

HÉROS FONDATEURS
ET IDENTITÉS COMMUNAUTAIRES
DANS L'ANTIQUITÉ ENTRE MYTHE, RITE ET POLITIQUE

a cura di Maria Paola Castiglioni, Romina Carboni
Marco Giuman, H el ene Bernier-Farella

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According to a passage of Pausanias, Pyrrhus dedicated two series of inscribed shields, respectively in the sanctuary of Athena Itonia in Thessaly and in the sanctuary of Zeus in Dodona: starting from this reference we will try to reconstruct the 'real' intentions of the sovereign and the politics that he wanted to adopt after his return from the expedition to the West and after a (decisive?) victory against Antigonus Gonatas. It is evident, in fact, that Pyrrhus' devotion for the gods might not be sufficient to explain the reasons of the dedications. Causes of political nature and propaganda are, instead, to be considered crucial. Archaeological data have confirmed only up to a point the testimony of the Pausanias: the discovery of one of the Macedonian shields dedicated in 278 B.C. in Dodona, Pyrrhus portraits with the crown of oak leaves and, lastly, his relics preserved in the Epirotic sanctuary contribute, on one hand, to understand the role that this place played in the propaganda of the king but, on the other hand, open a new problem related to the original preservation's place of the dedications.

PYRRHUS: HERO FOUNDER AND HEALER IN DODONA?¹

This paper explores the singular significance of the sanctuary of Dodona, through the literary and material record, in the creation of the political and cult status of Pyrrhus and demonstrated that this site remained at the very centre of the propaganda of the king, both during his life and after his death.

1. Two dedications for a victory: Pyrrhus' ex voto in Iton(os) and in Dodona

At 1, 2, 1 Pausanias, using as pretext the presence of a statue of Pyrrhus still then visible in Athens (2nd century A.D.), begins a digression on the years following the return of the king from the West. Our focus is on the events described below:

1. The present text is the result of a common and shared research. Notably, part 1 is of Cesare Zizza and part 2 of Maria Elena Gorrini. We thank S.A. Burgess for the English translation of the text.

Paus. 1, 13.2:

After the defeat in Italy Pyrrhus gave his forces a rest and then declared war on Antigonus, his chief ground of complaint being the failure to send reinforcements to Italy. Overpowering the native troops of Antigonus and his Gallic mercenaries he pursued them to the coastal cities, and himself reduced upper Macedonia and the Thessalians. The extent of the fighting and the decisive character of the victory of Pyrrhus are shown best by the Celtic armour dedicated in the sanctuary of Itonian Athena between Pherae and Larisa, with this inscription on them:

“Pyrrhus the Molossian hung these shields taken from the bold Gauls as a gift to Itonian Athena, when he had destroyed all the host of Antigonus. ‘Tis no great marvel. The Aeacidae are warriors now, even as they were of old.’ [=T1]

These shields then are here, but the bucklers of the Macedonians themselves he dedicated to Dodonian Zeus. They too have an inscription: “These once ravaged golden Asia, and brought slavery upon the Greeks. Now ownerless they lie by the pillars of the temple of Zeus, spoils of boastful Macedonia. [=T2]²

The occasion of the two dedications, evidently, is the same: the spoils deposited in Iton(os) between Pherae and Larisa and those placed in the sanctuary of Zeus in Dodona were to celebrate a victory reported by Pyrrhus over Antigonus Gonatas³.

This episode occurs with a specific and significant chronological context: in the intermission between the return of the king from his expedition in the West (around 275/4 B.C.) and prior to the beginning of his Peloponnesian campaign (273/2 B.C.). Although the identification of the exact date of this battle, commemorated by these dedications, is a rather complex matter⁴ and a number of hypotheses have been advanced by modern scholars⁵, the greatest support is for 274 BC as the year of Pyrrhus’ attack and the subsequent defeat of the Gonatas’ army⁶.

2. Transl. JONES 1918.

3. On the *formulae* used in the two inscriptions and on other questions here neglected for space reasons cfr. ZIZZA 2006, Inscr. nn. 1 and 2, pp. 117-134.

4. Cfr. also LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 632-635.

5. For a complete and detailed picture: GAROUFALIAS 1979, p. 424 note 53; p. 433 note 5.

6. Cfr., e.g., FRAZER II, p. 110; NENCI 1953, p. 31, note 122; LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 561 and 635; FLACELIÈRE 1968, p. 301; CROSS 1971, p. 120; HATZOPOULOS 1985, p.

The sources are almost completely silent on the location of the battle but it is possible to formulate hypotheses. On the basis of a (rather generic) indication in Plutarch (*Pyrrhus* 26, 5), which places *περὶ τὰ στενὰ* Pyrrhus' assault of Antigonus' army, and certain passages in Livy (32, 5, 9; 32, 13, 2), which attest to the existence of *castra Pyrrhi* not far from the *Antigonenses fauces* which *stena vocant Graeci*, almost all scholars are agreed in accepting the identification of *στενὰ* with the Aous river gorge, near Antigoneia (Northern Epirus) and so identify this location as the site of the (final and decisive?) battle between the Epirote and the king of the Macedonians⁷.

We know of the final stages of the war through Plutarch⁸: Pyrrhus was able to scare away Gonatas, and his soldiers with him⁹, after an attack on the Macedonian phalanx¹⁰ and following his defeat of the Galatians, the largest contingent of the rear-guard of the enemy deployment.¹¹

It is very probable, therefore, that the shields placed in the temple of Athena Itonia and those dedicated in Dodona belonged to the men of Antigonus' army. Those dedicated in Dodona, mentioned in T. 2, had been used by Macedonian soldiers; those dedicated in the Thessalian sanctuary – namely the *θυρεοὶ* of T. 1 – belonged to Galatian mercenaries and, therefore, almost certainly, by those sol-

34; LAUNEY 1987, pp. 499-500; pp. 905-906; WALBANK 1988, p. 260; p. 263, note 1; CARTLEDGE 1989, p. 33; MUSTI 1989, p. 784; BEARZOT 1995, p. 704; BOFFO 1998, p. 93. Others consider 273 B.C. as a plausible date: cfr. TARN 1913, p. 260, note 7, p. 264; GOW-PAGE 1965, p. 392; HAMMOND 1989, pp. 304 and 306; PRITCHETT 1991, p. 143.

7. Isolated is the proposal of BELOCH 1925, p. 573, note 1, who places the battle in Thessaly, considering a reliable evidence the fact that Pyrrhus had chosen to dedicate the shields in the Thessalian sanctuary of Athena Itonia. For other hypotheses of localization see, in particular, LÉVÊQUE 1957, p. 562, notes 1 and 3; GAROUFALIAS 1979, p. 124; p. 433, notes 6-7; WALBANK 1988, p. 261.

8. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 5 ff. We do not have information on the initial operations done by the two armies.

9. Cfr. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 8; Paus. 1, 13, 2-3, see also Iust. 25, 3, 5-7.

10. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 7-8.

11. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 5-6. On Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus* see now the Italian translation and commentary of SCUDERI 2017.

diers of the rear-guard mentioned by Plutarch¹². The Galatians, we should recall, fought against the Epirote as mercenaries in the service of the Macedonian king and not because of any sense of shared ethnic or cultural identity or common cause: they fought, being mercenaries, for Antigonos alone.

Following the defeat of Antigonos' army Pyrrhus dedicated the weapons of the Galatians at the sanctuary of Athena Itonia in Thessaly and seized the opportunity to leave a lasting memorial of the fight with the Gonatas and, most significantly, of the moment when his forces faced the Galatian mercenaries deployed by Antigonos, most likely together with men of other origin.

Among the ancient sources mentioning this episode, Pausanias' *Periegesis* is the only text which indicates the location of the sanctuary of Athena Itonia, named in the first verse of the inscription: it is not the homonymous shrine in Boeotia¹³, but one which was placed Φερῶν μεταξύ καὶ Λαρίσης: i.e. the federal sanctuary of the Thessalians which was located in Achaia Phthiotis, the ancient kingdom of Aeacid Achilles from whom Pyrrhus was said to descend. This federal sacred place was near Iton(os), a place known since Homer (*II*. 2, 696), and located halfway between Pherae and Larisa Kremaste¹⁴.

It is not entirely convincing that Pyrrhus (who according to the tradition did not neglect to make sacrifices in honour of the deities of the conquered cities)¹⁵ dedicated the spoils of his defeated enemies in the sanctuary of Iton(os) solely to pay tribute to Athena Itonia, a deity particularly worshipped by the Thessalians, given that

12. Cfr. *supra* notes 9 and 11. On Celtic mercenaries in Hellenistic period cfr., e.g., Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 4; 26, 6; 26, 11-13; 32; D.S. 22, 12; Paus. 1, 7, 2; 13, 2 and GRIFFITH 1984, p. 63 ff.; LAUNEY 1987, p. 490 ff.; SZABÓ 1991; RITCHIE-RITCHIE 1996, p. 55 ff.

13. On the Boeotian sanctuary dedicated to Athena Itonia cfr. Plu. *Ages.* 19, 2; *Moralia* 774 F-775 A; Str. 9, 2, 29; 5, 14; Paus. 3, 9, 13; 9, 34, 1-2; 34, 5 and, among others, FRAZER V, p. 169 ff.; ROESCH 1965, pp. 63 and 107-108; PRITCHETT 1969, p. 85 ff.; KRENTZ 1989; DEACY 1995; SCHACHTER 1996, pp. 23-24; 28; KNOEPFLER 2001, p. 356 ff.; GRANINGER 2011, p. 43 ff.; MOGGI-OSANNA 2010, p. 407 ff.

14. GRANINGER 2011, p. 43 ff.

15. NENCI 1953, p. 31, note 122.

he acquired the sovereignty of Thessaly after the victory over Antigonos it is not entirely convincing. Pyrrhus' religiosity alone is not sufficient to explain why, in this sanctuary, he offered the spoils of only the Galatians, given that Macedonian soldiers as well as Galatians mercenaries fell during this battle. It seems that other factors, including those of a political and diplomatic nature, were likely to have played a more decisive role in Pyrrhus' decision to choose the Thessalian sanctuary for the dedication of the Galatian shields.

It is very likely that Pyrrhus took advantage of the defeat of the Galatian mercenaries, men belonging to the same peoples that the Greeks well remembered for their devastating invasions of Greece (about 280-278/7 B.C.), as an excellent opportunity to present himself to the Greeks and in particular to the Thessalians, those who suffered the most from the Celtic invasions, as the avenger of the Galatians' arrogance and as the new defender of the Hellenic cause against any type of external danger¹⁶. Pyrrhus would clearly have realized that, after having taken possession of Thessaly and part of Macedonia¹⁷, in order to conclude his planned campaigns, (Greece would have been his last field campaign)¹⁸, it was necessary for him to obtain the favour of the Greek public in general and, in particular, the vital support of the Thessalians who, more than others, would have appreciated a victory over the Galatians and who, at the time of the battle, were still of some importance in the Amphictiony, and, precisely for this reason, perhaps, they could have been able to provide him with a sort of Panhellenic legitimacy¹⁹. From this point of view, it is likely that Pyrrhus' aim with the dedication of the Celtic shields

16. In this sense FLACELIÈRE 1937, p. 95; NACHTERGAEL 1977, p. 183; BEARZOT 1992, pp. 105-106; CASEVITZ-POUILLOUX-CHAMOIX 1992, pp. 155 and 173.

17. Cfr. *Plu. Pyrrh.* 26, 4-5; Paus. 1, 13, 2 and GAROUFALIAS 1979, pp. 436-438, note 13.

18. BEARZOT 1992, p. 106.

19. It is highly probable that Pyrrhus intended to establish a relationship with the Thessalians which would have gone beyond that derived from a conquest (cfr. BEARZOT 1992, p. 106). Cfr. as well SCHUBERT 1894, p. 226; TARN 1913, p. 265; LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 563 and 567; HAMMOND 1967, p. 571; NACHTERGAEL 1977, pp. 182-183; GAROUFALIAS 1979, p. 435, note 10; WALBANK 1988, p. 262.

was to enhance his victory over the Celts and to testify this fact to the Thessalians and to the other Greeks: that he himself, even if he was absent at the time of the invasion and engaged in campaigns in the West, had fought and punished the Galatians. In this way, he was able to redeem his own absence which, otherwise, could have dangerously lessened his popularity and so compromised his plans. Additionally, and once home, it is likely that Pyrrhus would have quickly realized that Antigonos had managed to increase his own prestige and to consolidate his *basileia* precisely because of the favourable outcome of his fight with the Galatians in the region of Lisimachia (277 B.C.)²⁰.

It is not excluded, therefore, that Pyrrhus hoped, with his victory of 274, to achieve the same results obtained by Gonatas in 277 and to obtain above all from the Thessalians the trust and, necessary, support for the realization of his plans. In this sense, the genealogical reference of l. 4 in T1 is significant. It is probable that the reference to the noble ancestors of Pyrrhus, those brave Aeacid warriors (*αἰχμηταὶ καὶ νῦν καὶ πάρος Αἰακίδαι*), was inserted by the epigrammatist, clearly at the request of the king, because it was functional to his Philo-Thessalic and Panhellenic political programme. It was by virtue of his link with the Aeacids and above all with Achilles as the hero *par excellence* of Phthiotis (the southern part of Thessaly where the sanctuary of Athena Itonia was located) that Pyrrhus was able to further legitimise his conquest of Thessaly and gain their favour. His programme consisted in a project to present himself to all the Greeks, especially after the victory over the Galatians, as the heir and embodiment of the famous warrior, as a new Achilles²¹: the acknowledged paradigm of the victorious hero, the defeater of barbarians and liberator of the Greek Helen²².

20. Cfr. *IG* II/III², 677 (= *SIG*³ 401); LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 554-556; FERGUSON 1974, pp. 159-160; NACHTERGAEL 1977, p. 177 ff.; TARN 1978, pp. 18-19; WILL 1979, pp. 107-110; 209 ff.; HAMMOND 1989, pp. 302-303; BEARZOT 1992, p. 105; BEARZOT 1995, p. 706 and note 40; BOFFO 1998, p. 93; HABICHT 2000, p. 153.

21. So BRAUND 1997, p. 5.

22. VENERI 1997, p. 63.

This interpretative context provides for a fuller understanding of the choice of Dodona as a site for the dedication of the Macedonian spoils. During Pyrrhus' reign and as a result of his demonstrable support for the sanctuary²³, Dodona became one of the most famous and most important religious centres in all of North-Western Greece²⁴ and especially in Epirus²⁵. The fact that Dodona housed one of the earliest and most consulted oracles in the Greek world²⁶ catalysed Pyrrhus' attention and he unfailingly provided public demonstrations of his devotion to Zeus *Dodonaïos*²⁷. On the other hand, and from the time of establishment on the Epirotic throne in 297, there are indications that Pyrrhus wanted to free the kingdom from its secular political isolation²⁸ and to expose himself to the 'limelight' of international relations²⁹.

On other occasions he had proved his ability to exploit everything that could be useful from a propagandistic point of view to support his cause³⁰ and so Pyrrhus must have realized the value of a centre of Panhellenic importance such as Dodona³¹, both for the entire region and for his political propaganda: the sanctuary was a constant reference point for the Greek world since the Archaic period and was able to exercise a certain influence on other

23. In this sense: NENCI 1953, p. 74 ff.; HAMMOND 1967, p. 581 ff.; PARKE 1967, p. 118 ff.; LÉVÊQUE 1996, p. 1132; BRAUND 1997, p. 11, note 21.

24. Cfr. Paus. 7, 21, 2 and PERDRIZET 1887, p. 697; BEARZOT 1988, pp. 104-105 and 107.

25. Cfr. LEPORE 1962, p. 58; CASEVITZ-POUILLOUX-CHAMOIX 1992, p. 173.

26. Cfr. CARAPANOS 1878, p. 129 ff.; 145; LAUNEY 1987, p. 906.

27. I refer, on one side, to the dedication of the war spoils taken to the Romans in the battle of 280 B.C. in Herakleia (*SIG*³ 392) and, on the other side, to our inscription on the shields, hanged up «on the 21 columns of the peristyle court of the temple of Dodona» (GAROUFALIAS 1979, p. 435 note 11) or suspended «à l'épistyle de la colonnade du temple dans le sanctuaire de Zeus à Dodone» (CASEVITZ-POUILLOUX-CHAMOIX 1992, p. 173). On the archaeological evidence of this dedication see GORRINI, *infra*.

28. Cfr. NENCI 1953, pp. 66 and 71-72; BEARZOT 1992, p. 236. Cfr. now PICCININI 2017.

29. NENCI 1953, p. 66.

30. Cfr. NENCI 1953, p. 65 ff.; BEARZOT 1992, pp. 105-107; 130-131; 236.

31. Cfr. LÉVÊQUE 1957, p. 233; LEPORE 1962, p. 58; LAUNEY 1987, p. 906.

cultural areas of the peninsula³². Significantly, the sanctuary also represented an obvious connection with Achilles³³. As such is not coincidental that several coin series issued by Pyrrhus contain unequivocal references to Dodona and the sanctuary³⁴. In a short time, Pyrrhus managed to link the name of Dodona (traditionally associated with the name of Achilles) with his own name³⁵ and the name of Epirus. He was able to turn the ancient sanctuary, formerly gravitating to Molossian rule³⁶, into the centre of the religious life of all of his subjects³⁷ (Thesprotians, Molossians and Chaonians) and, at the same time, the universally recognized and recognizable symbol of 'national epirotic union'³⁸.

If it is true that the sanctuary continued, throughout this period, to be one of the most frequented oracles of the Greek world then I believe it is clearly possible to propose that the Pyrrhus also used Dodona as a communication channel for the dissemination of his propaganda, not only within but also, and crucially, beyond the kingdom. The dedication of the Macedonian spoils and the choice of this sanctuary, along with the anti-Macedonian and Philellic inspiration of the inscription, suggests that Pyrrhus may have wanted to exploit the favourable outcome of the battle with Antigonus Gonatas to gain the favour and the support not just of the Epirotes³⁹ but of all those Greeks who identified the Macedonians as their common and most feared enemy (as confirmed by the explicit mention in the inscription of Macedonian arrogance)⁴⁰. This

32. Cfr. CARAPANOS 1878, p. 139 ff.; LEPORE 1962, p. 61.

33. Cfr. Hom., *Il.* 16, 231 ff.

34. Cfr. PERDRIZET 1887, p. 697 and note 10; NENCI 1953, p. 74 ff.; LÉVÊQUE 1957, p. 427 ff.; 691 ff. Cfr. GORRINI, *infra*.

35. Cfr. JACKSON 1991, p. 244: «Just as offerings in victors' own temples might stay in their places for many years, so even after the Classical Period, Greek states continued to offer the gods dedications of spoils taken from their fellow Greeks, at least at sanctuaries that were, or were regarded as, their own. So Pyrrhus dedicated spoils of Macedonians at Dodona».

36. CARAPANOS 1878, p. 144; LEPORE 1962, pp. 63-64.

37. Cfr. PARKE 1967, p. 120.

38. NENCI 1953, p. 68.

39. Notable remarks in NENCI 1953, p. 90.

40. BEARZOT 1995, p. 705.

was in direct support of his military plans for conquest, providing him with free access to the heart of ‘classical’ Greece: he would have soon brought the war into the Peloponnese⁴¹. It was therefore necessary to present himself as the avenger of the Greeks and to prepare himself to conclude his ‘crusade’ against Antigonos⁴² (who still held Corinth and several other Greek cities)⁴³ in order to be able to free, finally, all the Greeks. In this sense, the reference in the epigram of Dodona to the δουλοσύνα imposed by the Macedonians on the Greeks (l. 2 of T.2: αἶδε καὶ Ἑλλασί<ν> δουλοσύναν ἔπορον) is quite significant: in order for the expedition of Pyrrhus to the Peloponnese to be considered as a war of liberation, it must have seemed appropriate to the epigrammatist (and to Pyrrhus, of course, who choose the text to be inscribed) to present the victory over Gonaatas as a form of exemplary punishment that the Epirote king, had succeeded in inflicting on Macedonia, both in the name of and on behalf of the peoples of Greece. On the eve of the transition from the Aetolian Chersonese⁴⁴ to the Achaia, Pyrrhus’ political-diplomatic goals, supported by his philhellenic and anti-imperialist and anti-Macedonian propaganda, could already be said to have been largely achieved. If it is true that the sovereign was able to reach Laconia easily and to bring his army to the gates of Sparta it is also reasonable to infer that, in addition to the Acarnanians and to the

41. About the Peloponnesian expedition of Pyrrhus cfr. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 15 ff.; Paus. 1, 13, 4 ff.; Iust. 15, 4 ff. and LÉVÊQUE 1957, p. 569 ff.; CROSS 1971, p. 84 ff.; GAROUFALIAS 1979, p. 126 ff.; WILL 1979, p. 214 ff.; KINCAID 1980, p. 91 ff.; WALBANK 1988, p. 264 ff.; CARTLEDGE 1989, p. 33 ff.; HAMMOND 1989, p. 306 ff.; BEARZOT 1992, p. 128 ff.; ZODDA 1997, p. 59 ff.

42. Cfr. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 21 and LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 587; 591-592; CROSS 1971, p. 85; CARCOPINO 1978, pp. 76-77; KINCAID 1980, pp. 90 and 93; MARASCO 1980, pp. 103-104 and 106; CARTLEDGE 1989, p. 33; HAMMOND 1989, p. 306; ZODDA 1997, pp. 60-61.

43. Cfr. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 26, 9; Iust. 15, 3, 7 and, among the others, LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 569-570 and 578-579; KINCAID 1980, p. 91.

44. Cfr. Iust. 25, 4, 4; BELOCH 1925, p. 575, n. 1; LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 583-584; FLACELIÈRE 1968, p. 298, note 3; WILL 1979, p. 214; KINCAID 1980, p. 93; MARASCO 1980, p. 104. In general on Pyrrhus’ depiction in D.H. and Iust. cfr. SCHETTINO 1991 and 2015.

Aetolians⁴⁵ (who were the people closest to Dodona and who, more than many others, frequented the sanctuary and consulted the oracle)⁴⁶, even the Peloponnesian Greeks supported (or at least did not hinder) his advance against the Macedonian oppressor⁴⁷.

C.Z.

2. *The birth of a hero: historical sources and archaeological evidence*

From the archaeological point of view the sanctuary of Athena Itonia has not yet been identified on the ground⁴⁸, and therefore any further reflections must be suspended. Dodona, on the other hand, is well known⁴⁹ and in the text below we will reflect on the role that this sanctuary played in the propaganda of the Epirotic king.

Our knowledge of the religious practices of the most ancient phases of the sanctuary of Zeus⁵⁰ derives mainly from literary sources⁵¹. The focus of the cult was an oak tree sacred to Zeus⁵²: from the rustling of the leaves⁵³ of the oak or from the flight of the doves

45. Cfr. *SIG*³ 369; SEGRE 1927, pp. 35-36; FLACELIÈRE 1937, p. 107, note 1; p. 189; LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 572-573. See *supra*, note 43; *infra*, note 45. Cfr. *SIG*³ 369.

46. Cfr. *IG IX* 1², 3 (in particular l. 15); Paus. 7, 21, 2 and PERDRIZET 1887, p. 697; BEARZOT 1988, pp. 104-105; BULTRIGHINI 1990, pp. 295-296.

47. Cfr. *Plu. Pyrrh.* 26, 19 ff.; *Iust.* 25, 4, 4-5; FLACELIÈRE 1937, p. 190; LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 572-576; 586 ff.; KINCAID 1980, p. 93; MARASCO 1980, pp. 104-107; HAMMOND 1989, p. 306; MUSTI 1989, p. 784; BEARZOT 1992, p. 183, note 19.

48. GRANINGER 2011, pp. 50-67.

49. Mainly CARAPANOS 1878, I-II; HAMMOND 1967; PARKE 1967; DAKARIS 1960; DAKARIS 1971; KATSIKLOUDIS 2005; LHÔTE 2006; DIETERLE 2007; QUANTIN 2008; EMMERLING 2012; PICCININI 2012; MANCINI 2013; MANCINI 2016; PICCININI 2016; PICCININI 2017, pp. 20-25.

50. On proto- and pre-historical phases of Dodona cfr. KLEITSAS 2014 and KLEITSAS 2017, pp. 401-408.

51. Collected and commented by DE GENNARO, SANTORIELLO 1994, pp. 382-408. Cfr. also PARKE 1967, pp. 1-93.

52. *Hes. Catalogues of Women, Fragm.* 97 PARKE 1967, pp. 20-33.

53. *Hom. Od.* 14, 327-330; *Od.* 19, 296-299.

nesting in its branches⁵⁴ the prophets (*Selloi*)⁵⁵ interpreted the will of the god for those consulting the oracle⁵⁶. The questions and answers were written on lead strips, many of which have been found in the excavations, and deal with disparate issues, from private to public concerns⁵⁷. The sources also report a mythical tradition concerning the foundation of the sanctuary: two black doves flew from Thebes of Egypt, one to found the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon in Libya, the other to an oak tree in Dodona where she ordered the inhabitants to build the sanctuary⁵⁸. We must note here a parallelism because, according to this tale, known since Herodotus up to the contemporaries of Pyrrhus, Zeus Ammon was the oracle which confirmed the divine genealogy of Alexander⁵⁹: it is by highlighting the mythical relationship between Dodona and that Libyan sanctuary that Pyrrhus is able to present himself as a new Alexander in the sign of another oracular Zeus. The divine legitimacy of his power and Zeus' support lead him to be able to win the arrogant Macedonians and to dedicate their spoils in Dodona.

The monumentalization of the sanctuary passes through various phases, repeatedly analysed in bibliography, but it seems to begin between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century. B.C.⁶⁰. In this section we focus exclusively on the building activity promoted by Pyrrhus.

54. Hdt. 2, 52 ff.

55. The prophets, according to Homer *Il.* 16, 233-235, did not wash their feet, and slept on the ground, in order to be in contact with it and derive their oracular powers. Eust., *schol.* ad Hom. *Il.* 16, 233; ad Hom. *Od.* 14, 327; About *Selloi*: Arist. *Mete.* 352b1. See PARKE 1967, pp. 20-33.

56. GARTZIOU-TATTI 1990, who also examines other traditions related to the ways of interpreting the god's will.

57. On the oracular lead tablets cfr. FRANKE 1956; DAKARIS, CHRISTIDIS *et alii* 1999; LHÔTE 2006; MÉNDEZ DOSUNA 2016; on the ways of consulting the oracle cfr. PARKER 2016.

58. Hdt. 2, 58. Eust. ad Hom. *Od.* 14, 327; PARKE 1967, pp. 34-45.

59. Arr. *An.* 3, 3-4. FREDERICKSMAYER 1991, pp. 199-214.

60. On Molossians cfr. MEYER 2013; MEYER 2015. For the first phases of the sanctuary see, lastly, EMMERLING 2012, PICCININI 2016 and PICCININI 2017, with discussion of the bibliography therein.

The attention that the king lavished on Dodona can certainly be linked to his propaganda, in a genealogy which makes him the successor and heir to Achilles through Neoptolemus and Andromache, through a mythical proto-Molossian dynast, claimed as the ancestors of the Epirote sovereign⁶¹.

The references to Achilles, and his son Pyrrhus Neoptolemus, as his own ancestors served to present Pyrrhus, during his expedition to Italy, as a Panhellenic king, almost as a new Achilles challenging the Romans who descended from Aeneas, from the Trojans, and coming to the rescue of the Greek Spartan colony of *Tarentum*⁶².

The connection with Achilles is conveyed through genealogical links, used for political purposes, and at the same time through cult practice: it should be emphasized that it is Achilles, in fact, who raises the eldest prayer to Zeus *Dodonaïos* (16th book of the *Iliad*, vv. 233 ff.). A second, and significant, parallel for Pyrrhus' restoration and restructuring of his sanctuary which should be highlighted, is with Alexander and his plans to restore the great Greek sanctuaries, starting with the Macedonian *hieron* of Zeus in Dion but including Dodona and extending to Olympia⁶³. Pyrrhus' central claim, during preparations for the Western expedition, was that he was acting to both avenge and defend the Greeks of *Tarentum*, threatened by Rome, and unify the Western Greeks⁶⁴. His works in Dodona can be read in this sense: the special attention he reserved for the sanctuary, according to the inscription we started from, suggests the erection or the restructuring of a temple of Zeus, upon whose columns (*kionas*) he would have hung up the Macedonian weapons. A colonnaded temple, however, has not been identified in Dodona: Quantin⁶⁵ proposed to identify the

61. POUZADOUX 1997; KITTELÄ 2013; SCUDERI 2017. See also GAGÉ 1954 and LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 251-258.

62. ZIZZA, *supra*.

63. HATZOPOULOS, MARI 2004. MARI 2002, p. 255 note 1 does not exclude that the monumentalization of Dodona should be attributed to Alexander the Great; the question is discussed in PICCININI 2016, pp. 165-166.

64. Cfr. *supra*.

65. QUANTIN 2008.

building mentioned in the inscription with the *hierà oikia* recorded by Polybius⁶⁶ and recognized by Dakaris⁶⁷ with building E1, which is provided with columns in the front as a result of a programme of restoration and extension ascribed to Pyrrhus' period (Fig. 1). Against this proposal, however, and as Mancini⁶⁸ has correctly pointed out, if the prominence of E1 is suggestive of cult function there is nothing to prove definitively that the *naos* should be identified with the *hierà oikia* E1. A fragment of a Macedonian shield bearing the inscription “βα [σι] λέυς”⁶⁹ has been connected by Dakaris with the episode mentioned by Pausanias [T2] and placed in ‘E1’, although the discovery took place in the *Bouleuterion* ‘E2’⁷⁰. Mancini⁷¹ highlights as well that a ring element bearing the inscription “βασιλ [έως] [---] ρου”⁷² and a fragment of bronze sheet with an inscription mentioning Pyrrhus⁷³, both considered parts of shields, were in fact found in the *Bouleuterion* ‘E2’. These discoveries would rather lead us to suppose that the *Bouleuterion* ‘E2’ served as the location for the exposition of this type of dedication, a sort of archive, according to a custom also attested elsewhere⁷⁴. Indeed, there is no archaeological evidence that the shields were displayed in ‘E1’⁷⁵, but rather in the *Bouleuterion*, a building that was provided with columns but was yet not a *naos*.

66. Plb. 4, 62, 3-4.

67. DAKARIS 1971, pp. 39-41; MYLONOPOULOS 2006, pp. 190-197 thinks that the *naiskos* might have been a temple; QUANTIN 2008, p. 15 and notes 41 and 44.

68. MANCINI 2015, pp. 359-360.

69. Museum of Ioannina, inv. 1951; DIETERLE 2007, p. 95, F425, fig. 29.

70. On building E2 see DAKARIS 1986, pp. 56-82 and QUANTIN 2008.

71. MANCINI 2015, p. 362, note 171; MEYER 2013, *passim*; DIETERLE 2007, pp. 93-96.

72. ([Αλεξάνδ]ρου or [Γύρ]ρου, according to two different proposals of integration: DIETERLE 2007, p. 93 f., F595, fig. 28.

73. Museum of Ioannina, inv. 1430; DIETERLE 2007, p. 96, F606, fig. 30.

74. Paus. 6, 23, 7; POLITO 1998, p. 24; MANCINI 2015, p. 362 note 161; PICCININI 2016, p. 166.

75. Nonetheless, every building of Dodona should be carefully re-examined in its architectural elements as well as in its stratigraphy and findings, in order to provide a secure chronology and an attribution, starting from Carapanos and Dakaris' works. DAKARIS 1971, p. 50 ff. has been an indispensable and, at times, irrefutable, reference until the contributions of DIETERLE 2007, pp. 117-119 and QUANTIN 2008, followed

Therefore, it may be worth reconsidering the proposed correction of the reading of the term Διὸς νᾶω (T2, l. 3) with Νᾶω, genitive of the attribute *Naios* of Zeus in Dodona⁷⁶: Foucart was the first⁷⁷ to suggest to correct the text in this way, and the reading seems more respectful of the archaeological evidence, both in the sense that no colonnaded temples of Zeus exist in Dodona, and that the shields have been found in the *Bouleuterion* E2, a building ascribed to Pyrrhus by Dakaris⁷⁸. Their finding place – if they were in deposition, as the reports indicate – suggests that the spoils were actually hanged up inside a colonnaded, but civic, building, in view of all the members of the Epirotic *koinon* who, fighting together, had defeated the Macedonians. Furthermore, even in T1 the Galatians shields are simply hanged up as a gift to Itonian Athena, without any further specification of a place within the sanctuary: this could further support the translation of νᾶω as the genitive of the divine epithet of Zeus, in parallel with *Itonian* of T1.

Other documents attest the deep relations between Pyrrhus and this sacred place: a dedication of the king with the Epirotes and the Tarentines to Zeus *Naios* of the war spoils of the Romans and their allies⁷⁹ and, secondly, the Chronicle of Lindos, which mentions Pyrrhus' offer of *bucrania* and – again – inscribed weapons according to a specific command of the oracle of Dodona⁸⁰.

by EMMERLING 2012, pp. 183-186; MANCINI 2013, p. 81 ff.; MANCINI 2015; PICCININI 2016.

76. MUSTI, BESCHI 1982, 304. Cfr. discussion in ZIZZA 2006, p. 130, note 13.

77. FOU CART 1882, p. 167; PREGER 1891, nr. 97: «Νᾶων scripsi, quod et alia monumenta ... et nummi illius aetatis declarant Epirotas tum non ω posuisse pro ου»). Cfr. ZIZZA 2006, p. 129.

78. DAKARIS 1986, pp. 61-62. CABANES 1976, p. 167 argues that a council must have existed in the 4th c. B.C. already, when it served to advice the *ekklelesia* of SGDI 1335 (an inscription of King Alexander that he also dates to the 4th c. B.C.). Even if the *Bouleuterion* existed before Pyrrhus, it is there that the king placed his dedications, providing new focus on the building and on its function.

79. SIG², 392.

80. BLINKEMBERG 1941, c. 114; cfr. now KOCH PIETTRE 2005, p. 118 and MASSAR 2006.

According to Dakaris⁸¹ Pyrrhus also added four *oikoi* (small temples, in his opinion) placed around the sacred house: the buildings Γ, Ζ, Α, Λ. (Fig. 2) This hypothesis, however, is in doubt: the identifications of the supposed deities to whom these *oikoi* were dedicated is still *sub judice*⁸² and we cannot exclude that these structures, with the exception of building A and as demonstrated by Mancini⁸³, are in fact *thesouroi*⁸⁴. Dakaris has argued that the following interventions are also to be ascribed to Pyrrhus: the modifications of the plan of building E1⁸⁵ and the construction of the *bouleuterion*, the *prytaneum* (O), the theatre⁸⁶ and a rectangular building on the south-eastern edge of the sacred area⁸⁷. Only an accurate revision of the structures as well as the excavations' reports may lead to a new effective knowledge of the phases and the functions of every single building of Dodona: so far, the actual extent of the building activity, however, and the religious intervention carried out by Pyrrhus in the Epirotic sanctuary must remain open.

Pyrrhus demonstrates the legitimacy of his power through divine ancestry, affirmed with a specially constructed genealogy⁸⁸, and through his direct intervention in the sanctuary of the god to whom Achilles, claimed as his ancestor, addressed his prayers. However, two other elements of dynastic legitimacy need still to be analyzed: the creation of a royal iconography, and the concrete evidence of his privileged relationship with the gods.

81. DAKARIS 1986.

82. QUANTIN 2008; EMMERLING 2012, p. 206 ff.; MANCINI 2015.

83. MANCINI 2015.

84. QUANTIN 2008, pp. 20-29; MANCINI 2013, p. 81 ff.

85. PICCININI 2016, p. 155 ff.

86. QUANTIN 2008 has demonstrated how the construction of the theatre is presumably to be connected with the introduction of the *Naiia*. Cfr. CABANES 1988 and HATZOPOULOS, MARI 2004.

87. DAKARIS 1971, pp. 38-49. See now PICCININI 2016, pp. 167-169.

88. KITTELÄ 2014; PICCININI 2017, pp. 127-131.

In terms of his physical image⁸⁹ Pyrrhus remains an enigma because of the lack of ascertained numismatic portraits⁹⁰. In Epirus he struck a bronze issue from 297 B.C., which depicted Zeus wearing a crown of oak leaves on the obverse, an indisputable reference to Dodona⁹¹, and a thunderbolt on the reverse⁹². Another series of coins showed the portrait of Achilles on the obverse, and a depiction of Thetis holding the shield of Achilles on the reverse⁹³. The political intention of this coinage is obvious, Pyrrhus intended to answer the questions of legitimacy which surrounded every Hellenistic king, by highlighting his divine ancestor Achilles through the medium of Dodona⁹⁴, as indicated by the oak leaves, the sanctuary he had chosen as his dynastic cult place.

Only two recognized, and not unanimously so, portraits of the king are known: the first comes from the Villa of the Papyri in *Herculaneum* (Fig. 3)⁹⁵ and depicts Pyrrhus wearing a Macedonian style helmet decorated, unsurprisingly, with an oak wreath. We should recall Plutarch at this point, who comments on the fact that the Epirote soldiers used to wear oak wreaths in battle, another explicit reference to Dodona⁹⁶. The presence of the helmet may further indicate a comparison with Achilles and his military virtues: Pyrrhus himself was (and wanted to be) regarded as an excellent general⁹⁷.

89. Unfortunately, there are no remains of the statues of Pyrrhus that Pausanias saw in Athens (1, 2, 1) and in Olympia (4, 14, 9). LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 683-698; RICHTER 1965, p. 258; SMITH 1988, p. 64; WINKES 1992, pp. 175-188; STEWART 1993, p. 284; POLLITT 1986, p. 34; KATSIKOU DI 2009.

90. The Barcelona coin mentioned by LÉVÊQUE 1957, nr. 2, pp. 693-694 has been proved faked: CARROCCIO 2011, p. 412, note 7.

91. *Contra*, FLORENZANO 1992, p. 208, who suggests that the prolific use of Zeus may have been inherited from Alexander because he was the natural god to symbolise supremacy.

92. MØRKHOLM 1991, p. 84.

93. FLORENZANO 1992, p. 208; CARROCCIO 2011.

94. On the relations between Alexander and Achilles see HATZOPOULOS, MARI 2004. MOSSÉ 2001, p. 74 comments on the fact the Alexander as well counts Thetis as his ancestor on his mother's side.

95. RICHTER 1965, p. 258; SMITH 1988, p. 64; MATTUSCH 2005, p. 163; WINKES 1992, p. 175.

96. *Plu. Pyrrh.* 11; *Pyrrh.* 34, 1. SMITH 1988, p. 64.

97. *Plu. Pyrrh.* 8, 2.

The second portrait, of Roman provenance, is in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek in Copenhagen. (Fig. 4): the identification with Pyrrhus rests on the presence of the crown of oak leaves, as with the first portrait. When compared with the helmeted head from *Herculaneum* there is enough of a facial resemblance to argue that they represent the same man. Several scholars⁹⁸, however, have suggested that the style of the portrait does not look like a copy of an original from the 3rd c. B.C. Focusing on certain aspects such as the rounded face, strong chiaroscuro and lively hairstyle Pollitt has suggested that the original belonged to the second century B.C., and therefore he has considered the head as that of an “unidentified ruler”⁹⁹. Brown¹⁰⁰ and Smith¹⁰¹, nonetheless, have maintained the identification with Pyrrhus and Stewart has highlighted that the king tried to present himself as Alexander’s reincarnation¹⁰², as it appears evident in this second portrait, in the hairstyle: a process which passes through common divine ancestry, i.e. Zeus (*Dodonaios*, in case of Pyrrhus, Ammon, for Alexander) and particular devotion for Achilles¹⁰³. We may infer that at least one portrait of the king would have been placed in Dodona, despite the lack, so far, of archaeological evidence.

In addition to this divine genealogy a number of *signa regalitatis* linked Pyrrhus to the gods. Plutarch reports that his upper jaw consisted of a single bone¹⁰⁴ and that, the first of a long series of monarchs-taumathurgists¹⁰⁵, he was able to operate miraculous healings (especially of those suffering of splenetic conditions) with

98. RICHTER 1965, p. 258.

99. POLLITT 1986, p. 34.

100. BROWN 1995, p. 6.

101. SMITH 1988, p. 65.

102. STEWART 1993, p. 284.

103. ATT. 1, 11, 7-12, 1; Plu. *Alexander* 15, 8-9. Cfr. BURGESS 2009, p. 131 ff.

104. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 3, 6-9. Cfr. SCUDERI 2017, *ad locum*. NENCI 1953, pp. 152-161 and 166, considers Proxenus the sources about Pyrrhus’ healing powers, and underlines how the detail both apt to enhance his divine qualities and his philanthropy, will be copied later by Prusias II, king of Bithynia. Val. Max. 1, 8, ext. 12.

105. BLOCH 1924.

his right toe after the sacrifice of a rooster¹⁰⁶. As Nenci¹⁰⁷ has clearly pointed out, these details are not, or not only, fabulous *mirabilia* but a means of propaganda to confirm the divine origin of Pyrrhus and to attribute to his kingship that sacred character which every *basileus* absolutely needs as the very foundation of his power.

These marvellous tales do not stop with his death, after which he is transformed into a hero. The narratives of Pyrrhus' death are consistent in placing it in Argos¹⁰⁸, the treatment and the fate of his mortal remains are less agreed and present several differences. Plutarch recalls that his body, beheaded, was pitifully reassembled and placed on the pyre by Antigonus, who sent Pyrrhus' son Helenus back to Epirus as a prince, not as a prisoner¹⁰⁹. Pausanias¹¹⁰, instead, stated that in the middle of the marketplace in Argos there was a monument (in marble, decorated) set up where the pyre

106. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 3, 84. Cfr. Plin. *Nat.* 7, 20. GAGÉ 1954, pp. 137-167. The inevitable model is the god Asclepius, cfr. NENCI 1963 and NENCI 1992, pp. 180-181.

107. NENCI 1963, pp. 152-161; NENCI 1992, pp. 180-181, stresses how practising miracles was a necessity for a king who was, firstly, a *homo novus*.

108. Minor variations in the sources on the exact place in Argos and on the way he got killed. Plu. *Pyrrh.* 34, 1 ss.; Str. 8, 376 places Pyrrhus' death near Argos' walls, after a tile thrown on his head by an old woman. Paus. 1, 13, 8 reports that his death happened in Argos, by sanctuaries and houses, and in the narrow lanes, and that he was killed by a blow from a tile thrown by a woman. Nonetheless, the Periegete continues saying that was not a woman who killed him but Demeter in the likeness of a woman, according to his Argive sources, and that in Argos there is a sanctuary of Demeter, built at the command of the oracle, on the spot where Pyrrhus died, and was buried. On this passage, Pausanias' sources and the divine intervention cfr. LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 622-630. Polyæn. 8, 68 generically praises the Argive women's role, who threw tiles from the roofs, one of which killed the king. Quint. *Inst.* 5, 11, 10 highlights as well his killing by a woman. Iust. 25, 5, 1, places Pyrrhus' death outside Argos' walls, and refers he was killed by a stone. Oros. *Hist.* 4, 2, 7 notices that Pyrrhus died in Argos, hit by a stone. Isolated in its originality is Zonaras' version (Zonar. 8, 6, 8): a woman, being eager to catch a glimpse of him from the roof as he passed by, made a misstep, and falling upon him, killed the king. Cfr. LÉVÊQUE 1957, pp. 622-630; ZODDA 1997, p. 67 and SCUDERI 2017, commentary ad *Pyrrh.* 34.

109. SCUDERI 2017, *ad locum*, indicates Hyeronimus of Cardia as the source of this encomiastic tradition towards Antigonus, a tradition which is found as well in Val. Max. 4, 1, ext. 4. Cfr. HORNBLLOWER 1981, pp. 103-105.

110. Paus. 2, 21, 4. Cfr. ZODDA 1997, p. 68.

stood but the bones of Pyrrhus themselves were in the sanctuary of Demeter, close to the site of his death¹¹¹.

The story of Justin¹¹² is considerably different, stating that Pyrrhus' bones were handed over to Helenus by Antigonos to bring them back to their homeland: this version is confirmed by Valerius Maximus¹¹³ and by his epitomist Januarius Nepontianus¹¹⁴, who adds that the king's prodigious toe could not be burned and was, therefore, buried in the temple of Zeus in Dodona, in a golden casket¹¹⁵.

With the exception of Pausanias, all of the sources agree that the remains of Pyrrhus, cremated in Argos¹¹⁶, were transported to Epirus by his son: further confirmation of this comes from Ovid's *Ibis*, vv. 303 -304, as Zodda has noticed¹¹⁷.

The return of Pyrrhus' remains, or part of his remains, to Epirus and their burial in the sanctuary of Zeus in Dodona represent a final confirmation of the extent to which this site was at the very centre of the king's propaganda and, after his death, it hosted his relics endowed with healing powers: transforming Pyrrhus from a monarch and a warrior into a healing hero in the very place he (re)-founded as his dynastic sanctuary.

M.E.G.

111. The reference to Demeter's temple as a necessary punishment of Pyrrhus' *hybris* (he did sacked the sanctuary of Persephone in Lokroi) has been commented by ZODDA 1997, p. 82.

112. Iust. 25, 5, 2.

113. Val. Max. 5, 1 ext. 4.

114. Nepotian. *Epithome Libr.* Val. Max. 9, 1, 8, ext. 12: «Pyrrhi regis Epirotarum pollex e dextro pede remedio erat, si cuius renes tumentes eo tetigisset; idem Pyrrhus cum ab Antigono victore iussus esset exuri, sic arsit ut idem pollex igni inveniretur intactus; qui digitus aureo loculo inclusus est, et in antiquissimo templo Dodonaei Iovis conditus». On relics in Greek sanctuaries cfr. PFISTER 1912.

115. Ps.-Aur. Victor, *Vir. Ill.* 35, 10-11.

116. The funerary monument decorated with elephants of Argos agora, described by Pausanias, should be reconsidered in relation, on one side, with the funerary monument of Alexander the Great and, on the other, with the depictions of elephants in Greek and Western-Greek figurative monuments, on the ground of what has been already indicated by SETTIS 1966 and GOUKOWSKY 1972.

117. ZODDA 1997, p. 68.

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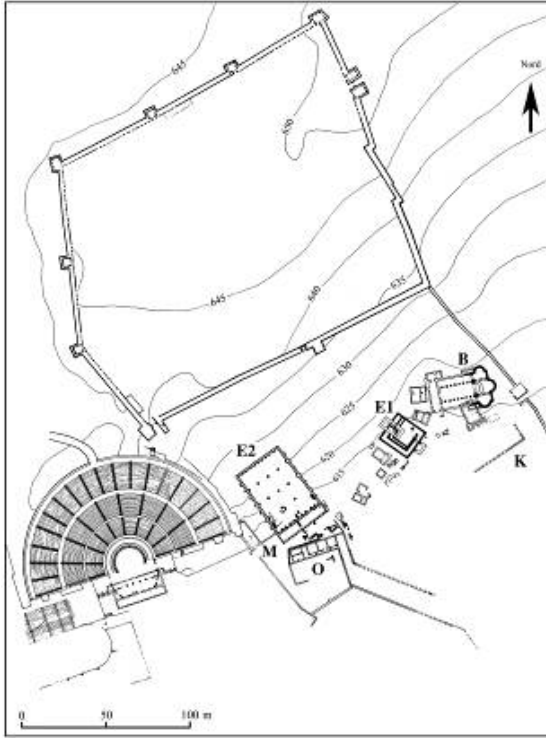


Fig. 1. Dodona, plan of the sanctuary [after QUANTIN 2008, fig. 3].

Fig. 2. Dodona, the terrace of E1 and its *oikoi* [after Quantin 2008, fig. 4].

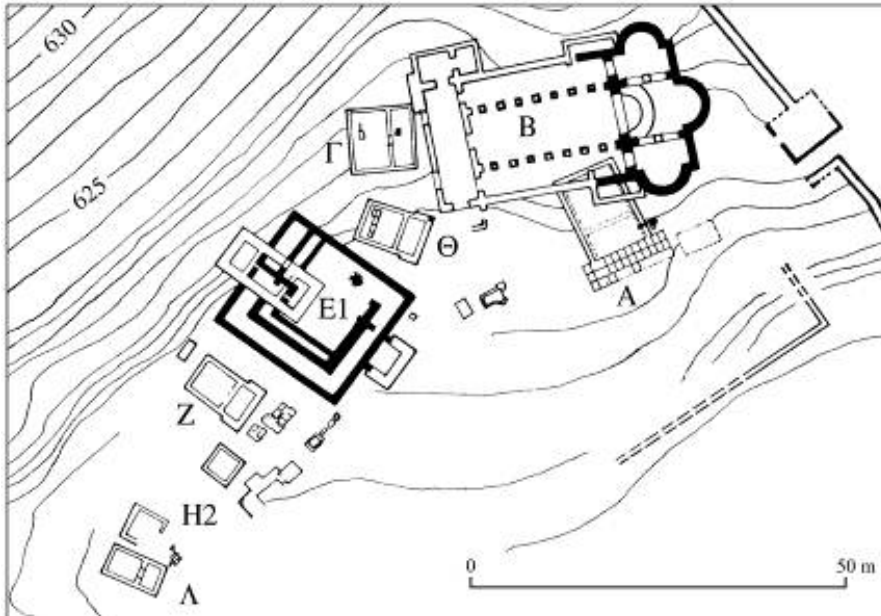




Fig. 3. Pyrrhus portrait from Herculaneum, Villa of the papyri inv. nr. 6150. [after <https://www.museoarcheologicoinapoli.it/villa-dei-papiri/>].



Fig. 4. Pyrrhus marble portrait inv. nr. 578. Courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Photo: Ole Haupt.