English summary

Background

In the traditional research perspective the Greek pottery from the Timpone della Motta has been a dominant source material in the reconstruction of Greek frequentation and of contacts further along the Ionian coast prior to the foundation of ancient Sybaris (720/710 BC). This also holds for the later Greek colonisation of the Sibaritide. Based on the limited range of early Greek imports, a variation of suggestions to the nature of the contacts between indigenous groups in the Sibaritide and the carriers of the Greek imports have been brought forward by various authors. The distribution of early Greek pottery in the Sibaritide is explained by a number of different arrival theories such as circulation of imports in autonomous indigenous networks, direct contact between indigenous groups and “Euboean” sailors going in the direction of Ischia, or “Greek Corinthian prospectors”, mainly operating from the Salento area.

In the study of subsequent periods Greek pottery dating to the last quarter of the 8th century BC and onwards, has been used as an empirical barometer in the reconstruction of the foundation of ancient Sybaris and its relations to the indigenous Sibaritide.

Problem formulation

Our present understanding is however limited by the sporadic availability of published Greek and non Greek ceramics from the Timpone della Motta and other sites of the Sibaritide. As a consequence thereof, the reconstruction of its distribution and the underlying cultural mechanisms, are unclear and only defined in general terms.

Objective and method

The current thesis provides both a detailed interpretation of the reception of the Greek pottery in ritual and funerary contexts and explanations of the geographical, chronological and typological distribution of Greek pottery in the Sibaritide. This is done by evaluating the presence of Greek pottery within a broad contextual frame, which for the greater part focused on the relationships between Greek imports and local pottery products which where strongly inspired by Greek ceramics.

Observations and conclusions

The identification of a group of Euboean imports as well as of Euboean inspired local vessels, labelled “Oinotrian-Euboean”, from the Timpone della Motta, shows that Greek potters where working in Francavilla Marittima from well before the middle of the 8th century BC and until the beginning of the 7th century BC.

The conclusion that Greek potters were present in indigenous Oinotrian society is reached by combining traditional archaeological stylistic methods of analysis with “onsite” comparison between Oinotrian-Euboean and traditional indigenous painted pottery ( matt-painted ), in regards to potters’ technique, vessel shapes and origin of motifs. A strong coherency between the Oinotrian-Euboean pottery in the Sibaritide and the contemporary Italo-Geometric productions in Campania, Etruria and on Ischia, suggest that a circulation of potters craftmanship was current between the Sibaritide and the Tyrrenian coast. In the thesis it is therefore concluded that the influx of Greek pottery to the Timpone della Motta, prior to 730/720 BC, was a result of the circulation of craftmanship. It is suggested however that until 730 BC Greek presence in Francavilla Marittima was limited to a crafts level. This is argued from an analysis of the reception pattern of Greek and Oinotrian-Euboean pottery in the sanctuary on the Timpone della Motta and in the indigenous graves of the Sibaritide, which shows that the pottery was not received with any special inherent meaning but was merely taken as replacement for traditional vessels.
In the period between 730 and 720 BC Greek presence in the Sibaritide reached a higher social level which is observed through changing reception patterns in the indigenous graves where especially Greek or Greek style drinking cups achieved an individual functional position among the grave goods. This justifies the conclusion that the cups where associated with a special ritual - introduced from outside – and probably in the shape of wine consumption. In the sanctuary on the Timpone della Motta the construction of a temple with Greek and native architectural trends (building Vc) coincided with the introduction of new Greek pottery shapes that were related to the consumption of wine. The overall material and ritual expression of the sanctuary did however at the same time remain predominantly indigenous until 700 BC. In the first two decades of the 7th century BC the range of vessel shapes remained unchanged in the sanctuary but the locally produced Greek types gained popularity at the expense of traditional ones. Greek imports did however remain rare on the Timpone della Motta.

From c. 680 BC the large scale influx of Greek pottery in the sanctuary began and from c. 660 BC it would increase rapidly. At the same time, the local pottery workshops were producing vast amounts of vessels meant for ritual use in the sanctuary. The overall shape repertoire shows that new dedicational rites were introduced as is indicated by shapes such as aryballoi and conical lekythoi. This points to an increasing Greek participation in rituals taking place in the sanctuary although traditional indigenous trends continued. The construction of Temple Vd around 660/650 BC appears to be the culmination of the increasing Greek involvement in the sanctuary. The construction of this temple corresponds with the date of the earliest Greek pottery from other sanctuary sites in the Sibaritide. Although not much is known about these sites, the appearance of this Greek pottery in itself would indicate an increasing sybaritic interest in the religious activities in the Sibaritide. Contemporary changes in indigenous funeral rites illustrates that also Greek presence had a cultural impact on indigenous society.

Towards the end of the 7th century BC, or in the early 6th century BC, the sanctuary on the Timpone della Motta was rearranged again. From what can be concluded from the excavated material the ritual arrangements of the sanctuary did not undergo any substantial changes on that occasion. The indigenous graves from the later part of the 7th century and the 6th century BC show an gradual transformation incorporating Greek funeral rites.