

Representation as Visual Exegesis: The Stone Figurines of Chalcolithic Cyprus

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Abstract

An image may signify not simply by resembling its referent but also by being similar to or different from other images. Among Chalcolithic stone figurines from Cyprus, that second dimension of signification seems to account for much of the formal variability. Several heterogeneous types were characterized by differential schematization: images ranged from highly schematic to more recognizably anthropomorphic. In each of these types, formal relations among the figurines suggest an underlying logic uniting a diversity of images. Individual figurines would have been perceived both as distinctive and as part of a systematically varied whole. Cross-referencing among the images is so pronounced that it needs to be given serious attention in any effort to characterize subject matter. I suggest that the stone figurines were not depictions of people, but rather of signs—logo-like symbols conceived of as vaguely anthropomorphic. It is thus the more schematic of the figurines that come closest to depicting the basic subject of the images. Anthropomorphic detail constituted an elaboration on the core image, and it signified metaphorically rather than literally. Like cartoonists who distort the faces or bodies of politicians, Chalcolithic figurine makers manipulated the form of stone figurines to interpret the meaning of their subjects. These representations can be thought of as ‘visual exegeses’, because an interpretive commentary on the referent was embedded in the form of the image. Indeed, most of the differences in form among the figurines derive from the varied interpretive elaborations of the artists rather than an effort to distinguish different referents.

Keywords: Chalcolithic, Cyprus, figurines, metaphor, schematization, subject matter

Introduction

The path to sociopolitical complexity in prehistoric Cyprus was long and bumpy. From the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, no single region was consistently prominent, and settlement histories were characterized by instability and rupture (Manning 1993). At the scale of the site, florescence in one period was often followed by abandonment in the next. Peltenburg (1993) envisioned recurring cycles of intensification and collapse of social inequality. The Early and Middle Chalcolithic, from 4000/3900 to 2700 Cal BC, constitute one such cycle. Domestic archi-

tecture went through a trajectory of increasing elaboration following a significant break at the end of the Neolithic (Peltenburg 1998: 237-49; Clarke *et al.* 2007: 120-26; Knapp 2013: 197-215). In several settlement clusters in the south and west of the island, villages of 10 ha or more appeared. Incipient complexity is suggested by evidence of various sorts (Knapp 2013: 243-45), with specific expressions thereof varying between settlement clusters or even between prominent sites within a single cluster (Peltenburg 1993: 15-16). At Kissonerga *Mosphilia*, a ceremonial area was established beside a high-

status residence (Peltenburg 1998: 244-49). In the Souskiou cemeteries, there is evidence for differential ranking of groups and/or individuals (Peltenburg 2006: 166, 176-77; Knapp 2013: 226-27, 244-45). Also important are consistent differences between the Souskiou tombs in the styles of ornaments included as grave goods. Peltenburg sees these as expressions of group identity, an indication that 'society was organised along heterarchical lines with pronounced family/house autonomy' (Peltenburg 2006: 167-68).

The Early-Middle Chalcolithic is characterized as well by a proliferation of anthropomorphic representations in multiple media. Ceramic figurines ranged up to 50 cm in height, many bearing elaborate painted designs. Particularly common are picrolite pendants of the standardized cruciform type. Figures in more readily available stones range from schematic, vaguely anthropomorphic representations to relatively naturalistic depictions. Picrolite cruciforms are most common at sites of the Souskiou cluster, and many may have been manufactured there (Peltenburg 2011: 688). Figurines in other stone or ceramic were locally manufactured at various sites in southern and western Cyprus, including Erimi *Pamboula*, Lemba *Lakkous*, and Kissonerga *Mosphilia*.

My focus here is on two interrelated aspects of this remarkable corpus: the subject matter of the imagery and the implications of variation in form. Chalcolithic figurines have sometimes been interpreted as deities (e.g. Karageorghis 1992), but more often they are identified as depictions of people. Variation in the form of the images is seen as specifying the human subject matter: expressing a gender ideology, depicting aspects of childbirth, or distinguishing individuals (Goring 1991a: 52-55; Peltenburg 1992; Bolger 1996: 367-69; 2003: 113-15; Knapp and Meskell 1997: 195; Talalay and Culen 2002: 186; Knapp 2013: 242). Arguments along those lines are convincing for the ceramic figurines but not for the stone imagery.

The goal of this study is to offer an alternative reading of subject matter and formal variation among the stone figurines. I suggest that many are not depictions of people (or deities) but of *signs*. The signs were shared, public symbols and, like many such symbols observed by anthropologists, they were rich, evocative, and vague. In their material renderings of the symbols, figurine artists regularly added naturalistic details, but these human attributes were meant to be taken metaphorically rather than literally. Differences in form referenced not a differentiated subject matter but rather the varying efforts of different artists to interpret the core sign. I argue that patterns of variation among the images make this interpretation attractive and that a representational system of this sort is consistent with a model of Middle Chalcolithic societies as incipiently complex but with persistent cultural mechanisms that stymied the emergence of dramatic inequalities (Peltenburg 1993; 2006: 179-80).

Explaining Formal Variability among Chalcolithic Figurines

Variation in the form of Early-Middle Chalcolithic figurines is in part explicable in relation to material and function. A three-way division into ceramic, picrolite, and miscellaneous stone other than picrolite (including limestone, chalk, calcarenite, andesite, and diabase) is a helpful starting point (Vagnetti 1974: 25-26). Peltenburg (1991: 100-101) proposed a threefold typology relating image size to differences in material and original function of the objects: small figurative *pendants* of picrolite, a relatively soft greenstone related to steatite, were overwhelmingly cruciform in design. They were worn singly or strung on necklaces and are the only figurines regularly used as burial offerings. Intermediary *figurines* were of ceramic or miscellaneous stone. The ceramic figurines were often freestanding and perhaps served didactic purposes, while the stone figurines were not

freestanding and exhibited wear from being repeatedly handled (Goring 1991a: 54-55). The largest figures, *statuettes*, were again of either ceramic or stone and bear no signs of wear from handling. I will often use 'figurine' as a generic term to cover anthropomorphic pendants, statuettes, and the various sizes of figurines distinguished by Goring (1998a: 151-52).

Aside from differentiation by material and function, *reference to subject matter* is often treated as the fundamental source of variation in form—or at least as autonomous and salient in relation to other sources of variation. In that case, observed variability would translate directly into differences between subjects. For example, figurines that do not bear evident sexual attributes are prepubescent, whereas figurines with breasts are adults and those holding infants represent parenting. Bolger (1996; 2003: table 4.1, 113-15) argues along such lines, reading shifts in imagery between Chalcolithic and Bronze Age primarily in terms of subject matter (woman as birth-giver to woman as mother). Frankel (1997: 84) is skeptical. He points out that the 'new order' of the Bronze Age involved 'different depictions of the human form, not only iconographically but also in terms of techniques, materials, styles, and quite probably function'. In other words, references to subject matter were not autonomous but instead entangled with other aspects of formal variability such that it becomes difficult to isolate and compare Chalcolithic and Bronze Age subjects. I would agree—and add that entanglement with other sources of variability is also present within the Chalcolithic corpus. My focus is on what Frankel glosses as 'style' in the quote above.

Gell's (1998) approach to style is helpful: whereas iconographic elements in a work reference the subject matter of the image, stylistic elements reference other works. Stylistic qualities of a work prompt it to be perceived as part of a larger whole constituted by all works in the same style (Gell 1998: 162-63). Thus, the stylistic qualities of a figurine head reference

other figurine heads by appearing similar or different. Those similarities or differences, in turn, reference the ways in which a figurine was made, given the range of possibilities available to the maker—and thus, ultimately, choices on the part of the maker or user. In the language of Peircian semiotics, style signifies indexically rather than iconically—more in the manner of a paw print than a portrait (Lesure 2015: 109).

Stylistic analysis begins with the traditional typological procedure of grouping like with like. Once the nature of patterning in the corpus is understood—let us say by grouping into types—the next task is to infer the logic behind the patterns. What were the generative rules that led multiple artists, working over an extended period of time, to produce a corpus exhibiting the observed variation? The pattern-generating logics of interest here are those governing differentiation within types. I am postulating that the types were recognizable to ancient makers and users and that associated with each type was a *schema* (pl., *schemata*), a shared set of rules for how to make a figurine that was both distinct from and similar to other figurines in a type.

The concept of schemata as the sets of rules structuring formal variability within types is helpful here because of the nature of variability in the Chalcolithic corpus. Among figurines from, for instance, Formative Mesoamerica (e.g., Lesure 2015), types may be monothetic or polythetic, but they are pretty homogeneous stylistically. Vagnetti (1974: 28-29) identifies two such types among the microlite figurines of Chalcolithic Cyprus. Her Kythrea variety features in the discussion below. Overall, however, internally homogeneous, readily distinguishable types are not common. More prominent are several cases in which objects that I propose grouping as a type are dramatically heterogeneous—and yet systematically so. In each case, there is a gradation from highly schematic to more detailed and anthropomorphic. A Campo (1994: 141) draws attention to this sort of pattern when she argues that the microlite cruciforms 'are all simple or

more elaborate variations on a normative type' (Figure 1). She is here identifying systematic variation among the cruciforms and inferring the presence of a (simple) schema that gave coherence to a diverse set of images. The viewer who apprehended the schema would have been prompted to see the objects as forming a systematically differentiated whole rather than a series of distinct entities. These aspects of formal variability signified most immediately through similarities and contrasts with other figurines rather than references to subject matter. Among the picrolite and miscellaneous stone figurines, I identify three types displaying graded schematization: *tripartite*, *phalliform*, and *typical cruciform*. This kind of systematic formal variation not reducible to subject matter appears to be basically absent among the ceramic figurines.

Demonstrating the validity of systematically heterogeneous types is something of a challenge. An intuitive leap is necessary to perceive variation as (1) systematically patterned and (2) thus probably the result of diversity-generating rules shared by the ancient artists. The most reasonable approach to empirical justification is hermeneutic: a depth of engagement with the details and an effort to account for as much evidence as possible. Still, skepticism remains a likely response. For example, Bolger sees a Campo's (1994: 141) claim that cruciforms are differentially schematized variations on a norm as the result of 'a methodological bias to minimize or ignore differences' (Bolger 2003: 101). The issue, though, is not whether one or the other ignores difference but what they make of it. A Campo explains variability in terms of the artist's decision to

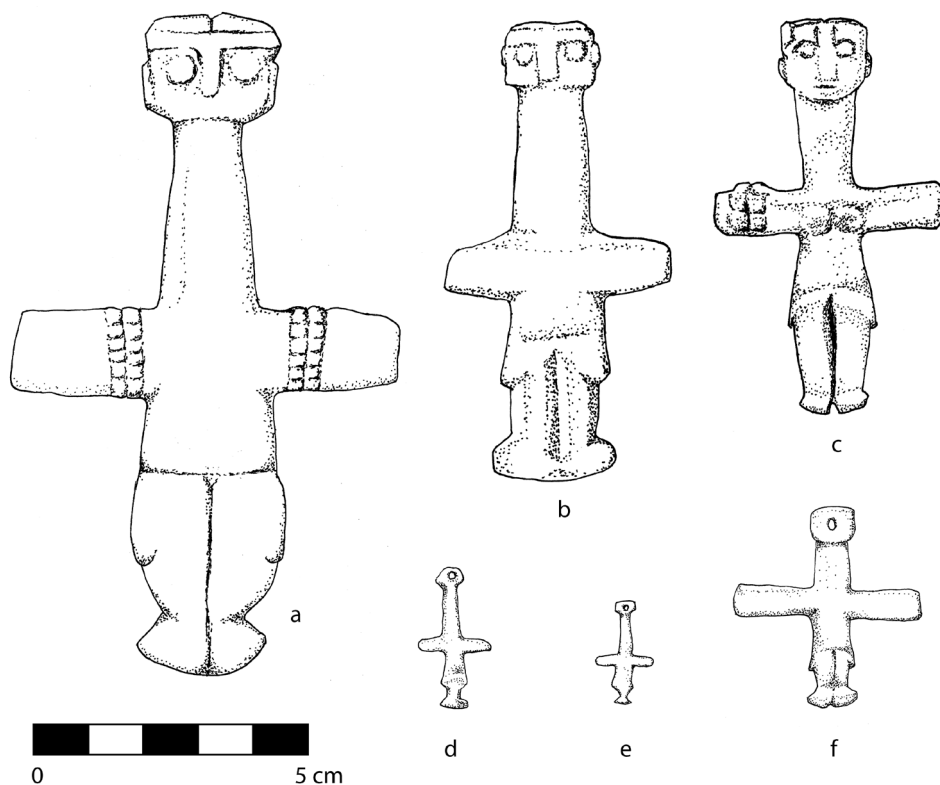


Figure 1. Typical cruciform pendants and figurines in picrolite from Souskiou. Drawn by Alana Purcell from: (a) Peltenburg 2006: pl. 29; (b) Flourentzos 1990: cat. no. 29; (c-f) Vagnetti 1980: pls. I:2, X:23, XI:41, IX:23.

elaborate or simplify; Bolger argues that formal variation referenced differences among subjects. For Bolger, formal variability was fundamentally iconic whereas for a Campo iconic references to subject matter were entangled with indexical references to choices by the maker (to elaborate or simplify) and the user (concerning which style to wear). Neither approach is inherently better. The question is an empirical one. In the case of the Chalcolithic cruciforms, I agree with a Campo.

The Chalcolithic Figurine Corpus

Most of the corpus of Chalcolithic figurines comes from six sites in southern and western Cyprus: Kalavassos *Ayious* (object catalog code K-Ay), Erimi *Pamboula* (ER), Souskiou *Vathyrkakas* (SVP), Lemba *Lakkous* (LL), Kissonerga *Mosphilia* (KM), and Kissonerga *Mylouthkia* (KMyI)—the locations are all shown in Figure 2. Several figurines reported by Vagnetti (1987) and Goring (1998a; 1998b) are also noted,

from Limassol Museum (LM) and Paphos Museum (PM). Recent excavations at Souskiou *Laona* have also yielded numerous figurines (Crewe *et al.* 2002; 2005), but a full report is still in preparation. Following the convention in Cypriot archaeology, the full two-part site names include the name of the nearby village followed by a local toponym in italics (Bolger 2003: 227). Sites referred to repeatedly will be shortened to either the village name (Erimi, Lemba) or the italicized toponym only (*Mosphilia*, *Mylouthkia*). *Vathyrkakas* and *Laona* will sometimes be referred to together as ‘the Souskiou cluster’.

The figurines considered were broadly contemporary, with most of them Middle Chalcolithic (Table 1); figurine making declined significantly in the Late Chalcolithic (Peltenburg and Webb 2013: 254). Data for this paper are mainly drawn from the high-quality final monographs (Peltenburg *et al.* 1985; 1991; 1998a; 1998b; 2003; 2006; Todd and Croft

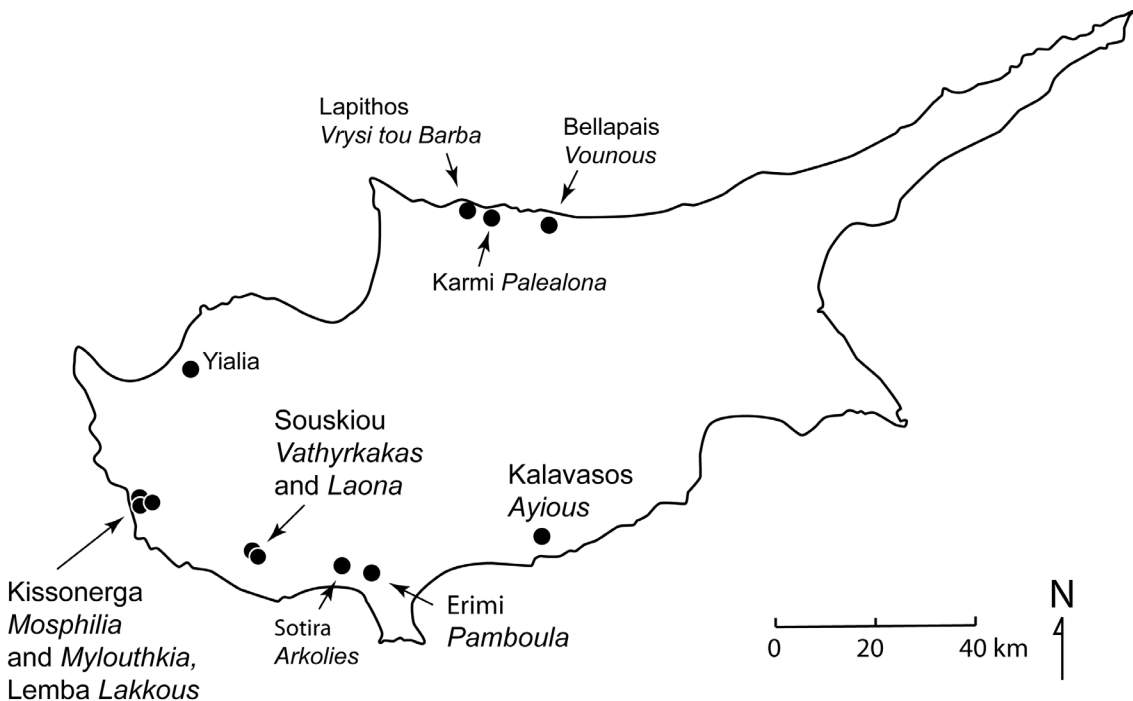


Figure 2. Locations of Chalcolithic and Bronze Age sites mentioned in the text.

Table 1. Chronology of prehistoric Cyprus (simplified from Knapp 2013: tables 2 and A2).

<i>Basic Periods</i>	<i>Specific period or phase</i>	<i>Dates Cal BC</i>
Epipalaeolithic	Late Epipalaeolithic	11000–9000
Neolithic	Initial Aceramic Neolithic	9000–8500
	Early Aceramic Neolithic	8500–6800
	Late Aceramic Neolithic	6800–5200/5000
	Ceramic Neolithic	5200/5000–4100/4000
Chalcolithic	Early Chalcolithic	4000/3900–3600/3400
	Middle Chalcolithic	3600/3400–2700
	Late Chalcolithic	2700–2500/2400
Prehistoric Bronze Age	Philia Phase	2500/2400–2250
	Early Cypriot I–II	2250–2000
	Early Cypriot III–Middle Cypriot I–II	2000–1750/1700
Protohistoric Bronze Age		1750/1700–1100

2004). The Erimi excavation, conducted in the 1930s, has been unevenly published (Dikaios 1962; Bolger 1988; Karageorghis 1991a). I personally examined the original collection, now split between the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia and the Limassol District Archaeological Museum.

Several particularly important finds are illustrated in Figure 3. From Lemba *Lakkous* there is a limestone statuette 36 cm in height (Figure 3a), found on the floor of a partially preserved building with some unusual features compared to typical houses (Peltenburg 1989: 122–23). While the ‘Lemba Lady’ (Peltenburg 1977) is not monumental, this figure and an unprovenienced artifact to be referred to as the Getty Cruciform (Figure 3b) are significantly bigger than typical stone figurines, generating debate over whether these might be cult statues (Peltenburg 1977: 140; Karageorghis 1992: 20; a Campo 1994: 86–87; Bolger 1996: 368; 2010: 156–57). A pit at *Mosphilia* (Unit 1015) contained a remarkable collection of objects, including 18 ceramic and stone figurines piled in and around a ceramic model of a Chalcolithic building (Peltenburg 1991). According to Peltenburg (1989: 113–22), interment of these objects was a ritualized act. Among the ceramic figurines,

a figure with female breasts shown seated on a stool (KM1451) may be in the act of giving birth, based on the painted design on a flat area in the crotch that seems to show the head and arms of the emerging child (Figure 3c).

Birthing as Theme

The most prominent current understanding of the basic subject matter of Chalcolithic figurines from Cyprus is that they depict aspects of childbirth or, more generally, human life-stages. The Unit 1015 cache at *Mosphilia* is particularly important. The emerging baby painted on KM1451 (Figure 3c) supports Morris’s (1985: 122) interpretation of a previous find from *Mosphilia* (KM299) as representing a woman on a ‘birth-stool’. Furthermore, the contextual association of KM1451 with other figurines (both stone and ceramic) prompts the suggestion that all of these diverse images might originally have been associated with the theme of birthing (Goring 1991b: 156–60; Bolger 1996: 368). Based on use wear, Goring (1991a: 49–55) suggests a range of functions (didactic, ritual) all involving activities and beliefs associated with childbirth.

The Unit 1015 cache did not include picrolite figurines or pendants, but Peltenburg

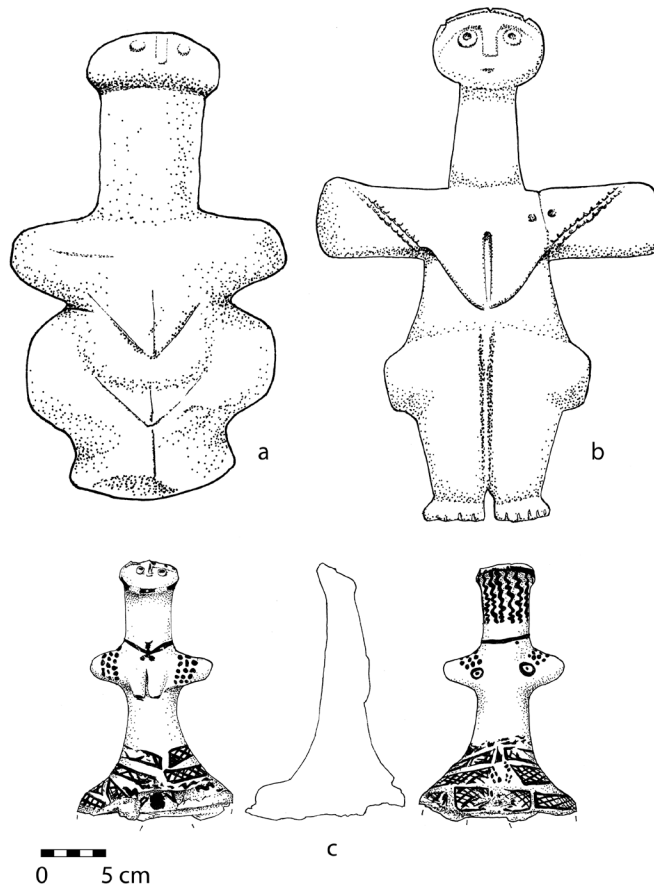


Figure 3. Chalcolithic imagery from Cyprus: (a) Lemba Lady, LL54 (limestone); (b) Getty Cruciform (limestone); (c) KM1451, a seated female shown in the act of giving birth (ceramic). Drawn by Alana Purcell from: (a) Peltenburg *et al.* 1985: frontispiece and fig. 81; (b) Flourentzos 1990: cat. no. 13; (c) Peltenburg *et al.* 1991: fig. 24 and pl. 9.

(1991: 101; 1992: 32) compared the posture of the cruciforms (see Figure 1, above) to that of KM1451 and identified it as also the stance of a woman giving birth. If the numerous cruciforms are thus ‘birth pendants’ (Peltenburg 1992), then much of the Chalcolithic corpus might be directly associated with that theme. Of course, stone figures such as the Lemba Lady are depicted standing (Figure 3a), and among ceramic figurines there is further variety in posture and gesture (Figure 4). That diversity can be accounted for either by positing that figurines in other stances depicted different aspects or stages of pregnancy (Bolger 1996:

368) or by expanding the scope of proposed references from birthing to the human lifecycle more generally (Bolger 2003: 113-15; Goring 1998a: 165).

The iconographic case for birthing as central theme is impressive but not definitive. For instance, the endlessly repeated posture among cruciforms involves knees together and genitals hidden, in contrast to that of KM1451 or the Lemba Lady. Also, the idea that an uplifted face and cruciform-style arms illustrate the stance of a woman at the moment of birth—straining, with arms flung wide for support by other women (Morris 1985: 122; Goring 1991b;

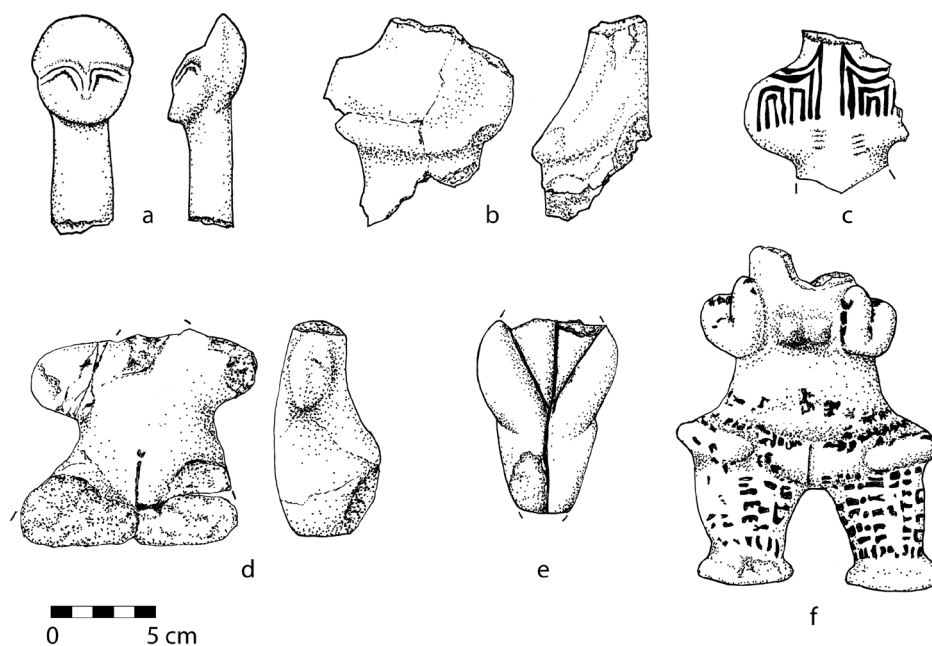


Figure 4. Ceramic figurines: (a-b) head and torso fragments from Kalavasos *Ayios*; (c, f) torso fragments from Kissonerga *Mosphilia*; (d-e) seated torso and standing legs fragments from Erimi *Pamboula*. Redrawn by Alana Purcell from: (a-b, d-e) Karageorghis 1991a: figs. 22, 17, 10, and 8; (c) Peltenburg *et al.* 1998a: fig. 86:1; and (f) Peltenburg *et al.* 1991: fig. 25 and pl. 12.

Peltenburg 1991: 101; 1992: 32)—is problematic, because those features are actually common among figurines of every posture. My point here is simply that birthing as the main theme remains debatable; when I speculate below about symbolic content, I accept these arguments but suggest that the fundamental referent was more abstract than ‘birthing’ per se.

My attention in this paper is on aspects of formal variability that involved cross-references among images rather than direct reference to subject matter. Work on this dimension of variability need not conflict with iconographic analysis: a Campo’s (1994) assessment of the cruciforms as basically representing the same subject, with variability the result of artistic choice, is fully compatible with Peltenburg’s (1992) argument that childbirth is the central theme. The present work poses more of a challenge to life-stage interpretations, since those assume that most variability directly references

differences among subjects. Yet the basic classes of Chalcolithic figurines are not the same in this regard. The life-stages interpretation seems promising for the ceramic figurines, where differential schematization is not a salient theme and a diversity of posture, gesture, and ornament suggests a differentiated subject matter. My focus in this paper falls on the stone figurines, among which there is comparatively little differentiation in posture/gesture and variable schematization is a prominent theme. I look in detail at tripartite figures, touch briefly on the phalliform type, and finish with the picrolite cruciforms.

The Tripartite Figurines

The majority of figurines of miscellaneous stone appear to have been *roughly* tripartite in that they consisted of three basic parts corresponding to head-neck, torso-arms, and hips-legs-feet. Tripar-

tite figurines display a gradation from minimally anthropomorphic to detailed and naturalistic, with traits added according to a consistent logic as suggested in Figure 5 (right side).

At the schematized end of the spectrum, there were two alternate versions of the most primitive feature that would make a rock into a human image: projecting arms or a constricted neck. With projecting arms, the object immediately became 'tripartite' in form (KM289). Where the most primitive feature was a constriction or groove differentiating head from body, the most minimally human images are 'bipartite' rather than 'tripartite' (KM1467, KMyl-301). There is, however, no convincing 'bipartite' type. The minimal bipartite figurines seem instead closely related to those with a second constriction lower on the body, forming a waist and producing a 'tripartite' form. From there, the line of increasing elaboration beginning from 'neck constriction' joins that starting with 'projecting arms' and ends with naturalistic figures such as the Lemba Lady.

From the point where the two lines of increasingly detailed images merge, the next steps involve the addition of female attributes: the differentiation of thighs from belly, the specification of that with pubic triangle or vaginal slit, and the addition of breasts. Inclusion of further anthropomorphic details—projecting feet, bulging belly, face differentiated from neck, and facial features—generally follows that of female sexual attributes, but the traits are not themselves ordered in any definite way.

The foregoing reading of the majority of miscellaneous stone figurines suggests that they cohere in a heterogeneous type characterized by systematic variation. I infer that Chalcolithic artists shared a generative logic for schematizing the human figure in a graded series from minimally anthropomorphic to relatively naturalistic. Given the strength of patterning, Chalcolithic users of the figurines probably perceived the conceptual unities that lay behind manifest differences among individual works. The issue is

important because the implication is that much of formal variability among the images may derive from cross-referencing between figurines rather than direct reference to subject matter.

To assess this intuitive reading of diverse figurines as constituting a systematically varied whole, a data set of 105 stone figurines was assembled: 66 from Kissonerga *Mosphilia* (based on Goring 1998a; 1998b); 12 from Lemba *Lakkous* (based on Peltenburg *et al.* 1985); 11 from Kissonerga *Mylouthkia* (based on Goring 2003); and 16 from Erimi *Pamboula* (based on personal observation as well as Dikaïos 1962; Vagnetti 1987; Bolger 1988). These figurines were classified by 'type' as follows: 51.4% tripartite or possibly tripartite; 5.7% minimally anthropomorphic 'bipartite' to be analyzed with tripartite; 15.2% phalliform; 2.0% non-picrolite but cruciform (LL949, KM509); 5.7% 'other', meaning not fitting any of the three main types; 9.5% unclassifiable small fragments; and 10.5% unclassifiable due to insufficient published data.

The tripartite, possibly tripartite, and minimally anthropomorphic 'bipartite' totaled 60 figurines. Variables coded as present/absent (1 or 0), were as follows: *arms* protruding to sides; *waist* constriction dividing upper torso from hips-legs; *neck* constriction dividing head from torso; *leg differentiation* of some kind such as full separation, a groove, or merely a notch at the base of the figure; *differentiation of thighs from belly*, most commonly by grooves meeting in the crotch to form a V-shape; *female genitals* suggested by a grooved pubic triangle, a vertical groove for the vaginal slit, or, rarely, some other means; *breasts* represented by either V-shaped grooves or rounded projections; *feet* differentiated from legs; a *bulging belly*; *face* differentiated from neck; and *facial features* such as brows, nose, or eyes shown in relief or by grooving. Note was also made of any salient features beyond the above.

Assessment of the proposal is distilled in Table 2. It is important to remember that subject matter has not yet been taken into account. We are considering a dimension of formal variation not

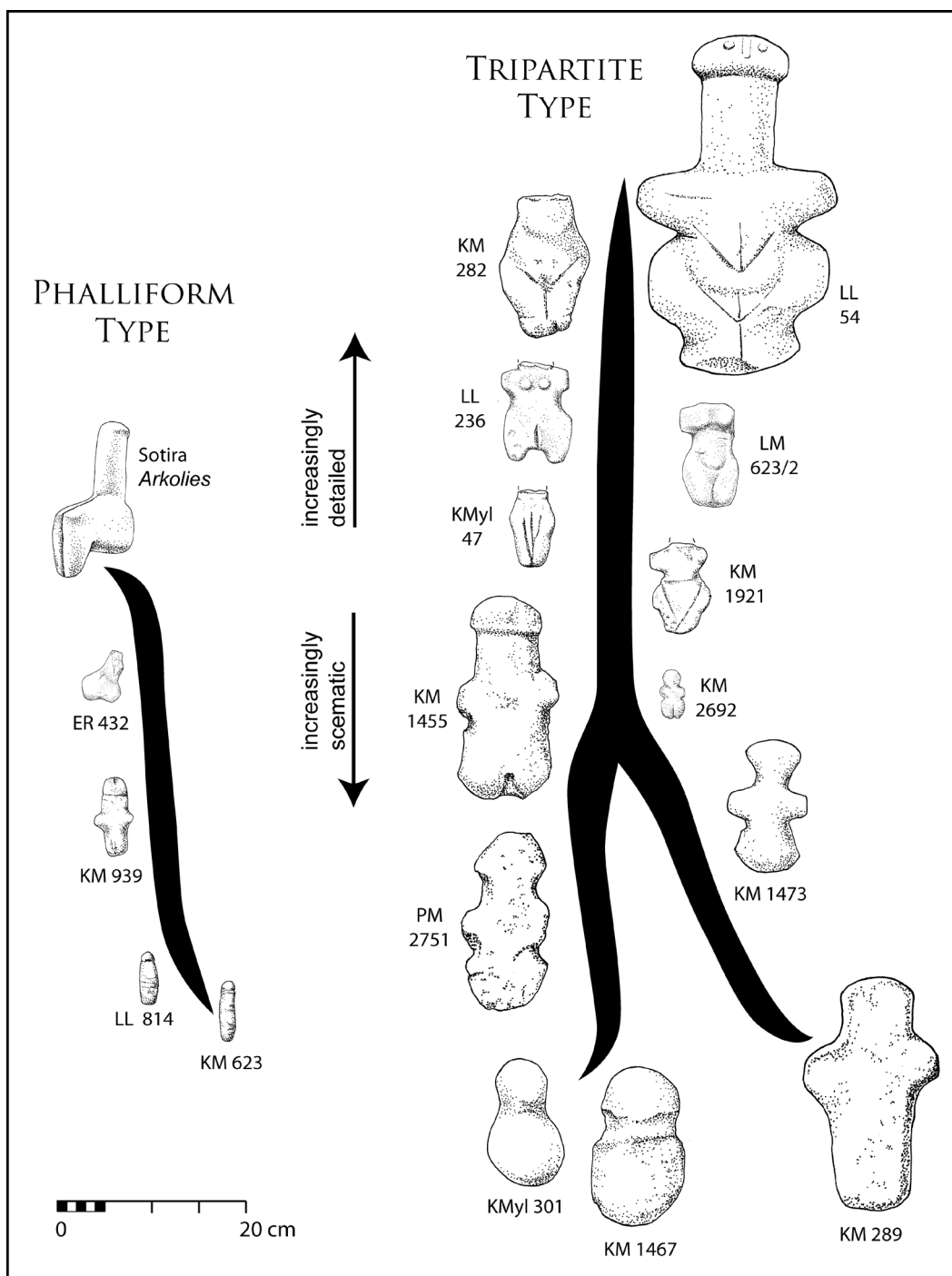


Figure 5. The tripartite and phalliform schemata among stone figurines. In each schema, the images vary from detailed/naturalistic (top) to schematized (bottom). Composition by the author; images redrawn by Alana Purcell from: KM, PM – Peltenburg *et al.* 1991; 1998a; LL – Peltenburg *et al.* 1985; KMyl – Peltenburg *et al.* 2003; ER – Bolger 1988: fig. 34; Sotira – Flourentzos 1990: cat. no. 11.

Table 2. Analysis of tripartite stone figurines (see text for discussion).

Most primitive	Arms (or neck)	Waist	Neck (or arms)	Leg diff.	Thigh/belly diff.	Genitals	Breasts	Feet	Bulging belly	Face diff.	Facial Features	Cat. no.
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	LL54
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	KM1471
	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	KM282
	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	LM623/2
	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	LM623/1
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	KM2678
	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	LL236
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER1219
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KMyl-47
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM2825
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM3597
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1921
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM33
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER598
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	LL720
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER929
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM578
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM2692
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER362
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1455
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER635
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM898
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER248
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM3599
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	PM2754
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1896
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	PM2621
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	LL1096
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1098
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER760
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1448
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1473
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1470
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	PM2751
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM2115
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM3602
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1474
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1472
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER1218
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1201
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM2413
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER810
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM289
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1469
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER765
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER61
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	ER1001
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM977
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KMyl-301
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1467
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KM1388
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	KMyl-98

directly referencing subject matter. Unless all the figurines depict the same thing, we would expect some variation to be an expression of differentiation among subjects.

The central part of Table 2 presents the variables in columns and individual figurines in the rows, with original catalog number at the far right. The columns are arranged in the order proposed for increasing detail. Variables are coded by presence/absence (1/0), with missing values due to fragmentation of many figurines shown in gray. The 52 rows of the table constitute all of the figurines for which at least five of the variables could be coded. The rows have been arranged to favor the proposed graded series of added traits, with the most schematic figurines at the bottom and the most detailed at the top. Lack of fit with the schema would appear as 0s within the black mass of 1s to the upper left or as 1s amongst the 0s to the lower right. To distill the two branches of highly schematic tripartite figurines (Figure 5) to a single table, the first and third columns—which normally are the ‘arms’ and ‘neck’ variables respectively—are transposed for those figures for which ‘constricted neck’ rather than ‘projecting arms’ was the most primitive feature. This is signaled by the notation ‘neck’ in the column labeled ‘most primitive’. Although the most detailed of the figurines is also the largest (LL54), statistical analysis of the entire set substantiates a pattern observable in Figure 5: that there is no strong relationship between degree of elaboration and image size.

The results in Table 2 support the idea that the figurines were made according to a logic of graded schematization in which figurine makers chose to add or subtract details according to a shared set of generative rules. The possibility of arranging the rows so as to produce a coherent triangular block of black cells (1s) to the upper left and 0s to the lower right was by no means a foregone conclusion; it is a characteristic of the data. In the black block, 10 of 200 individual cells vary from expectations for the ordered addition of traits, with 33 missing values due to

fragmentation. Six of the ten are cases in which a neck constriction is absent when projecting arms are inferred to be the most primitive trait, or else arms absent with neck constriction the primitive trait. It seems possible to make sense of those within the proposed logic of the schema by positing that, starting with neck constriction as the most primitive trait, projecting arms were optional, and vice versa. There remain four cells in which a feature is absent when expected to be present and nine cells in which features are present when expected to be absent; those total approximately 3% of the cells with data or 2% of all cells (with 17% of all cells blank due to missing data).

In terms of individual figurines, three are missing expected indication of female genitals (KM282, LM623/1, LM623/2) and one lacks thigh/belly differentiation (LL236). There are also six with from one to three ‘extra’ (out-of-order) traits. Three of those involve solely unexpectedly detailed heads (ER1219, LL1096, KM1098). Two bear isolated extra traits (breasts on KM1896 and possible thigh/belly differentiation on KM2413). One figurine has multiple out-of-order traits (defined feet, bulging belly, and facial features on LL720).

How much are such variations likely to have mattered? In several instances, they seem minor (the absence of a grooved vaginal slit when the division between legs and belly is delineated by grooves meeting to form a V-shape—or the reverse of that). Several other cases are more interesting. The facial features on LL1096 and ER1219 are surprising given the featureless bodies. One wonders whether treatment of subject was the issue here, with presence of a face confirming to users that the torso was to be taken as positively sexless rather than a schematized reduction of the human form. A second look at two other figures, LL720 and LM623/1, reveals some cruciform traits. The absence of genitals in these two cases might be explained by positing that the makers of these figurines drew eclectically from the logic of both tripar-

tite and typical cruciform types; in the latter, genitals are absent at all levels of detail.

Recordable variation beyond that shown in Table 2 is modest. There is no emphasis on variation in posture, with most probably standing. Eight figurines have salient, atypical traits. In four cases, the unusual features consist of drilled pits, cut marks, or scratches that derive from deliberate damage to the figurine; those would have referenced the history of the use of the object rather than the subject matter (ER248, ER929, KM1469, PM2754). The other cases are each unique and not very revealing: KM3599 has a drilled navel; KM2413 has a deep horizontal groove across the torso; KM3597 appears to depict a gesture involving at least one hand on the chest; finally, LL720 has small drilled holes on the shoulders which likely depict the same sort of garment shown on some ceramic figurines.

Hopes for identifying different subjects among the tripartite figures center instead on the basic traits of the schema. Among the more detailed figures, femaleness and perhaps pregnancy are salient themes. Further, femaleness is deeply embedded in the schema, since female traits are added in a roughly consistent order as figurines become more detailed. An important issue is what to make of the highly schematized versions. It is tempting to contrast these with the female images and label them unsexed or to think of them as people in a generic sense. By stopping there, however, we ignore the linkages among images (Figure 5). Each figure would have been perceived *both* as different from those at other levels of schematization and as part of a unified whole of the tripartite type. To understand subject matter, we need to grapple with the idea that figurines at each position along the gradient of schematization were simultaneously assertions of the distinctiveness of that position and expressions of the coherent whole of which they were a part.

The quality of being both distinctive and part of a whole may have had other implications

besides subject matter, pointing particularly to the artist and the choices he or she made among a range of options. Yet the patterning is so strong that one wonders if the underlying schema could itself have been somehow a subject. One possibility would be that the more schematic figurines were explorations of the essence of the more naturalistic ones. However, it is the reverse of that which I think holds particular promise for making sense of the Chalcolithic figurine corpus: that the basic subject here was the highly schematized, minimally human image; that this was a rich, productive, but also vague symbol in need of explication; and that the more detailed figurines were explorations of its meaning. The latter would not, in this case, be depictions of women but instead objects in which female imagery was deployed metaphorically, as an elaboration or commentary on a schematized symbol. I develop that idea in the sections that follow.

Phalliform Figurines

A second heterogeneous type involves stone phalli and anthropomorphic elaborations thereof (Figure 5, left side). The sample is small, but here again variation appears to be systematic. The rules for graded differentiation of images are different from those for tripartite figurines. At one end of the series are elongated stones, round in cross-section, with a circumferential groove that gives the object a phallic form. At the other end of the series is the seated figure from Sotira *Arkolies*, a surface find variously interpreted as Chalcolithic or Neolithic (Swiny and Swiny 1983: 58-59; Knapp and Meskell 1997: 193; Knapp 2013: 182-83). This seated anthropomorph is strikingly phallic in overall form, and its projecting legs make it three-dimensional in a way unknown among the figurines of the tripartite schema. In a clever reading, Swiny and Swiny (1983) suggest that this work encoded both male and female genitals, depending on how it was viewed.

Similar seated anthropomorphs with arguably phallic neck-heads are known from Erimi and *Mosphilia* (ER342, KM1485). Positing that the rules of this schema involved the gradual anthropomorphization of the penis, we can trace a series from simple phallus to anthropomorphized phallus to phalliform anthropomorph as indicated in Figure 5.

Considering the more anthropomorphic versions in isolation, one would probably see them as depictions of people in which phallic imagery was deployed metaphorically. Considering the full spectrum of variation, however, the greater frequency of simple phalli compared to anthropomorphized versions, and the commentary above on tripartite figurines, another possibility presents itself. The anthropomorphic elements may have been deployed metaphorically to elaborate the symbolism of the phallus. The Sotira figure would thus be less a depiction of a person than a depiction of a phallus with the addition of anthropomorphic elements.

Cruciform Figurines and ‘Visual Exegesis’

Figurines of picrolite, overwhelmingly cruciform in design, are the most numerous single class in the Chalcolithic corpus (Vagnetti 1980; Morris 1985; a Campo 1994; Goring 2006). They are sometimes divided into ‘pendants’ (with perforation) and ‘figurines’ (without), but Peltenburg (1991: 101) considers those both to have functioned as pendants, the unperforated versions suspended with a string tied around the neck. The cruciforms are strikingly similar in conception (see Figure 1, above). Repeated traits include the cross form, with arms reduced to rigid bars extending straight out from the body; a long, straight neck; and a strange posture with drawn-up knees protruding slightly to the front in a manner between crouching and sitting. There is virtually no variation in posture and gesture, but the figures range considerably in detail, from small and schematic to larger and more naturalistic. Some have female breasts

and/or a grooved lattice pattern on the arms or chest suggestive of clothing as depicted on some ceramic figurines (compare Figures 1a, 3c). Sometimes the face is tilted back from the vertical, and/or the throat displays a distinct bulge. There are also rare but truly weird cruciforms including those with lattice-covered faces (Figure 6c, h), swastika-style hands (Figure 6e-f), arms converted into a complete secondary torso (Figure 6a-b), and other rare variants on the theme of multiple figures (Figure 6d, h, i).

I do not describe in detail my analysis of attribute patterning. The results are broadly compatible with those of a Campo (1994: 124-43). I agree with her (a Campo 1994: 128-31, 133) that differential schematization is strongly linked to the size of the figurine (a point of contrast with tripartite figurines, indicating differences in the underlying schema). My analysis also substantiates a Campo’s (1994: 131) identification of a core set of cruciform attributes as including drawn-up knees, outstretched arms, and a long neck, to which other attributes such as tilted faces, facial features, arm/torso decoration, and breasts were added in something of a characteristic order. Further, I agree with a Campo (1994: 141-43) concerning the unity of subject matter: that there is one basic image that was more or less elaborated according to artistic choice. Again, the resulting images can be regarded as a heterogeneous type characterized by systematic variation involving differential schematization, in this case based loosely on size.

Not all cruciform figurines, however, follow this schema. There are a few minor types characterized by internal homogeneity. Examples include the weird variants (Figure 6) and a type that Vagnetti (1974: 28-29) calls the Kythrea variety. The latter is more fully three-dimensional than typical cruciforms (Figure 7b-d). Instead of adding detail with greater height, Kythrea variety figurines all display the same set of attributes (radically tilted facial plane, lack of facial features, bulging throat, and fully separated lower legs).

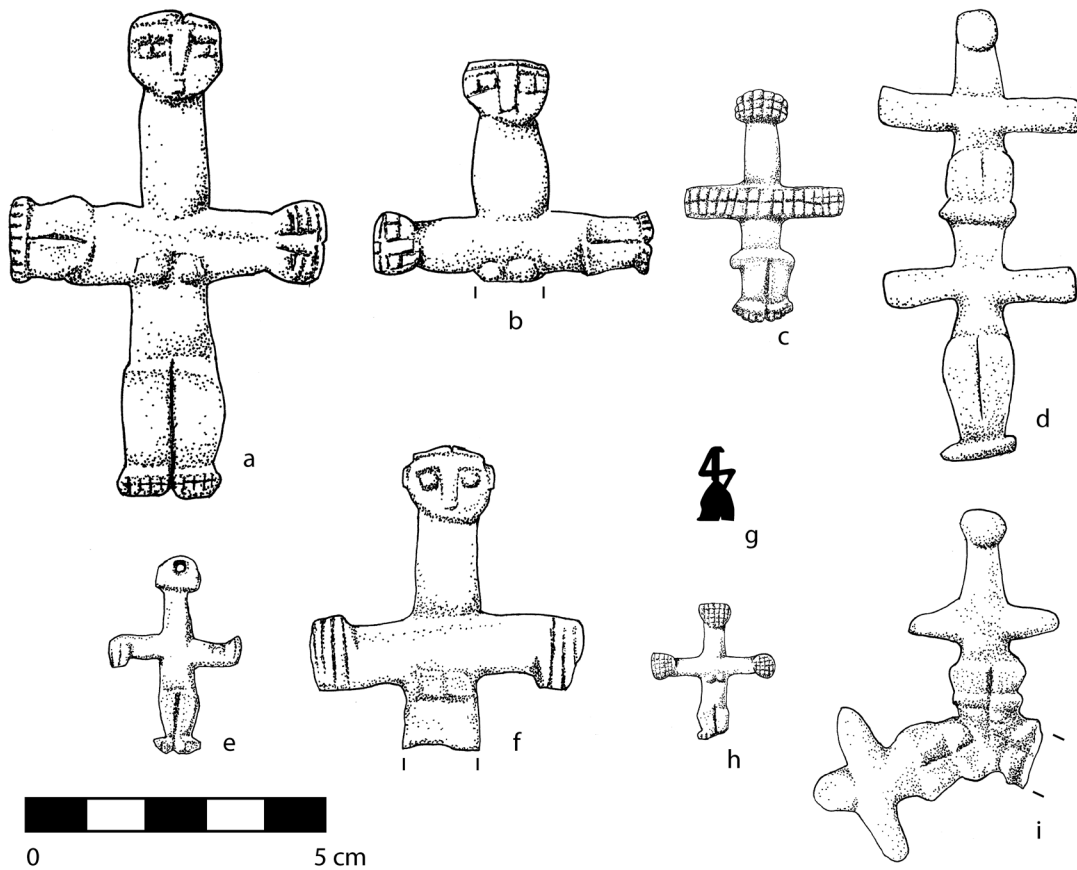


Figure 6. Rare varieties of cruciform pendants and figurines in picrolite, from Souskiou *Vathyrkakas* unless otherwise noted: (a-b) double figures with arms rendered as secondary anthropomorph; (c, h) figures with lattice-covered faces; (d) smaller figure shown emerging from the headless neck of a slightly larger figure, from Limassol district; (e-f) figures with swastika-style hands—one pointed up, one down; (g) painted pendant shown at neck of seated female figure in ceramic (for comparison with e-f); (i) two remaining figures of a group of three joined at the feet. Drawn by Alana Purcell from: (a-c, e-f, i) Vagnetti 1980: pls. IV:10, IV:1, III:6, VI:20, II:5, and III:12; (g-h) Peltenburg 2006: pls. 25 and 30; (d) Crouwel 1978: pl. IV:11.

Stylistic patterning is thus complex: there are several types, each characterized by a distinctive internal logic. Can we triangulate towards subject matter from the vantage point of the different types, trying to account for as much of the formal variability as possible?

Let us immediately set aside the idea that the cruciforms depict ‘people’ in a generic sense. The endlessly repeated posture points to greater specificity of referent. Possibilities might include a deity of which the Getty Cruciform (Figure

3b) was a cult image (Karageorghis 1992: 21) or else a concept such as fertility (Morris 1985: 122) or birthing (Peltenburg 1991: 101; 1992: 32). The weird variants pose challenges to all of those suggestions. Attempts to make sense, for instance, of the double cruciforms (Figure 6a-b) as a mother and child, a copulating couple, a desire for twins, and so forth (Vagnetti 1974: 31; 1980: 55-56; Morris 1985: 130-31) do not explain why the *arms* would be transformed into the secondary figure.

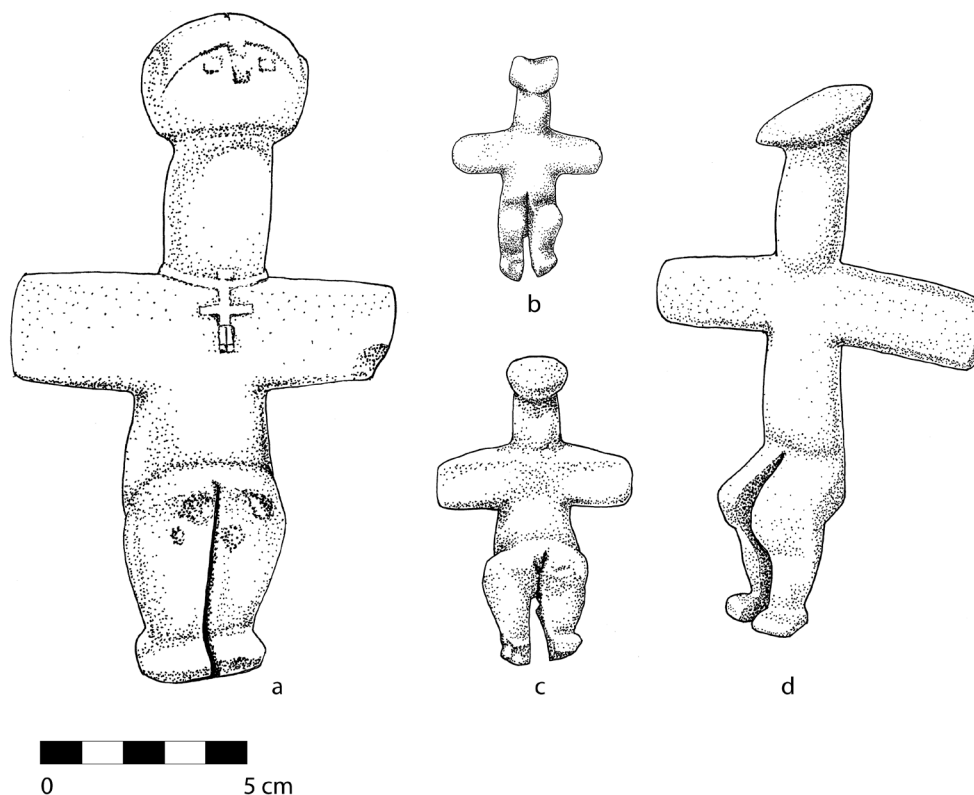


Figure 7. Chalcolithic figurines in picrolite: (a) from Yialia; (b) from Kathikas; (c) possibly from Kythrea; (d) from Souskio *Vathyrkakas*. Drawn by Alana Purcell from: (a) Karageorghis 1983: pl. 25; (b) Vagnetti 1975: pl. I:3; (c) Karageorghis 2003: cat. no. 3; (d) Peltenburg 2006: pl. 27.

The wearing of a cruciform pendant was clearly an act of social significance. The pendants were made in a valuable material. Further, several Chalcolithic human images in ceramic and picrolite are depicted wearing anthropomorphic pendants (Figures 3c and 7a; also SVP86/20 and KM299). Finally, the statuette-sized Getty Cruciform (Figure 3b) indicates that the imagery in question was symbolically rich and relevant to social rather than strictly personal settings.

My proposal concerning subject matter builds on that already suggested for tripartite figurines: what the cruciforms depicted was a *symbol* conceived of in vaguely anthropomorphic form. The symbol may have been comparable in some respects to modern company logos, which are

sometimes anthropomorphic without depicting people. The anthropomorphic logo for Starbucks Coffee derives (in the company's official version) from a two-tailed Norse mermaid, chosen to symbolize the maritime traditions of Seattle and the coffee trade (Starbucks Coffee 2011). The original Miss Chiquita was an anthropomorphized banana (Chiquita Brands 2016). Logos can be anthropomorphic without necessarily being treated as representations of people. Consider, for instance, the otherwise puzzling survival of Colonel Sanders (logo of Kentucky Fried Chicken) in places such as Peshawar, Pakistan, where all other public depictions of the human form have been eliminated (Dalrymple 2005).

I think that the basic subject of cruciform figurines was a symbol vaguely similar to company

logos. Yet logos are always the same, whereas cruciform figurines, like the tripartite and phallic form figurines, vary in their degree of anthropomorphic detail. It is this variability—mainly involving differential schematization but among the cruciforms not confined to that—that I ascribe to *visual exegesis* on the part of Chalcolithic figurine makers. ‘Exegesis’ proper refers to the explanation of texts. I propose the term ‘visual exegesis’ to refer to an interpretive commentary on a referent that an artist embeds in the form of an image. Imagery in such cases often signifies metaphorically: the artist is more interested in revealing the meaning of the referent than in reproducing its visual appearance.

The practice is common in the modern tradition of political cartoons: public figures are distorted to present a (usually negative) commentary on their nature, motives, or actions. Consider cartoons of Marie Antoinette from the French Revolution. The artists who placed her head on the body of a harpy were not suggesting that she actually looked like that. They were looking beneath surface appearances to reveal her true nature—her meaning (Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts 1988: cat. no. 70). Further, as different cartoonists sought to convey the meaning of Marie Antoinette, they portrayed her in different ways, for instance with a hyena’s body and an anthropomorphic head crowned with snakes (Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts 1988: cat. no. 81). The formal diversity among cartoons (hyena-plus-snakes versus harpy) derives not from differences in basic subject matter—the primary referent was in each case Marie Antoinette—but in variation in the visual exegeses provided by different artists. I think that much of the variation among Chalcolithic figurines can be accounted for in a similar way.

The basic referent of cruciform figurines was a logo-like symbol conceived as vaguely anthropomorphic. Like many powerful symbols, its meaning was complex and layered. It invited explication. Figurine makers were agents in that process. Instead of copying by rote, they engaged

with the cruciform as sign. As a Campo (1994: 131, 141) points out, they *chose* what attributes to include and what to leave out. Yet the artists faced a dilemma. The symbol itself did not correspond to anything visible in the world—and besides, it was richly layered with meaning. How was something like that to be represented?

One approach was to deploy appearances metaphorically. Sometimes Chalcolithic artists presented impossible images, images designed to jar the viewer into confronting the cruciform’s meaning. Why outstretched arms reduced to bars? Chalcolithic Cypriots were probably so familiar with the image (Figure 1) that they did not ask themselves that question. The double figures with arms as secondary anthropomorphs demanded that they do so (Figure 6a-b). These were explorations of the meaning or inner nature of the cruciform arms, achieved through the metaphoric manipulation of external appearance. Other unusual versions are understandable as variations on that theme. The double-figure in which a small cruciform emerges from the neck of a larger one (Figure 6d) urges the viewer to ‘look into’ the sign. The triple figure, with three anthropomorphs connected at the feet (Figure 6i), is a variant of figures in which each arm terminates in a lattice-covered ‘face’, resulting in three heads (Figure 6h). Thus, most of the weird variants can be accounted for as attempts to visually interpret the cruciform image. (It is only the figures with swastika-style hands [Figure 6e-f] that are not readily explicable from this perspective. The strange hand position may refer to the same gesture depicted in a painted pendant on the anthropomorphic effigy vessel SVP86/20 [Figure 6g].)

The weird variants constitute a tiny proportion of cruciforms. Can more typical versions be understood according to the logic of representation as exegesis? I think so. The bulk of the cruciforms look like popular presentations—crowd pleasers. Differential schematization is correlated with size: a simple, readily perceptible

logic. As these typical versions become more detailed, they become more human and thus more accessible: they acquire facial features, and the lattice work on arms suggests the sort of garments depicted in greater detail on ceramic figurines.

The Kythrea variety is rather different (Figure 7b-d). Its highly coherent cluster of traits, the boldness of schematization emphasized by greater three-dimensionality, and the complete rejection of such humanizing elements as facial features suggest that these might be ambitious attempts to represent the cruciform symbol itself in pure form.

To summarize, it seems possible to make sense of much of the formal variability among cruciforms according to the logic of representation as an act of visual exegesis. The Kythrea variety was an anti-elaborationist reading. The more common cruciforms were popularizing, pedestrian renderings in which schematization was related to size and any details—albeit still deployed metaphorically—served to make the symbol more human and thus more experientially familiar. The makers of double and triple figures strove to unsettle rather than soothe the viewer, the goal being to invite contemplation of the component parts or layered meaning of the cruciform sign.

Were the cruciforms female, as suggested by a Campo (1994: 134)? At one level the answer must be ‘no’: the cruciform image (like Colonel Sanders in Peshawar?) was not a person and had no human identity of which femaleness might be an attribute. However, it was metaphorically presented as female in an attempt to explore its nature. One might compare such works to the way figurehead carvings presented sailing ships as female. But what if the drawn-up knees show a birthing posture? That might help explain why the image is not metaphorically presented as male, but it doesn’t seem to require that the referent be female in the way a person is thought of as female. One needs to recall that the neck and heads of cruciforms may have been read as

phallic. At the end of the next section I speculate further about the content of cruciform and tripartite symbolism.

Discussion

Representational art is concerned with what things look like, what they are imagined to look like, what they would look like if they existed, and so forth. Chalcolithic figurine makers, however, were not just interested in appearance. They were also concerned with the meanings of shared symbols, a concern evident particularly in the stone images considered here. They embedded their interpretations in the form of the images, employing appearances metaphorically rather than literally to provide an experientially accessible commentary on otherwise vague symbols. Gradations of schematization helped elicit metaphoric readings. Viewers perceived not only the naturalistic details of figures like the Lemba Lady (Figure 3a), but also the series of linkages that connected her to more schematic tripartite figures (Figure 5). The systematic linkages signaled that her image was to be understood at a level beyond that of everyday experience. An alternative way of prompting the viewer to apprehend appearances metaphorically was to create images that did not exist in nature, such as an anthropomorphized penis or a cruciform figure with arms transformed into a second person.

Much of the variability among stone images results from the interpretive engagement of different artists with a limited set of symbols. Perhaps there was one symbol associated with each of the basic types discussed here: a cruciform anthropomorph, a tripartite anthropomorph, and a phallus. There might have been fewer, with the cruciform and tripartite signs different versions of the same thing. Alternatively, there may have been more: Karageorghis (1991b) raises the possibility of a vulvaform type, apparently differentially anthropomorphic like the phalliform figurines but poorly represented in the extant corpus.

Beyond distinctions between a small set of core symbols, what are we to make of the remaining variability? Considerations of value and practicality certainly lay behind choice of material, with picrolite chosen for personal ornaments and more readily available stone for larger figures. In addition, Peltenburg (1991: 100-102) and Goring (1998a: 151-52, 165) convincingly link image size to function. Much of the rest of the variability can be accounted for through the logic of graded differentiation within the various types. The phallus is progressively given anthropomorphic traits. The tripartite anthropomorph gradually emerges as a standing female. Among typical cruciforms, degree of detail is strongly related to image size. Rarer cruciform variants constituted alternative approaches to the same basic subject, with the Kythrea variety a purist attempt to depict the symbol itself and the double/triple figures an effort to reveal inner meaning through the manipulation of external appearance.

The foregoing does not account for all variation among stone figurines, but it covers a great deal of it. As suggested in discussion of the tripartite figures, some of what remains might be explained if we envision artists borrowing from the schemata of multiple types. I also noted different treatments of the subject: some artists interpreted the tripartite sign as sexless rather than female. They showed that by departing from the rules of the schema to put facial features on a sexless torso.

Why the diversification of cruciform types, with their contrasting internal logics? Chalcolithic figurine makers seem to have been 'artists' in something of the modern sense of the term. They did not simply copy signs but actively interpreted them, self-consciously manipulating representation to reveal meaning. As visual experiments that challenged the viewer to look at the cruciform in a new way, the double figures might be compared to Cubist experiments with the representation of appearances (e.g., Cox 2000).

This model of figurine makers as exegetes suggests a new reading of the most famous figurine of Chalcolithic Cyprus: the Yialia cruciform, a beautifully executed picrolite figure shown wearing a cruciform pendant that is a tiny replication of itself (Figure 7a). Previous interpreters read this work as depicting a person wearing a pendant. Morris (1985: 126), for instance, treats it as evidence that the cruciform image is not a goddess, since a deity would not have to wear a charm for her own protection. Examining this image from the perspective developed in this paper, we are alert for a manipulation of appearances that would have challenged the viewer to ponder inner nature or layered meaning. In this case, the paradox of the cruciform wearing itself signals that this object is not simply another representation of the cruciform symbol. It is instead *a representation of a cruciform pendant*. Chalcolithic viewers would have been prompted to follow a three-stage sequence: apprehension of the object itself as a cruciform figure, recognition of the paradox of the pendant wearing itself, and renewed contemplation of the whole after that unsettling recognition. Confrontation with the paradox invited the viewer to recognize this object not as a representation of the symbol but as a representation of such representations. By calling attention to its own status as a representation, this work subtly directed attention from the cruciform sign to representations thereof. Returning to the whole, viewers were prompted to ponder the wearing of a pendant and what that meant. They would then find that the artist had provided an answer: by donning a cruciform pendant, the wearer became one with the core symbol. Embedded in this work of art was an exegesis of what it meant to wear a cruciform pendant, achieved by calling attention to the object's status as a representation.

If, as I have been arguing, the stone figurines depicted symbols, then what did those symbols represent? What was the content of the symbolism? It seems necessary to offer plausible suggestions, though I emphasize that what follows

are my speculations. I suspect that tripartite and cruciform figurines derive from different schools of thought concerning the same basic subject; I am not sure about the phalliform type and set that aside here. I accept the birthing theme proposed by Peltenburg (1991; 1992), Goring (1991b), and Bolger (2003), but propose shifting it to a more abstract level. On inspiration from Durkheim (1965 [1912]), I suggest that the tripartite/cruciform sign was a sacred, mysterious symbol for society itself. It was a kind of a logo not simply for society but for the Chalcolithic ethos, for people's sense of being at this time and place. The fact that there were different versions of the logo was a fundamental characteristic of the Chalcolithic brand itself, a point to which I return to in the conclusions.

A Durkheimian reading fits with my interpretation of the Yialia cruciform: the wearer of a cruciform pendant became one with society. It is also consistent with other patterns discussed above. A Durkheimian symbol is not recognized as 'society' but rather experienced as mysteriously sacred and powerful. The well-handled, schematic, tripartite figurines were ritual/magic devices experienced as creating effects; perhaps, as suggested by Goring (1991a: 55), they were manipulated by women during pregnancy or labor. The Lemba Lady was an explication of the sacred power of the smaller devices, designed for public presentation and ritual. In Lemba *Lakkous*, the symbol was elaborated as female. Some artists in the Souskiou sites were more interested in looking deeply into the cruciform anthropomorph, where they found more anthropomorphs (Figure 6): throwing back the curtain of 'society' revealed ... people! Further, it hardly seems far-fetched to suggest that 'society' could have been mystically conceived simultaneously as birth-giving and as incorporating both male and female aspects. Contexts of recovery of the figurines seem generally consistent with these suggestions, including the common placement of cruciforms with children (Peltenburg 1992), whose deaths would have temporarily destabi-

lized the networks of relationships that constituted 'society'. One point of concern is what was long understood as a complete lack of association of cruciforms with burials of men (e.g. Bolger 1996: 368). However, one case is now known from Souskiou *Vathyrkakas* (Peltenburg 2006: 165). I would expect further excavation to reveal a trickle of additional cases: it seems possible to envision women as the primary but not the exclusive actors engaging with a sacred symbol that ultimately stood for society itself.

Conclusions

To conclude, I return to the conception of the Early–Middle Chalcolithic of Cyprus as constituting a cycle of intensification and collapse of incipient complexity, among a series of such cycles stretching from the Aceramic Neolithic to the Bronze Age (Manning 1993; Peltenburg 1993; see Table 1, above). I first consider how representation as visual exegesis might have been related to other aspects of Chalcolithic social life, then briefly consider Chalcolithic representations in diachronic perspective.

Middle Chalcolithic villages of southern and western Cyprus participated in a single broad style horizon (Bolger 1989). Localized diversity at a variety of scales led Peltenburg (2006: 168) to envision a heterarchical dimension in social organization, with persistent expressions of autonomy on the part of individual kin groups. Patterns of variation among the stone figurines are consistent with a heterarchical model. The symbols that formed the basis for representational elaboration were emphasized to varying degrees in different communities, with the cruciform image a minor theme at Erimi, elaborated into a key symbol at Souskiou, and something in between at Kissonerga *Mosphilia* and surrounding sites. Yet despite these local differences of emphasis and elaboration, the basic set of symbols was widely shared, and artists in different communities engaged with and incorporated each other's innovations. I have argued

that much of the variability among the figurines results from the efforts of different artists to give tangible form to the meaning of public symbols. Although the maker of the Yialia cruciform may have been something of a Chalcolithic Picasso, what we mainly have in cases like the double versus triple cruciforms is evidence for distinct schools of interpretation. That is the sense in which the system looks heterarchical: there was no centralized control over the meanings of key symbols. The Middle Chalcolithic representational system, in other words, was poorly suited to provide ideological justification for profound social inequality, a point supporting processual discussion by Bolger and Peltenburg concerning the demise of the Middle Chalcolithic system (Bolger 1996; 2003: 120-21; Peltenburg 1993; 2006: 178-80).

Imagery of the Early–Middle Chalcolithic is in many ways dramatically different from that of both the preceding Neolithic and the subsequent Prehistoric Bronze Age. I end by drawing attention to a few ways in which the Chalcolithic practice of representation as visual exegesis might be seen as building from themes in imagery of the Neolithic and (more tentatively) having an attenuated legacy in the Bronze Age. In the Neolithic, figurines were rarer but also more heterogeneous in style and imagery than in the subsequent Chalcolithic; they were probably quite diverse in meaning, function, and social contexts of use. Although many Neolithic figurines are not evidently sexed (or include both male and female attributes), in contrast to the Chalcolithic, male imagery seems to have been more common than female (Le Brun 2002: 30; Knapp 2013: 130-31, 182-84). A point of similarity, however, is that the male imagery was deployed metaphorically: an unsexed or female human figure is presented as phallic in overall form (Bolger 2003: 85; Christou 2012:13-20). Such images anticipate the phalliform type of the Chalcolithic and the possibly phallic neck-heads of the cruciforms (Peltenburg 1982). There may also be a more

general sense in which the Neolithic figures anticipate developments of the Chalcolithic. By portraying the human body as phallic in overall form, Neolithic figurine makers were treating somatic imagery as meaningful in and of itself, outside of the context of social personhood. Phallic-shaped human figures were not male in the way husbands or brothers were male; they referenced a depersonalized quality of maleness. This theme among representations of the Late Aceramic and Ceramic Neolithic may have been a precondition for the emergence, in the Chalcolithic, of logo-like symbols envisioned as schematized anthropomorphs.

A new florescence of image-making appeared in Early Cypriot I–II (2250–2000 Cal BC), this time centered on north-coast sites such as Bellpais *Vounous*, Lapithos *Vrysi tou Barba*, and Karmi *Palealona* (see Figure 2, above). The tradition is radically different from that of the Chalcolithic, and may have been inspired by intensified contacts with southern Anatolia (e.g., amongst many others, Webb and Frankel 2010). Acknowledging, first, the 400-plus year gap between the Middle Chalcolithic and Early Cypriot I–II (Table 1) and, second, ongoing debate about the role of hybridization in the cultural configuration of the initial Bronze Age (Knapp 2013: 264-77), I nevertheless would tentatively identify an intriguing aspect of Bronze Age representations as a possible legacy from the Chalcolithic. A recurring theme in decorated ceramic vessels from north-coast tombs is a self-consciousness about representation. Among the animals modeled around the rims or shoulders of bowls and jugs are miniature replicas of the vessel itself (Morris 1985: fig. 505; Karageorghis 1991a: pls. CVI:3, CVII:1). Given the lack of traces of wear and the practical difficulties posed by the complex and fragile modeling around vessel mouths, Knox (2012: 130-31) proposes that decorated vessels were manufactured specifically for funerary use, and suggests that the ‘self-reflecting’ elements may have referenced the role of the parent vessel in the funerary ritual.

One might propose alternative interpretations, but the important point here is that such self-consciousness about representation is relatively rare in prehistoric art. Could this Bronze Age theme have roots in the Chalcolithic? It is possible to envision a deep tradition: in the Neolithic, elements of the human body separated from personhood and given symbolic meaning; in the Chalcolithic, further development of depersonalized anthropomorphic signs together with a heterarchically organized system of visual exegesis in which a self-consciousness about representation emerges; and in the Prehistoric Bronze Age, abandonment of the depersonalized body symbolism but continuation of a reflexive theme in representations, manifested in the practice of attaching images to their referents (e.g. a miniature jug on a jug). Interestingly, although artistic self-reflexivity may (perhaps) constitute a legacy from the Chalcolithic, the Bronze Age manifestations hint at orthodoxy: they are descriptive or even prescriptive rather than interpretive and heterarchical. The inequality-inhibiting aspects of the Chalcolithic system appear to be absent in the more complex and hierarchical societies of the Bronze Age.

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