



The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Terracotta Figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods (Corinth)

Gloria S. Merker

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About 24,000 figurines and fragments were found during excavations at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, greatly enriching the known body of Corinthian figurines not only in number but also in the addition of many entirely new types and styles. Working far beyond the output of the Potters' Quarter workshops, the Corinthian coroplasts are revealed as inventive, often highly adept in technique, and attuned to stylistic developments in the plastic arts in general. Most importantly, the evidence suggests that there may have been a link in Corinth between the manufacture of terracotta figurines and small bronze ones, especially in the 4th and early 3rd centuries B.C., through the use of shared models. If this is true, the figurines provide a glimpse of the mostly lost bronze production of that period. The figurines are also important because they help to explicate the meaning and conduct of the cult of Demeter and Kore in Corinth. Since the literary sources and inscriptions are unfortunately not as abundant as one would wish, the nature and conduct of the cult must be understood largely through the architecture and other finds. The figural coroplastic art provides additional data on the deities and heroes recognized at the sanctuary, the age and gender of the participants in the rituals, the offerings they brought, and the nature of their cultic activities. Beyond these data, the figurines are examined for what they may reveal through their imagery of the underlying ideas of the cult, how the deities were perceived, why they were approached, and how the cult functioned as a part of Corinthian society.

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