

Demeter and Dionysos: Connections in Literature, Cult and Iconography  
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Demeter and Dionysos are two gods among the Greek pantheon who are not often paired up by modern scholars; however, evidence from a number of sources alluding to myth, cult and iconography shows that there are similarities and connections observable from our present point of view, that were commented upon by contemporary authors. This paper attempts to examine the similarities and connections between Demeter and Dionysos up through the Classical period.

These two deities were not always entwined in myth. Early evidence of gods in the Linear B tablets mention Dionysos as the name of a deity, but Demeter's name does not appear in the records until later. Over the centuries (up to approximately the 6<sup>th</sup> century as mentioned in this paper), Demeter and Dionysos seem to have been depicted together in cult and in literature more and more often. In particular, the figure of Iacchos in the Eleusinian cult seems to form a bridging element between the two which grew from being a personification of the procession for Demeter, into being a Dionysos figure who participated in her cult.

**Literature:**

Demeter and Dionysos have some interesting parallels in literature. To begin with, they are both rarely mentioned in the Homeric poems, compared to other gods like Hera or Athena. In the *Iliad*, neither Demeter nor Dionysos plays a role as a main character. Instead they are mentioned in passing, as an example or as an element of an epic simile.<sup>1</sup> These two divine figures are present even less often in the *Odyssey*, though this is perhaps a reflection of the fewer appearances of the gods overall, they are

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<sup>1</sup> Demeter: 2.696, 5.500, 13.322, 14.326, 21.76; Dionysos: 6.132-137, 14.325.

still less present than others. Again they do not appear as actual characters in the story, but are mentioned as mythological examples, or in the case of Dionysos briefly named as the provider of a gift.<sup>2</sup> There are in addition *Hymns* (or fragments of them) which are devoted to both deities, though.<sup>3</sup> Demeter is not mentioned in *Hymns* outside of her own, although her *Hymn* is the longest surviving one. Dionysos, by contrast, is not only discussed in his own hymns, but is also mentioned in *Hymn* 19 by name, being referenced as the god who was most pleased to see that Pan was born when Hermes presented him to the other gods.

Furthermore, these two deities are on a few instances spoken of together by ancient authors. Sometimes the mention is only in passing, but it does illustrate that there was some conception of a connection between these two deities present in the mind of the author, and by extension in the minds of the populace at large. For example, in the *Isthmian* of Pindar, Demeter and Dionysos are alluded to as being related in some way, perhaps through dance or music: ἤ ῥα χαλκοκρότου πάρεδρον / Δαμάτερος ἀνίκ' εὐρυχαίταν / ἄντειλας Διόνυσον;<sup>4</sup> ("Or when you made to raise up Dionysus with wide-streaming hair sitting beside bronze-rattling Demeter?"<sup>5</sup>). Here Pindar uses epithets for Demeter and Dionysos that are unique or crafted by him. He calls Demeter 'καλκοκρότου' ('the loud sounding one') and Dionysos 'εὐρυχαίτας' ('wide-flowing hair'), an invention of his own. Farnell in his commentary on the ode concludes that the two deities are mentioned in such close context because Pindar was writing for Thebans, who were very devoted to both Demeter and Persephone, and Dionysos.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Demeter: 5.125. Dionysos: 11.325, 24.75.

<sup>3</sup> Dionysos: *Hymn* 1, 7 and 26; Demeter: *Hymn* 2 and 13.

<sup>4</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Ed. Gregory R. Crane. <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>> Pindar, *Isthmian*. VII, 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis Richard Farnell, Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar (Amsterdam: Claredon Press, 1965), 372.

Euripides in his *Bacchae* also seems to make a point of connecting Demeter and Dionysos, saying that the populace has “ δύο γάρ, ὦ νεανία, / τὰ πρῶτ’ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι: Δημήτηρ θεά-- ... ὅς δ’ ἦλθ’ ἔπειτ’, ... ὁ Σεμέλης γόνος”<sup>7</sup> (“Oh youth, for there are two, those first among men: the goddess Demeter... after came him born of Semele”). Kirk suggests that the mention of Demeter in connection with Dionysos is part of Tiresias’ argument for the legitimacy of Dionysos as a god. Demeter is already an accepted deity who presides over solid nourishment, and so Dionysos, who rules over liquid nourishment, ought to be one as well. This argument is persuasive because wet and dry are opposing and complementary elements. The sophist Prodicus stressed the connection of gods to natural commodities and “the opposition of wet and dry ... was a commonplace archaic Greek thought.”<sup>8</sup>

While the two gods are at times connected to one another on their own merits, they are also tied together by a familial connection: either as mother and son directly, or as grandmother and son, through Persephone. This belief that Persephone had given birth to Dionysos seems to originate with the Orphic tradition, believing that she bore him with Zeus.<sup>9</sup> According to Diodorus, Dionysos was connected to Demeter through her daughter: τοῦτον δὲ τὸν θεὸν γεγενῆσθαι φασὶν ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Φερσεφόνης κατὰ τὴν Κρήτην<sup>10</sup> (“This god (Dionysos) it is said was born from Zeus and Persephone on Krete”). In his guise as a child of either Demeter or Persephone, Dionysos is often referred to as Iacchos. In Euripides’ *Bacchae* (first performed in 406 BC), the Bacchae address Dionysos as follows:

Ἴακχον ἀθρόω στόματι τὸν Διὸς γόνον / Βρόμιον καλοῦσαι<sup>11</sup> (“With all mouths calling out Iacchos, son of Zeus, Bromius!”). Also, in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (first performed in 405 BC) Dionysos encounters the *mystae* in the underworld, a group which is clearly tied to the Eleusinian mysteries, and who evoke Dionysos as Iacchos, the son of Demeter and Zeus (or of Persephone and Zeus according to which myth

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<sup>7</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Euripides, *Bacchae*. Line 274-8.

<sup>8</sup> Euripides, *The Bacchae of Euripides*, Trans. G.S. Kirk. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 50.

<sup>9</sup> M.L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford: Claridon Press, 1983), 74.

<sup>10</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Diodorus, *Library of History*. V.75.

<sup>11</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Euripides, *Bacchae*. Line 725-6.

is being considered). In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Dionysos is yet again connected with Eleusis. κλυτὰν ὄς ἀμφέπεις / Ἴταλίαν, μέδεις δὲ / παγκοίνοισ, Ἐλευσινίας / Δηοῦς ἐν κόλποις, Βακχεῦ<sup>12</sup> ("You who protect glorious Italy, you rule over what is common to all, in the vales of Eleusinian Deo, Bacchus!") (1117-1120). This seems to allude to Dionysos' role as Iacchos in the Eleusinian Mysteries, a role in which he would lead the initiates.<sup>13</sup> Brown notes that Eleusinian Deo is a name for Demeter. In Sophocles work, *Antigone*, he refers to Dionysos here, in connection with Demeter, as Bacchus, and elsewhere as 'Iacchos'.<sup>14</sup> Larson supposes that the procession to Eleusis during the Eleusinian Mysteries was "led by Iacchos, the god who personified the ritual cry "Iackhe!" Because of the boisterous tone of the parade and similarity between the names Iacchos and Bakchos, the former began at an early date to be associated with Dionysos," although she provides no firm evidence of where this can be seen.<sup>15</sup>

Demeter and Dionysos are also different from the other gods in that they tend to be portrayed as gods who suffer, as well as gods who have chthonic elements incorporated into their nature. Thus for example Plutarch distinguishes them from the other gods by drawing a line between gods and daemons, claiming that Demeter and Dionysos are daemons because they suffer things that fully divine beings would not.<sup>16</sup> They are notable for having two of the foremost mystery cults of the ancient world devoted to them, as discussed below. While other gods were the subject of mystery cults, those of Demeter and Dionysos were some of the best known. These cults incorporate their identification with humans as gods who have suffered as they have, as well as the chthonic aspect of their divinity, which gives them the ability to offer a better afterlife to their devotees. Diodorus mentions that "Orpheus has handed down the tradition in the initiatory rites that he [Dionysos] was torn in pieces by the Titans."<sup>17</sup> This is where Dionysos' chthonic nature seems to arise from, while Demeter's is tied into the ordeal she underwent

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<sup>12</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Sophocles, *Antigone*. Line 117-1120.

<sup>13</sup> See Farnell's observations on the connection with Iacchos above.

<sup>14</sup> Sophocles, *Sophocles: Antigone* (Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips, 1987), line 1154.

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 75.

<sup>16</sup> De Iside, 25; cf. De E ap. Delphos', 9

<sup>17</sup> V, 4. 75; Loeb Vol. III.

with Hades over her daughter Persephone. Both are also associated with fertility, and aspect that is often linked with subterranean forces, as is seen in the cave cult of the childbirth goddess Eileithyia on Crete.

### **Cult:**

According to Burkert, both of their mystery cults evidence a relationship to the Anatolian mother goddess.<sup>18</sup> The Anatolian mother goddess seems to be a holdover from a Bronze Age religious tradition later embodied in Anatolia by Kybebe and Kybele. Her worship spread into Greece at an early date, and she was later identified with a few different goddesses in order to make her fit in with the established genealogy in Greek mythology, including Demeter as well as Rheie and Aphrodite. Both Demeter and Dionysos receive first fruit offerings, and their worship can involve the use of masks and ritual abuse.<sup>19</sup> In the harvest feast in Attica, the *thalysia*, a private celebration with much eating and drinking which cannot be fixed in the calendar, Demeter and Dionysos are remembered together in prayer and vows.<sup>20</sup> Dietrich calls them both “deities of the soil...to whom the agrarian society of Greece had been bound since the Bronze Age and before.”<sup>21</sup> Of course, Demeter is not evidenced in the Linear B tablets, although she may have assumed the agricultural duties of an earlier god or goddess. Plutarch also states that Orpheus was the one who brought the Panathenaia, Dionysia, Thesmophoria and Eleusinian mysteries to Athens.<sup>22</sup> Because of the date of Plutarch’s writing and the fact that he chose to indicate the connection between the two deities through Orpheus, it seems likely that this is a

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<sup>18</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 278.

<sup>19</sup> Masks are not exclusive to Dionysus and Demeter. The cult of the ancestors also uses masks (Burkert 101) First fruit offerings are also offered to a variety of popular minor gods, as well as to heroes (Burkert 67).

<sup>20</sup> Burkert, 265.

<sup>21</sup> B.C. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion* (Bristol: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2004), 273

<sup>22</sup> fr. 212, Theodoret

connection that has sprung up from the mythos that was propagated by the Orphics, rather than arising of its own accord from the earliest times. As far as connections between the god and goddess themselves, Dionysos is called the *paredros* of Demeter by Pindar.<sup>23</sup> And Apollodorus claims that they both arrived in Attica during the reign of Pandion.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps most significantly, Demeter and Dionysos resemble each other and differ from the other main gods of the pantheon in that their mysteries were believed by ancient Greeks to offer to humans a happier and more rewarding afterlife. Those that are initiated into their mysteries are said to be provided with this heavenly afterlife, but those who are not are stuck with the prevalent conception of the afterlife as a place that is grey and rather boring, most famously stated by Achilles in book 11 of the *Odyssey*. Perhaps this alternative afterlife arises from the close connections these two gods seem to have to humanity, and their roles as ‘suffering’ deities. The aforementioned chthonic elements to their nature as well likely contributed to the perception of them as deities who are able to effect what happens after death. Demeter’s tie to the chthonic elements comes about through her connection with Persephone as Queen of the Underworld, and Dionysos through his perception as a god who has died and been born again.

In Greek religion, the duality of gods and aspects of a god are often important. Apollo, for example, is famously both a bringer of plague and a healer. Demeter and Dionysos both individually embody this duality. They are both bringers of agricultural bounty, either in the form of grain or wine, but they are also able to cause destruction as well. They also have an interesting connection between one another. Demeter is the goddess of solid agricultural bounty – grains and crops that people eat. Dionysos is her opposite, a god who embodies the liquid agricultural bounty – the wine that people drink.

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<sup>23</sup> Usually the assistant or deputy director celebrations for a god, in the case of Dionysus it means “he who is enthroned beside Demeter” (Mylonas, 320). See Isthmian VII, 3-5, cited above.

<sup>24</sup> Apollodorus, III 14.7.

Like Demeter, Dionysos is not a major civic god. Although they are acknowledged by all, neither Demeter nor Dionysos tends to be acclaimed as a poliad deity. Neither do their cult sites seem to be located within the boundaries of the city, as far as preference of cult location goes. The sanctuaries of both are often found in suburban or extraurban contexts, something which is suited to the agricultural aspects of their worship. Demeter's cult at Eleusis, for example, is in a suburban context, as are her cults in Corinth and Knossos. The procession of Demeter Cthonia at Hermion and that of Dionysus at Smyrna were both extraurban.

Demeter and Persephone are nearly always closely linked in cult. In some places Demeter is the more prominent goddess, in other Persephone is. But the two are inseparably linked and are often simply known as the 'Two Goddesses'. Because of this, the way in which Persephone figures as a prominent figure in the Orphic writings, which are closely tied to Dionysos, brings Demeter and Dionysos into close association. According to Strabo, οἱ μὲν οὖν Ἕλληνες οἱ πλεῖστοι ... Ἴακχόν τε καὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καλοῦσι καὶ τὸν ἀρχηγέτην τῶν μυστηρίων, τῆς Δήμητρος δαίμονα<sup>25</sup> ("Most of the Greeks... call Iacchos both Dionysus and the leader of the mysteries, the genius of Demeter"). As mentioned above, Iacchos is a figure who is sometime said to be the child of Demeter, and at others mentioned as the son of Persephone. The *Lenaia* is an annual festival celebrated in Gamelion. Although the rituals and activities that happened at *Lenaia* are not well documented, it is known that there in particular Dionysos was addressed as "Iakchos, son of Semele, giver of wealth."<sup>26</sup>

While there is speculation by some scholars as to whether or not Dionysos and Iacchos are actually the same deity<sup>27</sup> or are two different gods, there was "an unmistakable fusion by the late fifth

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<sup>25</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Strabo, *Geography*, X, 3.10.

<sup>26</sup> Larson, 135.

<sup>27</sup> Support: Burkert, 287; Marcovich 296-7; Pindar, *Isthmian* VII, 3-5; Segal, 219; Against: Larson, 75; Leventi, 131; Mylonis, 238 and 309.

century” of the “different manifestations of Dionysos.”<sup>28</sup> The language of the hymns concerning Dionysos “whether Eleusinian, Bacchic, or “Orphic,” all show from the fifth century on a high degree of conformity and fusion of common elements indicative of the union of the various aspects of the god into what could be regarded as a single divinity.”<sup>29</sup> The identification is further supported by iconographical evidence discussed below.<sup>30</sup> Dionysos even appears under his own name, alongside Demeter and Persephone, in the Lesser Mysteries of Agrae, and is depicted with them in a few of their temples. There does not seem to be any firm evidence for assuming that they were viewed as separate gods in light of the contemporary references to Dionysos as Iacchos. Thus if Iacchos and Dionysos are identical, Dionysos has a clear and strong link with Demeter through this function in her cult.

By far one of the most interesting overlaps between Demeter and Dionysos in cult seems to have occurred on Acrocorinth. Here there was a terraced temple to Demeter, on a site that was continually occupied since the Bronze Age, a temple which was located among a series of other sanctuaries and was reached apparently by a road from the city of Corinth located below the hilltop, although the actual road has not yet been uncovered. The site on Acrocorinth has been excavated by a number of people over the years, but Nancy Bookidis and Ronald Stoud handled the majority of the excavation, and in particular the terraces and dining rooms mentioned below. Little is known about the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth outside of the archaeological work that has been done on it, and a couple of brief mentions of a founding myth that may be associated with this temple. Both Diodorus and Plutarch mention what appears to be this temple when they write about the life of Timoleon, although they do not give evidence of the location of the temple.<sup>31</sup> Worship in the form of jewelry began in the Late Geometric period, perhaps even earlier, and from there the site continued to

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Paul Segal, “The Character and Cults of Dionysos and the Unity of the Frogs” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 1961, 65, 218.

<sup>29</sup> Segal, 219.

<sup>30</sup> Larson disagrees (75). Xavier Riu supports the idea in his book *Dionysism and Comedy*(135).

<sup>31</sup> Diodoros 16.66.1-5; Plutarch *Life of Timoleon* 8



develop.<sup>32</sup> It developed into an elaborate sanctuary, but the paucity of literary evidence about this site makes it difficult to determine how the site was connected to Corinth, among a number of important things such as how the site was run, who worshiped there and why this site in particular was chosen.

What is of the most interest, though, is the way that this site developed in the sixth century. Dining areas were added on the lowest of the three terraces, and by the middle of the century had been expanded to host about one hundred people at once. The ritual menu here appears to have been “focused not on sacrificial meat, but on grain based foods.”<sup>33</sup> It is here that the terracotta *liknon* (or winnowing fan) was also a popular votive item.<sup>34</sup> These votives were found, “dedicated in the Sanctuary from the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, if not earlier, until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC ... most heavily concentrated in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.”<sup>35</sup> The *liknon* has connections with both deities. “In Hellenistic times the *liknon* is associated with the mysteries of Dionysos, where it appears filled with the fruits of the earth and a phallus. The *liknon* is also closely associated with Demeter, as we see on the Lovatelli urn, where it is held over the head of the veiled initiate during the preliminary initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.”<sup>36</sup> Brumfield says the *liknon* is something that is usually expected to be associated with Dionysos, despite the fact that it is first linked to him in the Hellenistic Era, but the examples of votive *likna* from early dates in Corinth illustrate “that the winnowing fan was also sacred to Demeter from the earliest times.”<sup>37</sup> And while a ritual menu of grain seems to suit Demeter perfectly, there is also evidence that wine was consumed at these ritual meals – something that may or may not fit into the rituals of Demeter, but is perfectly suited to Dionysos. Some of Demeter’s rituals were dry, particularly at Eleusis, echoing the founding myth for the Eleusinian cult in which Demeter refused to drink wine.

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<sup>32</sup> Nancy Bookidis and Ronald S. Stroud, The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Topography and Architecture (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1997), 425.

<sup>33</sup> Larson, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Image A

<sup>35</sup> Allaire Brumfield, “Cakes in the Liknon: Votives from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth,” *Hesperia* 1997 66.1, 147.

<sup>36</sup> Brumfield, 148-9.

<sup>37</sup> Brumfield, 158.

While the author Dionysos makes it sound as if wineless offerings were the rule of Demeter cults, there is an inscription from Cos which clearly indicates that wine was dedicated to her. Wine was also used in connection to her feasts, according to Farnell.<sup>38</sup> “Wine cups (*kantharoi* and *skuphoi*), mixing bowls and amphoras” were found in these dining areas.<sup>39</sup> *Kantharoi* are “the characteristic wine cups of Dionysos.”<sup>40</sup> Among those black figure drinking vessels which were brought to the sanctuary in the sixth century, a number were decorated with Dionysiac scenes.<sup>41</sup> A plaque dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century bearing Dionysos’ name in the genitive case also ties him to this site. This archaeological evidence seems to indicate that there was a fusion, or at least an overlap, of the cults of the two deities at this site.

The later adoption of Demeter and Dionysos into the Roman Pantheon under the names Ceres and Bacchus seems to follow this general trend of linking these two deities. In Roman times, Bacchus and Ceres were two gods, along with Libera (a figure who some equate with Persephone, but who seems more like a fusion of Demeter and Dionysus, joining elements of Persephone with those of a female Liber), who formed the Aventine Triad. This seems to just be a formal recognition of the closeness and intertwined nature of these three deities in the Greek mythology and religion as figures associated with agriculture, carried over from the Greeks to the Romans.

### **Iconography:**

While there are connections between Demeter and Dionysos that can be teased out of myth, cult practice, and archaeology, there are also visible reminders of the fact that the connections between these two deities were not just coincidental, but that they had relevance in the mind of the

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<sup>38</sup> Lewis Richard Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States, Volume III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 102.

<sup>39</sup> Larson, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Larson, 128.

<sup>41</sup> Bookidis, 427.

contemporary Greek as well. Perhaps most famously, the East frieze of the Parthenon depicts the gods arranged in a semi-circular manner. Demeter and Dionysos are depicted as being close together, with their knees interlocked, with Hermes and Ares flanking them.<sup>42</sup> Mark argues that “Hermes, Dionysos, and Demeter, are chosen for their importance in rural Attica.”<sup>43</sup> But more than just being associated under this broad term, she argues that there were clear links between them on the basis of societal institutions. Among them you have Hermes (herding), Dionysos (wine), and Demeter (crops) as the representatives of agricultural skills contrasted with Athena (craft) and Hephaistus (smithing) as illustrations of artisanship in the city. This idea is based on the philosophy of Prodikos, who portrays the Olympians as discoverers and teachers of skill, which seems to reflect an older and more widespread belief.<sup>44</sup>

They are also seen together in the Mondragone Relief, a Classical Attic votive relief found in Campania, depicting the Eleusinian Cult circle, including Dionysos.<sup>45</sup> It is suggested that in this relief he is serving as a representation of Iacchos, symbolizing the procession of initiates to Eleusis. “Dionysos and Iacchos are interchangeable in art,”<sup>46</sup> and this more than anything else would indicate that they are not, in fact, separate deities, but are considered to be equal. Dionysos “was himself initiated into the mysteries.”<sup>47</sup> Although the *Axiochus* is later than most others, there is little reason to question the truth of this belief in light of the connection that had grown up between Demeter and Dionysos through the figure of Iacchos previously. It would appear that this is just the next step in the process, from depicting Dionysos as Iacchos to showing Dionysos participating in the cult of Demeter himself.

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<sup>42</sup> Image B

<sup>43</sup> Ira S. Mark, “The Gods on the East Frieze of the Parthenon,” *Hesperia* 1984 53.3, 293.

<sup>44</sup> Mark, 315.

<sup>45</sup> Image C

<sup>46</sup> Iphigeneia Leventi, “The Modragone Relief Revisited: Eleusinian Cult Iconography in Campania” *Hesperia* 2007 76.1, 131.

<sup>47</sup> Leventi, 131 – via *Axiochus* 371e.

Having mentioned the *liknon* votives that were unearthed in Acrocorinth, it is significant to note that there is a vase that would support the use of the winnowing fan in the cult of both Demeter and Dionysos. This vase depicts a horned god (Dionysos) sitting on a pile of grain, holding a winnowing fork and shovel. This would seem to indicate a clear link between Demeter (the grain and winnowing implements) and Dionysos (the god actually depicted). Ure says that Dionysos was known to be called “*Liknites*, wielder of the winnowing-fan” and that “the *liknon*, the basket-shaped winnowing-fan, was associated with his cult at least as early as the second half of the fifth century.”<sup>48</sup> The title of ‘*Liknites*’ is explained, according to Hesychius as referring to the story of Dionysos resting in a *liknon* when he was an infant.<sup>49</sup> Dionysos’ affiliation with the *liknon* began around the fifth century. A *chous* by the Eretria painter shows an image of a mask of Dionysos sitting in a *liknon* on a table, which is being approached by women with offerings. Ure points out, though, that “the majority of the scenes that show ritual acts involving the *likna* belong... to the Hellenistic age or later.”<sup>50</sup> Ure finds no reason to believe that this title must have originated so late, however, or that it could only refer to Dionysos sleeping in a *liknon* as a baby, like Hesychius stated, and takes the Reading *pyxis* as proof that Dionysos the Winnower was known in Corinth in the fifth century.<sup>51</sup> This would fit into the idea of the title ‘*Liknites*’ as interpreted as ‘wielder of the *liknon*.’ Although the *pyxis* shows Dionysos with a shovel and not the basket, they both relate to the same activity.<sup>52</sup> Demeter and Dionysos, as Ure<sup>53</sup> illustrates, are connected through the threshing floor in a number of ways: not only through this winnowing fan, but in that it was where both grain and grapes were processed, and that is also believed by some to have given rise to the dancing and then drama that is such a large part of Dionysos’ worship.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> A.D. Ure, “Demeter and Dionysos on Acrocorinth,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 1969 89, 121.

<sup>49</sup> A.D. Ure, “Threshing-Floor or Vineyard,” *The Classical Quarterly* 1955 5.3/4, 228.

<sup>50</sup> Ure 1955, 229.

<sup>51</sup> Image D

<sup>52</sup> Ure 1955, 229.

<sup>53</sup> Ure, 1969.

<sup>54</sup> Here grapes would be dried, rather than pressed for wine.

Elsewhere, Demeter is shown as the Mother of Iacchos/Dionysos in the Oxford vase-fragment (IV century BC), which shows her sitting with a small boy in her lap. The joining of Iacchos and Demeter at Eleusis is, according to Marcovich, “a link at least as old as IV century BC.”<sup>55</sup> This link is assumed based on a discussion of the issue by Fritz Graf.<sup>56</sup>

The fourth century Attic Pantikapaion Hydria in the Hermitage also shows Demeter and Dionysos being depicted in the same scene. It illustrates a scene of Demeter talking with Persephone, Aphrodite and an unidentified figure. Dionysos sits off to the side, included in the scene because of the tradition that he was initiated into the Mysteries of Demeter at one point in his life.<sup>57</sup> Iacchos is also shown, leading Herakles towards the goddesses. The Pourtales Vase, of an uncertain date, shows the two depicted together again, in a scene in which Iacchos, depicted twice, brings heroic initiates to Demeter and Persephone. Two red-figured hydriai (from Capua and Krete) show Persephone, Demeter and Dionysos as her *paredos* clustered in the middle and surrounded by other unidentified figures.<sup>58</sup> The Ninnion tablet illustrates, yet again, Iacchos with the two goddesses.<sup>59</sup> Herakles and Dionysos as initiates to the mysteries of Eleusis are shown on a hydria from Cumae<sup>60</sup> and they are depicted alongside the Dioskouroi on horses on a red-figure cover in Tübingen.<sup>61</sup>

Pausanias makes mention of a temple which honored both Demeter and Dionysos as Iacchos. He says καὶ πλησίον ναός ἐστι Δήμητρος, ἀγάλματα δὲ αὐτῆ τε καὶ ἡ παῖς καὶ δᾶδα ἔχων Ἰακχος: γέγραπται δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ τοίχῳ γράμμασιν Ἀττικοῖς ἔργα εἶναι Πραξιτέλους.<sup>62</sup> “And a temple of Demeter is nearby, sculptures of herself and her daughter and Iacchos holding a torch; written on the wall in Attic

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<sup>55</sup> M. Marchovich, “Demeter, Baubo, Iacchos, and a Redactor,” *Vergiliana Christiana* 1986 40.3, 300.

<sup>56</sup> Fritz Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 46-69, 198.

<sup>57</sup> George E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 211

<sup>58</sup> Mylonas, 213.

<sup>59</sup> Image E

<sup>60</sup> Image F

<sup>61</sup> Mylonas, 213.

<sup>62</sup> Perseus Digital Library. Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, I.24.

letters that the works are by Praxiteles.” This temple is located in the city of Athens itself, and is encountered after entering through the Dipylon Gate. But this is not just a singular occurrence. Pausanias mentions a couple other temples in which statues of Demeter and Dionysos appear together. Demeter, Dionysos and Kore appear in temples to Demeter in Thelpousa<sup>63</sup> and on the Sikyon-Philiou road.<sup>64</sup> The temple in Thelpousa is in Arkadia, near Oryx or Halous as it is also called by Pausanias. The temple on the Sikyon-Philiou road is located in a grove called Pyraia in the general area of Corinth. Information about these temples outside of their brief mention in Pausanias’ work seems to be brief.

## **Conclusion:**

Demeter and Dionysos share an interesting relationship. They are agricultural gods who illustrate different elements of the products which are produced: food and wine. While this basic similarity between the two has always been present, their connection in literature, cult, and iconography is something which has changed and developed over the centuries.

The key link between these two figures seems to grow up through the figure of Iacchos. Although Iacchos is said to have originally been a simple figure meant to embody the processional elements of the worship of Demeter, he eventually became connected to Dionysos, linking him to Demeter. From this simple connection the idea of Dionysos being initiated into Demeter’s cult himself seems to have emerged.

This connection can be seen in art, archaeology, and in literature, most outstandingly in the plays of Euripides and Sophocles. This is something which should be remarked on because these plays are works which would be shown to the populace in its entirety, not just something which is meant to

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<sup>63</sup> Pausanias, VII 25.3(2).

<sup>64</sup> Pausanias, II 11.3

be read by the educated members, and thus indicates the popularity of the growing identification of Dionysos with Demeter. The connection is also illustrated publically in the inclusion of statues of Dionysos in temples to Demeter, and culminates in the closely linked relationship they have when they are adopted as members of the Aventine Triad.

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“Reclining Gods on the Parthenon Frieze London (British Museum).” Photo. Iran Chamber Society. 23

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A. *Liknon* votive (C-62-818)



B. Reclining Gods on the Parthenon Frieze



C. Votive Relief from Mondragone



D. Pyxis in Reading



E. Ninnion Tablet



F. View of a relief hydria (Regina Vasorum) showing Eleusinian deities