



CSIG NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE COROPLASTIC STUDIES INTEREST GROUP · No. 2, SUMMER 2009



Letter from the Chair: Where did we come from? Where do we go from here?

As most of you know, the CSIG came into formation almost two years ago in June 2007. The original membership comprised 9 participants of the Izmir conference *Terracotta Figurines in the Greek and Roman Eastern Mediterranean*, who were studying and working in the United States. We felt that it would be useful to get together periodically for the exchange of ideas and especially to give support and encouragement to young researchers and those new to the field of coroplastic studies. For convenience this small group allied itself with the Archaeological Institute of America as an Interest Group, which required membership in the AIA.

The following year, in January 2008, three new members attended our first "official" meeting at the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Chicago, increasing membership to 12. The future of the CSIG was discussed, and it was suggested that we organize a colloquium for the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Philadelphia, issue a newsletter, and set up a website for the easy dissemination of information and bibliography. Within that year member Caitlin Barrett (Yale University) organized and chaired the colloquium "Coroplastic Studies at the Start of the 21st Century: From Collection to Context" at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the AIA

in Philadelphia (see p. 15), Alexander Nagel (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) edited and put out the very first issue of the CSIG News, and a website www.coroplasticstudies.org was mounted. By the end of 2008 membership had swelled to 16.

The second annual meeting of the CSIG took place immediately after our January 2009 colloquium, during which 11 members were in attendance. It was agreed that archaeologists studying terracotta figurines could benefit from the differing approaches to material culture offered by anthropologists and historians, among other scholarly professions. It also was agreed that membership be opened to scholars working in any geographic area where terracotta figurines were produced, and that membership in the AIA would not be required. Strategies for expanding membership were discussed and the members present agreed to network with their various constituencies. That was on January 9, 2009.

Within one week membership rose to 30. By the third week after our meeting we were nearly 50 strong and, by the end of February, 70 members' names were posted on the website. Now, at the end of May, 94 members represent Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Siberia,

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- International Press
- Important Dates:
Conference Announcement,
New Orleans, November 2009

Special Thanks to



CSIG Museum News

Re-opened Museum Exhibition in Athens, Greece

Comprising material from the vast collections of the National Museum in Athens, a new gallery of Greek terracotta figurines was opened to the public at the end of February.

Most of the material was assembled through excavations in the 19th

and 20th century. Regional collections from Athens, Boeotia, Corinth, Euboea, the Peloponnese, the islands, Myrina and elsewhere are well displayed along thematic lines, such as theater iconography with further explanatory texts explaining issues

like the original polychromy and other aspects of coroplastic studies. The CSIG Newsletter editor thanks Mrs. Avronidaki (National Museum, Athens) for providing us with a photograph and congratulates her on this well arranged exhibition.



Photo credit: C. Avronidaki

continued from p. 1:

Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Terracotta figurines under consideration range from Chile to Mexico, from North Africa to the Black Sea, and from Spain through Greece, Iran, and Siberia to Japan.

So, where do we go from here? Clearly, the overwhelming interest in coroplastic studies that has been demonstrated by the strength of our membership is proof of the need for continued communication and exchange of ideas. Expanded programs that could include conferences, lectures, bulletins, field reports, focus groups, publication sponsorship, pri-

zes and awards, blogs, and discussion groups, for example, are all strikingly useful enterprises that could form the core of our activities. However, member participation is vital on a number of levels, not the least of which is in the formulation and implementation of ideas. Even so, funding is the critical factor in the success of any of these projects, and we must consider becoming incorporated as an independent not-for-profit agency so that grants can be requested.

To that end, we would need a steering committee that would oversee the process of incorporation. It

is all possible, but not without your active participation. After all, this is your organization. Use it wisely.

Warmly,

Jaimee

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The Archaic Coroplastic Finds from Katane, Sicily: A Multidisciplinary Project

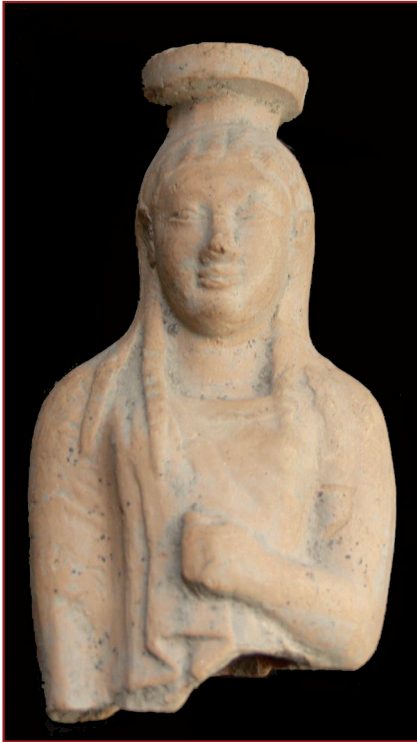


Photo credits: A. Pautasso

Fig. 1 Fragment of a plastic vase from the votive deposit of Katane.

The votive deposit from the sanctuary of Demeter at Katane, Sicily, excavated by Giovanni Rizza in 1959, is one of the most important votive complexes of the western Mediterranean. The material from this complex comprises imports from Athens, Corinth, Sparta, and East Greece, as well as from Katane itself and other sites on the east coast of Sicily and ranges in date from c. 600 to the end of the 4th century BCE.

The more than 15,000 examples of pottery and terracottas that were brought to light required a long period of study during which painstaking classification and organization took place. The most numerous class of finds consists of terracotta figurines, which amount to about 8,000 examples, most in a good state of preservation. These include proto-mai, both local and East-Greek, as well as other East Greek imports, local archaic korai, both seated and standing, and females with piglets.

A publication plan for the coroplastic material from the votive deposit has been undertaken by a team of archaeologists of CNR in collaboration with the Cultural He-

ritage Office (Soprintendenza) of Catania within the last few years (see www.figuredargilla.com; www.ibam.cnr.it/IBAM_files/attivita/A_01r.pdf). The first step in this project concerns the analytical study and publication of the earliest East Greek coroplastic material and its local imitations. These include female figurines and standing kore alabastra, with or without attributes, seated females, males and kouros alabastra, the so-called Dickbauch Dämonen, seated couples, and reclining men.

Although style and technique are the most important facets of this study, they are not the only aspects of the methodological framework of the research program. Recent archaeometric analysis of the varying clay fabrics could provide interesting results concerning the localization of production centers of the imported terracottas and the recognition of different local ateliers. In the case of Katane, the large quantity of finds and the long span of time covered by the terracottas required a multidisciplinary project that involved different analytical methods. Currently we are analyzing the terracottas with the XPIXÉ method (National Institute of Nuclear Physics - INFN - University of Catania), which reveals different clusters that are useful for an initial division of finds in groups, and with the Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) method (Pottery Centres in East Aegean project and database, in collaboration with Michael Kerschner, Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Vienna, and Hans Mommsen, Bonn University) for the localisation of the production centres of the imported examples. At the same time, we are considering the new perspectives in 3D digital rendering of clay statuettes as a helpful tool for study and exhibition.



Fig. 2 Dickbauch Dämonen from the votive deposit of Katane. The two examples on the left show the mark left by the NAA analysis at the bottom.

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Archaic Figure Vases and Figurines from the Malophoros Sanctuary at Selinus, Sicily: Ionic Importations and Local Imitations

The votive deposits from the sanctuary of the Malophoros at Selinus in south-western Sicily, Italy, has produced a notable quantity of terracottas, most of which were unearthed during the excavations carried out by Ettore Gabrici between 1915 and 1926. The material is currently



Fig. 1 Ionic vase figure (Archaeological Regional Museum of Palermo, N.I. 43458, H. 27,0 cm).

housed at the Regional Archaeological Museum "A. Salinas" in Palermo. The terracottas offer a great variety of typologies and document continuous activity at the sanctuary from the 7th to the 3rd centuries BCE.

Thus far, no extensive analysis of the coroplastic material from the sanctuary has been undertaken. Rather, scholars have attempted to delineate a coroplastic development through the analysis of significant examples for each phase or specific types that have not been analyzed in their entirety. The only complete

publications are those related to the figurines "a parure" (*Les statuettes aux parures du sanctuaire de la Malophoros à Sélinonte* by Martine Dewailly, 1992) and to the protomes (*Les protomés féminines du sanctuaire de la malophoros à Sélinonte* by Elsbeth Wiederkehr Schuler, 2004).

My current research focuses on the archaic figure vases and figurines of Ionian manufacture (Figs. 1-2), as well as those of regional production (Fig. 3). The examples (approximately 1,000 fragments) have been subdivided not only into types, but also into versions and variants, in order to reconstruct the process of serial



Fig. 2 Ionic figurine (Archaeological Regional Museum of Palermo, N.I. 43458, H. 27,0 cm).

production. The Ionian and regional figure vases and figurines are distinguishable from each other by function, with the local examples exclusively made in the form of figurines, the distinctive clay, the refinement

of details, and the production technique.

Though the local craftsmen of Selinus did not change the icono-



Fig. 3 Local figurine (Archaeological Regional Museum of Palermo, N.I. 126, H. 25,4 cm).

graphic scheme of the Ionian products, they gradually elaborated their own stylistic language, becoming autonomous and recognisable. This contributed to the construction of their own identity through precise figurative instruments.

From the very beginning this project has been supported by various people. A special thanks goes to Dr. G. Fava, director of the Regional Archaeological Museum "A. Salinas" of Palermo, and to Dr. Agata Villa, coordinator of the "Collezioni Archeologiche – Esposizione Museale" department, for the study permits.

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Maria Chidioglou (Hellenic Ministry of Culture,
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Terracotta Figurines from Euboea, Greece: Groups of Deities, Females and Males, Actors and Children

The island of Euboea, with the modern towns of Chalkis, Eretria, Histiaia and Karystos, built in the region of the homonymous ancient ones, stretches along the east coast of the Greek mainland. Its extant ancient sites received the attention



of 19th century scholars, but the island was systematically surveyed only in the last half of the 20th century, first by the British School of Archaeology, followed by the Swiss School in Eretria and others.

Recent excavations in Eretria, Chalkis, and Karystos have yielded a large number of terracotta finds, with characteristic groups of gods, female and male figures, actors, and children among them. A great number of various groups of figurines of gods, standing or seated

female and male figures, children and comic actors of Middle and New Comedy types, were found by Dr. E. Sapouna – Sakellaraki in the late 1980s, in a deposit, most probably belonging to the sanctuary of Artemis Amarynthia, in Amarynthos, near Eretria. Some of the same figurine types have been found in cemetery sites of the Classical to Hellenistic period in Eretria itself, in Chalkis and Karystos. Moreover, a number of figurines from Euboea, found during the late 19th and early 20th century, have



recently been included in the new exhibition of the National Museum at Athens, together with terracottas from Athens, Boeotia, Corinth, the islands and Myrina. My study concentrates on Euboean coroplastic

products, as they have been found in recent salvage excavations conducted by the Greek Archaeologi-



Photo credits: M. Chidioglou

Figs. 1-3 Euboean Terracotta Figurines and a Theatre Mask from the Collections of the National Museum in Athens.

cal Service in Euboea and compares these with the 19th to early 20th century assemblages in the National Museum at Athens, with the aim of distinguishing local workshop traits, religious and burial practices, and of gaining some insight in Euboean coroplastic production aspects, iconographic types, and prototype or mould distribution patterns.

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Elena A. Solovieva & Andrei V. Tabarev
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A New Project on the Anthropomorphic Figurines of the Ancient Cultures of Northeast Asia

In 2009 a group of specialists from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at Novosibirsk, Russia, have begun to develop a project devoted to a comparison of the anthropomorphic clay figurines from the ancient cultures of both Western and Eastern Siberia, the Amur and Maritime regions of the Russian Far East, and the Jomon culture of the Japanese islands. The chronological range of this material begins with the first traces of this tradition around 11,000 to 9,000 BP in the Initial and Early Neolithic up to the Bronze Age

of ca. 4,000 to 3,000 BP. In spite of the large number of collections of figurines in museums and universities across the described territories, only a small number of them have been published and analyzed in terms of their full archaeological context, i. e., morphology, technology, position in the complex, interpretation of their significance, etc. We suggest that this pilot study will help to trace cultural connections between the regions of the Russian Far East and Japan, on the one hand, and those of Western Siberia and Eastern

Europe on the other. This will shed more light on our understanding of the phenomenon of the production and distribution of figurines among hunter-gatherers and intensive fishers in comparison to that of the early agriculturalists. We are planning intensive work with the collections in Russia and Japan along with a series of publications in periodicals and reports at international conferences. Consultations with a wide range of colleagues and experts around the world are highly appreciated.

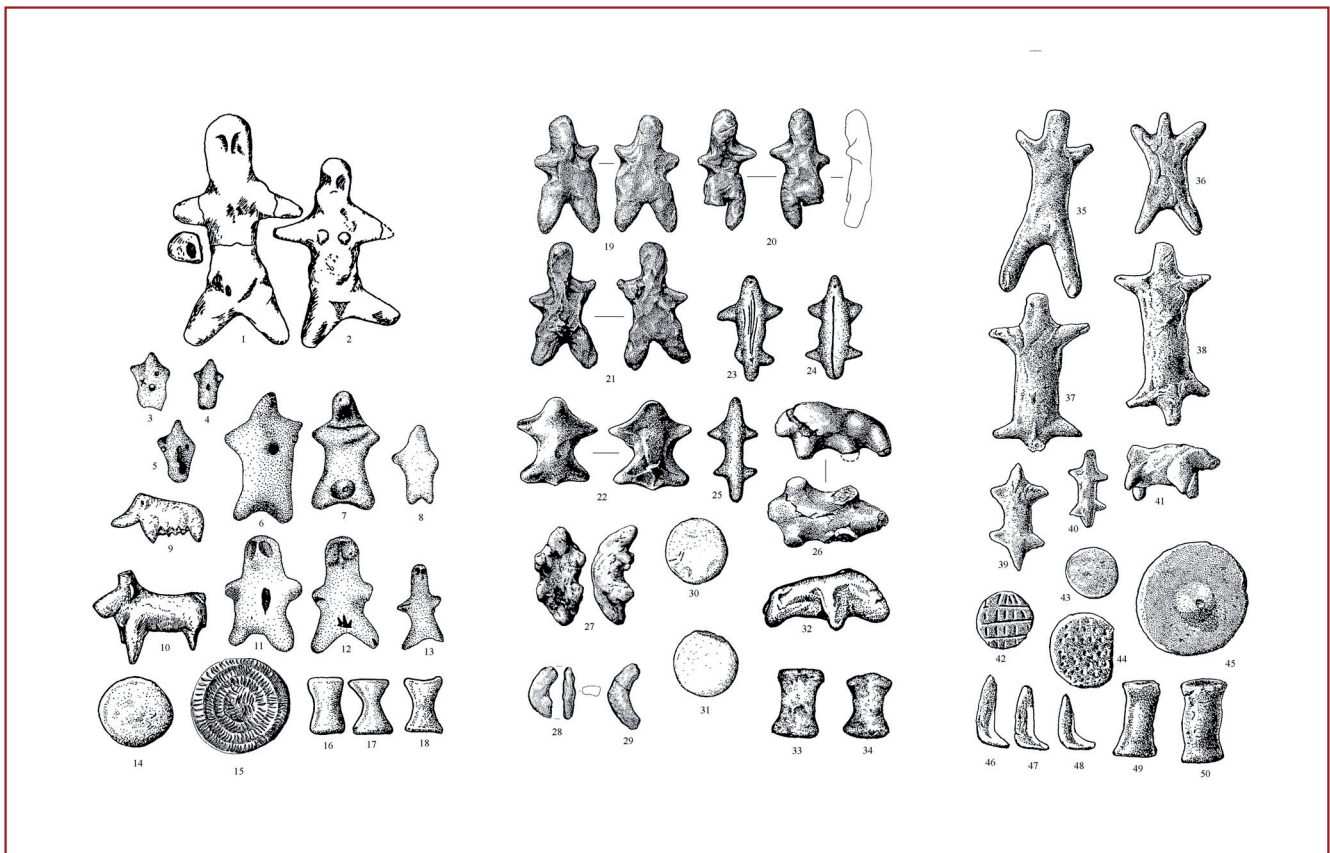


Fig. 1 Clay figurines from Europe, Western Siberia and Japan, 7,000-3,000 BP.

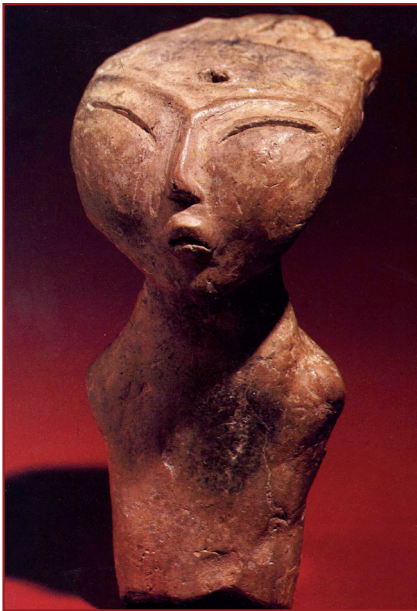


Fig. 2 Neolithic clay figurine from Japanese Islands.

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*Jomon anthropomorphic figurines,
 Japan, 9,000-3,000 BP*

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*Figurines in the Russian Far East,
 Early Neolithic, 9,000-7,000 BP, and
 adjacent regions*



Photo credits: E. A. Solovieva & A. V. Tabarev

Fig. 3 Neolithic clay figurine from Amur Region.

CSIG News

Recent Monographs and Articles

Ben-Shlomo, D. & M. Press. A Reexamination of Aegean-Style Figurines in Light of New Evidence from Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 353 (2009): 39-74.

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Weber-Hiden, I. Mykenische Terrakottafigurinen aus der Sammlung des Instituts für Archäologie der Universität Graz. In: Christof, E. et al. eds. *Potnia Theron: Festschrift für Gerda Schwarz zum 65. Geburtstag*. Vienna: Phoibos (2007): 453-62.

For recently published monographs, articles and related works on terracotta figurines by members of the CSIG see

www.coroplasticstudies.org

Veit Vaelske (Philipps-Universität, Marburg)

Terracotta Figurines from Tell Basta, Ancient Bubastis near Zagazig, Egypt

A short while ago the quantity of terracotta figurines with Bubastis/Tell Basta as designated origin comprised only a lot of poorly documented items in several Egyptian and European museums. Especially the 19th century private collections of F. G. Hilton Price (UK) and O. Bally (Germany) included at least a hundred statuettes.

While the former was dissolved around 1900, the latter became integrated into the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe. Meanwhile the provenience Bubastis is considered potentially misleading because not every object that was sold by merchants at Zagazig needs necessarily to have been found on Tell Basta. It

is all the more important that an increase of approximately 110 fragmented figurines was recently produced by the activity of the Tell Basta-Project/German-Egyptian Joint Mission of the Potsdam University and Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt.

Earlier field work campaigns had focussed on the reconstruction reconstruction work inside the Great Temple area. Therefore only a few stray finds could then be detected. Since 2008, however, the excavation focussed on the area in front of the Great Temple of Bastet, where a certain number of post-pharaonic installations have been identified. The terracotta figurines found in this

place are associated with stratified archaeological contexts. Since the Tell Basta-Project is far from being terminated and every campaign yields new material, only short and preliminary statements can be made. Although the fragmentation of most of the figurines complicates identification, Harpocrates and Bes take a prominent place, followed by different types of Aphrodite. During the last campaign some Anasyromenai were discovered.

Whether these figurines should be connected with Herodotus – who reports (II 60) that during the procession to Bubastis “some of the women continue to play and sing, others call aloud to the females of the place and load them with abuse, while a certain number dance, and some standing up uncover themselves” – is still an unsolved question.

Among the recently found terracotta figurines the “horse and rider” types are of special importance. Because of style only few figurines can be attributed to the Hellenistic period, while the bulk of the material derives from Roman times. This fits in with the current state of excavation, whose findings mainly originate from Roman or even Late Roman centuries.

So far it is remarkable that the main cult place of the Egyptian cat-goddess Bastet did not stimulate Greco-Roman coroplasts to reproduce the omnipresent bronze-statuettes of Bastet in clay. While archaeological work at Bubastis also yielded a number of bronze cats no terracotta Bastet was found.

I am indebted to the team of the Tell Basta-Project, headed by Dr. Eva R. Lange (Potsdam University), for entrusting me with the research on Greco-Roman artefacts from Bubastis.

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Annonce de mise en ligne d'une base de données bibliographiques sur la coroplastie antique

Parallèlement à ses travaux sur les terres cuites votives des sanctuaires de Thasos en Grèce, et de l'Artémision de Dyrrhachion en Albanie, l'équipe lilloise s'investit depuis 2001 dans un projet de base de données bibliographiques sur la coroplastie antique, mis en place par Arthur Muller et piloté par Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi avec la collaboration de Jacky Koslowski. L'ambition ini-

à constituer un outil documentaire utile pour l'ensemble des chercheurs en coroplastie.

La base, réalisée avec la version 8.5 du logiciel *File Maker Pro*, se compose de deux parties comprenant chacune plusieurs rubriques qui permettent une recherche à l'aide de mots-clefs ou de menus déroulants. Dans la première partie, sont réunies des informations d'ordre bibliogra-

nologique, on a pris en compte pour le moment la période grecque au sens très large, depuis le minoen jusqu'au gréco-romain. Un élargissement de la base à la coroplastie helladique, romaine et gallo-romaine est en cours. Une version en anglais est également prévue (celle-ci sera réalisée par notre collègue Bélisa Muka, chercheur à l'Institut Archéologique de Tirana).



Photo crédit: S. Huysecom-Haxhi

tiale était simplement de proposer, en répertoriant les titres parus entre 1985 et 2005, la suite du bulletin bibliographique publié par Simone Besques et ses collaboratrices dans la *Revue Archéologique* de 1985 ("Cinquante ans de découvertes et de travaux sur les figurines de terre cuite grecques et romaines", pp. 77-114). Mais très vite, au fil des dépouillements en bibliothèques, il a finalement été décidé de prendre en considération l'ensemble des références bibliographiques depuis à peu près le milieu du XIXe siècle, de manière

phique (auteurs, titre, date, collections et périodiques, nature de la publication, compte-rendu disponible), et dans la seconde, des informations d'ordre thématique (pays, région, site, contexte, période chronologique, types iconographiques, sujets d'étude, indication des moules publiés). D'un point de vue géographique, toutes les régions du bassin méditerranéen sont concernées y compris celles qui n'avaient pu être traitées par S. Besques, comme l'Etrurie, Chypre, l'Illyrie ou encore l'Espagne. D'un point de vue chrono-

La base, qui recense dans son état actuel 3330 références bibliographiques dont 250 pour la période 2005-2008, sera mis en ligne via le site internet de Halma-Ipel dans le courant du mois de juin, avec l'aide de Christine Aubry. Nous espérons vivement la collaboration de nombreux chercheurs pour compléter les fiches d'enregistrements et enrichir la base de données.

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Terracotta Figurines from the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, Attica

Between 1948 and 1950, and again between 1955 and 1963, several thousand terracotta figurines were excavated by the Archaeological Society at Athens under the direction of Ioannis Papadimitriou at the coastal sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron in Attica. The chronological range of these figurines extends from the end of the 8th to the middle of the 3rd century BCE.

The forthcoming volume by Dr. Veronika Mitsopoulos-Leon (*Brauron. Die Tonstatuetten aus dem Heiligtum der Artemis Brauronia I. Die frühen Statuetten. 7. bis 5. Jh. v. Chr.* Athens: Library of the Archaeological Society) will offer an analysis of the most characteristic types and iconography, both handmade and moldmade. It will also provide an important complement to the corpus of figurines from the sanctuary of Artemis Mounichia that was published by Lydia Palaiokrassa in 1991. Not only will the volume contribute to the refinement of our understanding of the various types of dedications in the Attic sanctuaries of Artemis, but it will provide solid ground for comparative material for terracotta figurines deriving from sanctuaries dedicated to other deities.

My own study concerns the handmade terracottas of the columnar type. Building upon the work of Dr. Mitsopoulos-Leon the project

sheds light on the historical implications of these figurines. They are classified by the most appropriate criteria and then separated into types

according to the morphology of their heads. I also attempt to understand their symbolic meaning. Columnar figurines are an Attic phenomenon

whose beginnings can be traced back to the end of the 8th century BCE. They died out by the early 6th century BCE. The figurines were mass-

produced with regional variations. This mass offering occurs at a time during which current scholarship has observed drastic social changes

resulting in the integration of broader social classes within the cult communities of Attica. The figurines, which belong to both genders, represent various social groups, such as hoplites, horsemen, charioteers, musicians, dancing women, kourotrophoi, and groups of individuals approaching the goddess. There are animal representations, but these depict horses almost exclusively. It is of interest that there is no evidence of the animal sacrifice that was so typical of earlier periods. The anthropomorphic and zoomorphic terracotta figurines seem to have been used as instruments for the construction of identity of an emerging social class, apparently members of the polis of Athens. It is, however, striking that early archaic terracotta figurines are a common feature in sanctuaries of female goddesses (Artemis, Athena, Demeter, Nemesis), while in sanctuaries of male deities (Zeus, Poseidon) they are completely missing. The sudden cessation of dedications of these figurines seems to reflect another

change in cult practice at the beginning of the 6th century BCE in Attica.

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Fig. 1 The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron in Attica, Greece



Fig. 2 Terracottas of Columnar Type from the Sanctuary of Artemis

Photo credit: Lenka (picasaweb.google.com)

Photo credit: K. Kalogeropoulos

Marina Albertocchi (Ca' Foscari University, Venice)

The Terracottas from the Archaic Level of the Bitalemi Sanctuary at Gela, Sicily

My research focuses on the terracottas recovered from the archaic stratum of the Bitalemi extra-urban sanctuary at Gela in Sicily. The significance of this modest, sacred area excavated in the 1960s by Piero Orlandini, rests not only in the over 20,000 votive offerings that were brought to light in many discrete votive deposits, but also in the evidence it presents for the reconstruction of Geloan cultic activity in the archaic and classical periods. Thanks to the discovery of an inscription with a dedication to the Thesmophoros we definitively can identify the deity worshipped in the sanctuary.

The oldest level in the history of the site, a sandy layer referred to as stratum 5, was sealed around 550-540 BCE by a clay pavement put down in order to support the first building of the sanctuary. A team under the steady guidance of Piero Orlandini has been charged to study the material from this stratum for the publication of a complete catalogue of each of the votive deposits, a project that is now in its final phase.

In particular, the study in which I am engaged concerns the ritual practices evident at the site, as well as the problem related to the arrival of imports from East Greece and their subsequent local reproduction. These imports are much more numerous than the local copies. Archae-

ometrical analyses have been conducted to evaluate the precise quantity of imports from Ionia and to identify the different fabrics. The result is that about 400 imported specimens equal 95% of the total number of terracottas. This also includes a small group comprising Peloponnesian figurines belonging to the slab type, as well as other handmade types.

The chronology of mixed deposits comprising terracottas ranges

cheaper dedications. The result is an outstanding number of terracotta offerings of local manufacture that can be dated to the period after 540 BCE.

Finally, it is important to note that among the 450 deposits constituted by two or more offerings, only 22 of them present one or more terracottas in their votive assemblages. Much larger is the quantity of figurines and/or plastic vases dedicated independently that number about

140 items. This observation allows us to conclude that the offering of a statuette during a sacred celebration belonged mostly to the enterprise of a single devotee. Instead, the bigger deposits, testifying to more complicated ritual practices where the common consumption of food and beverages was at the centre of the action, very rarely include a coroplastic dedication. In conclusion, it seems clear that the data revealed by



Photo credit: M. Albertocchi

from the end of the 7th to shortly after the middle of the 6th century BCE, with the greatest concentration clustering around the middle of the century. We also can recognise the same situation in independent deposits, mostly assembled in the upper part of stratum 5. After the area was sealed by the clay pavement around 540 BCE. Local workshop activity can be documented, ready to reply to the growing request for

the terracottas from the archaic level of the sanctuary at Bitalemi offer us a well-defined picture of the value attributed to coroplastic offerings in that period. The *terminus ante quem* for the presence of imported figurines provided by the clay pavement that sealed stratum 5 represents an important chronological basis for the study of votive terracotta circulation in Western Mediterranean.

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Paul Jacobs, Lahav Research Project (LRP, Mississippi State University)

Coroplastic Studies, an Argument for Total Publication

The discovery of c. 800 terracottas on the site of Tell Halif, Israel, led to a search for comparanda, particularly against collections from nearby sites. Here the frustration of object-based research began. Collections of hundreds of figurines from nearby sites, some within 20 km, potentially promised good bases for comparison. Unfortunately, those assemblages which were published showed, because of restrictions of print media, relatively few graphic representations, often with a bias toward featuring the unique, unusual, or beautiful; common terracotta types were underrepresented.

Ora Negbi's *A Deposit of Terracottas and Statuettes from Tel Sippor* (Jerusalem, 1966), e.g., reported "more than 200 terracotta figurines." Graph-

ic representations showed 66 (b/w photos), one-third of the total. While this percentage is unusually high for print media, the 133 not shown are equally valuable to research, even if



Photo credits: P. Jacobs



they are incomplete. In the meantime they remain archived, essentially unavailable for study. We hold that a primary obligation of excavators is publication of complete assemblages. Because publication of few terracottas from large assemblages skews the statistics of the collection and represents the biased selection

of the excavator, because archived assemblages deteriorate as items are displaced, and because access to non-published terracottas are often denied, it becomes essential that researchers of coroplastic material publish complete collections. Only as we do so will reliable database sources become available. LRP offers, as example, online publication of every terracotta fragment as one approach that assures there is no underrepresentation or bias. Researchers will know that statistical analysis will be reliable. And because all are graphically shown a researcher is free to reach reliable conclusions different from those of the excavators.

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Karina Croucher (University of Manchester, UK)

Alternative Readings of Figurines in the Ancient Near East

As with the material record of the classical world, the prehistoric figurines of the ancient Near East have been investigated in terms of their typology and related functions. The figurines, however, may additionally contribute to anthropological studies of body and identity, too. In a recent article, co-authored with Aurelie Dams of Ghent University, we examined examples of figurines with relation to skeletal evidence from the Late Neolithic to the Middle Chalco-

lithic in Iran (*Iranica Antiqua* 2007: 1-21). We argued that in alternative readings of the material record, partly based on interpretations made by the original excavators, along with evidence of cranial modification recovered from mortuary contexts, figurines may provide us with further insights into bodily practices. As such, a number of depictions may provide us with information on how the body may have been physically treated or manipulated, as well as

providing information on the social implications of bodily practices, such as cranial modification. Whilst this work has focused on the modern geographical area of Iran—an artificial boundary not necessarily relevant in the past—our future work will examine material from other regions, as well as other aspects of bodily treatment and identity.

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Ferhan Sakal (Tübingen University)

Bronze Age Figurines from the Syrian Euphrates

The study of the iconography and function of terracotta figurines from the Syrian Euphrates is one of my main research interests. This began in 1991, when as a young student I participated in the excavation of Höyücek, a late Neolithic site in south-western Anatolia that is well known for its figurines.

Since then my interest in pre-classical terracottas has grown and has developed into two large research projects that cover almost 2,000 years of the history of the Near East. Generally speaking, the region I am mainly dealing with is the so-called Euphrates Great Bend, an over 200 km expanse of land that stretches from Birecik at the Turkish border

to Raqqa in Syria. My first project *The Early Bronze Age Figurines from the Syrian Euphrates* is at the moment the subject of my PhD dissertation at Tübingen University. The aim of this project is to establish an iconographic typology that embeds all the old and new findings of the region that have been excavated mainly in the last twenty years due to the construction of two large reservoirs.

Alongside a morphological analysis, the research focuses on aspects of iconography, gender, function, and production, as well as breakage and the repair of figurines, a usage that seems to be common and – so far unexplained – among the third millennium Euphrates cultures. The

second project *The Late Bronze Age Terracotta Figurines, Plaques, and Masks from Emar* is in its final publication stage and concerns a complete lot of small finds retrieved by the Syro-German mission on the site of Emar, where I have been working for almost ten years.

In this publication particular attention is devoted to the typology and iconography of terracotta plaques, such as the Astarte and Lute Player Plaques, as well as the representation of Zebu throughout the Bronze Age and its role in the cult of the Euphrates communities.

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Photo credit: F. Sakal

Dominique Kassab Tezgör
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Les figurines de l'époque hellénistique à Alexandrie et à Myrina, Turquie

Dans l'étude que j'ai menée sur les figurines de l'époque hellénistique mises au jour à Alexandrie et à My-



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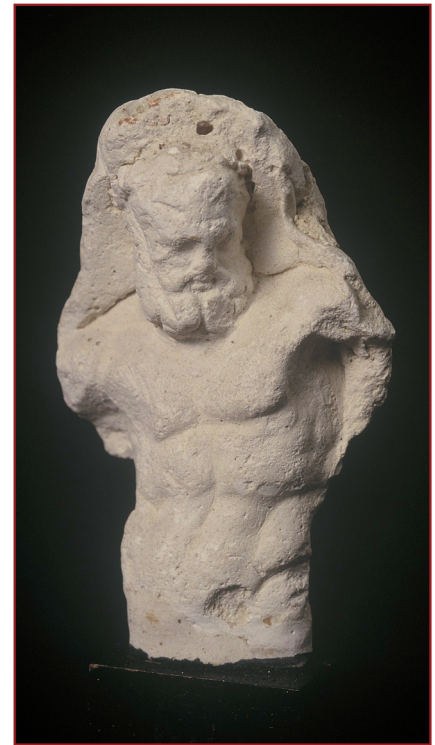
rinna, il m'a semblé que l'observation de la technique de fabrication, jointe à une étude typologique pointue, était essentielle. Non seulement elle



permet de distinguer les caractères régionaux d'une fabrication et de reconnaître ses produits hors contexte, mais en outre, elle s'avère importante lorsqu'il s'agit de reconstituer – autant que peut se faire – les séries

de moulage et de surmoulage qui ont pu se développer simultanément dans plusieurs centres de fabrication. Cette classification fournit parfois un indice sur le mode de diffusion des types: envoi d'un moule, surmoulage d'une figurine-patrice, ou simple copie. Je voudrais, par ailleurs, insister sur l'importance de la

connaissance des techniques artisanales contemporaines. Les sources antiques nous apprennent que les coroplastes travaillaient non seulement l'argile, mais aussi le plâtre et la cire. Ainsi, le savoir-faire des santonniers de Provence, par exemple, et celui des artisans travaillant le plâtre, nous apportent des éclaircis-



sements à la fois sur les moules mêmes, sur la technique du moulage et du surmoulage, et sur les produits finis. Le travail de la cire est extrêmement rare à l'heure actuelle, la visite d'un petit atelier en Géorgie m'a permis de suivre les mêmes procédés que pour la fabrication des objets en terre cuite et en plâtre, depuis la création du prototype jusqu'au tirage en cire.

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rina, il m'a semblé que l'observation de la technique de fabrication, jointe à une étude typologique pointue, était essentielle. Non seulement elle

CSIG Conference Report, Caitlin Barrett (Yale University)

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

At the 110th Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Philadelphia, the Coroplastic Studies Interest Group was proud to sponsor a colloquium entitled “Coroplastic Studies at the Start of the 21st Century: From Collection to Context.”

Organized and introduced by Caitlín E. Barrett (Yale University), the colloquium included papers by several CSIG members: Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock (State University of New York at New Paltz), Nancy Serwint (Arizona State University), Adi Erlich (University of Haifa), Maya Muratov (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Greek and Roman Art), Kathleen Donahue Sherwood (John Abbott College), Ergün Lafli (Dokuz Eylül University), and a co-authored paper by Paul F. Jacobs (Mississippi State University) and Chris Holland (Concepthouse, Inc.). Our discussant was Marina Albertocchi (Ca' Foscari University, Venice).

Since its antiquarian origins in the 19th century, the scholarly study of Mediterranean terracotta figurines has undergone a dramatic transformation. Finds of figurines in well-excavated, stratified archaeological contexts have revolutionized researchers' understandings of the production, distribution, chronology, display, function, and social meaning of these popular, mass-produced objects. A new focus on the systematic analysis of clay fabric and manufacturing technique has facilitated the sourcing of terracotta figurines and clarified the steps involved in their serial production. Furthermore, increased research into iconographic and textual parallels for many figurines' imagery has led to breakthroughs in the understanding of these artifacts' religious symbolism. Contemporary research on terracotta figurines must employ multiple academic or interdisciplinary approaches, including (but not

limited to) anthropology, Classical archaeology, archaeometry, art history, and religious studies.

Our colloquium interrogated the ways in which a new focus on archaeological context, technological analysis, and cross-regional comparison is currently transforming coroplastic research throughout the Mediterranean. Each presenter spotlighted the effects of these trends



on scholarship in a different part of the Mediterranean world. The resulting papers provided a truly interregional perspective on the ancient Mediterranean, including many areas emerging as new frontiers for coroplastic studies. Nancy Serwint discussed figurines from Cyprus; Adi Erlich, the Levant; Jaimee Uhlenbrock provided a perspective from North Africa; Ergün Lafli (whose paper was read, in his absence, by Jaimee Uhlenbrock) focused on Asia Minor; Maya Muratov discussed the Black Sea; and Kathleen Donahue Sherwood investigated selected figurines from Greece. Finally, Paul Jacobs and Chris Holland discussed new methodologies for synthesizing the data from these diverse regions via the Distributed Archives Transaction System (DATS). Our discussant, Marina Albertocchi, contributed a

perspective from yet another region of the Mediterranean, as her research focuses on figurines from Greek Sicily.

The presenters approached the contextual analysis of terracotta figurines in different, but complementary, ways. Nancy Serwint emphasized figurine corpora from a single, well-excavated site, while Ergün Lafli's paper addressed the problem of old museum collections with poorly-recorded findspots and suggested some ways to deal with this pervasive problem. Jaimee Uhlenbrock's presentation not only provided a useful survey of figurines from a variety of sites in Cyrenaica, but also addressed the political and economic threats currently facing coroplastically significant sites like Cyrene.

The research presented throws into relief the value of terracotta figurines, not merely as objets d'art, but as artifacts rich in social meaning. When viewed in their archaeological context, terracotta figurines shed crucial light on many aspects of society, such as the nature of religious practice, as Kathleen Sherwood's paper demonstrated, or the negotiation of cultural hybridity. In the presentations of Adi Erlich and Maya Muratov, terracotta figurines offered evidence for the interaction of Hellenicity with indigenous cultural traditions in, respectively, the Black Sea region and the southern Levant. By updating scholars on their colleagues' work in different regions, presenting recent research on terracotta figurines to those outside the field, and laying the groundwork for a series of future AIA sessions on coroplastic research, this colloquium has made its own contribution toward the goal of an interdisciplinary, interregional, context-focused approach to coroplastic studies.

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Christopher Holland
(Cobb Institute of Archaeology: Mississippi State University)

A Distributed Archive for Coroplastic Research: www.datsproject.org

Most researchers would admit how difficult it has been to quickly gather comparative data and references when dealing with coroplastic subject matter. There are problems with both the quantity of data available and the ease of accessing the material that is available.

By helping to alleviate the latter problem the Distributed Archives Transaction System (DATS) also helps spur solutions to the former. By making data archives easier to search and compare it promotes the importance of complete availability of and accessibility to archival collections.

The DATS system is interfaced by a website for online content and comparison searches. Currently in

its first trial version, it is specifically targeted to research in coroplastic archaeology. The system currently searches over ten different collections, all of which have substantial coroplastic collections and some of which are not accessible via other search methods.

Using DATS, as introduced at the AIA meeting in Philadelphia this January, is as easy as pointing your browser to www.datsproject.org and entering a phrase or word in the search box at the top of the page. The system will then search all of the various collections and return the information to you, and since some of these collections are not available via Google or Yahoo! searches it alleviates the need to search

each of the individual collections separately. Once the system has returned results, any of them can be “starred” and saved as a “Favorite” so that you can return to it later. Additionally, every time you search the system saves the information so that you can easily repeat complex searches that you have done in the past by simply clicking on them on the “History” page.

The system aims to make online research easier, more targeted, and more valuable while allowing access to collections that are not normally accessible via internet search engines. You are invited to try the system at www.datsproject.org.

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Announcement: American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Annual Meeting

“Figuring Out” The Figurines of the Ancient Near East

This session aims to bring together scholars researching terracotta figurines from sites across the Ancient Near East to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and cross-cultural comparisons of figurines. Many advances in the technological analysis of figurine production, anthropological theory of figurine use, and art historical analysis of figurine iconography have been made in recent years; this session will allow room for discussion of these advances in figurine research, as well as demonstrate their practical application to Ancient Near Eastern terracotta figurine analysis.

November 18 - 21, 2009, New Orleans, LA

Session Chair: Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper,
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