

The Votive λίκνα of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Acrocorinth

Nearly 600 ceramic votive λίκνα containing ceramic dedicatory cakes were uncovered at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Acrocorinth, primarily dating to the 6th and 5th centuries BCE (Brumfield 1997). These offerings, mostly miniature, were concentrated in the Middle and Lower Terraces, where sacrifice and ritual dining took place, respectively. They are rare in the archaeology and primary source texts, mostly being discussed separately (*Anecd. Graec.* I p. 277, *Call. Cer.* 127, *Ar. Th.* 285, *Ath.* 137b-c). This leaves us with the question of why they appear at this particular sanctuary, wherein the symbolic and ritual significance of the λίκνα and the cakes were intertwined, left behind in the record as votive objects.

In this paper, I suggest that the λίκνα at the Demeter and Kore sanctuary captured and commemorated an idealized moment of feasting, reinforcing a conceptualized liminal world at the intersection of the mortal and godly realms. I follow Parikh (2023), who uses Snodgrass' (2006) framework of “raw” objects, or those that had a use in the dedicant's life before being dedicated to the divine, versus “converted” objects made specifically as votives offerings, to argue that converted objects—especially miniatures—reflect how worshippers imagined and engaged with the divine as both familiar and fundamentally other, using altered forms to construct a symbolic world distinct from everyday life. By manipulating scale and function, the λίκνα were material expressions of the human-divine relationship, shaped by local practices and collective imagination. In this sense, these votives represented perpetual nourishment and embodied the ritual dining that structured religious experience at the sanctuary.

Bibliography

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