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# Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine Vol 1: Production, diffusion, étude

Jaimee Uhlenbrock

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# Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine Vol 1: Production, diffusion, étude

Jaimee Uhlenbrock

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## REFERENCES

*Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine Vol 1: Production, diffusion, étude*, edited by A. Muller and E. Lafli; collaboration by S. Huysecom-Haxhi. *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, supplément 54. École française d'Athènes, Paris/Athens 2016. Pp. 517.

- 1 The discipline of coroplastic studies is a relatively recent addition to the sub-specialties that comprise archaeological research into the cultures of the ancient world. While over the course of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of dedicated scholars recognized the important role that figurative terracottas could play in the religious, political, and social structures of antiquity, it was only in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that a larger community of researchers came into being for the support and encouragement of the study of that most entangled of research concentrations, mass-produced sculptural images made in clay. The catalyst for the coming into being of this community was unquestionably the international conference “Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine” that was held at Dokuz Eylül University in Izmir in 2007 and that was organized by Ergün Lafli of Dokuz Eylül University in Izmir, Michel Feugère of the European working group *Instrumentum*, and Arthur Muller of the University of Lille 3 in France. This conference brought together some 136 participants, of whom 45 gave papers and 91 presented posters. So exceptional was the response to the theme of figurative terracottas of the Greek and Roman Mediterranean that the publication of the proceedings of this conference that consisted of 90 papers required a division into two separate volumes that was made possible by a collaboration between Dokuz Eylül University, the École française d’Athènes, and HALMA UMR 8164 of the University of Lille 3. The first volume is the subject of this present review, while the second volume, the first to appear in print in 2015, was reviewed by Marina Albertocchi in *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt* 16, 2017. This division of the proceedings was in part responsible for the delayed appearance of volume 1, since it was published by the École française d’Athènes as a BCH supplement, while volume 2 was published by the Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.
- 2 The present volume presents a very wide array of papers of varying topics, length, and quality, which is not surprising given the encyclopedic scope of the conference. An attempt at an organization of the content into two separate sections, each containing a further division into sub-sections, makes for a useful structure, although this reviewer questions the placement of some papers into specific sections, while others of similar themes were placed elsewhere. Nonetheless, the editors of this volume should be commended for what must have been a daunting task of organization, once the papers began to be submitted. Because of the division of the proceedings into two volumes, published separately by different agencies more than a year apart, the editors also made the wise decision to include the preface, the introduction with a map, the full table of contents, and the combined lengthy bibliography in both volumes.
- 3 The first section in the volume under review, titled “De la fabrication à la collection et à l’étude,” has four sub-sections dedicated to “(1.1) Officines,” “(1.2) Techniques et outils

de production,” “(1.3) Diffusion et constitution de koinès,” and “(1.4) Étude, collections.” Thus, in the first section, the papers by GIORGOS SANIDAS, JUTTA STROSZECK, and MARCIE HANDLER present the evidence for actual coroplastic production at sites in the classical and post classical city (SANIDAS), in the Kerameikos of Athens (STROSZECK), and bordering on the Athenian Agora (HANDLER), as documented by the presence of production facilities, such as kilns with remnants of figurines or figurine wasters and finds of production tools, such as patrices, moulds, gravers, or coloring material, among other objects. A more general review of the evidence for workshop activity in Egypt is made by PASCAL BALLETT, who noted the distinction in typological preference between cosmopolitan centers and those in the chora.

- 4 The sub-heading “(1.2) Techniques et outils de production” ostensibly was dedicated to those papers that explored the creation of figurative terracottas from specific production perspectives, rather than in relation to the actual physical places where they were produced, as we saw in the first section. STÉPHANIE HUYSECOM-HAXHI focused on two iconographic types belonging to the so-called Aphrodite Group” of Reynold Higgins that illustrated successive stages in production practices developed by south Ionian coroplasts that expanded the repertoire by interchanging heads apparently belonging to two different stylistic milieu. SOPHIE FÉRET introduced a corpus of some 40 moulds from a *pastas* house in Tricarico, Lucania, that attested to the presence of a domestic workshop at the house, a topic that perhaps should have been placed in the first sub-section dedicated to ateliers. ARTHUR MULLER and CHRISTINE AUBRY presented the database COPCor, an international collaboration dedicated to bringing together under a single umbrella all moulds for the production of Greek figurative terracottas by reference to the terracottas from which they were produced.
- 5 The third section, “(1.3) Diffusion et constitution de koinès,” contained four papers, of which two, by SILVIA MARTINA BERTESAGO and LAURA GASPARRI respectively, singled out types of 6<sup>th</sup> century Ionian kore alabastra at Bitalemi (BERTESAGO) and Selinus (GASPARRI) and illustrated their influence on local Sicilian workshops. Here it must be pointed out that in the paper by Bertesago, the reference to the earliest examples of kore alabastra from tombs at Kamiros dating to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (“secondo metà del’VIII sec.,” fn. 8) is surely a typographical error. MARINA ALBERTOCCHI also focused on the presence of East Greek figurines at Gela, but these were from the later 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. With the paper by SABINE FOURRIER in this sub-section the attention shifted away from Sicily and to Cyprus. The author traced the diffusion of Cypriote terracottas in the eastern Mediterranean that took place in the 7<sup>th</sup> and earlier 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. While these generally were marketed along East Greek transportation networks, nevertheless she believes that they all came from the same production center, which she ascribes to Salamis.
- 6 Two papers on unrelated approaches and themes were placed together in the final sub-section of this first section called “(1.4) Études, collections.” The first, by CLARISSA BLUME, focused attention on the use of polychromy on Hellenistic figurines in an attempt to illustrate the significance that certain colors conveyed to the viewer. She believed that color could indicate different age groups, as well as divinity. The second was by MARTIN MASCHBERGER, who reviewed the history of the collection of figurative terracottas in the Berlin Antikensammlung, emphasizing current attitudes toward their display and authentication. He also highlighted a new collaborative partnership with the Pushkin

museum in Moscow for the restoration of terracottas, as well as other antiquities, taken by Russian troops after the fall of Berlin in 1945.

- 7 The second main section of this volume was titled “2. Centres de production” and comprised the bulk of the papers, as many participants took advantage of the opportunity to present new finds of coroplastic material or to re-evaluate evidence that had been discussed in previous studies. Of the 19 papers that make up this second section, seven deal with material from mainland Greece and are organized under the rubric “(2.1) Grèce proper.” The second sub-section “(2.2) Éolide, Ionie, Carie” has seven papers devoted to figurines and related material from Asia Minor, while the third, “(2.3) Marges du monde classique,” consists of five that discuss coroplastic material from Israel, Iraq, Cyprus, Thrace, and Illyria.
- 8 The results of recent excavations in the cemeteries of ancient Thebes were the focus of two papers in the first sub-section that make a considerable contribution to our understanding of the development of the coroplastic production of Boeotian Thebes from the Archaic through the Hellenistic period. In both the papers by ELENA KOUNTOURI ET AL and MARCELLA PISANI figurative terracottas from recent excavations in the necropoleis of the ancient city were discussed in order to further illuminate the picture for terracotta manufacture there, with the exception of a roughly 50-year period after the destruction of Thebes in 335 B.C.E. MARCELLA PISANI, who focused her attention on material from Hellenistic graves, confirmed that on-going coroplastic activity can again be documented by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. During the Hellenistic period she saw Thebes as at the center of a lively network of coroplastic diffusion that was represented by products from sites in central Greece, including Athens, as well from Alexandria, that continued until the second half of the second century B.C.E.
- 9 Figurative terracottas from other centers in Greece proper also received attention. MARIA CHIDIROGLU presented a group of little-known figurines in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens from three sites in Euboea: Chalkis, Eretria, and Karystos. She viewed this material against the evidence presented by more recent excavations in southern Euboea in order to identify the varying influences at play among the local workshops. The coroplastic production of Corfu of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. was discussed by KALLIOPI PREKKA-ALEXANDRI, who surveyed the evidence from seven sanctuaries, as well as a large industrial district with workshops where figurines were manufactured alongside ceramics and tiles. However, a characterization of the style of the workshops of Corfu was the main thrust of this study that revealed the dominant influence of Corinth. JOANNIS MYLONOPOULOS assessed the evidence for the corpus of the figurative terracottas found during early 20<sup>th</sup> century excavations at the so-called Polis cave in Ithaca. He concluded that Ithaca was a recipient of a vast trading network that encompassed the products of most major centers of the Greek mainland, as well as south Italy and more distant Rhodes.
- 10 Two papers presented aspects of coroplastic production in cities within the Macedonian orbit. POLYXENI ADAM-VELENI reviewed the figurines of the late Hellenistic period from the Macedonian city of Petres and determined that they were derivative of the production of Pella. She suggested that the figurines and plastic vases recovered from areas of houses at Petres could indicate that these locales functioned as centers for female cults. ÉLÉNI TRAKOSOPOULOU introduced a modest corpus of figurative terracottas that was brought to light in the Macedonian city of Akanthos that comprised imported Ionian alabastra, archaic Corinthian, Boeotian, and Attic figurines,

a small number of late classical to Hellenistic figurines, and at least three mould fragments. The Ionian alabastra conform to very well-known types, whose origins have been the object of a number of studies. Because of this, it is unfortunate that this author has maintained several outdated notions, such as a possible Rhodian provenance for the Ionian alabastra, or the identification with Aphrodite for the standing kore type.

- 11 Seven papers in the sub-section “(2.2) Éolide, Ionie, Carie” were dedicated to coroplastic material from various sites in Asia Minor. The figurative terracottas from Aeolian Kyme dating from the Classical to the Hellenistic period were the object of the paper by SEBASTIANA LAGONA, who assessed previous studies that dealt with this material in the light of recent finds. The author concluded that Kyme was a center of production as well as diffusion. JAN BREDER introduced a novel type of archaic plaque figurine from Didyma that preserves the proper right part of a human chest with a bent arm that is held across the waist. Decorated in black glaze in the Wild-Goat style, it was interpreted by the author as a fragment of an applique for a vase of a type hitherto undocumented. FIRKET ÖZCAN reviewed the evidence for the gradual resumption of coroplastic activity at Miletos after its destruction in 494 B.C.E. This suggests that workshops may have specialized in terracotta votives for specific sanctuaries. Moreover, in the Hellenistic period, at least, the evidence also suggests that Milesian coroplasts did not participate in a larger, region-wide network.
- 12 Recent coroplastic finds from several areas of the city of Priene were presented by FREDERICK RUMSCHEID, who demonstrated that previously-held assumptions about the totality of the coroplastic production of a given site can be completely shattered by new discoveries. These recent finds have broadened the typological and thematic spectrum of the figurative terracottas from Priene. ISABELLE HASSELIN-ROUS discussed a small corpus of 47 late Hellenistic and Roman small-scale figurines from Smyrna that replicate well-known Greek monumental sculptures of the 5th and 4th centuries. Emphasizing the exceptional techniques of these figurines, that included gilding in imitation of bronze statuary, she suggested that they may have been the products of specialized workshops at Smyrna active over the course of at least three centuries that were dedicated to the production of luxury objects for the home. CHANTAL CORTOIS analyzed a collection of some 900 mostly Hellenistic figurine fragments assembled by Beatrice De Candolle when living in Izmir in the early years of the 20th century. While the majority were attributed to Smyrniote workshops, a few were assigned to Myrina, Illion, and Klazomenai, among other sites in Asia Minor. SUAT ATEŞLIER presented select examples of a large corpus of archaic architectural terracottas found together in a bothros at a sanctuary of Zeus in Euromos in Caria. They belonged to as many as three or four Ionic buildings built and renovated between the mid- and the late-sixth century B.C.E. Discussed were fragments of relief plaques, pedimental sculpture, simas, scrolls, and acroteria, most preserving impressive polychrome decoration.
- 13 The final sub-section, “(2.3) Marges du monde classique,” illustrated the very wide diffusion of Greek culture via figurative terracottas. A survey of the presence of Greek or Greek-inspired terracottas of the Hellenistic period in two cities in the southern Levant, Akko and Maresha, was made by ADI ERLICH. She noted the prevalence of these coroplastic finds in domestic, rather than sacred, contexts, and commented on their rarity in tombs. As to be expected, some types show an admixture of Phoenician, Egyptian, and Greek elements, although the author asserted that this is not reflective of

cultural assimilation, but rather co-existence. ROBERTA MENEGAZZI discussed two coroplast's dumps that were found in and around a structure at the south side of the Archives Square at Selucia on the Tigris. Consisting of roughly of 4,000 figurine fragments dating to the late Hellenistic period, including fragments of some 50 moulds, this corpus reveals a greater level of Greek influence than has hitherto been recognized in the terracottas from this Mesopotamian city.

- 14 The rich coroplastic production of the ancient city of Marion in Cyprus was presented by NANCY SERWINT. More than 25,000 fragments of figurative terracottas recovered from securely-dated contexts comprise this corpus that dates from ca. 700 B.C.E. until Marion was destroyed in 312 B.C.E. by Ptolemy 1 Soter. This extensive corpus is illustrative of the many and varied cultural influences that swept over the island over a period of more than 300 years. KALINA PETKOVA surveyed the finds of figurative terracottas from a number of Thracian sites on the northwest coast of the Black Sea and further inland. All Hellenistic in date, these terracottas, while not numerous, nevertheless were said to reveal typological and functional consistencies with similar finds throughout the Greek world. BELISA MUKA made a similar observation in her survey of coroplastic production in southern Illyria.
- 15 The extraordinary geographic breadth of the papers that comprise this volume underscore a fundamental "truth" about the nature of figurative terracottas in the ancient Mediterranean world and its surrounding regions. In many of these presentations we are reminded yet again that terracottas travelled. It is assumed that this occurred via trading networks, a term that is used outright in one paper (FOURRIER), or that is implied in others (HUYSECOM-HAXHI, ALBERTOCCHI, BERTESAGO, GASPARRI, KOUNTOURI *et al.*, Pisani, Prekka-Alexandri, Chidiroglou, Mylonopoulos, Adam-Veleni, Trakosopoulou, Lagona, Erlich, Petkova, Muka). Yet, conspicuously absent from the papers in this volume is any further enlightenment, no matter how brief, of the nature of these networks. Did figurines travel along a ceramics network, as may have been the case with Corinthian figurines that are found alongside Corinthian pottery at Sicilian sites, for example, or along the network that dealt in luxury goods, perhaps the reason behind the presence of East Greek figured alabaster at colonial centers with burgeoning populations, but not on the Greek mainland? Could there also have been an independent coroplastic network that was consumer driven and that gave rise to extensive surmoulage, as may have been the case for the archaic Ionian, Hellenistic Boeotian, or Hellenistic Macedonian centers of coroplastic activity, among others? An exploration of the place of figurative terracottas in trade networks could be a fruitful avenue for further consideration.
- 16 The importance and usefulness of the two volumes that make up the proceedings of this conference cannot be understated. Variations in scholarly quality notwithstanding, when taken as a whole these proceedings make an indelible imprint on the field of coroplastic studies, providing researchers with a solid basis and firm points of departure for new and on-going investigations into aspects of the figurative terracottas of the Greek and Roman Mediterranean.

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## ABSTRACTS

The conference proceedings *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine Vol 1: Production, diffusion, etude* is reviewed by Jaimee Uhlenbrock.

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**Keywords:** Terracotta figurines, coroplastic research, coroplastic centers of production, coroplastic diffusion.

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