TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

and PLAQUES from

DURA-EUROPOS

Susan B. Downey
To the memory of
ANNY ALLARA
and happy and productive times at Dura
This publication of the terracotta figurines and plaques of Dura-Europos complements my two volumes on the sculptures in stone and plaster from the site: *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report 3.1.1: The Heracles Sculpture* (New Haven, 1969), and *The Stone and Plaster Sculpture: Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Monumenta Archaeologica 5 (Los Angeles, 1977).

The manuscript had a long genesis. It was begun at the suggestion of and with the encouragement of Antonio Invernizzi, with whom I have enjoyed many fruitful conversations about the problems raised by the terracottas of Dura-Europos in relation to those from other Near Eastern sites. During a visit to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1986, we were able to look together at the terracotta figurines and plaques in the collections of the Yale University Art Gallery, and I profited greatly from his insights.

I made a number of research trips to New Haven to work in the archives and storerooms of the Dura-Europos collection in the Yale University Art Gallery, and I owe a particular debt of gratitude to that gallery’s curator of antiquities, Susan B. Matheson, and to a series of her assistants, for help during these visits and for supplying photographs. The generosity of Susan B. Matheson in allowing me access to the archives and the material in the storerooms and the help of her and her assistants in finding the objects and locating information in the archives have been indispensable for the completion of this book. In gathering comparative material from other Near Eastern sites, I have had the generous assistance of curators in a number of museums: the staff of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan, Maud de Shaunnesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Agnès Spycket of the Louvre in Paris, Jens Kröger of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and Adnan Bounni and Jawdat Chehadé of the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums in Damascus. I would like to thank especially Evelyn Klengel-Brandt of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, for allowing me access to then unpublished terracotta figurines from Babylon in that museum’s collections. My
discussions with her of this material and of the terracottas of Assur were extremely fruitful.

Insights of other scholars, shared with me over a period of years, have contributed greatly to this work. Participants in two conferences—“Arabia Antiqua,” held in Rome in 1991, and another on Palmyra and the Silk Road held in Palmyra in 1992—provided very thoughtful comments on the papers I presented there. It is impossible to acknowledge all the other scholars whose insights have been helpful, but I would like to thank especially Kerrtu Karvonen-Kannas and Jean-François Salles. The terracotta figurines and plaques of Dura-Europos constitute in some respects a unique ensemble, and the opportunity to compare the body of material from Dura with ensembles from such other sites as Seleucia on the Tigris, Babylon, Assur, and Failaka has broadened the scope of this work. The comments of participants in an art history seminar at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, in the fall of 1999 were insightful. I also owe a debt to Steven Dyson and the anonymous readers of the manuscript, for suggestions that greatly improved it, particularly in setting the terracottas in the context of the site. Discussions with my colleague Richard Lesure of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, about the difficult problem of interpreting figurines in prehistory added breadth to chapter 2 of this book’s introduction, on the cultural meanings of the figurines. Interpretation of the material of modest quality is difficult, and responsibility for the opinions expressed herein, as well as for any errors, is entirely my own.

This project has been supported over the years by a number of grants: a National Endowment for the Humanities Travel to Collections Grant for work in the Yale University Art Gallery; two grants-in-aid from the American Philosophical Society; and numerous grants from the Academic Senate at the University of California, Los Angeles. The manuscript was completed during the tenure of a fellowship from the Institute for Advanced Study. I am very grateful for all of this assistance. Finally, I want to thank Ellen Bauerle and Collin Ganio of the University of Michigan Press for their assistance in the editorial process. It is a great pleasure to see a project that has occupied so many years come to fruition.
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The abbreviations for periodicals follow the system used in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (1991): 1–16. The following short titles and abbreviations are used in addition.

**Abbreviations**


DAFI  = Délégation archéologique française en Iran


Koldewey, R., *Das wieder erstehende Babylon* (Leipzig, 1913).


Palmyra and the Silk Road

International Colloquium: Palmyra and the Silk Road, AAAS 42 (Damascus, 1996).
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<td>Safar, F., and M.A. Mustapha, Hatra: The City of the Sun God (Baghdad, 1974).</td>
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<td>Van Ingen, W., Figurines from Seleucia on the Tigris, University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 45 (Ann Arbor, 1939).</td>
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<td>WVSOG Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</td>
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