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Two Collaborative Projects for Coroplastic Research, IV. The Work of the Academic Years 2016–2017

Arthur Muller and Jaimee Uhlenbrock

- ¹ For the last five years¹ a team from ACoSt that has comprised Marina Albertocchi, Christine Aubry (University of Lille), Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi (CNRS Lille), Arthur Muller (University of Lille/IUF), Marion Muller-Dufeu (University of Lille), Antonella Pautasso (IBAM-CNR Catania), and Jaimee Uhlenbrock (State University of New York at New Paltz) has been meeting twice a year at the University of Lille and the University of Catania respectively to prepare two projects: a manual for the study of Greek figurative terracottas and a searchable database for Franz Winter's *Die Typen der figürlichen Terrakotten*, referred to as *Winter On Line*. The most recent meetings took place in Lille from December 5 to December 10, 2016, and again from October 9 to October 14, 2017, in order to continue work on both these projects and to propose an international conference for 2021 or 2022. At the December 2016 meeting the team welcomed new member Souad Aït-Salah (University of Lille). Originally, the last meeting for these projects had been planned for spring 2017 in Ferrara in conjunction with the *International Summer School. La coroplastica greca sulle sponde dell'Adriatico: la tecnica di fabbricazione, lo studio dei contesti e delle immagini, i nuovi metodi di analisi*. Unfortunately this meeting had to be postponed due to the low enrollment for the summer school. Consequently, our final meeting was held instead in Lille in October.
- ² At each meeting the team members reported on the progress of their work in the field of coroplastic research: the study of terracotta figurine sets in Thasos, in Epidamnos-Dyrrhachion, in Kirrha, in Catania, and in Bitalemi, as well as research into the reception of figurative terracottas in the Age of Enlightenment. At the December 2016 meeting, Souad Aït-Salah presented her doctoral research project for the University of Lille that focuses on male imagery in figurative terracottas from sites in north Greece.² A report was made on the didactic exhibition *Les terres cuites grecques: Pour qui ? Pourquoi ? Comment ?* held at the University of Lille from March 1–April 6, 2016, that was a great success and

that was accompanied by several lectures.³ The didactic panels of this exhibition were also translated into Italian for the exhibition *Katanè tra mito et rito* held in Catania from June to October, 2017, that highlighted the rich corpus of Greek votive figurines discovered in this city.⁴ An additional report focused on the publication of the two long-awaited volumes of the Izmir Congress held in June 2007,⁵ as well as the publication of the proceedings of the Italo-German bilateral workshop *Pilina Eidolia. New Perspectives in Cretan Coroplastic Studies (13th - 7th Cent. B.C.)* held in Catania on September 19–21, 2013.⁶ Finally, a report was made on the video *Prises de têtes. Coroplathie thasienne* by Jean-François Dars and Anne Papillaut of CNRS Lille that is now viewable with English subtitles (*Puzzling Stories. The Coroplast's Art in Thasos*) on the ACoSt website.⁷

The *Handbook* team, l to r: Souad Aït-Salah, Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi, Arthur Muller, Marion Muller-Dufeu, Marina Albertocchi, Antonella Pautasso. Not photographed, Christine Aubry, Jaimee Uhlenbrock.



1. Handbook for Coroplastic Research

- 3 As has already been noted in previous reports, the first aim of these meetings has been the preparation of a manual for coroplastic research on Greek figurative terracottas that is designed to place their study within historical, contextual, and methodological frameworks in order to assist the researcher new to coroplastic topics. Tentatively titled *A Handbook for Coroplastic Research*, this originally was envisioned as an open-access publication that would be available as an e-book, as a free pdf download, and as a print-on-demand book. However, at these most recent meetings the issue of its publication format and its availability were discussed at length, since distribution will be problematic with a self-published book in any form. Thus we agreed to investigate the possibility of an academic publisher for distribution purposes. Because of this we will no longer publish chapters as they are completed, even though several have already appeared in *Les Carnets de l'ACoSt*. A suggestion also was made that a pdf of the book could be available either free or for a modest cost for members of ACoSt.

4 The following table of contents for the *A Handbook for Coroplastic Research* has been reorganized to take into account the addition of new chapters or sections.⁸

1. Historiography of coroplastic research (JPU)
 - 1.1. Eighteenth and 19th century beginnings, including 19th century biases.**
 - 1.2. Coroplastic research in the earlier 20th century**
2. Manufacturing techniques and workshop production (AM, MMD)*
 - 2.1. Modelled by hand
 - 2.2. Made on the wheel
 - 2.3. Made in a mould and derivative production
 - 2.4. Mixed techniques
 - 2.5. Polychrome decoration (Violaine Jeammet, Brigitte Bourgeois)*
 - 2.6. Workshops / signatures
3. The Distribution, Trade, Diffusion, and Market Value of Greek Figurative Terracottas (JPU)**
4. Contexts, use (AP, MA)*
 - 4.1. The ritual act
 - 4.2. Architectural context*
 - 4.3. Natural environment*
 - 4.4. Funerary environment*
 - 4.5. Secular contexts: domestic, public, semi-public and workshop spaces
5. Methodologies from fieldwork to publication (AM)*
 - 5.1. Recording archaeological data
 - 5.2. In the museum
 - 5.3. Publication
- Appendix*
 - Effective photographic techniques (Thomas Nicq).
 - Link to the video “Prises de têtes / Puzzling Stories”**
6. Chronologies
 - 6.1. Comparative time-line (JPU)**
 - 6.2. Problems in the dating of figurative terracottas (AM)
 - 6.3. Fixed points for an absolute chronology (collective)
 - 6.4. Late Bronze to Early Iron age: continuity or rupture?
7. Methodological approaches for coroplastic research
 - 7.1. Stylistic approach (JPU)**
 - 7.2. Art historical approach (AP)
 - 7.3. Iconographic approach (SSH)*
 - 7.4. Workshop recognition (Ambra Pace)
 - 7.5. Anthropological approach (Christina Marangou)**
 - 7.6. Sociological approach (Mireia Lopez-Beltran)
 - 7.7. Museographical approach
 - 7.7.1. Figurines de terre cuite et questions de muséographie (Violaine Jeammet)**
 - 7.7.2. The issue of forgeries (Giacomo Biondi)**
 - 7.7.3. Annotated list of exhibitions (JU)**
 - 7.8. Archeometric approach (Maria Dikomitou, Giorgios Papantoniou)*
 - 7.9. The evidence of fingerprints (collective)
8. Where are we now, where are we going ? (JPU)*
9. Multilingual lexicon (collective)**
10. Bibliography (SAS)

5 During these last two meetings several contributions to the *Handbook* both by invited authors (§ 2.5, 7.1, 7.5, 7.7.1, 7.8), as well as those written by members of the team (§ 3, 4, 5, 7.1, 7.3) were reviewed and discussed collectively. A number of contributions have been completed and have been reviewed collectively, some are nearing completion, while others will have to be reorganized to better adhere to the objectives of the *Handbook*. New contributions also were requested (§ 7.6, 7.7.2).

- 6 The *Handbook* is now well advanced and the team is committed to completing it as quickly as possible. No doubt an additional meeting will be necessary for final co-ordination and review of the respective parts of the *Handbook*, as well as discussions of financing options. The time and place of a final meeting is yet to be determined.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a database interface. At the top, there's a search bar and a table with columns 'Winter', 'Volum', 'Page', and 'Number'. Below this is a section titled 'TYPE' with a 'Chapter name' dropdown. The 'ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLE' section contains a form with fields for 'Museum', 'Inv.', 'Size (m)', and 'Place of discovery'. To the right of this form is a small image of a terracotta figurine. Below the form is a 'Technique' section with a 'Handmade' dropdown and a 'Period' dropdown. The 'Form of the representation' section has tabs for 'Single figure', 'Multiple figure', and 'Partial representation'. The 'Nature of the representation' section has dropdowns for 'Anthropomorphic', 'Species', 'Posture', and 'Gesture'. The 'Age' section has a dropdown for 'Adult'. The 'Attributes' section has a dropdown for 'Dress'. A 'Comments' field is on the right side. The footer contains contact information for the project.

2. Winter On-Line Project

- 7 The second project of the team *Winter On Line* has progressed considerably since our last report when the searchable database had just been created by Christine Aubry with input from the team. The two volumes of F. Winter *Die Typen der figürlichen Terrakotten* (1903) were digitized in Lille in high definition and in different formats (pdf, jpg). Each figurine illustration then was “cut out” and saved as an individual jpg file to be pasted into a dedicated field of the electronic database. Marion Muller-Dufeu recovered all of Winter’s text in Word format and she thus was able to make corrections for those characters not recognized by the character recognition software, as well as introduce the *corrigenda* lists of Winter himself. The information provided by this Word doc is to be copied and pasted into each of the relevant fields of the database for each figurine illustration, including chapter title, museum, inventory, bibliographic reference, dimensions, provenience, iconographic characteristics, archaeological contexts, and a “Comments” field, among others.
- 8 The database, currently at a trial stage, is now in the process of being populated by members of the team using Winter’s images and data. As of this writing some 100 records have been completed. This has highlighted problems that still have to be addressed. For example, it is most important to have an iconographic description of each object, but this involves a complicated number of data fields and descriptor values that still have to be added. Thus, the current approach is to strike a balance between the richness and accuracy of the data and the ease of filling the data fields to obtain the greatest reliability.

We have multiplied the descriptor values so that a single search will yield the maximum result. Eventually, it will be possible to add to *Winter On Line* new finds of figurine types not known in Winter's catalogue, or additional data or new finds of already represented types. This second step obviously will comprise a widely collaborative effort.

3. New conference project

- 9 A third project was articulated during the course of the October 2017 meeting that concerns a possible international conference to be organized by ACoSt. Entitled *Coroplastic Studies in the Early Third Millenium: Alternative Approaches*, this has been proposed for sometime in 2021 at the earliest with the suggested participation of the École française d'Athènes, the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. A proposal was drafted in the three relevant languages in order to solicit the interest of these research institutions that could co-host this conference in Athens. The following is the proposal: "Since the middle of the last century, research on figurative terracottas has evolved into an autonomous discipline. Once limited to art historical, iconographic, or purely archaeological points of departure, recently it has integrated approaches from other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, archaeometry, economics, geography, statistics, and information sciences, among others. This proposed conference focuses on Greek terracottas from the Neolithic Age to the end of the Hellenistic period in order to explore the different ways in which these new approaches enhance coroplastic research. Those papers that present new and concrete results stemming from innovative and interdisciplinary approaches will be privileged, while simple excavation reports or presentations of purely theoretical methodologies will not be considered." During the course of the next few months the directors of the suggested archaeological schools will be approached for possible participation.

4. Excursions

- 10 During both of the Lille meetings excursions were made to major exhibitions presented at the Louvre-Lens Museum: *L'histoire commence en Mésopotamie (History Begins in Mesopotamia)* in December 2016, and *Musique! Échos de l'Antiquité (Music! Echos of Antiquity)*, in October 2017: obviously, terracotta figurines played a role in both exhibitions. In addition, far from our ancient Greek preoccupations was a visit in October 2017 to the recently-restored Villa Cavrois in Croix, on the outskirts of Roubaix near Lille. This is a large Modernist mansion designed in 1934 by the French architect Robert Mallet Stevens for a wealthy industrialist as a "total artwork." Stevens designed all aspects of this spacious home, integrating the furniture, down to the smallest detail, with the architecture and surrounding park.

NOTES

1. See “Two Collaborative Projects for Coroplastic Research,” Newsletter of the Association for Coroplastic Studies 11, Winter 2014, 32–33; Muller, A. and J. Uhlenbrock, “Two Collaborative Projects for Coroplastic Research, II. The Work of the Academic Year 2014–2015,” *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt* [Online], 13 | 2015, <http://acost.revues.org/633>; Muller, A. and J. Uhlenbrock, “Two Collaborative Projects for Coroplastic Research, III. The Work of the Academic Year 2015–2016,” *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt* [Online], 15 | 2016, <http://journals.openedition.org/acost/986>
 2. S. Aït-Salah, “Figurines masculines en contextes votif et funéraire de la Thessalie à la Thrace : Marqueurs identitaires et témoins des rituels d’intégration et de socialisation ?,” *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt* [Online], 16 | 2017, <http://journals.openedition.org/acost/1026#authors>
 3. Hugot C., S. Huysecom-Haxhi and A. Muller, “Les terres cuites grecques. Pour qui ? Pourquoi ? Comment ?,” *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt* [Online], 15 | 2016, <http://acost.revues.org/970>
 4. <http://catania.liveuniversity.it/2017/06/16/catania-katane-tra-mito-e-rito-ecco-la-mostra-che-racconta-la-citta-etnea-allepoca-dei-greci/>
 5. Muller A., E. Lafla and S. Huysecom-Haxhi, *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine. Actes du Colloque international d’Izmir, juin 2007. Volume 1 : Production, diffusion, étude, BCH Suppl 54 (2016). Volume II : Contextes, iconographie et fonction, Septentrion Collection Archaiologia (2015).* <http://www.septentrion.com/fr/livre/?GCOI=27574100726490>
 6. Pautasso A. and O. Pilz, *Πήλινα Ειδώλια. Nuove prospettive nello studio della coroplastica cretese (XIII-VII sec. a.C.). Atti del Seminario bilaterale Italia-Germania, Catania, 19-21 Settembre 2013, Creta Antica 16, 2015 [2017].*
 7. <https://coroplasticstudies.univ-lille3.fr/fichiers/fichiers%20video/Prisesdetete-final-ST.mp4>
 8. Sections marked by two stars have been completed, reviewed, or have been already published in *Les Carnets de l’ACoSt*; sections marked by one star are nearing completion.
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ABSTRACTS

An international team of 7 researchers has been meeting biannually to collaborate on two projects that are envisaged as aids for coroplastic research. The first is the *Handbook for Coroplastic Research* (HaCoSt), a tool designed for those new to the field of coroplastic studies. The second project has been nicknamed Winter On-Line. This concerns the creation of a searchable version of Franz Winter, *Die Typen der figürlichen Terrakotten*, 1903, in wiki format.

INDEX

Keywords: Handbook for Coroplastic Research, greek terracottas, greek terracotta figurines, searchable database, Franz Winter.

AUTHORS

ARTHUR MULLER

University of Lille / IUF
arthur.muller@univ-lille3.fr

JAIMEE UHLENBROCK

State University of New York, New Paltz
uhlenbrj@hawkmail.newpaltz.edu