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Forms of private and public devotion in the Dodecanese in the Hellenistic Age: The cases of the Great Gods and Hecate

Romina Carboni and Emiliano Cruccas

Abstract

The aim of this contribution is to underline some topics concerning the main features of some cults connected to personal and civic protection, like those of Hecate and the Great Gods of Samothrace, in the islands of Dodecanese, between the late Classical and Hellenistic periods. It will further focus on influences in the evolution of cultural phaenomena through a global analysis of archaeological, epigraphical and iconographic sources. In fact, there are some examples of ἑγεμονία and private forms of devotion for Hecate that show a strong influence ascribable to a Carian cultural substrate. Another important vector of influence comes from Samothrace and its popular and Panhellenic cult of the Great Gods. Forms of private and public devotion for these gods are indeed testified by some epigraphical texts concerning lists of so-called Samothrakiastai. We shall also emphasise syncretic links between external influences and local cultural tradition in the Hellenistic Age.

Key words: Hecate, Great Gods of Samothrace, Cabiri, Rhodes, Kos, Caria, Creta

Foreword

From the age of Alexander, major cultural and political changes characterised the Eastern Mediterranean, within which religious cults were seen in a different light, compared to the late Classical period. If, until that time, the cults seemed to have played a role essentially connected with the different communities of the poleis, with the exception of the so-called Panhellenic sanctuaries, the Hellenistic period shows syncretic phenomena between the local pantheon in different regions and ‘universal’ and foreign cults.¹ In the case of the Dodecanese, and in particular with regard to the island of Rhodes, these aspects are identified in some cults that show a strong allogeneic nature, such as that of the Gods of Samothrace and Hecate, topics of this work. In this chapter, we will try to build a hermeneutical path that will lead to the formulation of some interpretation proposals and hypotheses concerning the cultural vectors that contributed to the spread of these cults in the Dodecanese area, with particular reference to Rhodes, Kos, and the so-called Rhodian Peraia.

It should first be noted that there is no doubt that the two-year period from 408–407 BC, when the Rhodes synoecism (Diod. XIII, 75) was established, was a turning point for the analysis of social and cultural structures in this area.² The institutionalisation of the cult of Helios/Halios as a patron deity is definitely an element that confirms an important change.³ It was an event that, through political and cultural dynamics, marked the beginning of a process that led, starting from the age of Alexander, to the introduction of different cults in this geographical area. The importance of this innovation is also linked to the fact that Helios/Halios was not an extremely widespread cult and, in any case, even where identified, it was not so important,⁴ and this can explain the choice of a deity who was not too close to one of the three cities that were protagonists of synoecism.⁵

The Great Gods of the sailors

Among the cults which, starting from the Hellenistic period, spread widely in Rhodes and in the Dodecanese area, we should mention the cults of Samothrace.

The cult of the Great Gods, which became popular starting at least from the 7th century BC in the Eastern Mediterranean, is characterised by regional differences concerning mainly relationships with local deities.⁶ Confused and identified with the so-called Cabiri, these deities had their main sanctuaries on the islands of Samothrace and Lemnos, and in Thebes, in Boeotia. The

¹ Morelli 1959: 94–99 and Paul 2015 (with previous bibliography).
² Morelli 1959: 94.
³ Morelli 1959: 95. Morelli (1959: 96) also points out that the worship of Athana Lindia already fulfilled this pan-Rhodian function. In this regard, the introduction of the cult of Halos can be seen as a desire to strengthen the image of the aristocracy of Ialyssos, to which this deity was clearly linked.
⁴ On this cult and his features, see Blakely 2006; Bremmer 2014 (here 21–54); Cole 1984; Cruccas 2014; Hemberg 1950.
etymology of the ancient name Kabiros/Kabiroi seems to derive from the Semitic root ‘kabir-’ (= big), connected to the word Megaloi Theoi (Great Gods) of the Greek tradition.7

The name Kabiros and its plural date back to the most archaic phases of Lemnos and Thebes, while they seem almost entirely absent on Samothrace, where the deities were identified by the name Great Gods, and never by the word Kabiros/Kabiroi, except for one epigraphic document dating to the 2nd/1st century BC. A plausible hypothesis is that the most archaic theonym was the one associated with sacred mystery ceremonies, and, therefore, was a sort of secret name that could only be pronounced during the religious ceremonies to which the uninitiated were not admitted.8 In fact, this cult seems to show clear ‘Eastern’ elements, but through a complex and varied reality, resulting from cultural stratifications of different origins and chronology. This is confirmed by the sanctuaries of Samothrace, which, starting from the age of Alexander, plays a central role in the development of the Greek religion through the diffusion of a cult that begins to have its own characteristics, making it different from the original ones of the cult of the Cabiri, expanding from the island throughout the Eastern Mediterranean basin, and then also in the Romanized world.

In the case of the Dodecanese islands, the presence of citizens sent to Samothrace for the periodic ceremonies in honour of the Great Gods is confirmed by several elements: the devotion by the inhabitants of Rhodes to the gods of Samothrace in the Hellenistic period can be explained by their function as the protectors of sailors, in relation to the main activities carried out by the inhabitants of the island.10 At least from the beginning of the 4th century BC, in fact, the port of the new capital, Rhodes, was expanded to accommodate more and larger vessels.11 The strategic position of the island and the regular arrival of merchants and sailors from all over the Mediterranean was undoubtedly an incentive for the development of the cult of the Gods of Samothrace.

The oldest inscription dedicated to these deities comes from Lindos and dates to the 3rd century BC (IG XII. 1. 788);12 the second, probably of the 2nd century BC, is from nearby Karpathos and was discovered near the temple of Poteridan Porthmios (IG XII. 1. 1034).13 This inscription refers to the priestess of the cult of the Great Gods.14 In addition to this document, we have two epigraphic texts concerning the sending of mystai to the sanctuary of Samothrace.15

Another document, which seems to date between the 2nd/1st century BC, comes from the city of Rhodes and confirms the presence of priests who were simultaneously in charge of the worship of several deities:16 in addition to the Gods of Samothrace, we find Dionysus, Asclepius, Heracles, and the Dioscuri,17 figures often associated with the Great Gods.18 Dating to the same period, there is also another inscription from Kamiros, which refers to gods of Samothrace and the gods of Lemnos.19 Other finds from the same chronological period show the words Σαμωθραϊκασθαί,20 which refer to members of religious congregations of devotees of the gods of Samothrace.21

8 Dimitrova 2008: 83–90.
13 [―] Θεοὶ Σαμωθραϊκικασθαί θεοῖς [―]. On this inscription, see Cole 1984: 65 and 159–60, no. 42.
The link with the sanctuary of the Great Gods seems to be confirmed by the dedication of the famous Nike in the island sanctuary, supposedly dedicated by the inhabitants of Rhodes after the naval victories of 190 BC against the Seleucid fleet.22

This connection with the island is also confirmed by some inscriptions with lists of theoroi-proxenoi of the 2nd century BC.23 Most of the epigraphs from the island date to the 1st century BC: a document referring to a priest of Serapis, Heracles, Aristomenes, of the Gods of Samothrace24 and of the Korybantes25 also comes from the city of Rhodes. These mythological figures, together with the Curetes26 and the Telchines, are often associated and confused with the so-called Cabiri. The Telchines, in fact, were decisive in the case of Rhodes: their name is attested on the island as epicleses of other divine figures, including Apollo, the Nymphs, and Hera.27

According to Strabo, the Telchines arrived on the island from Crete, and then from Cyprus, and because of them the island was named Telchinia.28 However, the cultural root that seems to refer to a substrate compatible with these cults is probably the one linked to the Curetes-Korybantes. The presence of these mythological figures, usually connected and often identified with the Cabiri/Great Gods, can provide a key to clarify the cultural background to the origin of certain myths and cults. These figures are described and represented as young men in armour, engaged in apotropaic dances, according to the mythical tales of the births of Dionysus Zagreus and Zeus. These dances are often associated with the so-called pyrriche, which, according to Plato (Pl. l.g. 796), was one of the peculiarities of Athena in the capital of Attica, the Dioscuri in Sparta, and the Curetes on Crete.

With regard to this geographical area, there may be a connection between the Dodecanese islands and the main island sanctuary, the cave of Mt Ida. On this island, in fact, one of the most famous mythical events of Greek religion took place, when the new-born Zeus was hidden to prevent him from being killed by his father, Kronos, an episode also told in the famous hymn of Palaioastro,29 dating to the period between the end of the 4th/beginning of the 3rd century BC.30 In this episode, which took place in the cave of Mt Ida, the Curetes,31 called Telchines by Statius,32 played a central role.33 This was the site of a sanctuary dedicated to Zeus, where materials from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods have been found.34 The protagonist of the mythological story told by Hesiod (Hes. Th. 459–491) is Rhea, who, after giving birth to little Zeus, gave him to Amalthea, so that the nymph could raise him. Lest her infant’s cries should reveal his presence to his father Kronos, his mother asked the Curetes to execute noisy movements in their armour while dancing to prevent Kronos from finding and swallowing him.

The most typical iconographic representation of the Curetes-Korybantes is that of dancers around the little Zeus as they try to protect him from his father, Kronos.35 This connection seems to be evident also in Caria. According to Diodorus Siculus (D.S. 5, 60), a group of five Curetes from Crete colonised Cnidian Chersonesus and forced the Carians who lived there to leave. In the nearby Panamara centre, the cult of the god Panamara, identified with Zeus36 and with one of the Curetes, seems to be confirmed: in fact, Panamara37 probably arrived with the brothers Labraundos and Spalaxos, from the island of Crete in Caria.38 The connection between these semi-gods coming from the religious world in Crete and Zeus Carius finds an exegetical explanation in the mythological role that the

22 On this topic, see Moreno 1994: 366–367: the scholar thinks that the dating of the statue coincides with the victory over the Seleucids in 190 BC; contra Ridgway 2000: 150–160, who believes that a dating c. 160 BC is more likely. On this topic, see Palagia 2010, who connects the Nike with the capture of Perseus in 167 BC.
23 IG XII 8, 170e, 65–69: ‘Ῥοδίων· | Εὐάρατος Εὐαράτου | Τιμάπολις Εὐφραγόρου | καθ’ ὑοθεσίαν δὲ Τιμαπόλιος’; Dimitrova 2008: no. 23: ‘Πέδου [——] Αἴ[——] ἹΡΟ[——]’.
25 Here identified by the name kyrbanthoi. On this topic, see Laumonier 1958: 283; Morelli 1959: 158.
26 For the presence of a cult of Poseidon Kyrítoys in Kamiros, see Laumonier 1958: 657.
27 Diod. Sic. 5, 55, 2: ‘εἰς τὸν βίον τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσηγητάς. ἀγάλματά γε ἔπειτα αὐτοῖ[——] τε καὶ᾿Ερύμνης καὶ Λαρίσης, νῦν δὲ Τράλλεων καλουμένης τῆς ᾿Ασίας· τε καὶ Νύμφας Τελχινίας, παρὰ δὲ Καμειρεῦσιν ῾Ηραν Τελχινίαν’. Lg 339. EM s.v. ‘Εὕδωνος: Ποταμὸς τῆς ποτὲ μὲν Δίας κατὰ χρῆσιν ἐπὶ τὴν Καρίαν ὁρμῶντες, νυκτὸς ἐπικαταλαβούσῃ, Παρὰ τὸ εὑδῆσαι οὖν Εὕδωνον κατὰ χρῆσιν ἐπὶ τὴν Καρίαν ὁρμῶντες, νυκτὸς ἐπικαταλαβούσῃ, παρὰ τὸ εὑδῆσαι οὖν Εὕδωνον κατὰ χρῆσιν ἐπὶ τὴν Καρίαν ὁρμῶντες, νυκτὸς ἐπικαταλαβούσῃ’.
28 Strabo 14, 2, 7: ‘In earlier times Rhodes was called Ophiussa and Stadia, and then Telchinis, after the Telchines, who took up their abode in the island. Some say that the Telchines are “maligners” and “sorcerers”, who pour the water of the Styx mixed with sulphur upon animals and plants in order to destroy them. But others, on the contrary, say that since they excelled in workmanship they were “maligners” by rival workmen and thus received their bad reputation; and that they first came from Crete to Cyrus, and then to Rhodes; and that they were the first to work iron and brass, and in fact fabricated the scythe for Cronus. Now I have already described them before, but the number of the myths about them causes me to resume their description, filling up the gaps, if I have omitted anything’ (Translation from Perseus). On this Strabo quote, see Biffi 2009: 230.
30 InscrCret III 2.2. On this topic, see Willetts 1962: 211–212.
31 The fact that the Mt Ida area was a place of worship of these divine figures seems to be also confirmed by the toponym of a small neighbouring village, Koeufotai (Sporn 2002: 222).
33 Sporn 2002: 218–223.
34 Sporn 2002: 218 with bibliography at n. 1591.
35 Cruccas 2014: 40–41.
37 Laumonier 1958: 340. EM s.n. Εὔδωνος Ποταμός τῆς ποτὲ μὲν Δίας κατὰ χρῆσιν ἐπὶ τὴν Καρίαν ὁρμῶντες, νυκτὸς ἐπικαταλαβούσῃ, Παρὰ τὸ εὑδῆσαι οὖν Εὔδωνον τῶν τοπατονίων ὁμόδωρον’. Laumonier (1958: 730, n. 7) also assumes that the name of Caria may be connected with the Cabiri and that they may come from this area.
38 Laumonier 1958: 349.
Curetes-Korybantes played in the episode of the birth of the Father of the Gods and in their protection of the infant from his father Kronos. Now we will see how these aspects related to the Cretan and Carian substrates are also connected with the cult of another deity who seems to play an important role in the pantheon of the Dodecanese islands.

E.C.

**Hecate between Caria and the Dodecanese**

One of the most famous representations of the birth of Zeus is the one depicted on the frieze of the temple of Hecate in Lagina (Caria). On the eastern side, in fact, the central area is occupied by the birth scene of the Father of the Gods (Figure 1). This choice, which is definitely not accidental, seems to reflect the desire to show the bond that united the goddess receiving the cult of the sanctuary with its main ‘benefactor’, and, at the same time, to bring together the two most venerated deities in Stratonicea. Under Roman domination, in fact, within the city bouleuterion, public events of devotion in honour of Hecate and Zeus, the proestotes of the city, were held to thank these deities for using their great divine powers to save their city from serious dangers. In this regard, we should mention the erection of two statues in their honour in the chapel of the bouleuterion, the granting of the right to seek asylum by the senate to the sanctuary of Hecate in Lagina and to that of Zeus in Panamara, in addition to the formation of a choir of children singing a hymn in honour of Zeus and Hecate in Stratonicea. If a series of the Stratonicea mint shows, on the obverse and on the reverse, respectively, a laureate head of Zeus and Hecate with torches, a confirmation of this link also comes from Chalki, one of the Dodecanese islands, in which the goddess replaces Zeus’ bride on a double-rock throne.

In the Dodecanese islands, particularly Rhodes and Kos, the cult of Hecate is confirmed by finds that seem to date between Hellenistic and Roman times. This widespread diffusion could be traced back to the strong influence of Caria, the geographical area where probably the cult originated. Although, in fact, identifying the exact place of origin of Hecate is not simple, many aspects seem to refer to the Eastern area, and more precisely to the southern area of the Anatolian peninsula; in fact, the oldest evidence of the cult of the goddess seems to come from here. This thesis seems to be confirmed by both philological-literary data and strictly archaeological data. With regard to this aspect, we should mention the archaic evidence from the

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39 On this subject, see also the hypothesis that the theme of the childhood of Cretan Zeus had particular popularity in the Hellenistic period among the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties (Mastrocinque 2002).
40 Baumeister 2007: 35–36; Carboni 2015: 70–75 (with previous bibliography).
41 In a passage from Hesiod’s Theogony (Hes. Th. 411–452), Zeus honours Hecate by granting her powers extended to the earth, sea, and sky.
42 Le Bas and Waddington 1870: 142, no. 519.
44 Carboni 2014.
45 Meadows 2002.
46 IG XII 1, 958. Susini 1965: 249, 252 (with previous bibliography).
Ionian cities of Miletus and Didyma, in relation to the cult of Apollo, and the already mentioned sanctuary in Lagina, the most important place of worship dedicated to the goddess in this region. Although it dates to the Hellenistic-Roman period, the sanctuary refers to a more ancient substratum, and is, therefore, another element confirming the micro-Asian origin of the cult.

Among the oldest evidence of the cult of Hecate, we find an inscription engraved on an altar dedicated to her in Miletus by two Prytaneis, later placed within the Delphinion (Figure 2). It was found in a stratum of Hellenistic date, but the typology clearly refers to that of the altars of the Archaic period, as is also confirmed by the characters of the epigraph. An inscription engraved on the side of the throne of a seated female sculpture, found near Didyma, where Hecate and Apollo are mentioned together, is also of the same period. In addition to the archaic nature of the evidence, an interesting element is also provided by the association of the goddess with Apollo, which confirms a consolidated devotional practice that sees Hecate sharing places of worship with other deities. In Miletus, in fact, the goddess is celebrated as the ἐντεμένιος θεός, and it is no coincidence that Hecate is mentioned with Apollo, in the so-called Molpoi inscription, a religious regulation coming from the Delphinion that lists the cathartic prescriptions intended for different deities, including...
Apollo and Hecate, thus confirming the important role assigned to the goddess:55

όταν οστεοφανρόροι ίσων ἐς Δίδυμα, ἢ πόλις διδότ έκατον βίντι τρία ἱερήτα τελεία τούτων ἐν ὰδίκ, ἐν δὲ ἐνορχές, ἢς μολπ<ῶ>ν ἢ πόλις διδότ Ταρηγηλίασιν ἱερ-ην-ον τέλειον καὶ Μεταγη[ι]-

τύνισιν ἱερ-ην-ον τέλειον, ἔβδομασιν δὲ δύο τέλεια καὶ χόν τοῦ παλαιόν ήρη-
tῆς ἐκάστης τούτωσι τοῖς ἱεροϊς ὁ βασιλεὺς παριστᾶται, λαρχάει δὲ ὀδόν πλήν τῶν ἁλλῶν μολῷν, καὶ ἄρχονται οἱ οστεοφανρόροι Ταφρεύ-
νος θεῖοι Απόλλωνι ᾠδερινίῳ ἀπό τῶν ἀριστερῶν ἀπαρβάμενοι, καὶ ΚΡΗΤΗ
ΡΙΣΑΣ τέσσερας, καὶ γυλλοί φέρονται δύο, καὶ τίθεται παρ' Ἐκάτην τὴν πρόσθεν

pyleων ἐστεμένου καὶ ἄκρητω κατασπένετε, ὁ δ' ἔτερος ἐς Δίδυμα ἐπὶ

θύρας τίθεται· ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντε ἔρχονται τὴν ἀπαρξάμενοι, καὶ ΚΡΗΤΗ

παρ' ῾Εκάτην τὴν πρόσθεν πυλέων ἐστεμένος καὶ ἀκρήτω κατασπένετε, ὁ δ' ἔτεροςἐς Δίδυμα ἐπὶ

θύρας τίθεται· ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσαντε ἔρχονται τὴν ἀπαρξάμενοι, καὶ ΚΡΗΤΗ

παρ' ῾Εκάτην τὴν πρόσθεν πυλέων ἐστεμένος καὶ ἀκρήτω κατασπένετε, ὁ δ' ἔτεροςἐς Δίδυμα ἐπὶ

The feature shared by evidence of the cult of Hecate in Caria is the absence, in pre-Classical times, of temples dedicated to her, whose number, even in later periods, is always small. This can be explained both by the fact that Hecate was worshiped as a complementary figure within temples dedicated to other deities, and to evidence supporting the private nature of the cult.

Despite the difficulties in identifying the origins of Hecate, it seems likely that the cult of the goddess belongs to Asia Minor, probably in Caria or in the neighbouring regions; hence this cult spread then spread, probably, to peninsular and insular Greece, where religious practices in honour of the goddess took new forms, thanks to the addition of elements from the Greek pantheon.64

It is not surprising, therefore, that the influence of Caria is also evident in the islands of the Dodecanese, in particular Rhodes and Kos. On Kos, the goddess is given different epithets emphasizing the complexity of her nature in relation to evidence related both to the public/official and to the private spheres. The many finds of the Hellenistic period related to Hecate and coming from the island seem to be a consequence
of the strong influence exerted by Caria on the area. With the exception of a relief representing Hecate with torches (Figure 4),69 most of the finds are dedications and cult calendars in which the name of Hecate is mentioned along with different epithets, which refer to the different areas of relevance for which the goddess was invoked on the island. The first time Hecate is mentioned in Kos is on a cult calendar of the early 3rd century BC (Ἐκάται ἐμ πόλει),70 while a second calendar, whose interpretation is more controversial, dates to the end of the same century.71 Another proof is provided by a lex sacra, where several chthonic cults are mentioned, including the cult of Hecate Megala, to whom infernal characteristics are attributed;72 the name Megala could refer to the megeste form that spread in Caria in the Imperial era.73

It is no coincidence that the poet Theocritus from Siracusa, who lived on Kos for a while, associates the goddess Hecate with demons:74


71 Here the sacrifices to the Nymphs and to other deities, including perhaps Hecate, are mentioned. Segre 1938: 192–193.
72 Herzog 1929: 15, no. 5 A, 8–9 (mid 4th century BC); Sokolowski 1969: 272, no. 156 (first half of 3rd century BC).
73 Müller 1913: 335–336.
forms of private and public devotion in the dodecanese in the hellenistic age

syncretism that characterises her multifaceted nature.

The goddess is also mentioned on Kos in association with Asclepius, and, above all, with Apollo, as we see in Didyma and Miletus. With the epiclesis Pontia she is mentioned along with Apollo on an inscription from the 2nd century BC engraved on a circular altar from Halieis, or even in Halasarna where Ecate, here called Strattia, is mentioned, once again, in association with the god in five dedications by the priest of Apollo and the hieropoioi. Their dedication to Hecate suggests that the cult of the goddess was deep-rooted, and that it played a significant role in the area. The association between Strattia and Soteira epicleses, equally widespread on the island, and referring to military dedications, suggests that these dedications can be dated to the period between the Cretan Wars and the war against Philip V.

Hecate is also known as Soteira on Rhodes, here in her syncretic relationship with Artemis, as confirmed by Suda. The presence of a cult of the goddess on the island in the Hellenistic period is confirmed, in fact, by several finds from Rhodes, Ialysos, Kamiros, and Lindos. In the Archaic period these cities all belonged to the same sacred federation, known as the Doric Hexapolis, together with Kos, Halicarnassus, and Cnidus. In the 6th/5th century BC the name of the confederation that included these cities located opposite the coast of Caria was changed to the Doric Pentapolis when Halicarnassus was excluded from it.

Among the different epicleses with which the goddess was invoked on Rhodes, we should mention Propylaia, which refers to her function as protector of crossroads and gates. Two epigraphs with the name of Hecate with the epiclesis in question come from the acropolis of Camirus, and not just by chance from the area of the Propylae:

\[
\text{Ἀπόλλωνος Ἀποτροπαῖος / Ἐκάτας Προπυλαίας}^{73} \\
\text{Ἑρμᾶς Προπυλαῖῳ πέσος ταύτα[ι]. / Ἐκάτας Προπυλαίας}^{74}
\]

In both inscriptions, the goddess is mentioned as Propylaia, immediately after Apollo Apotropaioi in the first case, and Hermes Propylaioi in the second. The association with the two gods is not new, but it seems well established in several other cities in Asia Minor and Greece, as we have seen in the above-mentioned example of Apollo on Kos.

Hecate and Hermes are often invoked together near the propylaea of the acropolis, e.g. Athens, in their apotropaic role of protectors and guardians of gates. The expression `πέσος ταύτα[ι] = coque hic, found on the second epigraphic document reported above, refers to the ritual prescription of a votive meal regularly dedicated to Hecate, but also to the goddess and Hermes together, which consisted of deigna that also included puppies and fish cooked on the spot.

With regard to the similarities with the Acropolis of Athens, we should also mention Rhodes, on whose acropolis an Hellenistic hekataion was discovered, characterised by an archaic style, perhaps a replica of an attic one (Figure 3). The hekataion was located on a high plinth in the area of the temple of Athena Poliás, and there is clearly a correspondence with the situation of the Athenian fortress, where the triple image of Hecate was probably located near the temple of Athena Nike (Paus. 2, 30, 2). The hekataion on Rhodes, with a total height of c. 2.50 m, was perhaps one of the most impressive anathema within the acropolis of Rhodes. Hecate and Hermes on Rhodes are also associated in the celebration of the mysteries, and then on an inscription together with

78 Suid. s.v. Ἀσφόδελος. The passage mentions Artemis Soteira in connection with a plant, the asphodel, linked to the cult of the dead and the gods of the underworld. The reference context suggests an interpretation of the deity mentioned as a hyposost of Hecate. See Amigues 2002: 7–14.
79 HD 1, 144: κατὰ πρὸ ὧν ἐκ τῆς πενταπόλεως νόον χώρων Δωρὶς, πρόσεφον δὲ νεκραῖας τοῦ ἱεροῦ τάσσεται καλομένης, φιλοδοξοῦσιν ὅτι μήμης ἐνδεδείχθη τῶν προσομοιών Δωρίων ἐξελθόταν καὶ τῆς τὸν Ἱωνίαν κλητῆς, [ἐ]ν γὰρ τῷ ἁγίῳ τοῦ Τριοποῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἀποτροπῶν ἐπίθεται τὸ πάλαι τρίποδας χαλκέους τοῖσι νικῶσι, καὶ τούτους χρῆν τοὺς λαμβάνοντας ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ μὴ ἐφέρενεν ἀλλὰ τοὺς τοῦ φόρου τοῦτον ὑμῖν δαμαστάναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφέων αὐτῶν τοὺς περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀνομήσαντας πρότερον δὲ ἑξαπόλιος τῆς αὐτῆς ταύτης καλεομένης, φυλάσσονται (ἀνέλλ.) | δύο τ' ἐπὶ τούτοις καὶ εὐσεβῶν (χ)ῶρος (σφ').
80 A herm of Hermes comes from the 'sacred square' of the acropolis of Camiros (Maiuri 1932: 437ff.).
84 Phases, in Rhodes, with a total height of c. 2.50 m, was perhaps one of the most impressive anathema within the acropolis of Rhodes.
85 Hecate and Hermes on Rhodes are also associated in the celebration of the mysteries, and then on an inscription together with

\[\text{Phil.} \ X \ 141, 142, 203.\]

\[\text{Propylaia:} \ \text{Ἀπόλλωνος Ἀποτροπαῖος / Ἑκάτας Προπυλαίας}^{73} \]

\[\text{Ἑρμᾶς Προπυλαῖῳ πέσος ταύτα[ι]. / Ἐκάτας Προπυλαίας}^{74}\]

\[\text{In both inscriptions, the goddess is mentioned as Propylaia, immediately after Apollo Apotropaioi in the first case, and Hermes Propylaioi in the second. The association with the two gods is not new, but it seems well established in several other cities in Asia Minor and Greece, as we have seen in the above-mentioned example of Apollo on Kos.}\]

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Moreover, a *hekataion* from the acropolis of Ialysus features the three typical figures arranged around a central pillar and wearing a chiton, a *himation*, and a single *polos*, from which two braids fall over the shoulders (Figure 6). The sculpture is a small specimen (h. 40 cm) probably belonging to the group of *Hekataia Prothyraia* which, according to Aristophanes, all Athenians kept outside the doors of their homes.

An example of Artemis *Soteira* depicted as Hecate, and placed to protect the entrance of a stonemason’s atelier at Lindos, also belongs to the private sphere. The inscription comes from a cave between the latomie, at the entrance to which, on the right, Hecate is represented holding two torches as a dog looks at her.

**Concluding remarks**

With regard to the cults analysed above, the aspects examined show a cultural matrix that seems closely connected to a general micro-Asian sphere. However, some elements clearly refer to a *koinē* that can generally be defined as coming from Caria, but which clearly shows some archaic elements connected with another geographical area, i.e. around the island of Crete. It seems evident, in the light of these considerations, that the cults of Hecate and the Great Gods of Samothrace, the latter in their syncretic relationship with the Cabiri, the Telchines, and the Curetes/Korybantes, show, characteristics linked to the local substrate, combined with elements of the Archaic period. The aspects connected with Zeus from Mt Ida (Crete), and the myth of his birth, play a central role in these cult processes. The figures of Hecate and the armed dancers, the protagonists of the mythical episode which is also represented on reliefs, seem to be the *trait d’union* that, through a process of slow crystallisation and reinterpretation of myths and cults, connects the Dodecanese area and the opposite micro-Asian coast to the island of Crete, where these cultural phenomena probably originated.

**Bibliography**


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*Figure 5. Rhodes. Hekataion (after Maiuri 1932: 15, figs. 3–5).*

*Figure 6. Ialysus. Hekataion (after Jacopi 1931: 81, fig. 53).*