The Josef Floren Replica Lists of Classical and Hellenistic Greek Sculpture (JoFReL)

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Introduction

The following text presents and contextualizes a dataset. It is not a research article in the conventional sense, but rather a documentation of and an access point to a scholarly archive compiled by Josef Floren (1941–2012), a classical archaeologist who devoted much of his academic life to the study of Greek sculpture and its Roman copies. Between 1986 and 2012, Floren systematically gathered extensive bibliographic and visual material related to known Roman replicas of lost Greek originals, resulting in 1,352 digital files.

This dataset represents Floren's attempt to catalogue and reconstruct Classical and Hellenistic sculptural types through the methodological lenses of "Meisterforschung" and "Kopienkritik". While the resulting material reflects the limitations of a pre-digital, individual scholarly effort – being often incomplete, inconsistently structured, and rooted in now-outdated interpretative models – it remains a rich resource. The aim of this publication is to make this material accessible to the wider research community in its original form and to provide the necessary background for understanding how and why it was assembled.

We have not altered or edited Floren's original files beyond reorganizing them for usability. We have stored them in the repository Zenodo where the JoFRel dataset is open for access[2] We present the files as a legacy dataset, with the intention of preserving his contribution and enabling future researchers to draw on this material for their own analyses. This article offers context, structure, and guidance for working with the JoFReL dataset, but does not include new interpretative conclusions or original research findings.

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1. Context of the JoFReL dataset

The JoFReL dataset contains the academic bequest of Josef Floren (1941–2012)[3], a Münster-based classical archaeologist and expert in ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. Floren undertook the task of gathering comprehensive information on all known Greek sculptures by also compiling extensive lists of Roman copies connecting them with literary evidence. His main aim was to reconstruct the mostly lost Greek works of art by identifying statue types placing his approach firmly within the German tradition of "Meisterforschung" and "Kopienkritik".[4] This research was the basis of his book project "Handbuch der Griechischen Plastik 2. Die klassische Zeit" which was supposed to follow the publication of the first volume "Die geometrische und archaische Plastik".[5] A third volume was intended to focus on Hellenistic sculpture. The series, edited by Werner Fuchs and Josef Floren, was, however, never completed. It was planned to update the "Handbuch" of Georg Lippold.[6]

Incidentally, research on Greek and Roman sculpture had developed significantly in the last decades which made Floren's approach somewhat outdated. First, Roman copies were no longer considered to be faithful copies of Greek masterpieces, instead, the active contribution of Roman sculptors and creators was emphasised – although the value of the "high fidelity"-copy, the copy that aims at faithfully replicating the original, in Roman times was also mapped out.[7] This decentering of the Greek original called into question a central methodological approach of Floren. Second, he persistently operated with the notion of "Kunstlandschaften", identifying local styles that he connected with local traditions and ethnic affiliations. In the scholarly community, such an approach has long been seen as problematic, not only because as more and more archaeological contexts are known such local styles have sometimes proved to be wrongly attributed[8] but also because it is now a scholarly truism that ethnic identities are not cogently reflected in material culture.[9]

Josef Floren was born on 29 March 1941 and died on 11 November 2012. He studied at the universities of Münster and Freiburg and obtained his doctorate

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[3]   Cf. https://d-nb.info/gnd/140005714.
[4]   On "Meisterforschung" cf. Kansteiner 2017.
[5]   Floren 1987.
[6]   Lippold 1950.
[7]   Anguissola 2015; Giuliani 2022.
[8]   Bol 2002.
[9]   Hall 1997.

in 1972 in Münster with a thesis on the Gorgoneion.[10] This was followed by the travel grant ("Reisestipendium") from the German Archaeological Institute, and from 1973 until his death, he worked in Münster on the Handbook of Greek Sculpture. During this time, and especially after taking up the handbook project, he published only very little[11], which can be explained by the diligent research which he pursued over nearly three decades, and which was supposed to lead to comprehensive monographs. As a teacher, he inspired numerous students to study Greek sculpture and generously made his lists of replicas available to them for their theses.[12]

The archive lists 1,352 individual files written in German, mostly lists of replicas of statue types, but also fragmentary handbook chapters. For decades, Floren systematically consulted all literature on Greek sculpture. The files were regularly updated by Floren until his death in 2012, the last update taking place in April 2012. Floren's sudden death prevented him from completing his work. The lists and texts are therefore often sketchy and incomplete[13]; in their current state, they were not intended for publication.

2. Methods

The aim of Floren was to write a comprehensive art history of Greek sculpture as a handbook and as an update of the work of Georg Lippold.[14] As the foundation for this, he systematically collected information on all surviving original sculptures from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. To reconstruct lost types of ancient Greek sculpture, Floren followed the principles of "Meisterforschung" (see above), as he explains in a fragment of a talk.[15] His underlying assumption was that by bringing together a large quantity of ancient sculptures, it is possible to identify the lost masterpieces. This was done by tracing interdependences between individual pieces and organizing them into lists of replicas, ranging from exact copies to loose interpretations ("Umbildungen") of his masterpieces. Following this methodological approach, it is not surprising to note that Floren cared little for archaeological contextualization.

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[10] Floren 1997.
[11] Floren 1978; 1979; 1981; 1992; 1993; Floren / Herfort 1983.
[12] E.g. Filges 1997; Peine 1998; Post 2004.
[13] Contra Stupperich, in: Stupperich / Scholl 2016–2018, 12, stating that the volume on classical sculpture was "ready for press".
[14] Lippold 1950.
[15] See the file JoFReL/1_General/MAN-I in the dataset.

Steps

Floren collected comprehensively all Information on sculptures from excavations, museums and the art trade worldwide including their respective bibliography. He was an avid user of interlibrary loans and regularly spent time in the library of the German Archaeological Institute in Rome, the worldwide most comprehensive library for classical archaeology.

The sculptures were assembled in replica lists. The basis was an analogue file system with photos and bibliography (kept at Münster University). The digital replica lists were categorised in folders and subfolders down to the individual file which reflected a type. The structuring suffers from attempting to combine a regional approach (in the tradition of Lippold) and a typological approach. The entries also contained possible literary evidence. All the sculptural copies as well as reflections in other media such as coins usually followed this taxonomy.

Many of the entries are incomplete and were in the process of being constantly updated by Floren. He marked missing information such as inventory numbers, page numbers or image references with the symbol #. Some of the files are empty and were left by the present authors as such to preserve Floren's structure.

The replica lists were originally arranged in the following folders (with numerous subfolders):

- A-KLASSIK = contains mostly Early Classical and High Classical sculpture organized by types and genres
- C-HOCHKL = contains mostly Early Classical and High Classical sculpture organized by regions, genres and artists
- D-SPÄTKL = contains mostly Late Classical sculpture organized by regions
- E- HELLEN = contains mostly Hellenistic sculpture organized by types, genres and artists
- F-K = contains general Classical sculpture organized by regions
- F-KATALOG = contains indices, abbreviations and notes
- SPK = contains Late Classical sculpture organized by types and genres
- SPK_GÖTT = contains Late Classical sculpture organized by male deities
- SPK-Kü = contains Late Classical sculpture organized by artists

For the sake of usability, we rearranged the dataset as follows:

-        1_General = contains F-K and F-KATALOG
-        2_Early and High Classical Sculpture = contains A-KLASSIK and C-HOCHKL
-        3_Late Classical Sculpture = contains D-SPÄTKL, SPK, SPK_GÖTT and SPK-Kü
-        4_Hellenistic Sculpture = contains E-HELLEN

The replica lists are organized according to ancient sources, bibliography, format and state of preservation, genres and material. Usually, the sculptures closest to the original are listed first. Floren used a number of abbreviations among them most importantly:

-        Br. or BR. = Bronze (bronze)
-        GR = Grabrelief (grave relief)
-        FO = Fundort (place where it was found)
-        K. = Kopf (head)
-        Rel. or REL. = Relief (relief)
-        Slg. = Sammlung (collection)
-        St. = Statue (statue)
-        T. = Torso (torso)
-        TC. or TK. = Terrakotte/a (terracotta)
-        WR. = Weihrelief (votive relief)

Quality Control

During data collection, which was work in progress, the lists were constantly revised and checked by Floren, as he used them extensively for his teaching and supervisions. A final quality control by the present authors did not take place and was not intended as this dataset is understood as legacy data, and as such the files were uploaded to Zenodo in their original condition.

Constraints

The main constraint of the data collection was its unlimited scope which led to a massive amount of data that could not be handled by an individual. Moreover, Florens strict taxonomical approach led to problems of structuring the diverse data. Although the individual replica lists were in themselves logical, they could not be integrated into a hierarchical order coherently, since Florens

arrangement according to types, artists and regions did not follow a relational hierarchy in which each and every replica list had its unique position. This shortcoming of structuring is deeply rooted in the pre-digital age before digital relational applications became widely used.

3. Reuse potential

The archive can support a wide range of art historical analyses of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, including discussions of typology and style of Greek sculpture but also of the characteristics of Roman sculpture, supplementing seminal publications such as "Der neue Overbeck". [16] Floren's quest for completeness in his lists makes it considerably easier to find replicas of ancient statues. The lists are therefore a treasure trove for sculpture research, based on Floren's deep familiarity with Greek sculpture. Current research on ancient sculpture rejects the assumption that all Roman ideal sculptures were faithful copies of Greek masterpieces and instead regards many of the Roman works as new creations. The comprehensive lists of sculptural types organised according to genres and their degree of dependence to the presumed original have the potential to spark this debate anew by establishing replica relationships on a very large material basis. The material comprehensively documented by Floren allows for a fresh debate on the question of the character of Roman ideal sculpture, its eclecticism, classicism and the mechanisms of reproduction and adaptation.

Firmly rooted in the traditional classical archaeological method of "Meisterforschung", Floren understood the painstaking compilation of lists of replicas as the necessary foundation to close the gap between the numerous *opera nobilia* documented in the ancient literary tradition and the surviving objects. Even if complete concordance between texts and sculptures can certainly never be achieved, the material compiled by Floren, has nevertheless considerable potential to inspire new approaches to the study of sculpture, as the following might illustrate: Oftentimes, Roman ideal sculpture that cannot be attributed to a known type or seems to be a variation of one is explained by eclecticism which is an important argument for identifying the creative potential of the Roman sculptor. When checked against the vast amount of material, compiled by Floren, however, other replicas may be identified. This challenges the notion of the creative Roman invention, and for Floren, this would have been proof of the fact that this sculpture is a copy of yet another Greek type that had to be identified. Such a shift in evaluating the strong

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[16]   Kansteiner et al. (eds.) 2014.

persistence of Greek types has implications for our knowledge of Greek ideal sculpture on the one hand and Roman copying practices on the other.

In terms of constraints in the reuse of the data, it must be noted that the replica lists cannot be used intuitively, because of the non-coherent structure in the folders. Therefore, we recommend downloading the whole data set, open it with file explorer and use the search bar to find specific types or objects.

4. JoFReL dataset description

Name
JoFReL (with several subfolders)

Format
.docx. The original files from Floren were in .doc format and have been converted to .docx in the present dataset for better interoperability. Some of the files are damaged but readable, only some special characters and endnote layout are corrupt.

Creation dates
1986-2012

Dataset Creator
Josef Floren, University of Münster

Language
German

License
CC-BY 4.0, Creative Common License.

Repository location
https://zenodo.org/records/15527000

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