

THE JOURNAL OF HELLENIC STUDIES

VOLUME CVII 1987, p. 250-251

This Volume is published with assistance from the British Academy

ERETRIA. Ausgrabungen und Forschungen. 7.
METZGER (I. R.) Das Thesmophorion von
Eretria: Funde und Befunde eines Heilig-
tums. Berne: Francke. 1985. Pp. 93, [41] plates.
Sw. fr. 98/DM 118.

The Thesmophorion of Eretria was identified by O. Reverdin in 1963 and excavated by C. Davaras, with a report of the excavation in the *Deltion* for 1965. Thanks to Davaras' generosity, M. is now able to publish the copious finds from the sanctuary. The sanctuary is situated on the south slopes of the Acropolis of Eretria. It comprises a walled temenos 18.45 m. × 11.25 m with an additional terrace 4.45 m. wide along the full length of the southern side. It contained a rectangular temple 7.20 × 4.25 m., a single room with a door at the east end. In front are the remains of a roughly built altar. The temenos is approached from the west, a path leading along the southern side of the main enclosure and turning at the east end towards the altar. The only other feature is termed the *Apothetes*, a hole or depression between gently banked rocks, 2.50 × 2.00 m., on the N.E. corner of the temenos, and full of pottery.

This volume is essentially the catalogue and description of the finds, which are arranged in three main groups: pottery from the *Apothetes*, pottery from the temenos in general, and terracottas, found over all, but particularly on the south terrace. The general finds, and the terracottas, extend from the late Archaic to Hellenistic. The terracottas are mostly of a mature woman and a younger woman—obviously Demeter and Kore, and serving to identify the sanctuary.

The most intriguing aspect of the study is provided by the *Apothetes* and its contents. These are mostly cups, skyphoi in particular, clearly of local manufacture and are described in detail and illustrated. Some are 'Corinthian' in type, especially with zig-zag decoration between horizontal bands; others seem to take after Athenian examples, and are given plain black glaze. The date range is very restricted, limited to the beginning of the 5th century (the date suggested is between 500 and 480). They lay upside down and so it is suggested that they are ritual offerings for Chthonian deities ('die im *Apothetes* umgekehrt niedergelegten Gefässe sind als Opferritual nur für chthonische Gottheiten denkbar').

I am not so sure. The narrow date range—around 490 B.C. in effect—suggests that they got in the hole at the time of the Persian capture of Eretria. If they were offerings, put in the hole at an annual festival, one would expect a more extensive series, and certainly continuing to a much later period, as does the pottery from the rest of the temenos. From the appearance of them as they were found, in the photographs of Tafel 3, it looks very much as if they slid down into the hole in

one single movement (and presumably were thereafter buried out of sight), almost as though there was a large cupboard, or a storeroom, or something similar in a flatter area just above the uppermost limit of the hole, against the northern temenos wall—see, particularly, the photograph Tafel 3.4, *Apothetes* von Westen—out of which they fell at a moment of destruction. They seem, rather, to be utensils provided for the feast which followed the sacrifice of the piglets to Demeter, originally perhaps stacked up for distribution to the worshippers.

It is tempting to regard objects found in sanctuaries as offerings to the god. I have suggested that the Chorsiai Heraion inventory is a list of dining equipment, rather than offerings, and that the great collection of phialai mesomphaloi found by Payne in the so-called sacred pool at the Heraion of Perachora also represent vessels (of bronze, and so lasting for much longer) used in the feasting. The fact that both at Perachora and Eretria, despite the difference in material, the vessels were mostly cups seems to me significant.

It may seem presumptuous to put forward an interpretation solely on reading the present volume. That I felt able to do so must be taken as a tribute to the excellent presentation in it of the evidence.

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