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Nymphs and Springs in Syracuse: Between Greece and Sicily

Sophie Bouffier

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Ancient Waterlands

sous la direction de
Betsey Ann Robinson, Sophie Bouffier et Iván Fumadó Ortega



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Arethusa and Kyane, Nymphs and Springs in Syracuse: Between Greece and Sicily

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Abstract – The paper will examine the examples of Arethusa and Kyane, two springs situated in Syracusan territory that knew some fame in antiquity. According to legend, the first one, Arethusa, a nymph in the retinue of Artemis, was a Peloponnesian native who crossed the seas to escape the Olympian Alpheus River's lust. Once aground on Ortygia, later the heart of the Corinthian colony of Syracuse, she was transformed into a spring by her patron goddess, and the river who followed her poured its waters into her streams, establishing an eternal link between the Greek motherland, and Sicily, land of Greek diaspora. For her part, Kyane was a native nymph who witnessed the abduction or rape of Kore by the god Hades, who punished her by changing her into a spring. Both were integrated into Greek cultural and religious heritage and have thus crossed the boundaries of their adopted island. As early as the end of the 6th century BCE, Arethusa is frequently mentioned in ancient literature, from Pindar, probably the first author to name her, down to Imperial Latin writers, and even their Byzantine successors. She is one of the most popular figures of ancient literature regarding nymphs. As both springs were undoubtedly places of worship, they were both instruments of fertility of the land and of Syracusan women. The paper will highlight the material and symbolic role they play in Syracusan culture, and in relationships between motherland and colony, as well as the Hellenic *koine*.

Résumé – La communication proposera d'examiner les exemples d'Aréthuse et de Cyané, deux sources du territoire syracusain qui ont connu une certaine gloire dans le monde antique. Selon la légende, la première, Aréthuse, nymphe d'Artémis, originaire du Péloponnèse, aurait traversé les mers pour échapper à la fougue du fleuve olympien Alphée. Une fois sur le sol d'Ortygie, au cœur de la fondation corinthienne, elle aurait été métamorphosée en source par sa patronne, et le fleuve l'aurait suivie et aurait uni ses eaux aux siennes, instaurant ainsi un lien éternel entre le Péloponnèse, patrie du dieu des dieux et la Sicile, terre de diaspora grecque. Par opposition, Cyané est une nymphe autochtone qui se serait opposée à Hadès lors du rapt de Koré et que le dieu aurait transformée en source pour la punir. Ces deux sources ont la particularité d'avoir été intégrées dans le patrimoine mythique de la culture grecque et d'avoir ainsi dépassé les frontières de leur île d'adoption. Dès la fin du VI^e s. av. J.-C. Aréthuse est évoquée abondamment par les sources textuelles, depuis Pindare, premier auteur, semble-t-il, à l'avoir mentionnée, jusqu'aux sources latines impériales tardives, voire byzantines. Elle est l'une des nymphes les plus populaires de la tradition grecque. Sur la source Cyané, Diodore de Sicile atteste des sacrifices très anciens, qui dateraient de la venue d'Héraclès en Sicile. Lieux probables de culte, ces sources sont également des instruments de la fertilité territoriale et de la fécondité féminine de l'*apoikia* corinthienne. On cherchera à mettre en exergue le rôle symbolique qu'elles ont joué toutes les deux, à la fois dans la culture syracusaine, dans les liens de *syngénéia* entre la métropole et la colonie, ainsi que dans la *koine* panhellénique.

Introduction

In the phenomenon of Greek expansion, myths and cults are among the topics that best allow us to understand how the new communities construct their ethnic identity.¹ The subject has been long discussed, from Irad Malkin's study (1998) of the figure of Odysseus, to an Oxford *Companion* edited by Jeremy McInerney (2014), and it features especially in epistemological and methodological debates about the definition and pertinence of the concept of ethnicity, sometimes associated, or even opposed, to those of culture and hybridity (Derks, Roymans 2009; Antonaccio 2003). Historians, relying on anthropological and sociological concepts, have then sought the constituent elements of the ethnicity of individual societies from Greek *poleis* or the Roman Empire to the margins of the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, as Catherine Morgan has argued (2009, 24), "attention has focused less on ethnicity as the process of situational identity creation and negotiation (with all that this implies for understanding of specific context), and more on the outcomes of that process." It is obvious that every human community defines its ethnic identity by organizing a systemic framework of symbolic and historical representations that can be transformed and manipulated according to political, social or religious circumstances. Also important are politics, language and local cultural practices in the construction of a community's ethnic identity (Derks, Roymans 2009). Anthony D. Smith rightly identifies six criteria for the recognition of an ethnic group: a collective name, shared history, common myth of descent, distinctive shared culture, association with a specific territory, and a sense of communal solidarity (Smith 1986, 22-32, quoted from Morgan 2009, 21). In this paper about the Greek city of Syracuse, I shall insist upon two of these criteria: a common myth of descent and the association with a specific territory.

1 "This work has been carried out thanks to the support of the A*MIDEX project (n° ANR-11-IDEX-0001-02) funded by the « Investissements d'Avenir » French Government program, managed by the French National Research Agency (ANR)." Many thanks to Betsey A. Robinson for her valuable editing, expert advice, and patience.

Greek cities accorded particular importance to their origins, which inscribed them in time, sometimes timeless or legendary, and a territory. They thus wrote, sometimes later, sometimes in successive palimpsests, their first steps, and looked for heroes, legendary founders, demi-gods, even gods themselves (Curty 1995). The rewriting of origins, which is not exempt from political and ideological manipulation, is one of the fundamental aspects of the construction of any group's ethnic identity. The origin of a man immediately places him, in the eyes of the other, in a space, a history, a culture, even a religion: "Tell me where you are from, I'll tell you who you are" to quote a popular saying. Thus, the geographical landmarks of a community, especially those that provide it with its livelihood and wealth, such as sources or rivers, also contribute to building this ethnic identity, through which its members recognize and distinguish themselves from others. An identity both emic and etic, as formalized by Jonathan Hall (2003, 23): in the view of the society in question, as well as foreigner, some cultural, linguistic or religious elements are immediately linked to history and identity.

What is true for Aegean Greek cities from the moment they developed in the 8th century BCE is even more true for colonial societies that had no background, no baggage, except that of the community from which they originated. Historiography has underlined the role of such a link in religion and culture, as the metropolis and colony rewrote their past and history to give a specific vision of their relationship, and indeed to reinforce it if they had become distant (Quantin 2010; Quantin 2011; Calame 1996).

But as Morgan (2009, 11) has stated, "in the open, interconnected Mediterranean prior to 480, the language of association was more powerful than that of exclusivity, let alone ethnic purity." The case of Greek colonies seems to be more complex than in Aegean cities, as they appeared *ex nihilo*, and settled in a foreign land that had its inhabitants, its characteristics, its tradition. The phenomena of interrelationships have thus to be explored, questioning the degrees of mixing and reciprocal borrowing. The debates focus on the concepts of Hellenization and Romanization, and then of acculturation, mixture, hybridity, and syncretism. They have been greatly influenced by the highlighting, as a result of Richard White's work (1991), of a middle ground, a zone of coexistence between communities, as the encounters created a kind of original buffer space, intended to ensure contacts of any kind and accommodation (Malkin 2011; 2017). But the results of these encounters are not so easy to understand, because the archaeological and textual evidence depends on so many factors, beginning with ancient historical and ideological contexts and extending to our modern biases.

The case of Syracuse, founded in the second half of the 8th century BCE by Corinthians who were then beginning to establish outposts in several regions of the Mediterranean, offers much to the debate. In ancient historiography, the city appears immediately independent from its motherland. There is no evidence of a revolt or war of independence led by the city during its history, unlike its sister, Korcyra (Corfu), nor any official interference of the motherland, as in the case of Potidaia on the Chalkidike. Its position at the margins of the Greek world, at least when it was originally settled, and its remoteness from Aegean circuits certainly fostered this independence. But as in other colonial foundations, to constitute the unity and cohesion of the group, its founders and their heirs sought to set up a system of representations that rooted them in a place, a territory, and possibly brought them closer to local societies, while also reaffirming their kinship (*syngeneia*) and cultural connection with the mother city.

Springs and rivers were important nodes in social networks, as their presence often attracted human settlement in the first place and anchored settlers in a territory, as it has been quite rightly pointed out.² Thereafter, they continuously marked inhabitants' lives and collective memory (Bouffier 2013a). In Syracusan territory, two emblematic springs, Arethusa and Kyane are both known from ancient literature as well as archaeological remains (Fig. 1). They belong to the common language of the Syracusans, both in their materiality, exploited daily by the population, and in their symbolism, religious and ethnic. But the nature of each, as a source/fountain that gave life to the community, also brought them closer to the motherland, Corinth, which exploited and revered its many springs, such the so-called Sacred Spring and Peirene, a phenomenon seen across the Greek world.³ This paper will discuss Arethusa and Kyane, highlighting the material and symbolic roles they played in Syracusan culture, in the relationship between motherland and colony, and in Hellenic *koine*. I contend that traditions surrounding these two springs contributed to the process of building Syracuse's ethnic identification but were also used to assert that Syracuse was a political entity well anchored in its own land, therefore an autonomous city.⁴

Corinthian migrants settled on the site of Syracuse around 734/733, according to the chronology of Thucydides (6.3.2), following Apollo's injunction to the founder, the *oikistes* Archias (Paus. 5.7.3). Through the Pythia, the god told of a place with an exceptional spring, Arethusa, on the island of Ortygia. It soon became the heart of the Corinthian colony. Other

2 See Feldman, Robinson, in this volume; Weiss 1984; Frisone 2012; Bouffier 2014. Kopestonsky 2016, 716, n. 30.

3 See Kopestonsky, Feldman, in this volume; Reichert Südbeck 2000, 159-161; Bookidis 2003, 250; Robinson 2011; Kopestonsky 2016.

4 This has been shown for other cities in the work of the Copenhagen Polis Centre Program; see Hansen 1997; Morgan 2009, 23.

Fig. 1 – Localization of the springs Arethusa and Cyane on Cluver's map of the city of Syracuse. From *Sicilia antica cum minoribus insulis, ei adjacentibus. Item, Sardinia et Corsica. Opus post omnium curas elaboratissimum; tabulis geographicis, aere expressis, illustratum*, 1619; adaptation V. Gemonet, AMU/CNRS, CCJ, 2019.



ancient writers mention a second source, Kyane, located in the Syracusan *chora*. It has been identified with a spring in the Anapos River plain, about 5 km southwest of the ancient city.

The first of these springs supplied drinking water to the urban population; the second one brought fertility and wealth to the territory and its residents. Both were famous for their quality and abundance. But they did not have the same destiny: Arethusa appears in works by some 50 ancient writers between the 6th century BCE and the 10th century CE and has remained famous up to modern times. For instance, it was long a metonym for Syracuse, as in the 12th-century *Liber ad honorem Augusti* by Pietro da Eboli and the 13th-century Ebstorf Map, as well as for Sicily as a whole (see Maurici 1998, 696–699). Later, the nymph appears on the 18th-century Fountain of Rouen and in compositions such as André Campra's ballet, *Arethusa, ou la vengeance de l'amour* (1701).

Kyane might have been completely forgotten if Ovid had not recounted Hades's abduction and rape of Proserpine in his *Metamorphoses* (5.408–437). When the water nymph, Cyane in Latin, rose from her spring and tried to bar their way to the Underworld, the god ran through her; she then pined away and eventually melted into her own waters. As a witness and minor player in ancient mythology, Kyane seems otherwise to have gained little attention. Some recognize her in a fresco of one of the tombs of Vergina-Aigai in Macedonia, Greece, which depicts the kidnapping of Persephone by Hades: the goddess desperately reaches out to the supposed Kyane, a female figure who cowers behind them (Green 1990, 113). The character also appears in Plutarch's minor works. There, however, she is not the nymph transformed into a source but the daughter of a legendary Syracusan king, raped by her father in a moment of drunkenness, as commanded by Dionysus to punish the goddess king (*Parall. Min.*, 310b–c).

After antiquity, the spring, personified as a nymph, mainly appears in illustrations of Ovid's work. For example, she watches from the reeds in an engraving in Johann W. Bauer's series of *Metamorphoses*, the impotent witness presented in the Latin text (Fig. 2).⁵ Perhaps she was also in Monteverdi's opera, *Proserpina rapita* (1630), the libretto of which has been lost. The only other modern occurrence of the name that I have found is a Spanish tragedy, *Ciane de Siracusa o Las Bacanales*, by Cándido M. Trigueros (1767), but that figure is Plutarch's princess, not the spring (see Pabón 1972).

Fig. 2 – *Pluto rapit Proserpina Cyanen in Stagnum Transmutat*, by Johann W. Bauer, *Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphosis*, Augsburg, 1703, plate 51. (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Wilhelm_Bauer_1659_-_Cyane_and_Pluto.jpg)



Modern historiography continues this pattern: little space has been given to Kyane, while Arethusa is the subject of two monographs, both of which consider all aspects of the spring, from its importance in ancient tradition to its contemporary appearance (Mauceri 1925; Cannata 1942). The two authors were able to consult the works of local scholars of the 16th to 19th centuries, so their publications are precious, both for preserving local knowledge and for informing us of architectural remains that have since disappeared. Luigi Mauceri, moreover, was interested in the hydrology of the spring, and his monograph includes important details on the quality and flow of the water in the early 20th century. While such historical and physical facts are very useful, the works are otherwise outdated.

Jennifer Larson's book, *Greek Nymphs*, includes Arethusa and Kyane in a comprehensive study of nymphs and their features (2001). Other works add further layers of possibilities, especially by the comparatist view applied to the different cultures and their own modes of expression (Forbes Irving 1992; Buxton 2009). For example, in his many works about the

links between myths and historical and social facts, Richard Buxton investigates how the process of metamorphosis and ways in which it is read and understood depend on the cultural background of each society (Buxton 2009). The metamorphosis of Kyane provokes different "forms of astonishment" depending on the society and the time in which it is perceived. Carol Dougherty (1993, 69) considers Arethusa a metaphor for Greek and indigenous interaction and intermarriage. And in a study reflecting recent anthropological and symbolist turns in historiography, Sonia Macrì (2012) focuses on several springs including Arethusa and Kyane as representatives of the relationship between fertilizing water, female purity and sexual behaviour. Finally, Francesca Veronese (2013) emphasizes the relationship between Artemis and Arethusa and especially the unusual importance of fishes in the Syracusan cult of Artemis, which she interprets as an Eastern *Potnia Thérôn*, a "Mistress of Animals" introduced by Corinthian settlers. Indeed, most historians interested in Arethusa and Kyane have been drawn to them through their studies of great deities of the Hellenic pantheon, as ancient texts associate them in myth and sometimes in worship: Artemis for Arethusa (Reichert-Südbeck 2000; Fisher-Hansen 2009; Bannister 2009), Demeter and Kore-Persephone for Kyane (Polacco 1986; Hinz 1998; Reichert-Südbeck 2000).

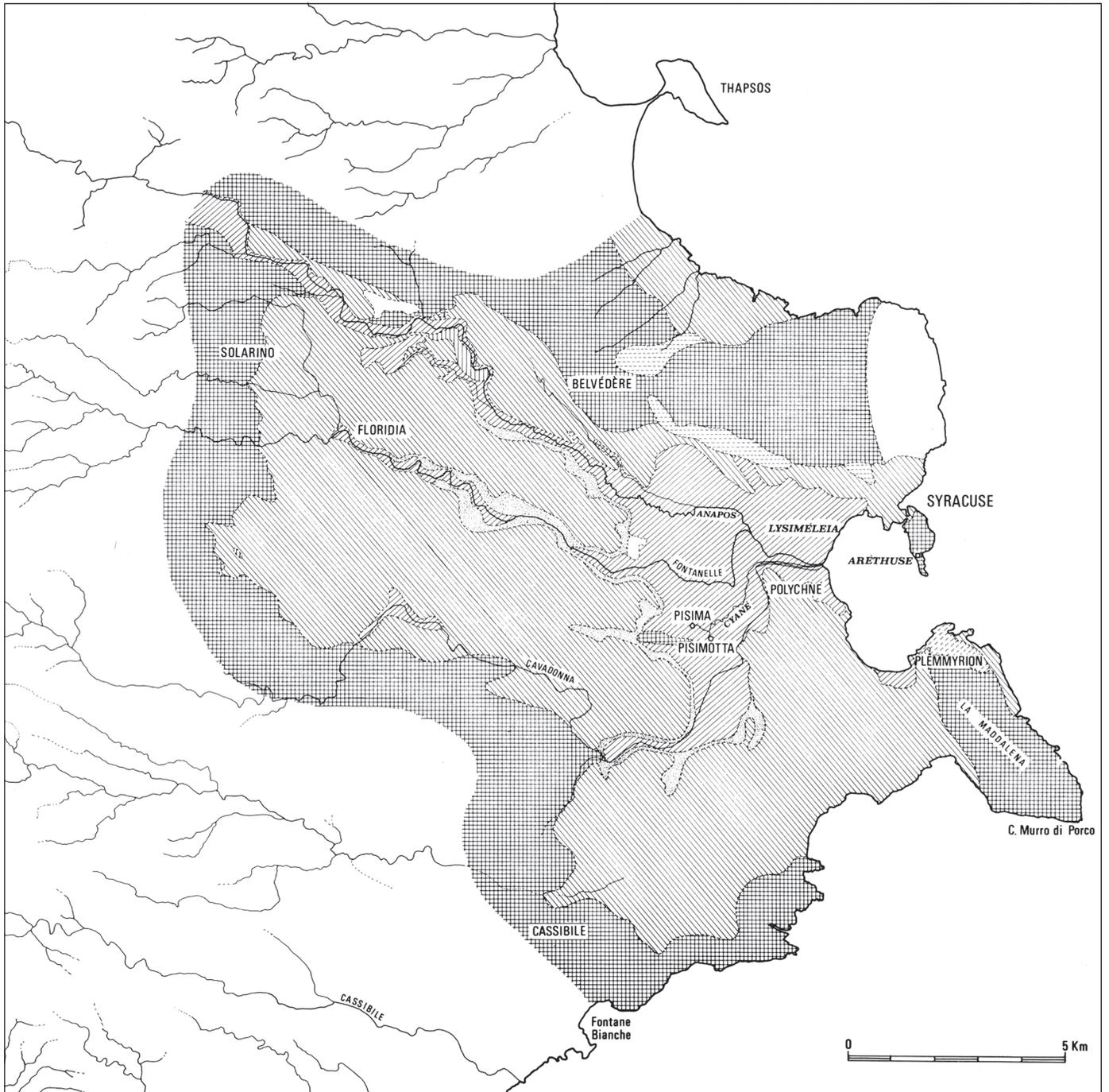
Based on these new research directions, I shall use this paper to examine the political and cultural meanings of Arethusa and Kyane, focusing on their roles in the conceptual framework of the Syracusans, but also of other Sicilian and Greek peoples. I shall concentrate on the following questions: What are their particular features and what did they represent for local identity and Greek culture? Are they vectors of the close relationship between mother city and colony?

Times and Troubles of the Syracusan Springs

The exceptional qualities of the Syracusan springs share the same starting point of a particular hydrology which probably convinced the first migrants to settle there. The Syracusan region is based on a Miocene limestone fundament, as is the rest of southeastern Sicily. This original substrate has been overlaid with successive coats of marls and marly limestones (approx. 50 m thick), then a first coat of Pliocene grey clays (50 m thick), calcarenites and sands (max. 20 m thick), and then Pleistocene alluvial deposits (50-70 m thick). The ancient Greeks exploited the superficial layers for capturing and storing water, but the artesian water table, at the level of the Pliocene grey clays was too difficult to reach with their technical capabilities (Fig. 3). The depression corresponding to the Anapos and Kyane Rivers basins was formed by Pliocene tectonic activity, particularly along vertical fault lines (10-15 m deep) which favored water circulation between the

⁵ *Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphosis*, by Melchiorren Kysell, Augsburg, 1703, first edition, 1681, plate 51), <https://www.uvm.edu/~hag/ovid/baur1703/>

Fig. 3 – Geological map of Syracusan territory. U. Colalelli, École française de Rome, 1987.



-  A – Alluvions actuelles de fond de vallée.
-  B – Sables et calcaires détritiques du Pléistocène Moyen Supérieur.
-  C – Argiles et argiles marneuses du Plio-Pléistocène.
-  D – Marnes calcaires du Pliocène Supérieur.
-  E – Alternance de calcaires détritiques, de roches sédimentaires organiques et de marnes du Miocène Supérieur.
-  F – Alternance de calcaires détritiques et marnes du Miocène Moyen Supérieur.
-  G – Substrat volcanique du Crétacé.

Fig. 4 – The Fountain of Arethusa near the turn of the 20th century. Postcard, ca. 1910 (image in public domain).



Fig. 5- The Fountain of Arethusa today. Photo © Sophie Bouffier.



affected layers (Aureli, Di Pasquale, Privitera 2005; Arena 2009). Local karstic phenomenon allowed the emergence of better or lesser known springs, such as Arethusa, Kyane or those of Archidemia, Magea, Milichie and Temenites, mentioned by Pliny the Elder (*HN* 3.89) but not yet identified. The part of the aquifer that runs under the west shore of Ortygia supplies Arethusa, the Occhio della Zilica, the Fonte Conceria, and the Fontana degli Schiavi to their north, as well as the so-called Bagno della Regina, inside Castello Maniace at the very southern tip of Ortygia (Arena 2009). And as early as the 8th century, Greek residents excavated wells in the parts of the island when they could not reach easily Arethusa spring (Bouffier 1987, 672).

Topography and the Form of Arethusa

The spring of Arethusa is located on the island of Ortygia, site of the first Corinthian settlement and of the posterior palaces of the Dionysian tyrants from the 5th century, maybe even the Deinomenids before them. It would have supplied all ships calling at Ortygia, so even before the establishment of the Greek colony, it must have been known by navigators, who probably had some contacts with the local population well before settlers arrived. Its waters now rise in a pool on the island's western shore—facing the Great Harbor—about 200 m southwest of the present-day Piazza Duomo, by sanctuaries of Artemis and Athena that were established by the 7th century BCE.

The modern fountain of Arethusa looks like an artificial pond, neatly bounded by balustrades and high walls: this last reorganization has been decided under the mandate of the Mayor Barone Pompeo Borgia in 1862 after architectural developments during the Spanish fortification of the island in the 16th century (Fig. 5). Since there the fountain has not changed. It is full of papyrus, and inhabited by ducks, swans, and huge carp. In the pool, two columns of grey marble—probably Roman—coexist with scattered blocks, which could be relics of some more ancient construction (Fig. 6). This waterfront spring is clearly the Arethusa of medieval-to-modern times.

The 12th-century geographer al-Idrîsî (1999, 315, 4.2), the 16th-century monk Tommaso Fazello (1560, 82-89), and other medieval and early modern scholars report that water issued from an opening in the rocks of the bank in their times, giving the impression that the water flowed from a grotto. According to Fazello, author of the first great monograph about Sicily, the spring became a pond with a circumference of one stadium (so around 200 meters), because it received a number of streams that flowed into rivers and supplied workshops and tanneries in particular.⁶

6 Fazello 1560, 89: "Anim vero Arethusa (ut Cicero et Diodorus referunt), incredibili olim erat magnitudine vel ea ratione, quod plerique fontes, qui circumquaque emergunt, et ad officinas coriariorum diversa loca instar fluminum hodie excurrunt, simul confluentes, lacum efficiebant :

The year 1169 brought one of the most important events in the entire history of Arethusa. In that year, a terrible earthquake rocked eastern Sicily, perhaps followed by a tsunami. As described in *The History of the Tyrants of Sicily*, a contemporary work by one "Hugo Falcandus," the quake created new water sources, while stopping or changing others. In Syracuse:

the very famous spring called Arethusa, which according to legend brings its water to Sicily by secret channels from the city of Elis in Greece, changed from a trickle to a great flow, and its water turned salty because of the amount of sea water mixed up in it (trans. Loud, Wiedemann 1998, 217).⁷

Once the water quality became undependable, tanneries and water mills moved in to take advantage of the flow (Fazello 1560, 89; Mirabella 1613, 25). The rock-cut basins of a few tanneries can still be found in the basements of buildings on Via Alfeo and Largo Aretusa, north and east of Arethusa. On Ortygia people kept drinking water from Arethusa, but they also exploited other springs like that supplying the then-new Spanish-Renaissance Fontana degli Schiavi a little north along the waterfront, as well as cisterns, and wells, some of them dating from antiquity.

Interestingly, there is no record of further changes wrought by the catastrophic Sicilian earthquake of 1693 (still one of the worst in Italian history), but 17th- to 19th-century images further document the transformation of the spring over time.⁸ The basin became the public laundry that travellers on the "Grand Tour" deplored. For instance, Dominique Vivant Denon describes an abundant source of brackish and sulphurous water pouring out between "sad rocks" into a basin defined by old—but not ancient—walls, full of dirty laundry and dirtier women.⁹ The pen-and-ink drawing by Louis Ducros captures the monument at the end of the 18th century (Fig. 7). A gouache of 1776 by Jean-Pierre Houël gives a still broader

qui uno ambitus stadio a specu, unde nunc exundat, ad fontem usque, qui aetate mea a canalibus nomen habebat, protendebatur."

7 Cf. Rocco 1733, 162, for a similar observation: "Anno 1169, tota Sicilia terraemotu maximo concutitur, et aqua celebris fontis Arethusae, iam turbida contraxit maris salsuginem."

8 See for example, Mirabella 1613, pl. 1; Houël 1785, 98, pl. 193 (and Pinault 1990, 88, fig. 35); Saint Non 1786, pl. 110; Serradifalco 1840, 51; Mauceri 1925, 32.

9 Denon (1788, 187-188): "Cette Aréthuse, si chère à Diane, à laquelle on rendait tellement des honneurs divins qu'Hercule même lui sacrifia des taureaux, enfin cette Aréthuse dont les eaux nourrissaient une quantité innombrable de poissons sacrés, n'est plus maintenant qu'une abondante source d'eau saumâtre et sulfureuse qui s'échappe entre de tristes rochers et qui coule dans une espèce de bassin anguleux, formé de deux vieilles murailles qui ne sont point antiques, et où le linge le plus sale est lavé par une troupe de femmes plus sales encore, qui, presque nues et retroussées offrent le tableau de tout ce que l'impudicité a de plus dégoûtant."

Fig. 6 – Ancient remains in the fountain of Arethusa. Photo © Sophie Bouffier.



view.¹⁰ The common features of these images are a significant difference in elevation between the fountain and the town above, sometimes a flight of stairs, and two grotto-like openings, one in the high eastern escarpment, the other in a lower wall to the north.

During an interruption of the flow in 1793, a Syracusan scholar, Giuseppe Maria Capodiceci, was able to enter one of the supposed grottos. He observed that it was actually a great rock-cut cavity in the limestone bedrock, measuring about 12 meters long and 3.12 m wide (or high), with water flowing in through an iron grill from an opening at the back.¹¹ Capodiceci was the first modern writer to argue that the “spring” of

Arethusa was actually an artificial fountain. Most subsequent scholars have accepted this interpretation, particularly Julius Schubring (1865, 607). On the contrary although the present form of Arethusa incorporates the interventions of several millennia, it is important to remember that behind them all is a natural aquifer, the flow from which was tapped, then augmented, by cutting into the rock.

At the end of the 19th century, there were growing concerns about the poor sanitary conditions of Ortygia because sources of drinking water were not separated from wastewater (Mauceri 1891; 1910). During another interruption of the flow in 1870, the engineer Luigi Mauceri took stock of all the hydraulic installations and used the occasion to write a monograph on Arethusa, in which he included a sketch of the fountain (Fig. 8). His observations differ from those of Capodiceci, showing the degree to which Arethusa had been modified in a restoration project after 1850. The iron grill no longer existed, and the dimensions were noticeably different from those of 1793.

10 Paris, Musée du Louvre 27 189 (recto), <http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr/detail/oeuvres/1/212999-La-fontaine-dArethuse-a-Syracuse>; Pinault 1990, 88, fig. 35.

11 Capodiceci (1813, 142) gives measurements of 50 palms (*lunga*); 12 palms (*larga*), where a Sicilian palm measures 26 cm.

Fig. 7 – The spring Arethusa in the 18th century, from Louis Ducros, *Voyage en Italie, en Sicile et à Malte*, 1778, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Courtesy Rijksmuseum (image in public domain), <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-T-00-493-73B>.



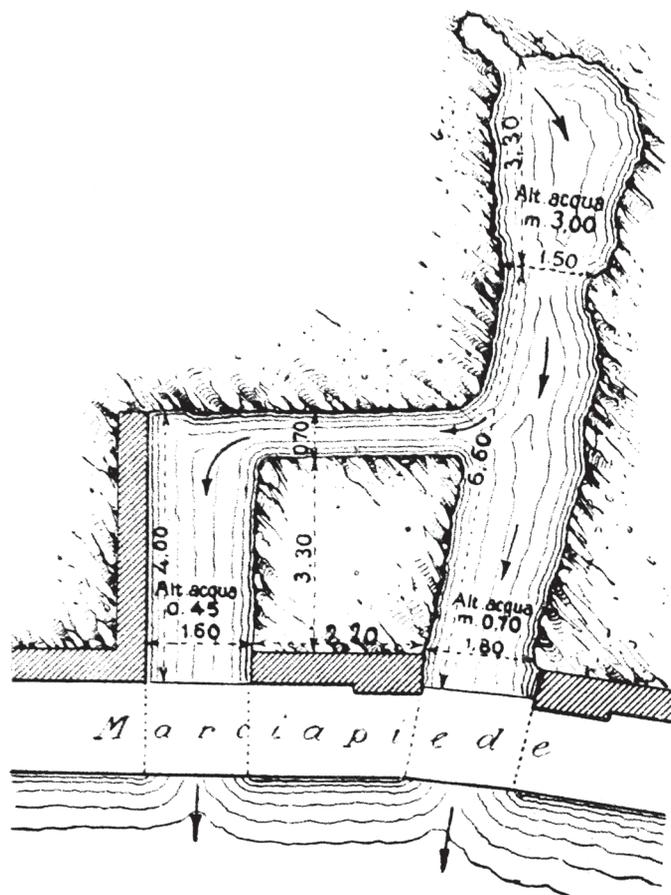
A main channel brought the water from a small conduit at the back of the channel. Cut directly into the rock, it was 9.90 m long, 1.50-1.80 m wide, and varied in depth from about 3 m at the back of the cave to 0.70 m at its mouth. It was joined by a secondary channel, ranging from 0.70 m to 1.60 m in width at the mouth and 0.45m high. Neither appears to have had a hydraulic coating. Mauceri (1891, 31-32) calculated the flow to be 627 liters per second (l/s), a significant amount compared to the city's wells and cisterns, but less than the the 700 l/s of the Galermi aqueduct, Syracuse's main source of water in 1910.¹² According to Mauceri, only the channel supplied by the aquifer (to the east on his plan), is ancient, while the other is modern (Fig. 8).

¹² Mauceri (1910, 26-36) reports that in 1870, wells furnished about 56 l/s, and cisterns about 12 l/s, and we have to consider the seasonal irregularity as well.

Furthermore, the water-tunnels in the scarp suggested to some scholars that the water of Arethusa was actually flowing from the mainland.¹³ Julius Schubring posited the existence of a dense network of aqueducts originating at Mount Climiti, at the edge of the Hyblaean Mountains from which Arethusa is an arrival point (1865, 607-609, 635). Based on his exploration of the countryside, the plateau, and the city of Syracuse, he lists manholes that have been lost today and associates them with aqueducts, mapping a dense network of pipes that he attributes to the Deinomenids in a diagram that is at once realistic (by the indication of the shafts recorded during his surveys) and fanciful (by the countless lines drawn between the shafts, and defined as probable aqueducts).

¹³ Fazello 1560, 83; Capodici 1813, 131-144; 31, 144-149; Schubring 1865.

Fig. 8 – Map of the channels carrying water into the Arethusa Fountain. Luigi Mauceri, 1925.



Ortygia's strategic importance and uninterrupted settlement of have hampered attempts to understand the ancient situation of Arethusa, as well as its relationship to the ancient fortifications. Even the precise location of Arethusa in antiquity is a thorny issue (Mauceri 1925, 9-13; Cannata 1942, 68-91). Some scholars have even claimed that its location has changed over time. The 17th-century geographer Philip Cluver (1619, 156-166) believed that it was first on the eastern part of the island, by the Small Harbor. This, at least, can be dismissed. Others have suggested that an ancient fountain could have been integrated into the main temenos of Athena and Artemis, just east of Piazza Duomo.¹⁴ This, too, can be ruled out, thanks to the topography, because the source is some distance away and was situated in the vicinity of archaic domestic structures discovered between the spring and Piazza Duomo (Voza 1999).

The evidence does, however, allow for a position somewhere between the present fountain and the Piazza Duomo, perhaps in the area of the Fontana degli Schiavi, north of Arethusa on the waterfront. First, channels carrying water into the modern fountain basin approach from the north (Figs. 4-5, 7-8). Second, early published hypotheses on the original placement—especially Vincenzo Mirabella's belief that the ancient spring was closer to the tanneries of his time—support this view.¹⁵ It seems worth mentioning that even before Cicero, the nature of the story about a river pursuing the nymph and bubbling up here suggests a waterfront location. Surely some form of Arethusa has always poured forth near the western shore of Ortygia, close to the center of the ancient city and its preeminent sanctuary.

The relationship of the spring to the island's ancient defences is difficult to ascertain. Elsewhere we have evidence of natural sources closer to the rampart, whether included in the fortifications or not (Gras, Tréziny, Broise 2004, 279-284; Bouffier 2013b). The ancient inhabitants were faced with a choice. They could either enclose the source within the walls, protecting it but running the risk of undermining the foundations and compromising security, or they could leave it outside, losing the benefits of a good and abundant supply of drinking water during a siege. In discussions about the relationship between Arethusa and the fortifications, most scholars have assumed that the spring was outside the Classical walls until the 16th century, when the new circuit embraced it.¹⁶ This is the most plausible hypothesis, further buttressed by Mauceri's report (1925, 12) that a seafront inhabitant in his time discovered an underground ramp running down to the fountain inside the 16th-century fortifications.

Livy's description of the Roman siege of Syracuse in 213-212 suggests that the spring was outside the fortifications at that time:

Accordingly Marcellus ordered a transport with armed men to be towed at night by a four-banker to Achradina, and the soldiers to be landed near the gate which is by the Fountain of Arethusa (25.30.7; trans. F. Gardner Moore, Loeb, 1958).

Thus the troops of the Roman general Marcellus disembarked near Arethusa spring prior to their attack on Achradina, the district just northwest of Ortygia on the mainland, diverting the attention of the Ortygian garrison in order to easily capture the two districts, Achradina and the Island. The nearby gate was part of the Dionysian fortification system

¹⁴ Pers. comm. Paolo Tiralongo, Syracuse, 26 July 2016. For a new interpretation of the town-planning of the city, see Basile 2012.

¹⁵ Mirabella (1613, 25): "Questa fonte in quei primi tempi non scaturiva dove oggi scaturir si vede, ma nel piano, dove attorno vi sono a' nostri tempi le botteghe di conciar cuoia."

¹⁶ Fazello 1628, 129; Mauceri 1925, 9-11; Cannata 1942, 72.

erected at the end of the 5th or beginning of the 4th century BCE, but it hasn't survived, so its precise location and relationship to the spring cannot be judged.¹⁷ All the same, it seems to me that Arethusa could only serve as a topographical landmark for the Roman historian if it was visible to the Roman army, so it must have been outside the rampart.

By Cicero's time, Arethusa was protected by a breakwater or dike, but still seems to have been outside Ortygia's defences:

At one extremity of this island is the spring of fresh water called Arethusa; an incredibly large spring, teeming with fish, and so placed that it would be swamped by the sea waves but for the protection of a massive stone wall [*moles lapidum*] (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.53.118, trans. L. H. G. Greenwood, Loeb, 1935).

In a well-protected port, such as the Great Harbor, the source could have been used by all kinds of travelers; perhaps it was even operated—its water sold—for commercial purposes. To conclude, it is very likely that Arethusa remained outside the fortifications throughout antiquity and that only the walls of modern times came to include it, at a time when telluric changes had made its flow and quality unreliable. It was then exploited to feed the mills or tanneries that had been established on the western shore of Ortygia. On Arethusa's ancient form, it is difficult to say more than that it must have long had the appearance of some kind of pool inside a cave.

Kyane: Spring, Lake, and Marsh

Across the Great Harbor in the Anapos Plain is the Kyane Spring (Fig. 1). It today looks much as it probably did in antiquity (Fig. 9), a pond crossed by the Anapos River. Kyane is called either a spring (*Ov. Met.* 5.5.6) or a *lacus*, a basin, pool, or lake (as in the late-antique compendium of Vibius Sequester).¹⁸ It is constituted of two points of groundwater seepage, Pisima and Pis(i)motta, which fed a series of small lakes before being routed into a navigable canal during 18th-century efforts to drain the marshy ground. In the past, before modern bonification efforts, the sources of Kyane created a large marsh, called Pantano and a small river leading to the Great Harbor. This marsh was treacherous for enemy armies (from the Athenians in 415-413 to Punic and Roman forces later).¹⁹ But elsewhere I have noted its

ambivalent (Bouffier 1994, 326-328), for it was also used for fishing and pasture in the same era. Plutarch, for example, recalls Carthaginian and Syracusan soldiers catching eels there together in 338.²⁰ Now it is a great natural park, full of birds and papyrus. This abundance of water is due to a good geological and hydrogeological situation.

Neither ancient nor modern texts mention any built structures or improvements of the spring, and the archaeological evidence is equally sparse, though the area has not yet been subjected to detailed landscape archaeology. Nearby, a unique archaeological investigation has highlighted the presence of a monumental structure at Cozzo Scandurra (Cavallari 1887), and the discovery of a few archaeological finds in the area, such as two lion-head waterspouts and the early-6th-century "Laganello Head" (Figs. 10, 11).²¹ In particular, this colossal female head of Corinthian style but local workmanship—probably part of a cult statue—found near the spring may suggest formal religious activity or a sanctuary nearby. Based on its findspot, Francesco Saverio Cavallari (1887) argued for the existence of a sanctuary of Kyane; that identification was accepted by R. Ross Holloway (1991, 99), though the head is better identified as Kore and associated with the introduction of Demeter and Kore's cult in Syracuse (White 1964; 2010; Bookidis 2003, 251). Recently, local inhabitants have revealed the existence of columns reemployed in the wall of a *masseria*, Masseria Navora, at Piano Scandurra.²² But only a targeted archaeological investigation will identify the existence of a place of worship, and even if a temple is found, it will not mean that Kyane spring was worshipped there. The monumental aspect of the finds suggests a more important divinity than a simple nymph. It is obvious, however, that the Kyane spring has been used mainly for irrigation throughout history, very much in keeping with its consecration to Demeter and Kore. Other springs located in Greek hinterlands, in particular in the territory of Poseidonia or Paestum, were consecrated to Demeter (Tocco Sciarelli *et al.* 1988, 371-74; 415-16; 419-30). Unfortunately, area survey is not very advanced in the territory of Syracuse, and the traces of spatial organization seem to relate to the installation of ancient vineyards in limestone areas (Boissinot 2009, 99-101) rather than the setting up of plots to favor drainage, as seen in other regions (Bouffier 2002; 2008).

17 Only one part of the rampart has been discovered at the northwest end of the island, but it is far away from the spring and cannot be linked to it. For philological disagreement on the landing place and Livy's possible confusion about Syracusan topography, see, e.g., Nicolet-Croizat 1992, 63.

18 See Gelsomino 1967, 186: "Lacus: [...] Cyane Syracusis, per quam Anapos transit."

19 For the Athenian Expedition: Thuc. 7.47.2; Plut. *Vit. Nic.* 22.1.3; for the Carthaginian army in 396, Diod. Sic. 14.66. For the Roman Army in 212 BC, Livy 25.26.7. Cf. Villard 1994.

20 Plut. *Vit. Tim.* 20.3: "In the shoals about the city which receive much fresh water from springs, and much from marshes and rivers emptying into the sea, great numbers of eels live, and there is always an abundance of this catch for anybody. These eels the mercenary soldiers on both sides, when they had leisure or a truce was on, used to hunt together" (trans. B. Perrin, Loeb, 1961).

21 Spout: Museo archeologico regionale Paolo Orsi, inv. 6341; Head: Museo, Museo archeologico regionale Paolo Orsi, inv. 754.

22 See <http://www.antoniiorandazzo.it/archeologia/santuario-ciiane.html>

Fig. 9 – The pond of Kyane in the Syracusan countryside. Photo © Sophie Bouffier.



Ancient Literary Visions

Fame and Excellence

The springs of Arethusa and Kyane were well known to ancient authors, poets, historians, and travellers. To begin with, Arethusa is not only a Syracusan spring, for other springs by the same name exist elsewhere in the Greek world. Strabo (1.58; 10.449) mentions one in Euboea between Chalkis and Eretria, a specific feature that has led some researchers to suggest that the Euboians, early Greek explorers of Sicily, could have been involved in the naming of the Syracusan spring (Larson 2001, 213). This would put Euboian presence in the Corinthian colony on equal standing with the Corinthians themselves (Pelagatti 1982). Other occurrences of the name Arethusa, however, weaken this hypothesis, instead mapping a geography that could be interpreted as the diffusion of religion and culture across the Mediterranean Sea, in which Artemis is the central figure of Greek mobility. Indeed, other springs of Arethusa are

known in Boiotia (Plin. *HN* 4.23), Argos (*schol. Hom. Od.* 13.406-408), Smyrna (*schol. Hom. Od.* 11.11), Kephallonia (*schol. Theocr.* 1.117), and Ithaca (*Od.* 8.406). Cities of Arethusa are recorded in Macedonia (Strabo 7.331, frg. 36) and in Syria (Hyg. *Fab.* 181). Finally, Aktaion's dog was also called Arethusa; in this case, the link with Artemis is immediately obvious, as Artemis was Aktaion's patron goddess.

The etymology supports this line of thought. The word "Arethusa" is not explained by ancient lexicographers and Pierre Chantraine's *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue française* (1999) does not mention it. Herodianus (1.440, ed. Lentz 1867) mentions that there is a verb ἀρέθω: to irrigate. It exists also an adjective, ἀρέθουσιος ὕδωρ, "Arethusian water," which appears in an epigram in the *Greek Anthology* (9.362.18), also about the Syracusan spring. Is it possible that the word derives from [ἄρδω / ἄρδεύω]: "give drink to cattle" (Hdt 2.109) and in a more extensive way, "to flow, irrigate" the

countryside? Chantaine does not support this (s.v. ἄρδω), though Georg Curtius does (1879, 63). Some local scholars of the earlier modern period held that it could derive from another culture: as an example, the 18th-century scholar Giuseppe M. Pancrazi believed that the spring had been called “Alfaya,” that is to say “Spring of the Willows” in Phoenician, and then the name would have been transformed into “Arith,” “stream” by the Corinthian migrants.²³

Pancrazi’s remark deserves special attention insofar as sometimes Arethusa is called *Kypara*, as in Hesychius (κ4636): Κυπάρα· ἢ ἐν Σικελίᾳ κρήνη Ἀρέθουσα, “*Kypara*: the fountain Arethusa in Sicily.” The name appears again in Stephanos Byzantios (*Ethn.* 116): “Ἀρέθουσα... κρήνη Σικελίας· αὕτη Κυπάρα ἐλέγετο,” “Sicilian fountain; this itself is called *Kypara*.” This word likely refers back again to a Phoenician context, the eastern Mediterranean and the island of Cyprus, as I shall discuss below. This etymology informs the train of thought chosen by Francesca Veronese (2013, 1358–59). She argues that Artemis would have been introduced as *Potnia Therōn*, a hypostasis of the Near Eastern Atargatis, hellenized as *Astarte*.

If Veronese is correct, we should perhaps reconsider the Phoenician presence mentioned by Thucydides in his introduction to the Sicilian Expedition. Until now, no archaeological evidence has been found at Syracuse to indicate their presence on Ortygia or elsewhere in its territory, and Artemis would seem to be more credible in a Corinthian context. As I shall discuss in some detail below, however, there remains the possibility that the Greek settlers accepted and adapted local—even recently installed Phoenician—traditions.

Concerning *Kyane*, the etymology of the name is clear: it corresponds to the colour of water, or to the impression of darkness that it can give: κύανος means “dark blue, glossy” or “cobalt-blue,” which can also characterize the depth of the Mediterranean Sea. Two small islands, the Κυάνεαι, or “Dark Rocks” at the entrance of the Euxine, also took their name from the word (Hdt. 4.85; Strabo 7.6.1). The dark color of the water evokes the depth of the spring, which underlies a link with the Underworld that was perceived by users. Herakles could well have plunged bulls into the pool, as Diodorus Siculus tells us, but here again I am getting ahead of myself.

23 Pancrazi (1752, 90): “Fra tanto giudichiamo avertire, che il Bochart crede, non sia fondata in altro questa favola, che su d’un’ equivoco della Lingua de’ primi Abitatori della Sicilia. I Fenici, che andarono quivi a stabilirsi, avendo trovata questa Fonte circondata da Salci, la chiamarono Alfaga, che significa Fonte de’ Salci; Altri la nominarono Arith, che vuol dire Ruscello. I Greci, che qualche tempo dopo, giunsero in Sicilia, non comprendendo il significato di queste due parole, e ricordandosi del Fiume loro Alfeo, che scorre nell’ Elide, credettero che, avendo il fiume, e la Fonte l’istesso nome, attraversasse Alfeo il Mare, e venisse in Sicilia.”

Ancient authors agree that the most important feature of the Syracusan springs is the abundance and quality of the water. Arethusa is especially celebrated because of its topographical situation and urban use. It is said to be μεγίστη, “huge” (Diod. Sic. 5.3.5), ἐυρρεΐτης, “broad” (Paus. 5.7.3), *incredibili magnitudine*, “of extraordinary size” (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.53.118), and πότιμος, “potable” (Strabo 6.2.4). Seneca the Younger (*ad Marc.* 17.3–4) provides an especially strong impression of Arethusa, “with its bright gleaming [*nitidissimus*] pool, transparent [*perlucidis*] to the very bottom, and pouring forth its icy waters [*gelidissimas aquas profundentem*].” In short, Arethusa was excellent for human well-being.²⁴ About *Kyane*, no direct and explicit information is given except the marshy land in which it flows.

Myth and Cult

Arethusa, Artemis, and Alpheius

Arethusa appears in works by some 50 ancient writers between the 6th century BCE and the 10th century CE. Its image is generally linked to Syracuse itself, as Pausanias mentions, quoting the Delphic oracle:

For when he [Apollo, via the Pythia] despatched Archias the Corinthian to found Syracuse he uttered this oracle:
 “An Isle, Ortygia, lies on the misty ocean
 Over against Trinacria, where the mouth of the Alpheius
 bubbles
 Mingling with the springs of broad Arethusa.”
 (Paus. 5.7.3, trans. W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1960)

The Pythia’s recommendation focuses on the spring, which shows that Arethusa and Ortygia were the trademarks of the geographical site.²⁵ This is also seen in the choice of Arethusa as Syracuse’s most recognizable monetary emblem (Picard 2012, 61–63). If numismatists hesitate between identification of Artemis or Arethusa on some Syracusan coins, there is no question of her identity on the silver tetradrachms of the famous engraver, Kimon, issued at the end of the 5th century BCE. The face of the nymph appears on the obverse with her name written just overhead.²⁶

Pausanias perpetuates a legend that was famous in antiquity: Alpheius, alternatively a river or a hunter (as the textual variants tell us), fell in love with Artemis’s nymph Arethusa, and wanted to marry her. Desiring to remain a virgin servant of the goddess, Arethusa escaped across the Ionian Sea, from

24 Note, however, that these texts are all relatively late, produced in an era in which hygienist considerations about drinkable water had become prevalent (Bouffier, Brunet, forthcoming).

25 Parke, Wormell (1956, 60) defend that oracle as very ancient and authentic.

26 See particularly Head 1876, 177, nos. 208–209; Head 1911, 177, fig. 100; Holloway 1991, 132; Reichert-Südbeck 2000, 268–271.

Elis to Syracuse, where she was transformed into a spring. Becoming a river, Alpheus passed through the sea to mingle his waters with hers. Arethusa's link with the goddess Artemis is so strong that some authors have attributed this myth to the goddess herself.

This tradition goes back to ancient times, as in the second half of the 6th century BCE, Ibycus of Rhegion must have known the legend of Alpheus and Arethusa (as well as the fact that the peninsula of Ortygia began as an island).²⁷ Fragments of his knowledge are preserved in the scholia to Pindar's *Nemean* 1, and to Theocritus's *Idyll* 1:

Spout: resting place and breathing; some say eruption; in fact after its diving into the invisible, the river appears again in Arethusa: that is its resting place as its loving desire decided it. This Arethusa is in Ortygia Island; this Ortygia which was first an island and was connected to the continent to become a peninsula, as Ibycus relates.²⁸

Arethoisa [sic], fountain in Syracuse. It is said that Alpheus crosses the sea to come to her <...>, as Ibycus says, relating about the Olympian phiale.²⁹

Ibycus is also the earliest known author to have told the anecdote of the Olympian phiale, or cup, which once thrown into the river, supposedly reappeared in the fountain. No detailed testimony has been transmitted to us and yet this myth lasted a very long time, itself reappearing in Pliny (*HN* 2.225, 31.55), Seneca (*Q Nat.* 3.26.3-6; 6.8.2; *Marc.* 17.3) and in Servius's 4th-century CE commentary on Virgil's *Eclogue* 10.4 (ed. Thilo 1887, 119).

Pindar focuses on the links between Alpheus, Artemis and the island of Ortygia: "Hallowed spout of Alpheus, Ortygia, offspring of famous Syracuse, couch of Artemis!" (*Nem.* 1.1-3, trans. W. H. Race, Loeb, 1997) or "Ortygia [...], the haunt of the river goddess Artemis" (*Pyth.* 2.6-7, trans. J. Sandys, Loeb, 1961). Moreover, in evoking his own journey to the court of Hieron I, the poet uses "the fount of Arethusa" to represent the city (*Pyth.* 3.68-70).³⁰

27 Pace Bilić (2009, 121): it seems to me risky to suggest that the myth of the Alpheus, Arethusa, and Artemis should go back to the time of Hesiod, and therefore to the foundation of Syracuse.

28 *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina*, *Nem.* 1.2 (1a) = Ibycus, fr. 320: Ἄμπνευμα: ἀνάπνευμα καὶ ἀναπνοή· ἔνιοι δὲ ἀναφύσημα· ἀπὸ γὰρ καταδύσεων ἀφανῶν εἰς τὴν Ἀρέθουσαν ἀναφαίνεται. τὸ δὲ ἀνάπνευμα ἐπὶ τῆς ἔρωτικῆς σπουδῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ τάττει· ἔστι γὰρ κατὰ Ὀρτυγίαν τὴν νῆσον. ἢ δὲ Ὀρτυγία πρότερον μὲν οὔσα νῆσος εἶτα προσχωσθεῖσα χερρόνησος γέγονεν, ὡς καὶ Ἴβυκος ἱστορεῖ (Drachmann 1997).

29 *Scholia in Theocritum vetera* 1.117a = Ibycus, fr. 323: Ἀρέθοισα: κρήνη ἐν Συρακούσαις· φασὶ διὰ πελάγους Ἀλφειδὸν ἦκειν <...>, ὡς φησὶν Ἴβυκος παριστορῶν περὶ τῆς Ὀλυμπιακῆς φιάλης (ed. Wendel 1914).

30 Cf. *Ol.* 6.6.34 which relates to the Iamidai of Olympia, whose ancestor Iamos was involved in the founding of Syracuse.

By the Hellenistic period, the *mythos* was well established: Alpheus's waters crossed the Ionian Sea to pass into those of the fountain without mixing its drinkable waters with the salt of the sea. From Polybius to Byzantine lexicographers, many authors discuss the legend of Arethusa and Alpheus, some accepting it (Timaios and Theocritus, for instance),³¹ others refuting it and qualifying it as fiction and fantasy (e.g., Polybius, Strabo).³² Ovid gives it the literary ornaments that we know in the *Metamorphoses*, imagining a conversation between Arethusa and Kyane (5.487-508, 572-641). Alpheus appears to be a river renowned for his lust (Brewster 1997, 80-87). Actually, it is a geographic phenomenon as well as a mythical legend.

As Julie Baleriaux has shown, the phenomena of disappearance and reappearance of surface waters, rivers, lakes and springs, are one of the very common geological features of karst environments in the Aegean world and especially in Balkan Greece, for example the Katavothra of the Lake Kopais (Strabo 9.406-407). The dominantly limestone bedrock of Greece is naturally carved by water, so rivers might flow on the surface then dive into natural sinkholes and go underground as long as the karstic environment allows it, then come back up again, as a river or a spring. This phenomenon is fairly common in the Peloponnesos (Baleriaux 2016, 103-104). The modern history of Syracusan land is familiar with this phenomenon, as the Anapos River descends from the Hyblaean Mountains, and in some places flows into natural cavities that Syracusan people called *peritori*.³³ In the 18th and 19th centuries, farmers sometimes tried to close them so as not to lose water.

While modern knowledge of karstic hydrology can be used to channel flow, limit losses, and set up recovery systems, the related phenomena were not understood in antiquity. They were often attributed to divine interventions and or explained as legendary exchanges between the Underworld and great rivers such as the Nile, the Acheloos, and the Peloponnesian Eurotas and Alpheus (Baleriaux 2016). Some authors have even invented imaginary journeys. For instance Pausanias attributes to the same Alpheus a complex route across the Peloponnesos, punctuated by disappearances and reappearances (8.54 .1-3) that finally leads to Arethusa Spring. From Roman times, however, others sought natural causes for the phenomenon: huge masses of air, groundwater, or seismic movements that would create imbalances and

31 Ti., *FGrH* 566F *apud* Antig. Car.; Theoc. *Id.*, 1.117-118, schol. *Id.* 1.117-118a, b; Mosch. fr. 3.1-8; *Anth. Pal.* 9.362; Verg. *Aen.* 3.694-697, *Ecl.* 10.1-6; Sil. *Pun.* 14.89; Plin. *HN* 2.225, 31.55; Pompon. 2.117; Lucian, *DMar* 3; Paus. 5.7.3, 7.24.3; Solin. 5.16; Claud. *De raptu Proserpinae* 2.60; Auson., *Ordo nob. urb.* 16-17; Vibius 4; Nonnus, *Dion.* 13.323-327; Suda, s.v. *Arethusa*, s.v. *Adrias*.

32 Polyb. 12.4d.5; Strabo 6.2.4; Sen. *QNat.* 3.26.3-6, 6.8.2, *ad Marc.* 17.3.

33 Operazione Marvuglia, 1807 (Archivio di Stato di Siracusa, Archivio privato Gaetani Specchi, vol. 205).

upset the normal flow of rivers (Diod. 15.49.4; Strabo 9.2.16; see Baleriaux 2016, 108-109). The connection of Alpheus and Arethusa has therefore been widely repeated, whereas in reality, no natural phenomenon allows to put them in relation. The Alpheus flows into the Ionian Sea south of Pyrgos, like any normal river, and no rational motive forced the invention of this story. What then is to be made of it? Can we imagine a link with the Underworld as suggested by Baleriaux for some rivers (2016, 110-113)? It seems largely unlikely as Alpheus and Arethusa are not said to have openings into the Underworld, in contrast to Kyane and Anapos, located just a few kilometers away.

However, in a stimulating paper, Tomislav Bilić has suggested that the Alpheus-Arethusa axis probably alludes to the ancient navigation route between the Peloponnesos and Sicily (2008, 122-126). On the basis of Philostratos's description of the journey of the Pythagorean Apollonius of Tyana between Italy and Greece, he defends the position that the direct, open-sea voyage across the southern part of the Ionian or Sicilian Sea was one of the main sailing routes from Syracuse to the Peloponnesos, allowing the navigators to avoid circumnavigation and to follow the shortest path. It brought them directly to the mouth of Alpheus, some 550 km from Syracuse.³⁴

[Apollonius and his company] put in at Syracuse and then sailed for the Peloponnese about the beginning of autumn. After crossing the open sea they arrived after five days at the mouth of the Alpheus, at the point where the river enters the Adriatic and Sicilian seas, still fresh (Philostr. VA 8.15.1, trans. C. P. Jones, Loeb, 2005).

Bilić points out that the mouth of Alpheus River and the island of Ortygia are at similar latitudes, and that seafarers should have used celestial navigation, thanks to their knowledge and observation of the stars. They could have followed several stars, particularly Rastaban in the constellation Drakonis, which may have inspired the legend. Furthermore, he notes that the island of Delos and Ephesos, which both claimed to be Artemis Ortygia's birthplace, follow the same axis of navigation (Bilić 2008, 126-127). According to him, therefore, the myth is closely linked to this maritime route, essentially its poetic transposition. Nevertheless, to me, the common point of this Ephesus-Delos-Syracuse axis does not seem to be so much the maritime route as the presence of Artemis, born in Ortygia, revered at Ephesos as well as Syracuse, and embodied by Arethusa.

³⁴ According to Strabo (6.2.1), the distance from Pachynos [mod. Pachino, south of Syracuse] to the mouth of the Alpheus is 4,000 stadia (about 631 km).

In all these texts, Artemis, whether through her birthplace, Ortygia, or her following servant, Arethusa, is closely linked to Alpheus. Actually, according to ancient authors, Pindar first, then maybe the poetess Telesilla,³⁵ the river would have fallen in love with the deity, not with her servant. The leading role is played by the goddess, as specified by a scholiast to Pindar's first *Nemean* ode:

They said that Alpheus fell in love with Artemis and pursued her unto Sicily; the pursuit ended there in the place where Arethusa flowed. That is the reason why they call Artemis *Alpheioa* and why in Olympia they dedicated a sanctuary to Alpheus and Artemis; and following Pindar, they call Artemis *Potamia* from the love Alpheus felt for her; others call Artemis *Alpheioa* because Alpheus River opens to Eleian Artemision.³⁶

Two scholia to Pindar's *Pythian* 2 are more specific:

Haunt of Potamia: haunt of Alpheioa; in fact some say that Alpheus fell in love with the goddess and pursued her until he stopped at Ortygia. From there they tell that there is a sanctuary of Artemis Alpheioa, as the divinity is called Potamia.³⁷

Artemis's statue has been erected near Arethusa; Arethusa receives the flow of the river Alpheus; that is the reason why the poet called her Potamia.³⁸

The closeness of Artemis and Alpheus in the Peloponnesos has been illustrated many times (Maddoli, Saladino 1995, 213; Fischer-Hansen 2009, 207-215; Bannister 2009, 19). In Elis, the goddess is Potamia (Pind. *Pyth.* 2.7), Alpheiousa or Alpheionia (Strabo 8.3.12), or Alpheieia (Paus. 6.22.8-10). A common altar was dedicated to them in Olympia (Paus. 5.14.6). So the link between Artemis and Alpheus seems to me an essential point, as other scholars have noticed (e.g., Veronese 2013). Actually, even if we attribute to Artemis the identity of the river's beloved, the main point remains the link between

³⁵ See Bacchylides frg. 717 (ed. D. A. Campbell, Loeb, 1992).

³⁶ *Schol. Pind. Nem.* 1.3 (*scholia vetera*, ed. Drachmann 1997): τὸν γὰρ Ἀλφειὸν φασὶν ἔρωτι ἀλόντα τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἐπιδιώξει αὐτὴν ἄχρι Σικελίας τοῦ δὲ τέλους τῆς διώξεως αὐτόθι γενομένου αὐτόθι συστῆναι τὴν Ἀρέθουσαν. Διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν Ἀλφειῶν προσαγορεύεσθαι καὶ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ δὲ ὁ Ἀλφειὸς τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι συναφίδρυνται καὶ τὴν ποταμίαν δὲ Ἄρτεμιν εἶναι οἱ παρὰ τῷ Πινδάρῳ ἀκούουσι διὰ τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῇ τοῦ Ἀλφειοῦ πάθος εἶναι δὲ οἱ Ἀλφειῶν τὴν Ἄρτεμιν λέγουσι διὰ τὸ τὸν Ἀλφειὸν διὰ τοῦ πλησίον τῆς Ἡλείας Ἀρτεμισίου καταφέρεισθαι.

³⁷ *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* 2.12a (*scholia vetera*, ed. Drachmann 1997): ποταμίᾳς ἔδος τῆς Ἀλφειῶας. Φασὶ γὰρ τινες Ἀλφειὸν ἐρασθέντα τῆς θεοῦ καὶ διώξαντα ἄχρι τῆς Ὀρτυγίας παύσασθαι. Ὅθεν Ἀλφειῶας Ἀρτέμιδος ἐκεῖ φασὶν εἶναι ἱερόν, ἣν νῦν ποταμίαν εἶπεν.

³⁸ *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* 2.12b (*scholia vetera*, ed. Drachmann 1997): ἴδρυνται γὰρ ἄγαλμα Ἀρτέμιδος ἐπὶ τῇ Ἀρεθούσῃ, ἣ δὲ Ἀρέθουσα ἐξ Ἀλφειοῦ τοῦ ποταμοῦ δέχεται τὰ ρεῦματ' αὐτῆς οὖν [Ἀρτεμιν] αὐτὴν διὰ τοῦτο ὠνόμασεν.

the home country and the land of settlement. Artemis is Panhellenic as Arethusa plants the new community in a particular land. In any case, the nymph reveals the goddess whose worship at Syracuse is very well testified both by ancient literature and archaeological finds. The island was dedicated to Artemis (Diod. Sic. 5.3.4), as highlighted by the *temenos* and the Ionic temple in Piazza Duomo, and by the suburban sanctuaries of Belvedere and Scala Greca.³⁹ The coins insist on her poliad role from the last decade of the 6th century, as terracotta figurines show her as Potnia Theron, huntress, and Chitonia (Fischer-Hansen 2009, figs. 2.211, 4.213). Festivals and political events are known to have happened with the protection of the goddess.⁴⁰

The second important point, which has been often illustrated, is that all these texts converge on the idea that Syracuse, daughter-city of Corinth, is closely connected to the motherland. Surely the Sicilian city is linked to the Corinthia, but not only to that. Tobias Fischer-Hansen (2009, 214) argues that Artemis was more important at Syracuse than at Corinth, at least before the Hellenistic Period, and if we have a look at the lists of Artemis's epithets and functions in the motherland and colony, established by Petra Reichert-Südbeck (2000, 61; 69 and references), we notice that they are not the same. At Corinth, Artemis is Ephesia, Eukleia(?), Kori(n)thos, Pacilucifera(?); at Syracuse, she is Agrotera, Alpheioa (with all the variants), Chitonia, Angelos, Lyaia, Meroessa, Pherais, Potamia, Soteira, and maybe Eukleia, which is the only epithet common to both of the cities (Bannister 2009, 198). The presence of Arethusa and the grotto in which it springs refer to Artemis's wilderness and the epithets of Agrotera and Alpheioa and Potamia, although its urban position should be the proof of Artemis's taming and humanizing.

The daughter-city worships many more facets of the goddess than its motherland. As François Quantin has noted (2010, 439-40), Artemis, goddess of the wilderness and hunting, and twin sister of Apollo, is also representative of Corinthian expansion, as she appears in all Corinthian colonies to varying degrees. Nevertheless, perhaps we should attribute the myth of Arethusa/Artemis/Alpheius to the Iamides family, seers who accompanied the *oikistes* Archias in the foundation of Syracuse (Maddoli, Saladino 1995, 213 and state of the question). They must have played a decisive role in the establishment of Syracusan cults, as the success of the foundation had to be guaranteed by the gods, and their

political importance is illustrated by their position to the Deinomenid Hieron, two centuries later. For the migrants, the myth, which appears at least from the middle of the 6th century, underlined their Greek identity by the link with one of the more specific gods and sanctuaries of Hellenism, Zeus and Olympia, alongside Artemis. Thus they put themselves under the protection of the two greatest sanctuaries in the archaic period, Delphi, guarantor of the colonization, and Olympia, guarantor of political and international life. The close relationship is reinforced by the fact that the inhabitants of Aigion in Achaia, another Peloponnesian city, when celebrating the cult of Soteira, sent cakes baked for the goddess to Syracusan Arethusa by throwing them into the sea, at least when Pausanias visited in the Roman period (Robinson, in this volume):

The beach on which the people of Aegium have the sanctuaries I have mentioned, affords a plentiful supply of water from a spring; it is pleasing both to the eye and to the taste. They have also a sanctuary of Safety. Her image may be seen by none but the priest, and the following ritual is performed. They take cakes of the district from the goddess and throw them into the sea, saying they send them to Arethusa at Syracuse (Paus. 7.24.3, trans. W. H. S. Jones, Loeb, 1961).

We do not know if Soteira here should be identified with Artemis or Demeter. She was honored, furthermore, at Epidaurus (*IG* IV, 1319), Patras (Paus. 7.21.7), and Metapontion, from which coins of the 4th century feature obverse images of Demeter or

Persephone with the inscription, "Soteira" (Head 1911, 78-79). But the offering of cakes to Arethusa spring, the vicinity of the sea in both cases, and the fact that at Syracuse, 5th-century coins, particularly those of Kimon, represent Arethusa as Soteira (Bannister, 2009, 231, CS20; ΑΡΕΘΟΥΣΑ ΣΩ[ΤΕΙΡΑ])—Artemis's epithet as well (Bannister, 2009, 231, CS231)—encourage me to identify Soteira as Artemis in the case of Aigion.

We may ask why Arethusa and then her patron goddess should be Soteira at Syracuse. Nicola Carole Bannister (2009, 160-161) associates this epithet to the Syracusan resistance against Athenian, then Carthaginian, aggressions from the end of the 5th century. It seems to me preferable to reconsider the original role of Arethusa, that of providing drinkable and abundant water. If the epithet Soteira really appears at Syracuse at the end of the 5th century and characterizes the nymph, we should see it in relation to the epidemics that affected enemy armies during sieges of Syracuse but spared the local population, already accustomed to the endemic situation (Bouffier 1994; Villard 1994).

In that context, how shall we read the prohibition reported by Diodorus?

39 Orsi 1919; Gentili 1967; Pelagatti 1999; Fischer-Hansen 2009, 207-211.

40 One of the prolegomena in the scholia to Theocritus (ed. Wendel 1967, 2-3, B.a) tells of the citizens' reconciliation thanks to the intervention of Artemis in a civil war; Livy mentions a three-day festival of Artemis during the Roman siege in 215-212 (25.23). About the cult of Artemis in Syracuse, see Fisher-Hansen 2009, 208-215; Bannister 2009.

Artemis received from the gods the island of Syracuse which was named after her, by both the oracles and men, Ortygia. On this island likewise [the] nymphs, to please Artemis, caused a great fountain to gush forth to which was given the name Arethusa. And not only in ancient times did this fountain contain large fish in great number, but also in our day we find these fish still there, considered to be holy and not to be touched by men; and on many occasions, when certain men have eaten them amid stress of war, the deity has shown a striking sign, and has visited great sufferings such as dared to take them for food." (Diod. Sic. 5.3.3, trans. C. H. Oldfather, Loeb, 1961)

This peculiarity of the fish is repeated by Latin authors, such as Silius Italicus (14.53). As I have specified elsewhere, the ancient Greeks preferred marine fish, which was consequently very expensive; and yet drinking water cannot be salty (Bouffier 1999; 2000). Ancient people drank water from springs, wells, cisterns, which normally do not contain fish or other animals. Even if it was not that frequent in Greek societies, they also drank water from rivers, so presumably tolerated freshwater species.

Arethusa's fishes are said to be holy because they are dedicated to the goddess Artemis, a tradition that Veronese (2013) interprets as a specific characteristic of the oriental origin of Artemis. She suggests that the worship of Artemis migrated from the East to the Greek world and adapted to the Greek cultural environment. For her, the interdiction against eating fishes of the fountain reveals the previous existence of an ancient Artemis, Potnia Theron, patron goddess of fishes and characterized by water as an element, a specificity that was abandoned by Greek continental culture. Veronesi assimilates her with the Syrian goddess Atargatis and proposes that in a Greek context, the goddess lost her oriental features. Because of the lack of interest in fishes in cult, the Greeks would have removed this peculiarity and perpetuated the characteristics of the wilderness that suited their intellectual context. This hypothesis is very tempting and attractive.

Moreover, if we take into account other details, such as the pseudo-Phoenician etymology of the word Arethusa, the existence of a spring by that name in Syria, and others distributed across a map displaying ancient mobility across the Mediterranean region, we can see not only the Greek migration and the Near Eastern influence, but also the possibility of an early Phoenician presence in Syracuse, as reported by Thucydides in his prologue to the Athenian expedition to Sicily:

Phoenicians, too, had settlements all round Sicily, on promontories along the sea coast, which they walled off, and on the adjacent islets, for the sake of trade with the Sicels. But when the Hellenes also began to come in by sea in large numbers, the Phoenicians left most of these places... (Thuc. 6.2.6; trans. Smith, Loeb, 1921).

I propose an alternative to Veronese's argument, that rather than imagining that the Greeks imported a Near Eastern cult and adapted it to their religious context, we may be seeing the traces of these first Phoenicians on Sicily, and indeed on Syracusan Ortygia. The Corinthians, coming later and meeting those western Phoenicians, could have then adapted the local traditions to their own cultural context. Furthermore as pointed out by Bannister (2009, 9), Hesiodic tradition records Arethusa as the nymph of a Chalkidian spring (Hesiod F130, ed. Most, Loeb, 2007). In still another myth, the god Poseidon abducts Arethusa from Boiotia, raping her and transporting her to Chalkis. After giving birth to Poseidon's son, Abas, then king of the Abantes, Arethusa is turned into a spring by Hera (Larson 2001, 144, note 65). The presence of Chalkidians in the settlement of Syracuse has been also highlighted by archaeologists for 40 years (Pelagatti 1982).

These tenuous clues of the presence of Phoenicians and Chalkidians are perhaps the explanation of the specificity of Artemis in Syracuse, a divinity who illustrates the syncretism of the populations settled in the Corinthian daughter-city and the religious contacts that they could have. Contrary to the rather limited list of early Greek settlers listed by Thucydides (6.3), but according to Strabo (6.2.4), there should be settlers coming from all parts of the Mediterranean even if the main group was Corinthian, led by the Heraklid Archias.

Kyane, Herakles, and the Two Goddesses

Out in the Anapos Plain in the Syracusan hinterland, Kyane has been also the subject of a myth; her *aition* is reported by Diodorus:

But a great fountain was made sacred to her [Kore] in the territory of Syracuse and given the name Cyane or "Azure Fount." For the myth relates that it was near Syracuse that Pluton [Hades] effected the Rape of Core and took her away in his chariot, and that after cleaving the earth asunder he himself descended into Hades, taking along with him the bride whom he had seized, and that he caused the spring named Cyane to gush forth, near which the Syracusans each year hold a notable festive gathering; and private individuals offer the lesser victims, but when the ceremony is on behalf of the community, bulls are plunged in the pool, this manner of sacrifice having been commanded by Heracles on the occasion when he made the circuit of all Sicily, driving off the cattle of Geryones (Diod. Sic. 5.4.1-2, trans. C. H. Oldfather, Loeb, 1953).

The abduction and the festival are also described by Cicero:

... one feels that the landscape of itself confirms the story, familiar to us from childhood, of how the maiden was carried off. There is indeed in the neighborhood, facing north, a bottomless cave, from which, we are told, father

Dis [Hades] suddenly issued in his chariot; he seized the maiden, carried her away thence with him, and suddenly, not far from Syracuse, plunged underground; at this latter place, all in a moment, a lake appeared, near which the Syracusans to this very day hold an annual festival that is attended by crowds of men and women (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.107-108, trans. Greenwood, Loeb, 1935).

But the most detailed story is told by Ovid who personifies the spring and presents it as a counterpart to Arethusa-Alpheius narratives. One, Arethusa, is the migrant, the foreigner. The other, Kyane, is the indigenous one who does not have the right to talk and can only express her feelings by tears and flows of water (Ov. *Met.* 5.487-508, 572-641). According to Ovid (*Fast.* 4.469; *Met.* 5.409-443; *Pont.* 2.26) for instance, Kyane was first a nymph loved by the River Anapos, and became his wife of her own free will. But the poet doesn't specify her patron god or goddess. In the general spirit of his collection, he insists on the process of metamorphosis. Moreover, this story is so similar to that of Arethusa and Alpheius that it seems to be a duplication. Such imitation can be understood as a poetic process of amplification at the very least, or at most as cultural and religious syncretism: in the 1st century BCE, there were no more Greeks, Sikels, and foreigners, as myths and beliefs had melted into a single, shared Greco-Roman culture. The latter is supported by the testimony of Aelian (*VH* 2.33), that "the Syracusans represented the Anapos as a man, but honored the Kyane Spring with the image of a woman."⁴¹ Such worship is part of a general context in which Nature was deified and considered as full of different spirits.

The late literary process of metamorphosis cannot make us forget that the story of Kore's abduction gives birth to real cult practices. As we can read in the testimonies of Diodorus and Cicero, Kyane's, then Persephone's place was the centre of a collective meeting, and Ernesto De Miro (2008, 68-82) has proposed that one of the events of the Thesmophoria should have taken place there. This festival is attested in other Sicilian cities (De Miro 2008) but no bull's sacrifice by immersion has been evidenced. It is possible that the ceremony indicated by the orator refers to it: every year, the Syracusans celebrated a feast in which they made a sacrifice to Demeter and Kore-Persephone, attracting crowds of men and women.

Herakles was said to have instituted cults, sacrifices and festivals when later passing through Sicily. Even if Timaios or Philistos—we do not know which—proposed some prior version of his journey to Sicily, the earliest references emphasize the role of Herakles in subjugating the indigenous gods to the Olympians. According to Diodorus:

... he came to the city which is now Syracuse, and on learning what the myth relates about the Rape of Core, he [Herakles] offered sacrifices to the goddesses on a magnificent scale, and after dedicating to her the fairest bull of his herd and casting it into the spring Cyane he commanded the natives to sacrifice each year to Core and to conduct at Cyane a festive gathering and a sacrifice in splendid fashion (Diod. *Sic.* 4.23.4, trans. Oldfather, Loeb, 1961).

The historian writes both of the legend and the cult, and it is worth noting that Kyane does not appear as a nymph, but only as a πύγη, the spring produced by Hades as he rushed into the Underworld with his captive. She remains anonymous and depersonalised. Even in the story of the spring's origin, Diodorus focuses on major deities, Hades and Kore. His narration of the Rape of Kore appears after Herakles's match with Eryx and before his battle with the Sikani and their leaders, local deities such as Leukaspis, Pediakrates or Bouphanas. The sacrifice is offered to Kore, not to the spring or its presiding nymph. The legend shows clearly the lesser role of the spring, which only comforts Herakles and, as she is considered a witness and a guarantor, she supports the cult of

Fig. 10 – Laganello Head. Photo ©Sophie Bouffier, with the permission of the Polo Regionale di Siracusa per i Siti e i Musei Archeologici, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi.



⁴¹ Ael. *VH* 2.33: καὶ ἐν Σικελίᾳ δὲ Συρακούσιοι μὲν τὸν Ἄναπον ἀνδρὶ εἴκασαν, τὴν δὲ Κυάνην πηγὴν γυναικὸς εἰκόνι ἐτίμησαν (my translation).

Fig. 11 – One of the two Waterspouts from Cyane’s pond Photo ©Sophie Bouffier, with the permission of the Polo Regionale di Siracusa per i Siti e i Musei Archeologici, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi.



major divinities. As mentioned above, the colossal Laganello Head was found near the spring (Fig. 10). If it was intended to represent one of the goddesses, as it seems most likely, I believe that it is best identified as Kore, because the cult instituted by Herakles was devoted to Kore and Demeter, not to a minor local divinity.

Modern historians and anthropologists have often noted the civilizing function of the hero’s subjugation and pacification of foreign lands through which he travels.⁴² The hero appears to be closely linked to water (Salowey 1995), particularly in Sicily. Diodorus returns a familiar image, that of one who channels and tames the waters, especially in the Peloponnese, with the upgrading of the land by the mean of draining and irrigation. In Sicily, we find the two main directions of his water control: the development of the territory and the defence of public health. During his journey nymphs make hot waters spring up, so the hero can rest. His presence provokes the gush of springs near Himera and Segesta (Diod. Sic. 4.23.1-2), whether it is upon his impulse or that of the nymphs. Some of these were thermal springs, as at Himera where archaeological excavations have revealed therapeutic baths, dating them to the 1st century CE and later.⁴³

Across Sicily, archaeology attests to sanctuaries installed at springs, often hot or sulphurous, as at Monte Kronio (Province of Sciacca), or in the territory of Gela, at Palma di Montechiaro,

Fontana Calda (Butera), and Feudo Nobile, but they are not closely associated with Herakles. No literary evidence concerns these springs. Most of them, like Kyane, are located in strategic places, on the outermost bounds of territories; they appear to have marked Greek ownership of the land and places of cross-cultural mediation between Greeks and local populations (see De Polignac 1995, 109-149). Usually worship was consecrated to Artemis or the two Goddesses, Demeter and Kore. At Monte Kronio, Demeter was honored in the San Calogero sulphurous vapor caves from the 6th century (Maggi 1980-81). At Palma di Montechiaro, the therapeutic properties of Tumazzo sulphurous spring were exploited at least from the 7th century, as highlighted by the discovery of a sanctuary consisting of a probable wooden *naiskos* and an abundant votive deposit (end of the 7th - beginning of the 5th century): the worship has been attributed to Artemis (Caputo 1938). At Feudo Nobile, votive deposits consecrate worship to one or more feminine deities, probably Demeter and Kore-Persephone, based on the presence of statuettes with torches and piglets (Adamesteanu 1960). At Fontana Calda, still in the territory of Gela, the hot and iodine spring attracted worship from the 7th century until the Byzantine era (Adamesteanu 1958). Several divinities were venerated there: first Demeter, probably referred to by the word “polystephanos,” then nymphs from the Hellenistic period, and possibly Dionysus. An Archaic bronze statue of a bovine recalls Herakles and the sacrifice of bulls, but it is little more than a tease.

As Christina A. Salowey proposes (1995, 92-93), Herakles’s hydraulic role developed in close relation to Asclepius.

42 Sjöqvist 1962; Martin 1979; Jourdain-Annequin 1989; Bouffier 1992.

43 Belvedere, Vassallo, below; Bonacasa, 1991; Marconi 1999; Vassallo 1999.

Both drainage and public health are linked as marshes are implicated in disease and epidemics. Nevertheless, at Syracuse, the emphasis is on the fertility given to the land, not to the therapeutic role, although the threat of swamp miasmas and diseases weighed on ancient thought. Diodorus focuses on the religious syncretism of Herakles's action: his control of the Kyane Spring and its dedication to Demeter and Kore incorporate the indigenous spring in the family of Greek deities. The presentation of this inauguration comes just before the fight against local Sikeli heroes. At the same time, it celebrates Peloponnesian and more precisely Corinthian gods (Reichert-Südbeck 2000, 248-254; 272-274). Herakles's link with Corinth, itself founded by his descendants according to tradition, has been insufficiently underlined.⁴⁴ Ancient historiography rationalized Dorian identity in historical times and pretended that the Heraklids claimed the Peloponnesian land at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE (Diod. Sic. 4.58.4; Hdt. 6.53; Vanschoonwinkel 1995). This Dorian people claimed also the possession of Sicily, as the Spartan Dorieus and companions in West Sicily did, when Apollo Pythian commanded him to found a colony there, Herakleia (Hdt. 5.42-48). Herakles's intervention at Syracuse anticipated and justified the Peloponnesians' claims to the possession of Sicily. Alternatively, Kyane, protecting the fertility of the land, was absorbed into the mythic tradition about Herakles.

The large spring-fed pond in the landscape, Kyane, was more important for marking the territory with its waters and supporting the productivity of the land. By comparison, Arethusa, in the city, was central to urban life and city dwellers'survival.

Let us conclude by distinguishing the symbolic aspects of both springs, Arethusa and Kyane. The former was perhaps a holdover from an early Phoenician presence. It could have been integrated into the religious context of new inhabitants as they constructed a collective identity as Greeks, but also as Siciliots, that is to say Greek migrants inside a foreign country, who built their identity in relation to other cultures. The latter, the autochthonous Kyane, maybe a vestige of an indigenous cult, was also integrated into the Greek religious sphere, which has been expressed by the institution of the sacred festival by Herakles and devoted to the goddesses of agrarian prosperity. Arethusa and Kyane are thus two faces of one reality, the result of a Corinthian ideological construction, which was born at the time of the first contacts between immigrants from the Peloponnesos and autochthonous and foreign populations that met on the site.

This phenomenon derives from the practical and sacred roles of natural springs in the Corinthian landscape (Landon 2003; Kopestonsky 2016), as well as the process by which the most famous spring, Peirene was incorporated into local myth (Robinson 2011). Peirene inspired ancient literature, whatever the literary genre, poetry, theatre or historiography (Robinson, 2011, 28-35), and explanations of its existence fit into a fairly widespread etiological tradition in the Greek world: she was considered as a daughter of the Phliasian river Asopos according to Diodorus and others (Bacchyl. 9.62; Diod. Sic. 4.72.1; *Anth. Pal.* 9.225), and as a daughter of the Acheloos River according to Pausanias (2.2.3). She was transformed into a spring because of her misery when Artemis involuntarily killed her son, Kenchrias (see Larson, 2001, 307; Robinson, in this volume).

The parallelism with Syracusan Arethusa is obvious: in both cases, Artemis plays a preeminent role, as the goddess provokes the emergence of the spring, and protects her. If Peirene is the daughter of a river, then essentially Arethusa can be considered a descendant of Alpheus. A conceptual link between the two springs is established, moreover, by Cicero's brief remark, in a letter addressed to Atticus:

And the impudence, to ask you for a subscription. . . . Suppose he had come not to a "thirsty fount," but to a Pirene or "the holy place whence Alpheus took breath," he would drain the fount, as you say. . . . (*Att.* 12.5.1, trans. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb, 1999).⁴⁵

Here Cicero puts Peirene and Arethusa on the same level by quoting Pindar (*Nem.* 1.1). Both springs, or their guardian spirits, can be considered *archegetai*, founders of their cities, Peirene, because she was the daughter of a river and mother of the two Corinthian harbors, Leches and Kenchrias, who gave the city its wealth, and Arethusa, because she symbolized the first settlement of the colony in Ortygia.

This legend can also be linked to Kyane, whose emergence results from pain and violence. But as Robinson (2011, 35) notes, initiatory functions are closely linked to water in Pindar's poetry; we could even suggest that these initiatory functions are not only in Pindar's ideology but characterize Greek mentality, because a spring or a river is often the point of birth of a human settlement. Examples are numerous, particularly in the Peloponnesos (see n. 2, above). The originality of the Syracusan myths in a Sikeliot context is also very striking. We have no particular legend about any other springs in Sicilian tradition. The only one which could be quoted would be the case of the nymphs of Himera who made springs beside which

⁴⁴ One of the rare historians to develop this topic, Quantin (2011) insists upon this aspect for Corinthian colonization in Epirus.

⁴⁵ Cic. *Att.* 12.5.1: *Fac non ad "διψῶσαν κρήνην", sed ad Πειρήνην eum venisse, "ἄμπνευμα σεμνὸν Ἀλφειοῦ" in te "κρήνη", ut scribis, haurire in tantis suis praesertim angustiis.* "ποῖ ταῦτα ἄρα ἀποσκήψει;

the hero Herakles could rest, but these have no identity, no history, no destiny (Belvedere, Vassallo, in this volume). Thus they differ greatly from Arethusa and Kyane, unique and identified entities. To conclude, the two Syracusan springs are unusual and powerful entities in the ancient Sicilian landscape. They ensured the internal cohesion of the city of Syracuse and preserved connections to Corinthians and other Peloponnesian Greeks. For us today, they offer insights into cultural conditions that a poor documentary record makes difficult to understand, representing the memory of the Syracusan people, rooted in the mother city's culture, but thoroughly reshaped by time and local conditions

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Ancient Waterlands

ARCHÉOLOGIES MÉDITERRANÉENNES

propose des synthèses
méthodologiques et
met en perspective
la documentation
matérielle des
premiers humains
à l'époque
contemporaine.

Autour de la Méditerranée, dans des régions marquées par des ressources limitées, l'eau potable est une ressource indispensable et un élément de base. Sa présence a souvent conditionné l'installation d'un peuplement humain et donné naissance à des croyances et des rites destinés à la protéger et à la conserver. Aussi, après deux volumes consacrés à des questions d'histoire des techniques et des politiques hydrauliques, le réseau de chercheurs HYDRΩMED, créé par une équipe d'Aix-Marseille Université en 2015, entend-il explorer les voies religieuses et symboliques des eaux, sources et fleuves, dans les mentalités de la Méditerranée du premier millénaire avant notre ère. Fleuves, sources et fontaines sont couramment associés à des traditions mythiques et étimologiques par le biais de récits aussi bien que par des pratiques rituelles et votives. Croisant approches géologiques et usages culturels ou religieux des points de jaillissement des eaux, l'objectif de l'ouvrage est d'étudier les processus de transformation des paysages naturels autour des sources et des rivières (des grottes naturelles au développement de fontaines bâties ou à la création pure et simple de grottes artificielles). Eau nourricière, délassante, ou guérisseuse, eau-spectacle... Comment a-t-elle été parfois monumentalisée, mise en scène, voire sacralisée ? Dans quelle mesure a-t-elle été considérée comme la base de récits cosmologiques, étimologiques et mythologiques ou comme un miroir de l'identité collective d'un groupe ? Autant de questions auxquelles cherchent à répondre les auteurs de cet ouvrage collectif à partir d'études de cas réparties sur l'ensemble de la Méditerranée.

Betsey Ann Robinson est professeur associée d'histoire de l'art à Vanderbilt Université. Ses travaux incluent l'architecture et l'art grecs et romains, les villes et sanctuaires antiques, ainsi que les paysages – réels, imaginés et représentés dans l'art et la littérature antiques. Depuis 1997, elle effectue des recherches sur le site de la Corinthe antique, avec l'American School of Classical Studies at Athens, en mettant l'accent sur l'approvisionnement en eau, l'architecture et les œuvres d'art contextualisées.

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En couverture



La fontaine Aréthuse, Syracuse
Crédit : Sophie Bouffier.



Delphes sous la pluie
Crédit : Betsey Ann Robinson.

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