



CSIG NEWS

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COROPLASTIC STUDIES INTEREST GROUP · No. 1 WINTER 2009



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this first issue of the *Coroplastic Studies Interest Group* Newsletter. The idea of creating a forum dedicated to coroplastic studies dates back to June 2007, when a number of us attended the international conference *Terracotta Figurines of the Greek and Roman Eastern Mediterranean* in Izmir, Turkey. This conference drew over 160 participants. Several of us from the United States believed that we should keep the momentum going by meeting stateside as often as possible. The most convenient avenue for the realization of this goal was to form the *Coroplastic Studies Interest Group* (CSIG) as an Interest Group of the Archaeological Institute of America.

The number of excavated figurines or fragments of such alone is - besides pottery - beyond the quantities of any other material groups found on archaeological sites. More than 20,000 fragments were excavated in the Argivian Aphrodision, some 24,000 in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth. As the corpus of material is increasing, our group intends to provide a venue for the developing studies of terracotta figurines, for the distribution of ideas and data, and for the support and encouragement for those new to this complex and often vexing area of research. The understanding of the production of coroplastic material, its distribution, chronology, display, function, sources of clay,

and social meaning continue to evolve rapidly. Even though the focus of our founding members lies within the area of Mediterranean archaeology and is concentrated on the coroplastic industries of the first two millennia BCE and the first millennium CE, over time we hope that our regular meetings, our newsletter, and the CSIG website will broaden to encompass dialogue from other areas of the world, as well as from other disciplines.

This first newsletter presents the coroplastic research in which some of our members are involved. I am delighted that this encompasses such a wide spectrum of analytical methods and geography. This latter ranges from North Africa (Libya, Egypt), Greece (Corinth, Delos, Ithaca), Italy, Turkey, the former Bosporan Kingdom, the Phoenician Empire, Cyprus, the Levant, and Mesopotamia. All who are interested in joining us are most welcome to do so by following the link to membership on www.coroplasticstudies.org. This also is regularly updated for recent publications in the field of coroplastic studies, as well as announcements of scholarly meetings. Look forward to see you in our next meeting in Philadelphia this January!

Alex Nagel

Alexander Nagel
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Special Thanks to



Erin Walcek Averett (Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies, Creighton University)

Terracotta Figurines from a Rural Sanctuary at Athienou-Malloura, Cyprus

I completed my dissertation, *Dedications in Clay: Terracotta Figurines in Early Iron Age Greece (c. 1100-700 BCE)*, at the University of Missouri under the direction of Susan Langdon in 2007. My dissertation compares the types and iconography of votive figurines from more than ten Geometric sanctuaries, including Samos, Lindos, Chios, Tegea, Isthmia, and Olympia. My study discerned two phases of terracotta dedicatory patterns: while early figurines depicted goddesses, perhaps serving as cult idols, and bulls, emphasizing animal sacrifice, the eighth-century

figurines represent active male figurines and standing robed women. My research concludes that eighth-century votive terracottas were used primarily as tools in constructing and confirming elite male and female identities during this time of social and political change.

My current research focuses on the island of Cyprus, where I have been digging for over ten years. I am the Assistant Director of the Athienou Archaeological Project, directed by Michael Toumazou, Derek Counts, and Nick Kardulias. I am in the initial phase of preparing the

terracotta figurines from a rural sanctuary at Athienou-Malloura for publication. The figurines date from the Cypro-Archaic through Hellenistic periods, with the majority found as fill beneath the 4th-century sanctuary floor.

Currently, I am faced with the challenges of organizing and grouping close to 1,000 terracotta fragments, stored in the Larnaca Archaeological Museum. So far, I have identified the major types dedicated at Malloura: chariot groups, warriors, horse riders, and horses. In addition to these figurine types, there are several anthropomorphic and grotesque votive masks and fragments from larger terracotta statuettes. After completing a catalogue, my next task is dating the figurines. I plan to review all stratigraphical evidence, which was carefully recorded for almost every figurine, to ascertain if the levels provide any chronological guidelines. My preliminary study, however, has found that the overwhelming majority of the figurines were found in secondary depositional contexts, which provide little assistance on specific dating. I suspect that I will rely primarily on stylistic criteria for dating these figurines.

After completing the initial phase of sorting and organizing this important Cypriot figurine corpus, I will tackle larger research questions, including workshop production, stylistic links to other workshops and the relationship of style to political boundaries. My main area of analysis, however, will highlight the religious iconography of the Malloura figurines, which sheds light on the ritual, deities, and cult at the sanctuary. In the summer of 2009, I hope to finish the catalogue and arrange to see firsthand many unpublished figurines from excavations around the island.



Photo credit: E. Walcek Averett

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Theodora Kopestonsky (State University of New York – University of Buffalo)

The Kokkinovrysi Figurine Deposit from Ancient Corinth, Greece

My research focuses on the analysis of the architecture, landscape, and assemblage of a small Classical shrine dedicated to the Nymphs at Corinth. Excavated from 1961-1963, the site of Kokkinovrysi (“red water”), which is located west of the city’s defensive walls, was originally identified by a farmer’s accidental discovery of a large deposit of figurines. Although the site was excavated over forty years ago, the material and plans were never fully published. As a result, my research began with the study of all the material. I re-examined the original excavation notebooks and stratigraphy as well as the architectural plans and finds. The figurines were particularly remarkable. Approximately 5,000 frag-

ments yielded a minimum of 261 figurines and represented twenty-four different types. Handmade and mold made varieties were present and the most prevalent types included standing females holding a bird and a piece of fruit, animals (dogs, birds, and even a mouse), horses with riders, and dancing groups. However, half of the total deposit was comprised of just one type—a handmade dancing group consisting of four or five dancers with arms clasped and circling a central flute player. Only a few examples of this type have been found in Corinth outside of Kokkinovrysi but the type exists elsewhere in Greece.

My research has shown that when dedicated in high numbers, as

is the case here, this type of dancing group signifies that the shrine with which they are associated belongs to the Nymphs. In searching for parallels, I found that few Nymph sanctuaries are published beyond preliminary reports. Consequently, I have difficulty comparing the Kokkinovrysi assemblage with many other sanctuaries. Moreover, even published sites often provide only basic information and not quantitative analysis. Currently, I am analyzing all the whole assemblage from Kokkinovrysi, which also includes ceramics, stone altars, a thesauros, and a stele, and placing it within a Greek ritual context.

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Photo credit: T. Kopestonsky

S. Rebecca Martin (North Central University at Minneapolis)

Ritual Deposition and Coroplastic Objects from Archaeological Contexts in Tel Dor, Israel

I am a recent U.C. Berkeley art history Ph.D. now working at North Central University (Minneapolis) and have specialized in Greco-Near Eastern art and archaeology of the first millennium B.C.E. My dissertation was concerned with Hellenization in southern Phoenicia in the classical, or Persian, period – that is, before Alexander's political conquest of the East. I examined the role played by material culture in developing group identity with particular interest in the circumstances through which Greek objects became critical to the identity of non-Greeks (in this case, of the Phoenicians). A harbor city called Tel Dor, Israel provided the case-study. Other than a delightful two-day period where I and another volunteer found over two dozen figurines in the Athenian Agora (2001 season), Tel Dor is also where I first engaged the coroplastic arts.

Thanks to their low intrinsic value, easy portability, and high numbers, terracottas provide key, but rarely straightforward, evidence of culture contact. I confronted Dor's terracottas art historically (iconography, type and style) and archaeologically (deposition). Art historical inquiry showed that several objects interpreted traditionally as Greek – and therefore as evidence of Hellenization – were of Cypriot type, some with

Achaemenid costume. Others were of Greek type but manufactured in mainland Phoenicia and deployed in a local manner. Very few indicated direct contact with Greece or Greek religious practice, contrary to previous claims.

Archaeologically the situation was equally complicated. Evidence of tel occupation in the Persian period Levant – especially in the early decades – is sometimes marked by little more than large numbers of

nents of religious life can be recovered archaeologically. The abundance of what are considered cultic objects in southern Phoenicia has no clear relationship to various practices, rituals and beliefs. However it is common in Israel to claim that ritual deposition was a southern Phoenician practice on the strength of evidence from the mainland and Cyprus: at Kourion, Kharayeb, 'Amrit and Sidon. Following from these presumed corollaries, and borrowing

some debated terminology from Rome and Greece, several *favissae* and *bothroi* have been identified and interpreted as markers of now-lost temples. Indeed *favissae* are the de facto means of identifying sanctuaries.

I argued that Dor lacks *favissae*, even though some pits show signs of ritual deposition of other sorts. In truth, none of the so-called *favissae* elsewhere in Israel stands up to scrutiny. The problem of

identifying structured cult sites persists, which has led me to take up the inquiry again. This essay-in-progress aims to discourage the misleading use of Greco-Roman terminology in order to focus on what good evidence we have of ritual deposition and use of coroplastic objects.

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Photo credit: S. Rebecca Martin

pits. Some of these pits are massive, measuring several meters in width. Oftentimes they contain pottery, scrap metal and organic debris, suggesting they were trash dumps. Once a figurine or mask is found in or near such a pit, chances are that someone will dub it a *favissa*, a ritual deposition of cult objects.

As we know, even in an ideal situation only some of the compo-

Nancy Serwint (Arizona State University)

The Terracotta Sculptures from Marion, Cyprus

I have been excavating, partly as assistant director in Cyprus for the past twenty five years as part of the Princeton University excavation, exploring the ancient cities of Marion and Arsinoe. It is particularly Marion, one of the city kingdoms of the island during the Archaic and Classical periods that has produced a bounty of terracotta sculpture – over 30,000 fragments, and having undertaken the publication of the Marion corpus, I am engaged in a multi-facetted analytical study.

Recovered from excavated, well-defined contexts, the material ranges in size from miniature to over lifesize; covers a gamut of chronological periods throughout the Cypriot Iron Age; reflects stylistic sources that include Greek, Egyptian, Phoenician, and local Cypriot; demonstrates a variety of production strategies that include hand techniques (coil, slab, and additive strategies), use of a mold, and wheel made construction; evidences a diversity of decorative approaches; and reveals numerous iconographic types.

Investigation, to date, has focused on establishing typologies, positing the basis of cult ritual for those objects recovered from sanctuary contexts, studying technical aspects, identifying workshops, assessing economic constraints on production, determining the impact of foreign stylistic sources, and establishing mold series. Plans are being configured for an archaeometric approach to the material to include an assessment of compositional, structural, and textural aspects of the sculpture in addition to identifying clay sources. The thorough study of the Marion terracotta sculptural corpus promises to add much to the current study of the coroplastic arts in the eastern Mediterranean.

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Photo credit: N. Serwint

Maya B. Muratov (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Bosporan Terracotta Figurines

In December 2008 I finished my one-year tenure at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, as a Visiting Researcher and a Guest Curator for a show entitled "Bosporan Kingdom: Dialogue of Cultures in the North Pontic Area" scheduled for the Fall 2010. In January 2009 I will start at the Department of Greek and Roman Art of the Metropolitan Museum where I will be working on the provenance project (i.e. researching provenance of every single object in the Greek and Roman collection). As far as the terracotta figurines are concerned, I am currently working on a number of projects.

The first is the publication of recently excavated material from a "coroplast's dump" -- a waste-pit located in the potter's quarter of Pantikapaion. Several hundreds of fragments of masks, protomes, and figurines were discarded probably because of bad baking. The pit dates from the last decade of the 2nd ct. AD. The significance of this securely dated material lies in the fact that it can (and should) be used to disprove a commonly held notion that because of "barbarization" of the Greek cities of the Bosporos, the coroplastic production came to an end. More importantly, these figurines allow one to raise questions about the social and cultural processes (including popular beliefs) that took place in the Greek colonies at the time.

The second project is work in progress that would one day hope-

fully turn into a monograph is a study on the terracotta figurines with articulated limbs from the Bosporos. Dating from the late Hellenistic period through the first three centuries AD these figurines are extremely unusual and are not found outside of Bosporos. I strongly believe that they hold a key to our understanding of local popular religion of the period and are highly interesting examples of terracotta production of a multicultural milieu. I am writing several entries on Attic and South Italian terracotta figurines (including a head-shaped incense-burner from Canosa for a catalogue of the ancient collection of the Fordham University (forthcoming in 2009). A short essay on Etruscan/Italic anatomical terracotta votives and votive heads (plus catalogue entries on some of them) is also on the way. I am also preparing a short article on two grotesque terracotta figurines from the MMA collection. As a sidekick, I continue my work on the ancient marionette theater that involves studying several large terracotta figurines that I believed were once used as actual puppets. A new article entitled "Votive Terracotta Figurines from a Temple on the Acropolis of Pantikapaion" (written in collaboration with T. Ilyina of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) has just been published in *Drevnosti Bospora 11* (=Bosporan Antiquities) (in Russian).

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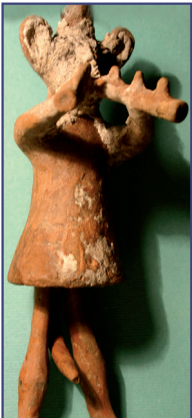
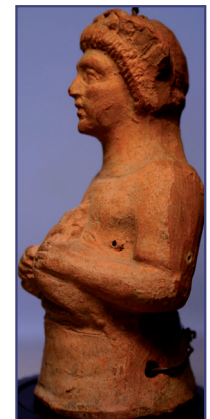
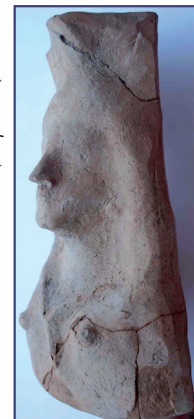


Photo credit: M. B. Muratov (all photos)



Rebecca Miller Ammermann (Colgate University,
New York; currently American School of Classical Studies at Athens)

Votive Terracottas from Southern Italy: Paestum and Metaponto

Since I began my dissertation research on Medma more than a quarter century ago, my scholarship has focused on terracotta figurines and reliefs from the city-states of southern Italy.

After the publication of the votive terracottas from the extramural sanctuary of Santa Venera at Paestum, I began with Marina Cipriani, the Director of the Excavations and Archaeological Museum at Paestum, the study of the much larger assemblage of terracottas from the northern urban sanctuary at Paestum. This study is still very much in progress.

In recent years, I have also begun to prepare final publications of the

terracottas recovered from the extensive field surveys and excavations conducted by the Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICA) at the University of Texas under the direction of Joseph Carter. My publication of the terracottas from the survey between the Bradano and Basento rivers (in press since 2004) should appear with in the year.

I am currently pursuing research on the terracotta assemblages from excavations of several farmhouses in the chora of Metaponto as well as the spring sanctuary at Pantanello. In both domestic and rural sanctuary contexts, many terracotta plaques portray Pan dancing in a rocky grotto

in the company of a female figure, presumably a Nymph. So that I may more insightfully interpret the significance of this distinctive imagery, I must make a comparative study of Pan's worship at Metaponto in the fourth and third centuries BCE with his worship in Mainland Greece. I have thus shifted my focus temporarily this year from Magna Graecia to Greece, where I am currently a Whitehead Professor at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

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Stephanie Lynn Budin (Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey)

Kourotrophoi: The Woman and Child Motif in the Bronze Age

My current research project is a book on kourotrophic iconography in Bronze Age Egypt, Levant, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and the Aegean. The "kourotrophos" motif as I define it is a depiction of an adult female (there is only one, highly specialized category of male kourotrophoi) who holds and sometimes nurses one or possibly two infants.

I first became interested in this topic about a decade ago when I started noticing how rare kourotrophic iconography actually was; there is very little in the Levant, for example, and absolutely none in Minoan Crete. By contrast, some regions, notably Egypt and Cyprus, have very long-standing traditions of kourotrophic iconography, and it appears that it was from these two

regions specifically that the motif spread out into the rest of the Mediterranean.

My work on this topic has two major components. On the one hand I am cataloguing the full corpus of Bronze Age kourotrophoi from the regions mentioned above. I am specifically interested in matters of cultural transfer and, more locally, how the different societies made use of kourotrophic iconography. It is seldom a depiction of motherhood or fertility, contrary to most modern interpretations. On the other hand, I am using the image of the kourotrophos as a means of studying ancient gender constructs. As the "ungendering" theories of Judith Butler, Naomi Hamilton, and Lauren Talalay become increasingly popular in

academic discourse, notions of a clear-cut male:female have been on the wane. Nevertheless, even as new theories concerning ungendered, dual-gendered, or even ambiguously gendered individuals become common, it remains a fact that with only one small exception, kourotrophoi are always female, even though lactation is seldom at issue. This indicates that at least some ancient societies associated women with children, regardless of biological reasons.

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Alexander Nagel (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)

Terracotta Figurines from Akarnania: The Stratos Figurines Project

During recent excavations to the northwest of the ancient city of Stratos in Akarnania on the western Greek mainland a large quantity of material has been found in a votive pit, dating from the sixth to the late fourth centuries BCE. The width of the typology of the terracotta figurines found within the deposit covers the devotional needs of the main deity of the region – Artemis, but other deities and symbols are found as well, among them a figurine of Aphrodite Anadyomene and various types of an Apollo with a lyra, and a group of terracotta roosters. What was the symbolic meaning of dedicating the miniatures? What depositional processes were involved in our context?

The aim of the *Stratos Figurines Project* is to exploit the amount of information we get by investigating coroplastic material from Akarnania. What can we learn about the nature of the religious practices carried out from a close reading and decoding of coroplastic material with a well

stratified context? Recent monographs on the religions of ancient Greece have stressed the importance of the examination of local aspects of ancient Greek religions, rather than relying on Panhellenic conceptions. We must first focus on specific regional phenomena within its local contexts, since the precise articulation of the cults varied within regions. Particular local cult characteristics can be studied in Akarnania in their own specific contexts, in the context of the pantheon to which they belong. At the same time, the methodological approach will be put on debate: How can we “decode” the coroplastic material?

The *Stratos Figurines Project* also aims to introduce the historiography of coroplastic studies on the western Greek mainland in general, and argues for various ways of reconstructing the coroplastic milieu in this region. In ancient Stratos, at least three extra-urban sanctuaries have been identified by Greek and German archaeologists in recent years, but coroplastic material has also been excavated in other contexts, adding new information and improving our general understanding of ancient Stratos significantly, earlier limited to the only excavated site with religious character, the “Sanctuary of Zeus”. The new material offers helpful insights into various aspects of human activities in one of those regions on the Greek mainland, where the study of ancient coroplastic industries has hardly yet begun. Systematic study of the find spots with their extraordinarily rich find assemblages, and the nature of the archaeological evidence with particular reference to iconography and technics will help us to reconstruct many aspects of the coroplastic industries of ancient Akarnania.

For my M.A. Thesis I have been working on terracotta figurines from a sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Aghios Sostis in Tegea in Arkadia, Peloponnese.

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Joannis Mylonopoulos (Columbia University in the City of New York)

Odysseus in the Cavern? Terracotta Figurines from the Polis-Cave on Ithaca

My study focuses on the terracotta objects found during excavations in the so-called Polis-cave (also known as Loisos or Odysseus cave) conducted by Silvia Benton on behalf of the British School at Athens. Compared to the terracotta production in important cultural and artistic centres of the Archaic and Classical periods such as Corinth, Athens or Miletus, the objects from the Polis-Cave are anything but spectacular. The chronology of the terracotta finds ranges

from the Late Geometric to the Hellenistic periods, while the published pottery puzzlingly reaches back to the Bronze Age. Despite the discovery of 12 or 13 fragmentary bronze tripods that obviously place the natural sanctuary at the Polis bay among cult places like Olympia, Samos or Dodona, the terracotta finds consist almost exclusively in small-scale, relatively simple figurines, protomes, and some reliefs. A sphinx, originally at least 50 to 60

cm tall, represents the only exception in this pattern of votive behaviour associated with the dedication of small “handy” terracotta objects. Details in the figure’s composition suggest that it was part of a heraldic group that most probably stood at the entrance to the cave. Stylistic comparisons demonstrate a close connection with Cretan examples of the Subminoan group, which were produced until the 7th ct. BCE. Together with figurines of the Archaic

period, the Geometric sphinx attests to the role of the island within the early trade routes toward Korkyra and farther to the north. The scientific importance of the material found in the Polis-cave and in other places on the island such as Aetos and Marmarospilia primarily lies in its diversity in terms of origin: the terracotta figurines offer evidence for contacts between the small Ionian island and the eastern part of Mainland Greece and the Aegean (mainly with Corinth, Athens, and Rhodes), but more importantly, they clearly demonstrate that Ithaca was a recipient part in a trade network including parts of Western Greece (Acarmania, Epirus, Kephallenia, Leucas) and Illyria. However, there can be no doubt that a small workshop did exist on Ithaca which produced during the Archaic and Classical periods a wide variety of both genuinely local and popular imitations of votive types like the Corinthian standing Korai. During the Hellenistic period the Ithacesian

workshop restricted itself to the continuous reproduction of a small range of votive offerings delivering the local sanctuaries mainly with female protomes in a variety of iconographic types. The problems I am continuously confronted with are closely associated with the lack of published material especially from Western Greece and Illyria in such numbers that would allow me to further reinforce my hypotheses regarding the material from Ithaca. In this respect, the international conference in Izmir back in 2007 was definitely an invaluable revelation, since I was able to trace exact parallels among the unpublished material from the mentioned areas. The iconography of the terracotta votives undoubtedly points to a cult of the Nymphs in the cave. A Hellenistic dedicatory inscription on a female protome referring to Odysseus was used in various publications as an argument for the reconstruction of a heroic cult of Odysseus dating back

to the Late Geometric or Early Archaic periods. My study clearly demonstrates that Odysseus is a “late-comer” in an attempt to propagate the Homeric traditions of the island. In this context, I am more broadly interested in the interrelations between the concrete iconography of the dedicated terracotta object(s) and the character as well as the identity of the divine recipient. Although such interrelations are usually negated, the terracotta material from the Polis-cave reveals remarkable formal and iconographic similarities with terracotta votive complexes unearthed in other cult caves for the Nymphs both on Ithaca and on Kephallenia. It seems that in this particular cultural and geographic context, terracotta votive objects were closely interconnected and more importantly produced for specific cultic figures.

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Announcement: Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting

Colloquium: Coroplastic Studies at the Start of the 21st Century: From Collection to Context

1. The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Marion
Nancy Serwint, Arizona State University
2. Between Sidon and Alexandria: Hellenistic Terracotta Figurines from Israel
Adi Erlich, University of Haifa, Israel (Department of Art History)
3. Recent Developments in Greek and Roman Coroplastic Research in Asia Minor
Ergün Lafli, Dokuz Eylül University
4. Coroplastic Studies in Greek and Roman Libya
Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock, State University of New York at New Paltz
5. Coroplastic Traditions in the Bosphoran Kingdom (Northern Black Sea Area)
Maya Muratov, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Greek and Roman Art
6. Figurines in Sanctuary Contexts at Mytilene and Stymphalos: What CAN We Learn?
Kathleen Donahue Sherwood, John Abbott University
7. A Distributed System of Archives for Coroplastic Studies
Paul F. Jacobs, Mississippi State University

Friday, January 9, 2009, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Organizer: Caitlin E. Barrett, Yale University

Caitlin Barrett (Yale University)

Religious Syncretism in Egyptianizing Terracotta Figurines from Delos

My dissertation, "Diversity within Domestic Cult: A Contextual Analysis of Egyptianizing Terracotta Figurines from Delos," investigates questions of religious syncretism and cultural interaction through an interdisciplinary study of terracotta figurines of Egyptian deities found at Delos, an important Hellenistic Greek port of trade. This project compares the Delian figurines' iconography to known Egyptian parallels: figurines, temple reliefs, ritual objects, and descriptions in religious texts. Although Classical archaeologists have often dismissed Egyptianizing terracotta figurines as mere "grotesque" curiosities, the Delian figurines' iconography actually reveals a highly sophisticated understanding of Egyptian theology. Many of the figurines depict deities or rituals associated with the festival of the Inundation, and the best parallels

for their imagery come from temple reliefs and descriptions in supposedly "elite" religious texts. The presence of this iconography in mass-produced, widely accessible objects such as terracotta figurines suggests, not the sharp dichotomy sometimes thought to exist between "official" and "popular" cult in Egypt, but a complex interweaving of the two.

Additionally, I use unpublished excavation notes to restore archaeological context to these figurines, most of which were excavated from domestic contexts in the early 20th century. Although the best extant publication of the Delian figurines (A. Laumonier, *Les figurines de terre cuite*. 2 vols. *Exploration archéologique de Délos* 23. Paris: De Boccard 1956) offers scanty information on their find spots, the original excavation notes are more informative. These documents suggest that the

houses that produced Egyptianizing figurines were owned by people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and social positions.

Finally, drawing on comparative data from my work at six museums in Egypt, Greece, and the US, I analyze the figurines' clay fabric and manufacturing techniques to distinguish Egyptian imports from locally-produced imitations. My research establishes a set of explicit criteria for distinguishing Egyptian clay fabrics in coroplastic collections from Greece. The results suggest the vast majority of the Egyptianizing terracottas on Delos were locally made, so the figurines' allusions to Egyptian religion accurately reflect the theological knowledge of craftsmen on Delos.

This project is interdisciplinary, spanning several fields: archaeology, Egyptology, Classics, epigraphy, and art history. In addition, my work has relevance to a broader audience, as the internationalism and religious syncretism of the Hellenistic/Early Roman world create ancient precedents for modern phenomena such as globalization, tourism, and colonialism. In the cosmopolitan environment of Delos, people from all over the Mediterranean lived, died, traded, intermarried, and worshipped together. The terracotta figurines testify that this international community also engaged in a meaningful exchange of ideas. The presence of sophisticated Egyptian religious concepts in the iconography of terracotta figurines – inexpensive, mass-produced objects, accessible to all levels of society – suggests that many inhabitants of Delos had a fairly thorough understanding of Egyptian theology. Rather than superficial attraction to an exotic fad, their interest in Egyptian religion emerges as a serious, thoughtful engagement with foreign ways of thought.

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Coroplastic Studies Interest Group Newsletter

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Jaimee Uhlenbrock (State University of New York at New Paltz)

The Terracottas from the Extramural Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene

Over 4,500 terracotta figurines were brought to light during excavations conducted by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania at the extramural sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene, Libya, between 1969 and 1979. This material is being studied by me for a

B.C. to the 2nd century AD, and representing almost every terracotta-exporting center of the ancient Greek world, this corpus of figurines offers the opportunity to view a local industrial production that was originally based on external influences of the late 6th century B.C., but by

female, but rather a variety of types that would ensure their market viability. A catalogue based solely on a typological organization, while easy to consult, runs the risk of separating products from the same workshop and from the same commercial milieu. It is my view that in the majority



Photo credit: J. Uhlenbrock

monograph in the series *The Extramural Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene*. The Final Reports, to be published within the University Museum Monograph series.

The excavations revealed a terraced sanctuary of three levels that underwent continuous building activity from the late 7th century B.C. to the late 2nd century AD. The terracotta figurines were found in varying concentrations within the votive accumulations that covered the middle terrace, the only area of the sanctuary that has been explored thus far. Dating from the early 7th century

the mid 5th century B.C. was developing a unique local character.

Currently, I am at work on the final catalogue of this material, which has undergone a complete revision of its organization. In order to illuminate the foreign influences on Cyrenean coroplasts and the complicated local serial production that ensued, the traditional coroplastic catalogue based on typology is being abandoned in favor of one based on fabric, first imported and then local. This decision is driven by the belief that most coroplasts did not restrict themselves to producing only one type, such as a standing or seated

of cases the only constant in a given coroplast's production was the clay, barring the sudden use of a different clay source. A catalogue arranged according to imported fabrics with the dependant local production alongside each one will make even more evident the extent of these external influences and the eventual metamorphosis to a truly local coroplastic idiom. Please have a look at the website: <http://www.cyrenaica-terracottas.org/>.

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Announcement: Stanford University

Figurines in Action

Current figurine studies have attempted to understand the effects that figurines had on the perceptions, lived experiences, and daily practices of the people in the past that created and interacted with them. Traditional interpretations of figurines as mother-goddesses, fertility symbols, or as mere reflections of social and political organization have been replaced by interpretations of figurines as active forms of material culture that

played an important role in shaping people's identities and social relationships. Key questions in this line of research include: What effects did figurines have on people in the past? What do figurines do and how do they do it? That is, how do they work? This session seeks to address these questions and contribute to contemporary figurine studies by exploring the diversity of approaches to figurines that have developed in light of

the recent trends in archaeological method and theory. In particular, special emphasis will be given to the study of materiality, especially in regards to aesthetics, semiotics, agency, embodiment, identity, personhood, and the biography of objects. It is desired that participants would not only explore at least one of these theoretical issues through a detailed case study, but also provide clear statements of the methods used to address them.

Preliminary List of Speakers

- John Matsunaga (UC Berkeley) and Peter Biehl (SUNY Buffalo): *Figurines in Action: An Introduction*
- Douglass Bailey (San Francisco State University): *Thinking about Differential Body Part Emphasis on Prehistoric Figurines*
- Peter Biehl (SUNY Buffalo): *Representing the Body: Rethinking Anthropomorphic Imagery*
- Raymond Whitlow (SUNY Buffalo): *Creating Bodies through Symbolic Commitment and Compromise: a Cucuteni-Tripolye Case Study*
- Karina Croucher (University of Manchester) & Aurelie Daems (Ghent University): *Figuring it Out: Figurines and the Body in the Neolithic Near East*
- Christina Halperin (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign): *The Materiality and Performativity of Classic Maya Figurines*
- Rosemary Joyce (University of California, Berkeley): *Title TBC*
- General Discussion/Question and Answer Afternoon Session
- Olga Soffer (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign): *Putting 'the Venus' Back Together Again*
- John Matsunaga (University of California, Berkeley): *Neolithic Materiality: The Technology and Daily Practice of Vinca Culture Anthropomorphic Figurine Production*
- Slobodan Mitrovic (The Graduate Center, CUNY): *Figurines and Fragmentation: Implications of the Two Paradigms on Southeast Europe Prehistoric Archaeology*
- Carolyn Nakamura (Stanford University): *Buried Memories: Neo-Assyrian Figurine Deposits and the Production of Time and Space*
- Ajay Pratap (Banaras Hindu University): *Thoughts, Things and Toys: The Praxis of Terracotta Art of India*
- Lisa Overholtzer (Northwestern University): *Ancient Mementos: Life Histories of Collected and Curated Figurines from Central Mexico*
- Warren Barbour (SUNY Buffalo): *Person, Practice and Super-ego: The Function of Figurines in Ancient Teotihuacan, Mexico*
- Lynn Meskell (Stanford University): *Discussant*

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/archaeology/cgi-bin/TAG/drupal/?q=content/figurines-action>

Theoretical Archaeology Meeting, May 1-3 2009

Organized by John M. Matsunaga (UC Berkeley), Peter Biehl (SUNY Buffalo)