Painted Early Cycladic Figures: An Exploration of Context and Meaning
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PAINTED EARLY CYCLADIC FIGURES

An Exploration of Context and Meaning

ABSTRACT

Early Cycladic marble figures were commonly enriched with painted patterns. Certain motifs occur on a great number of figures, supporting the hypothesis that small communities separated by space as well as time wished to acknowledge and confirm cultural unity. Other patterns are relatively rare, suggesting a need to express smaller group or individual identities (perhaps associated with particular events). Possible functions and meanings for the figures are proposed here on the basis of these painted motifs, the archaeological contexts of the figures, and ethnographic parallels.

INTRODUCTION

The examination of Early Cycladic figures in collections in the United States and abroad makes it clear that most were finished with strong colors in patterns that are not easily fathomable to observers today (e.g., Fig. 1).[1] I have examined approximately 450 such figures under various conditions—mostly through vitrine glass—and have recorded evidence for paint on more than 200 examples (e.g., Figs. 2, 3). To this number can be added many figures with evidence for paint that I have seen only in published illustrations.[2] Why were these works painted? In order to approach this question, we must ask another: Why were they made at all?

1. This study could not have been carried to this point without the generous encouragement and critical advice over the last several years of Tony Frantz, Pat Getz-Gentle, Günter Kopcke, Joan Mertens, John M. Russell, and George Wheeler. My debt to caretakers of collections in Greece and the United States is gratefully acknowledged; in particular I wish to thank Katie Demokopoulou, Dolly Goulandris, Nikolaos Kaltsas, Marisa Marthari, Joan Mertens, Photeini Zapheiropoulou, and Eos Zervoudaki. I have also benefited from the comments of audience members at the Bronze Age Colloquium in New York, where I presented an earlier version of this paper on February 11, 2002. I am grateful to Robert Koehl for inviting me to present my work there. My thanks also to the editor of *Hesperia* and to the anonymous reviewers, whose suggestions greatly improved the text.

All photographs and drawings are the work of the author.

2. The majority of Early Cycladic (EC) figures illustrated in catalogues do not come from documented excavations. These examples can nonetheless provide information about their original appearance if one is willing to take the time to check for surface patterns captured by the photograph (which is usually composed and lit to show form rather than surface texture). Some of the most useful illustrations can be found in the following catalogues: Zervos 1957; Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977; Doumas 1983; Getz-Preziosi 1987a, 1987b; Getz-Gentle 2001; Renfrew 1991.

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In this article I seek to identify some of the possible functions and meanings associated with the painted figures of the Early Bronze Age Cyclades.[3] To address the relationship between individuals and the marble figures that they made and used, I consider only some types of evidence relevant: 1) the marble figures themselves, their forms and especially their painted surfaces, which are made more visible by various methods of documentation; and 2) patterns of deposition, the archaeological contexts of the figures. I assume that an analysis of the artifacts—the visual information—will allow us to address my original questions: how did the marble figures function in Early Cycladic communities, and what (various things) could they have meant to the people who used them? That is, can we discern the sorts of memories that were being maintained and transmitted by the figures?[4] The pursuit of these questions may also reveal who those people were. Why were some individuals associated with the figures while others were not?

APPROACHES TO THE MATERIAL

In referring below to Early Cycladic "culture(s)" I mean, in a general Childean sense, the tendency for a group of people living in the Cyclades to express a common identity by making artifacts or using material in a broadly consistent way. This expression may change over time, and smaller groups within the greater enduring community will add to and subtract from the basic cultural complex, giving it a local flavor. None of that diminishes the overriding "pan-Cycladic" identity that can be recognized as such (now, and, I would argue, during the Early Bronze Age), made tangible in stone, clay, and metal, and through burial habits and other behaviors less resistant to the passage of time.[5] This larger community may in fact have encompassed only some of the inhabited islands, but the salient feature is that multiple small groups seem to have allied themselves to form a larger entity capable of satisfying general needs.

Comparisons to other cultures will be made when relevant. These include Neolithic groups from the Aegean, as well as modern nonindustrial groups described in the anthropological and ethnographic literature. Neolithic examples are useful for insights they provide regarding the possible origins of (and departures from) Early Cycladic attitudes toward the use

3. The *function* of the painted pattern was to alert the viewer that another layer of meaning was present on the figure, whereas the *meaning* of the particular markings would have been understood only by those who had been taught the correspondence between motif (including placement on the body of the figure, color, context of application) and concept. See Hoffman 2002, p. 525, and especially Talalay 1993, p. 38, for a general definition of the terms "function" and "meaning" in archaeological scholarship.

4. Melion and Küchler (1991, p. 3) define memory as "a process precipitated and shaped by the relaying of visual information."

5. As Nakou (1995, p. 13) writes, "the use of metal technologies was tied to the life cycle of its users, while the persistence of the abstract forms through constant repetition and recreation with each generation, ensured the timeless continuity of group identity within and above the individual community."

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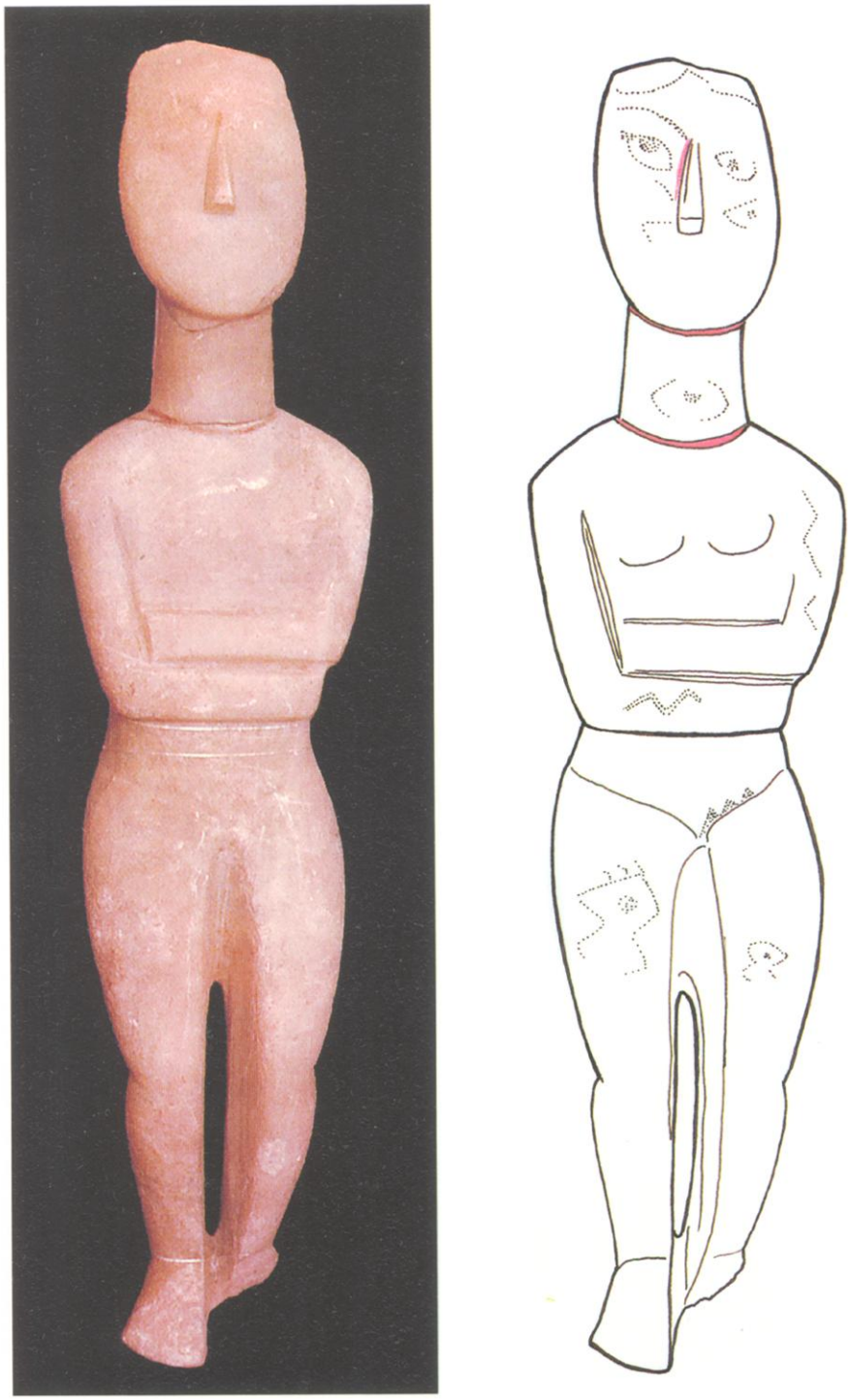

Figure 1. Early Cycladic marble figure from Keros, Kavos. H. 54.5 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 4691.

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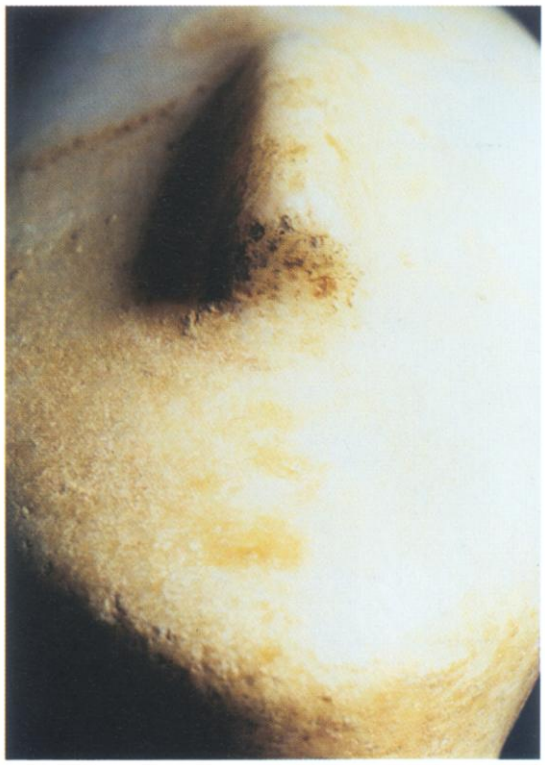
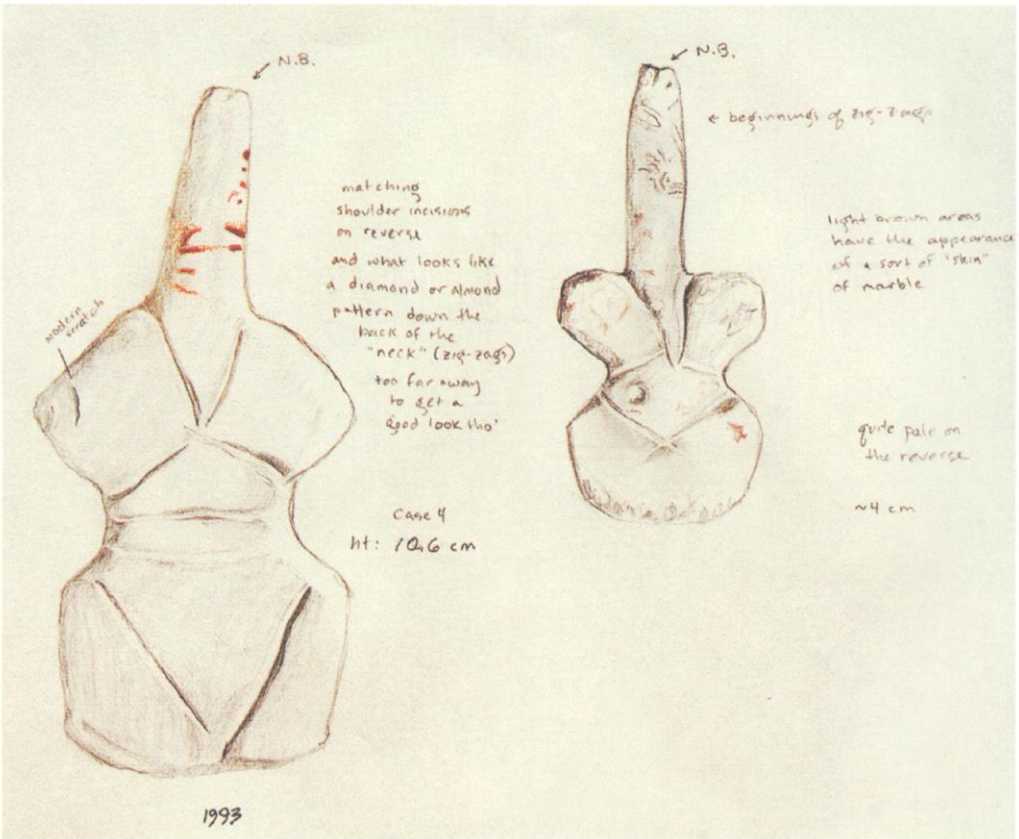


Figure 2 *(left)*. Detail of painted nostrils on Early Cycladic folded-arm figure; no known findspot. H. 36.3 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 34.11.3, Fletcher Fund, 1934.

Figure 3 *(below)*. Sketch of Early Cycladic "Violin" figures from Naxos, Akrotiri, tombs 20 (Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 1993) and 21 (Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, no visible accession number).



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of figures and the function of surface markings.[6] Studies of modern groups are useful for suggesting possible meanings associated with figures and especially their painted "skins."

The Early Cycladic figures are found almost exclusively in graves, prompting the need to examine mortuary data. Recent work has made use of several methods for considering the relationship between prehistoric Aegean peoples and their cemeteries. For example, types of burial goods from Early and Middle Minoan Crete have been correlated with, among other things, "social differentiation" as well as ranking both in life and in death.[7] In making these correlations, we tend to assume that artifact types we find valuable today would have been similarly valuable to the people who made them in the past, and that a similar status is conferred on individuals buried with these goods. The assumption is made that there are consistent human tendencies to value exotic or rare materials, labor-intensive products, and specialized skills.[8] As we shall see, the archaeological data from the Early Bronze Age suggest that different individuals had access to certain kinds of artifacts, and within this group some had acquired more of them. Well-provided tombs, although rare, are known for a few individuals, but these did not contain (preserved) goods that were not available to others. It is difficult to draw conclusions about social stratification from this evidence, but we may surmise that particular individuals, whether "rich" or "poor," had access to particular sets of material.[9]

Underlying much of the following discussion is the assumption that human beings make, use, and become intimately associated with certain kinds of objects that help them understand and control the world they inhabit. The very existence of grave types, burial goods, and other clues regarding attitudes toward death demonstrates that the Early Cycladic peoples had worked out a culturally specific set of behaviors to help them cope with this event. The material remains that have survived the past four to five millennia can thus be treated as windows to some aspects of this behavior, and the marble figures are a part of this evidence. I would stress here, however, that final deposition need not represent sole function; as detailed below, some evidence associated with the painted motifs suggests uses for the figures prior to burial.

6. The painted motifs found on Middle and Late Neolithic (MN, LN) terracotta figures from the Aegean and surrounding coasts provide apparent antecedents for some of the motifs found on EC marble figures. Difficult to explain, however, is the dearth of surface embellishment on the decreased number of anthropomorphic figures recovered from sites dating to the Final Neolithic (FN) period, just prior to the Early Bronze Age (EBA). There are two possibilities: either the motifs were carried on in perishable materials such as wood, cloth, or body paint; or the apparent links are as fortuitous as parallels drawn between skin embellishments in modern New Guinea or Africa and strikingly similar EC designs. Close examination of all the evidence is necessary before one alternative can be favored over the other.

7. Karytinos 1998, pp. 78–79; Maggidis 1998, pp. 87–91.

8. See Helms 1993 for a full treatment of this thesis.

9. Broodbank (2000, p. 263) observes that "possession and withdrawal [of goods] through funerary deposition was starting to be reworked in a few parts of the Cyclades into a means of defining status or controlling value, an incipient trend that was drastically amplified in EBII." Helms (1993, pp. 3–4) also argues that possession of special materials or skills (among other things) defines and is restricted to the "elite." I would rather remain more neutral, and use the term "specialists" for those who are actively associated with restricted materials or skills. Metcalf and Huntington (1991, p. 17) also caution that the equation of expenditure on grave construction, for example, with the status of the deceased is risky; much more effort might have been devoted to "rituals" or other behaviors that left no permanent record.

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In addition to mortuary studies, consideration of contemporary Bronze Age practices related to body modification and modern ethnographic parallels may also shed light on how some of the marble figures were used. Like the production and use of objects, body modification also helps organize the world according to a group's visual lexicon. Several studies by Tristan Carter, for example, demonstrate that prismatic obsidian blades were often deposited in Early Cycladic burials unused, suggesting that even the potential effect of use was sufficient.[10] Carter argues convincingly that the *idea* of the blades was intended to conjure body modification—shaving, cicatrization, tattooing, bloodying—rather than food preparation or other external tasks. The patterns of paint on the marble figures may similarly have signified the idea of body embellishment, either upon actual people or those personae represented by the marble figures.[11]

Gail Hoffman, in a related study, concludes that the long-lived practice of women scratching visible (bloody) lines down their cheeks as part of the mourning ritual in many parts of the Mediterranean, even today, may be represented by the red striations painted on the cheeks of a number of Early Cycladic marble figures, as on later and more certain representations of mourning women.[12] These red markings would have been applied at the appropriate time, suggesting a modification of meaning via the act of painting, a point I return to below.

The significance of painted motifs may be further revealed by a consideration of elaborated "skin" in the longer tradition of figure embellishment, stretching back to the Neolithic period in the lands surrounding the Aegean. Lauren Talalay, for example, uses the nonanatomical designs on southern Greek clay figurines from the Neolithic to argue for intersite communication, particularly between Franchthi Cave and Corinth.[13] The autonomous and painted "split-leg" forms from several Middle Neolithic sites in the vicinity of Franchthi Cave further suggest to Talalay that these sorts of objects functioned as two halves of a social agreement between parties at different sites. She proposes that "the circulation and use of such devices would only make sense in a sphere of regional integration where literacy was not yet available to render explicit a range of obligations or ties among separate but interdependent settlements."[14] Here the painted patterns help to "match up" two halves, physically demonstrating the bond the two parties had when the figures were split. The idea of agreement between separate groups embodied in a painted anthropomorphic figure is the point that interests me here.

In other regions and times, communities have used painted motifs on three-dimensional anthropomorphic figures to express the social status of the deceased, as, for example, in the elaborately painted Malangan wood

10. Carter 1994, 2002, and forthcoming.

11. Sherratt (2000; cited in Broodbank 2000, p. 253) suggests that the marble figures may represent women brought home as brides by seafarers within exogamous networks. This seems to be pushing the point somewhat.

12. Hoffman 2002.

13. Talalay 1993, pp. 16, 45, 83. Pottery, too, may provide a "skin" for embellishment. Cullen (1985) suggests that motifs on Greek Urfirnis ware from the MN period helped maintain relationships among disparate communities. Emberling (1995, pp. 182–192) demonstrates that painted designs on early-third-millennium pottery from Mesopotamia and northwestern Iran can be correlated with period, region, and context (for public consumption or in domestic or funerary spheres), describing deliberate expressions of community differences or similarities. He notes (p. 190) that this marks a break from earlier periods where the pottery was "largely undecorated, and as much as 90% mass-produced."

14. Talalay 1993, p. 46.

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carvings made for funerary rituals in Papua New Guinea. As Melion and Küchler observe, "the engraved images posit their own biography by being depicted as an assemblage of independent motifs with their own history and their own future."[15] "Cultured" individuals would be able to interpret the meanings of those motifs, teach them to the uninitiated, and thereby pass down specific group memories.

A more general model that seems to work well with the Early Cycladic data is loosely based on G. W. F. Hegel's discussion of our tendency as human beings to seek both the universal and particular aspects of our relationship to society and beyond.[16] In Hegel's philosophy, the individual recognizes that the external world can (and must) serve as a tool for self-consciousness. Self-consciousness generates free will, which passes through three key stages of development during the growth of the individual within "civil" society: 1) expression of self in possessions; 2) establishment of freedom among individuals through familial "contracts" (by sharing possessions); and 3) stated or unstated dependence on others in a broader community that defines and respects individual rights to possessions.[17] This view can be applied to the Bronze Age: a person achieves and expresses his or her own personality by 1) exhibiting at different times a particular relationship to the external world through specific skills, roles, or possessions; 2) acknowledging "vertical" (along a temporal axis) relevance through family/clan bonds that connect to the past and future via manifestations of memory; and 3) establishing "horizontal" relevance through cultural bonds that link the individual and clan to the larger contemporary community or communities.[18] Thus the individual exists as a duality of particular and universal states of being: I can own *particular* things (including skill sets and roles) because I belong to a *community* that accepts this idea of ownership—in the past, present, and future. If we feel uncomfortable projecting the concept of private property onto a prehistoric, preindustrial community, we can replace "possessions" with "closely associated goods or skills," for which there is ample evidence in the tomb assemblages.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The people who inhabited the coasts bordered by the southern Aegean Sea during the Early Bronze Age produced peculiarly stylized anthropomorphic figures that have come to be known as "Early Cycladic figures" or, rather dismissively, "figurines" (Fig. 4). These are with some few exceptions made of white marble and were finished with abrasives that resulted

15. See Melion and Küchler 1991, p. 29; the authors go on to write: "Sculptures are conceived as skins that replace the decomposed body of a deceased person and thus provide a container for his or her life force. The life force merges with the material, which is thought to come alive in the process of sculpting." This meaning changed once the carvings became a valuable source of income (sold to Western collectors), but the function of the motifs remained as potent, now protected by a consensus that treated them essentially as a variant of intellectual property: people had rights over certain motifs, which they could "lease" for tangible goods or exchange for right of access to neighboring lands, etc. In other words, the shared image established and maintained relationships between separate parties.

16. See also Helms 1998, pp. 3, 6–13, on the basic organization of humans into "individual and group identifications of Us and not-Us."

17. The relevant passages in Hegel [1821] 1981 can be found in paragraphs 44, 75, 164, 170, and 186.

18. On the use of these terms, see Helms 1998, p. 37.

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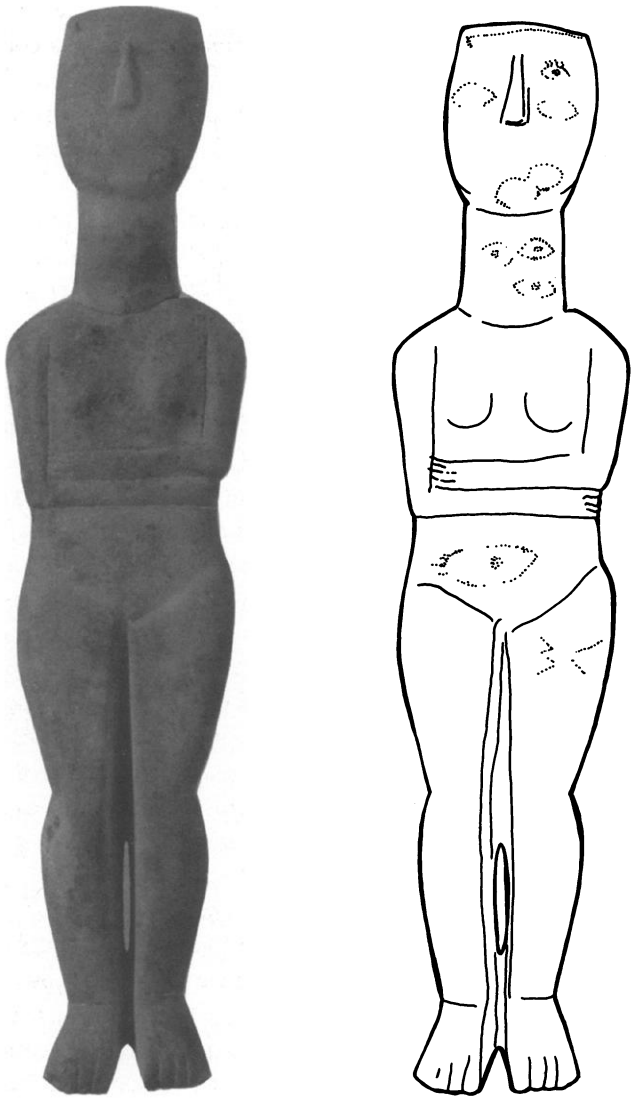

Figure 4. Early Cycladic marble figure from Keros, Kavos. H. 58.0 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 4181.

in smooth transitions between forms.[19] Grooved lines made with narrow abrading tools often emphasize interior details such as the neckline, pubic triangle, spine, buttocks, legs, and knees, as well as define fingers and toes on many of the figures. Conspicuous in their absence, facial features are only very rarely indicated with grooves, except on the earlier varieties, such as the so-called Plastiras type, where a short horizontal incision sometimes represents the mouth.[20]

The choice of material is significant. In earlier periods, the overwhelming majority of anthropomorphic figures made on Crete and the Greek mainland were produced in clay, which lends itself to an additive mode of

19. For manufacturing techniques, see Oustinoff 1984, 1987.

20. See, for example, the Plastiras-type figures illustrated in Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, pp. 231–235, nos. 65–79; Preziosi and Weinberg 1970, p. 7, pl. I:4; and in the Athens National Archaeological Museum (NAM), no. 3919, which preserves the pebble in the left eye ("Amorgos" is written on its label but I have not been able to confirm that this is the source). Eyes were often indicated on this type by pebbles inlaid in bored sockets; the sockets are usually all that remain today. See Getz-Preziosi 1987a, pls. 18, 19, for a preserved pebble inlay.

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production rather than the subtractive, abrasive mode required by stone.[21] Clay can be smoothed and polished as a final step, as was common for pottery, but in figure production the plasticity of the material permits, even encourages, the joining together of major parts and the addition of three-dimensional details on top of the basic shapes. Forms are quickly built up, not laboriously polished down. Planning is less critical; mistakes are easily fixed. Surface textures may be applied spontaneously, in a single stroke, and smoothed over if deemed unsatisfactory. This process is in marked contrast to that used to shape marble figures: the persistent rubbing back and forth with a narrow tool aided by constantly applied abrasive slurry to cut (generally straight) surface features in stone. The commitment of time required for shaping stone is far greater than that for clay;[22] the choice of material is thus significant since clay and stone were equally available to the inhabitants of the Cyclades.

Mode of production, as much as final effect, may be relevant. To produce a marble figure, a grinding motion is required that must have been familiar to those (women, I imagine) in charge of producing meal from grain. It is an activity that requires endurance, strength, patience, and an ability to resume after being interrupted by more immediate concerns that crop up during a day of domestic duties. On the other hand, it is also an activity that could be carried out in a social setting, since it is not dangerous, loud, or associated with large pieces of equipment (as weaving on some kinds of looms would be). Grinding, it may be noted, is also a major component of pigment preparation. It is possible that women were the producers of the marble figures;[23] the scenario suggested above is consistent with women's work in rural settings.[24]

The great majority of Early Cycladic figures are female,[25] displaying breasts—usually of small size—and pubic triangles. It should be noted, however, that these gender signifiers are not exaggerated beyond the dimensions of average anatomy. There is no conventional visual evidence on these figures that fertility and procreation were the primary concepts that inspired their production. The few figures with abdominal grooves that

21. For clay figures, see illustrations in Papathanassopoulos 1996, pp. 298, 299, 302, 307, nos. 203, 204, 211, 221. Talalay (1993, p. 126, n. 12) reports that Neolithic stone or marble figures predominate at Thebes as well as at Kouphovouno, near Sparta; she does not list sites that produced both clay and stone figures in equal abundance. Significantly, there are more white stone than clay Neolithic figures known from the islands, excluding Crete; the opposite is true elsewhere around the Aegean. A notable example of a Neolithic stone figure is the "Fat Lady of Saliagos," a marble seated female from LN Saliagos that is similar in form to Neolithic examples from non-Cycladic regions around the Aegean (see Evans and Renfrew 1968, fig. 75, and text with bibliography, p. 86; see also Papathanassopoulos 1996, p. 319, no. 240, for color pls.). See Talalay 1993, p. 30, for techniques of making Neolithic figures of clay.

22. Talalay (1993, p. 32) reports that it takes ten minutes to an hour to create a clay figure, and, citing Oustinoff 1984, five to sixty hours to produce one of marble.

23. See Gero 1991 for the likelihood that women in prehistory worked stone for tools in a domestic setting. It may also be relevant that at Franchthi Cave "on given occasions throughout the Neolithic, figurines were associated with domestic work areas, particularly those where some kind of grinding activities were conducted" (Talalay 1993, p. 48).

24. In the village of Tell Ahmar, northern Syria, for example, I have participated in wool-sorting gatherings, where all the women of an extended family group convene to separate raw wool according to quality. Much of the village news was communicated during such gatherings, and it appeared to me that relationships among women were formed and maintained in that setting. See the essays in Gero and Conkey 1991 for approaches to discerning the organization of women in prehistory.

25. But see Getz-Preziosi 1981.

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have been interpreted as post-partum lines may be exceptions.[26] The depiction of identifiable roles, such as (rare, and mainly male) musicians, is unusual; the "folded-arm figures" are much more abundant.

Most Cycladic figures are quite generic, represented with feet angled downward, legs together and bent slightly at the knee, arms folded across the chest (left over right), face forward and occasionally tilted upward. Hundreds, if not thousands, of examples that fit into this category were produced, even if the proportions and angles shifted somewhat over time and place. Whether this canonical posture was meant to represent a reclining position or one more or less upright (leaning or perhaps held) is debatable.[27] Painted features may weight the argument in favor of the latter position (see below, pp. 439–440).

Establishing a chronology for the EBA Cyclades is difficult given the lack of stratified sites. Several attempts have been made to order groups of artifacts based on seriation, most notably by Colin Renfrew and Christos Doumas.[28] For present purposes, I am concerned with broad trends; the archaeological evidence indicates that Early Cycladic peoples buried their dead with painted anthropomorphic figures throughout the third millennium B.C. In this paper I seek to establish the essential motives of this practice; a study establishing the variations in painted motifs over time must be left to the future.

It is important for my argument to use excavated examples as often as possible; not only are questions of authenticity thus avoided, but associated burial goods can also bring more meaning to the presence of paint, and to the marble figures in general. I sometimes refer, however, to unprovenienced figures in North American and European collections in order to make it easier for a widely dispersed audience to examine accessible figures "in the flesh." Unless the lighting for a photograph was designed specifically to reveal vestigial traces of paint, it is nearly impossible to see such evidence in individual photographs of figures in publications.

Even the nonspecialist can easily recognize "Early Cycladic sculpture," as it is often referred to today. Several varieties and subvarieties of the figures have been recognized, and these can be seen as evolving from one to the next once their relative chronology is identified.[29] While the term "sculpture" is anachronistic, its use suggests how these objects have come to be categorized. In our own age they have made the transition from "repulsively ugly"[30] curiosities to elegant works of art, worthy of display in the finest art collections in the world. Indeed, one may argue that in many cases a degree of formal refinement must have been a concern for some of

26. Getz-Gentle 2001, p. 10.

27. Getz-Gentle (2001, pp. 35–37) espouses a reclining posture.

28. Renfrew (1972, pp. 72–75, 138–142) developed a relative chronology based primarily on the stratigraphy of Emporio on the island of Chios and Phylakopi on Melos. By comparing the pottery and other finds at these sites to finds from less well stratified sites in the islands and surrounding mainlands (e.g., Attica and the Troad), he was able to arrange groups of objects, including the marble figures, in roughly chronological order. Although details of this order are debated, (see, e.g., Doumas 1972, p. 151, n. 1), the basic framework still holds. Barber and MacGillivray (1980) object to Renfrew's identification of chronological periods with dominant "cultural" groups, and prefer instead the more general EC I, EC II, and EC IIIA and B. These are the most commonly used designations for the periods Renfrew describes using cultural terms. For a recent examination of EC chronology, see Broodbank 2000, pp. 53–55.

29. For a description of the varieties, see Renfrew 1969; Getz-Preziosi 1987a.

30. Wolters 1891, p. 47, "abstossend hässliche" (referring to a head in Athens, NAM 3909).

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the Early Cycladic marble workers.[31] No case can be made, however, that the original purpose of the works was to please the eye or satisfy a sense of aesthetics, although this is a legitimate response for a modern audience.[32]

If one considers the additional surface elaboration on these figures (see, e.g., Figs. 1, 4), it is much easier to imagine that they were made to satisfy a wider range of needs. The presence of any sort of embellishment on the polished white surfaces of Early Cycladic figures may be visually startling to our eyes, trained to look approvingly at sculptural analogies such as those produced by Modigliani and Brancusi,[33] but in the context of prehistoric figure production in the Aegean basin, the painted Early Cycladic figure fits, even comfortably, into an earlier and apparently complex tradition.

METHODS FOR REVEALING EVIDENCE FOR PAINTED PATTERNS

Using a broad range of lighting and photographic techniques, computer enhancement, and microscopic examination, I have begun to document the painted surface features that were applied to Early Cycladic figures.[34] The patterns revealed include recognizable features such as eyes, jewelry, and hair, as well as less easily identifiable markings on the head and body. In most cases no pigment remains, but photographic and computer manipulation techniques can enhance the subtle effects of ancient painting. Ultraviolet light has proved useful, although the reasons for its efficacy are still not understood. Raking light exaggerates topographic differences on the marble's surface resulting from the effects of paint (or surface preparation prior to painting) long since vanished. These "ghosts," described in 1970 by Preziosi and Weinberg on a variety of Cycladic figures, had been already identified earlier by Papathanassopoulos on a figure now in the Athens National Archaeological Museum, although he did not use the term "ghost."[35]

31. See Getz-Preziosi 1987a. Cory (1956, p. 33) reports that while any member of the modern Bantu community may make figurines for the various functions for which they are needed, those who are most skilled are sufficiently valued to be invited to make figures for others. See also Broodbank 2000, p. 63.

32. For the influence of Cycladic design on modern sculptors, and thus modern expectations, see Sachini 1984.

33. See Renfrew 1991, pp. 168–185, pls. 116–119.

34. See Hendrix 2003 for full descriptions of these techniques. In brief, I use (1) raking light photography to enhance topographic differences caused by differential weathering; (2) close-up photography to capture minute traces of extant pigment; (3) ultraviolet (UV) visible fluorescence photography, which permits fluorescence in the visible range of the spectrum to expose the film; (4) UV-reflectance photography, which permits only those wavelengths below the visible range of the spectrum to expose the film; and (5) computer enhancement of digitized photographs to expand and contrast image information. I also produce a detailed sketch (e.g., Fig. 3) based on prolonged observation of the object.

35. Preziosi and Weinberg 1970; Papathanassopoulos 1963, p. 132. Different kinds of paint integrate with the marble substrate in different ways, and they therefore affect the marble's ability to withstand weathering agents differently. Finely divided reds, which can be suspended in media with low viscosities, tend to seep into the pores of the stone, while coarse pigments, such as azurite, stay on the surface of the stone, protecting that surface from the corrosive effects of water. This latter sort of paint preserves the surface wherever it is applied. Over time, the unprotected surface (including areas painted with low-viscosity media) deteriorates more than protected surfaces. The variables that control the rate and character of the weathering, however, have not yet been studied. I am grateful to Jerry Podany at the J. Paul Getty Museum for discussing with me (March 2003) the problems that result from assuming we understand these weathering mechanisms on EC figures.

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In other instances, enough pigment particles survive to be documented by close-up photography. This salutary condition has in some cases permitted elemental or optical analyses of pigments, resulting in the identification of the minerals used by the Cycladic islanders for their colors. These findings may have important ramifications regarding the significance of certain minerals beyond their coloring effects (see below).

Perhaps the most important method for revealing traces of paint on Cycladic figures, however, is the production of a careful sketch of the figure (e.g., Fig. 3). The time required for this exercise is time spent looking, which eventually enables the observer to distinguish evidence for paint from fortuitous burial stains.

PAINT MOTIFS

In the following pages, I describe the motifs in order of frequency of occurrence, with the caveat that what appears to be most common is simply what has been most commonly (seen and) preserved; this may or may not reflect what was most often painted in the Early Bronze Age. For example, if a yellow robe made from saffron and saliva had been represented on every figure, there would be little or no evidence for such painting today.

Eyes: Anatomical, below Crown Band

Most of the Cycladic figures that preserve evidence of paint bear traces of almond-shaped eyes, placed (usually not entirely symmetrically) on either side of the nose (e.g., Fig. 1). They are the most striking of the painted motifs, heralding a dramatic break from the Neolithic tradition of cursory slit eyes.[36] These Bronze Age eyes are often very large, extending from the nose to the edge of the face, and are frequently enlivened with pupils, lashes, and eyebrows. Accompanying these eyes, vertical hair(?) strokes or, more usually, a pale horizontal band ("ghost") may be seen at the top of the crown. This latter pattern suggests some sort of hairstyle or headdress (the earlier "Plastiras"-type figures were often provided with a groove across the forehead to indicate a *polos*). Numerous examples can be cited. Figures from known contexts that preserve this motif include a large example from Kavos (Keros) in the Naxos Archaeological Museum at Chora (Fig. 4; no. 4181), and four Naxian figures in the National Archaeological Museum (NAM) in Athens: one from Karvounolakkoi (NAM 6140.16), another from Phyrroges (Fig. 5, NAM 6140.19), and two from Spedos

36. Talalay (1993, p. 12) notes that on Neolithic figures from Franchthi Cave (produced throughout the Neolithic period), "facial features are fairly perfunctory: mouths and ears are never indicated on anthropomorphic images, though they are detailed on zoomorphic examples. *Eyes are infrequently marked and small,* and modeled noses appear commonly" (emphasis mine). The figures from Achilleion, Sitagroi, and elsewhere generally have coffee-bean or slit eyes. Exceptions to the canonical large open eyes on Early Cycladic figures exist, and may hint at recollections of earlier figures. A marble head from tomb 112 of the Krasades cemetery on Antiparos (NAM 4848) has two incised slits for eyes, as well as nose *and* ears in relief.

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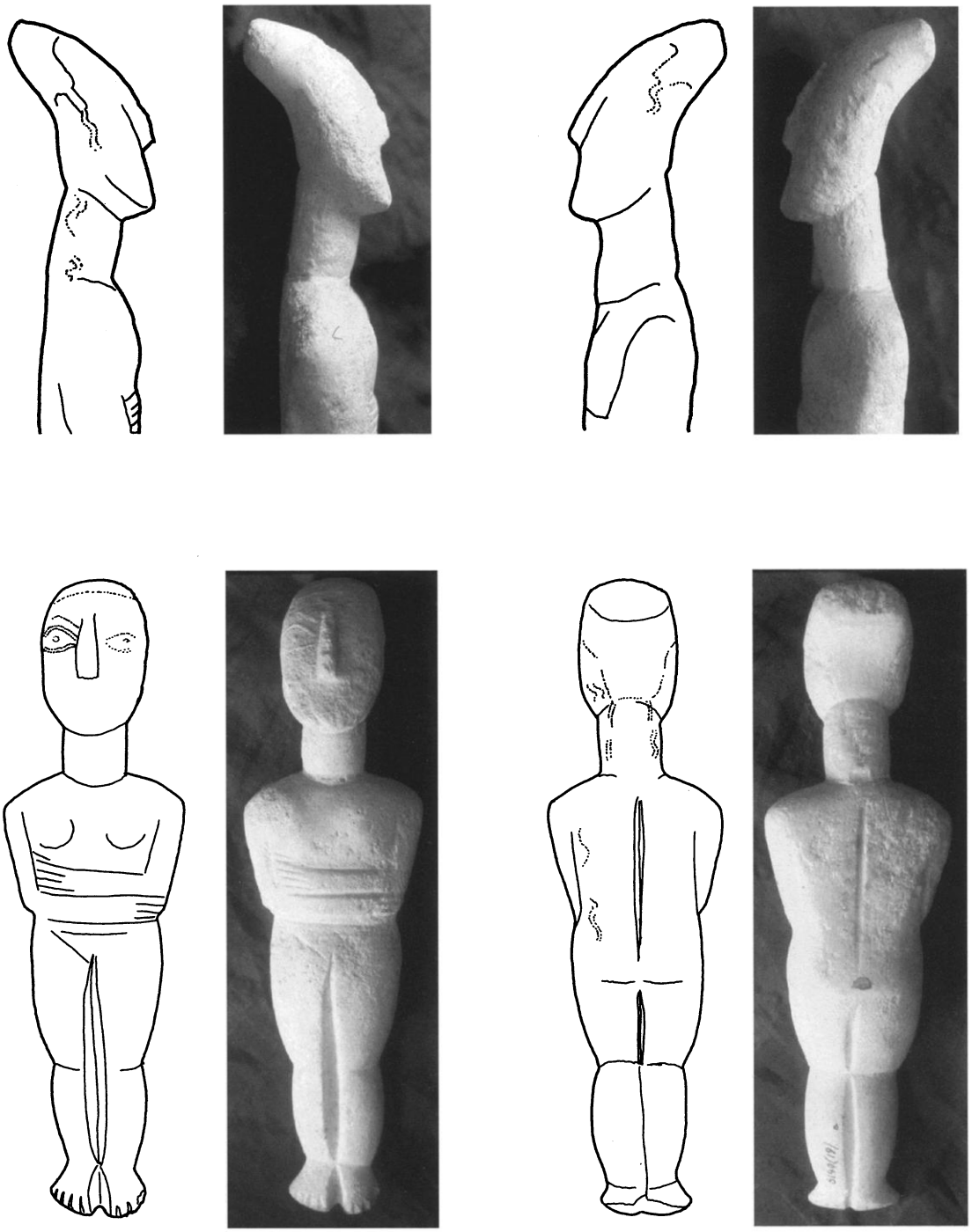

Figure 5. Early Cycladic marble figure from Naxos, Phyrroges, tomb 28. H. 19.8 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 6140.19.

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(NAM 6140.21, 6140.22), to list a few.[37] Careful examination of illustrations in catalogues of Early Cycladic figures, such as those published by Getz-Preziosi/Gentle, and Doumas, demonstrates that this pattern was evidently widespread and long-lived.[38]

Hair

In addition to a *polos,* numerous Cycladic figures were given an elaborate coiffure. Again, symmetry was not always important, although it is most often the symmetrical examples that have been published (reflecting modern receptiveness more than Bronze Age custom). Hairstyles made up of curls or short straight "pigtails" or sideburns are generally preserved as paint ghosts, suggesting the paint used was thick enough to act as a barrier to weathering agents (see Fig. 5). This would be consistent with a paint made with azurite, which requires a thick medium in which to suspend and bind the large particles. Tentatively, I would suggest that most caps and many hairstyles were originally blue,[39] with the exception of a fringe of red vertical strokes that occasionally appears across the forehead (e.g., on a head in the Metropolitan Museum of Art [MMA], no. 69.5.11, whose red stripes were identified as cinnabar by energy dispersive X-ray spectrometry[40]). Sometimes this fringe appears in conjunction with a ghosted band as though representing short-cropped hair protruding below the cap. Clear examples may be seen on figures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia.[41]

An excavated example of a figure with elaborate coiffure "ghosts" is the folded-arm figure from Phyrroges tomb 28 (Fig. 5) mentioned above in conjunction with eye ghosts. Although many more examples are displayed in museums, I have not been able to trace those to documented excavations. Some examples in disparate but accessible collections include figures in the Naxos Archaeological Museum in Chora (4695/8927), the

37. For Naxos 4181, see Zapheiropoulou 1980, p. 534, pl. 240; for NAM 6140.16, see Papathanassopoulos 1963, p. 112, pl. 43; for NAM 6140.19, see Marangou 1990, p. 152, no. 157 (color pl.) and bibliography. These figures are also illustrated, with drawings of painted motifs, in Hendrix 2000: nos. 23, 28, and 41. Large photographs of the figures from Spedos, tombs 13 (6140.21) and 10 (6140.22), are published in Zervos 1957, pls. 114 and 115, respectively.

38. The same motif can be discerned on a marble seated figure from LN Sangri on Naxos; an excellent photograph is published in Papathanassopoulos 1996 (p. 321, no. 243). The contours of the Sangri figure foreshadow the shape of the EC I "Violin" figures. The top of the head, which is flattened, has a slightly paler band at the top of the crown, and the right eye, with pupil and possibly eyelashes, is visible as darker lines on the stone. Although I have not yet examined this figure outside its vitrine, additional paint on the right cheek of the figure seems to be visible in the photograph. As much as the motif recalls earlier traditions, it also heralds the new approach to the human form (specifically the open eyes) that took hold in the EBA Cyclades.

39. This possibility is also suggested by Getz-Preziosi (1987b, p. 169). A figure in the Honolulu Academy of Arts (4386.1) preserves traces of blue on the forehead and right sideburn curl, in addition to red dots on the cheeks and vertical strokes across the forehead; see Getz-Preziosi 1987b, p. 204, no. 55. My sincere thanks to Pat Getz-Gentle for making her notes from the "Cycladic Examination Project" (in connection with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, exhibition and catalogue) available to me. See also a figure in the British Museum (no. 1971.5–21.1), discussed below.

40. Hendrix 1997–1998, pp. 7–8.

41. See Hendrix 1997–1998, p. 10, figs. 10–12 (MMA 34.11.3), and also Getz-Preziosi 1987b, p. 107, pl. III (J. Paul Getty Museum); p. 204, no. 55 (Honolulu Academy of Arts 4386.1); and pp. 246–247, no. 81, with drawing of paint remains (University of Missouri–Columbia 76.214). See also n. 39 above.

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N. P. Goulandris Collection in Athens (304), and the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (70/550).[42]

Dots/Stripes on Face

Rows of dots—single, double, or multiple—were painted across the faces of many figures and on occasion extend around the back of the head or occur elsewhere on the body. Still evident is a pattern of blue-over-red paint, neatly used on two large examples I have examined, one in a private collection in New York, 69 cm in height, the other, 77 cm in height, in the British Museum, neither from a documented context.[43] The large size of these figures may suggest that they were used differently than the more common 30- to 50-cm-tall figures. Does the larger size suggest a greater audience, either in terms of number or status? There is no evidence to argue one way or the other. The shift in color, however, does suggest that there were two audiences, separated either by time (the earlier group seeing only the red dots) or by access to the knowledge that two colors were present (one group aware of the underlying red, though only the blue was visible).

At least five rows of carefully rounded dots were painted across the forehead of the New York figure, and nine or more rows across the cheeks, extending below the nose but perhaps interrupted by the mouth area, where dots are only partially preserved. At the back of the head, a neatly squared hair mass (now a ghost) was bordered by blue-on-red dots.[44] The dots, as well as the very large (slightly asymmetrical) eyes and eyebrows, call attention to the head as the primary area of focus on the figure.

Two rows of dots were painted across the forehead of the British Museum figure, and as many as seven rows can be discerned on the cheeks. More difficult to detect are at least two rows of dots on the chin. A stripe down the nose was also painted with blue over red. Blue paint is clearly visible at the edges of the large eyes, as eyebrows, and on the left side of the forehead (in an unidentifiable pattern); a short dark stroke appears just below the nose.[45] The spine of this figure was highlighted with red paint, as were the incisions between the neck and the base of the skull and the jaw line (the red on the British Museum figure was analyzed and identified as cinnabar[46]). The figure was given red nostrils, a detail also preserved on a figure in the Metropolitan Museum (Fig. 2, above).

The majority of the preserved face dots are in red paint. Catalogues of Cycladic figures demonstrate that face dots were relatively common on both large and small figures, and on figures that span the EC II period

42. For Naxos 4695/8927, see Zapheiropoulou 1980, pl. 235; for N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 304, see Renfrew 1991, pls. 2, 3, 100:7 (detail); for Badisches Landesmuseum 70/550, see Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, p. 271, no. 171.

43. See Getz-Preziosi 1987a, pl. VI:a, for the figure in New York; Fitton 1989, front and back cover, for the British Museum figure (no. 1971.5–21.1).

44. See below ("Jewelry") for a description of additional painted motifs on this figure. Also of interest is the pattern in the surface sheen of the belly of a plain-weave textile that must have been in contact with the marble while it was buried. The pattern is visible in raking light (see below, Fig. 13).

45. This line is described as black by Higgins (1972), but it may once have been red if it was painted with cinnabar. See Hendrix 2001, pp. 53–54, on the color shift of cinnabar from red to black.

46. Higgins 1972.

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(the Kapsala through Late Spedos styles).[47] Unfortunately, none to my knowledge come from documented excavations. Published examples in accessible collections include Spedos-type figures in Boston, Pasadena, Karlsruhe, and Munich.[48]

Vertical stripes on the cheeks are still visible on a handful of figures.[49] As mentioned above, Hoffman has recently explored the meaning of this motif in the context of mourning. Her argument is convincing, although other interpretations are also possible (e.g., clan or age-related cicatrization). The figures that bear these markings are unprovenienced works dated on the basis of formal style; the styles range from those of the earlier phases of production of folded-arm figures to the later. Thus the motif appears to span at least several hundred years in the Cycladic period, and beyond, if Hoffman is correct. Unfortunately, here too we cannot turn to associated goods or findspots. Therefore interpretations rely on the evidence on the figures themselves. This evidence may be compared to the ethnographic and historical records, as Hoffman has done, but for identifying possible functions, the motif may also be usefully considered in the context of other painted figures (see below).

Painted Grooves

Grooves between contiguous body parts (such as the spine, head/neck; *not* between arms/torso or legs) were often picked out with red paint, as on the figure in the British Museum described above. Fingers and toes were also occasionally colored red, with paint either filling incisions or defining the digits. The earliest example with which I am familiar is a "Pre-Canonical" figure with arms meeting at the center of the torso in the manner of Plastiras-variety figures. Red strokes define the fingers, and red was painted in the toe incisions. Mercury and lead were detected on the fingers, indicating that cinnabar and perhaps red lead were used for the color.[50] Red grooves can be observed on figures of the Plastiras, Kapsala, and Spedos types and on figures from transitional phases, but not on the (later) Dokathismata or Chalandriani varieties.

Jewelry

Necklaces and arm bangles can be discerned on a few Early Cycladic figures, although this motif is not as common as other sorts of embellishments, such as face dots. One of the most spectacular examples in this respect is the figure in a private collection in New York discussed above.[51] Along with numerous anatomical details and skin embellishments, the figure was provided with bangles on the left wrist, a "choker" below the chin composed of linked butterflylike motifs with a band of fringe descending from it. At the base of the neck is another necklace, this one of linked scallops with dots at the center of each scallop. Both the choker and the necklace extend partway around the back of the neck. They, and the bangles, are painted red. On other figures (see, e.g., Fig. 1), red lines in the grooves between the head and body (which occur at the top and at the base of the neck) may represent necklaces, or may be related to the red-

47. See Hendrix, 2000, fig. 18, for a sketch of fourteen examples.

48. Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, nos. 139, 156, 171, 190. The Karlsruhe and Munich figures are provided with tentative proveniences in Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, based on old museum notes associated with their acquisition. For published photographs of examples in private collections, see Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, nos. 141, 209.

49. Hoffman 2002, pp. 526–530, with bibliography and comparanda. See also Hendrix 2000, fig. 22.

50. See Hendrix 2000, no. 5. The figure is currently on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, L.1997.70, from the Wallach Museum, Columbia University. My thanks to Sarah Elliston Weiner for permission to examine this figure. See Hendrix 2000, pp. 95–97, tables I:5 and I:6, where additional figures with painted grooves are listed.

51. See Getz-Preziosi 1987b, pl. I, no. 24; Hendrix 2000, no. 17.

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Figure 6. Early Cycladic marble head from figure with painted diadem; no known findspot. H. 10.6 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 4182.

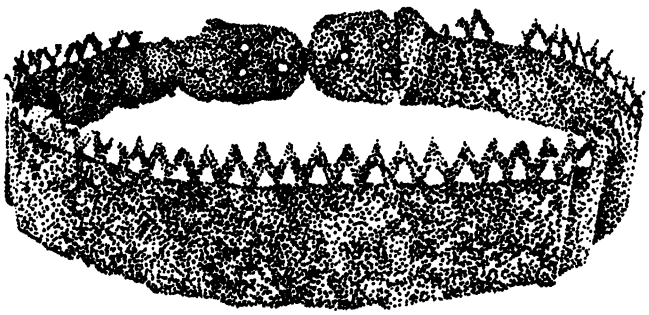

Figure 7. Early Cycladic silver diadem from Amorgos, Dokathismata, tomb 14. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 4729.
After Zervos 1957, pl. 127

painted grooves that are found with some frequency elsewhere on the body as described above. The bangles on the wrists of a large figure in the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe[52] and a smaller figure in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek in Munich (10.382) survive as grooves; no traces of paint, if paint was ever there, remain.

The dotted lozenges painted across the crown of a head in the Naxos Chora Museum (Fig. 6) may represent a diadem, the significance of which cannot be precisely ascertained from the archaeological record. A similar headdress may have been worn by some Early Cycladic people: a silver band with zigzag motif was found in a tomb on Amorgos (Fig. 7; see also below, p. 440). Whether such a headdress strictly conveyed a specific status or was more fluid in its meaning is uncertain. Jewelry motifs seem to be restricted to EC II, which accords with the dramatic increase in personal adornment at this time observed by Carter.[53]

52. Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, p. 259, no. 151; Badisches Landesmuseum 75/49.

53. Carter, forthcoming.

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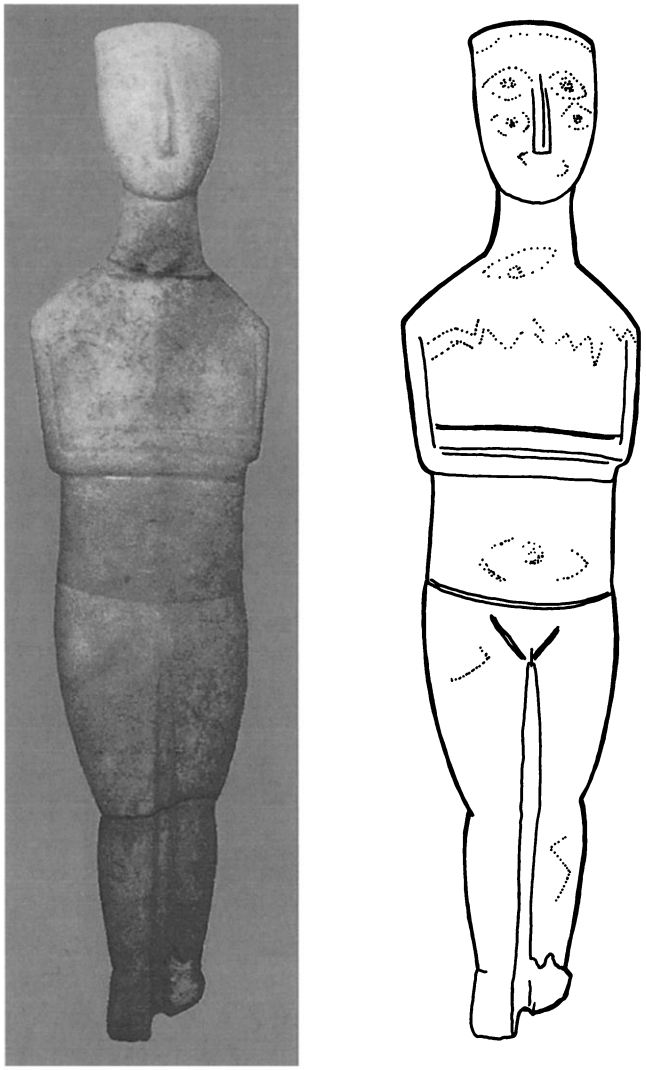

Figure 8. Early Cycladic marble figure; no known findspot. H. 39.0 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 4675.

Zigzags/Stripes on Body

Markings on the chests of Early Cycladic figures most often take the form of a series of vertical, or nearly vertical, stripes or a zigzag. This departs somewhat from the Neolithic tendency to represent a crossed-strap motif, although similarities can be found.[54] The incisions on some Violin-type figures from the very beginnings of the Bronze Age may preserve the last vestiges of the Neolithic form of this motif (see, e.g., Fig. 17, below).

A zigzag is visible across the chest of a figure in the Naxos Chora Museum (Fig. 8). In addition to the zigzag and the common eyes and crown band, this Spedos-type figure also exhibits at least four additional "nonanatomical" eyes, a motif discussed in more detail below. The upper half of a Dokathismata-type figure in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is illustrated here in a photograph taken under normal light conditions as well as in an ultraviolet reflectograph (Fig. 9). The latter is characterized by a mottled surface; a pale zigzag can be discerned across the chest.

54. See, e.g., Papathanassopoulos 1996, pp. 295, 303, 304, 306, nos. 196, 213, 214, 220. For a clay figure with clear vertical stripes across the chest and zigzags across the belly, see p. 293, no. 189.

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a b

Figure 9. Early Cycladic marble figure; no known findspot. H. 23 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1971.258.1. Gift of Alastair Bradley Martin, 1971. *(a)* Photograph taken under normal light; *(b)* UV-reflectance photograph.

Early Cycladic figures with vertical stripes on their chests may in some cases actually have been given zigzags originally, since the marks are generally poorly preserved, and often not quite vertical. Stripes across the chest appear clearly on at least four Early Cycladic figures. One figure comes from tomb 14 at the site of Dokathismata on Amorgos. Dark red stripes, slightly off-vertical, are still easily visible across the chest (see below, pp. 435, 437, for a description of this figure and its archaeological context). The others are unprovenienced works. In each case the color is red, but it is not certain that the same pigment was used for all of them. The red pigment on the stripes on a figure in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, was identified as cinnabar,[55] whereas my attempts to analyze by X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF) the stripes on the chest of a figure in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (a "Post-Canonical" or "Dokathismata" type hermaphrodite [possessing breasts and penis], MMA 1972.118.103[56]) yielded slightly elevated levels of iron, but no mercury (which would have been easily detected by the instrument) indicative of cinnabar. I have thus tentatively identified the red of the Metropolitan Museum figure's chest stripes as iron oxide (either red ocher or hematite). Both cinnabar and iron have been identified on Early Cycladic and Neolithic Greek figures and vessels.[57] Unlike some of the previously described motifs, the stripes on the chest appear to be a motif favored toward the end of the EC II period.

A zigzag pattern on the belly is still visible today on a figure from tomb 14 of the Spedos cemetery on Naxos, as it was on the photograph

55. Getz-Preziosi 1987b, p. 207.
56. See Hendrix 1997–1998, p. 8, figs. 6, 7.
57. See Hendrix 2003, table I. On cinnabar, see below, n. 70.

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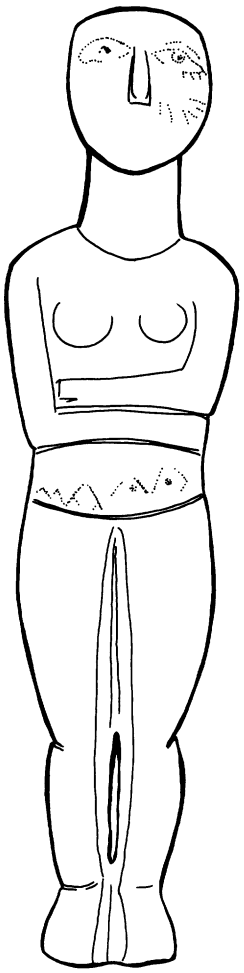
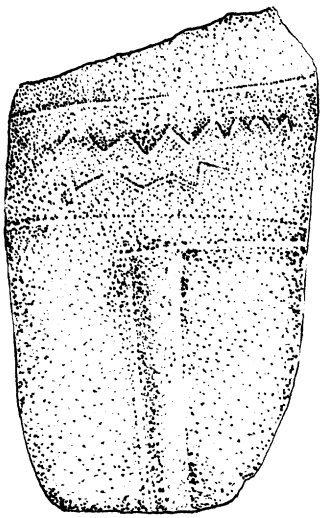


Figure 10 *(left)*. Early Cycladic marble figure from Naxos, Spedos, tomb 14. H. 33.5 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 6140.20.

Figure 11 *(below)*. Late Neolithic fragment of clay legs from Thessaly, Sesklo. P.H. ca. 6 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 12246.



taken by Zervos in 1957 before the encrustation was removed (Fig. 10).[58] Centuries earlier, a very similar zigzag was scratched on the surface of a clay figure fragment from LN Sesklo (Fig. 11). There is no reason to suppose that the motif was carefully passed down over this long span of time. The idea of a belt with a simple pattern, however, may have been common to both LN Thessaly and Early Cycladic Naxos.

Vertical zigzags on the arms or legs were also applied. These may be opposed, forming a series of stacked diamonds, as at the juncture of the right upper arm and torso of a Plastiras-type figure from Naxos, Akrotiri, tomb 20,[59] and on the right thigh of an unprovenienced Late Spedos-type figure illustrated in the Karlsruhe catalogue.[60] Again, it is likely that hundreds of years separate these two examples, suggesting that much evidence for the motif on intervening figures has been lost, and that motifs could endure (as motifs, not necessarily as particular symbols) over impressively long intervals of time.

58. Zervos 1957, pl. 108.

59. Doumas 1977, p. 93, pl. 32:f–g; Hendrix 2000, no. 3.

60. Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, p. 267, no. 162 (and p. 467, where traces of red are noted); Hendrix 2000, no. 36. See Hendrix 2000, figs. 23 and 24 for sketches of figures with vertical zigzags.

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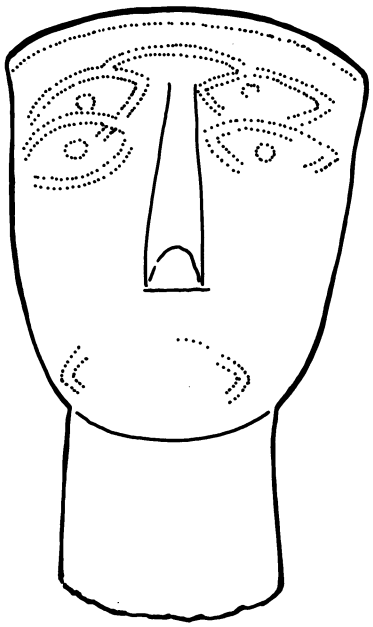

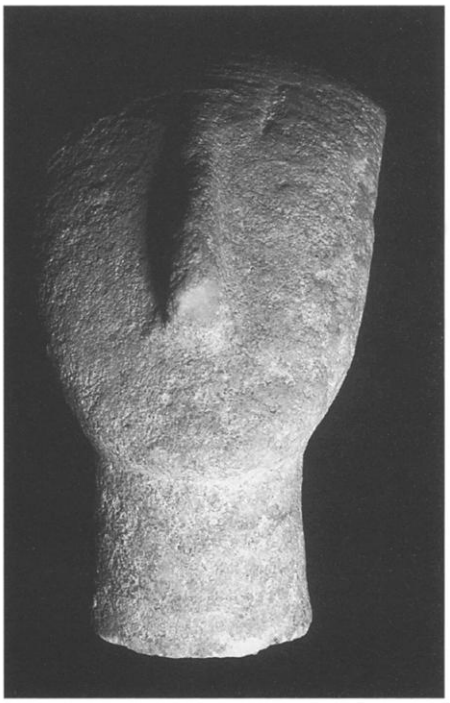

Figure 12. Early Cycladic marble head from figure; no known findspot. P.H. 10.7 cm. Athens, N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 701.

Eyes: Nonanatomical

I conclude this selected catalogue of motifs with a pattern that is more mysterious than rare. "Eyes" painted on the body and multiple (more than two) eyes on the face are visible on a surprising number of Early Cycladic figures. A clear example is in the Naxos Chora Museum, mentioned and illustrated above (Fig. 8). In addition to the zigzag on the chest and two very large open eyes on the face of that figure, a large dotted lozenge or eye is well preserved in green pigment at the base of the neck. Closer examination reveals that two more eyes can be seen on the face below the better-preserved eyes. Whether all four eyes on the face were visible simultaneously is difficult to determine, since the effects of the media may result in ghosts or other vestigial remains even after the pigment had been mostly removed or had flaked away. The green eye at the base of the neck, however, was surely visible at the same time as two or more eyes on the face (since they are still visible today), suggesting that the simultaneous display of multiple eyes was in some instances deliberate. It is possible that a second set of eyes was painted after the first had worn away, but sufficiently soon after for the painter to avoid the (charged?) space of the first set. Another possibility is that two sets of eyes were painted to be visible at once, two sets representing more "eye power" than a single set.

A striking example of this phenomenon occurs on a head in the N. P. Goulandris Collection, in the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens (Fig. 12). In raking light, the two pupils on the right side of the face confirm that two sets of eyes were painted—not a single set of eyes with eyebrows, as previously thought.[61] The arch spanning the top set of eyes can also be seen on two other figures in the same museum (Coll. 252, 280); the larger example (Coll. 280) is better known for its red parallel stripes that cover

61. Doumas (2000, p. 146) shows how another lighting situation reveals "eyes and eyebrows." An illustration in Renfrew 1991 (pl. 76) also shows "eyes and eyebrows," as well as an almond-shaped mouth. Neither author mentions the four pupils or the arch above the top set of eyes.

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the face, chest, forearms, and belly.[62] Including the head illustrated in Figure 12, I know of seven figures that preserve double sets of eyes painted in this manner, that is, in approximately the same location but distant enough from each other to imply that one location was chosen in order to avoid the other.[63]

A series of relatively dark open lozenge shapes arranged around the face appear in an ultraviolet reflectograph of a large figure in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA 68.148).[64] When the figure was subsequently examined under low magnification with a stereo microscope (×7 to ×30 magnification), particles of bright red pigment were discerned. After the particles had been mapped, it was apparent that many (although not all) correlated with the lozenge shapes. These shapes are exceedingly difficult to discern, but their presence is rendered more probable both by the remains of pigment and by the number of figures that bear these faint traces in similar places.[65]

MOTIFS: PLACEMENT, STYLE, MATERIALS

Identification of the most common positions of the motifs on the figures provides another perspective on the significance of the motifs. These trends can be considered apart from the archaeological context, giving us an idea of what the appropriate positions were according to pan-Cycladic customs.

Motifs such as hair configurations and jewelry occur where one might expect, but there are telling limits. Although hair curls may extend down the sides of the neck, and well down the back,[66] they were not to my knowledge painted down the front of the torso (as on kouroi, for example). Representations of bangles on the wrists are attested, but not on the upper arms or around the ankles. We begin to form an idea of Early Cycladic grooming and adornment for (some) women. These motifs reflect material, three-dimensional objects that were part of the world of the living; bracelets and possible necklace components have been found in a number of tombs, and we can assume that Early Cycladic humans grew hair that required attendance. Dress is missing from the marble figures, although textile pseudomorphs on at least one large figure (Fig. 13) hint at the possibility that articles of clothing were provided as actual textiles.[67]

62. Hoffman 2002, p. 533, figs. 7, 8. See Doumas 2000, the most recent catalogue of this collection, p. 145, no. 252; p. 158, no. 280. See Hendrix 2000, no. 43, for a "map" of the paint remains.

63. The seven figures are published as follows: 1) Munich Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 10.382: Fellman 1981, pp. 14–16, no. 6; Hendrix 2000, no. 27; 2) Athens, N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 252: Renfrew 1991, p. 117, pl. 77, fig. 10; Hendrix 2000, no. 33; 3) Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum 70/550: Getz-Preziosi 1987a, no. 29, fig. 42:g; Hendrix 2000, no. 48; 4) private collection: Hendrix 2000, no. 53; 5) Athens, N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 701 (Fig. 12 here): Renfrew 1991, p. 121, pl. 76; Hendrix 2000, no. 55; 6) private collection: Getz-Gentle 2001, pl. 71:d ("Keros hoard"); 7) Athens, N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 1105: Doumas 2000, p. 138, no. 187.

64. See Hendrix 1997–1998, pp. 12–13, figs. 13–15 (fig. 14 is the UV reflectograph).

65. See Hendrix 2000, fig. 19, for sketches of ten figures with nonanatomical eyes.

66. See Renfrew 1991, p. 122, fig. 7.

67. Hendrix 2000, p. 47, n. 64.

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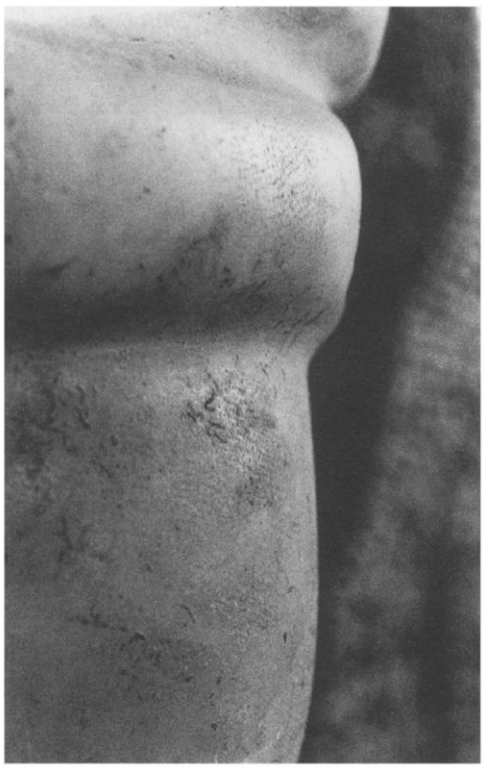

Figure 13. Detail of textile pseudomorph on the belly of an Early Cycladic marble figure; no known findspot. P.H. 69.4 cm. New York, Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection.

Motifs that do not seem to represent tangible objects include various sorts of stripes, zigzags, and the nonanatomical eye. These may have had correlations in paint, scarring, or tattooing on living humans, or they may have been reserved for the marble figures alone. Theoretically they could be applied anywhere, so any consistency in their positions on the body should aid in the interpretation of their significance.

Vertical stripes occur on the cheeks and chests of the figures, but not across the backs or on the legs. Rows of dots were painted on the cheeks and brow, and very occasionally around the back of the head. This motif has not been observed below the neck. Zigzags, however, may appear on the face (as on MMA 1971.258.1; see above, Fig. 9), chest, upper arms, or legs. When almond shapes, and almond shapes with central dots (which I interpret as eyes), were applied, they also consistently appear on certain parts of the anatomy. Sets of double eyes on the face may represent augmented anatomical eyes. Other parts of the body were also provided with eyes. The belly and throat are favored, but eyes may also occur on the upper chest and thighs. A figure in the Naxos Chora Museum (Fig. 4) has a large almond-shaped motif on the belly (similar to the pattern on the belly of a figure in the N. P. Goulandris Collection, Coll. 724).[68] Several almond-shaped motifs without central dots appear on the face below the high-set anatomical eyes (two in the mouth region), and several more with central dots appear on the throat.

Some motifs appear to be favored in the earlier part of the Early Cycladic period, and some in the later. Early motifs include the red-painted

68. For Coll. 724, see Renfrew 1991, pls. 2, 78, 96:20, 100:8, 103; also Hendrix 2000, no. 24, for a "map" of the painted patterns.

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grooves, and late motifs include the chest stripes (although the sample size is too small to feel confident about these distributions). More importantly, most of the motifs appear on figures of nearly all varieties, suggesting that they stayed in use for a long time. The possible functions and meanings of these motifs are considered below, following a discussion of the archaeological contexts and ethnographic parallels.

The play between symmetry and asymmetry is manifest in the relationship between contour (exterior) and interior designs and cannot be easily dismissed as unintentional: incisions, breast forms, and paint motifs are asymmetrical more often than can be ascribed to carelessness. The final polishing of the stone will have affected the symmetry of the contours. Symmetry was generally achieved, although it would have been quite easy to abrade one side differently from the other. The interference of slurry, the difficulty of judging progress while abrading the surfaces, and the temptation to finish work prematurely were all overcome by stopping, cleaning, and checking repeatedly during the process. Clearly, symmetry was culturally desirable when producing the basic form, which would be visible from some distance.

The interior details were approached with quite a different attitude. In many ways the eyes and hand that judged symmetry for the contours could have found it easier to form breasts at the same height and same size on the chest, yet this result is infrequently observed. Similarly, separating two equally sized features such as legs, arms, and toes should have been a simple matter, had it been desired. Such symmetry, however, is also rare (note the odd placement of the nose in Fig. 4). We should not be surprised to find eyes at different heights, or in seemingly odd locations, or zigzags swinging across incisions, or various strands of curly and straight hair on the same figure. The interior markings were directed to a more intimate audience, with different expectations of symmetry for these details.

The choice of pigments may also be significant. Red, blue, and less often green have been found on marble figures, vessels, and in pigment containers. Red is by far the predominant color on the figures (as they have been preserved). Both cinnabar and iron oxide have been identified by analytical methods on the figures as well as in vessels.[69] The link between the color red and blood is well attested in the ethnographic literature, and Hoffman applies this connection in her interpretation of the cheek stripes. But why use cinnabar, a rare and exotic pigment,[70] rather than iron oxide, which is as brilliant in hue as it is common in the Cyclades? I have trouble telling the two apart visually since the hue of each can vary, sometimes resembling each other closely. Color must not have been the only valuable property of the pigment. Cinnabar is mercuric sulfide, and

69. See above, n. 57.

70. Carter (forthcoming) discusses several potential poor (i.e., not commercially viable) sources of cinnabar in the Aegean, including Naxos, Chios, Samos, and Euboia. Thus it may not have been strictly exotic. It was certainly rare, however, and the expenditure of knowledge and time to locate and retrieve this pigment highlights its special desirability.

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may be associated with elemental mercury at its source. It is possible that this association and its exotic origin added to the potency of the red material.[71]

Blue pigment is often found packed into tiny decorated clay pots or incised bone tubes.[72] It is more rarely found on the figures than red pigment, but may once have been prevalent, if the paint ghosts visible today indicate areas that were originally painted blue. Several analyses of the blue in pigment containers have identified the mineral azurite.[73] Azurite is a copper mineral and may also have been valued in part for its association with this metal. Copper ores are found on Kythnos and, to a lesser extent, on Siphnos (better known for its silver ores), Seriphos, and near the tip of Attica at Laurion. All were worked in the Early Bronze Age, and both copper and silver were fashioned into articles of apparently high value in the Cyclades.[74] The closest source of the other blue pigment used in early antiquity, lapis lazuli (with an entirely different chemistry than azurite), is Afghanistan, most likely beyond the reach of Cycladic islanders or their trading partners, if such existed. To date it has not been identified in association with Early Cycladic objects. In sum, blue pigment was selected, saved in special pigment containers, interred, and used on marble figures. These choices reflect the value of this pigment.

Unfortunately, the rare green pigments found in pigment containers[75] and on the one figure known to me (Fig. 8) have not been analyzed, but it may be worth recalling that one green pigment—malachite—is found in the same geological contexts as azurite, that is, with copper ores. Azurite can turn into malachite after prolonged contact with water, leaving open the possibility that only blue and red were used, with occurrences of green testifying to the hydration of blue.[76]

LOOKING AT PAINT MOTIFS

When recognizable anatomical features were painted in locations that make sense to us (e.g., the nostrils in Fig. 2, or the hair in Fig. 5), we are more willing to see (and preserve) traces of the painting in those areas, or acknowledge the existence of paint ghosts. Patterns that occur frequently, such as a band across the top of the crown, become increasingly discernible to individual viewers as greater numbers of figures exhibiting the motif are noted.

Even patterns that recall other objects from the same culture may be recognized, if reluctantly at first. As we have seen, a marble head in the

71. See Helms 1993 for a discussion of the importance of traveling and travelers to early societies for establishing and maintaining ties among widespread communities, and the associated prestige of materials brought home from afar by such travelers.

72. Hendrix 2000, appendix II.

73. Hendrix 2000, pp. 137–138, table III.

74. See Broodbank 2000, pp. 79–80, with bibliography. On the cultural importance of metals in the EC cultures, see Nakou 1995, with bibliography.

75. Hendrix 2000, appendix II.

76. Hendrix 2001, p. 53.

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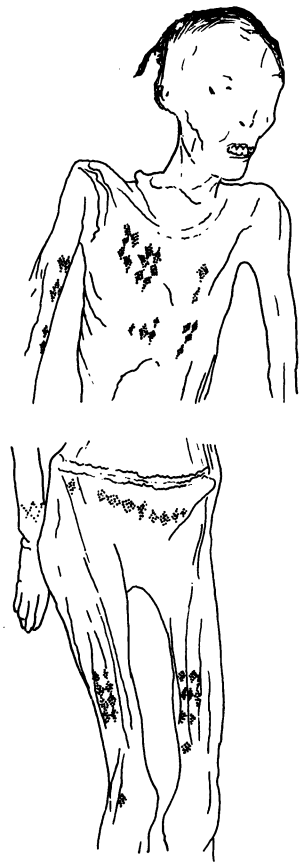

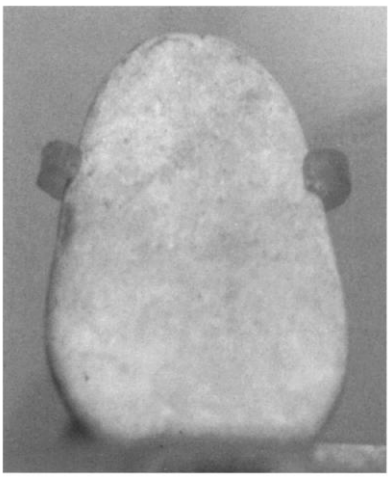

Figure 14 ***(left)*****. Tattooed mummy from Thebes, Egypt, late third millennium B.C.** After photograph in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Figure 15 ***(above)*****. Marble pebble figure from Despotiko, Zoumbaria tomb 137. H. ca. 8 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 4885.6.**

Naxos Chora Museum (Fig. 6) has the pale crown band that is so common, but it also displays a zigzag or lozenge motif across it, reminiscent of an object of personal adornment such as the silver diadem found in tomb 14 at Dokathismata (Fig. 7). This may be a clue that some painted geometric motifs represent objects in the real world. Similarly, some of the dots, stripes, or zigzags may mimic signs of tattooing, scarification, or body painting practiced by the islanders. There is solid evidence from third-millennium B.C. Egypt that these sorts of body alterations were practiced (Fig. 14).[77]

It is a greater challenge to accept similar evidence for asymmetrical designs or familiar shapes in the "wrong" locations or on the "wrong" sorts of objects. The very clear eye, with extant red pigment around the inner corner, on a pebble figure (Fig. 15) from tomb 137 in the Zoumbaria cemetery on Despotiko eluded me for years, despite my having drawn it several times. Only when I was open to the possibility and saw the figure in a certain light did the paint suddenly appear, and then the eye was breathtakingly obvious. Likewise, a nonanatomical eye on white marble Cycladic figures (e.g., Fig. 8) has been very difficult to accept, despite the plethora of ethnographic examples for disassociated eyes, as well as isolated eyes on nonanthropomorphic objects (e.g., Fig. 16) from the later Bronze Age Cyclades. One must open one's mind as well as one's eyes to the possibilities.

77. See also Bianchi 1988; Talalay 1993, pp. 70–72.

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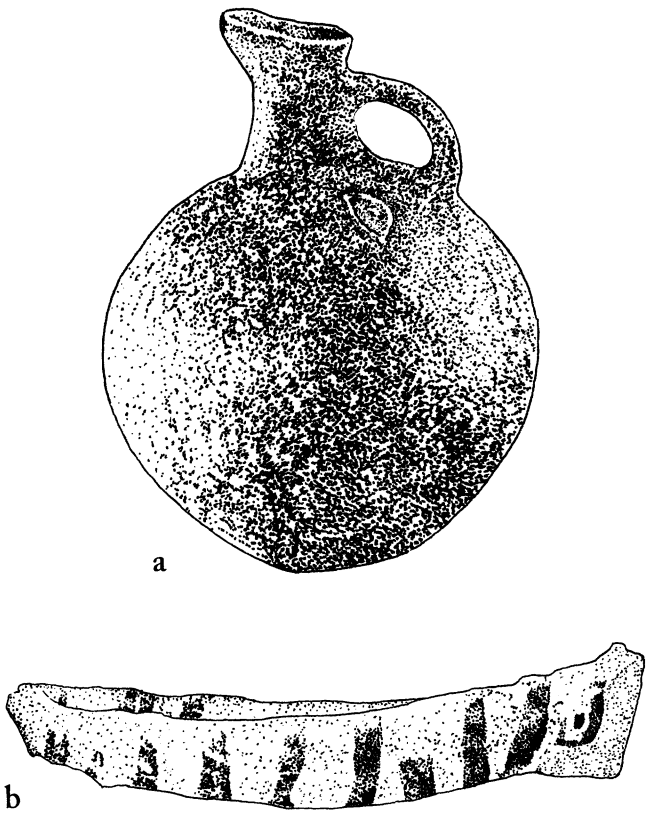

Figure 16. Vessels with eyes depicted: *(a)* **Early Cycladic clay jug with incised eye from Naxos, Panormos. H. 20.4 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora 357.** After Marangou 1990, no. 108
(b) **Middle Cycladic clay boat model with dark brown painted designs, including eyes, from Melos, Phylakopi. L. 12.7 cm. Athens, National Archaeological Museum.** After Zervos 1957, pl. 230

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

How do the archaeological contexts and distribution of the figures contribute to our understanding of their function or their meaning? Early Cycladic marble figures have been excavated mainly in cemeteries, although occasionally they have been discovered elsewhere, such as at Mandres tou Roussou, a rock-crevice site on Amorgos,[78] and at the settlement of Kastraki on Naxos (near Melanes, the prime source of emery in the Cyclades).[79] The site of Daskaleio-Kavos on the tiny island of Keros (between Naxos and Amorgos) has yielded hundreds of fragments of figures, marble vessels, and human bone. The site may testify to secondary burial practices in the Cyclades in addition to the evidence for a puzzlingly large settlement.[80] Renfrew and Doumas have each examined the archaeological contexts of

78. Marangou 1997.

79. Kastraki was published in very cursory fashion by Stephanos in 1904, 1908, and 1909. Additional settlement sites in the EBA Cyclades that have yielded EC figures include Phylakopi on Melos (in a probably disturbed context below Mycenaean-period houses; see Atkinson et al. 1904, pp. 194–195, pls. 2–8); Agia Irini on Kea (also in post-EBA contexts; see Caskey 1971, 1974); and Akrotiri on Thera (EC I figures found at the LBA site, most from "Cenotaph Square," also a secondary context that points to knowledge of these objects beyond the EBA; see Sotirakopoulou 1998). At least twenty other EC settlement sites have been explored where no anthropomorphic figures have been documented.

80. See Broodbank 2000, pp. 223–236, with bibliography. Peggy Sotirakopoulou is currently preparing a fuller publication of the finds from this site.

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TABLE 1. MINIMUM NUMBER OF EARLY CYCLADIC FIGURES PER ISLAND

Island	*EC I*	*EC II*	*EC III*
Andros (Northeast)	—	—	—
Tenos (NE)	—	—	—
Syros (NE)	9	9	?
Mykonos (NE)	—	—	—
Naxos (Southeast)	37	24	—
Greater Paros (SE)	53	6	—
Erimonisia (SE)	1	(350 from Keros Hoard)	?
Amorgos (SE)	6	20	?
Ios (SE)	—	5	—
Sikinos (SE)	—	—	—
Pholegandros (SE)	—	—	—
Thera (South)	24	7	6
Kea (West)	—	—	—
Kythnos (W)	—	—	—
Seriphos (W)	—	—	—
Siphnos (W)	2	—	—
Greater Melos (W)	—	6	7

Data from Hendrix 2000, appendix II; Broodbank 2000, p. 225. For the Keros Hoard, see n. 80. A question mark indicates that some of the documented figures may belong to the indicated period; a dash indicates lack of data.

figures in the Cyclades and individual site reports have added to these syntheses.[81]

Despite lacunae in the record—the result of looting and the cursory publication of many Early Cycladic cemetery sites—some observations regarding deposition patterns for marble figures may be drawn from published excavations. Throughout the third millennium, isolated tombs exist as well as burial sites that range in size from tiny clusters of two or three graves to large cemeteries of well over a hundred tombs.[82]

Broodbank's proximal point analysis (PPA) of the EBA Cyclades indicates that connections between islands are likely to have been complex and variable within certain boundaries.[83] He discerns a western group including Kea, Kythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, and the Melian cluster, and, in the east, subsets that center on some of the larger islands, in particular Naxos. When the overall distribution of findspots for Early Cycladic figures is considered, it becomes apparent that as our information stands at present, the islands in closest proximity to Naxos have yielded the greatest number of figures throughout the third millennium. Table 1 provides minimum numbers (the looting of sites and limited exploration of some islands must deflate the numbers considerably). Despite the gaps in our knowledge, Naxos and the islands immediately surrounding it seem to have served as the focal point for the consumption of figures.

A brief look at the archaeological evidence from Paros, Naxos, and Amorgos gives a general idea of the deposition of figures in this group during the third millennium. I examine them here in roughly chronologi-

81. Renfrew 1972, esp. pp. 135–195; Doumas 1977; Barber 1987. For a list of excavated sites, see Leekley and Noyes 1975; Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979; Fotou 1983 (for sites on Naxos); Davis 1992. For a chart of most excavated EC objects, arranged by island, see Hendrix 2000, appendix II.

82. See Hendrix 2000, appendix II.

83. Broodbank 2000, pp. 183–191, fig. 53.

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cal order; the main cemeteries on Greater Paros (the islets to the south of Paros would have been connected by land bridges) date generally to the earlier phases of the Early Bronze Age, those on Naxos to the early to middle phases, and those on Amorgos to the middle phases.

Excavations on Greater Paros yielded more schematic than folded-arm figures. In terms of materials and time, these EC I figures would have been less expensive to produce than the marble kandiles also found, an important consideration when assessing the relative "wealth" deposited in each grave. Tsountas excavated the EC I cemetery of Krasades on Antiparos in the late 19th century, publishing the contents of nine of the more than fifty graves identified there.[84] The most generously provided tomb (tomb 117) contained thirteen Violin-type figures deposited near the feet of the skeleton. The tomb also contained two marble vessels, one very similar in type to the FN marble vessels from Kephala on Kea, suggesting a link to the western string.[85] Other tombs also contained marble figures and vessels (including a kandila and a phiale with blue colorant in tomb 113), although not in such an impressive quantity.

At Despotiko, at the southernmost tip of Greater Paros, Tsountas excavated two early cemeteries in a good state of preservation at Livadia and Zoumbaria, each comprising approximately twenty graves.[86] Tomb 129 at Livadia and tomb 137 at Zoumbaria contained the bulk or all of the figures (Livadia's tomb 129 also contained the only kandila, as well as the only documented pigment container—a perforated marble palette with red colorant and two pebbles on top of it, one also smeared with red pigment), but other tombs contained marble vessels or obsidian blades in addition to pottery and beads, and another tomb at Livadia had a marble figure as well. The finds from Zoumbaria are more segregated, tomb 137 containing all the figures (six, of various schematic varieties, one with a large red eye painted on it; see Fig. 15). The other tombs for which finds were reported contained one or two terracotta vessels, and occasionally beads (tomb 135 was also well provided, equipped with one undecorated and two decorated pots and approximately fifty beads).

The smaller cemetery at Glypha on Paros, with a total of ten graves, contained four tombs that produced numerous marble vessels (kandiles) and figures.[87] The similarly sized and dated cemetery at Plastiras also revealed a variety of marble figures and vessels, but all of the figures (and one of the kandiles, as well as a marble bowl with red pigment, small fragments of obsidian, and a copper needle—tools for "skin" embellishment?) were found in a single tomb, tomb 9.[88] The large EC I cemetery of Pyrgos on Paros, also excavated by Tsountas, held fifty-eight tombs, of which fourteen were specifically described.[89] Terracotta vessels and pierced stone beads were found in many of these tombs; marble figures and/or vessels were documented in three graves. One grave, tomb 103, contained fourteen Violin-type figures, stone beads, fragments of shell, and a pot with a decorated base, while tomb 104 contained a marble kandila. In addition to two terracotta pyxides, tomb 98 was outfitted with a marble bowl and pestle, both of which preserved traces of red pigment.

The finds from Greater Paros suggest that individuals were interred with objects that were associated with them specifically; not every burial

84. Tsountas 1898, pp. 140, 150, 161–162, pls. 8:37–43, 60–61, 9:40, 10:5, 11:1, 5, 8, 9, 15, 19.

85. The southern tip of Greater Paros (i.e., Despotiko and Antiparos) is anticipated as the first link between the western and southeastern Cyclades by Broodbank's PPA from the earliest (least populated) periods. See Broodbank 2000, p. 184, fig. 53.

86. For Livadia, see Tsountas 1898, pp. 162–164, pls. 9:22, 34, 10:9, 12. For Zoumbaria, see Tsountas 1898, pp. 141, 164–165, pls. 8:22–36, 11:2, 3.

87. Tsountas 1898, p. 155, pls. 8:11, 10:4, 16, 11:20.

88. Doumas 1977, pp. 97–100, pls. 34:a–f, 35:a–d, 11:h, 12:a.

89. Tsountas 1898, pp. 149–151, 158–160, pls. 8:20, 21, 44–47, 49–52, 62, 63, 9:14, 18, 27, 10:17, 11:4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 17.

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had the same suite of offerings. In many cemeteries one tomb seemed more generously provided than the rest, but often another one or two graves were also provided with numerous or "expensive" goods. The evidence hints at a loose correlation between certain individuals and the quantity and quality of grave goods, with only a few other individuals having access to similar sets of objects. The marble figures from Paros generally fall into these two classes of graves during EC I.

Excavations on Naxos have to date yielded the greatest numbers of tombs and finds in the Cycladic sphere by far, thanks to the careful excavations of Doumas, and the painstaking reconstructions of Stephanos's excavations by Papathanassopoulos.[90] The evidence from Naxos may be summarized as follows. At Aeila, three tombs were explored in a cemetery containing an unknown number of graves. Each of the three tombs contained a distinct type of offering: copper tools, terracotta drinking vessels, and a terracotta box (pyxis) with lid. But this is an exceptional situation. At Agioi Anargyroi, where the excavator reported the existence of twenty-two graves (seven of which were plundered), one tomb (tomb 21) contained a Spedos-type marble figure as well as skeletal remains (including at least nine crania), a stone "pillow slab," three marble bowls, nine obsidian blades or fragments, a terracotta cup, and a "frying pan."[91] At least one other grave (tomb 5) had an equally impressive array of goods, but no marble figures, and several other graves were also rich in finds. The presence of the "frying pan," an object that is considered EC I in date, and the Spedos-style figure, indicative of the EC II period, in one grave with multiple inhumations strongly suggests that the subgroup utilizing this grave intended to assert its longevity; the marble figure contributed to this expression.

A similar-sized cemetery on Naxos, Akrotiri, suffered less than Agioi Anargyroi from plundering. Four of the twenty-four graves documented contained marble figures, and two contained both a Violin-type and a Plastiras-variety figure.[92] The figures in the remaining two graves were also simple schematic or Violin-type figures. Many of the tombs contained a rich variety of goods, including marble vessels, so it is unlikely that the tombs with the figures were occupied by individuals considered "wealthier" than others in the community. A possible exception is tomb 5, which contained one of the Violin/Plastiras figure pairs, as well as the only marble kandila, a marble palette, stone beads (and one of copper), and two decorated terracotta pyxides. Nevertheless, tomb 21, with only one Violin figure, also had a rich assortment of other goods (see below). The decision to include marble figures in tombs seems to have been based on other concerns, which may be further illuminated by the painted and incised markings on some of these figures.

Of the ten tombs at Aplomata recorded by Kontoleon (total number of graves unknown), six contained marble figures—often more than one—as well as marble vessels, marble or terracotta "frying pans," objects made of metal (personal ornaments, in one case a sword, in another a silver ladle), obsidian blades, or pigment containers.[93] The tombs without figures also contained marble vessels, terracotta "frying pans," metal objects, and bone

90. Doumas 1977; Papathanassopoulos 1963.

91. "Frying pans" are discussed by Coleman 1985.

92. Doumas 1977, esp. pp. 87, 93, pls. 28:i–k, 32:f–i.

93. Kontoleon 1970, p. 151, pls. 192, 193, 195; 1971, pp. 178–179, pls. 210–215; 1972, pp. 149–151, 154, pls. 133, 134, 136, 138, 139–144.

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tubes, so again it is difficult to distinguish "economic" status on the sole basis of marble figures. A similar situation exists at the site of Spedos on Naxos.[94] If we turn our attention to much smaller clusters of graves, we find similar assemblages. Three tombs, in which multiple burials evidently took place, comprise the "cemetery" at Audeli on Naxos. This small site produced two marble figures as well as marble vessels, many obsidian blades, terracotta vessels, and an elaborate silver pin.[95] Objects from a (contemporary?) house nearby include a lump of red ocher (not analyzed as far as I am aware), an obsidian blade, a grinder, and a piece of emery, suggesting that stone working as well as painting may have been practiced at the site despite its distance from a larger settlement. Other very small cemeteries also indicate that on Naxos marble figures were not the possessions of members of larger communities alone.[96]

On the island of Amorgos there are cemeteries containing more than twenty tombs, such as at Dokathismata and Kapros, cemeteries half that size, as at Kapsala and Agios Paulos, and numerous isolated burials. Although the tomb with the greatest number and variety of burial goods including marble figures (tomb 14 at Dokathismata) was found in one of the largest cemeteries on the island, marble figures were also found in much smaller cemeteries and even solitary graves.[97] Moreover, graves containing a figure might contain nothing else (as at Aigale), or a few ceramics (as in tomb 13 at Dokathismata), or a great variety of other objects including additional marble figures (as in tomb 14 at Dokathismata). Most sites contained some evidence of marble figures, but several did not, including Agios Paulos (with a total of eleven graves) and Phoinikies (just two graves). (The two Early Cycladic settlements on Amorgos of which I am aware, Markiani and the settlement near the Agios Paulos cemetery, yielded no metal artifacts or marble figures.) Although the total number of recorded goods from Amorgos is not great (less than 200, counting unspecified numbers of items such as "pottery sherds" or "stone rubbers" as representing five items), at least twenty-five whole or partial marble figures were recorded, suggesting that these were relatively common burial goods on Amorgos.[98] These numbers do not, however, shed light on the percentage of people who were buried with marble figures.

It is even more difficult to estimate the percentage of the population that possessed figures. Broodbank's attempts to infer population size from numbers of graves may provide minimum numbers,[99] but do not account for deaths at sea or outside the community, even if some tombs with no skeletal remains were intended for those lost souls. The poor state of preservation of skeletal material also hampers our attempts to discern multiple burials in single graves, for which there is much, although not consistent, evidence. Some tombs do preserve evidence for multiple inhumations, such as tomb 10 at Kapsala (which contained copper and terracotta, but no marble goods), and some preserve a single cranium (such as tomb 14 at Dokathismata, with two marble figures and many other goods), but the reports for most graves record no skeletal remains at all. The rather brief accounts of excavations from the late 19th and early 20th centuries compound the difficulty,[100] as it is uncertain whether bones would have been

94. Stephanos 1903, pp. 56–57; 1906, p. 88, n. 1; Papathanassopoulos 1963, pp. 114, 115, 120, 122–125, pls. 46:a, b, 47:a–c, 48, 49:a–d, 50:a–c, 51:a, b, 52:a–d, 53:a–c, 54:a, b, 55:a–c, 56:a, b, 57:a–d, 58:a–c, 59:a, b, 60:a–c, 61.

95. Doumas 1977, pp. 122–126, pls. 22:e–g, 49:e, h–n, 51:b, e.

96. Marble figures have been found in cemeteries with less than ten graves on Amorgos: at Stauros (six tombs; Tsountas 1898, pp. 138, 153); Notina (seven tombs; Dümmler 1886, pp. 17–18, pl. 1:3–5; Tsountas 1898, p. 138); and Aigale (a single tomb; Tsountas 1898, p. 138; Renfrew 1972, p. 523); and also on Syros at Pydima (two or three tombs; Tsountas 1899, p. 79).

97. For a figure in an isolated grave, see Tsountas 1898, p. 138 (Aigale). Very small cemeteries containing marble figures are published in Tsountas 1898, p. 138 (Kato Akrotiri, two graves), p. 153 (Stauros, six graves).

98. See Hendrix 2000, pp. 191–194, for a list of finds from Amorgos.

99. Broodbank 1989, p. 325, table 1.

100. For example, Jeremy Bent's excavations on Antiparos, published in the 1884 volume of *JHS,* are written as a picturesque travel diary rather than an excavation report. The reports of Klon Stephanos (1903, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911) of his early excavations on Naxos, published in *Prakt,* are just a few pages in length.

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consistently documented even if they had been found. We can conclude from the reports on the excavations at Amorgos, however, that twenty-five marble figures have been recovered thus far from about eighty-six graves, with at least four graves containing more than one figure.

The burial contexts from Amorgos suggest that marble figures were not the exclusive possessions of one type of individual, and they could be associated with persons buried either alone, or in large or small cemeteries. Some of these individuals had no other (nonperishable) burial goods, or a few pieces of pottery, but others had impressive amounts of burial goods, including items made from relatively rare materials such as copper or silver, which also would have entailed considerable labor to produce. This variability suggests that individuals on Amorgos possessed marble figures for reasons that cannot be linked simply to economic status or to singular roles in their communities. It may also be observed that the burials with the most "special" objects (metal, marble, elaborate pottery) did not always contain a marble figure.

When the largest Early Cycladic cemeteries are examined, such as at Chalandriani on Syros (with more than 500 tombs), a similar pattern emerges: seventy-five tombs are recorded and, despite some plundering, only nine had no finds beyond skeletal material.[101] Tomb 307 was equipped with two late EC II marble figures, marble vessels, three pigment tubes, a terracotta "frying pan," and a terracotta bowl. Tomb 354 contained a late EC II figure, two marble bowls (one with green pigment in its interior), and two terracotta jars. Tombs 415 and 468 each included a single schematic figure of marble. Tomb 447 contained a marble figure of the Dokathismata variety (late EC II), terracotta vessels, and a cranium. Other tombs, without figures, contained many items, including goods made of marble, copper, and silver, or specialized objects such as elaborately (and symbolically) decorated "frying pans," pigment tubes, or obsidian blades. Again, this evidence does not point to the equivalence between marble figures and "wealth" per se.

What conclusions can be drawn from the archaeological data thus far? Most broadly, the variety of grave goods and their presence in both the smallest and largest burial sites argue against the marble figures serving to circumscribe any sort of expressed economic hierarchy in Early Cycladic mortuary practices. Let us ask instead, however, who *was* interred with the marble figures. Marble figures are found in the majority of cemeteries throughout the EBA Cyclades. From the earlier to the later phases of the period, they were associated most often with one or two tombs (containing, it must be acknowledged, an unknown number of individuals who were nonetheless buried as one entity), with additional tombs containing markedly fewer examples. This pattern is most evident at the beginning of the Early Bronze Age. Thus, in most communities, one entity (individual or family/occupational clan) was most closely associated with the figures. If we can determine the function(s) of the figures, we may be able to say something about the roles of those people who were interred with them.

101. See Hekman 1990 for tomb assemblages at Chalandriani.

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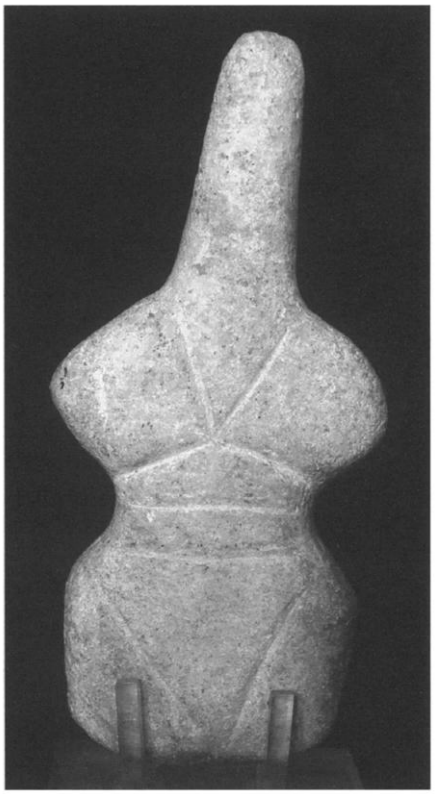

Figure 17. Early Cycladic Violin-type figure from Naxos, Akrotiri, tomb 20. H. 10.5 cm. Naxos, Archaeological Museum, Chora, 1993.

PAINTING: PERFORMANCE AND PARAPHERNALIA

A study of burial assemblages reveals that in addition to the marble figures, items that relate to pigment and paint were also deposited in numerous tombs. In some cases there may be a direct relationship between the activity of painting and the marble figure (and the deceased).[102] Tomb 14 at Dokathismata, mentioned above, is well known.[103] In this undeniably rich grave, one of two marble lug bowls contained a lump of dark red pigment (unfortunately not analyzed as yet); a very similar color was applied as a series of slightly off-vertical stripes arranged across the chest of one of the two marble figures found in the tomb.[104] At Akrotiri on Naxos a Violin-type figure with a pattern of grooves on the torso (including a pubic triangle) was found in tomb 20 (Figs. 3, 17). In addition, a series of red horizontal stripes or partially preserved lozenges was painted up the neck prong (Fig. 3, left).[105] Another Violin figure (slightly smaller) with similar grooves and a "notch" at the top of the prong was found in tomb 21 (Fig. 3, right). Although no traces of paint were observed on this figure, tomb 21 also contained two marble pestles, one with the remains of red pigment on its grinding surface, and a white stone mortar with red in its interior.[106] Clay vessels with incised decoration and stone beads—one in the shape of a bird—were also included in tomb 21 (items of personal

102. See Getz-Gentle 1996, p. 179; Hendrix 2000, p. 158.

103. Tsountas 1898, pp. 154–155; Hendrix 2000, p. 192.

104. Getz-Gentle 1996, p. 79, pl. VII(2):D and E (color), NAM 4724 (bowl) and 4722 (figure).

105. See Thimme and Getz-Preziosi 1977, pp. 439–440, no. 72 (description of paint on p. 440), for an unprovenienced Plastiras-type figure with red horizontal stripes painted up the very long neck. This figure is in a private collection in Germany.

106. Doumas 1977, p. 94, pls. 32:c, h, i, 33:c, e.

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adornment, perhaps a necklace?); a copper bead and a marble Plastiras-type figure were found in tomb 20 along with the painted Violin figure. In other words, these were tombs that may be described as well provided (two other tombs, of twenty-four, in the cemetery contained one marble figure each, and another two contained objects with pigment: a bowl in tomb 11, and a pestle in tomb 23). The similarity of the Violin figures from tombs 20 and 21 and the remains of paint—on a figure and as prepared for use—suggest that these two tomb occupants were somehow connected and that an event related to the act of painting was associated at least with the burial in tomb 21. While painted designs on their own communicate more about the final effect than the process, this evidence and that from tomb 14 at Dokathismata suggest that the process of painting itself was also culturally significant for some individuals.

The importance of such processes in other cultures has been discussed in the anthropological literature. It is worth reviewing in some detail one example, the Melville islanders (the Tiwi), since the processes of carving, painting, and dance as part of the burial ritual all contribute to the success of the event.[107] The Tiwi carve and paint wooden burial poles during a two-to-four month period after a member of the community dies. Due to taboos of proximity, the creators[108] of the poles must not be related to the deceased. The general process, from selection of raw materials to final painting, is culturally prescribed, although details of output depend on the creativity of the maker, and on the wishes (and finances) of the deceased's kin. Groups of pole-makers gather, each group responsible for the production of one pole. The pole must be of a certain size and type of wood, and the basic design must conform to tradition, a mandate ensured by the artisan's asking for and receiving advice from the more experienced individuals working nearby. When the poles are finished they become the focus of dancing rituals during the final burial celebration. The particular qualities of this whole display relate to the deceased's status in life as well as to his or her ancestral status. The point of the ritual is to facilitate the deceased's transition to the world of the "once-living" since the Tiwi believe that the ancestors are partaking in a simultaneous ritual of dancing in which the newly deceased member joins. After the dance, despite all the effort and materials expended on them, the poles are no longer significant and are left to decay naturally. The taboos and dancing associated with the poles, rather than the poles themselves, are clearly the focus of the ritual. The poles are important insofar as they give tangible form to the maintenance of the ritual.

We do not know whether the marble figures were made specifically for burial rituals; repairs and multiple painted motifs may indicate that they functioned in other contexts as well. In some cases, however, we may be justified in interpreting the finds as evidence for mortuary behavior (ritual painting) that is either specific to burial rites or that relates to activities carried on in life. The deposition of figures, paint, pigment containers, vessels, needles, and obsidian blades in graves strongly suggests that burial practices were complex and often (but not always) required at a minimum the paraphernalia that have survived to the present.

107. Goodale and Koss 1967.

108. Primarily male, except when a female shows special aptitude during mock rituals in which all children partake in all the roles; see Goodale and Koss 1967, p. 188.

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In the EBA Cyclades, similar burial good assemblages attest to a shared sense of appropriate possessions among widely dispersed communities (the horizontal axis). Just as importantly, connections to the past were maintained by the deposition with the deceased of goods that bear similarities to those deposited by previous generations (the vertical axis). The presence of differentiated burial goods *within* cemeteries suggests that individual entities were associated with particular subsets of the Early Cycladic material culture, and that these subsets accompanied particular roles within the EC cultural milieu. In nonindustrial societies where differentiation is marked by particular sets of knowledge or material possessions, agreement among a population that some individuals hold the responsibility to maintain group identity may be attested. Helms has observed, for example, that some members of a community can be empowered to transmit cultural identity through special activities, of which the production and use of extra-utilitarian goods may play an important (and durable) role.[109] This is the class of artifact into which painted marble figures, paint paraphernalia, clay and marble "frying pans," marble kandiles, and prismatic obsidian blades could, among other (and other less durable) goods, be ascribed. Helms defines the people who possess these objects and the knowledge systems that give them their meaning "aristocrats."[110] In the EBA Cyclades this category seems to have existed as well, but grave goods and burial context suggest that these "aristocrats" were differentiated from other members of the community not in terms of material wealth, but perhaps in terms of cultural responsibilities and powers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In attempting to make sense of the Cycladic painted figures, and having considered the physical evidence, I would extend Talalay's assessment of Greek Neolithic anthropomorphic figures into the Bronze Age: "figurines were ultimately associated with the adaptive strategies of a given community and [it is likely] that their functions varied."[111]

Double sets of eyes, multiple lozenge-shaped motifs on the face and other parts of the body, and especially the wide-open "anatomical" eyes on so many Early Cycladic figures indicate a possible shift in meaning of figurative works from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age. Only rarely do we continue to see the slit-eyes characteristic of the Neolithic, which were fashioned on clay as well as marble figures.[112] Rather, the eyes on Early Cycladic figures are painted in such a way as to effect a return gaze. The figures appear wide awake, focusing straight ahead, one reason why I cannot accept the hypothesis that the figures were utilized in a reclining position, although they may have been stored that way. Rather, the animated eyes combined with the size of the figures (almost all are under 0.50 m), the slightly pointed feet and bent knees, and the additional painted features suggest that the slender figures, held easily around the waist by women or men, played an active, upright role in ritual, storytelling, educating, or some combination of social uses over the course of their use-life

109. Helms 1998, p. 7.
110. Helms 1998, p. 6.
111. Talalay 1993, p. 37.
112. See Papathanassopoulos 1996, pp. 312–333, nos. 231–233, for eyes in clay visages, and from Thessaly, a marble head from a figurine in the Athens National Archaeological Museum (6001).

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in the community, prior to burial. That they could not stand on their own may further indicate that they were objects to be handled rather than venerated from a distance, although the largest figures may have been propped against walls to increase their visibility.[113]

Applications of painted designs specific to a given event may explain the relatively poor state of preservation of some motifs (see below), while other features, such as the two normal eyes and crown band, were intended to be more permanent. The kinds of events that may have inspired or required painting designs or symbols on figures cannot be discerned from the archaeological record as it exists now, with the exception of the event of death. We do have some evidence that the materials and act of painting were part of the burial process. I have already noted the Violin figures and mortar and pestle with red pigment excavated from tombs 20 and 21 in the early EC I cemetery at Akrotiri on Naxos, and the bowl with pestle and red pigment and figure with red stripes painted across the chest from tomb 14 in the Dokathismata cemetery on Amorgos, dating to late EC II. Tomb 14 also contained the silver diadem illustrated above (Fig. 7), a human cranium, another similar marble figure, a marble four-lugged bowl, several clay jars, a fragment of a silver bowl, a silver blade, a copper dagger with silver rivets, two copper bracelets, and a silver pin with a goat finial.[114] This was an exceptionally well stocked tomb, highly suggestive of an individual (if indeed there was just one individual buried there) who was wealthier than others in the cemetery. Part of this wealthy person's burial kit included tools and materials that could enable someone to engage in the act of painting. It is clear that painting as a process was significant in this context. Pigments associated with tombs elsewhere in the Cyclades may relate to this practice.[115]

It is necessary to speculate if we want to suggest what sort of events during a person's life would have been accompanied by the painting of marble figures. Here the position of the motif on the body may be revealing. As we have seen, the head and neck are favored. The head especially, with its wide-open eyes and other possible motifs, would have been the focus of interest, commanding the attention of the viewer to the figure and whatever message it was meant to communicate. The function of the paint at this level was to express the authority of the particular message the figure was set to convey.

The belly is a frequent location for zigzag motifs and also for the nonanatomical eyes (Figs. 4, 8, 10). Associations with pregnancy may not be out of the question, signifying a temporary condition for the persona embodied in the marble figure. Early Cycladic female figures are rarely represented as obviously pregnant. Bellies that protrude greatly enough to indicate pregnancy unequivocally are far less common than slightly swollen abdomens that seem more characteristic of normal female anatomy (perhaps enhanced by age).[116] Enlarged breasts, which may also signify pregnancy, are altogether absent on Early Cycladic figures, as are broad hips or exaggerated buttocks; typical prehistoric representations of "fertility" are not found in Early Cycladic female figures. Nevertheless, the condition of pregnancy must have been fraught with a sense of awe, danger, mystery, responsibility, and optimism, and would therefore seem an ap-

113. See N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Coll. 968, a fragment of hands holding a miniature figure, illustrated in Getz-Gentle 2001, p. 37, fig. 18 (reconstruction drawing), pl. 26. For a provocative and detailed discussion of the possible functions of anthropomorphic figures, see Talalay 1993, pp. 37–79. A rich analysis of ethnographic parallels is also provided.

114. Tsountas 1898, pp. 154–155, pls. 8:1, 2; 9:11, 11a, 21; 10:6; 12:2, 8.

115. Yellow ocher was found distributed on the slab floor of a double burial in tomb 8 at Agioi Anargyroi on Naxos (Doumas 1977, pp. 101, 108). Lumps of red-brown "ocher" were noted just outside the graves in the same cemetery (Doumas 1977, p. 119), and pigments were found throughout tomb 23 in the Aplomata cemetery, also on Naxos (Kontoleon 1972, p. 150; Coleman 1985, p. 210). Yellow powder was also found spread before tomb 8 in the Plastiras cemetery on Paros (Doumas 1977, p. 98), and two lumps of red pigment were found in tomb 356 in the Chalandriani cemetery on Syros (Tsountas 1899, p. 113).

116. This idea was first suggested to me in May 1999 by Pat Getz-Gentle (pers. comm.).

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propriate subject for performance, storytelling, song, and other behaviors supporting the act of painting on the belly. But that was only one condition worthy of social attention.

Nonanatomical eyes that appear elsewhere on the figure also presumably call attention to the part of the body where they appear, although the particular significance is unknown. Ethnographic parallels generally support this broad meaning. Symbolic eyes are added to images or created as isolated items (ex-votos) in modern Greece, Turkey, Syria, Mexico, and elsewhere.[117] The *tsikuri,* or "God's eyes" produced in yarn by the Huichol in Mexico, for example, symbolically ask a particular deity to "keep an eye on" the individual who possesses the *tsikuri*.[118] Eyes that appear on particular body parts of marble figures may similarly ask for safekeeping of the voice, womb, spirit, arm/strength, heart, and so on.

The zigzags painted on the upper arms or legs of some figures are also difficult to interpret. The function of these markings on those areas might be to call attention to the limbs, either strengthening or weakening their powers or the powers the limbs may have come to symbolize for an individual, community, or network of communities.[119] Alternatively, they may simply mimic body embellishments worn by living people. Clearly, in the absence of contemporary texts, too many variables exist to determine the precise meaning of this motif.

As already mentioned, very few, if any, Early Cycladic figures of the developed types are found in clay. That is highly suggestive of a form of cultural control over production. At the very least, Early Cycladic islanders did not find it desirable or necessary to fashion clay versions for themselves, which would have been relatively easy to do.[120] The female (occasionally male) human figure was an object that for some reason, and for centuries, was strictly linked to white marble. Given the white slip on so many Early Cycladic clay vessels, the color of the stone was not the issue, perhaps in the same way that color was not the only valuable property of the pigments used.[121]

Marble workers of various levels of skill and ambition produced anthropomorphic figures that have been found throughout the Cycladic world, even on islands where marble is not available. At the very least, crafting a figure of this material expressed conformity to a pan-Cycladic norm, and a willingness to invest considerable time in the effort. Those are two strong messages that may have helped establish and maintain beneficial and friendly relations among members of an important subset in every Early Cycladic community: travelers and hosts. The presence of such a figure in a community may have signified to travelers that the owner was "one of us." That there generally was more than one burial in a community associated with figures suggests that a number of special individuals within the community could maintain the larger group identity. Multiple figures in one burial may hint at several networks, and may also symbolize the extent of those networks as well as confirm them. The imagination supplies numerous avenues for speculation.

Our ability to divide figures into a relatively small group of stylistic types attests to a certain level of conformity. At the same time, there is much variety within the types. Great differences can also be found among

117. On the "evil eye" in other cultures, see Dundes 1981 and Thomsen 1992.

118. Muller 1978, p. 93.

119. For the intriguing connections between anatomy and power, see Winter 1989, 1996.

120. There are exceptional figures made of other materials, such as shell or lead, and on Crete, ivory. See Fitton 1989, p. 58, fig. 76, for a lead figure from Antiparos, and Sakellarakis 1977, p. 151, fig. 143, for the ivory figure from Tholos C at Archanes, Crete.

121. For EC white-slipped pottery, see Doumas 1977, pl. 36:c (where the kandila shape clearly mimics marble examples), and Renfrew 1972, pl. 7 (with dark-painted patterns analogous to the contrasting effects of paint on marble figures).

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the types, from the rudimentary notched pebble figures to the near-life-size folded-arm figures.[122] Nonetheless, all can be easily identified as Cycladic, as opposed to Anatolian or Balkan or Levantine; there must have been a consensus among the islanders for forms appropriate to the Early Cycladic cultures.

How does the presence of paint contribute to our understanding of the function and meaning of the figures? Certain motifs, in particular the two anatomical eyes and the crown band, are so common, and so broadly consistent in form, that they seem to have been part of the canon that was communicated as integral to the pan-Cycladic norm. In this case the function and the meaning seem to have been broadly the same: Here is the activated image that you, as a member of this (pan-Cycladic) world, will recognize.

Certain other painted designs may have been applied or not, depending on local customs or needs.[123] The form of the figure was essentially generic, and seems to have been initially detailed with two open eyes in order to render the figure alert. The individual or group that possessed a figure could use its generic form in a variety of ways over time, since its appearance was not tied to a specific condition such as pregnancy or mourning. Its appearance, and therefore meaning, could be altered with paint, and perhaps dress,[124] to work on a symbolic level for a variety of particular occasions. In other words, an unspecified human form can be particularized to suit a specific stage of life or event by the application of significant painted features.[125]

This hypothesis may also account for the poor state of preservation of so many of the painted motifs. Many of these features may not have been intended to last longer than the duration of the event for which they were applied.[126] The surprising absence of the mouth on most Cycladic figures may suggest two explanations: either mouths were somehow inappropriate on these works (the handler doing all the talking), or they were indicated with media that were temporary. As a possible symbol of voice, story, song, channel, or port of nourishment, the mouth may have been painted in a changing variety of ways over the use-life of the figure. Other features, such as the anatomical eyes, may have been applied in more durable media

122. See, e.g., plates in the abundantly illustrated catalogues edited by Thimme and Getz-Preziosi (1977) and Getz-Preziosi (1987b).

123. See Talalay 1993, pp. 40–44, for a discussion of ethnographic parallels regarding the multiple uses of figures in modern nonindustrialized communities. Songs and poems commonly accompany the use of these figures; they are part of a complex teaching program aimed at passing down traditions that provide the community with its worldview.

124. Dress does not necessarily negate the function of painted motifs, whose significance may be realized as much in the act as the effects of painting.

125. Bynum, Harrel, and Richman (1986, p. 5) point out that a given motif may have different meanings depending on the status of the viewer, a point also observed by Talalay (1993, p. 34). See also Kelly, Lang, and Walters 1972, p. 62, on the creation and use of anthropomorphic figures by the Navaho in order to help restore health to people who have fallen ill. Applied embellishments such as dress and jewelry elements aid in the task.

126. Talalay (1993, p. 17) suggests that the very friable biscuit of some Neolithic clay figurines from Franchthi Cave may indicate "that the act of making the figure was more important than manipulating the artifact," while hard-fired examples "might indicate that the figure was intended to have an 'active' life and, consequently, that the maker intentionally exposed the piece to a thorough firing in order to ensure its permanence." She points (p. 127, n. 27) to additional studies, such as those carried out by Crowley (1973) and Fernandez (1973), that demonstrate that the process of a figure's manufacture was at least as significant as the final product.

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or even reapplied when necessary, having a more stable function. Those features will be more likely to survive corrosive burial conditions (as well as modern "cleaning" efforts).

To conclude, I would propose that there was an implicit hierarchy of identities expressed in Early Cycladic figures. First, the forms themselves express, without doubt, that the manufacturer and possessor belong to some degree to the same broad group of people inhabiting the islands in the southern Aegean. As Jack Davis has observed:

> In the Early Bronze Age, the similarities in the formal characteristics of ceramics, marble vessels, figurines, and metal objects that typify the Early Cycladic culture are indicative of social and economic ties maintained among the settlements of the islands; these relationships may also be regarded as necessary adaptations that would have provided access to additional resources of food and manpower in times of crisis.[127]

The white, marble, pan-Cycladic, anthropomorphic forms were not complete, however, before two large open eyes were applied in paint. It is difficult to resist the notion that these eyes were meant to express the marble body's connection to the world of human beings.

Second, motifs such as stripes or zigzags, certain coiffures, perhaps, and red lines segregating specific body parts[128] may have associated the figure with a family or other group within the broader culture. The funerary context and the incisions on the Violin-type figures from tombs 20 and 21 from Akrotiri on Naxos, for example, suggest such a relationship. In a similar vein, links may have been expressed through similar motifs on figures "belonging" to a woman's or man's parental family and subsequently their spousal family, tracking personal histories of exogamy.[129]

Third, some motifs may have been applied in association with important events: initiations into adult groups, marriage, pregnancy, an important sea venture, and, ultimately, the voyage to the next world. Tattoos can also mark personal events or status, as can scarification and body painting, and even hair styles, as has been argued for the young women painted in the Thera frescoes.[130] The concept of painting the marble figures may derive from the practice of painting actual human bodies. Talalay, among

127. Davis 1992, p. 704.

128. The relatively common red lines only occur in incisions that delineate integrated body parts, such as the juncture between the neck and head, or the spine. It is extremely rare for separate body parts, such as the lower folded arms and the torso, to be outlined in red. It is therefore tempting to imagine that these red lines may also have been painted on human individuals. Red paint between fingers and toes is the exception to this rule, and may be specific to marble figures (vs. humans).

129. See Cullen 1985, pp. 94–97, for discussion of ceramic design similarities in the context of Middle Neolithic settlement exogamy.

130. For tattoos see Helms 1993, p. 59, with bibliography, and Talalay 1993, pp. 70–72. See Talalay 1993, pp. 37–79, and Rubin 1988 for body marking throughout the world. For hair treatments in the Thera frescoes, see Davis 1986. On the role of women as body painters (the bodies of children and other women), see Turner's (1971) study of the Tchikrin culture of Brazil. In that community painted symbols/designs on the body are used to express essential age divisions that are accompanied by different social status, particularly in regard to sexual availability. Besides various sorts of body paint and modes of application, these life stages are marked by specific hair lengths, and by specific articles of dress and jewelry. Furthermore, the position of the ornament is meant to enhance the (perception of) power of the anatomy to which it refers. Men and women use different methods of applying the paint, and colors as well as position on the body add to the meaning of the patterns.

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others, has noted that a key difference between body painting and tattooing or scarification is permanence. "While [tattooing and scarification] reflect permanent changes in status, body paint is used to symbolize more transient states or special occasions."[131] Here the choice of material may again come into play: incising clay figures *feels* more like permanent methods of body modification; painting on marble *feels* more like painting on flesh.

I propose that some of the painted emblems were appropriate for certain episodes in the life or death of the bearer, whether marble or flesh, adding particular dimension to the human—or at least anthropomorphic—body underneath. Body embellishment was not an innovation of the Early Cycladic period, but neither was it rejected then, despite the modern appearance of some marble figures. The great innovation in the Early Cycladic period was to provide anthropomorphic marble female figures with open eyes in addition to other body markings, some of which had been used earlier. These motifs, as applied to the marble figures, assisted individuals or small groups in their endeavor to transfer cultural memories across space and through time—to participate in the process of "being Cycladic."

131. Talalay 1993, p. 71, with references to ethnographic parallels.

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