
Representation of Humans and Animals in Greece and the Balkans during the Earlier Neolithic

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There were differences in the representation of humans and animals between the regions of Thessaly and the central Balkans during the earlier Neolithic. These differences imply the constitution of distinct worlds. Representation is anthropocentric in Thessaly and it focuses on particular actions of the human body. In the central Balkans, there is more animal imagery, although here too humans predominate. The lack of specific traits suggests an ontological principle of generic identity.

Emphasizing the multifunctionality of figurines, recent studies no longer explore what figurines were, attempting, arguably, to avoid a functionalist approach. That the meanings of these artefacts and of material culture in general are context-specific is conventional wisdom nowadays. However, awareness of the multifunctionality of figurines has served not as a point of departure for achieving context-specific insights but as a substitute for them. It is as if the mere mention of possible functions counts as interpretation. Clearly, this is still a functionalist approach. Figurines are still handled as a cohesive category of artefacts,¹ which stands for a particular category of behaviour, albeit with variations (Barrett 2005). Implicitly or explicitly, they are approached as demonstrations of humanity in general that produces representations as part of an essential human behaviour; context emerges as a field where these products are applied without any consequences for the subjectivity of their users (but see Bailey 2005, 24). This practice is basically associated with a group of uses that eventually comes down to one thing: communication; representations are made in order to communicate a message, to express an idea or a concept. Whatever the specific function attributed to representations (cult objects, apotropaic figures, toys, socialization agents), the premise is that they are used to express concepts in cult ritual, role play or negotiation of membership in particular social groups, and that these rites had to be veiled in order

to succeed (Gimbutas 1989; Marangou 1992; Kokkinidou & Nikolaidou 1997; Bailey 2000).

This approach presupposes a specific subject that produces and uses the particular objects. It cannot account for the conditions under which the subjects themselves are constituted because it sees material culture as a reflection of human intentionalities that are decontextualized and therefore ahistorical. This approach identifies contexts as fields of applicability for a prior social order, whereas, arguably, social order is constituted and reconstituted in particular contexts (Barrett 2001; 2006).

If we do want to account for these social orders and subjectivities, then we need to configure the questions we pose in relation to the figurines. It is important to attend to the contexts in which they were used as part of their users' attempts to come to terms with their world and find a place in it, even in cases where detailed information is not readily available. We need to see material culture not as a reflection of an already given intentionality but as part of a world that people have to use in order to inhabit it. Thus, material culture emerges as a framework for the rearticulation of the fields of social action and subject formation; it emerges as part of the material conditions that enable and govern social action.

We can gloss these material conditions as discourses, that is as structured totalities (which never attain closure) that enable and govern social action through an imperative to reiterate them.² Social action



Figure 1. Northern Greece and the central Balkans with sites and areas mentioned in the text: 1) Agios Petros; 2) Achilleion; 3) Platia Magoula Zarkou; 4) Otzaki; 5) Nea Nikomedeia; 6) Porodin; 7) Anza; 8) Kovačevo; 9) Rakitovo; 10) Karanovo; 11) Divostin; 12) Donja Branjevina.

is always situated in place and time, but a place and a time already partly constituted by living entities and things that follow different historical trajectories. Social action adheres to an already partly constituted framework even if it subverts it: it reiterates or cites practices, invigorating these practices and at the same time allowing people to choose which practices to reiterate (Butler 1993). In this way, particular discourses get more powerful than others, becoming the standard against which normality and the ‘natural’ are measured.

Thus we can approach figurines as part of discourses that enabled and governed social life, as material conditions that provided a framework which someone had to come to terms with and which could be used in order to find a place in the world. Arguably, the choice of the forms invoked to make sense of one’s place and agency in the world is the choice of a discourse on one’s very being. Different figurines would mean different frameworks and different worlds (Whittle 1998; 2003; Nanoglou 2006). In this paper, I pursue this line of argument for the constitution of new ways of life that has come to be known under the rubric of ‘neolithization’, although for the moment I do not fully address the issue. What I set out to establish is that differences in the form of figurines found, on the one hand, in Thessaly and, on the other, in the central Balkans (Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia; Fig. 1) show

different opportunities to constitute a new world during the Neolithic. Although these differences may be traced throughout the Neolithic period, I limit myself to the late seventh millennium BC and the first half of the sixth, corresponding, more or less, to the period known as Early Neolithic in the Balkans and Early and Middle Neolithic in Greece.

Ontologies

Before discussing the different representational practices in the two regions, I must clarify my understanding of the ways in which representation is embedded in the process of constituting a world to live in. Using the term ‘representation’, I do not mean to imply that figurines are to be interpreted as reflections of ‘actual’ life. Though it is possible that they did so, one should not assume this *a priori*. As Ingold (2000, 111–12) suggests, we should always keep in mind that these ‘iconic resemblances’ could mean something totally different from what we make of them on the basis of our western assumptions. Thus, I use ‘reflection’ to refer to the concept Ingold argues against and I construe representation as an articulatory practice that cites and rearticulates the form it ‘resembles’.³ So, to represent is to double the presence, to reiterate a discursive articulation, albeit in a different materiality. As I have outlined above, the reiteration of particular articulations (e.g. the shape of the human or the animal body) empowers particular discourses within the field of sociality, in order authoritatively to guide any further action. In other words, even when they aim to reflect their prototypes, representations of humans, animals or anything else always convey normative ideas concerning the nature of the entities represented (Butler 1999, xxi). Representation constitutes frames of reference that enable sociality.

This approach is drastically different from a view that glosses figurines as ‘intentionally expressive objects’ (Bailey 2005, 6–7, but see 159). Although still a valid possibility, that is just one among many, and privileging it *a priori* is particularly ethnocentric. Categorizing figurines as ‘expressive material culture’ (Bailey 2000; 2005) amounts to projecting a division between expressive and non-expressive material culture, a move reminiscent of the division between symbolic and non-symbolic material culture. It is highly relevant in an era that breaks up social life in fields like ‘economy’, ‘private life’, ‘social life’, ‘ritual’, ‘art’ and so on but, for the Neolithic, it remains to be seen whether such a split was employed and sustained. Thus, the issue is that intentions were constituted within a world populated by figurines, so that



Figure 2. A compilation of figurine types from earlier Neolithic Thessaly.

articulating one's will had to account for these objects as well. In a way, figurines are not an expression of one's intentionality: rather, they enable and guide the expression of intentions. They are constituent parts of these intentions rather than just their vehicles. They do not express an ontology already formed; rather, they constitute it (see also Joyce 2000).

Humans and animals

Humans and animals are by far the commonest themes in Balkan Neolithic representation. There are, of course, other themes, such as building, furniture or pottery-models, but they are not common and, in some cases, they enter the scene later (as is probably the case with the building-models from Thessaly: Nanoglou 2005, 148). In fact, taking a lead from the case of miniature pots, we need to keep in mind that the relation between 'actual' artefacts and their representations is always contextual, so we should be wary of generalizations which distinguish between prototype and image.

This persistence of human and animal forms seems to be crucial for understanding the range of the ways through which the inhabitants of the Balkans situated themselves within a frame of reference concerning the nature of the world and negotiated their position within this frame. Different forms sustain and empower different worlds and experiences, and I shall

argue that this is evident when we compare figurines from Greek Thessaly (Fig. 2) and the central Balkans (Figs. 3–6). I shall begin with what was represented and turn to how it was represented later on.

Unfortunately, there are but a few studies that provide details on the specific contexts within which the figurines under discussion were deposited. So issues concerning possible aberrant or subversive uses of the figurines are impossible to address, and the argument must rely heavily on iconography. Nevertheless, it is important to state that figurines seem to be found in both settlements, whether tells or extended ones, and caves (but see Nanoglou 2006, 171), not in particular contexts. Arguments that connect figurines from Neolithic Greece with 'habitation deposits associated with buildings' (Kokkinidou & Nikolaidou 1997, 90)⁴ do not take into account that this is all we get from Neolithic Greece (and the Balkans); there are virtually no extramural cemeteries during the earlier Neolithic (Bailey 2000, 116–24).⁵ The association with dwellings is even more ambiguous, as it is based on the figurines having been found 'either inside the house or in pits and yards outside domestic structures' (Kokkinidou & Nikolaidou 1997, 90), which actually means everywhere in the settlement (Perlès 2001, 262–3; Bailey 2005, 178). Thus, they could have been associated with dead people too, since burials were intramural in this period. In fact, later, when extramural cemeteries appear, there are occurrences

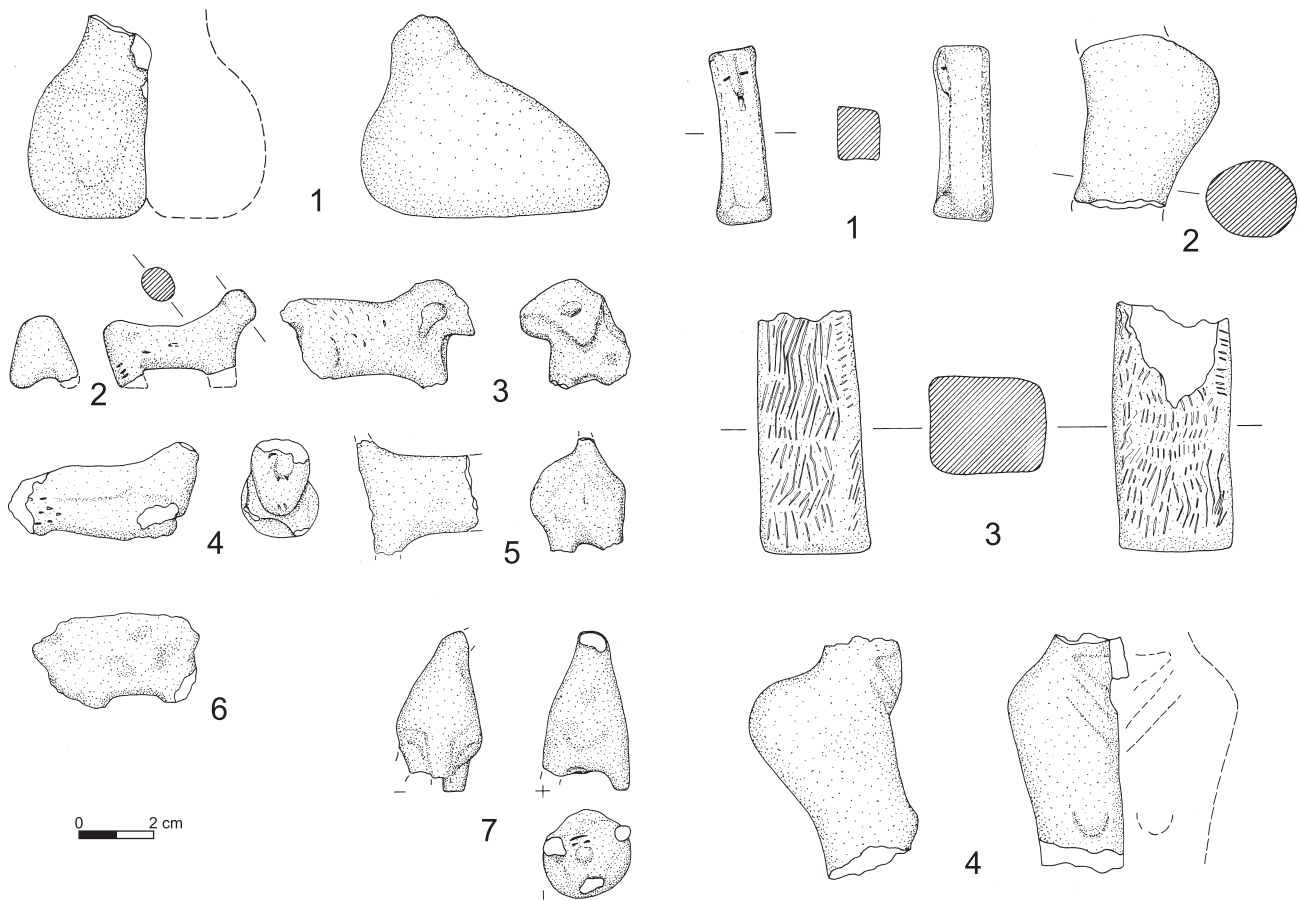


Figure 3. *Figurines from Karanovo. Karanovo I layers.* (After Hiller & Nikolov 1997, tables 109–10; see acknowledgements.)

of figurines in them: two were found at the Late Neolithic I (second half of the fifth millennium BC) extramural cemetery of Platia Magoula Zarkou, Thessaly (Gallis 1982, 114), although their exact relation to the burials (cremations within vessels) is not clear. Somewhat later as well are the figurines in Hamangia graves (Bailey 2005, 56–62).

Within the settlements, the contexts where figurines are found seem to be contexts of disposal. There are cases with marked differences in the number of figurines retrieved from adjacent settlements (Nanoglou 2006, 160) but, for the moment, there is nothing to suggest that figurines were associated with any particular context of disposal. The only cases published are groups of figurines found together, but it is difficult to evaluate the character of the deposition since very few details are known and the finds are not described within the wider context of their discovery (Nanoglou 2005, 146–7). The same seems to be the case for the central Balkans, although detailed

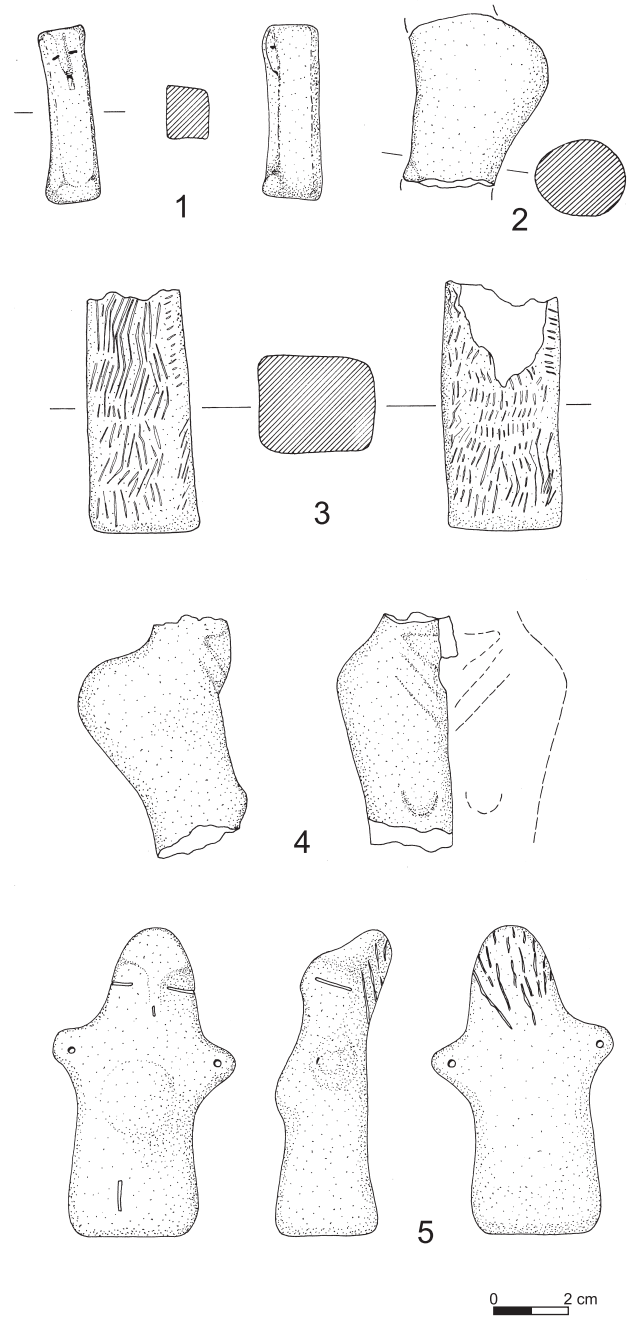


Figure 4. *Figurines from Karanovo. Karanovo II layers.* (After Hiller & Nikolov 1997, tables 110–11; see acknowledgements.)

information comes mainly from later sites (Tringham & Conkey 1998).

As I have mentioned, during the earlier Neolithic, representation was more or less limited to human and animal forms. In Thessaly, the animals depicted are quadrupeds, perhaps cattle or ovicaprids

(Toufexis 1994; Bailey 2000, 104). Toufexis (1993; 1994) provides a ratio of ten human to one animal figurine per site for Thessaly, but this seems to be a minimum. For example, a reconsideration of the assemblage from Achilleion provides a ratio of at least 13:1 (Nanoglou 2004; the ratio would be higher if we discounted the 'snake heads'). At Agios Petros there is only one dubious animal figurine out of a total of 50 figurines (Efstratiou 1985) and the excavations at Otzaki have produced 19 human figurines but no animals (Milojčić-von Zumbusch & Milojčić 1971). On the basis of excavated material alone, the prevalence of humans in Thessaly is unambiguous. If we add other representational forms as well, that is vessels and pendants, which usually are not counted in the figurine material, the human figure is even more pronounced, quantitatively, in the earlier Neolithic settlements of Thessaly (see Pileidou 2006 and Kyparissi-Apostolika 2001 for vessels and pendants, respectively).⁶

This relation changes as we go north, where animal figurines seem to be a recurrent feature in the earlier Neolithic settlements, although detailed publications are few. In Anza, two of the five figurines coming from Anza I levels depicted animals (Gimbutas 1976, 206). In Karanovo, Bulgaria (Hiptmair 1997), eleven human and six animal figurines have been found in contexts of Karanovo I (Fig. 3) and II (Fig. 4) whereas Rakitovo, also in Bulgaria, has yielded twenty-seven human and five animal figurines (Radunčeva *et al.* 2002). Even further north, in Divostin, Serbia, the ratio is 2.5 human to 1 animal in the whole assemblage and 3–4 human to 1 animal within the features (Figs. 5–6; Letica 1988; the numbers refer only to Divostin I, excluding 'lobates'; see below). We find a similar ratio in Donja Branjevina, Vojvodina, where the human figurines amount to more than 50 and the animal figurines to 22 (Karmanski 2005, 38, table 9). Apart from that, we should mention the well known 'horn amulets' or 'lobates' or 'labrets' or 'bucrania' (Elenski 2004 for northern Bulgaria; Kalicz 2000 for Serbia) that are found in many settlements of the central Balkans. Although it is by no means certain that all of them represent animal heads, it is possible that many of them, especially the clay ones, do. It is significant that such objects are not found in Thessaly.⁷

Arguably, it is quite dangerous to extrapolate representational practices for the whole of the Balkans from such a small sample of quite disparate sites (see Nanoglou 2006). Indeed, Whittle (1998, 140) suggests a view opposite to the one put forth here, arguing that animal figurines were completely absent from the earlier Neolithic. It is true that there is not much information on the ratio of human and animal repre-

sentations in Early Neolithic assemblages from the central Balkans. Yet it is impossible not to point to the cases for which detailed information is available, and they suggest that there is a pattern we need to comment upon. Even if, on the whole, representations of animals are less numerous than those of humans, their presence in the settlements of the central Balkans is considerable, at least when compared to Thessaly.

Although there were, thus, iconographic differences between the two regions, that both humans and animals were represented implies an ontological similarity: whatever the differences in the field of representation, both categories had to be acknowledged as part of the same conceptual field. At a time when the relation between humans and animals was changing greatly, 'with a shift in focus from the dead to the living animal' (Russell 1998, 42), from hunting and bringing the carcasses into the settlement to investing in and managing living animals, the reconstitution of ontological categories and the interplay between them was becoming crucially significant (see Whittle 1998, 144). First of all, then, the emergence or rearticulation of a discursive field, that of representation, constituted a framework whereby the particular entities were separated from entities that were not represented. Within these conditions, humans and animals acquired a specific ontological status, one that could or should materialize in clay (and, rarely, stone). From another perspective, representations of humans and animals constitute a field within which human and animal identities were played out in relation to one another (Halstead 1999, 83). Yet this is not to assume that 'People and animals were ... regarded as quite separate entities' (Bradley 2001, 262; see also Bailey 2000, 105). The figurines imply that animals were relevant in negotiations concerning ontological categories but this does not necessarily mean that they were juxtaposed to humans. The representation of humans and animals may have constituted a border between different kinds of identity, a limit enabling the emergence of each in its specificity; but, as I have just argued, this limit separated not only humans from animals but also entities that were represented from those that were not. It is equally possible that the representation of these forms enabled the constitution and negotiation of mixed categories, such as human-plus-ovicaprids-plus-cattle, which were perceived as contrasting with other forms of life (for a different aspect of the figurines' ontology, see Pavlović 1990). We need not envisage a distinction between hunter-gatherers who do not differentiate between humans and animals and farmers who do so, no matter how appealing this idea is (cf. Bradley 2001, 261–2). More-

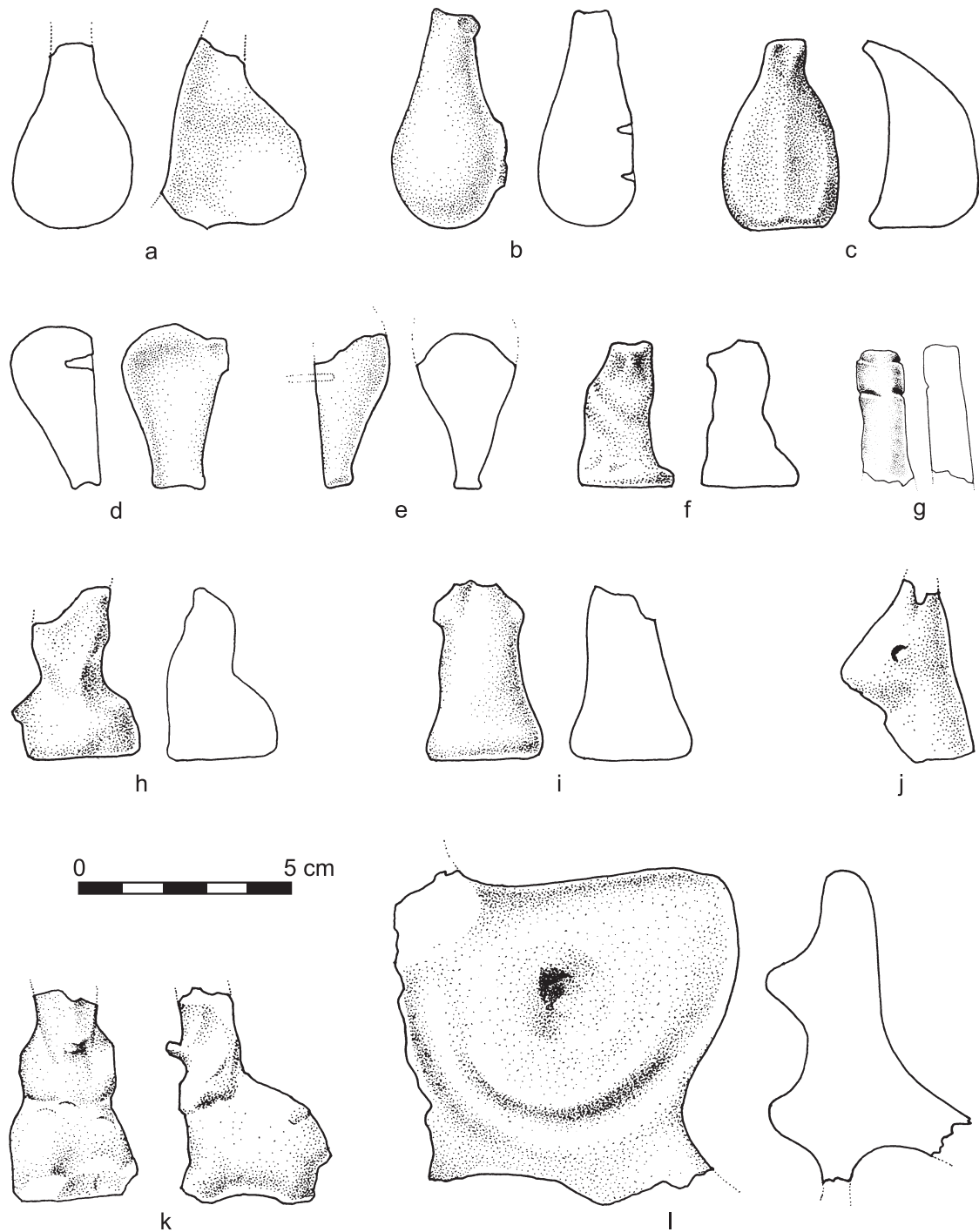


Figure 5. *Figurines and vessel fragment from Divostin. (After Letica 1988, fig. 7.1; see acknowledgements.)*

over, whatever differentiating processes were at work, they may have been part of a dual process whereby a certain group of entities emerged as a 'we' that was exempt from the realm of what was not represented while, at the same time, this group was internally differentiated on the basis of its members' characteristics,

namely their human or animal constitution. It could be objected that figurines were not self-referential but referred to people (and their animals) other than their users, but the point is that, even in such a case, they were reference points against which people measured their own lives.

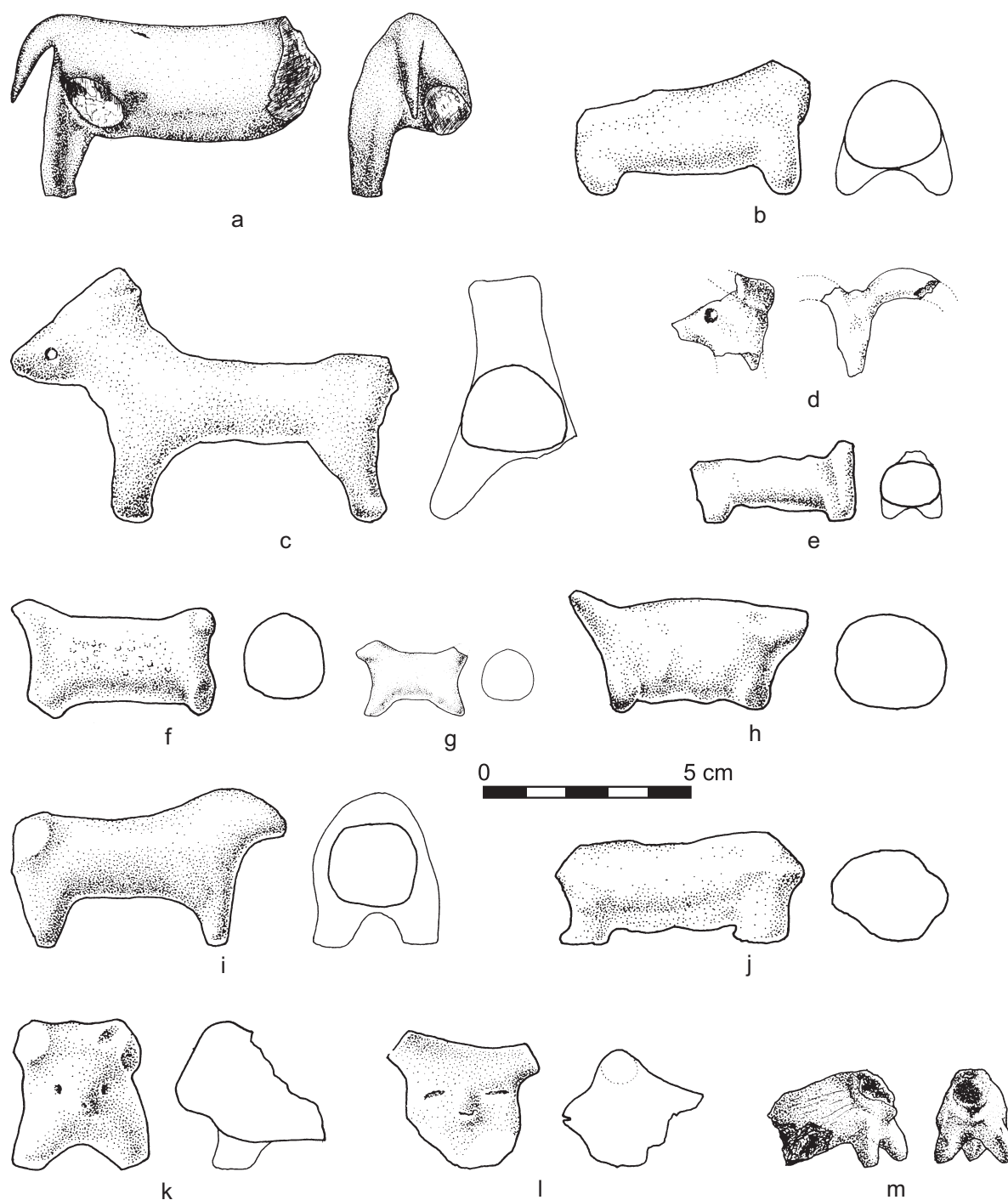


Figure 6. *Figurines from Divostin.* (After Letica 1988, fig. 7.2; see acknowledgements.)

If we accept this line of reasoning, it is evident that the position of animals in the respective ontologies of Thessaly and the central Balkans was different. To the north, although they never reached the quantity of human representations, animals were increasingly depicted along with people. It is significant that, in both

regions, the animals depicted seem to be domesticates, thus suggesting that the world depicted referred to a field of relations within the settlement, that its reference points were within the confines of the community (see Bailey 2000, 105; although, in the central Balkans, there are some zoomorphic vessels that resemble deer). Yet

there are differences between the new communities so materialized: Thessaly is overtly anthropocentric, the central Balkans are less so. It could be that the community (or any other common denominator, such as 'humanity') produced in each case had different constituents. In Thessaly, humans stood alone, or nearly alone, as worthy or in need of representation. In the central Balkans, humans and animals, whatever their differences, were deemed similar enough to be included in the same discursive field.⁸

Perhaps this picture corresponded to the broader living environment in the two regions. Habitation practices in the north seem to have important differences from those in Thessaly. Most of the figurines from Thessaly come from settlements that were densely occupied for many centuries (Kotsakis 1999), whereas we could suggest that the settlements in former Yugoslavia were shorter lived and perhaps a little more loosely organized (Bailey 2000; 2005, 4–5). Bulgaria seems to be intermediate both in habitation and representational practices. We could suggest, then, that there is a link between an environment where people lived somewhat packed in limited space and a preoccupation with the inhabitants of this space. On the other hand, loose architectural definition of community space could correspond to the incorporation of animals. People in Thessaly and the central Balkans inhabited environments where the definition of the community was experienced differently: in one region, the focus was on the human settlement space, whereas, in the other, animals' space counted as part of the community.⁹

Acting or standing

Human and animal imagery was probably brought to bear upon the changing lives of people in the beginning of the Neolithic in quite a few cases (see e.g. Whittle 2000; Bradley 2001; Boric 2005). If we approach these changes, that have come to be known as 'neolithization', in regard to the techniques of the body (Mauss 1935), that is concerning how people (and animals) came to use their body once they started to cultivate, grind, herd (or be herded) and so on, then we would expect representations of the body to play an important role (see also Hansen 2004/5, 31). It is evident that the changes brought about through these new practices (farming etc.) were embodied in a way that enabled people to make sense of them and get on with their lives. The representation of the bodies that carried out these practices had to have some bearing on how they were carried out. This does not necessitate positing a pictorial narrative as necessary background for these changes, or assuming that such

background always lies behind all imagery. Thomas (2005) and Whittle (2000) illustrate this with examples of 'neolithization' processes that engaged respectively no images and images of wild animals (rather than domesticates as in the case of Thessaly and the Balkans). Even if images do not directly refer to changes in planting and animal husbandry, it is hard to deny that they were indeed implicated in the constitution of a field within which these changes were rendered intelligible and meaningful. Particular images then would have enabled and would have imposed particular techniques of the body. Where such images are available, it is important to interrogate them as to local meanings they may inscribe (Whittle 1998; 2003).

Our picture of Thessaly is based on a large number of figurines, most of which come either from surface collection or from excavations conducted prior to the 1980s (Nanoglou 2005). I have argued, elsewhere, that there is important regional variability in Thessaly (Nanoglou 2004; 2005, 145–7; 2006). Here, I shall focus on a general trend in the representation of the human body during the earlier Neolithic, namely the almost exclusive tendency to depict the members in detail and to represent posture and gesture (Nanoglou 2005, 144–5). As I have argued, taken as a whole, the corpus of figurines from earlier Neolithic Thessaly is characterized by emphasis on movement, on lying, standing, placing the hands on the chest, grabbing an object, and so forth (Fig. 2; Nanoglou 2004; 2005). The placement or disposal of at least some figurines in groups (see above and Nanoglou 2005, 146–7) seems to warrant this interpretation of their gestures and postures as meaningful in relation to each other and therefore active rather than static (*contra* Bailey 2005, 17–18). This general trend seems to extend northward to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (see, for example, Porodin: Grbić 1960, tables xxx–xxxi) but it stops short of the central Balkans (see Hansen 2005, distinguishing a Near Eastern-Anatolian-Thessalian from a Balkan group, but on the basis of a different set of traits).

Assemblages of figurines from Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia dating from the earlier Neolithic and published in detail are not common. The area is vast and, as I have already argued, to group such divergent sites as Karanovo and Divostin together is, to say the least, problematic. Nevertheless, if we look at the figurines from sites with a more or less full publication report, such as Karanovo (Figs. 3–4; Hiptmair 1997), Rakitovo (Radunčeva *et al.* 2002), Anza (Gimbutas 1976), Divostin (Figs. 5–6; Letica 1988) and Donja Branjevina (Karmanski 2005), as well as sites for which published records are less definitive, like Kovačevo (Demoule & Lichardus-Itten 1994; Lichardus-Itten *et al.* 2002), and

even at whole areas like northeastern Bulgaria (Vajsov 1998), it is evident that the human body is represented differently from in Thessaly (see also Hansen 2005, 202–3). Most of the figurines are either standing or without distinguishable legs and with arms almost always rendered as stubs (see also Tringham 1971, 83). Elaboration of other details is usually minimal and, in general, there appears a lack of interest in anything but the representation of the human in its generic sense. In some of the figurines, even the rendering of the legs may point to a technique equivalent to that shown in the stub-like arms. They are just there. On the contrary, in Thessaly, they do something.

It seems, then, that representation of the human body differed from region to region. Whereas in Thessaly the emphasis is on the figure's action, in the central Balkans it is on the generic form of the human, on the body unmarked by distinct traits (Bailey 2000, 102). Perhaps this discrepancy points to two distinct fields of discourse pertaining to the formation and negotiation of identity. Emphasis on action must certainly have provided models of and for actual practice, inspiring people to view their own embodied selves under the light of the acting figurines. It is as if, in Thessaly, ontological questions were posed in relation to someone's acts: the identity materialized and performed through clay figures would probably make the concept of 'just a body' incomprehensible; or, rather, a body would have been 'just a body' when in action. It would perhaps be difficult to sustain an identity of a generic humanity, based on form alone; instead, it might have been imperative to follow specific actions in order to attain the ontological status negotiated through the figures. For the central Balkans, on the contrary, we could suggest, as a working assumption, that the generic form of the figures highlighted humanity as such (perhaps in relation to animality); or, instead, the form could have enabled the constitution of a division between a 'we' and a 'them', whereby the 'we' endorsed specific animals too.

It is difficult to be more explicit on the subject. For one thing, we cannot fully apprehend the precise contexts where these figures were used or invoked. It is possible that the identities they materialized were relevant only to a particular and restricted social context. But even in that case, the space-times in which these figures were brought to bear upon people's (and animals') social relationships would have been significant for life as a whole. They would have been points of reference that were commemorated, commented on and rehearsed on various occasions, extending the ontologies worked out there to the whole experience of life in the community.

Discussion

To recapitulate, in Thessaly and the north, figurines enabled and compelled different conceptualizations of what constituted a viable identity and of how this identity might be acquired, performed and sustained. We need not envision a clear boundary between two regions. There is no point in suggesting that the two trends I have described were exclusive strategies that characterized ideologically two distinct populations. Figurines might have been manufactured in the process of reiterating (consciously or not) various and diverse space-times in habitual or *ad hoc* instances (Nanoglou 2006), thus producing a landscape of images with differentiated values. But in general it seems as if, in constituting a certain 'we', people of the two regions invoked different things. It was through this 'we' that they could have monitored and accounted for changes they experienced, acted as social agents and conceptualized their world and their position in it (even if this 'we' was constituted in opposition to the images invoked). It could be suggested that human imagery in Thessaly betrays a concern with how identities were acquired (Nanoglou 2005, 152); in a way, the question these figurines refer to may be rendered as 'what do you do to get acknowledgement of your position in our world?'. On the other hand, from the perspective of figurines from the north, the relevant question seems to be 'what or who are you?'; and evidently this 'what or who' concerned animals too.

In considering these suggestions, it is important to refer to Tim Ingold's work (2000) on hunter-gatherers' depiction of humans and animals. The cases Ingold presents show quite eloquently that this imagery is implicated with the whole ontology of the people involved (see also Bird-David 2006). Of course, neither in Thessaly nor in the central Balkans were people hunters and gatherers and this is perhaps manifested in how the animals were represented: we are dealing not with hunting scenes or prey and predators but with animals that had to live with people and were fed by them. This relation is altogether different, and it constitutes different kinds of subjectivity (Ingold 1996). Perhaps what is more important is that in our cases what is represented is probably limited to the inhabitants, human and animal, of the community. That probably representations do not deal with a world-out-there, as in the cases presented by Ingold, is perhaps impressive given that hunting was still part of these people's lives, particularly in the central Balkans (Whittle 1996; Bailey 2000). What is depicted in the Neo-

lithic figurines is the world inside the community. If Bradley (2001, 262) is right, moreover, figurines in the central Balkans may evince the focus on the relationship between humans and animals within the community, whereas in Thessaly they may point to the importance of the relationships between people. Regrettably, owing to the lack of detailed contextual information, we cannot go further and consider the issue central to Ingold's cases, that is how making figurines was constitutive of the figurines' meanings. The figures that seem motionless as end products might have been enlivened through various acts of staging. The way figurines were handled, carried and disposed of could have bestowed them with different connotations. It is important to note that most of the figurines are small enough to hide in one's hand (see Bailey 2005 on miniaturism and intimacy), although there are indications that some of them were placed either seated or standing (Nanoglou 2005, 147). The issue of disposal and particularly whether they were deliberately broken (Chapman 2000; Chapman & Gaydarska 2007; Nanoglou 2005, 143) is an equally important part of their meaning. The disorderly disposal of most figurines found in pits contrasts with traces of wear from placing them on some sort of surface (Nanoglou 2005, 147), thus pointing to distinct scenes of use. Nevertheless, the point is that, in the two regions, the figurines took part in performative events in the context of which they evoked different aspects of people's bodily experience and oriented embodied selves to different notions of community.

As to what these differences were exactly, especially regarding the issue of 'neolithization', it is difficult to answer. There was, indeed, a move towards greater dependence on farming and animal husbandry in both of the regions I consider here; and, indeed, there were more similarities in farming and husbandry than it was thought up to now (Bogaard 2004); but the move did not involve the same practices or the same quandaries across the regions (Tringham 2000) and people were arguably making sense of their worlds in quite different ways. If people were using figurines rather frequently and not only on special occasions, then we could argue that, in the central Balkans, both human and animal representations were acting as reference points for people's lives, building a world that incorporated new members (by way of domestication) as equal, at least in a certain discursive field. In contrast, if people in Thessaly were indeed impelled to focus on their own bodies as the points of reference within their communities, this could have resulted in prioritizing a very anthropocentric discourse in un-

derstanding and handling the changes. On the other hand, even if figurines were used only on certain occasions, their connotations would have framed the subjectivities that pertained to those occasions and any impact on the wider social field would have been felt accordingly.

This picture is somewhat different from that offered by Hodder concerning developments in the Near East. Whereas he sees 'an increase of human agency' (Hodder 2005, 20), accompanying the development of farming and settled village life (Hodder 2005, 19, citing Helms 2004), I would suggest that, in the course of these developments, there is a differentiation in the ways human agency was being revealed. Representation of animals need not imply diminished human agency, as if the central Balkans were a step backwards; rather, agency may have been related to different forms of life instead of being situated almost exclusively in the realm of human actions (Helms 2004, 119). Hence, this is not a shift, from the Balkans to Thessaly, towards 'greater objectification of human agency' (Hodder 2005, 21) but, rather, the objectification of different relationships and different ontologies.

The differences between representational practices in Thessaly and the central Balkans evidence different modes and styles of inhabiting the world. At a time when the techniques of the body were changing slowly but steadily as people engaged in different relations to their environment — with plants, animals, or neighbours — emphasis on different aspects of the body suggest that different identities and worlds were forming. The emergent picture is one of variation in how people reworked their lives, engaging in agriculture, animal husbandry or the building of packed clay houses during the seventh and sixth millennia BC (Whittle 1996; 1998). Through the ability to stand differently in their world, there were, evidently, different ways to monitor and account for these changes. Representational imagery was actively engaged in these processes.

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Notes

1. See Meskell (1995) and her comments in http://figurines.stanford.edu/index.php?title=Questions_and_Themes, especially Question 3.
2. According to Laclau & Mouffe (2001, 104), articulation is 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting [is called] discourse'. In this formulation, there is no distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 107) and discourse is not restricted to language.
3. See Barrett (2001, 62–3) on a close but different use of 'representation', one that I again gloss as 'reflection'.
4. See also Hansen (2004/5, 30) and Bailey (2005, 11) for the Balkans.
5. The one found in Soufli Magoula was within the settlement, and its relation to the buildings remains ambiguous (Gallis 1982, 58–9).
6. There are reasons to suggest that pendants were used as a different category of artefacts during the earlier Neolithic. That might account for the fact that pendants depict animals not usually represented in clay (e.g. frogs).
7. The stone ones found in Nea Nikomedeia and cited in Kalicz (2000, fig. 8) seem to me to be quite different from the usual clay ones found in the central Balkans. In fact, distinctive objects of this kind, called 'ear-studs' in Greek reports, have been found in other earlier Neolithic settlements in Greek Macedonia as well. The stone 'ear-studs' found in earlier Neolithic settlements in Thessaly are again very different: they do not resemble animals and are, in fact, usually referred to as human representations (Kyparissi-Apostolika 2001, 88–91).
8. There are figures from Neolithic Greece for which it is difficult to say whether they are of human or animal form. They are mostly, but not exclusively, parts of vessels in the form of a head with long 'ears'. However, they are almost exclusively dated to the later Neolithic, so I do not include them in this discussion.
9. There is evidence that, in Thessaly, and northern Greece in general, for that matter, extensive settlements were already occupied alongside tells in the earlier Neolithic (see e.g. Kotsakis 1994 on Sesklo). There is as yet no detailed information as to the figurines recovered from earlier Neolithic flat settlements.

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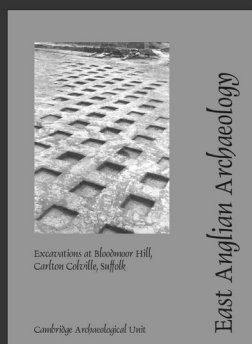
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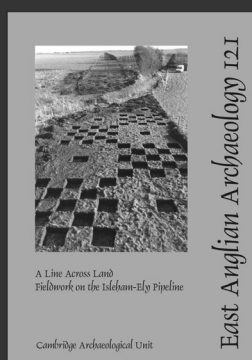


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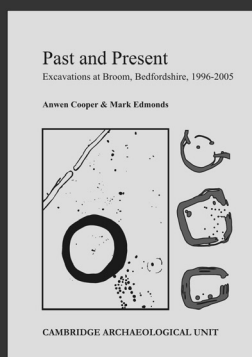


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