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- 1 The Corinthian sanctuary of Demeter and Kore was excavated in the 1960s and 1970s by Ron Stroud and Nancy Bookidis under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The site lies on the north slope of Acrocorinth rising above the Corinthian plain and is organized around an expanse of distinctive dining rooms on three terraces. The abundant finds include some 24,000 terracotta figurines offered to the goddesses from the seventh century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E. Gloria Merker undertook the massive task of publishing the Classical through Roman material (the majority of the figurines) in *Corinth XVIII*.¹ My study investigates the archaic figurines, lingering archaic types, and all handmade figurines. While the number of archaic figurines and fragments from the seventh and sixth centuries stands at about 1800, my study focuses on the 550 best preserved specimens. These include “Daedalic” plaques, hand-made figurines with mold-made heads, fully hand-made, and fully mold-made figures. The broadly varied assemblage documents the introduction of figurines into Corinthian votive practice and the development of cult iconography.
- 2 Most of my study focuses on the hybrid figures: mold-made heads placed on hand-made bodies and ornamented with applied poloi, jewelry, hair, and clothing. Developed from a variety of sources in the seventh century, the molded heads were used interchangeably for perfume vases and plastic figure vases, as well as for figurines. By the sixth century, the repetitive use of familiar molds created a network of representations linking figurines and ritual kalathoi across the sanctuary (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Female head on kalathos rim (C-62-826)

Photo by author

- 3 An early sixth-century head from the sanctuary fits perfectly into a mold found in the Potters' Quarter (fig. 2). Like the kalathos figure with its spectacle fibulae, the applied hair and necklace of this female figurine demonstrate the creative post-molding elaboration of appearance and identity that characterizes Corinthian archaic work. From their beginnings in the later seventh century, fully hand-made figurines show a close dependence on the iconography and appearance of combination figures, while new types continue to be introduced as late as the fifth and fourth centuries. Starting late in the sixth century the fully mold-made figurines include familiar Corinthian types that were widely distributed throughout the Greek-speaking world: seated and standing korai, jointed "dolls," a range of plaques, and protomes.

Fig. 2. Female head with applied hair MF-11241 fitted into mold KH8 from the Potters' Quarter

Photo by author

- 4 One of the goals of my study is to isolate the first stages of iconographic development and ritual practice in order to view the early cult as a complete ritual entity in itself, and not as an incomplete precursor to the better-known historical Demeter cults. In the eighth to sixth centuries the sanctuary fulfilled the needs of a developing community within an increasingly complex social and political setting. Evidence from the Potters' Quarter, where most of the figurines were made, provides a unique opportunity to study the material from the perspectives of both production and use within the larger context of a community, its cults, and its choices. The results will contribute to longstanding debates on the relationship of Corinth to Perachora and terracotta production in the larger north-east Peloponnese. Beyond the Demeter cult itself, my study expands our knowledge of the social life of archaic Corinth, from local clothing styles, issues of gender construction, and daily concerns addressed to the gods, to imports and other signs of external contact, leading to a fuller picture of the conjoined pottery and coroplastic industry, which was a cornerstone of Corinthian economy and identity.

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ENDNOTES

1. Merker, G. 2000.

ABSTRACTS

This work-in-progress focuses on the archaic figurines from the Corinthian sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth. These include “Daedalic” plaques, handmade figurines with mold-made heads, fully handmade, and fully mold-made figures. The broadly varied assemblage documents the introduction of figurines into Corinthian votive practice and the development of cult iconography.

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Keywords: Corinthian terracottas, Demeter and Kore, Acrocorinth, Daedalic, hand-made figurines, Archaic, lingering Archaic, Corinthian votive practice.

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