

The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: The Terracotta Sculpture

By Nancy Bookidis (*Corinth* 18[5]). Pp. vii + 315, figs. 19, b&w pls. 126, color pls. 8, tables 5. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Princeton 2010. \$150. ISBN 978-0-87661-185-2 (cloth).

Over the many years of excavations at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in ancient Corinth, some 944 fragments of large-scale, hand-modeled terracotta sculptures have been brought to light. In this meticulous and careful study, Bookidis documents the dedications of terracotta statues at the sanctuary from the late seventh to at least the early third century B.C.E. While research on the robust coroplastic industry of Corinth has been fairly extensive and has resulted in a relatively well-known set of parameters by which the moldmade terracotta figurines from Corinth can be recognized and interpreted, Corinth as a production center for large-scale, hand-modeled clay sculpture has been little known until the appearance of this volume. Moreover, the author tells us that these fragments represent the most extensive corpus of Greek sculpture from Corinth, which has produced relatively little freestanding sculpture in stone. She also notes that they constitute one of the largest assemblages of terracotta sculpture known from any Greek site, documenting a continuous history of large-scale coroplastic production that covers nearly four centuries.

While these noteworthy assertions are well documented by the material at hand, they are all the more noteworthy in the face of the very incomplete nature of the evidence that sometimes requires leaps of faith to accept the reconstructions the author proposes for a number of the sculptures to which these fragments belong. These reconstructions are based on a number of factors, including the scale of the fragments; their wall thicknesses; their clay color, surface, and composition; the modeling technique they exhibit; and sponge

marks or fingerprints they may preserve. Yet Bookidis' reconstructions appear probable, if not correct, an accomplishment that illustrates her painstaking consideration of all aspects of the associated fragments and her formidable understanding of Corinthian clays. This book is definitely aimed at the specialist, and it is a model of clarity and thoroughness.

When discussing the sculptures to which groups of fragments collectively have been assigned, Bookidis refers to them as statues, a term that no doubt is carefully chosen to stress the difference between this type of coroplastic output and that of smaller, mass-produced figurines. These latter certainly fall under the rubric of sculpture but cannot be considered statues. In the author's view, the word "statue" confers a degree of monumentality on the work that is evident even when the greater majority of the terracotta statues under consideration is three-quarters life-sized or smaller.

This study is organized into eight chapters, beginning with an introduction that orients the reader to the types of sculpture found, the methodology used in the study, the contexts from which the fragments were recovered, evidence for the placement within the sanctuary of the statues to which these fragments belonged, chronological considerations, and remarks about scale, clay colors, and terminology. Of particular importance in this chapter is the author's discussion of scale, as it outlines the means by which she determines the general height and relative proportions of given statues. The determination of scale is a critical tool, since this facilitates the reconstruction of the statues when, in most cases, only a few nonjoining fragments survive.

Chapter 2 comprises a detailed review of the techniques used in the creation of large-scale, freestanding statues at Corinth. Bookidis notes that, rather than being static, as was once believed, experimentation and modification marked the development of the craft of modeling large-scale sculptures in clay. The fragmentary condition of the evidence enables a detailed study of interiors of the sculptures, thus providing clear evidence for the successive stages in their production. Other informative aspects of this chapter outline the use and character of interior struts, the development of modeling processes, surface finish, kilns, and workshops, among other considerations.

Chapters 3 through 7 make up the catalogue, which is organized into chronological sections, within which 156 entries are arranged according to typology. The categories of sculptures are limited to standing draped males, standing nude males referred to as youths, standing draped females, children (including types of the so-called temple boy), miscellaneous anatomical parts, and a head said to belong to a herm. Ninety-nine statues are identified as standing males, while only three can be confirmed as representing females, of which two are peplophoroi. Clear and highly detailed descriptions of the fragments that make up a given statue are followed by lengthy discussions, where possible, of the iconography, style, and date of the statue. The exacting descriptions are particularly helpful, since some of these fragments have the appearance of breadcrumbs and are difficult to understand when relying on the illustrations alone.

In the discussion that follows each catalogue entry, Bookidis carefully reviews the criteria for dating the statues, which she admits are very problematic, given the lack of appropriate comparanda. Reliance on large-scale Greek and Etruscan sculpture in terracotta or Attic sculpture in bronze and marble provides general chronological guidelines. Where the evidence permits, she provides reconstructions of given sculptures by placing fragments in appropriate places on a schematic drawing.

Two sculptures from this corpus stand out from the rest because they were mold-made rather than hand-modeled. The first, represented primarily by a face fragment, is attributed to a male figure, since a slight trace of red color can be seen around the right nostril. Moreover, one of several associated fragments of drapery is believed to be part of a himation,

a garment that Bookidis sees as distinctly male attire for the earlier fifth century, the period to which this face fragment has been assigned. However, the modeling of the hair as thick, overlapping, zigzag waves articulated into full, heavy masses that fall low over the temples is unmistakably female in character. In this reviewer's opinion, the identification of a himation is also questionable. But if the red color on the face does indeed indicate that the complete sculpture represented a male figure, then the face must have been taken from some convenient female prototype.

The second of these sculptures is a strange male head and neck, originally gilded, that is said to have been made in a two-part mold and has been interpreted as belonging to a herm. It is clear from the vague facial features that they were produced from a mold belonging to a very late stage in the derivative production of its prototype. While the face is not discussed by Bookidis, its features are legible enough so that their relationship to something like the large mask of Dionysos from the sanctuary should be worth considering (G.S. Merker, *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Terracotta Figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods. Corinth 18*[4] [Princeton 2000] fig. C273). The placement of the facial features of the herm and their relationship to one another are so close to those aspects of the Dionysos mask that some kind of connection might be profitably explored. This is not to suggest that the herm represents Dionysos, but rather that the prototype from which the face of the herm was derived reflects the same sculptural impulses that were behind the creation of the mask.

Chapter 8 focuses on the interpretation of these sculptures as dedications at the sanctuary and their relation to the cult of Demeter and Kore, a topic that is fraught with difficulties and uncertainties. The difficulties concern the very fragmentary and sporadic nature of the evidence that limits interpretation. For example, even though most of the standing figures are interpreted to be male, in all but three cases it is impossible to know the age they represent, and therefore they cannot be categorized. Further, in this reviewer's opinion, the isolation of some of the fragments of drapery or anatomy renders it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize definitively if the original figure was even male or female.

The overwhelming preponderance of confirmed male imagery among the large-scale terracotta sculptures at the sanctuary is also

difficult to interpret, since the sanctuary was dedicated to Demeter and Kore. A very late source even refers to Demeter at Corinth as *Epoikidia*, or “of the household” (276), an epithet that would appear to mitigate a male component. But more importantly, the dominance of these statues of males relative to those of females completely contradicts the evidence provided by the moldmade figurines and other minor objects from the sanctuary, which are predominantly female in character. Bookidis believes that the presence of sculptures of nude youths could be explained in relation to agonistic events or maturation rituals, but this does not explain the presence of draped males or children.

All these uncertainties lead Bookidis to conclude sensibly that one interpretation cannot be applied globally to all the statues, and that—beyond documenting a distinctly Corinthian phenomenon—at the present state of the evidence, unambiguous interpretations are not

within reach for any of them. But, in the opinion of this reviewer, the initial impetus responsible for the appearance of this phenomenon sometime after the middle of the sixth century and the motivation for its continuity into the third century B.C.E. still requires thoughtful consideration. Why did a donor ask for, or need, an impressive image to dedicate in the sanctuary? The large scale of these sculptures, costly and time-consuming to produce, surely indicated wealth on the part of the donor and, therefore, status and privilege in a public setting. There must have been a reason or reasons why male self-representation, regardless of meaning, became so important in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore.

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