



BARRETT, CAITLÍN E.

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This volume, a revision of the author's doctoral dissertation (Yale University, 2009), focuses on 82 terracotta figurines with Egyptian religious imagery from Hellenistic Delos. Laumonier,¹ Bovon,² and Hatzidakis³ have previously published most of the figurines.⁴ By studying the unpublished excavation notebooks of the École française d'Athènes (listed in Appendix C), Barrett's aim is to examine the figurines' uses, interpretations, and social meanings in the context of Egyptianizing cults on the island as well as to analyze them as parts of an archaeological context, and not as "isolated objets d'art" (p. 26). The study examines the cultural and material contexts of the Egyptianizing figurines together with their fabric and technological style⁵ (chapters 1-6), and is followed by a catalogue of the figurines (Appendix B).

The first chapter addresses the historical context of Delos in the Hellenistic period and briefly presents the methodological approach of the study. As one of the important nodes in a far-ranging trade network, Hellenistic Delos was subject to competing powers of the Eastern Mediterranean: Ptolemaic Egypt, Macedonia, Athens, and Rome. The growing economic importance of the island attracted an international community of merchants from the early third century BCE, which promoted the creation of an increasingly syncretistic religious milieu. The economic importance, as well as the prosperity of the island, grew markedly after 167 BCE, when Rome granted the island to the Athenians as a "duty free" port. Between 167 BCE and the sacks of 88 and 69 BCE, the island became central in Rome's commercial relations with the Hellenistic East. Although Ptolemaic activity on Delos was short-lived (third century BCE), the benefactions of the Ptolemies marked the island's religious and public spaces, and political and probably economic contact with Egypt continued through the late second century BCE. The presence of Egyptian sanctuaries on Delos, however, seems to have been independent of the Ptolemaic court. Barrett addresses the diversity of Egyptian religion and examines the multiplicity of Egyptian cults on the island. She concludes that the Egyptian traditions on Delos were primarily Alexandrian and/or Lower Egyptian – a conclusion that accords with the information provided in the so-called "Sarapieion A Chronicle," which emphasizes the Memphite origins of the priest who first introduced Egyptian cults on Delos (p. 25).

The second chapter summarizes the results of the author's analysis of the fabric of the Egyptianizing figurines from Delos, which was included in the author's dissertation and will be published in an article currently under preparation. Here, Barrett compares the fabric groups of the Egyptianizing figurines from Delos to the ones of (a) a collection of Greco-Roman Egyptian clay figurines from the Cairo Museum, (b) Greekmade terracottas from the Athenian Agora, and (c) a collection of non-Egyptianizing terracottas from Delos. She determines that the vast majority of the Egyptianizing figurines were locally made. It is a pity that at the moment of the present review the article has not yet been published so that the analysis of the fabric groups can be properly assessed.

Chapter 3 addresses the manufacturing techniques of the figurines. The author examines 61 Egyptianizing figurines whose find-spots or fabrics suggest production on Delos together with samples from the same groups of material used in chapter 2 (see p. 94-95). As in chapter 2, a more detailed treatment of this analysis appeared in the author's dissertation and will be published in an article that is under preparation. The analysis of the manufacturing techniques and technological practices of these distinct groups enables Barrett to conclude that Delian coroplasts placed greater emphasis on the aesthetic appearance of the objects that they produced, following the practice of their Athenian counterparts, whereas Egyptian coroplasts made technical choices in favor of time efficiency.

Chapter 4 examines the iconography of the figurines in order to address their cultural context. This chapter forms the largest part of the study (202 p.). Barrett proposes that the iconography of many of these figurines alludes to Inundation festivals in Egypt. After addressing the evidence and theological background for Egyptian festivals of the flooding Nile in Egypt, Barrett tackles the architectural and textual evidence for a similar festival on Delos. The most important textual evidence is Callimachus' third-century BCE *Hymn to Delos* (lines 206-208), which equates the Inopos River on the island with the Nile. The architectural evidence is less firm. There are water installations in all three Sarapieia on Delos and Barrett interprets them as "Nilometers." The author states that they are modeled after "Nilometers" in Egyptian temples but does not analyze the latter in order to understand the ways in which the water installations on Delos were similar to them. It is possible, and seems highly likely in this case, that the Delian water installations were indeed "Nilometers," but further architectural analysis and comparison with similar structures in Egypt would have provided the missing link. In the remaining part of the chapter, the Barrett examines the iconography of the Egyptianizing figurines from Hellenistic Delos as related to the Inundation of the Nile and the New Year's festival. The iconography of the figurines is discussed in relation to the following categories: (1) depictions of deities identified with the returning goddess, who is associated with the Inundation; (2) sexual imagery alluding to the inundation caused by the *hieros gamos*, the sexual union of the returning goddess with the reigning god of the temple in question; (3) birth of the new solar child (Harpocrates), product of the *hieros gamos*; (4) Nubians and the entourage of the returning goddess; (5) Bes and related dwarf deities; (6) plastic vases and depictions of water or wine vessels; (7) Dionysos

Botrys; (8) Hermes-Thoth; and (9) flowers and floral wreaths. After a detailed examination, Barrett convincingly argues that the figurines' designers not only understood the underlying religious concepts but also were familiar and confident enough to create innovative themes that would be comprehensible to a Greek audience. The author's thorough iconographic analysis of the figurines and discussion of textual evidence on Egyptian imagery provide a useful tool for the study of Egyptianizing figurines on Delos and elsewhere.

Chapter 5 presents the archaeological contexts of the Egyptianizing figurines. By consulting the relevant excavation notebooks of the *École française d'Athènes* the author was able to contextualize 46 out of the 82 figurines under study. Twenty-four figurines come from the residential quarters of Delos (10 found in private houses, 8 in streets, and 6 from ambiguous contexts); nine originate from shops (5 from the coroplastic workshops); eleven were discovered in various sanctuaries of non-Egyptian gods; two come from graves in the Delian necropolis on Rheneia. In order to address the archaeological context of the figurines, the author reviews in detail the evidence from the excavation notebooks. The discussion of inconsistencies and mistakes in the excavation notebooks, as well as in more recent publications, is often excessive and in some cases incorrect: For example, on p. 398 Barrett points out that in his 2003 publication (p. 432-433, n. 425), Hatzidakis assigns B6790 to the 1927 excavations at the east of the wall of Triarius, whereas in his 2004 article (p. 386), he notes that B6790 was found southwest of the Agora of the Italians in 1904.⁶ This is not the case. I quote Hatzidakis (2004, 386): "081.N. Νέγρος, Μουσείο Δήλου Β.06790 (Α. του τείχους του Τριαρίου, 1927)..." The present reviewer would have wished that this kind of discussion were limited or inserted in the footnotes, in order to leave room for an analysis of the Egyptianizing figurines that engages other finds in the same archaeological contexts. Since the largest number of the figurines comes from houses and residential areas on Delos, a discussion of them in relation to the architectural context as well as other associated finds, such as inscriptions, graffiti, wall decorations, and sculptures, could have provided interesting insights into the religious syncretism attested on the island. Likewise, an analysis of the Egyptianizing figurines found in the sanctuaries of non-Egyptian gods in relation to other finds from the sanctuaries may have allowed a better understanding of the multifaceted religious syncretism on Delos.

The final chapter summarizes the points made in the preceding chapters in order to underline the ways in which a meaningful exchange of ideas underscored the production and use of the Egyptianizing figurines. Barrett's analysis of the Egyptianizing iconography of the figurines confirms previous scholarship on this matter, which demonstrated that Greco-Roman interest in Egyptian religion was far from superficial. Barrett points out that the Egyptianizing figurines evoked certain Egyptian traditions. The imagery associated with the Inundation festivals was the most prominent, which is not surprising given that Inundation festivals were very popular in Egypt, and that the river Inopos was equated with the Nile in ancient literature. On the basis of the epigraphic evidence, the adherents of Egyptian cults on Delos came from all over the Mediterranean, as previous scholarship has indicated. The broad distribution of production and use of the Egyptianizing figurines on Delos complements the epigraphic evidence.

To conclude, this book is a welcome addition to the bibliography on Delos. Barrett's sharp and thorough analysis of the iconography of Egyptianizing figurines, as well as her knowledge of Egyptian religion, enhance our understanding of Greco-Egyptian religious syncretism on Delos. Finally, I have a few technical comments. As the photographs are not numbered, but organized thematically, numbering the plates on which they feature and referring to these numbers throughout the text would have been a useful addition to the organization of the book. Additionally, numerous bibliographical, translation, and typographical mistakes are noted throughout. Listing all of them here, however, is beyond the scope of this review. I mention only a few:

p. 71, n. 226: there is no Peignard 1992 in the bibliography.

p. 373: the translation of "Γαλάτης" is Gaul or Galatian soldier, not "soldier".

p. 384-389: Kabirion should read Kabeirion; Kabeiroi is correctly spelled throughout.

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NOTES

¹ A. Laumonier, *Les figurines de terre cuite. Exploration Archéologique de Délos* 23, Paris 1956.

² A. Bovon, “Chapitre IX: Les figurines,” in P. Bruneau et al., *L’îlot de la Maison des Comédiens, Exploration Archéologique de Délos 27*, Paris 1970, p. 209-218.

³ P. J. Hatzidakis, *Delos*, Athens 2003; id., “Ειδωλιόμορφα σκεύη από τη Δήλο,” in ΣΤ’ Επιστημονική Συνάντηση για την Ελληνιστική Κεραμική, Βόλος 2000, Πρακτικά, Athens 2004, p. 367-392.

⁴ Two figurines were previously unpublished (Delos Museum inv. nos 59-M-204 and F120), and an additional one was found in Cécile Durvyé’s recent excavation at the Aphrodision (it will be published in a forthcoming volume of the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*).

⁵ The author uses the term “technological style” to address the external iconographic features as well as the variety of choices (conscious or unconscious) that craftsmen make in manufacturing an object (p. 29-30, 89-92).

⁶ For the bibliographical references, see n. 2.