

MINOAN THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS. PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION¹

During the Minoan period, a wide range of sites across Crete produced varying quantities of three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations which are now commonly known as 'figurines'. Although these artefacts have been widely discussed since the advent of Minoan archaeology, it is conspicuous that, to date, little consensus exists on how they ought to be named. They have interchangeably been referred to as 'figures', 'statues', 'statuettes', 'sculptures' and sometimes even as 'images', as well as often being termed 'goddesses', 'votaries' or 'cult statues'. While this variety in nomenclature presents no inconvenience for studies in which these objects' representative values and wider religious significance are discussed, it can nevertheless presently be regarded as a difficulty for more materially orientated studies seeking to further examine the implications of the objects' physical structures and properties. Indeed, the varied use of the aforementioned terms in previous studies has tended to blur the distinction existing between these diverse categories of objects, and to downplay the importance of each type's idiosyncratic three-dimensionality, size and transportability. Furthermore, the frequent use of religiously laden vocabulary has imposed a somewhat restrictive interpretive framework on these objects and placed unbalanced emphasis on their representative qualities, thus allowing reflection on their materiality to be bypassed.

This paper therefore attempts to untangle some presently problematic etymological webs by clarifying the material nature of the categories in which various Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations are placed. In order to contextualise this study, however, I first provide a brief summary of the approaches employed in previous examinations of these artefacts then outline particular examples of the two aforementioned present difficulties. Subsequently, my definition for the term 'Minoan figurine' which, in Bailey's manner (1996, 2005), is built upon careful material considerations, is provided. Finally, I advance some new headings for the classification of various three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, which I consider to be particularly relevant to materially orientated studies. Overall, it is here suggested that semantic clarity in studies concerned with different groups of objects is crucial. Clear definitions allow both for better understanding of the artefacts' material traits and for the reader to further appreciate the importance of their existence as three-dimensional objects with material consequences as well as their existence as visual representations.

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1.-A brief overview of past studies²

As mentioned above, this paper begins with a brief overview of the approaches and terms employed in past accounts on Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations. It must first be noted that, throughout this article, peak sanctuary anthropomorphs are employed as main sources for reference, mainly because this article developed following a study of such objects. Other types of Minoan anthropomorphic artefacts are, of course, also treated here. The first study to be outlined in this section is nevertheless Myres' account of the objects from the peak sanctuary of Petsophas (1902-1903) (*fig. 1*), as it is also incidentally one of the first specialised discussions on the general class of objects we presently name Minoan 'figurines'. Myres began his study with a brief description of the artefacts' clay and a with note on the manner in which he believed they were assembled, and followed these points with more extensive discussions on the anthropomorphs' visual appearances. Based on the details present on the artefacts' external surfaces, such as their clothing, gestures and stylistic features, the scholar concluded that they consisted of representations of human «votaries» (p. 380), deposited on site by worshippers as permanent reminders of devotion to a deity. Indeed, Myres suggested that, given their simple look and their location in ashes or in rock fissures, the artefacts were not of high value and therefore must have been disposable votive offerings rather than cultic paraphernalia (MYRES 1902-1903, p. 358). He referred to these objects as «figures» (pp. 358, 360-387), «figurines» (pp. 358-361, 366, 380) and «statuettes» (pp. 363-364, 366, 374).

Myres' methods of analysis, his interpretations, and his use of vocabulary were adopted and echoed in many subsequent specialised studies. The objects' clothing (SAPOUNA SAKELLARAKI 1971; PILALI PAPASTERIOU 1989; RUTKOWSKI 1991), gestures (RUTKOWSKI 1991; MORRIS-PEATFIELD 2000, 2004, 2012), gender (COULOMB 1980) and general stylistic and iconic features (DAVARAS 1976; RUTKOWSKI 1986; PILALI PAPASTERIOU 1992; RETHEMIO-TAKIS 1998, 2001; BLOMBERG 2006; SPHAKIANAKIS 2012) continued to serve as primary gauges for functional analysis, or at least as complementary sources to experimentation, as in the case of Morris and Peatfield's research (MORRIS-PEATFIELD 2000). Moreover – none except for Faure (1969, p. 121), who suggested that some of the larger anthropomorphs discovered at Petsophas and Xykephalo might represent deities – have contested Myres' interpretation of the peak sanctuary figurines as representations of votaries. It is generally agreed that they consist of «humble offerings» (DAVARAS 1976, p. 91) representing «adorants» (PILALI PAPASTERIOU 1992, p. 208). Similarly to Myres, these authors also called these artefacts «figurines» (cf. all aforementioned studies, *passim*) and «figures» (DAVARAS 1976, p. 91; RETHEMIO-TAKIS 2001, pp. 124, 126; SPHAKIANAKIS, pp. 204, 209-210), but also «statuettes» (RETHEMIO-TAKIS 2001, p. 125; RUTKOWSKI 1991, p. 23), «statues» (RUTKOWSKI 1986, p. 84) and «sculptures» (RUTKOWSKI 1991, p. 23).

Turning to an examination of past studies on other types of Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, it can be noted that similar approaches to those outlined above were also employed. Following Myres' study, accounts on the Knossos faience 'Snake Goddesses' rapidly ensued (EVANS 1921-1935; NILSSON 1950; JONES 2001; LAPATIN 2001; ALBERTI 2010; MILLER BONNEY 2011), as well as studies on the terracotta 'Goddesses

²This section is based on a chapter of my doctoral thesis (currently in progress), in which more detail about the points addressed here can be found.

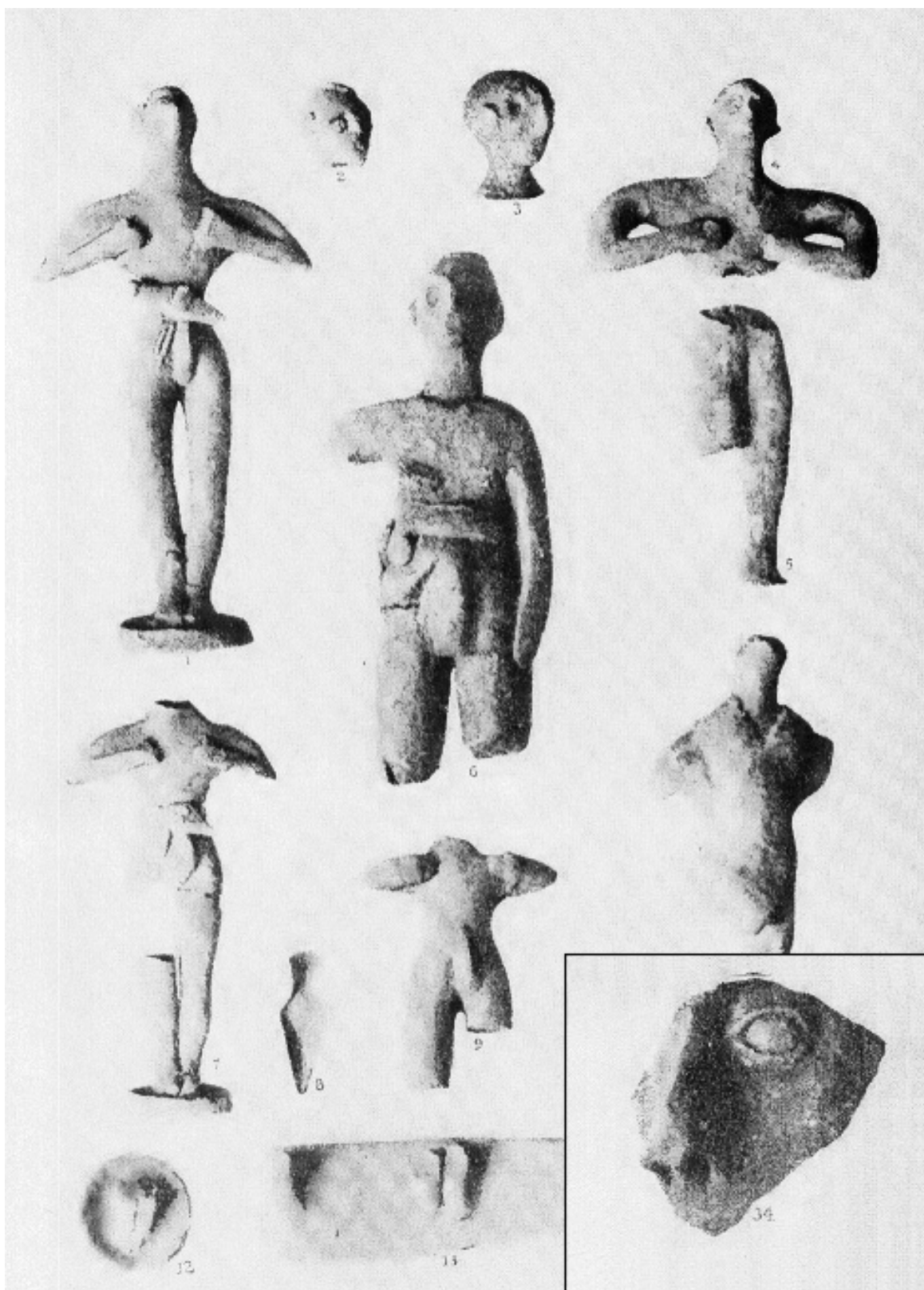


FIG. 1 – A SELECTION OF ANTHROPOMORPHS FROM PETSOPHAS (BOTTOM RIGHT: «LARGE FIGURE» FRAGMENT)
(FROM MYRES 1902-1903, PLS. X AND XII).

with Up-raised Hands' (BOYD-HAWES *ET AL.* 1908; HAZZIDAKIS 1916; EVANS 1921-35; MARINATOS 1937; NILSSON 1950; ALEXIOU 1958; SOPHOCLEUS 1990; GESELL-SAUPE 1997; GESELL 1995, 2004, 2010, 2012; CHLEVOURAKI *ET AL.* 2010), on bronze anthropomorphs from caves and settlements (VERLINDEN 1984; SAPOUNA SAKELLARAKI 1995; HITCHCOCK 1997; VAROUFAKIS 1988; VERLINDEN 1988), on a variety of clay, ivory and stone anthropomorphs and body parts from settlements (e.g. SHAW 1979; DETOURNAY *ET AL.* 1980; HÄGG-MARINATOS 1983; SAPOUNA SAKELLARAKI 1983; SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997; JONES 1999; KYRIAKIDIS 2001, 2006; BETANCOURT 2009), and the chryselephantine Palaikastro 'Kouros' (MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000; SACKETT 2006). Most of these studies were based on the anthropomorphs' clothing (Jones 2001), gestures (HITCHCOCK 1997), gender (EVANS 1925-31; NILSSON 1950) and their general appearance (VERLINDEN 1984; SOPHOCLEUS 1990; SAPOUNA SAKELLARAKI 1995). A few were nevertheless based on observations of the artefacts' manufacture traces, retrieved through observations of their breakage points or through X-rays (GESELL-SAUPE 1997; RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001; CHLEVOURAKI *ET AL.* 2010; GESELL 2012) (*fig. 2*).

These objects were also widely referred to as «figures» and «figurines» (e.g. NILSSON 1950; MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000). It is, moreover, noticeable that some of the more intricate, detailed or decorated anthropomorphs of faience and ivory were also designated as «statuettes» (MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000; VERLINDEN 1988), «statues» (MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000.) and sometimes even as «images» (RUTKOWSKI 1986, p. 84; WARREN 1988, p. 33). It is also worth mentioning that variations in vocabulary also occurred in studies written in other languages. Indeed, Faure alternated between the use of the terms «*figurine*» and «*statuette*» (1969, *passim*) which, in French, bear the same significance as they do in English, and, similarly, Rethemiotakis (1998, *passim*) switched between the Greek words «*ειδώλιο*» (*figurine*) and «*είδωλο*» (*figure, idol*). It is also evident that the aforementioned accounts frequently employed highly interpretive terms in reference to the studied objects, as was mentioned in the introduction. Many were indeed designated as «goddesses» (BOYD HAWES *ET AL.* 1908), «deities» (MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000), «idols» (NILSSON 1950, p. 289; RUTKOWSKI 1986, p. 103) or «cult statues» (RUTKOWSKI 1986; WARREN 1988; MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000). Some of these artefacts, such as the 'Goddesses with Upraised Hands' or the 'Snake Goddesses', even possess such terms in their official names.

Having briefly examined the methodologies and vocabulary employed by these past studies, it is noticeable that most interpretations of these artefacts were predominantly built upon observations of details visible on their external surfaces. It is consequently evident that the anthropomorphs' appearance, and the latter's quality, strongly influenced their naming. Moreover, it is noticeable that the visually striking and visually unique artefacts, such as the faience examples from Knossos, the large terracotta examples with up-raised hands, the anthropomorph from Myrtos (WARREN 1988), the bronze anthropomorph from Makrygialos (MANTZOU-RANI 2012), or the Palaikastro Kouros (MACGILLIVRAY *ET AL.* 2000), are those most frequently qualified as deities. Additionally, these pieces were often described as consisting of cultic paraphernalia, designed for permanent use. Conversely, it is apparent that less unusual, less aesthetically pleasing three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, such as peak sanctuary examples, or similar small clay artefacts found at settlements such as Chamaizi (DAVARAS 1972), Kommos (SHAW 1979), Mallia (DETOURNAY *ET AL.* 1980), Mochlos (DAVARAS-SOLES 1994), Petras (SCHACHERMEYER 1964), Phaistos (LEVI 1964) and Tylissos (HAZZIDAKIS 1921) or other open air sites such as Stous Anthropolithous (BROWN-PEATFIELD 1987), for example, have generally been considered as representing humans, and being designed for single, votive, use. Consequently, it might seem that the term 'figurine' has, possibly involuntarily, adopted a comparatively depreciatory signifi-



FIG. 2 – OTHER TYPES OF MINOAN ANTHROPOMORPHS (A VARIETY OF 'GODDESSES WITH UP-RAISED HANDS')
(FROM ALEXIOU 1958, PLS. ΣΤ AND Θ).

cance, as it is usually employed in reference to more 'humble' and less valuable objects, while 'finer' ones are termed 'statuettes' or 'sculptures'. This is an impression which this paper wishes to dispel by discussing the artefacts' material constructs rather than their appearance.

Before discussing the nature of these different groups of objects and providing definitions, however, some specific examples of situations in which eclectic uses of vocabulary have become problematic must be presented. As was stated in the introduction, variation in names is not a problem in studies discussing ritual and religion on a wider scale, yet it can become a setback for materially orientated research. As is demonstrated in the following section, with a case study on the anthropomorphs from Petsophas, many authors tend to refer to the same artefacts with semantically different terms which refer to materially

distinct groups of objects. This practice can confuse the reader, who might subsequently doubt which artefacts are being discussed especially in the absence of photographs or illustrations. The use of religiously laden terms can, moreover, limit the reader's scope for further functional considerations.

2.- Problems with vocabulary interchangeability

As was outlined above, the Petsophas anthropomorphs were collectively described by Myres and Rutkowski as «figurines», «figures», «statuettes», «statues» and «sculptures». Following a close reading of these authors' texts, however, I could not observe any particular patterns of use for these specific terms, except Myres' tendency to employ the term «figure» in relation to 'better-made' anthropomorphs (MYRES 1902-1903, p. 361). Overall, however, these terms seem to have been employed interchangeably. Moreover, it is noticeable that this trend was repeated in other archaeologists' studies, and although these authors employed the same words as Myres and Rutkowski in their texts, they did not use them in reference to the same artefacts. Faure, for example, generally referred to the Petsophas anthropomorphs as «figurines», although later in his article, he named similar objects from Traostalos «statuettes» (FAURE 1969, p. 115). Furthermore, he described the object which Myres identified as a «larger human figure» (MYRES 1902-1903, p. 375) as a «statue» (FAURE 1969, p. 121), and employed the same term in his description of a similar object from Xykephalo. The term «statue» was also employed by Rutkowski (1986, p. 84) in reference to the same large anthropomorph from Petsophas.

The varied use of these words can consequently become confusing for the reader, as it is difficult to understand which precise artefact is being discussed, and, moreover, to understand what the discussed objects consist of materially. It is important to note that the words 'statue', 'figurine' and 'sculpture' differ semantically. As defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* Online, a figurine is a representation which is «smaller than life-size». A statue, on the other hand, is a «carved or cast figure of a person or animal, especially one that is life-size or larger». Furthermore, a sculpture is an artwork which is rendered by «carving stone or wood or by casting metal or plaster». The objects referred to as statues and sculptures by Faure and Rutkowski are, however, not life-size or larger – the larger anthropomorph from Petsophas was estimated to measure 80 cm (MYRES 1902-1903, p. 121) – and they are made exclusively of clay. Moreover, the term 'figure', which in this case means a shape, can also be understood as an illustration or an outline, and thus the use of this term might project ambiguity over the representations' dimensionality. Finally, it may be noted that the term 'statuette', which in this case was attributed stronger artistic connotations, was often employed in reference to anthropomorphs of more «advanced» style (e.g. MYRES 1902-1903, p. 363; RUTKOWSKI 1991, p. 23).

Although the above examination does not demonstrate the existence of a particular or consistent pattern of vocabulary usage across the aforementioned studies, it must nevertheless be mentioned that some authors have observed the existence of a more systematic use of the terms 'figurine' and 'figure' elsewhere (PEATFIELD 1999, p. 28; RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001, pp. 89-103; TZONOU-HERBST 2010, p. 211). Unfortunately, however, these authors' interpretations of the exact meaning of these terms differed. Firstly, Peatfield placed emphasis on the cultic nature of the artefacts he named 'figures', and clarified that 'figurines' were disposable, votive paraphernalia. Secondly, Tzonou-Herbst conversely declared that the use of these words was mainly related to size. She described artefacts measuring over 20 cm,

such as 'Goddesses with Upraised Hands' and the Knossos faience 'Snake Goddesses' as 'figures', while she argued that peak sanctuary anthropomorphs measuring on average 18 cm, such as those from Petsophas, ought to be named 'figurines'. Moreover, she subsequently noted that 'figures' are rarer, wheel-made artefacts, designed for permanent use, while 'figurines' are handmade, abundant objects to be discarded after single use. Finally, Rethemiotakis' differentiation between these words related mostly to appearance. He suggested that 'figures' are delicate and aesthetically pleasing anthropomorphic representations, but that 'figurines' are small and crudely made objects.

It is apparent, however, that these above differentiations between the terms 'figurine' and 'figure' contradict each other and are not entirely applicable to the case of Petsophas. Indeed, Peatfield's and Tzonou-Herbst's definitions are problematic for the larger anthropomorph fragments: (presented in *fig. 1*, bottom right) and for the similar piece from Xykephalo. Both artefacts, when complete would have been larger than 20 cm, and would have thus been comparatively rare in these contexts. Hence, they could be termed 'figures'. However, it cannot be ignored that they were handmade and – based on their fragmentary condition – might have been discarded, and hence, could also be named 'figurines'. It becomes apparent that in this case, the aforementioned differentiations between both terms are of little help. One is consequently at a loss of how to define these objects which Myres additionally, in the case of the Petsophas example, interpreted as a «*chef-d'oeuvre*» (MYRES 1902-1903, p. 376), implying that it possessed high artistic value. These variations in nomenclature effectively hinder the reader's understanding of the objects' idiosyncratic material properties.

Having outlined the problem of semantic confusion, another problem related to the development of certain connotations concerning the nature of the studied artefacts must now be presented. Some types of three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations today hold certain associations which might in fact be quite different to the Minoans' understanding of their objects. As outlined above, it has become common to identify the less aesthetically pleasing anthropomorphs as humans and the better made ones as deities. Thus, based predominantly on appearance, religious significance was attributed to these objects which became known as «deities», «idols», and «goddesses» (EVANS 1925-31, *passim*; FAURE 1969, *passim*; MYRES 1902-1903, p. 380; GESELL 1995, 2004, 2010, 2012; NILSSON 1950, p. 289; RUTKOWSKI 1986, p. 103). It must be noted that the find location of the artefacts of course also influenced their interpretation, yet it seems to me that appearance remained the decisive factor. The designation of the artefacts as deities seems quite subjective from a material stand-point. Moreover, it is clear that this use of language imposes a strict interpretive framework on the artefacts which limits the reader's scope for further functional considerations. It is indeed rare that Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations are interpreted as representing anything other than humans or deities. It is nevertheless possible that they represented saints, or particular social groups, or equally, the body might also have been employed to represent a concept rather than an individual. Furthermore, it is rare that these objects are interpreted as anything else but representations. It is nevertheless possible, as Morris and Peatfield suggested (MORRIS - PEATFIELD 2004, 2012), that they also served as tools or channels for various experiences.

It must additionally be mentioned that, as a result of the connotations borne by some of these artefacts, the epithet 'cult/ic' has become quite widely adopted, as was mentioned in the previous section. For example, the 'Goddesses of Myrtos' has been described as a «cult statuette» (WARREN 1988, p. 33) and the 'Goddesses with Upraised Hands' have frequently been regarded as «cult material» (GESELL 2004, p. 133). While it is noticeable that the adoption of this epithet is partly based on the artefact's find location, it is strongly

influenced by its state of preservation. Indeed, alongside their 'more advanced' appearance, and their positioning on benches, 'Goddesses with Up-raised Hands', for example, are regarded as cultic because they do not seem to have been deliberately fragmented. Conversely, it seems that peak sanctuary anthropomorphs were never attributed a cultic function because they are mostly retrieved in a fragmentary condition. Moreover, it is rarely suggested that these Minoan anthropomorphs were discovered at different stages of their «use-life» (APPADURAI 1986), and that the objects might have adopted different properties at different points of their existence. It is in fact possible that peak sanctuary figurines were not objects for single use but were employed repeatedly, and that before being discarded, they were also put on display on benches in different locations, and at that stage adopted what we might call 'cultic' properties. Equally, the possibility that the 'Goddesses with Up-raised Hands' and the 'Snake Goddesses' were also intended to be discarded after a certain period of use must not be excluded. Thus, as Kyriakidis argues (KYRIAKIDIS 2002, 2006), the epithet 'cult/ic' must be employed with much caution.

Having outlined these two presently noticeable drawbacks of eclectic vocabulary use, it thus appears that over the last century Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations have been subjected to powerful cycles of interpretation built upon modern Western visual perceptions. Moreover, it is clear that more emphasis has been placed on the artefacts' appearance and on their representative qualities, which has often allowed for reflections on their materiality to be bypassed. In the light of these observations, it can be suggested that the first step to remedying to this vocabulary problem is to produce a clear definition for the term 'figurine'. In doing so, the original significance of this word, so frequently employed as an umbrella term for different types of three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, can be drawn out and associated with particular artefacts. The definition presented below is therefore based on peak sanctuary small clay three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, and was formulated following close examinations of their general material and visual features. It was later verified against other types of figurines too.

3.-*'Figurine': a definition*

Bailey once stated in his research on Balkan Neolithic anthropomorphs that the «successful interpretation of figurines rests on the achievement of one critical analytic moment: definition» (BAILEY 1996, p. 291). Indeed, setting a definition allows both the researcher and the reader to focus their attention on the critical features directing the study. Bailey defined a figurine as a three-dimensional, miniature, anthropomorphic representation (BAILEY 1996, p. 291; 2005, p. 84). His definition resulted from a consideration of the artefacts' dimensionality, volume, size and shape, and thus is appropriate to the spirit of this study too. While Bailey's definition is applicable here, his main points must nevertheless be verified against the evidence provided by the Minoan examples, so that any unintentional discrepancies caused by a definition based upon material from another culture are avoided.

These points are the following:

Three-dimensionality: As Bailey highlights, it is indeed important to emphasise that a figurine is a three-dimensional representation, and not a two-dimensional representation. This differentiation is particularly pertinent to Minoan material culture in which anthropomorphic 'dimensional hybrids' also exist. These 'dimensional hybrids' are seal

rings or incised representations of humanoids on vessels or small plaques, such as those found at Mallia for example (VAN EFFENTERRE 1980, pp. 431, 433). The representations cannot be considered as figurines since the representation of the body is not strictly three-dimensional despite the three-dimensionality of their supports. Figurines, on the other hand, consist of a body that can be grasped, handled, moved and perceived from all angles. The body, in the case of the figurine, is an object *per se*: something quantifiable in terms of size, shape, volume, weight and mobility (GOSDEN 2004 on the material nature of objects).

Size: As demonstrated by Bailey and a few others (e.g. NAKAMURA-MESKELL 2004; RENFREW 2007; TZONOU-HERBST 2010), it is often argued that a figurine is a miniature: a small, condensed version of something. While this is indeed true in most cases, it must nevertheless be noted that a figurine can occasionally be larger than what it represents. The Minoan beetle figurines from the peak sanctuary of Petsophas, for example, are larger than the species represented (RUTKOWSKI 1986). In the case of anthropomorphic figurines, however, the representations are of course scale reductions. Therefore, it might be more appropriate to regard Minoan figurines as scale alterations rather than strictly miniatures. It must also be noted here that, alongside size, objects which qualify as figurines also adhere to a volume consensus: regardless of their size and shape, figurines must remain easily transportable by a single individual. Thus, figurines can be differentiated from large three-dimensional objects such as statues which cannot be easily handled and moved by one person alone.

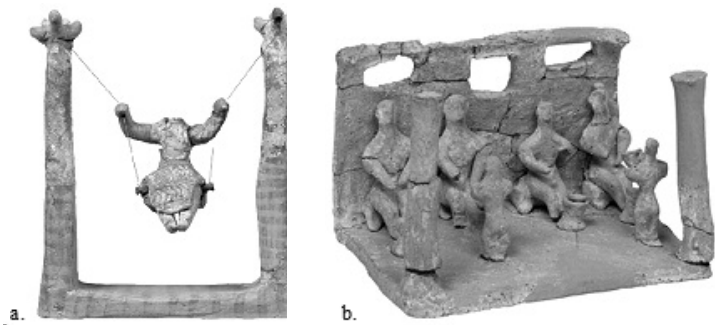
Shape: Bailey clarifies that the objects he is discussing are anthropomorphic. Although a figurine may represent practically anything (a human, an animal, an object, or a natural feature), it must nevertheless adhere to a certain shape consensus so that it may be differentiated from an amorphous lump of matter or a natural element. In order to be recognisable as anthropomorphic, the object must display a core body presenting a minimum of protrusions no matter how abstracted they are. Geometrical shapes such as the clay balls from Petsophas (RUTKOWSKI 1991), consequently cannot be qualified as figurines as their form is too highly abstracted to allow for immediate inference. Similarly, stones or shells, such as those occasionally found at Minoan peak sanctuaries, thus cannot be regarded as figurines either because they do not present traces of human intervention in the form of manufacture or decoration.

Having evaluated Bailey's definition in the light of the material evidence provided by Minoan figurines, and having adapted it to suit the Minoan context, it can be summarised that *a figurine is a human-made three-dimensional, tactile and mobile object which must represent a clear subject on a diminished scale*. In the light of this definition, the anthropomorphic representations belonging to this category can now be listed. Other Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations, which cannot be defined as figurines, are instead placed under the other materially appropriate headings of 'anthropomorphic ornaments', 'limb pendants', 'statues/life-size body parts', and 'anthropomorphic vessels'.

4.- Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations and their material categories

4a.- *Figurines* (figs. 3 a-c)

Beginning with the figurine category, it is here suggested that clay anthropomorphs from peak sanctuaries and settlements, such as those from Petsophas, and those from the variety of other open-air sites listed by Faure (1969), Rutkowski (1986) and Panagiotakis (2003) and Kyriakidis (2005) qualify as '*figurines*'. Most usually reported as measuring



A) FIGURINES. A) HAGIA TRIADA (MAX H. 15.5 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD. B) KAMILARI (MAX H. 10 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).



B) SMALL FIGURINES. A) PETSOPHAS (H. 17.4 CM), PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD. B) TYLISSOS (H. 16.5 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD. C) KNOSSOS (H. 34.2 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).



C) LARGE FIGURINES. A) KOPHINAS, NEOPALATIAL PERIOD (H. 10.5 CM). B) GAZI (H. 63 CM), POSTPALATIAL PERIOD. C) PALAIKASTRO (H. 54 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001; DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005; MACGILLIVRAY 2000).

D) BODY PART FIGURINES. A) PETSOPHAS (H. 11.4 CM), PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD. B) PETSOPHAS (H. 12.5 CM), PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).

FIG. 3 – CATEGORIES OF MINOAN THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS FIGURINES (INCLUDING SMALL FIGURINES, LARGE FIGURINES, BODY PART FIGURINES).

between 8 and 20 cm in height when complete, these objects are indeed miniatures which can be held in one hand (*fig. 3b*). Moreover, these objects generally present common material 'affordances' or, in other words, similar material properties (INGOLD 2007; KNAPPETT 2004). Indeed, following tactile engagement with 'figurines' from several sites³, I noted that examples of similar dimensions generally weighed the same, and given the relatively standardised painting practices, presented similar textures. These 'figurines' also exuded similar temperatures when exposed to heat. Moreover, the tactile experiences involved in their manufacture were relatively comparable. Although the manner in which the 'figurines' features were rendered and the order in which the body parts were assembled did vary, all manufacturers nevertheless experienced a process of negotiation with clay in its un-modelled state. Indeed, even if the figurines looked different in their final form, every manufacturer learnt how to initially gauge and then comply with the clays' texture, resistivity and malleability (MURPHY forthcoming).

While the objects cited above are the most prevalent throughout Minoan Crete, they are not the only artefacts to fit into the 'figurine' category. Other types of three-dimensional clay anthropomorphic representations possess appropriate material criteria to be termed so. The larger anthropomorphs from Petsophas and Xykephalo which were discussed above ought to also be classified in this section. Indeed, although these artefacts measure about four times the size of the other clay anthropomorphs discovered on site, they also consist of transportable three-dimensional representations of the human body on a reduced scale. Although they were presumably not as practical to carry as the smaller artefacts, which could fit in a pocket, they could have been placed in a cloth bag which the individual transporting it could have slung over his/her shoulder. Measuring approximately a metre in height, the transportation of these artefacts could be compared to the modern experience many archaeologists undergo of carrying a medium sized photographic tripod on their backs on their way up to the site. Hence, these anthropomorphs, which were previously described as 'figures' and 'statues' can instead also be termed '*figurines*', yet can be differentiated from the smaller examples with the use of the epithet 'large'. The fragments from Petsophas and Xykephalo, and similar pieces from Kophinas (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001), are therefore here termed '*large figurines*' (*fig. 3c*).

The Late Minoan clay 'Goddesses with Upraised-Hands', of which the smallest measure approximately 20 cm (ALEXIOU 1958) (*fig. 2*), can also be included in the 'large figurine' category, as their material properties also correspond to those advanced during the definition. Certainly, these artefacts would have been less practical to transport due to their odd shape, however it is arguable that they were not designed to be transported as far as peak sanctuary figurines were. Thus, these large anthropomorphs do nevertheless materially comply with the 'large figurine' category, as they could be moved from one location to another by a single individual. It must here be noted, however, that their manufacture drastically differed from the figurines mentioned in the previous paragraph as they were wheel-thrown. The use of this technique, however, did not render the process mechanical. Instead, it assisted the potter during manufacture, but the latter was still required to understand, feel and collaborate with the material for the production to be successful.

³For which I am grateful to Dr Evangelos Kyriakidis, Dr Marina Panagiotaki and the hosting British School at Athens of Knossos.

It must be added that the terms 'figurine' and 'large figurine' are not exclusive to clay objects. The faience 'Snake Goddesses' from the Knossos Temple Repositories, the bronze anthropomorphs from caves or settlements such as Tylissos or Aghia Triada (VERLINDEN 1984) and the Late Minoan small ivory boys from Archanes (SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997), Palaikastro (BOSANQUET-DAWKINS 1923) or the Late Minoan ivory acrobats from Knossos (ALBERTI 2001) can therefore also be termed '*figurines*'. These artefacts are indeed also transportable miniatures, which can be handled from all angles. The different types may be differentiated from each other with the simple epithets: '*faience*', '*bronze*' or '*ivory*'. Finally, the chryselephantine 'Kouros' from Palaikastro can be materially classified as a '*large figurine*' (fig. 3c). Although this artefact would have differed from the clay 'large figurines' in terms of its consumption mode, as it might only have been handled by very few individuals, it does nevertheless comply with the material criteria set out in the definition of a figurine.

Having enumerated the types of Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations belonging to the 'figurine' category and the various epithets which can help us differentiate each type, it is evident that despite their differing production and consumption processes, these artefacts' overarching material similarities allow them to be designated as the same type of object. The term '*statuette*', which has previously been employed to define some of the artefacts mentioned in this section, is not employed as a defining term here. It may nevertheless be suggested that, on occasion, '*statuette*' may be employed as an alternative for the word 'figurine' as long as it does not reflect discrimination on a visual basis. The word '*statuette*' is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* as «a small statue or figurine, especially one that is smaller than life-size». It is hence synonymous with the word 'figurine' and does not imply that artefacts bearing these two names present any material differences, and thus all types of 'figurines', regardless of whether we perceive them as beautiful or ugly, can be termed '*statuettes*'.

4b.- *Body part figurines* (fig. 3d)

The artefacts outlined under this heading consist of a subcategory of 'figurines'. This subgroup contains objects consisting of independent limbs or body parts such as heads, internal organs, or quarter or half bodies. These objects were attested in clay form at peak sanctuaries in Crete and in bronze form at Aghios Georgios on Kythera (SAKELLARAKIS 1996). Instances of clay limbs pierced with suspension holes have also been discovered in Minoan Crete, but these are here considered as a different type of artefact which is discussed later on in this paper. The objects under discussion in this section have often been described as «votive offerings» and were believed to have been dedicated to deities as indicators of a cure for disease (MYRES 1902-1903; RUTKOWSKI 1991). Upon close observation of certain examples, it was possible to assess that some of these body parts were made as individual objects since they did not present any traces of breakage or attachment. These can consequently be termed '*body part figurines*'. It is worth mentioning here that many sites in Minoan Crete, and especially peak sanctuaries, also produced large amounts of similar individual limbs and body parts presenting breakage marks. These pieces, however, cannot be considered as 'body part figurines' as they were probably broken off a body, and were thus not made as individual objects.

4c.- *Surface-bound figurines*

The type of three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations categorised under this heading are those contained within models. Examples of these artefacts were discovered at Archanes (SAKELLARAKIS 1997), Galatas (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2010), Gournos (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2009), Aghia Triada (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001), Kamilari (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001) and Pyrgos (pers. comm. Kyriakidis). While it is possible that some of the anthropomorphs were detachable from the model allowing them to be rearranged within or without the structure, and temporarily concealed (MARANGO 1996; RETHEMIOTAKIS 2010), the anthropomorphs cannot be considered as exactly the same type of artefact as the 'figurines' discussed in the previous section. They do not exist as individual free-standing objects, but are instead parts of a whole. In certain cases, some anthropomorphs, such as those discovered at Gonies-Philiremos (pers. comm. Kyriakidis), or the swinging anthropomorph from Aghia Triada (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001) are dependent on their containing structure since they were shaped in a seated position (fig. 3a). It is therefore suggested that since these anthropomorphs mostly adhere to the criteria required for an object to qualify as a 'figurine', but due to their close relation to another surface, they ought to be regarded as being of a special type. They are here termed '*surface-bound figurines*', thus implying that they are generally materially similar to the 'figurines' discussed above, but also indicating that their material affordances differ since they cannot always be handled and viewed individually in the round.

4d.- *Anthropomorphic ornaments* (fig. 4)

The objects under discussion in this section consist of anthropomorphs contained inside or on the rims of vessels, such as the bowls from Archanes (SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997), the vessels from Gonies-Philiremos (pers. comm. Kyriakidis) and Petras (pers. comm. Simandiraki Grimshaw), as well as the bowl from Palaikastro (BOSANQUET 1901-1902). This group also includes anthropomorphic representations such as those discovered at Mallia (DETOURNAY ET AL. 1980), which were intended to be stuck to a vessel's surface. It is evident, from the attachment marks they present, that these anthropomorphs were not intended to stand alone, nor intended to be rearranged within the container. They in fact depended on the vessel for physical support, and due to their material fusion with the latter, they were certainly not designed to be handled and seen individually. They were only held, moved and transported with the vessel itself, and thus ought to be considered as material additions to the vessel rather than entities in themselves. Hence, these anthropomorphic representations are termed '*anthropomorphic ornaments*'.

It must be noted that, as additions to a pre-existing object, these anthropomorphs are of particular material interest because they consist of a combination of opposing factors: display and concealment. While parts of their bodies are stuck against the vessel's surface and are inaccessible to the consumer's hand or eye, the nature of their presence on the vessel is to be noticed, and thus in a sense to be displayed. This conundrum continues with the function of these vessels. Presumably, the latter would not have been commonly employed in daily activities, and it may hence be assumed that these vessels were not filled and emptied as regularly as plain vessels. However, these artefacts do nevertheless consist of containers, albeit special ones, and it is therefore possible to suggest that, on occasion, the material presence of the contained anthropomorphs might have varied as liquids or grain temporarily concealed them and progressively revealed them.

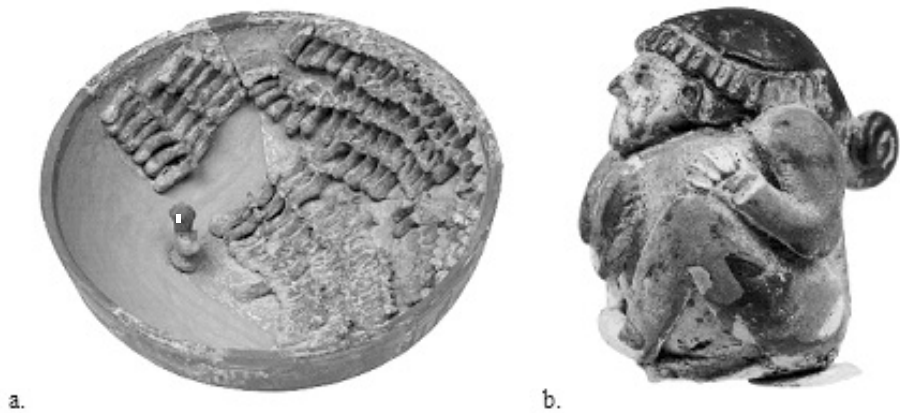


FIG. 4 – ANTHROPOMORPHIC ORNAMENTS. SURFACE-BOUND FIGURINES. A) PALAIKASTRO (DIAM. 19 CM), LATE PREPALATIAL PERIOD. B) PHAISTOS (H. 3.2 CM), PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).



FIG. 5 – LIMB PENDANTS. PETSOPHAS (ARM H. 7.5 CM; TORSO H. 5.1 CM), PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).



FIG. 6 – LIFE SIZE BODY PART/STATUE. ANEMOSPILIA (H. 17 CM, L. 24 CM), NEOPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997).



FIG. 7 – ANTHROPOMORPHIC VESSELS. A) MALLIA, PROTOPALATIAL PERIOD. B) GOURNIA (H. 15.5 CM), POSTPALATIAL PERIOD. C) PHAISTOS (H. 16.2 CM), POSTPALATIAL PERIOD (FROM DIMOPOULOU RETHEMIOTAKIS 2005).

4e.- Limb pendants (fig. 5)

This section examines the pierced limbs mentioned in the ‘body part figurines’ section. These mostly consist of an arm with a hands or a leg. Clay specimens have been attested at peak sanctuaries and at other open-air sites, and faience and shell parallels have been attested in the Knossos Temple Repositories (EVANS 1921-1935) and at Mallia (DETOURNAY *ET AL.*

1980). It has been suggested that these objects were suspended and worn as pendants and have consequently been termed «amulets» (MYRES 1901-1903; RUTKOWSKI 1991). This designation is, however, not employed here this since it carries too many religious connotations. Moreover, it is important to note that it is possible that these body parts were designed to be attached to other reduced scale body parts, which together would have formed an articulated body, such as those evidenced later in Classical times (FOTOPOULOS-DELIVORRIAS 1997, p. 99 for Attic terracotta doll), rather than existing alone. These articulated bodies could indeed qualify as 'figurines', but as the existence of such objects in Minoan Crete cannot currently be proven, the perforated limbs ought still be considered as individual objects for the time being. If they were intended to be suspended, this could have occurred in a variety of ways: they might have been fixed on a wall for display, hung from a bush or tree, or worn by an individual. In the latter case, they could have either been displayed or concealed according to clothing arrangements. Given our uncertainty regarding these 'objects' material associations, however, they cannot be termed 'figurines' but ought instead to be designated as *'limb pendants'*.

4f.- Statues/life-size body parts (fig. 6)

Remaining on the topic of individual body parts, a series of life-size clay feet were also evidenced in Crete during the Minoan period. These were discovered at Anemospilia (SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997), Mallia Quartier XVIII (CHAPOUTHIER ET AL. 1962), Mochlos Artisan's Quarter (SOLES ET AL. 2004), Chania (GODART-TZEDAKIS 1992), Gournia (BOYD HAWES ET AL., 1908), Phaistos Room LXIV (LEVI 1976) and Sklavokambos (MARINATOS 1931). The Gournia feet were originally considered by Boyd-Hawes (1908) as shoe-makers' lasts. Later, this suggestion was refuted as Warren (1988) and Sakellarakis-Sakellarakis (1997), as they argued that these objects consisted of the feet of a «cult statue» whose body was made of wood. As discussed earlier in this paper, the epithet 'cult/ic' must be employed with caution, and shall thus not be used here. However, these artefacts' possible existence as 'statues' can be discussed. The presence of attachment marks on most of these feet could indicate that they were once physically joined to something. If the rest of the body was proportionate to the feet, the artefact would have been life-size, if not taller, and would thus qualify as a 'statue'. While Evans' (EVANS 1921, vol. III) interpretation of the bronze locks discovered at Knossos as the hair of a life-size anthropomorph was quite speculative and has been contested (MARINATOS-HÄGG 1983), it may nevertheless be suggested that if Evans was correct, the artefact would also qualify as a 'statue'.

While it is possible that these clay feet acted as a support for a body, the possibility that these feet existed as individual artefacts must not be overlooked. Given the absence of attachment marks on the Mochlos feet, it is worth considering that these might also have simply stood alone, inviting the consumer to imagine the existence of the rest of the body, or simply existing as a symbol *per se*. It must be noted here, however, that even if these feet were independent objects, they could not be placed under the 'body part figurine' category by reason of their natural scale. Thus, in the absence of concrete knowledge regarding their existence as 'statues' or independent objects, they ought to simply be termed *'life-size body parts'*.

4g.- Anthropomorphic vessels (fig. 7)

The last type of three-dimensional anthropomorphic representation to be addressed in this paper is anthropomorphic vessels. These artefacts occur throughout the Minoan period, some dating as early as the Prepalatial period, such as the Mochlos libation vessel

(RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001), and some dating to the Postpalatial period, such as the rhyta from Karphi (GESELL 1985) or Phaistos (CARINCI 2007) for example. Within the anthropomorphic vessel category, two types of objects are noticeable: those which clearly retain the shape of the vessel, such as the rhyta, to which anthropomorphic features were added, and those such as the Early Minoan Mochlos female vessel (WARREN 1988), the Middle Minoan Phourni container (SAKELLARAKIS-SAKELLARAKIS 1997), or the Postpalatial Gournia female rhyton (RETHEMIOTAKIS 2001), which are bodies concealing interior liquid passage mechanisms.

While it is evident that objects of the first type do not qualify as figurines and can thus retain the term '*anthropomorphic vessel*', those of the second type require more careful consideration. The latter are indeed three-dimensional, transportable, reductions in scale of the human shape. Their internal structure, however, differentiates them from the compact 'figurines' studied above and allows the practical function of pouring as well as the function of representing something. As suggested by Simandiraki Grimshaw (2011), these artefacts are hybrids and therefore cannot be regarded as 'figurines' despite several material similarities with this group of objects. Thus, these artefacts ought to also be termed '*anthropomorphic vessels*'.

5.- Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to provide a solution to the existence of some semantic complexities in the field of Minoan 'figurine studies'. It was argued that further consideration of these Minoan anthropomorphs' material properties, such as their dimensionality, size, weight, shape, transportability, and construction method might help establish a more harmonised naming guide. Moreover, it was suggested that clear definitions for different object types can allow the archaeologist to better understand of the artefacts' material traits and to further appreciate the latter's archaeological relevance. Thus, following a more materially orientated approach to the classification of these objects, I proposed five main categories: *figurines (including small figurines, large figurines, body part figurines and surface-bound figurines), anthropomorphic ornaments, limb pendants, statues/life-size body parts, and anthropomorphic vessels*. Of the original terms employed in past studies, I only preserved two: '*figurine*' and '*statue*'. It was suggested that the term '*statuette*' could be employed as an alternative for '*figurine*' but without any relation to the quality of the object's appearance.

As well as devising these new categories, this paper was attentive to the use of religiously laden terms such as the nouns 'deities' and 'adorants' or the epithet 'cultic'. It was argued that such terms can only be employed following careful considerations of each artefact's material and contextual situation alongside its visual appearance. Indeed, focussing on the objects' physical remains, alongside their representative values, might help limit the scope of speculation based on present-day visual perceptions and aesthetic tastes. Finally, it can be concluded that this contribution, which must not be read as a condemnation of past vocabulary uses, but rather as a presently situated development from earlier research, is intended as a semantic facilitator for research on these various groups of Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations.

CÉLINE MURPHY

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ABSTRACT

MINOAN THREE-DIMENSIONAL ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS.
PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

As well as devising these new categories, this paper was attentive to the use of religiously laden terms such as the nouns 'deities' and 'adorants' or the epithet 'cultic'. It was argued that such terms can only be employed following careful considerations of each artefact's material and contextual situation alongside its visual appearance. Indeed, focussing on the objects' physical remains, alongside their representative values, might help limit the scope of speculation based on present-day visual perceptions and aesthetic tastes. Finally, it can be concluded that this contribution, which must not be read as a condemnation of past vocabulary uses, but rather as a presently situated development from earlier research, is intended as a semantic facilitator for research on these various groups of Minoan three-dimensional anthropomorphic representations.