



**THE ATHENS GREEK RELIGION SEMINAR, Tuesday October 5, 2021 at 17h Athens time (via Zoom link).**

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***Rites of the Ancient Mariners: Corinthian Votive Model Boats and Ancient Greek Maritime Religion***

**ABSTRACT**

Ancient Greek mariners' cults and rituals played a key yet overlooked role in Panhellenic religion. Rituals for seafaring saviour gods circulated around ancient Greece, to colonies and foreign cities with sailors on ships. The archaeological vestiges of these practices are preserved in shipwrecks and seaside sanctuaries, and attested by textual and iconographic sources. Rituals were conducted for embarkation, navigation and safe arrival on shore, especially at maritime cities like Ancient Corinth. Yet the practices and durability of maritime rituals for ancient Greek seafarers varied by social class and profession, from lowly fishermen to wealthy merchants. This paper focuses on one key aspect of archaeological evidence for tracing ancient Greek maritime religion: votive model boats from the Corinthia. In terracotta or bronze, they have been found in Archaic through Hellenistic contexts in the city centre of Ancient Corinth, and at the sanctuaries of Poseidon on the Isthmus and Hera Akraia on Perachora. This land-based local archaeological evidence for Greek maritime religion has benefitted in recent years from new publications and underwater finds. Ancient Greek maritime nodes and networks, and the cults of certain gods, can thus be newly illuminated by these little-known finds from the Archaic to Hellenistic Corinthia.

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