Eur-Greek-Hellenistic- Rooster Terracotta Figurine, 5th Century BCE.

Hellenistic Greek  Rooster Terracotta Figurine, 5th Century BCE.

# This terracotta rooster in erect, strutting posture with prominent comb, wattles and long curving sickle tail feathers conveys all the characteristics of a domesticated red jungle-fowl (Carter 1923). On the one hand the rooster is a chthonic attribute of Persephone as represented in the sanctuary **of Demeter and Kore at Corinth** (Merker 2000: 269).

# The provenance of this rooster is unknown but it may be from Abai, Greece. Abai was an important city near Hyampolis on a tributary of the Kephisos and on the main Orchomenos-Opous road from E Lokris into NE Phokis ([**Pausanias. 10.1.1**](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Paus. 10.1.1&lang=original), 35.1). In 1896 the British School at Athens excavated three similarly constructed rooster figurines. One of these was described as having a "Mouldmade body, handmade legs applied separately. Small circular vent-hole underneath. Clay: reddish yellow. Decoration: white slip. Remnants of red, yellow and black paint on comb, wattle, tail and wings" (see Fig. 3). Another cock figurine was described as one that stands on two short stump-like legs, with well defined facial features and a modeled comb and bulging eyes which dated to the early or mid-fifth century BCE (see Fig. 4) (Pisani 2006, no. 104, pl. 32b, no. 107, fig. 28). After two famous Phokian victories over the Thessalians shortly before 480 BCE ([**Herodotus. 8.27-28**](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt. 8.27&lang=original); [**Pausanias. 10.1.3-11**](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Paus. 10.1.3&lang=original)), the spoils and colossal figures were dedicated to the famous oracular shrine of Apollo at Abai ([**Herodotus 1.46**](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt. 1.46&lang=original)). Perhaps the burial of this rooster in its chthonic environment was part of these dedicated spoils.

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# Fig. 3. From Pisani 2006, 104 (T34), pl. 32b. Fig. 4. From Pisani 2006 no. 107, fig. 28. Cm. scale at right

# References:

# Carter, H. 1923. "An ostracon depicting a red jungle-fowl the earliest known drawing of the domestic cock." *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 9: 1-4.

# Merker, Gloria S. 2000. The sanctuary of Demeter and Kore : terracotta figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, *Corinth : results of excavations conducted by the American school of classical studies at Athens*. (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2000), vol. 18. part 4.

Pisani, Marcella. 2006. The Collection of Terracotta Figurines in the British School at Athens, *The Annual of the British School at Athens,* 101: 269-368.