

Food consumption and pottery in Corinth, 12th-13th centuries.

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The Medieval city of Corinth (Greece) was one of the first to be studied under the perspective of comparative study of food and foodways. These studies have so far been undertaken by the American School of Classical Studies and focus in the area of the Forum, which was occupied by a commercial and domestic quarter during the 12th, 13th and early 14th centuries. The Forum bears evidence for occupation by Frankish populations, as well as by Greek ones.

Today, it is possible to compare the Forum evidence with ceramic finds recovered from rescue excavations of the local Archaeological Department of the Greek Ministry of Culture in various quarters of the city. The present paper is a first attempt towards this end. It presents ceramic finds of the 12th and 13th centuries found in the Koutsougera plot, in the area of Kranion, east of the Forum. No historical evidence attests to the ethnic identity of the residents of this area, and hence all conclusions rely on archaeology.

The first results show that the residents of this area used glazed vessels which belong to the various Byzantine ways of production (mostly Sgraffito and Champlévé), while there are no traces of Italian glazed tablewares of the 13th century. On the contrary, the latter occur commonly in Forum layers of the 13th century. Similarly, there is a marked absence of the so-called 'Frankish' type of stewpot, which appears in the Forum in layers which post-date 1260. Supra-regional imports in the Koutsougera assemblage are only a few. The most important ones come from Constantinople and the Islamic East.

Such observations allow the conclusion that the residents of the Koutsougera excavation in the Kranion area made different choices than the Forum residents regarding use of their ceramics, and therefore dining habits. Differentiations of this kind, and their archaeological and historical documentation, may attest to some aspects of social and cultural life during this period of encounter between neighbouring populations.