GIRL, WOMAN, MOTHER, GODDESS: BRONZE AGE CYPRIOT TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

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In fig. 16 of Paul Åström's *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition: The Middle Cypriot Bronze Age* (Fig. 1) is presented a series of anthropomorphic terracotta figurines. They range from (Fig. 1) a relatively elaborate, somewhat three-dimensional version of the traditional ECIII 'plank figurine' to (fig. 12) a spindle-shaped, Dark Slip Ware figurine, which I have come to think of as 'the Mermaid'. This range displays the core of this paper, specifically, the evolution of these anthropomorphic terracotta figurines from the plank figurines of the Cypriot Early Bronze Age through to the so-called 'bird-faced figurines' of the LCII and III periods. As I shall argue, this family of images has always pertained, to one extent or another, to the feminine, and that changes over time are not so much an engendering as an increasing emphasis on sexuality, ultimately manifesting as images of a divine female.

Female?

The most controversial aspect of this hypothesis lies at the very beginning in the nature and meaning of the ECIII plank figurines (Fig. 2). As with perhaps far too many images from the ancient world, these figurines were early on identified as female, and based on that gender further categorized as either goddess/fertility figurines or possible *ushabti* images (*ersatz* wives/concubines for the dead).[1] Vassos Karageorghis recognized the ECIII plank figurines either as cult functionaries or, especially in the case of the multi-headed varieties, as deities,[2] while the transitional MCI versions of the plank figurines (discussed below) "illustrate the persistence of the fertility goddess or mother goddess type which we see first in the Chalcolithic period..."[3] By contrast, Orphanides has argued that, "the female figures may represent the wife (wives) or female servant(s) of the dead", although he also suggests that "we cannot exclude the possibility that some of our figurines represent goddesses with a kind of sexual purpose".[4] Morris admits his "bias favouring the fertility charm interpretation of prehistoric Cypriot figurines..." but later he asks, "Could they after all be substitute figures – effigies of widows placed in their husbands' graves to accompany them in death...?"[5]

Other scholars maintained the female identity of the images but came to less 'fertile' (or 'dead') theories regarding their meaning(s). Mogelonsky, for example, in her study of Early and Middle Bronze Age Cypriot figurines saw the figurines as female, but offered a fuller range of meanings based on the theories of Ucko and Voigt.[6] In her analysis of early Cypriot anthropomorphic figurines, a Campo argued that "the primary meaning of plank-figures seems to be the representation of individual, human women in role as wife and mother, within their 'lineage'".[7]

Starting in the 1980s a new approach was taken, suggesting that not only was it methodologically unsound to identify these images as specifically female, but that, in the absence of any gender markers on approximately 2/3 of the extant examples, gender ambiguity might actually be a critical aspect of the interpretation of the plank figurines.[8] Notions of gender ambiguity were not merely revealed in the absence of distinct sexual traits such as breasts, genitals, or even facial hair on the majority of such figurines, but concepts of hermaphroditism seemed implied on a small number of figurines that portrayed multiple sexual characteristics, such as breasts and a penis, or possibly breasts and a beard. Thus Hamilton argued that, "if sex is not indicated on figurines, it is reasonable to suppose that it was

Fig. 1. Åström 1972, 153, fig. 16. Used with author's kind permission.

Fig. 2. Early Cypriot plank figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Cyprus Museum, Inv. 1963/IV-20/12.)

not considered relevant – perhaps because the users of the figures knew what sex was indicated, because they were meant to be sexless, or children, or because sex was not perceived to be important..."[9] Likewise, Cullen and Talalay concluded that "the imposition of gendered identity on Cypriot plank figures seems to us to impose a specificity of interpretation that is rarely warranted and to overlook a sexual ambiguity that may well have been intended by the artist and of complex social significance and efficacy within a ritual context".[10]

To categorize the plank figurines as 'female' then, was to overlook other possible identifications and to deny a concept of sexuality and gender different from that prevalent in the modern West. The intermingling of the sexes was a long-enduring artistic motif in Cyprus dating from the Neolithic,[11] and thus hermaphroditism might be playing an important role here in the terracotta repertoire. Likewise, as Ribeiro has pointed out, the absence of sexual identifiers may indicate not gender, but age.[12] To assign a gender to these figurines would be to overlook possible age distinctions and concepts of childhood in the archaeological and artistic record.

However, there are a number of reasons why I believe the early Cypriots conceived of the plank figurines as female. To begin, while the majority of plank figurines display no clear gender, when they do, in about 1/3 of the extant examples, they are shown with breasts, which I am willing to accept indicates female sex. This is similar to the portrayal of sexual characteristics on the cruciform figurines of the Chalcolithic period (Fig. 3), where, once again, only about 1/3 of the examples are shown with breasts. However, what is consistent in all these figurines is their crouched, birthing posture, clearly indicating female sex. The breasts, then, as a Campo has argued, might be seen as redundant. That is to say, since the producers and users of the images already conceived of them as female (specifically giving birth), there is no need to indicate gender by secondary attributes such as breasts. A similar dynamic may be at work with the ECIII plank figurines – already being understood as female, secondary sexual characteristics were unnecessary. This hypothesis is intensified if we consider that in the ECIII period the most distinctive aspect of the plank figurines is their surface decoration, not the actual body. Modeled breasts could be seen to detract from the surface detail, and thus are either not necessary or are downright intrusive to the meaning of the images.[13]

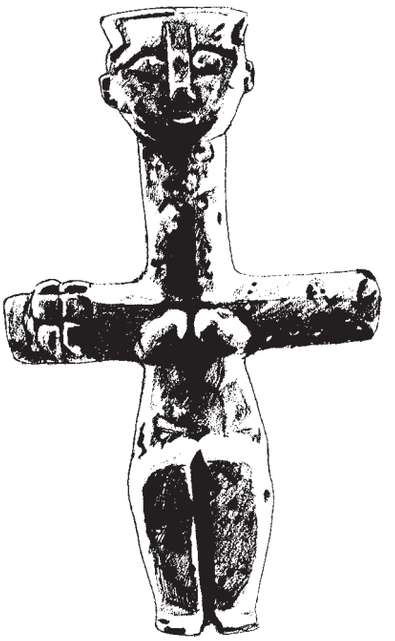

Fig. 3. Chalcolithic cruciform figurine from Souskiou. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Hajiprodromou Collection, 889.)

In contrast to the full third of our examples, which are clearly female as per breasts (and, as I shall discuss further below, vagina), the examples that are distinctively male or hermaphroditic are extremely rare,[14] individually unique (and thus probably of personal manufacture rather than mass-produced), ambiguous, and exist mainly in the later Plain or White Painted Wares. Thus, what few examples do exist are in a separate category from the common, static, barely anthropomorphic, apparently mass-produced plank figurines, which typify the ECIII period; they are later (probably influenced from portrayals of males on

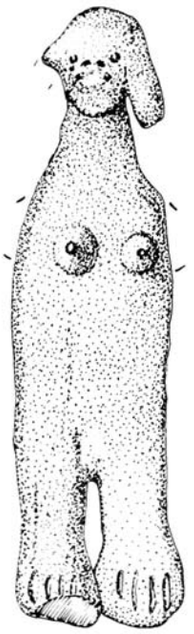

Fig. 4. Early Cypriot Plain Ware figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum.)

Fig. 5. Early Cypriot White Painted figurine from Ayia Paraskevi. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Cyprus Museum, Inv. CS2028/1.)

Fig. 6. Early Cypriot Plain Ware figurine. (Berlin Museum Antiquarium, Inv. T.C. 6683, 57. From Karageorghis 1991, 178, fig. 137.)

the 'scenic compositions'); and there is even now little current consensus as to which figurines are male and which are hermaphroditic. To date I have been able to find one clearly hermaphroditic figurine (Fig. 4): an unprovenanced Plain Ware figurine which displays modeled breasts and modeled male genitals.

Other examples are far less direct concerning possible hermaphroditism. A White Painted figurine from Ayia Paraskevi (Fig. 5) shows a painted person with a very long face and what appear to be tiny, pierced breasts on the chest. Do we have here a female (breasts) with a beard (male), thus a hermaphrodite of sorts, or a male with pectorals but no distinguishing genitalia? This example would appear to be the quintessential example of ambiguous hermaphroditism. It is also, currently, quite unique.

A particularly odd Red Polished figurine supposedly from Paphos (Fig. 6) shows a standing creature with a face resembling a sheep, sloping shoulders, modeled and incised breasts, and a phallic bulge above two well-rendered legs, including incised toes. The image is certainly hermaphroditic, but it is difficult to tell if it is even supposed to be human, and Merrillees even suggests that an effigy image is possible.[15]

Finally, an unprovenanced Red Polished figurine (Fig. 7) shows

Fig. 7. Early Cypriot Red Polished Ware figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Oriental Institute of Chicago, Inv. X.1161.)

a *kourotrophic* person with clearly rendered breasts and what might be either a pierced phallic bulge (thus masculine, thus hermaphroditic), an emphasized vaginal opening (thus female), or, considering the placement on the body, a navel (an 'outie'). The fact that the person in question appears to have one breast descending into the baby basket seems to give the appearance of breast feeding, in which case either postpartum exaggerated female genitals or belly button might be indicated and reasonable. It is therefore not necessary to see this figurine as hermaphroditic, while a strong argument could be made that the image is specifically postpartum female.

Hermaphroditic examples of free-standing terracotta figurines are extremely rare in contrast to the prevalent images with exclusively feminine sexual markers such as breasts, thus arguing for a general identification as female. Furthermore, a very few early examples display more sexual characteristics than merely breasts: There are three known plank figurines that also have vaginas (this is exclusive of the ambiguous, possibly hermaphroditic example mentioned above, which could easily belong in this category as a fourth example).

One example is a Red Polished figurine from Ayia Paraskevi (Fig. 8). Here we see a slightly three-dimensional image with a necklace, rudimentary arms and hands, modeled, pierced breasts, and below what is either a navel or vagina. A second Red Polished figurine (Fig. 9), quite small and unprovenanced, shows a rudimentary face with eyes, nose and ears, a dotted necklace, and an incised dot 2/3 down the body. Once again, we may have either a navel or a vagina. The placement of the holes in both cases towards the bottom of the figurines seems to argue for a vagina. Finally, an unprovenanced Red Polished figurine in the Cyprus Museum (Fig. 10) shows a crude figurine with modeled and incised face, rudimentary arms, one breast (?), and a deep vertical groove on the front indicating either female genitalia or, possibly,

Fig. 8. Early Cypriot Red Polished Ware figurine from Ayia Paraskevi. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (University of Pennsylvania Museum, Inv. MS 77.)

Fig. 9. Early Cypriot Red Polished figurine. (Desmond Morris Collection, Inv. DM-IRP-86.)

Fig. 10. Early Cypriot Red Polished figurine. (Cyprus Museum, Inv. A22.)

rudimentary legs. As the groove does not continue to the bottom of the figurines, however, genitalia seem more likely.[16]

Three or four examples do not a strong argument make, although I would point out that this also goes for the case regarding hermaphroditism above. A second argument that implicates, if not female sex, at least feminine gender, is the *kourotrophic* imagery that appears with the advent of the plank figurines. While both males and females are potential caretakers of the young, there is a strong correlation between *kourotrophic* plank figurines and those with breasts. Furthermore, in some instances, as in Fig. 7 above, the *kourotrophic* figurines specifically seem to be breast feeding, a clear marker of female sex.[17] Finally, we might consider the Vounous Bowl,[18] where the one individual clearly marked out as female as per her breasts, and in contrast to the other characters in the scene who have phallic bulges, carries a child. At least some plank figurines then, are not only female, but maternal.

A final argument for the feminine identity of the plank figures is the continuity of these figurines with breasts and occasionally genitalia with similar figurines generally dated to the early Middle Cypriot period (MCI). The best example is a series (Fig. 11 for one example) of five figurines in the Severis Collection, one Red Slip Ware, four Plain White Ware, which show figurines with modeled breasts, minimal, incised decoration, and, in all but one example, a distinctive incision indicating either navel or, considering the placement, especially on the RSW example, a vagina.[19] These figurines show continuity with the earlier

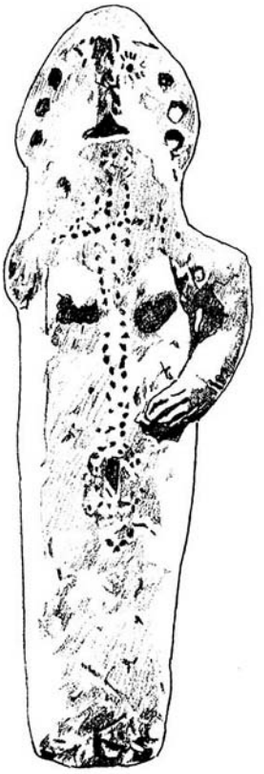

Fig. 11. Middle Cypriot Plain Ware figurine. (Severis Collection, Inv. 1539.)

ECIII plank figurines, especially in the multiply-perforated "ears" and the rudimentary (if existent at all) limbs. They show specific continuity with the Red Polished figurines portraying a navel/vagina: Not only do these MCI images show a similar hole, but, like their predecessors – and very much unlike traditional plank figurines – these images give the impression of being naked. The elaborate decorative marking which typify the usual, less engendered ECIII and MCI plank figurines are missing on the vaginal examples. This in itself may argue that the normal, decorated examples are understood to be clothed and thus do not reveal female genitalia normally. The tendency to portray a phallic bulge on males in the scenic compositions argues against the idea that such clothing would likewise hide male genitalia, and thus male plank figurines.

Context

The recently published excavations at Marki-*Alonia* reveal that the plank figurines first appeared when radical changes were occurring in the physical structuring of Early Cypriot society. Walls and isolated households became increasingly prominent in the ECIII period, indicating an increased emphasis on private property, security, privacy, and storage within the familial context. Plank idols emerged, then, when new concepts pertaining to the identification of the family as an economic unit first appear in the archaeological record. Just as the concomitant emergence of bovine terracotta figurines at this time may indicate a new concern with (familial) ownership of property and livestock, so too the new plank figurines might pertain to the relationship of females to the familial or household structure.[20]

In contrast to earlier theories that the figurines were primarily mortuary in character (due to the tendency to dig mainly in cemeteries, so guess where you tend to find things...), it is now clear from more recent excavations that plank figurines were used in daily living. These images have come to light in settlements, about three dozen from Marki-*Alonia*, a handful from Alambra-*Mouttes* and at least one from Ambelikou-*Alteri*.[21] The presence of these figurines at settlements, the evident wear on their surfaces, and mend holes on two examples (Marki AP8 and Lapithos

Tomb 21.A25) provide convincing evidence that these images were used by the living before being placed with the dead.[22] Placement in burials, then, appears to be no more than equipping the departed with artifacts from daily life.[23] Furthermore, Hamilton has suggested that in burials plank figurines were more commonly found with women's remains, "...material from the Early/Middle Bronze Age cemetery at Vounous suggests that most if not all figurines were found with female skeletons, while Paraskevi Baxevani's analysis of the Lapithos material also suggests that plank idols occur with females".[24] If accurate, then one might suggest that plank figurines played a role in women's lives in the prehistoric period.

Some suggestions have already been made to this effect, such as a Campo's theory that these images may have been used as a part of a marriage ceremony, whereby the transfer of the female image reflects the transfer of the human female.[25] Such a hypothesis would accommodate both the new focus on the familial unit as argued by Webb as well as the apparent ownership and use (?) by women as per the funerary records. But perhaps it would behoove us to be more subtle in our analyses, lest we begin to value the gender aspect to the detriment of other possibilities.[26] Perhaps we might see the figurines without breasts as girls more so than women *per se*, following to an extent the theories of Ribeiro. Or further, following Bolger, that the full range of 'unsexed', sexed, and *kourotrophic* figurines contribute to a narrative of women's life cycles, revealing different types of social identity – girl, woman, mother.[27]

Also of interest is the fact that these notions, whatever they were and however they evolved, remained entrenched in the Cypriot iconography, when portrayals of males virtually disappeared. This is partially due to the different media of display. Females appeared both in static images such as the plank figurines and within scenic compositions. Individual portrayals of males are quite rare, and prehistoric Cypriot males appear most commonly in the scenic compositions. These ceramic scenic compositions, often appearing on elaborate vessels, were apparently used as funerary goods, almost certainly for elite display. This contrasts with the plank figurines that, as discussed above, seem to have been used during the owner's lifetime. As Cyprus moved into the later Bronze Age, the scenic status symbols died out, no doubt replaced by the far more prestigious exotica resulting from connections with the Near East and Aegean. With the death of the compositions came the death, for several centuries, of male imagery in the Cypriot terracotta repertoire. This loss of male imagery is concomitant with developments in the Middle Bronze Age Near East generally, when portrayals of males in the terracotta corpus were quite rare.[28] When portrayals of males do reemerge in Cyprus, they are wholly foreign, either portraying Levantine style gods with horns, or Aegean warriors and bull fighters.

Meaning

That we recognize a femininity in the plank figurines does not, however, mean that we must fall back on the older, supposedly feminine identifications as goddess or ushabti. Quite to the contrary, the roles assumed by the plank figurines especially in the scenic compositions suggest that the plank figurines should, at this period, be seen as mortal females, as there is no evidence that they should be regarded as divine. This recognition should spur on new approaches to studying the figurines' relevance to women's lives in ancient Cyprus. What might these female images say about the roles and lives of Cypriot women in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages? Why do they emerge with the rise of domestic architecture? And why are women more likely to be portrayed in the iconography than males?

Might we point the finger at some early indication of the 'male gaze', whereby women were seen as inherently more objectifiable, thus artistically portrayable, than males? If we accept a Campo's theories regarding the plank figurines and marriage, might this be an early indication of specifically patrilocal marriage? Or, did the men simply leave their own self-portrayals elsewhere, somewhere not yet discovered? Could this in itself show an early gendered division of society: the females identifying themselves with the *domus*,[29] the males identifying themselves with non-domestic space?

This last notion is particularly interesting for what it may say about the rise of patriarchal society in ancient Cyprus. As Rosaldo has argued, it is the gendered division between the domestic and extra-domestic space of a community that has the greatest impact on the prestige and authority associated with males in that community.[30] The plank figurines first appear in Cypriot society at precisely that time when domestic spaces are

being most emphasized. Furthermore, as Bolger has argued, the static posture of the plank figurines along with their portrayal as *kourotrophos* places an emphasis not on their role as producer (*genetrix* of children or otherwise), but as caretaker, *mater*.[31] This connects well with Peltenburg's theories concerning the presence of a female, plank-like individual in a place of low status in the Vounous Bowl, suggesting that women held less authority than men in the ECIII period in which the plank figurines first appear.[32] A final consideration is a potentially similar development occurring earlier in the (pre-)history of Cyprus. Peltenburg has suggested that the deliberate destruction and burial of a hoard of feminine, terracotta birthing figurines at the Chalcolithic site of Kissonerga occurred during a period of intensified agricultural production and a concomitant intensification of domestic storage. Symbols of female power, then, are removed as the notion of domesticity grows and women are specifically associated with it. As Peltenburg wrote, "tools for the preparation of cultivars, especially cereals, are concentrated inside houses and, as suggested by the figurines inside the model and burial evidence [...], females are also closely connected to Kissonerga buildings".[33] Simultaneously, "the disappearance of pervasive symbols that explicitly conveyed the importance of birth, so emphasizing the roles of females in society, may well denote a restructuring of gender roles".[34]

Change and Continuity: Sex, Divinity, and the Levant

The intensification of feminine sexual attributes in the Middle Cypriot period marks an important aspect of the evolution of these images. Not only do the plank figurines grow more three-dimensional over time, they increasingly appear nude with greater emphasis on the sexual characteristics. The typically cited cause for this 'nudification' and eroticization of the figurines is contacts with the Levant.[35] Here, especially in Syria (Fig. 12), nude female figurines had been common since the third millennium, representing, I believe, some manifestation of the goddess Ishtar.[36] The late prehistoric phase of Cyprus is marked by an intensification of foreign contacts with the Near East, evident not only in the circulation of goods but also by references as early as the 18th century BCE to Alashiya (the ancient name for Cyprus) in the cuneiform corpus.[37] Thus the Cypriots were in contact with a society that made use of highly eroticized female terracotta figurines at the time when their own figurines start to show similar attributes.

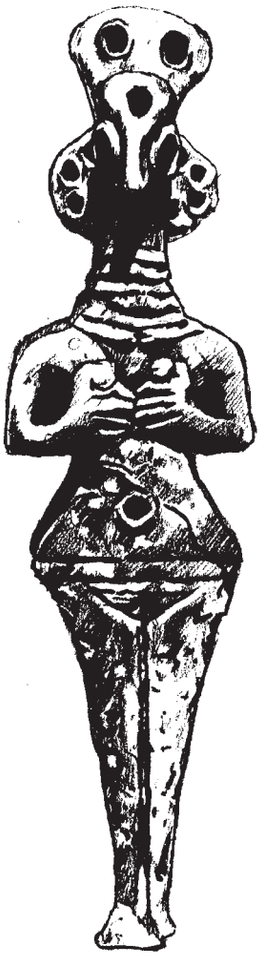

Fig. 12. Middle Bronze Age Terracotta figurine from Ebla. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Inv. TM.92.P.875+TM.94.P.530.)

However, the issue of continuity complicates this initial assessment. The MCI Cypriot female figurines, despite their conceptual similarities to the Levantine models, have much in common with their early Cypriot predecessors. Both the nudity and the presence of a vagina have precedents in the EC corpus, however minimal. Thus, rather than seeing the eroticization (or even engendering) of prehistoric Cypriot terracotta figurines exclusively as a result of Levantine influence, I think it more accurate to argue that exposure to eroticised yet familiar (multiply pierced ears, jewelry) female images from the Levant encouraged a trend that was already present in Cyprus.

Divine

The real Levantine influence on the Cypriot terracottas is felt starting in the MCIII period with the emergence of the spindle-shaped silhouette (Fig. 13). It is here that we begin to see strong parallels to the Levantine prototypes. The arms curve fully away from the body to curve in and support the breasts, a widening at hip level, and a rudimentary division between legs portrayed standing and together.

Fig. 13. Middle Cypriot Black Slip Ware figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. 74.51.1537.)

Fig. 14. Late Cypriot bird-faced figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (British Museum Inv. A 15.)

Fig. 15. Late Cypriot bronze 'Bomford' figurine. Drawing by Paul. C. Butler. (Ashmolean Museum, Inv. 1971.888.)

And, of course, the 'Levantization' of the figurines becomes almost complete in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 14), when Cypriot anthropomorphic female terracottas (and later bronzes) display all the attributes of the Levantine models: *en face*, prominent breasts, exaggerated pubic triangles, incised and modeled jewelry, a similar repertoire of arm positions, and even the criss-cross over the chest representative of a baldric in ancient Near Eastern art, thus indicative of the weapons carried by the erotic goddess Ishtar.

What remains distinctively Cypriot, however, is the *kourotrophic* imagery, which has little precedent in the Levant. This attribute is rather a holdover from the Cypriot iconography dating back to the ECIII period and once again emphasizes the continuity present in these images. We cannot deny that Levantine contacts had an influence on the evolution of Cypriot female figurines, just as Aegean contacts will later regularize the proportions of the somewhat monstrous LCII bird-faced figurines. But perhaps this Levantine influence took hold so well precisely because it reflected some ideology or *weltanschauung* already present in Cyprus for centuries.

This intensified Levantine influence prompted the final transforma-

tion of the terracotta female figurines of Bronze Age Cyprus, when the nude female terracottas come to take on divine associations.[38] That these figurines come to be seen as deities rather than mortal women is supported by three arguments. First, the weakest, is comparison with similar developments in the Levant. When considering the endurance of the terracotta Nude Goddess image in Syria in the Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 BCE) concurrent with the dying off of male iconography, Moorey suggests that the female iconography remained prevalent because it portrayed a powerful and well-beloved goddess – Ishtar – who played a prominent role in household and private cult.[39] In other words, during periods when mortals cease to be portrayed in the iconography, females remain because they represent divinities particularly associated with the domestic sphere and, possibly, "female personal piety".[40]

The second, perhaps stronger argument, is the full-scale importation of all aspects of Levantine religion in the Cypriot Late Bronze Age – iconography such as the bronze statues from Enkomi, the architecture as at Kition and Enkomi, references to Near Eastern divinities such as Baal and Athtart[41] – strongly suggests that the bird-faced figurines (and their normal-faced derivatives) also came to take on the divine associations they had in the Near East.

Finally, and in my opinion most importantly, there are the iconographic similarities between the LCII nude female terracotta figurines and Cypriot divine females in alternate media. One example are the bronze female images such as the Bomford figurine (Fig. 15), which portray a nude female with special emphasis on the sexual attributes, presented *en face*, with a similar repertoire of arm positions as we see on the terracottas. That these images portray goddesses might be gleaned from their elaborate materials and manufacture, but even more so from their similarities to bronze statues of male deities discovered at Enkomi. These statues show males wearing the horned miter which identified deities in the ancient Near Eastern iconography. As this horned miter motif moved westward, it became less consistent, such that while the presence of horns can usually be used to identify a deity in the iconography, their lack does not indicate a concomitant lack of divine status.[42] That is to say, a lack of horns does not mean that the individual portrayed is not a deity. The similarities between the male divine statues and the female, such as material and ox-hide-ingot-shaped bases, suggest that the females, as the males, were understood to be divinities.

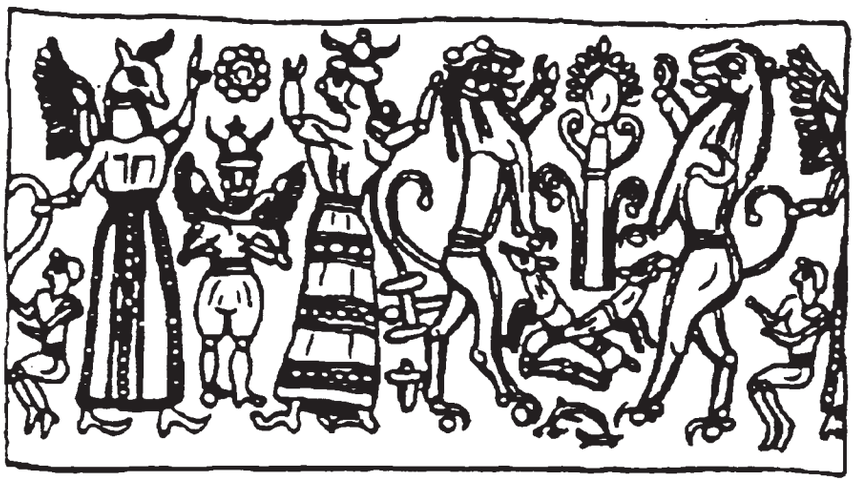

Fig. 16. Cypriot cylinder seal impression. (British Museum seal 1900.5–21.3. From Webb 1999, 268, fig. 85.1. Used with permission of the publisher.)

Likewise, there are portrayals of nude goddesses in the Cypriot glyptic. Jennifer Webb records three such examples.[43] The first (Fig. 16) shows a mixed Levantine-Aegean style typical of the Cypriot style.[44] Here, a small, winged nude female wears the horned miter discussed above. Like the figurines, she stands mainly *en face*, although her feet point to the side. As with many of the figurines, her arms bend inwards to support the breasts. Standing next to her is a number of fantastic creatures such as a Bovine genie, a Minoan style goddess, and even rampant lions, all indicative of divine status. The second example, from Klavdhia is similar, showing a nude female with wings, a horned miter, necklace and belts, who stands *en face* holding her breasts next to a griffin and caprid. On the third example, now in the Louvre, the nude female appears without wings or miter standing by a *potnia therôn* and holding a griffin by the tail.[45] The wings, horned miter, and especially presence among fantastic creatures and divinities argue that the nude female

herself must be understood as a divine character. Based on comparanda in multiple media, then, it appears that the Cypriot female terracotta figurine, now consistently nude, makes a final transformation into divinity.

Cyprus as Core

The changes and continuity present in the Cypriot female terracotta figurines reveal much about Cyprus and its relationship to its neighbors. All too often, Cyprus, as Sicily, Nubia, and Lydia, is relegated to the position of periphery, and its culture is studied with an eye towards which 'core' it came from (Anatolia, the Levant, Greece; certainly not indigenous), and how continued foreign contacts caused changes in culture. As a centrally placed island, Cyprus also has been accorded the distinction of a place where culture stops to rest while traveling between east and west.

The above study shows that, while certainly influenced by neighbors, Cyprus shows a cultural creativity and evolution in its own right. The tendency to recognize Levantine aspects of the terracotta figurines should not blind one to the long-standing continuity present in the iconography, most noticeable in the representations of gender, jewellery, and especially the *kourotrophism*. Perhaps rather than notions of adoption or adaptation, we should think in terms of convergence, that Levantine and Aegean influences had an impact on the Cypriot iconography because they reflected an ideology already present in Cyprus.

Even more so, we must recognize the important contributions that Cyprus made to her neighbors, other than just being an intermediary between the ancient Near East and the Aegean. The *kourotrophism* prevalent in Cypriot iconography from the Early Bronze Age had a powerful impact on both east and west: Aegean female figurines only show *kourotrophism* after contacts with Cyprus (Minoan figurines show no *kourotrophism*, and Mycenaean *phi* and *psi* figurines do not emerge until the LHII period.[46]) Cyprus, then, was an important contributor to the artistic and iconographic developments of the eastern Mediterranean, as one of her oldest and most enduring images spread out from its Cypriot core to the surrounding periphery.

Acknowledgments
I offer my thanks to the Medelhavsmuseet for organizing such a wonderful conference on gender in ancient Cyprus, to Paul Åström for photograph permissions, and to my husband Paul C. Butler for drawing the images for this paper.

NOTES

1 Frankel & Tamvaki 1973, 41; Karageorghis (1991, 52), toning down his earlier theories, nevertheless insists that the plank figurines "all have basic connections with fertility". On ushabti notions, see Åström 1972, 254. Merrillees (1980, 184) is more circumspect, seeing the figurines as symbols of "the continuity of human existence through procreation and life after death".
2 Karageorghis 1977, 58-60.
3 Karageorghis 1975, 62.
4 Orphanides 1983, 46.
5 Morris 1985, 162.
6 Mogelonsky 1988, 236ff.
7 a Campo 1994, 169.
8 Merrillees 1980, 173-174. Knapp & Meskell 1997, 197-198.
9 Hamilton 2000, 23.
10 Cullen & Talalay 2002, 190.
11 See Knapp & Meskell 1997, figs. 2-3.
12 Ribeiro 2002.
13 a Campo 1994, 147-148.
14 Merrillees 1980, 174.
15 Merrillees 1980, 176.
16 I recognize the precariousness of basing any analysis on unprovenanced examples, although, unfortunately, this is often all we have to work with. Concerning the present study, if one were to reckon only the examples with clear provenance, one would be left with the two examples from Ayia Paraskevi: one with both breasts and vagina, one with 'breasts' and 'beard'.
17 See also Morris (1985, 148) for other illustrated examples.
18 See Belgiorno (this volume), Fig. 1.
19 Karageorghis 1975.
20 Webb (this volume).
21 Frankel & Webb 1996, 188; see also Talalay & Cullen 2002, 184-185. I thank Jenny Webb for updated information about the finds at Marki!
22 Frankel & Webb 1996, 188.
23 Webb 1992, 90.
24 Hamilton 2000, 18.

25 a Campo 1994, 168.
26 Bolger 2003, 102-122; Meskell 1998.
27 Bolger 2003, 113-115.
28 Moorey 2001, 153.
29 Preziosi & Hitchcock 1999, 42-44.
30 Rosaldo 1974.
31 Bolger 1996, 369, 371-372.
32 Peltenburg 1994.
33 Peltenburg 2002, 59.
34 Peltenburg 2002, 59.
35 Karageorghis 1975, 61.
36 Two of the earliest and most consistent characteristics of the Nude Female images are their nudity, especially with an emphasis on the breasts, and the presence of a baldric – a crisscross over the chest – which indicates an association with things military. As the goddess who combines warfare and eroticism in her persona, Ishtar is the most likely deity intended for these images.
37 Steel 2004, 143; Knapp 1996.
38 Budin 2003, Ch. 6; Bolger 1996, 371; Knapp 1986.
39 Moorey 2001, 154-155. Moorey (2003, 38) makes a similar argument for the role of the Nude Female in Bronze Age Cana'an.
40 Moorey 2003, 15.
41 Walls 1996, 36.
42 Negbi 1976.
43 Webb 1999, 267-268.
44 Webb 1999, 85.1 (British Museum seal 1900.5–21.3); see also Porada 1948, no. 11.
45 Webb 1999, 267.
46 French 1971, 104.

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