

Leto. In this volume, a welcome complement to her 2015 volume, she continues her exploration of the iconography of specific Greek deities in votive monuments, focusing on votives certainly or possibly depicting Aphrodite. The scope of the material ranges chronologically from circa 520/510 to the late Hellenistic period. The largest number of pieces are from Athens and Attica; others come from the Greek mainland and islands, the area around the Black Sea, and Italy.

The stated goals of the work are to examine this overlooked category of reliefs in relationship to the cult of the goddess, to explore what they might contribute to the understanding of her nature, and to study the images of the goddess in these depictions for what they might reveal about underlying statuary prototypes and their sanctuaries. In the introductory chapter, Vikela briefly summarizes the complexity of the character of Aphrodite, citing Sophocles fragment 941, which refers to her many names and the seemingly contradictory chthonic and heavenly aspects of her character, and concludes that the iconography of votive reliefs provides an important contribution to an understanding of her essence.

The introduction is followed by a chapter discussing the divine forerunners of Aphrodite, goddesses in ancient Anatolia, Cyprus, the Levant and Crete; a chapter exploring more fully the dual nature of the cult of Greek Aphrodite; and a chapter on votive reliefs to Aphrodite in Attic sanctuaries. The next three chapters consist of detailed examinations of the iconography of the fifth and fourth centuries and of the Hellenistic period respectively. The following chapters deal with uncertain or possible pieces dedicated to Aphrodite, problematic or rejected examples, and reliefs depicting departing warriors with a female figure often identified as Aphrodite. The book ends with a concluding chapter, a summary in Greek, and an appendix on the Sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania  $\nu\epsilon\lambda\eta\ \nu\epsilon\pi\omega\iota\varsigma$  on the north slope of the Acropolis. A catalogue supports the text, containing forty-two reliefs, including twenty-eight certain, three uncertain and possible, six problematic and rejected reliefs, as well as five examples depicting the departure of warriors. The catalogue entries include find spots, present locations, dates, dimensions, and extensive bibliography. Although there is a list of inscriptions in the index and the epigraphic evidence is mentioned in the discussions of the pieces in the text, it is unfortunate that the contents of the inscriptions are not included in the catalogue entries. All the reliefs are illustrated with good black-and-white photographs.

The discussion of the reliefs proper begins in the fifth chapter, which treats votives of the fifth century, starting with the earliest example, the unique discus from Melos with a female head probably depicting Aphrodite, dated to circa 460/450. This is followed by a discussion of a number of late fifth and early fourth-century pieces. They depict figures of standing, leaning and seated Aphrodite and demonstrate from the outset both the geographical extent of her cult,

Evgenia Vikela, **Aphrodite. Zur Wesenseinheit einer kosmischen Göttin. Der Beitrag der Weihreliefs zur Bezeichnung der chthonischen und himmlischen Aspekte von Aphrodite.** Boreas. Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie, Supplement 13. Publisher Scriptorium, Marsberg-Padberg 2022. 152 pages with 32 black and white plates and 55 photographs.

Evgenia Vikela is well-known for her publications on Greek votive reliefs, beginning with her 1994 study of reliefs from the Pankrates sanctuary in Athens, continuing with her 1997 study of votive reliefs and the cult topography of Attica, her 2005 article on the iconography of Athena in votive reliefs, and most recently her 2015 volume on reliefs dedicated to Apollo, Artemis and

with numerous examples from Attica, some from the other parts of the mainland and islands, and a few from Asia Minor and Italy, and the wide variety of types and identities she could assume. Beginning with the standing and leaning figures, a veiled Aphrodite descending a ladder, probably from the Athenian sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania, represents both her heavenly aspect and possibly her connection with marriage. The relief from the area around Knidos depicting Athena with a figure later inscribed Aphrodite Peitho, goddess of persuasion, depicts the figure lifting the edge of her mantle in a graceful gesture that would become typical of the iconography of Aphrodite.

These are followed by reliefs depicting figures who appear to be reflections of statuary types. A figure in an example from the Aphrodite sanctuary in Daphni, identified as Aphrodite by the approach of a flying Eros, is shown as a possible reflection of the cult statue of Nemesis of Rhamnous by Agorakritos; accompanied by the Eleusinian deities Demeter and Kore, the figures' associations with the Underworld allude to the chthonic aspect of Aphrodite. A figure on a relief from Megara, identified as Aphrodite by the dove and pomegranate she holds, has drapery resembling that of the Kore Albani, which has been seen as a reflection of an Athenian cult statue. On another example from Daphni, Aphrodite leaning on a tree resembles a fragmentary figure that has been identified as the cult statue of Aphrodite in her sanctuary there and that may reflect the statue of Aphrodite in the Gardens by Alkamenes, the tree referring to her relationship to vegetation and therefore again to her chthonic aspect. A relief depicting Aphrodite leaning on a female herm has been thought to have been influenced by the heavenly Aphrodite Ourania of Phidias. The leaning motif, which is first attested for Aphrodite in the second half of the fifth century, can be seen as embodying her characteristics of casualness, tenderness and eroticism.

Two of the fifth-century reliefs depict Aphrodite seated or enthroned, an uncommon type in votive sculpture that appears related to the statue type of Aphrodite Olympias Albani, which may in turn have been influenced by an earlier statue of Hygieia. The example from the Athenian Agora depicts her enthroned, with her left arm resting on the back of her seat, with a female worshipper standing on a stone, possibly a reference to the open, rocky sanctuary of Aphrodite 'in the gardens' on the north slope of the Acropolis. The other relief, found in Rome, is only partly preserved but appears to depict an Aphrodite of the same type seated opposite a probable figure of Asklepios on a rocky landscape. In front of them, approached by a small male worshipper, is the focus of the representation, a large figure leading a horse, probably the hero Hippolytos, whose grave was on the south slope of the Acropolis.

The sixth chapter considers the votive reliefs of the fourth century, represented by only five examples with few iconographic similarities, unsurprising given their origins in Athens, Thebes, Euboia, Pompeii and the art

market (reportedly from the area of Perachora); all five are iconographically unusual. The very worn Attic relief is unusual in depicting a worshipping family, or at least an adult and young child, between two large figures, probably Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho, whose sanctuary was on the south slope of the Acropolis not far from the find spot of the object, and within the temple behind them a small herm, a form in which Aphrodite was frequently depicted. The relief from Thebes, according to its inscription a dedication to Aphrodite Euakoos by two male dedicators, only one of whom is depicted, shows Aphrodite with her right breast bared, a possible adaptation of the type Aphrodite Louvre-Naples or Aphrodite Fréjus, whose partial nudity represented an important innovation in the iconography of the goddess.

The other three fourth-century reliefs depict Aphrodite with Eros. The representation on a tall stele apparently from the area of Perachora probably originally had a painted inscription. It depicts Aphrodite with a small figure of Eros, his wings extended, apparently flying off from her outstretched extended right hand. The relief from a house in Pompeii probably originally came from Athens, its tenon testimony to its original installation and its cave-like frame suggesting the topography of Attic Aphrodite sanctuaries such as those at Daphni or on the north slope of the Acropolis. It depicts Aphrodite in a chiton and a mantle drawn over her head and left arm, its folds gripped with both hands by the small figure of Eros standing beside her, as Vikela notes, characterized not as an attribute but rather as her companion or son. The Eros in the very poorly preserved example from Oreos in northern Euboia is a more commanding figure, depicted in the same scale as the seated figure of Aphrodite beside him, who appears to lean somewhat backward and even to turn toward him, as he stands with one foot on a rock and his wings extended.

The seventh chapter discusses the more numerous Hellenistic reliefs depicting Aphrodite, which introduce several important innovations in the iconography of Aphrodite, the first of which is the tradition of the goddess riding an animal into the heavens. A series of mostly Attic pieces present her riding a goat; one example shows her on a ram and another on a swan. She rides side-saddle, her movement emphasized by her mantle billowing above her head. The find spots indicate that the motif was used for both Aphrodite Ourania and Aphrodite Pandemos. There are also depictions of her on or with a ladder, which Vikela understands as a reference to both the ascent and descent of her continuous cosmic journey. Another characteristic and important aspect of Hellenistic representations of Aphrodite is her full or partial nudity, following in the tradition established by the Knidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles, a statue actually depicted on a votive relief from Delos, a portrayal of the goddess that obviously refers to her sexual aspect. Aphrodite's brief but intimate relationship with Hermes is represented by a

poorly preserved example from Crete, where they were worshipped together.

The chronological discussion of the votive reliefs is followed by two short chapters, one treating three examples that Vikela considers uncertain or merely possible dedications to Aphrodite, and another on six pieces she regards as problematic and to be rejected. The first two in the uncertain and possible category show seated figures who might also be considered the deceased on grave monuments. The first is a late sixth-century relief from Thasos depicting a profile figure holding a dove and a flower, the second a late fifth-century relief from the excavations of the Athenian Agora that was published as a grave monument, presenting a woman in transparent drapery sitting in a relaxed position on a klismos. On the third relief, also from the Agora and published as a possible votive to Aphrodite, there is a woman in a languorous pose and transparent drapery possibly holding a bird.

The problematic and rejected reliefs include an example from Thasos depicting a figure in a naiskos who more closely resembles Cybele; a piece from Kos dedicated to the Charites but depicting four rather than the usual three figures, one with a small male figure peeping over her shoulder, apparently Pan rather than Eros; a relief from Pompeii depicting a seated goddess with the unlikely attributes of diadem and scepter and receiving the offering of a ram; an example from the Acropolis depicting a seated woman with a kalathos by her chair; a piece from Krannon in Thessaly illustrating a goddess standing by an altar but wearing a peplos rather than a chiton; and a relief from Sounion portraying a woman holding a wingless child in one arm and leaning with the other on an upright object, possibly a rudder.

The tenth chapter concerns five votive reliefs, four from Attica and one from Megara, from the late fifth and first half of the fourth centuries depicting a female figure pouring or preparing to pour an offering into a cup for an armed and apparently departing warrior. Four of the five depictions have worshippers. The figures are frequently identified as Aphrodite and Ares, but Vikela notes that the two were not united in cult in Athens, that the female figure does not closely correspond to the iconography of Aphrodite, and that the male figure is of somewhat larger scale than the female, all of which exclude the identification of the figure as Aphrodite. Warrior departure scenes were popular in Attic vase painting, the examples from the late fifth century and the time of the Peloponnesian War particularly oriented to the world of women, and she concludes that the figures in stone are heroic rather than divine, honoring and heroizing prominent war dead.

The concluding chapter provides a succinct and useful chronological overview and general observations about the reliefs as a whole, the development of their iconography, and their unusual aspects. The examples depicting Aphrodite are relatively few in number, constituting only

a small part of the monuments dedicated to her, which is surprising for Attica, with its large number of sanctuaries dedicated to her. The goddess is not regularly accompanied by other deities, and Eros usually appears only attributively. The dearth of inscribed dedications makes it difficult to assess the role of the worshippers who, if depicted at all, are not families but rather individual men and women. The lack of worshipping families is noteworthy since it appears to stand in contradiction to the characteristics of the goddess as a patron of sexuality, marriage and fertility, but it becomes understandable when taking into account her political role, her connection with the polis and its patron deity Athena, expressed most clearly by the prominence of her cult places on the Acropolis and in the Agora. Of all the various aspects of Aphrodite, only a few are incorporated into the iconography of the reliefs, most notably her connection with Eros, her beauty and her erotic character, the preference for emphasizing her body and particularly her breasts though transparent drapery and nudity. Some of the figure types can be associated with known statuary types, for example the cult statue in her sanctuary in Daphni and the leaning Aphrodite in her sanctuary on the Ilissos. Her essential characteristics, the chthonic and the heavenly, appear in all periods in the iconography, her chthonic aspects expressed through both motifs and figure types, her association with other underworld deities, her partnership with Hermes or her presence in nature, while at the same time she rules over all that is under heaven and rides frequently from land and sea to the heavens in order to establish the cosmic order. The chapter concludes with a succinct and very useful chronological overview of the style and iconography of the reliefs.

An important appendix addresses the difficult problems surrounding the topography of the north slope of the Acropolis, concluding that the Sanctuary of Aphrodite in the Gardens beneath the north slope mentioned by Pausanias (1, 27, 3) is not, as often supposed, identical with the Sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite on the north slope and certainly not with the Sanctuary of Aphrodite in the Gardens expressly located by Pausanias (1, 19, 2) on the Ilissos.

The author is thoroughly acquainted with the controversies surrounding the identification and interpretation of the various figure types of Aphrodite represented in the reliefs, which are fully documented in the extensive footnotes, and she is appropriately cautious in her treatment of some of the more speculative interpretations. The importance of ancient literary sources, not only for the iconography but also for their topographical background, is made evident, as are parallels in the iconography of Aphrodite in vase painting. This study will be essential reading not only for further work on depictions of Aphrodite and their relationship to her cult but also for those aspects of the other deities with whom she is associated.