FIGURINES AND FIGURAL OBJECTS FROM CHALCOLITHIC GÜLPINAR IN NORTHWESTERN ANATOLIA

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Abstract

This work offers an assessment of a small assemblage of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines from the Early Chalcolithic (phase II) and the Middle Chalcolithic (phase III) settlements at Gülpınar in northwestern Anatolia. The main goal is to place the figurine assemblage from both phases within its wider context and try to understand the repercussions of choices made in Gülpınar regarding the making and use of these objects. The assemblage from both phases II and III at Gülpınar complements the general discussions on the use and meaning of figurines within a wide geographical area that includes western Anatolia, Aegean, and the Balkans.

INTRODUCTION

A small assemblage of twenty-four figurines and other figural objects was unearthed during the excavations conducted at Gülpınar in north western Anatolia (Fig. 1). The prehistoric site has been located beneath the Greek and Roman remains of the Sanctuary of Apollo Smintheus (Smintheion) and spreads on a flat area at the outskirts of the synonymous village at an elevation of 60 m above sea level, 1 km east of the Aegean coast of the Troad. Excavations at the prehistoric site were conducted between 2004 and 2013 as part of the Smintheion excavation project (Takaoğlu 2005; Takaoğlu and Özdemir 2018). Radiocarbon samples date the main occupation of the site to the period from 5320 to 4450 BCE, a time from which only a few other sites are known in western Anatolia. Two major phases were distinguished in the excavation: phase II (5320-4940 BCE) may be termed Early Chalcolithic and phase III (4930-4450 BCE) Middle Chalcolithic.

The architectural remains that belong to the consecutive phases II and III at Gülpınar were revealed in three different sectors located close to one another in the settlement. In each of these sectors, a system of adjoined quadrangular and rectangular rooms, sometimes separated by corridors or courtyards, came to light. All these buildings were built of stone up to a height of at least 1.5 m in order to withstand flowing and standing rainwater.

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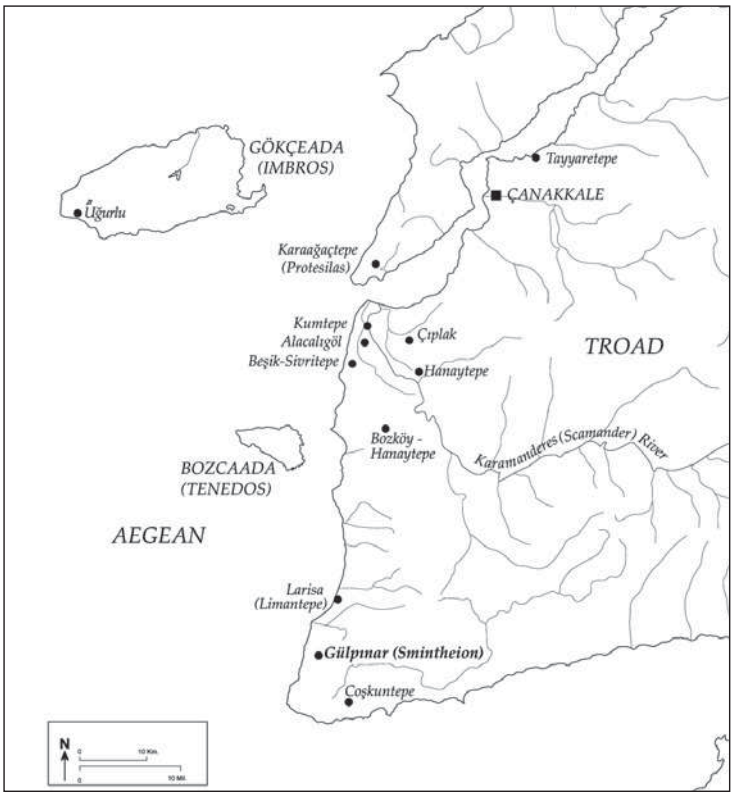


Fig. 1. Map locating major sites with Chalcolithic finds in the Troad.

A long stone-built enclosure wall delineates the northern, western, and eastern parts of the cluster of buildings, perhaps for defensive purposes.

Although the study of the excavation is well advanced and an extensive publication is in progress, we are presenting here only the small figural assemblage, which consists of figurines and other objects. The paper offers at first a short presentation of the assemblage within each phase. We take for granted that even the most basic recognition of an object – as a figurine, a zoomorphic vessel or something else- takes into account one's experiences, including the scholar's experiences in the present, and we point to several similarities with objects from other sites, in light of which the recognition of certain types would make sense. Such a list is not meant to be exhaustive; rather it is suggestive of the degree to which certain choices in Gülpınar would fit in wider trends. Although this certainly suggests at least the possibility of contact, we do not want to argue here that these similarities are evidence of belonging to a common culture. Furthermore, it will become apparent that the indication of similarities is biased towards certain areas and sites. This is certainly not by chance and it reflects to a great extent the state of research, including the authors' disciplinary histories. The final section attempts again to place the whole assemblage within its wider context, but from a different view; this time the goal is to try and understand the repercussions of the choices made in Gülpınar regarding the making and use of these

objects. Consequently, there is no merely descriptive and no purely interpretive section, but rather a constant positioning and repositioning of the assemblage within a material world.

With this in mind, in what follows we employ the term "figural" introduced by the Çatalhöyük Research Project (see Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 201-202 with earlier references), to refer to an object with a human or animal form, whatever that is, while we would also like to point out forms that denote a head and/or a body in such a generic way, that it is difficult to determine whether they are human or animal or even something in between (see also Nanoglou 2008a, 320; 2009a, 194 for such ambiguous forms in the Greek Neolithic). Last, but not least, the term "figure" in this paper is inclusive of "figurine". The former refers to any figural object, whereas the latter to a figural object that is not attached to a vessel or any other object.

Fourteen objects (F1-F14) belong to phase II (5320-4940 BC) and include seven human heads (F1-F7), which either belonged to figurines or were attached to the rims of vessels, and seven figural handles (F8-F14). The succeeding phase III (4930-4450 BC) yielded a total of eight clay figural objects (F15, F16, F18-F21), including six examples that could be parts of human figurines. The remaining two represent small clay lids with figural handles (F22-F23). A single marble head (F17), probably acrolithic, was also found in the same phase with these eight clay figural objects. There is also one additional figurine that lacks a stratified context (F24).

These objects display no obvious overarching pattern in terms of their spatial distribution in the site. Because they were mainly found in the structural debris of the houses and in rubbish pits in the courtyards, there is no clear indication as to their use prior to their deposition, or to the process of their deposition. That is, it is not clear whether these figurines were part of the house inventory or they were secondarily deposited during the cleaning and leveling off the ground before constructing new architectural features. Despite this, the morphological traits of figurines overall allow us to talk up to a certain point about their use and meaning within the community of Gülpınar.

Phase II

All figural objects retrieved from phase II (Figs. 5-8) are made of clay. All of them are well-fired and most of them are burnished or smoothed, which suggests that they were made with certain care, or perhaps by someone practised at making clay objects. A total of eight human heads have been uncovered at phase II (Figs. 5-6). Seven (F1-F7) are broken at the base of the neck and accordingly it is impossible to say anything about their body. It is probable that they could have been parts of vessels, as is clearly the case with F8. Heads F1-F4 are rather flat and seem one-sided, without any details at the back, but whether this was also the case with their bodies is impossible to know. They do bear some similarities with flat heads from earlier assemblages, like the one from Aşağı Pınar (e.g. Özdoğan 2013, figs 134 and 135, dated to Aşağı Pınar phase 7) or from Kovačevo (Lichardus-Itten 2017, Fig. 2 and especially Fig. 4, the latter dated to Kovačevo Ic-Id), some of which were attached to voluminous bodies. It is possible then that they were attached to a more rounded body, but none has been definitely recovered from phase II

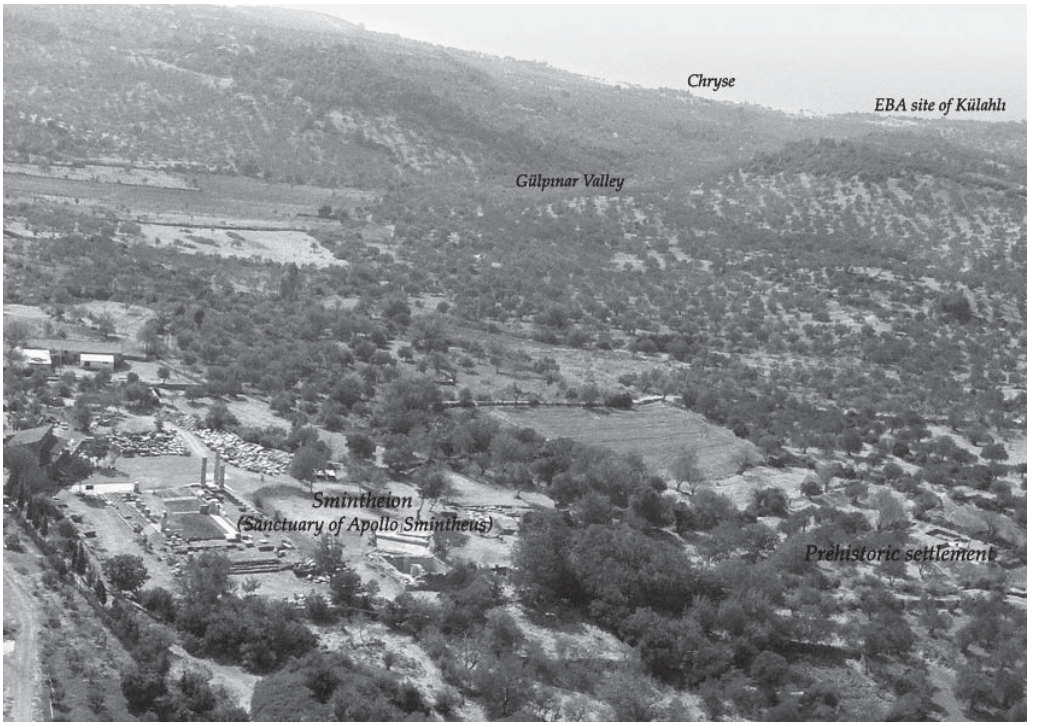


Fig. 2. Aerial view of Smintheion showing the location of the prehistoric settlement.

at Gülpınar.[1] However, they also bear some similarities to heads of later figurines, especially the ones encountered in Early Bronze Age contexts, such as at Thermi on Lesbos (Lamb 1936, 149ff), or Demircihüyük in Eskişehir (Obladen-Kauden 1996, 257ff) and accordingly it is possible that they might have been attached to a flat body, although again none has been found in Gülpınar.

On the other hand, if these heads were parts of vessels, it is not clear what kind of vessels these were, or whether there were multiple heads projecting from the vessel, or even which way the heads faced. Heads F5 and F6 are more voluminous and fit easier within what we know from broadly contemporary figurine assemblages, although that does not preclude the possibility of them being part of a vessel. Head F7 is peculiar both in form and manufacture. On the other hand, stubs placed on the top of handles similar to F8, but without facial characteristics, are known from north-western Turkey (e.g. Seeher 1985, Abb. 18, LL83.46/8 from Beşik-Sivritepe and Blum *et al.* 2011, Taf. 6.7 from Bozköy-Hanaytepe).

Heads F1-F6 consistently render the nose and the ridges of the eyebrows in relief, while the eyes themselves are incised. Interestingly, head F6 bears two parallel horizontal incisions in the place of each eye. The pattern has contemporary parallels in Greece

[1] F24 is voluminous and, being unstratified, may belong to this phase, but its waist is not as narrow as in the examples from the sites mentioned.

(e.g. Grammenos and Kotsos 2004, 154, no. 221, from Stavroupoli; also Tsountas 1908, Fig. 224 from Karabairami and Gallis 1992, Fig. 33a from Chalki 3; see also the one in Phelps 1987, pl. 33.1 from Corinth, which Phelps dates to the Middle Neolithic), but those heads are rod-like, with further incisions that probably render hair, and they do not show the eyebrows (for different types see Grammenos and Kotsos 2002, 307, no. 53 from Stavroupoli and Phelps 2000, Fig. 4.30: SF616 from Servia). In the Balkans, heads with double horizontal incisions are earlier (e.g. Hansen 2007, Taf. 165.1 and 3, Taf. 167.1), as are the examples from Aşağı Pınar (Özdoğan 2013, Fig. 134, one of which with three parallel incisions, Schwarzberg and Özdoğan 2013, Fig. 15). Although the pattern is not particularly specific, one could suggest that the incisions represent eyelids.

At least five of the heads also render the ears, which in four cases bear horizontal piercings, possibly for earrings made of some other material (see the later fourth millennium BC bone figurine with two copper earrings from Karanovo, Todorova and Vajsov 2001, 90, no. 535), although the holes are rather small. Whether this is the case or not, the presence of perforations on the ears, or elsewhere on the head or the body, is increasingly attested in the later Aegean and Balkan Neolithic/Chalcolithic, in sites such as Ftelia, Sarakenos Cave, Makriyalos, Sitagroi, Aşağı Pınar and Karanovo (Orphanidis 2002, Fig. 148; Orphanidis and Sampson 2015, numerous examples; Besios and Pappa 1995, 26; Gimbutas 1986, figs. 9.25 and 9.134; Hansen 2004, Fig. 2.2, 2.5; Özdoğan 2013, Fig. 162-3; Berger 2005, Taf. 160.7, 161.1-2; see also Hansen 2007 for many examples from further northwest). Even if the perforations were not intended for earrings or other items, it is still the case that they configured the meaning of the figures in relation to the norm of earlier periods and in a way that bears a significant link with the incisions observed on several of the figures of the period.

In two cases (F1 and F8) there are vertical incisions under the eyes. Once again, one can find parallels in the Aegean, in assemblages from contemporary sites like Makriyalos (Nanoglou and Pappa 2009, drawing 3c) or Paliambela (Nanoglou 2004, no. I-146), but there are also earlier examples, such as one from Sesklo (Theocharis 1975, table 12.c). Several examples of incisions below the eyes come from sites associated with the "Vinča culture" (Srejović 1988); interestingly, there are also animals bearing such incisions (Srejović 1988, 98). The pattern is not particularly specific either, so that it is difficult to assert what it represents. This is a period when incisions on figurines proliferate in the northern Aegean and the Balkans (Nanoglou 2005) and indeed they are ubiquitous in the "Vinča culture". There are a variety of patterns, but some of them are repeatedly present in specific areas of the body, like the series of punctures positioned vertically along the neck, or the series of vertical lines along the back (Nanoglou 2006). In a similar fashion to the perforations made to the ears, this could suggest that these patterns were recognized as referring to something specific, as in particular garments or particular tattoos. One could add a further possibility, taken from research that pertains to later figurines, always heeding to relevant caveats and taking into the account that we do not present this as evidence for a continuity of practices. Based on a study of painted patterns observed on Early Bronze Age figurines from the Cyclades, Hoffman (2002) has suggested that painted or incised vertical stripes on the figurines' cheeks indicate tears or scratches, and accordingly these figurines could represent mourners in a funerary ritual. An interesting point here is that

there is a possibility that the painted patterns on the later figurines were made *ad hoc*, using the marble figurines as some sort of blanks (Hendrix 2003, 442). With the possible exception of head F1 (for which the strongest possibility is that the incisions were made before firing, but they are not as deep as on the other figurines, both from Gülpınar and abroad, and accordingly they might have been made after firing), the incisions on the Neolithic figurines were made simultaneously with the rest of the body and accordingly the patterns were part of the initial role the figures were to perform.

Importantly, any discussion about the use and deposition of these figures needs to take their fragmentary condition into account. However, there is no way to decide whether they were deposited intentionally "fragmented". For phase II, this is especially so, because the architectural layout was renewed in phase III by re-using some of the foundations of the structures from phase II, which entailed in certain cases the possible disturbance and redeposition of the earlier debris beneath the new floors. This almost certainly resulted in the partial rearrangement of the artefacts and the loss of information regarding the practices of deposition during phase II. Four human heads were uncovered within the architectural debris over the floor of Building K of phase II just beneath the floor of Phase III structures (Fig. 3) and this may suggest that these artefacts were deposited in adjacent loci in the first place, but it is unclear whether this was actually the case and under which conditions this might have happened. In addition, the deposition of a human head near the top of Pit K in the Pits Area just to the south of Building K may be the result of a related activity. A cluster of 15 circular pits measuring between 70 cm to 90 cm in diameter and 40 cm to 120 cm in depth and dated to phase II were found to the south of Building K, located in the courtyards of the buildings, and are interpreted as pits first made for storage. In the excavation, these storage pits were found filled with broken pottery, animal bones, marine shells, broken saddle querns and other waste, which were deposited in them, when they ceased to be used as storage pits. So, the deposition of the head may be part of an operation that meant to prepare the area for its rebuilding. If proximity may be invoked as an indication, it could be the case that all these heads were initially deposited in adjacent areas and were redeposited as part of the backfilling that either filled and levelled the area of the new floors or filled the storage pits that were not used any more. In either case, it seems more plausible that all these heads were deposited as part of the debris and not as "independent" objects in themselves (see Nanoglou 2015a for a discussion that problematizes this issue). However, their deposition as part of the debris suggests that, at that point, they were not used any more as objects in themselves, broken or otherwise.

Four zoomorphic vessel handles (F9, F10, F11 and F14) have also been found at Gülpınar (Figs. 7-8). Heads F10-F11 and F14 face outwards, whereas head F9 faces inwards. The handle of F9 might have depicted the entire body, like similar handles from Karanovo in the Northwest (Berger 2005, Taf. 170.1 from Karanovo IV and Taf. 172.6 from the later phase Karanovo VI) and Büyük Güllücek in the East (Schoop 2005, Taf. 9.22). F14 is the only one that preserves the entire handle and part of the vessel, apparently a multi-legged short bowl. The head protrudes from the top of the handle, in a way that is difficult to say whether the handle was supposed to render the rest of the body or not. F10 seems to have had the same position in relation to the handle, whereas F11 could have been of the same type, but there is not enough part preserved to tell either way. Most heads appear

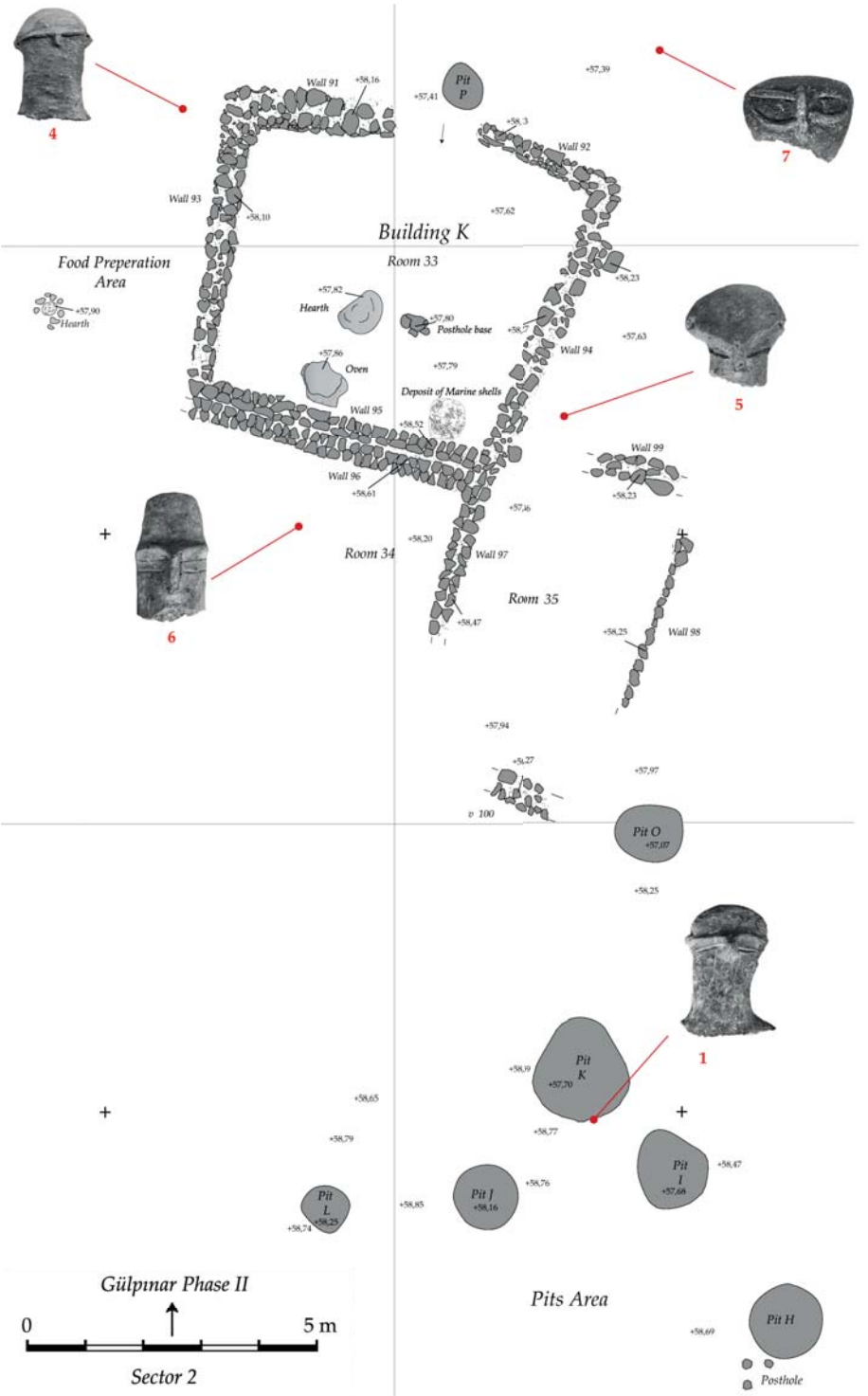


Fig. 3. Partial plan of Sector 2 showing the findspots of figural objects at Gülpınar, phase II.

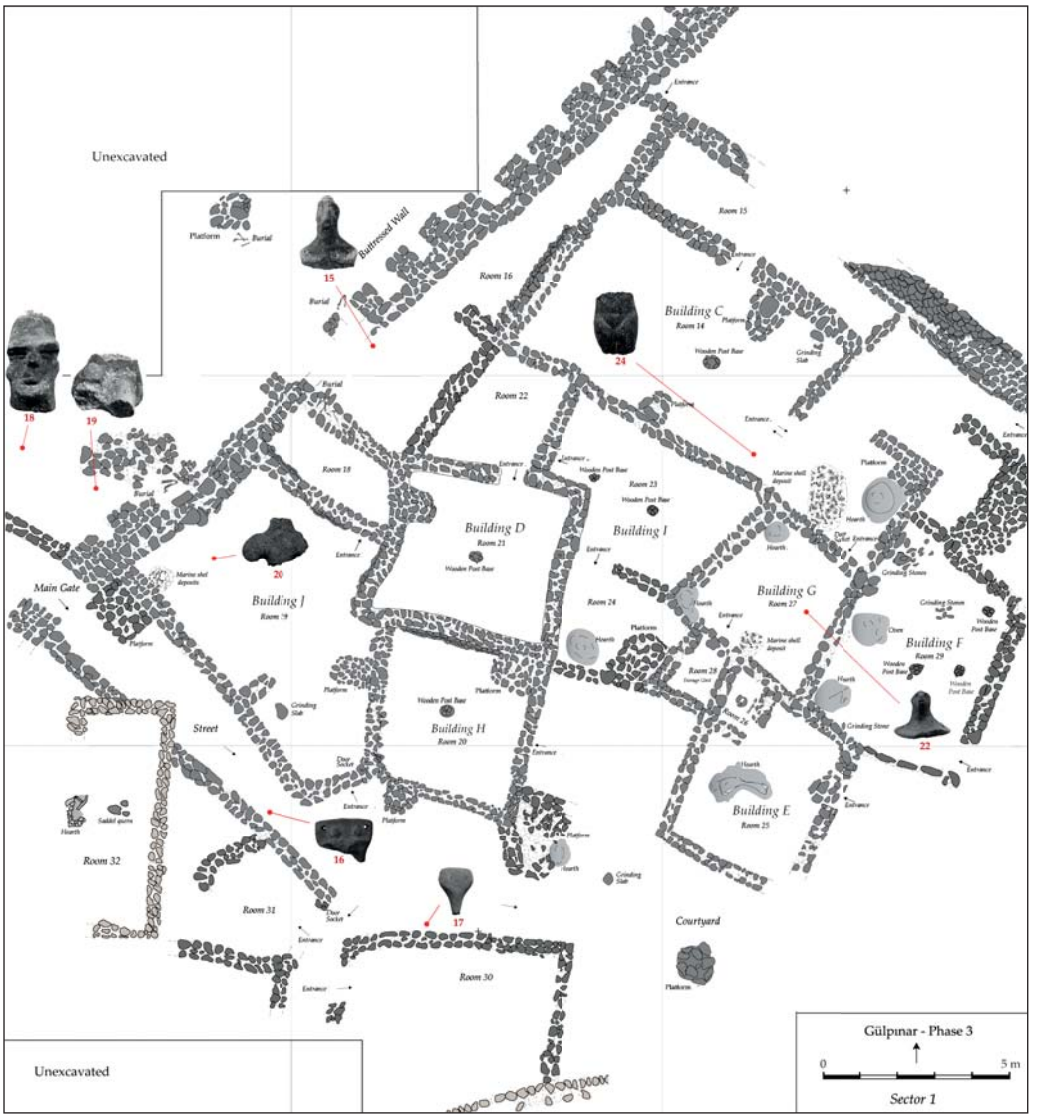


Fig. 4. Plan of Sector 1 showing the findspots of figural objects at Gülpınar, phase III.

to be horned and accordingly could represent a ram or a bull, although it is difficult to identify them with a specific animal with certainty. Decoration is scarce on animal figures all over the Aegean and the Balkans, but it does occur (for instance Berger 2005, Taf. 169-70 from Karanovo), and it seems it becomes commoner in the next phase (at least when it comes to zoomorphic vessels, see for instance Berger 2005, Taf. 172, Gimbutas 1986, Fig. 9.69-9.73 and Marangou 2004; see also Čochadžiev 2006). The scarcity of animal representations in the Aegean (Nanoglou 2009) hinders any meaningful tracing of what these patterns may refer to, but it is possible that they could represent a fleece or a dappling.

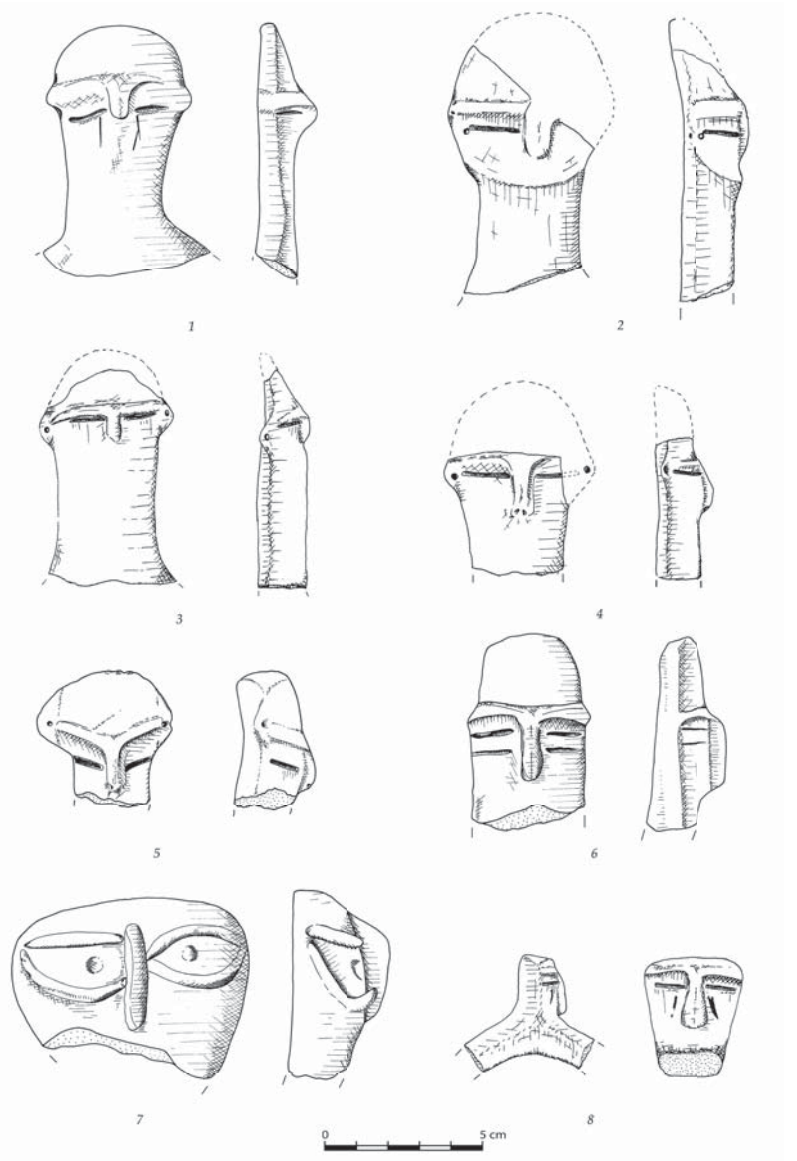


Fig. 5. Anthropomorphic heads, either of figurines or projecting from vessels (F1-F7), anthropomorphic handle (F8), phase II.

The last two items, F12 and F13, are also fragments from vessels, but it is difficult to tell whether they depict a human or animal head. They were both probably attached to handles comparable to either F10 or F14, and accordingly they would face outwards from the vessel.

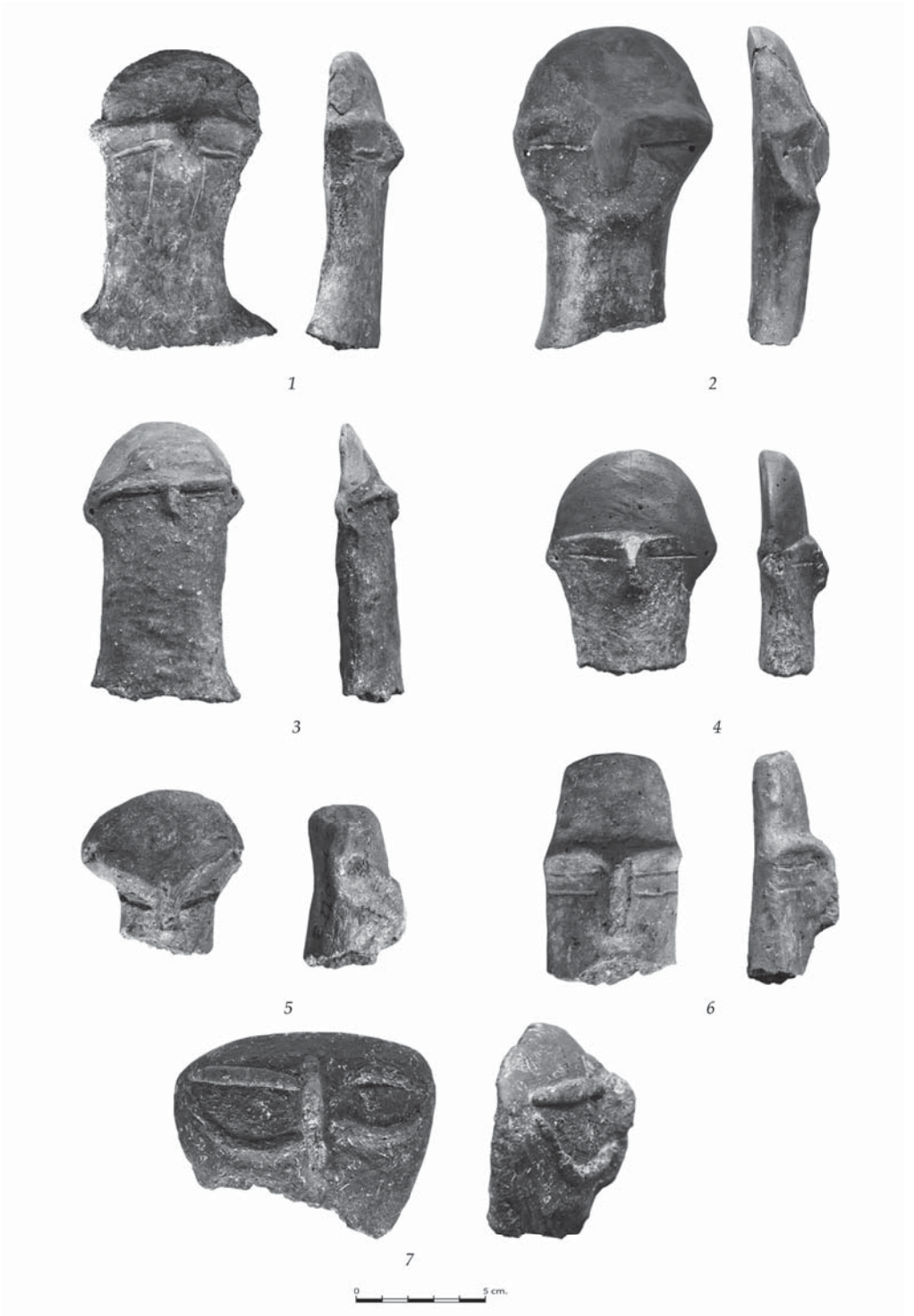


Fig. 6. Anthropomorphic heads, either of figurines or projecting from vessels (F1-F7), phase II.

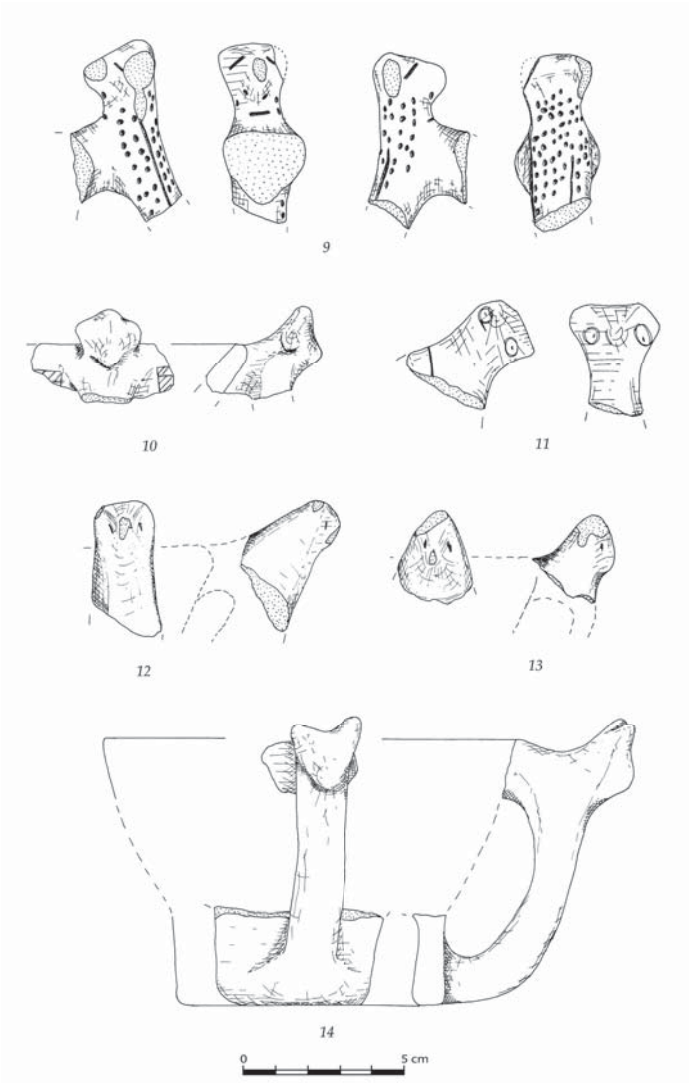


Fig. 7. Zoomorphic (F9-F11, F14) and possibly zoomorphic (F12, F13) handle fragments from bowls, phase II.

PHASE III

The figural objects from phase III are overwhelmingly made of clay, but there is also a marble find. As in phase II, clay objects are well-fired and almost always burnished or smoothed. Contrary to the assemblage from phase II, the one from phase III includes body parts other than heads as well. F15 is the upper part of a figurine broken off at the waist (Figs. 9-10). The arms, bent at the elbows, meet on the breasts. The fingers are rendered by incisions. It has eyes incised in circular form with a dot on the center. The eyebrows are also rendered with incisions. The nose and the ears are modeled in relief. Three rows

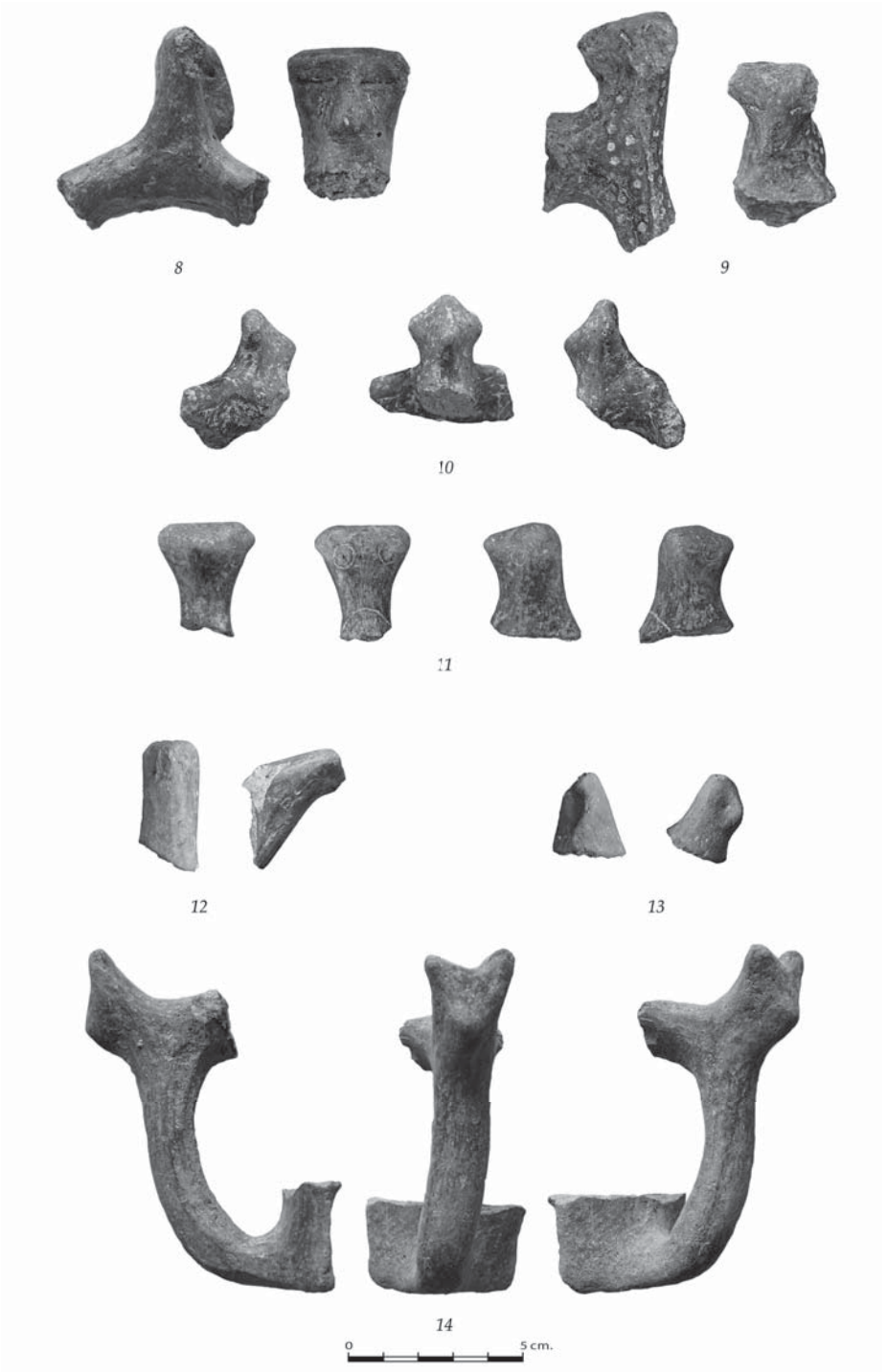


Fig. 8. Anthropomorphic (F8) and zoomorphic (F9-F11, F14) and possibly zoomorphic (F12, F13) handle fragments, phase II.

of parallel incisions on the head meet at the back of the head and run down the back of the figurine. Whether or not the incisions on top of the head represent hair or a kind of headdress is difficult to say. Contrary to these incisions, the ones on the arms do not render anatomical details and accordingly may indicate tattoo or a kind of garment. A hole on each of the figurine's shoulders could have been used for suspending the figurine or for inserting something that hung from the holes. As already said, perforations are common in this period in the Balkans and they were possibly used either to hang the figures (e.g. as pendants) or to fasten appendages made of other materials on the figurines, like hair or even garments or other objects (apart from the already mentioned cases of earrings, see also Gimbutas 1986, 229 who suggests feathers as a possible candidate). Various types of clay figurines with a hole on each shoulder have previously been attested at numerous sites in this period, including Uğurlu III on the nearby northeastern Aegean island of Imbros (Erdoğu 2013, Fig. 27). On the other hand, the way the eyes are rendered is uncommon and mostly brings to mind handle F11 from phase II and later figurines from central and eastern Anatolia (see for example Aydıngün 2007). The dearth of known figurines from this period in western Anatolia and eastern Aegean precludes us from making any substantive argument as to this feature, but a certain link of the assemblage from Gülpınar to later Early Bronze Age figurines has already been pointed out.

F16 preserves part of the body as well. Only, this time, the head was inserted in a socket on the upper part of the body. It is possible that the head was made of a different material (see below) and it is also possible that that the head was removable.[2] As in the case of F15 the arms are bent and meet at the front, while a group of horizontal incisions are found on the arms. Given the different position of the arms, the alignment of the incisions compared to the arms is the same as on F15. Unlike F15, there is a pair of breasts on the chest and a series of vertical incisions at the base of the back. Similar to F15, holes positioned on each shoulder may have been used for suspension or for attaching other objects. This is a composite figurine, reminiscent of figurines found in Anatolia and the Aegean that are usually termed 'acrolithic', meaning their head was made of stone, but there are examples of heads made of other material such as bone and marine shell. For instance, composite figurines with bodies made of clay and heads made of bone are known to us from the site of Höyücek in Lake District in south western Anatolia (Duru 2008, Fig. 183; 2012, figs. 45-46), while the site of Uğurlu III on the nearby north eastern Aegean island of Imbros yielded a flat elongated triangular head made of S*pondylus* shell along with clay figurines with sockets (Erdoğu 2013, Fig. 26).

There is a significant differentiation, however, among the figurines usually called acrolithic. Those actually found consist of a clay body and stone head (Tsountas 1908, pl. 36.1; Wace-Thompson 1912, Fig. 25; Theocharis 1973, Fig. 198) are poorly fired, whereas the well fired examples are usually not found with any head (Nanoglou 2008a, 321-322). Although F16 is well-fired, the marble head F17 (Fig. 10) was found in a location very

[2] The use of a different material for the head and its subsequent dissolvement does not necessarily mean that the head was removable. In fact, as far as the acrolithic figurines from Greece are concerned, which are indeed some of the first Neolithic composite figurines that have been described (Wace and Thompson 1912: 41), it seems extremely probable that their heads were not removable (Nanoglou 2008a: 322)

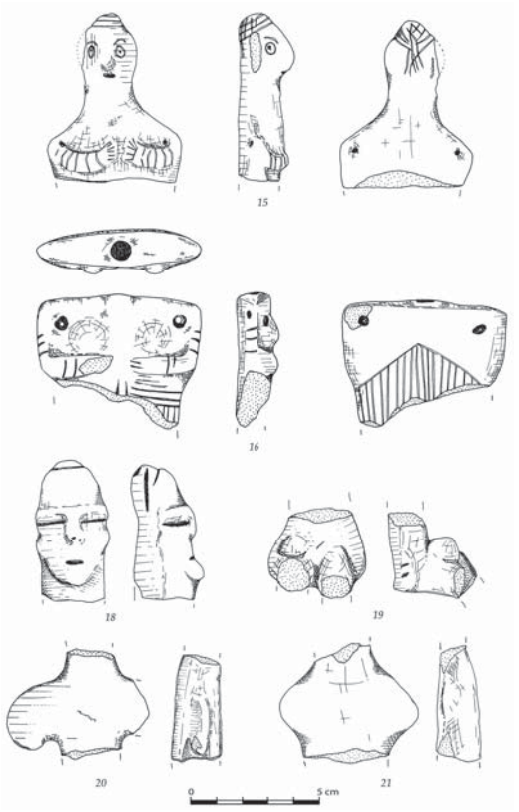


Fig. 9. Upper part of a figurine (F15), torso of a composite figurine (F16), head of a figurine (F18), torso of a seated figurine (F19), and torsos of figurines (F20, F21), phase III.

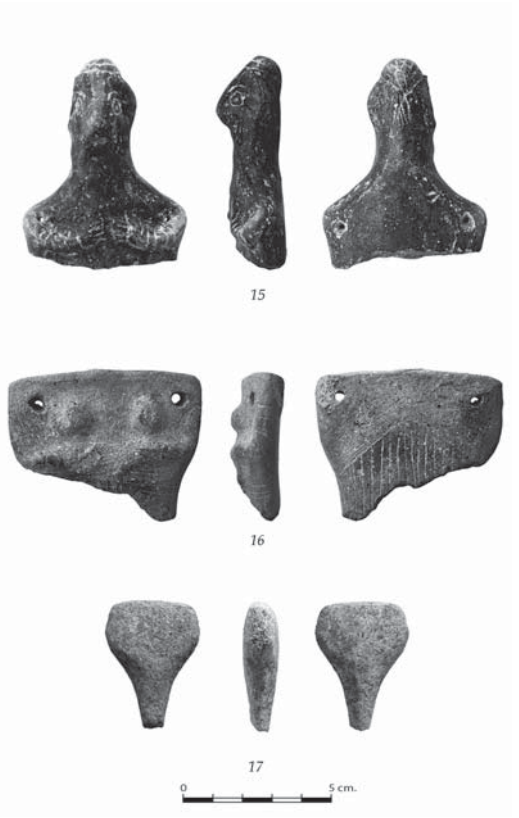


Fig. 10. Upper part of a figurine (F15), torso of a composite figurine (F16), marble head of a composite figurine (F17), phase III.

close to F16 and could have belonged to it. It is possible that they both once formed a composite figurine made of a well-fired clay body and a marble head.

Another head (F18), broken off at the neck, seems to have belonged to a figurine rather than to a vessel (Figs. 9 and 11). Although it is more three-dimensional than the heads of phase II, the principle is similar, with eyebrows and nose rendered in relief and the eyes with incisions. Unlike the heads of phase II, head F18 also shows the mouth. It is more voluminous than most figures found in assemblages of the period, but there are other examples from contemporary sites (e.g. Besios and Pappa 1995, 26 from Makriyalos).

Another body fragment (F19) apparently belonged to a seated figurine. It is broken off both at the waist and close to the knees (Figs. 9 and 11). The different breakage pattern on the legs and the knob on the right leg suggest that the right leg was drawn closer to the body, while the left one was extended.

There are also two body fragments from phase III, representing figurines adhering to the wider common trend. One of them (F20) represents the upper part of a flat torso with the beginning of the neck (Figs. 9 and 11). The protrusion on the right side is better preserved and shows the end bending downwards. This configuration brings to mind figurines with the arms bent at the elbows and hands joined on the chest and we could suggest either that this is a conventionalization of the gesture or that the arms are rendered with no interest in rendering any specific gesture.

Likewise, the body fragment F21 represents another upper part of a torso with part of the neck (Figs. 9 and 11), but, this time, the arms are indicated by stumps, in a typical fashion for the period, both in the immediate region (e.g. the figurine from the Middle Chalcolithic stratum VIIb at Liman Tepe (Erkanal and Şahoğlu 2012, Fig. 3) or the wider area (Nanoglou 2005)).

Phase III at Gülpınar also yielded two distinctive small clay lids with handles formed as heads (F22-F23) (Figs. 11 and 12). It is not easy to decide whether they depict a human or an animal head and this ambiguity applies to most similar artifacts known (for the most numerous and well-presented group see Berger 2005, especially p. 231, id. 175, 228, Taf. 169.3-4). The facial details of the head of the first lid (F22) were formed with finger pinching and the eyes and nostrils are with impressed dots. The second lid (F23) has the nose and the ridges of the eyes modeled in relief, while the eyes themselves are rendered with incisions. The mouth and the pupils are rendered with impressed dots. The first lid has two pairs of holes symmetrically on the left and right side of the head, while the second preserves only a pair of holes placed near the edge behind the head, since the opposite end of the lid is not preserved. In both lids the holes were possibly meant for securing the lid on the vessel, but it is striking that no such narrow-mouthed vessel with corresponding string holes has so far been identified among the pottery repertoire of Gülpınar. Accordingly, it is equally possible that these holes were put there, so that the vessel could breath, perhaps for whatever was kept inside the vessel to be able to emit its odor.

For phase III, the spatial distribution once again shows no particular pattern (Fig. 4). Their deposition as fragmented objects, especially the case of F16 and F17, which were found in the street beside Rooms 31 and 30 respectively, suggests that cleaning operations that possibly included the redeposition of figurines along with the soil matrix were not only performed during major rebuildings, but as a matter of a more frequent practice.

Unstratified figurine

A clay figurine (F24) turned in the debris of the Roman level above the prehistoric habitation layers (Fig. 11 and 13). It is the lower half of a standing figure with a more voluptuous body, which contrasts with most of the other figurines from the site. It has prominent buttocks and is decorated with shallow incised vertical lines, which follow the contours of the body. As in other examples, the vertical incisions could represent a garment of some sort.

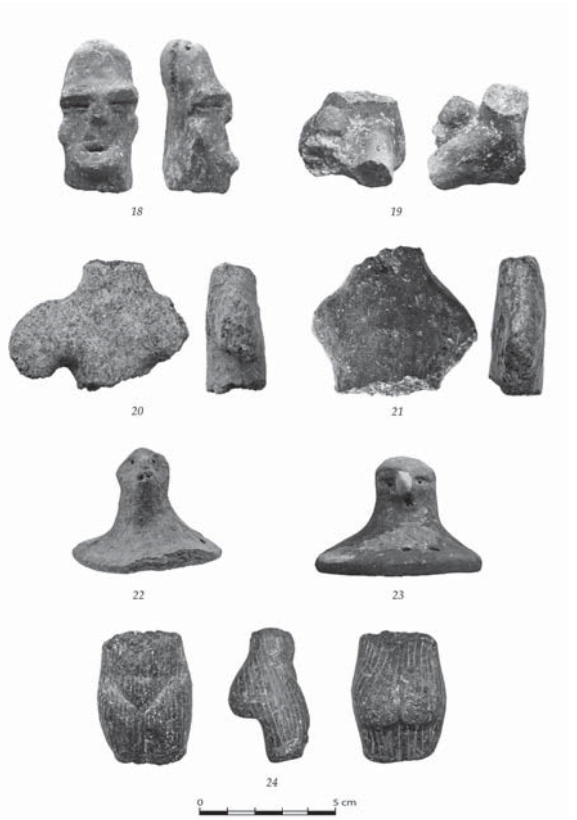


Fig. 11. Head (F18) and torsos of figurines (F19-F21), clay lids with possibly anthropomorphic handles (F22, F23), phase III. Lower half of a clay figurine with incised decoration (F24), unstratified.

Discussion

The figurine assemblage from Gülpınar consists of only a few objects. Their limited number accords with the general trend in the Aegean and probably in Anatolia during the Aegean Neolithic and the Anatolian Chalcolithic (Nanoglou 2014 for the material from Greece), a trend that contrasts with the estimated rhythm of making figurines in Early Neolithic Çatalhöyük (Nakamura and Meskell 2013). But it should be borne in mind that the assemblage from Gülpınar and other similar sites has a significant difference from the one from Çatalhöyük in that it consists of figurines well-fired, rather than just sun-dried or even baked in a hearth or an oven within buildings (Nakamura and Meskell 2013, 204). It is quite possible that figural objects made of materials now lost would have been produced and used in these communities, but for the moment any suggestion concerning such objects should remain speculative. The objects that have survived seem to have been made with a certain care, for they are well-formed, often burnished and, as said, generally well-fired. They are not objects easily characterized as incidentally or expediently made (see also

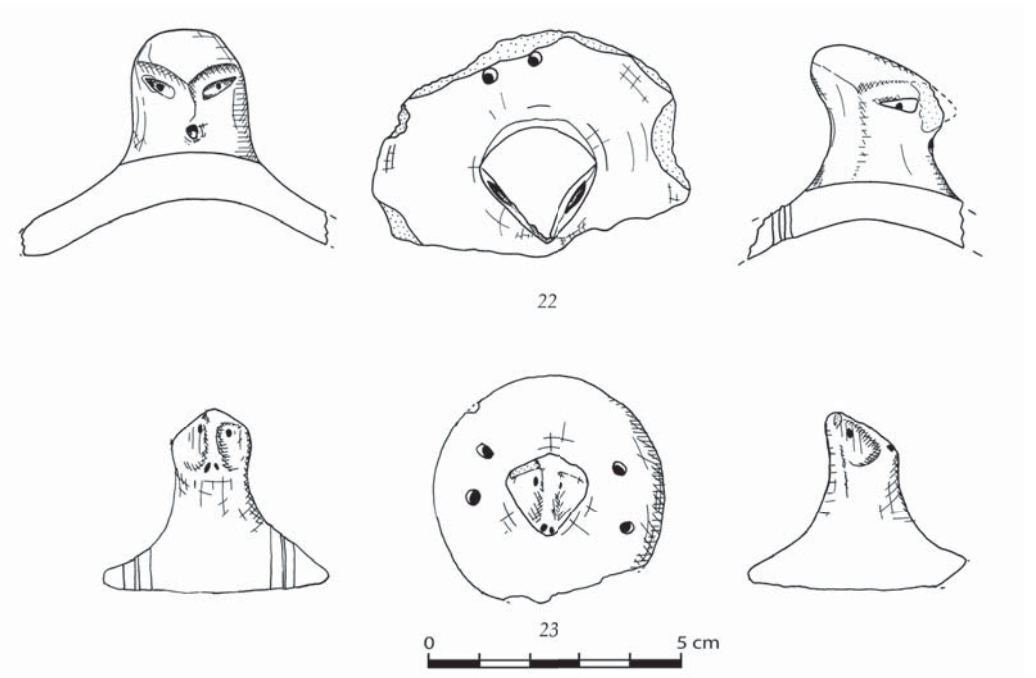


Fig. 12. Two clay lids with possibly anthropomorphic handles (F22, F23), phase III.

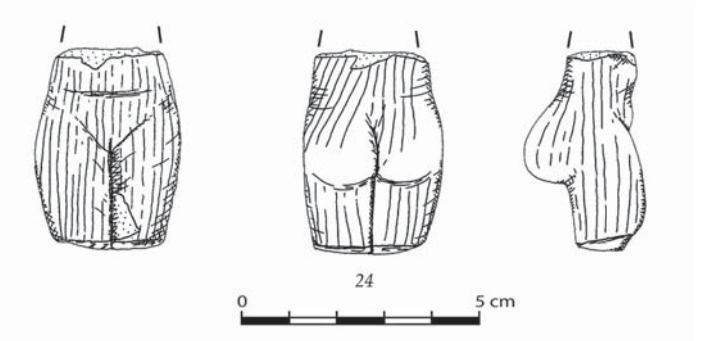


Fig. 13. Lower half of a clay figurine with incised decoration (F24), unstratified.

Nanoglou 2014). For the period we are concerned with, it is difficult to say anything about the actual rate of production, that is, whether they were produced in numbers at particular events or individually in random or specified intervals. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that certain sites have produced hundreds of figurines (e.g. Makriyalos in Greece, Karanovo in Bulgaria), the amount of figural objects circulating at any given moment in a community would have been small, possibly only a handful or a few dozens, if such objects were taken care of and used for an extended period of time (Nanoglou 2014 and 2018 for a very crude calculation based on material from Greece).

Again, in accordance with Aegean and Balkan trends (Nanoglou 2008b and 2009b), most of the figures found at Gülpınar depict humans. Despite the predominance of the animal forms in earlier Neolithic assemblages from such Anatolian sites as Çatalhöyük, Aktopraklık, Barçın Höyük and the Latmos Region (Meskell *et al.* 2008; Karul and Avcı 2013, Fig. 27; Gerritsen *et al.* 2013, Fig. 17; Peschlow-Bindokat and Gerber 2012, Fig. 55), it is unclear whether the same trend characterizes Chalcolithic Anatolia as well. Furthermore, the few animal figures from Gülpınar belonged to vessels, a practice which is characteristic of the Aegean and the Balkans (Nanoglou 2009a; 2015b). Even if the human heads from Gülpınar II belonged to vessels too, the point remains that animals were almost exclusively associated with vessels and figurines were overwhelmingly human oriented.

The assemblage from phase II at Gülpınar has yet another typical trait observed not only around the Aegean, but also in Anatolia and the Balkans, at least during the late sixth millennium BC. All figurines are made of clay. During phase III they continue to almost exclusively utilize clay, still adhering to the predominant trend in Anatolia and the Balkans. The exception is the head F17, which, if it was indeed part of a composite figurine, could, in addition to the above mentioned sites with composite figures made of clay and shell or bone (Höyücek: Duru 2008, Fig. 183; 2012, figs. 45-46, or Uğurlu: Erdoğu 2013, Fig. 26), point also to communities in eastern Thessaly and central Macedonia in Greece, where people turned to stone and particularly marble, alongside clay, as a material for making figurines (Nanoglou 2008a; 2018).

Although the human heads from phase II may belong to figurines, the lack of any body from the same phase makes it also possible that they belong to vessels. It should be stressed though that F24 is typologically very close to the figurines dated to this phase in northern Greece and the Balkans and accordingly may in fact have been produced during this time frame. If most of the figural objects belonged to vessels, and accordingly were used as containers of some sort, it would make a rather interesting case. The fact that they were found broken does not allow us to reconstruct their depositional history with any further detail, but at least we can presume that their meaning and effectiveness was linked to their use as containers. If they do belong to vessels, it might be possible to suggest that the representation of the head was sufficient enough for the vessel to acquire the meaning intended.

On the other hand, as argued above, the faces bear incisions and perforations that may be seen as a further focus on the appearance of the figure, once again in accordance with the general trend of the period (Nanoglou 2005). Consequently, it is not just the head, but an enhanced, so to speak, head that is needed for these figures to be meaningful and effective. What were these enhancements it is difficult to say, although, at least for the

perforations, one could suggest some kind of earrings, or perhaps this kind of piercing was meant to invoke a certain characteristic (e.g. having gone through some process related to age or status, etc). It is equally difficult to be certain on what the incisions refer to; possibly they were tattoos, facial hair (Wace and Thompson 1912, Fig. 25a-b), or even tears (cf. Hoffmann 2002; compare also the S pattern on some heads from Kovačevo: Lichardus-Itten 2017, Fig. 4). In either case, these traits were probably made as part of the initial forming of the figures and accordingly were invoked as part and parcel of the figure. The general uniformity of the objects (despite a certain variety in the details) seems to suggest that the rendering of the head points to a role, rather than to a specific individual. That is, the traits were used to specify a certain role that was needed for the object, the vessel or the figurine, to be meaningful and effective. If the incisions visible on the faces were meant to refer to tears, even painted tears as part of a certain 'costume', then a mourner could have been such a role. But we need to stress that for the moment this is just a speculation that helps illustrate the argument, rather than an interpretation specific to the objects at hand.

The animal figures are also parts of vessels and certain of the observations just made in relation to the human heads apply to them as well. One thing that stands out pertains to their preservation. All of them are parts of handles, positioning the figures specifically in relation to the user of the vessel. This is not discernible for the human heads; even though F8 is part of a handle, that handle is hard to match with a presumed vessel type. Nevertheless, it is significant that at least five of the heads (F9-F12, F14) seem to belong to similar vessels. The best preserved of these (F14) allows us to reconstruct it as some kind of footed bowl. This suggests perhaps that there was a very specific type of vessel associated with the animal heads. The position of the heads in relation to the pots shows no specific direction in which they are facing. The one figure that faces inwards (F9) is covered with impressed dots, while the remaining four facing outwards (F10-F12, F14) are undecorated, but it eludes us whether this is a significant distinction or it should be attributed to chance. All heads are horned and this may suggest the representation of a particular animal, but once again this is not at all certain, for such identification needs to trace wider representational associations (cf. Martin and Meskell 2012), which for the moment are not available for Gülpınar or its milieu.

Despite the observed variety in certain details, such as the direction the head is facing or the decoration of the body, and the limited number of the objects recovered, which makes the sample very small, it is possible then to suggest that we may have here examples of a specific object, a footed bowl with an animal head on its handle (or its handles, for we don't know whether the pot had only one handle), rather than an array of decorated vessels or diverse forms. This type of footed bowl is extremely common particularly during phase II at Gülpınar, especially a variant with four feet and a single horn-handle. Their exteriors are mainly decorated with incised decorations formed of geometric motifs (Fig. 14). Consequently, there is room to argue for a general category of mostly four-footed bowls with single handles, which are either horn-shaped or animal-headed. It should also be mentioned that this type ceases to be very common only towards the end of phase II at the site, with the adoption of other types of handles such as mushroom-shaped handles, tab handles and pointed-side handles. This reconstruction accords well with other examples



Fig. 14. The most common footed bowl type frequently attested at phase II at Gülpınar.

from the Aegean, the most prominent of which comes from the site of Makriyalos and especially the contemporary phase to phase II at Gülpınar, namely Makriyalos I (Pappa *et al.* 2004; Nanoglou and Pappa 2009; Nanoglou 2009a). At Makriyalos, it has been possible to distinguish a certain group of small one-handled cups, whose handles in many cases render animal heads (Pappa *et al.* 2004). Not all of the cups have animal heads as handles (and one should take into consideration the problems regarding identification), but the group was also defined in terms of form, pottery technology and contextual evidence (Pappa *et al.* 2004). The cups from Makriyalos are different from the ones found in Gülpınar, but the point is that there is evidence of utilizing specific vessels, sometimes bearing animal heads, across the Aegean during the later sixth millennium BC. The form of each type would have been tailored to local needs and local traditions and does not need to be identical across the Aegean or across other regions, however defined. What matters here is that it seems animal heads, or human heads for that matter, were not used as supplementary decoration, but rather were integral to the meaning and effectiveness of specific objects.

Turning to phase III, we encounter a picture that shows continuity in certain aspects and differs in others from the previous phase. First of all, there are figurine bodies that definitely belong to the deposits of this phase, which means that they were at least used during this phase, if not produced then. But this does not necessarily mean that no bodies were produced or used during phase II, not least because F24 may belong to that phase.

Notwithstanding this caveat, the figures from phase III offer significant information for their use. Two of them (F15 and F16) bear incisions that do not render anatomical parts, while the rest of the bodies (F19, F20 and F21) bear no incision, although they might have had incisions on the missing parts. Once again this is well in accordance with the trends in the Aegean and beyond. Many of the figurines in the Balkans were heavily incised (already from the previous phase, see Nanoglou 2009b for a comparison between northern Greece and the Balkans and bibliography). The ones in southern Greece show a different pattern, because their incisions were almost always utilized for anatomical details or rendering hair (see e.g. Phelps 1987 for Corinth, Talalay 1993 for Franchthi Cave). In one

case, for which quantified data is available, incised, and non-incised figurines are almost equal in numbers (Nanoglou-Pappa 2009 for Makriyalos) and the same holds true for Sitagroi (data retrieved from Gimbutas 1986). It is not certain whether this difference should be interpreted as denoting two groups of figurines within the same use frame or having distinct uses, that is, whether both groups were used together or in different contexts. The point is that, in the northern Aegean and the Balkans, communities were using incisions on many of their figurines to convey a certain attribute and Gülpınar is one such community. A link with the same area is evident in the use of perforations, whether they were used to suspend the figurines or to hang further objects from the figurines. As argued elsewhere by one of us (Nanoglou 2005) both these practices, the use of incisions and the use of perforations, betray a certain investment on the appearance of the figurines, as opposed to an earlier focus on certain actions, manifested in a variety of gestures and postures. This does not mean that figurines depicting gestures and postures vanished completely; the figurine lower body from phase III (F19) attests to their presence in this phase as well. But there was clearly a change of focus and a lack of elaboration on what these gestures and postures were. Furthermore, we should not take these similarities across communities as evidence of the figurines having the same meaning. Rather, the point is that across these areas, people were utilizing similar strategies and focusing on similar modes, as in highlighting appearance instead of actions, to make sense of the world.

The two lids (F22-F23) with the figural handles may signal a change from the previous phase. Not just because these may be anthropomorphic, whereas the definite figural vessels from phase II have zoomorphic handles (within the limitations set by a really small sample), but most importantly because of the type of vessel these heads are attached to. As with the bowls with the animal handles from phase II, these figures belong to similar vessels, at least to similar lids. This associates the presence of the human (?) head with the specific type of vessel and suggests again that the head is not just decorative, but integral to the meaning of the object. What changes here, besides the possible presence of the human, is that this vessel is closed. Consequently, the vessel would have been presumably meaningful and effective when the lid was on, at least for part of its life in use. Even when open, the body of the vessel would have invoked the lid, a specific lid. Whatever the possible use of the holes, either to fasten the lid or to emit some sort of odor, the case for the meaning and effectiveness of the vessel remains the same. Contrary to the bowls of the previous phase, the content of the vessel was to remain hidden, at least for a certain time. Perhaps the difference in the entity crowning each vessel type has to do with exactly that content, but in any case, we see a possibly different and yet once more very specific use for a figural vessel.

If our aim as archaeologists is to say something about the possibilities one had to make sense of the world and we conceptualize material culture, including of course figural objects, as being utilized in this process, then it is possible to suggest that the figural objects found in Gülpınar were well defined in form, despite a small variety discerned. If their small number is not due to some imbalance regarding the character of deposits explored, that is, if we are not precisely missing the areas where these objects were preferentially deposited, then their circulation was probably limited. Furthermore, their specificity argues in favour of their being used in some distinct practices with strict connotations and not

extensively and all-around. Their connection to pottery adds to that. It is possible to suggest then that the invocation of the animal form was mostly connected to the use of certain receptacles, and the meaning and effectiveness of those receptacles were contingent upon this association. We remain in the dark as to what might have been the use of those vessels, but it remains a practice that made their world inhabitable. The invocation of the human form is even more difficult to assess. Were the broken heads parts of vessels as well? And what was the connection to pottery in that case? Very few bodies were recovered, but these fit in the wider trends of the period, especially in the Aegean and the Balkans. With the limited resources we do have to account for the ways people at Gülpınar were using these bodies to make sense of their world, it is possible to suggest that, along with other contemporary communities, they were focusing on certain traits rather than others, like setting apart the head or oftentimes incising patterns that point to an exterior image.

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