, Erice, Contessa, Entellina, 23–26 ottobre 1997: atti* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2000): 983–1008.

³⁶ Jeremy Johns, “Monreale Survey: L'insediamento umano nell'alto Belice dall'età Paleolitica al 1250 D.C.,” in *Giornate Internazionali di Studi sull'area Elima: Gibellina, 19–22 Settembre 1991, Atti* (Pisa: Scuola Superiore di Pisa, 1992): 407–20 and Sebastiano Muratore, “Settlement's Dynamics in Western Sicily between VIII E IV Sec. B.C.: A Geographic Information System to Research,” *International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era* 2, no. 4 (2013): 570–84.

House, was destroyed. However, no traces of its suggested razing around 460 BCE survived due to the re-erection and re-inauguration of the temple around 300 BCE.³⁷ As I will argue, the deliberate physical breakage of the above-mentioned terracotta statue in the type of a standing *kore* (T 252 A–K), most likely once set up as a cult image in the adytum, might indirectly indicate the erasure of the Aphrodite Temple as part of the monumentalised colonial matrix.

Fragments of a two-thirds life-size *kore*, including parts of the head, left shoulder, right hand, and forearm, were discovered amidst the debris of the banquet rooms of the LA house, scattered across an area of 90 square metres (Fig. 8).³⁸ This indicates that the clay statue was shattered before the ritual demolition of the LA house, making it unlikely that the sculpture was part of the upper banquet room's inventory. The *kore* is also the only large-scale sculpture from the Archaic period discovered in Monte Iato. The much less careful elaboration of the reverse side of the terracotta statue suggests its placement in front of a wall. Such a set-up of the *kore* supports the assumption that the sculpture was originally placed in the adytum as an image of a female deity.³⁹

Assuming this suggestion is correct, with the termination of the temple and the worship of the female deity, which was later syncretised with Aphrodite,⁴⁰ the Monte Iato *kore* was intentionally broken to nullify the earthenware representation of the goddess. Fragments of the shattered *kore* statue would have been deposited in the banquet rooms of the LA house, representing *partes pro toto* of the broken divine power. The deliberate breaking of the *kore* and the destruction of the Aphrodite Temple were obviously part of the ritual closing of the LA house as a primary residence, which was intended to undo the power of the protective deity and pave the way for a return to the ancestral way of life and the beginning of a new era without a colonial power matrix.

In 460/50 BCE, a new structure was built right after the destruction of the LA house. Its east wall was reused as the west wall, and Room H of the former annexe was incorporated. Initial investigations suggest that the building had at least two rooms, accessible through the paved entrance to Northern Room 1 (Fig. 9 a). Therefore, there is no doubt that this new building was erected after the dismantling of the LA house. After a brief period of occupation of ten to twenty years, this dwelling, or at

37 Hans Peter Isler, *Der Tempel der Aphrodite: La ceramica proveniente dall'insediamento medievale: Cenni e osservazioni preliminary*, *Studia Ietina* 2 (Zurich: Eugen Rentsch, 1984): 11–14; Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagne 2014”: 154–59; Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagnen 2015 und 2016”: 291–92.

38 Verena Schumacher, “Die großformatigen Terrakotten des spätarchaischen Hauses vom Monte Iato,” in *Akten des 15. Österreichischen Archäologentages in Innsbruck 27. Februar–1. März 2014*, ed. Gerald Grabherr and Barbara Kainrath, *Ikarus* 9 (Innsbruck: University Press, 2016): 372–77.

39 See also Schumacher, “Die großformatigen Terrakotten”: 376.

40 Dauth and Kistler, “Einheimisch'-Werden auf dem Monte Iato.”

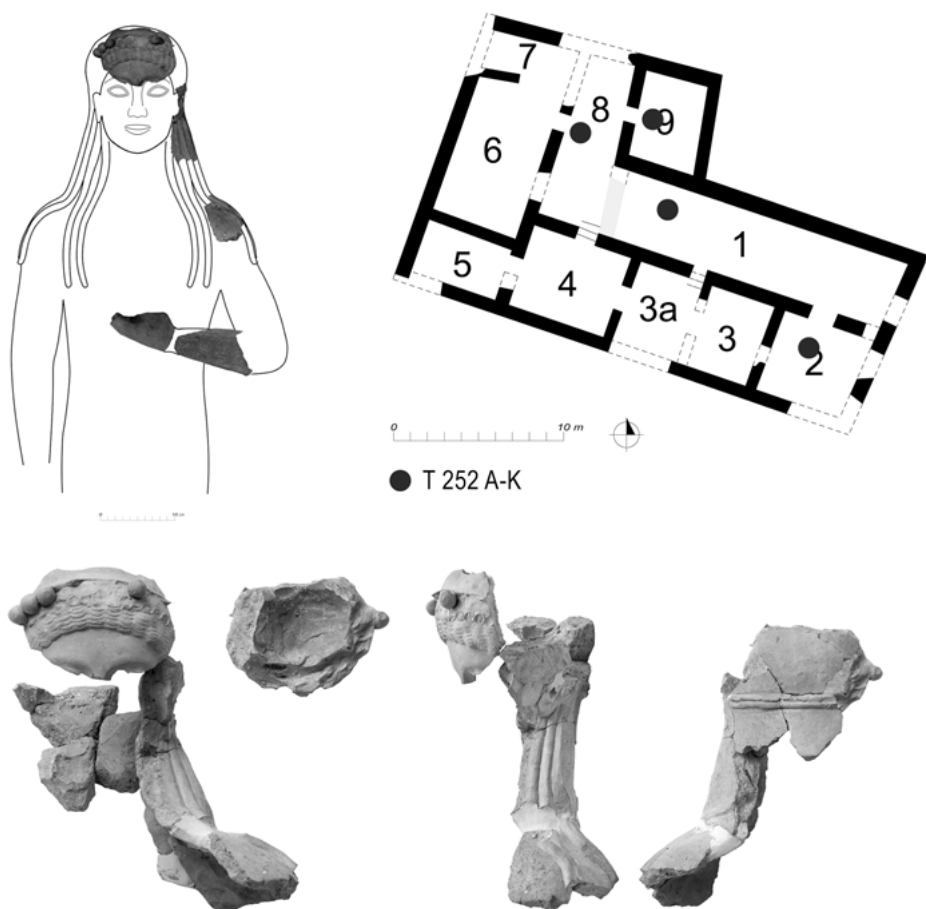


Fig. 8: Distribution of fragments of the terracotta statue T 252 in the type of a standing kore. Bottom: Front and rear head.

least its Northern Room 1, was ritually abandoned in three stages, similar to the LA house. At the first stage, the northern room was subjected to a curate behaviour, as evidenced by the missing record of the collapse of the tiled roof, although it is likely that the roof was covered with clay tiles, as suggested by the discovery of individual tile fragments in the debris of Northern Room 1 (I-Z 151, I-Z 152, I-Z 153, I-Z 175, Fig. 9 b–f).

The second stage, which involved the deposition of objects related to the post-LA house's biography, is attested to by the well-preserved flat tile laid on the floor (Fig. 9 b) and the limestone tub placed along the east wall as elements of the house's furnishings. Moreover, twenty almost intact vessels of various shapes, including transport ampho-

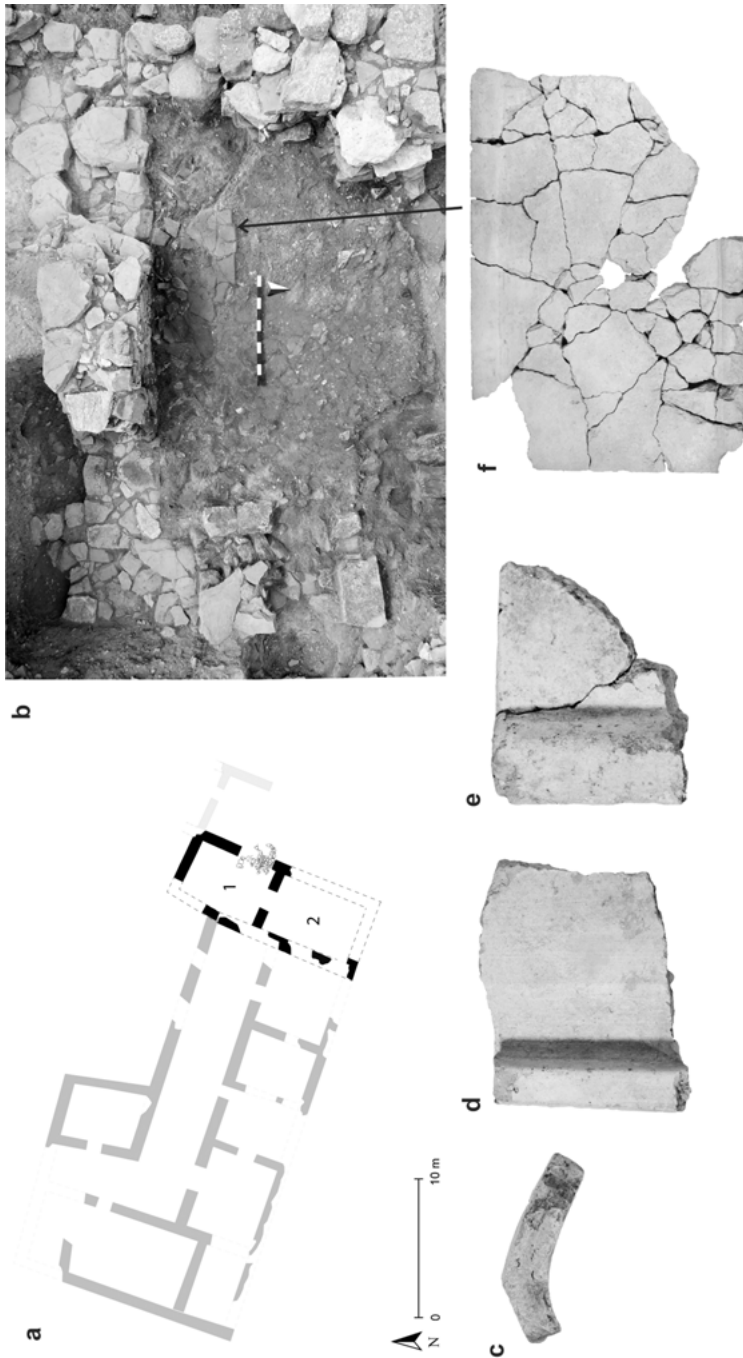


Fig. 9: a) Ground plan of the post-LA house, 470/60 BCE – 430 BCE; b) Northern Room 1, occupational layer with pan tile I-Z 175 in situ; c) Cover tile I-Z 151; d) Pan tile I-Z 152; e) Pan tile I-Z 153; f) Pan tile I-Z 175.

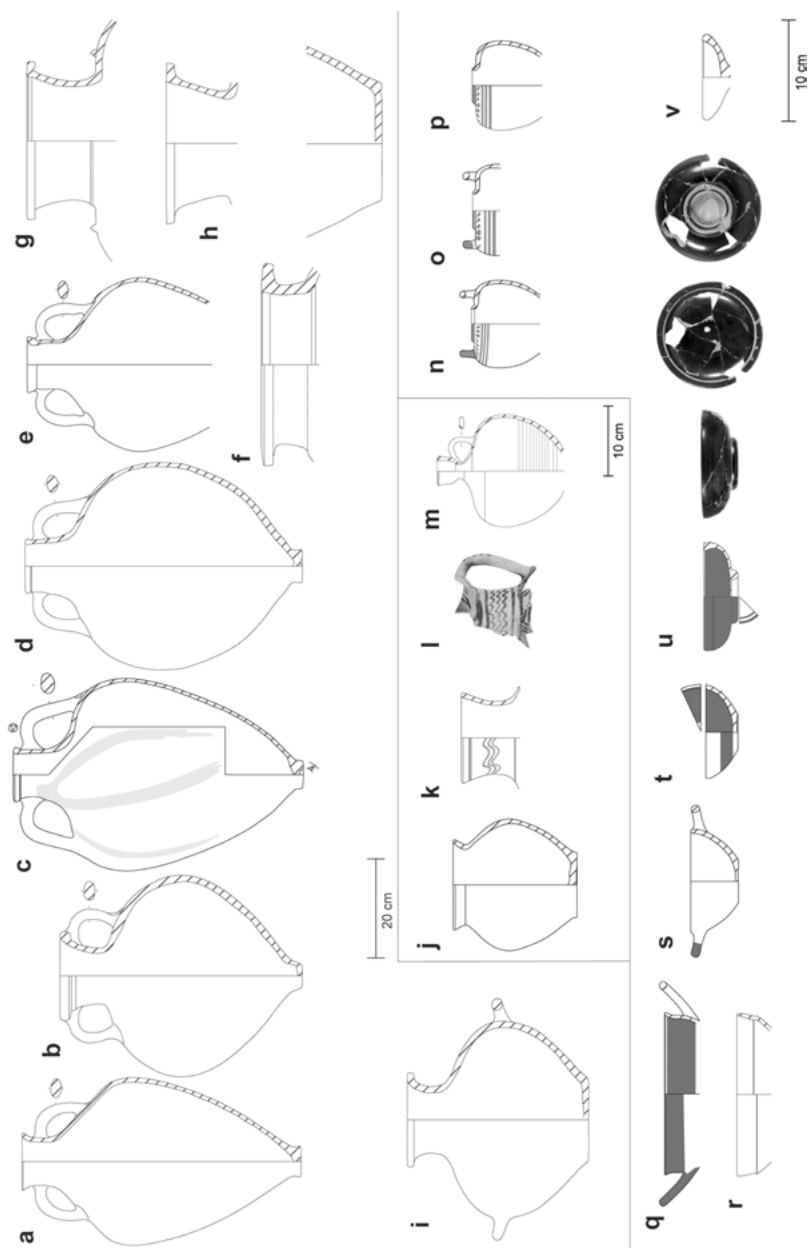


Fig. 10: **a) – e)** Greek transport amphorae (I-K 5446, I-K 5458, I-K 7626, I-K 5457; I-K 7625); **f) – h)** Greek type storage vessels (I-K 7624, I-K 5456, I-K 7623); **i)** Monochrome table amphora (I-K 5459); **j)** Monochrome pot (I-K 7629); **k) – l)** Matt-painted jugs (I-K 7630, I-K 8503); **m)** Monochrome jug (I-K 5454); **n) – p)** Banded pyxides with vertical loop handles (I-K 8502, I-K 8545, I-K 8546); **q)** Black-glazed band cup (I-K 8591); **r)** Attic black gloss cup (I-K 8589); **s)** and **t)** Banded one-handlers (I-K 5453, I-K 7627); **u)** Attic black gloss dish (or small bowl, I-K 5579); **v)** Attic stemmed dish (I-K 5464).

rae, pithoi, jugs, drinking vessels, dishes, and pyxides (Fig. 10), were deposited in Northern Room 1 before its walls were demolished during the third stage (Fig. 9 a).⁴¹

When dealing with single ceramic sherds found on the floor or trodden into it, it becomes more challenging to distinguish between pottery discarded during cleaning and those that were intentionally deposited as *pars pro toto* selections. Rim sherd I-K 8532 seems to belong to the latter category. It is the only fragment found in Northern Room 1 from the sherd pile of the associated incised bowl, a typical diagnostic clue for a *pars pro toto* selection (Fig. 11). This rim sherd features a unique painted exterior decoration of vertical lines, a modernising novelty in *ceramica incisa*, revealing the pseudo-traditional appearance of the latest generation of *archaika* used and broken during the abandonment rituals in Monte Iato.

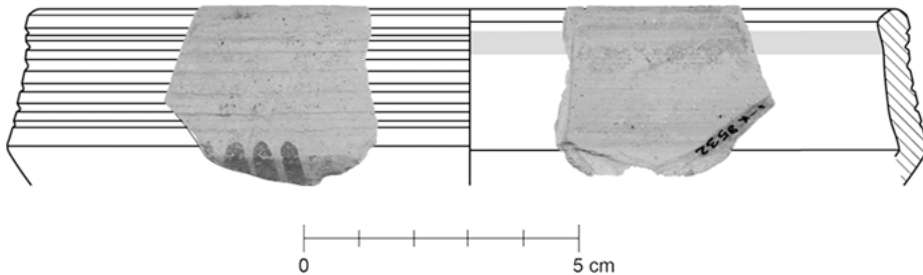


Fig. 11: Incised and matt-painted bowl I-K 8532, abandonment debris of the post-LA house, Northern Room 1.

The reuse of the east wall of the LA house as the west wall of the post-LA house establishes a clear connection between the two houses (Fig. 9 a). However, due to the incomplete excavation of the post-LA house, any further conclusions would be preliminary. Overall, it is unlikely that the post-LA house served as the new residence of the former chiefly House, reduced to a ‘normal’ size that would have been acceptable to the Iaitian community as a more modest dwelling. Instead, we can draw a parallel with the demolished houses in Etruria and Latium⁴² and assume that the post-LA house was a

⁴¹ The existence of the post-LA house is a new finding from the 2022 field campaign. As a result, all ceramic artifacts that were found in previous years on the youngest floor in Room H can no longer be attributed to the abandonment of Room H (470/60 BC). Instead, the dozen or so better-preserved vessels are now considered to belong to the context of the use and/or abandonment of Room H as part of Northern Room 1 of the post-LA house. Referring to Room H as *thesauros* during its phase of use as part of the annex belonging to the LA house, as suggested in recent publications, is therefore inaccurate (Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagnen 2015 und 2016”: 267–70; Kistler et al., “The Multiple Productions of Locality”).

⁴² See Krämer, “The Cleansing of a Political System” and Krämer in this volume.

communal building that succeeded the de-monumentalised chiefly House, indicating a shift towards a more heterarchical social fabric in which it played a prominent role.

Overall, the findings in Northern Room 1 indicate that the post-LA house was at least partially utilised as a meeting and banquet hall. During the periods when festivals were not taking place, communal stocks of wine, oil, and probably grain (Fig. 10 a–i)⁴³ were stored safely there, along with prestigious banquet equipment from by-gone days (Fig. 10 k–v).⁴⁴ Maintaining a certain appreciation for the cosmopolitan world that characterised the former colonial era is a common feature of post-colonial identity-building.⁴⁵ The latter is achieved by constructing the precolonial past out of a *mélange* of old forms of life and contemporary ‘modern’ styles and habits, with the aim of adapting the process of re-indigenisation to the changed post-colonial time.⁴⁶

In order to trace the chain of events that began with the deconstruction of the LA house, it is crucial to determine the exact chronological relationship between the construction and habitation of the post-LA house and the abandonment of the Archaic houses I and II, located at the southern edge of the Hellenistic-Roman agora. However, there is a significant obstacle in attempting to do so. With the exception of the attic dish I-K 5579, which dates from around 430 BCE (Fig. 10 u), all the other sherds discovered from the post-LA house date from before the mid-fifth century BCE.⁴⁷

It is apparent that after the destruction of the LA house as the chiefly House around 460 BCE, very few new pottery imports reached Monte Iato. Moreover, despite more than 50 years of excavations in Monte Iato, there have been few finds of imported pottery from the second and third thirds of the fifth century BCE. Only after

⁴³ On the use of pithoi to store grain in protohistoric Sicily, see Maria Rosa Albanese Procelli, “Sistemi di stoccaggio delle derrate nella Sicilia indigena in età arcaica,” *Sicilia antiqua. International Journal of Archaeology* 18 (2021): 29–36.

⁴⁴ There is a striking resemblance to the ‘delayed’ presentation of ancient Athenian vessels during the peaceful abandonment of a settlement in the latter half of the fifth century BC that can be observed at El Puig de la Nau. For further details, see Rodríguez Pérez, “Old Cups Die Hard: The Appropriation of Athenian Pottery in the Iberian Peninsula,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 141 (2021): 100–101.

⁴⁵ François G. Richard, “Thinking through ‘Vernacular Cosmopolitanisms’: Historical Archaeology in Senegal and the Material Contours of the African Atlantic,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 17, no. 1 (2013): especially 42–44.

⁴⁶ Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics*: 10; Attanapola and Lund, “Contested Identities of Indigenous People”: 173–75.

⁴⁷ Height: 3.5 cm; Rim diameter: 10.7 cm; Base diameter: 5.3 cm. Ring foot with clay ground base, edge of foot and underside with glazed band, convex wall on inner face with incurving, thickened rim, offset from the lower part of the wall by a shallow ridge on the exterior. See the small bowl in Brian A. Sparkes and Lucy Talcott, *Black and Plain Pottery of the 6th, 5th and 4th Centuries B.C.*, The Athenian Agora 12 (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1970): 295 no. 825, Fig. 8, dating 430/420 BCE.

the hilltop plateau's stable re-settlement in the late fourth century BCE did colonial imports reappear in Monte Iato.⁴⁸

Given the near-total cessation of imports after 460 BCE, the youngest sherds found in the rubble of Agora Houses I and II (Fig. 12 a), dating back to the second quarter of the fifth century BCE, provide a *terminus a quo* but not a *terminus ad quem* for their abandonment.⁴⁹ Therefore, their abandonment may have occurred as late as 430 BCE, similar to the post-LA house. The intentional abandonment of Agora Houses I and II is supported by the destruction of the walls, which buried the ceramic inventory beneath the toppled stones of the razed walls (Fig. 12 b).⁵⁰ Possibly due to the departure of this equally powerful Iaitinian household, the neighbouring building, an oikos-like structure (Fig. 12 a: Oikos E), experienced a cessation of use for over a century.⁵¹

In summary, the destruction of the LA house triggered a chain reaction that led to the large-scale de-monumentalisation of the colonial matrix in Monte Iato. This process of dismantling and disempowerment, which probably lasted two or three decades, was first heralded by the chiefly House's diminished power to prevent the obliteration of its palace-like residence, the LA house, and its socio-religious centre, the Aphrodite Temple. The deprivation of power and the economic decline of the sanctioned chiefly House coincided with the collapse of its social network, which included strong ties to foreign guest-friends in western Sicilian *apoikiai*. Consequently, the import of ceramics broke down after the middle of the fifth century BCE. At the same time, between 460 and 430 BCE, the club and treasure houses east of the Aphrodite Temple, such as the two-room building K – and possibly also the oikos-like building L (Fig. 2: K and L) – that had functioned as dependencies of external alliance partners were destroyed, and their inventories were buried under the collapsed roofs and walls.⁵² Interestingly, after more than fifty years of fieldwork, there is no evidence of in situ settlement layers or wall remains

⁴⁸ Of the 1073 inventoried sherds of black glossed pottery from the first ten years of the Zurich Ietas excavation, no sherd dates to the second half of the fifth century BCE and only nine sherds date to the first two-thirds of the fourth century BCE. See Roman Beat Caflisch, *Die Firniskeramik vom Monte Iato: Die Funde 1971–1982*, Studia Ietina 4 (Zurich: Eugen Rentsch, 1991): 75–83.

⁴⁹ Isler, “Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato”: 153–57; Kistler and Mohr, “Between Coloniality and Locality”: 83–87.

⁵⁰ Personal communication, Martin Mohr (09.05.2023), who argues for the destruction of Agora Houses I and II around 460/50 BCE.

⁵¹ Isler, “Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato”: 174–75.

⁵² Christoph Reusser, “The Research Project Led by the University of Zurich on Monte Iato: the Last 10 Years,” in *Trinacria, ‘An Island Outside Time’: International Archaeology in Sicily*, ed. Christopher Prescott et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2021): 123–24 and Martin Mohr, “Das Zweiraum-Gebäude K,” in *Neue Forschungen zum vorhellenistischen Monte Iato*, ed. Martin Mohr et al. (Zurich, forthcoming). For arguments in favor of the interpretation of the two-room building K and the oikos-like building L as club and festival houses, see Kistler et al., “Die Innsbrucker Kampagnen 2015 und 2016”: 261. On the other hand, an interpretation of building K as a residence is considered by Reusser, “Monte Iato: the Last 10 Years”: 124.

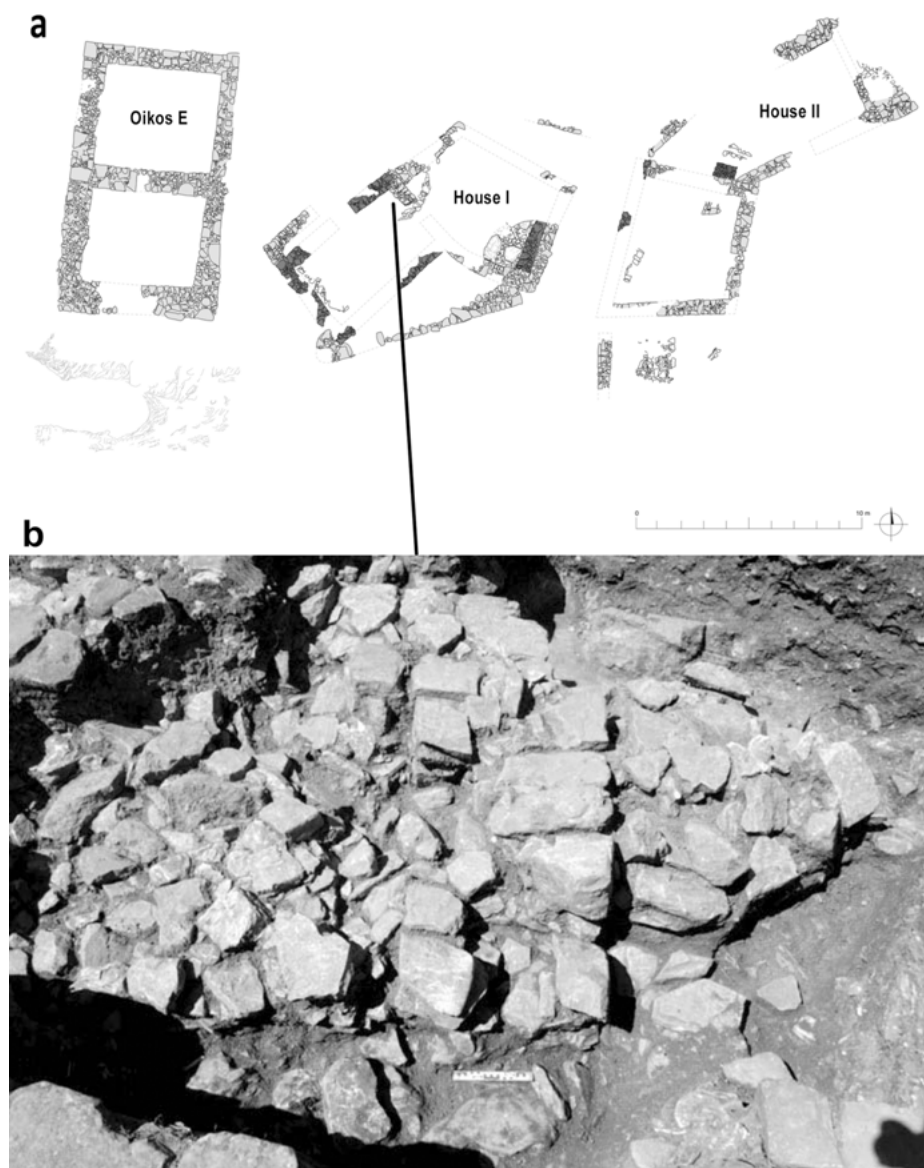


Fig. 12: a) Late Archaic structures at the southern edge of the later Hellenistic-Roman agora; b) The toppled stones of the razed walls of House I.

in the excavated areas from the period between 430 BCE and 330 BCE. This suggests that the Iaitines likely left the area during the third quarter of the fifth century BCE and relocated to existing or newly founded hamlets and villages in the Belice and Iato river valleys as a result of the de-monumentalisation and disempowerment of the colonial matrix.⁵³

6 The Wider Historical Context: Major Political Events and Local Conflicts (*staseis*)

The big question as to what caused the downfall of the chiefly House and the resulting punitive demolition of its physical environment is difficult to answer. There is no evidence of a war against foreign enemies that led to the defeat of the ruling houses.⁵⁴ Similarly, there are no indications of a violent uprising by the Iaitines against the ruling House as a means of decolonisation, which would have led to the dismantling of the colonial matrix.⁵⁵ It is possible that the Iaitinian chief died around 460 BCE and that his successor lacked the power to maintain control, resulting in the demolition of the LA house by the Iaitinian community. Whatever the results of the loss of the chiefly House's power after only three or two decades, the relatively brief period of its rule indicates a time of instability characterised by fiercely contested power dynamics and rapidly changing political landscapes.

53 Hans Peter Isler (Hans Peter Isler, "Glandes: Schleudergeschosse aus den Grabungen auf dem Monte Iato," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1994): 252–54), on the other hand, argues for a continuity of the settlement, mainly on the basis of the first Iaitinian coinage, which is dated to the end of the fifth/early fourth century BCE according to its stylistic, typological, and production-technical features (see also Suzanne Frey-Kupper, *Die antiken Fundmünzen vom Monte Iato 1971–1990: Ein Beitrag zur Geldgeschichte Westsiziliens*, *Studia Ietina* 10 [Lausanne: Éditions du Zèbre, 2013]: 80–96). Of course, such a first series of Iaitinian coins from 409 BC implies the continuity of the ethnic *koinon* of the Iaitines. But, this *koinon* could also have settled in the valleys of the rivers Iato and Belice at that time, and therefore this earliest coinage does not necessarily presuppose a continuous settlement on the mountain, which has not yet been proven stratigraphically.

54 As already pointed out by Isler, "Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato": 219.

55 Contra Isler, "Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato": 219: "Gegen 500 v. Chr. wird für einen Griechen, möglicherweise für einen emigrierten Athener, das grosse spätarchaische Hofhaus errichtet. Dessen Bewohner integrierte sich in den lokalen Kontext, behielt aber, soweit möglich, den Lebensstil eines Polisbürgers des kulturellen Zentrums bei. Seine soziale Funktion in der Gemeinschaft bleibt unbekannt. Nicht auszuschliessen ist, wenn man die gewalttätige Zerstörung des Importguts bedenkt, dass er eine dominierende Stellung einnahm oder einzunehmen versuchte." The deliberate breakage of the vessels during the ceremonies marking the abandonment and destruction of the Late Archaic house is still interpreted by Isler as the violent destruction of imported goods, to be read in the context of the violent expulsion of an Athenian emigrant who had attempted to rise to tyranny.

During the first half of the fifth century BCE, western Sicily became the primary battleground for the power struggle between Carthage and the Syracuse-Akragas alliance. The latter emerged victorious in the Battle of Himera in 480 BCE, temporarily placing Himera under the control of Akragas. Selinous, on the other hand, formed an alliance with Carthage after its *apoikia* of Heraclea Minoa was captured by Akragas. Following Carthage's defeat, Selinous found itself taking part in armed conflicts with neighbouring indigenous peoples, such as the Segestans, fighting over land and resources in 454/3 BCE (Diod. 5.9; Paus. 10.11.3) despite previously arranged inter-marriage alliances (Thucydides 6.6.2). All major players took advantage of the fluid political situation to increase or protect their power, but none of the parties succeeded in achieving long-term political centralisation and establishing rule over western Sicily. On the contrary, various power-holders or tyrants who sought to promote such centralisation were overthrown by 465 BCE. These major political events were inextricably linked to local settings and domestic political disputes and conflicts (*staseis*).⁵⁶

Regarding the city of Himera, Herodotus tells us that the deposed tyrant Terillos, in his attempt to regain power, utilised his guest-friendship with Hamilkar to incite Carthage's intervention in Sicily, which led to the famous Battle of Himera (Herodotus 7.165). Another example of the intertwining of local conflicts with larger political events is epitomised by the Spartan Euryleon, who was one of the few survivors of the failed mercenary enterprise of the Spartan king's son Dorieus. Euryleon successfully drove out the Selinous tyrant Peithagoras, but when he himself turned to tyranny, he fell out of favour with the Selinuntines and was killed by them at the altar of Zeus in the Agora.⁵⁷ The purification rituals in the *lex sacra*, enacted around 450 BCE in Selinous to reintegrate 'suppliants' into the community, also refer to the defilement caused by the blood debt resulting from local conflicts. Apparently, in Selinous, killing

⁵⁶ See Franco De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily: A Social and Economic History*, Greek Overseas (Oxford: University Press, 2016): 101–10, 180–93; Stefano Vassallo, "Guerra e conflitti in Sicilia centro-occidentale tra la metà del VI e la fine del V sec. a.C.: una prospettiva archeologica," in *The Fight for Greek Sicily: Society, Politics, and Landscape*, ed. Melanie Jonasch (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2020): 1–17; Jason Harris, "The Power of Movement: Mercenary Mobility and Empire Building in Sicily during the Classical Period," in *The Fight for Greek Sicily: Society, Politics, and Landscape*, ed. Melanie Jonasch (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2020): 130–53; Rhys Johnson, "The Curse Tablets of Selinous: Evidence of Social Strifes?" in *The Fight for Greek Sicily: Society, Politics, and Landscape*, ed. Melanie Jonasch (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2020): 107–17.

⁵⁷ Franco De Angelis, *Megara Hyblaia and Selinous: The Development of Two Greek City-States in Archaic Sicily*, Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph 57 (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2003): 159–60.

or even massacring opposing gentilicial groups or clans as a result of *staseis* was a common occurrence.⁵⁸

Given the highly dynamic nature that political power plays on the local, regional, and interregional levels, the short period of the LA house's rule in Monte Iato from 490/80 to 460 does not seem to be exceptional. In any case, the Iaitinian chiefly House appears to have pursued a multi-vector policy, as evidenced by the remarkable discovery of some silver coins. For example, two coin finds from the debris of the LA house's destruction, including a didrachm with an eagle and crab from Akragas (M 2787) and an Akragantine didrachm from Himera (M 2540), suggest an interweaving with the coinage policies of the so-called Emmenid – tyrants of Akragas ruling over Himera – as indicated by the freshwater crabs, the symbol of Akragas, on the reverse of the Himerian didrachm.⁵⁹ This particular historical position of power of Akragas, which dominated most of central Sicily from the south coast to Himera on the north coast, began with Theron's conquest of Himera in 483 BCE as tyrant of Akragas and ended with his death around 472 BCE.⁶⁰ In addition, a silver litra from Syracuse, featuring the head of Arethusa on the obverse and an octopus on the reverse (M 3391),⁶¹ hints at the Syracuse-Akragas alliance between Theron and his son-in-law, Gelon of Syracuse. The coin is dated between 485 and 465 BC and was discovered in a younger layer in context to the early Hellenistic reuse of the LA house.

During the 480s/470s, while the Akragantine didrachms were circulating, there was another strong currency in circulation in Monte Iato: two silver *oboloi* from Selinous (M 4373 and M 4374) found in the excavation rubble of the two-room building K.⁶² It appears that Monte Iato was also involved in Selinous' monetary and economic policies as they competed for territorial and political dominance in western Sicily. In this 'currency war', however, the Iaitines, even under the aegis of their chiefly House, were unable to achieve currency independence as a means of gaining political autonomy. In contrast to the Iaitines, the indigenous community of the Segestans was able to put their claim to territorial and political integrity into circulation from the 470s onwards by minting their own coins.⁶³ As early as 460, with the construction of the first *peri-*

58 Stefania De Vido, "I travagli della aristocrazia," in *La città inquieta: Selinunte tra lex sacra e deficiiones*, ed. Alessandro Iannucci et al. (Milan: Mimesis edizioni, 2015): 45–78; Johnson, "The Curse Tablets of Selinous."

59 Isler, "Die Siedlung auf dem Monte Iato": 180, with further references; see also Frey-Kupper, *Die antiken Fundmünzen vom Monte Iato*: 62; Ulla Westermarck, *The Coinage of Akragas c. 510–c. 406 B.C.*, *Studia Numismatica Upsaliensia* 6 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018): 41–66.

60 De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*: 280–82; Roberto Sammartano, "Himera negli anni della dominazione akragantina: la documentazione archeologica," *Kokalos* 59 (2022): 41–61.

61 Frey-Kupper, *Die antiken Fundmünzen vom Monte Iato*: 62.

62 Martin Mohr and Christoph Reusser, "Forschungen auf dem Monte Iato 2016," *Antike Kunst* 60 (2017): 100.

63 Silvia Mani Hurter, *Die Didrachmenprägung von Segesta mit einem Anhang der Hybriden, Teilstücke und Tetradrachmen sowie mit einem Überblick über die Bronzeprägung*, *Schweizer Studien zur Numis-*

pteros in the Contrada Magno, this claim was converted into the hard currency of stone.⁶⁴ As is well known, Segesta became a major player in the geopolitical conflict and fight for supremacy in western Sicily,⁶⁵ while the Iaitines, with their renaissance of a (pseudo-)precolonial past, returned to purely local political importance.

The West Sicilian coinage and coin finds reveal how deeply the Iaitinian chiefly House was involved in the intricate web of local and large-scale politics that involved Greek, Phoenician, and indigenous power seekers and power holders. On its way to power, the chiefly House implemented a multi-vectoral policy that allowed it to compartmentalise its dependence on external partners into various alliances by supporting several guest-friends in different western Sicilian *apoikiai* with aid in the form of the procurement of warriors,⁶⁶ labour for large construction projects,⁶⁷ storable food, and resources (Thucydides 6.20.4), including natural resources such as wood for building or as a primary fuel for crafting.⁶⁸ In return, the LA house received cosmopolitan goods, such as black gloss pottery, monumental architecture, haute cuisine, and technological knowledge, which they used to reward their local and regional supporters. This role as a mediator likely contributed to the chiefly House's prominent position in Monte Iato and made the sanctuary around the Aphrodite Temple a central hub for a burgeoning regional power within the interior of Western Sicily.⁶⁹ The effects of this mediating role reinforced the authority of the Iaitinian chiefly House to help Greek

matik 1 (Bern: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft, 2008); Monica De Cesare, "Building a New Identity in Segesta between Tradition and Innovation: What the Sacred Contexts of the 6th and 5th Centuries BC Tell Us," in *The Production of Locality and Empowerment in the Iron Age and Archaic Western Mediterranean*, ed. Erich Kistler et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press).

⁶⁴ Serra, *La ceramica a decorazione geometrica*: 19–21; De Cesare, "Building a New Identity in Segesta."

⁶⁵ Monica De Cesare and Hedvig Landenius Enegren, "L'Atleta' di Segesta: una statuetta di discobolo dal santuario di Contrada Mango," *Prospettiva* 167/168 (2017): 103–5; De Cesare, "Building a New Identity in Segesta."

⁶⁶ For warlordism in western Sicily, starting in the fifth century BCE, see Louis Rawlings, "Warlords, Carthage and the Limits of Hegemony," in *War, Warlords, and Interstate Relations in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Toni Naco del Hoyo and Fernando Lopez Sanchez, *Impact of Empire* 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 152.

⁶⁷ Erich Kistler, "Die Phönizier sind Händler, die Griechen aber Kolonisatoren – Zwei alte Klischees: Ulfs Kulturkontaktmodell und das archaische Westsizilien," in *Kulturkontakte in antiken Welten: Vom Denkmodell zum Fallbeispiel: Proceedings des internationalen Kolloquiums aus Anlass des 60. Geburtstages von Christoph Ulf*, 26.–30. Jänner 2009, Innsbruck, ed. Robert Rollinger and Kordula Schnegg, *Colloquia Antiqua* 10 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014): 91–99.

⁶⁸ For the necessary procurement of firewood for the classical pottery kilns at Selinous, see the important observations and calculations of Martin Bentz, "Zur Rolle der Keramikproduktion in der griechischen Stadt klassischer Zeit: Ein quantitativer Ansatz am Beispiel von Selinunt," *Kölner und Bonner Archaeologica* 7 (2017): 29–30.

⁶⁹ Kistler and Mohr, "Late Archaic Feasting Places": 394–96. On limited access to Athenian pottery as an index of social privilege and powerful connections in ancient Iberia, see Rodríguez Peréz, "Old Cups Die Hard": 94–95.

(and Phoenician?) power-holders to mobilise warriors and labour for wars and tyrannical economies. Therefore, the chiefly House was clearly a creation of this colonial situation, little supported in the traditional forms of indigenous organisation.⁷⁰ Consequently, if the chiefly House were to lose its Greek and Phoenician alliance partners due to dynamic changes in the larger-scale power game, brought about by shifts in interregional affairs and the resulting local conflicts, it would also lose its political dominance in the regional environment. In this scenario, the family would no longer be able to offer colonial goods as social valuables, thus reducing its attractiveness as a provider and redistributor of such goods. Such a scenario would then result in the loss of political capital and the dwindling of assistance from local and regional supporters.

Since the Iaitinian chiefly House aimed to establish a ‘modern’ position of power, it sought, from the outset, to traditionalise its new power and present it as deriving from the local forms of authority. For example, the LA house was built on the ruins of a protohistoric dwelling, which had been ritually abandoned to make way for the construction of the LA house in 490/80 BCE and was therefore rooted in local history.⁷¹ In order to prevent any potential for resilience or armed resistance, a cult niche for the worship of a natural divine power was incorporated into the second Greek-style phase of the Aphrodite Temple.⁷² Furthermore, the outdoor area immediately north of the LA house was used for identity-related gatherings and festivals, where the quality of being Indigenous was re-experienced and passed on to future generations by excluding anything Greek.⁷³ All this, of course, took place under the aegis of the chiefly House, which controlled these re-enactments of the locals as indigenous people.⁷⁴ However, after the chiefly House was deprived of power, all these loci, as hubs of indigenouness, became the propelling force behind the reclaiming of a pseudo-precolonial past that aimed to restore ancestral authorities and cults, to liberate the political elders from the patronage of the Iaitinian chiefly family, and to re-establish decentralising segmentarity as the basic principle of a re-indigenised organisation.

⁷⁰ Concerning this ambivalence creating hybridity, see Antonaccio and Shea, “Colonial Moments.”

⁷¹ Erich Kistler, “The MEDiterranean Sea: Mediterranean Object Histories and Their Counter-Histories,” in *New Horizons: Mediterranean Research in the 21st Century*, ed. Mirham Dabag et al., *Mittelmeerstudien* 10 (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016): 250–57; Kistler et al., “Archaika as a Resource.”

⁷² Dauth and Kistler, “Einheimisch’-Werden auf dem Monte Iato.”

⁷³ Kistler and Mohr, “Between Coloniality and Locality”: 89–92; Kistler et al., “The Multiple Productions of Locality.”

⁷⁴ Kistler, “The MEDiterranean Sea”: 255–56.

7 Conclusion

The de-monumentalisation process that occurred in Monte Iato in the second third of the 5th century BCE went beyond the dismantling of colonial structures and buildings. It represented a complete undoing of the monumental setting of colonial power, including the obliteration of the LA house as a chiefly residence, the decommissioning of hydro-technical structures as a manifestation of colonial expertise,⁷⁵ and the shattering of the cult image of the protective deity in the adytum as an expression of colonial-religious syncretism.⁷⁶ The process likely also involved the abandonment of foreign guest-friend clubhouses to the east of the Aphrodite Temple and other houses on the southern edge of the later Hellenistic-Roman agora.

Unlike recent efforts to de-monumentalise colonial monuments, the dismantling of the colonial matrix in Monte Iato did not involve any violent liberation by an indigenous armed movement. Instead, the rule of the LA house was ritually terminated and celebrated with opulent sacrificial feasts, thus re-inaugurating the world of their ancestors as the basis for a re-indigenised post-colonial era. This pseudo-return to a precolonial past after 460/50 BCE liberated the locals from their patronage relationship with the chiefly House and encouraged a decentralised and segmented form of organisation.

Overall, the de-monumentalisation process in the post-Late Archaic Monte Iato marked a break from its own colonial past. Both its ruination and the ruins of the LA house itself became a monument in the post-colonial era, encompassing and musealizing the historical lesson on the fate of their failed colonial chief. This idea of the de-monumentalised chiefly House as a heritage-creating memorial – of both the colonial matrix's collapse and the reawakening of indigenusness as an emancipatory political force – remained powerful until the early Hellenistic age and will be a point of focus in our future research.

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⁷⁵ For instance, for a detailed examination of the advanced hydrotechnical engineering utilised in Selinus during the sixth and fifth centuries BC, see Alba Mazza, "Waterscape and Floods Management of Greek Selinus: The Cottone River Valley," *Open Archaeology* 7 (2021): 1066–90.

⁷⁶ Sarah P. Morris, "Close Encounters on Sicily: Molech, Meilichios, and Religious Convergence at Selinus," in *Religious Convergence in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Sandra Blakely and Billie Jean Collins, *Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religions* 2 (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2019): 77–100.

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