

**INTRODUCTION (1-4)**  
From the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, many Mediterranean cultures produced human shaped figurines, usually of small size, sculpted from different materials (terracotta, stone and more rarely, shell or metal); they have been discovered from the Levant (Syria (1), Palestine), in Anatolia, the Balkans (2), Northern Greece (3), in the Aegean (4), in Sardinia and even as far as Spain.



2.



figurines of different regions. Even if the specific regional traits were very important, one recognizes today that these "idols" were destined for the religious or funerary sphere. Their typology is extremely varied: from simple pebbles of

small size to schematic forms, from the generously rounded contours of females (4) to sculptures that are elegant and more realistic (2), etc.

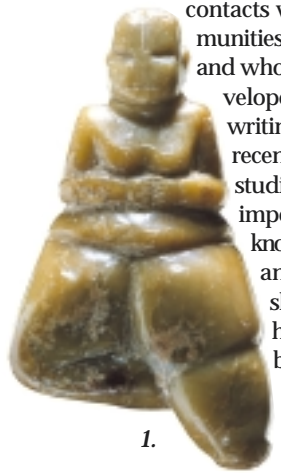
**KILIA (5)**

The Kilia type is named after a figurine originating from a site near Gallipoli in the Chersonese on the European banks of the strait of the Dardanelles. The shape of these objects is very homogeneous and they do not display marked differences in size: the head is elliptical



3.

Modern scholarship calls these figurines "idols", but this term is used only as a convention. These statuettes are the expression of primitive societies, whose contacts with other communities were very rare and who had not yet developed a system of writing. In spite of recent archaeological studies, it is nearly impossible for us to know the significance and the relationships that might have existed between the



1.

1. An Aragonite Female Statuette, Northern Syria (Tell Bouqras?), ht. 9.8cm, 6th millennium.

2. Two Female Figurines in Marble, Balkans or Western Anatolia, ht. 13.5 and 14.7 cm, 5th millennium.

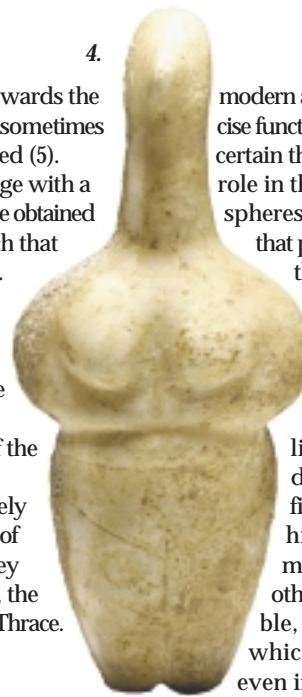
3. A Marble figurine, Northern Greece(?), ht. 15.3 cm, 5th - 4th millennium.

and large, slightly angled towards the back; the ears, the nose and sometimes the eyes are plastically indicated (5). The body resembles a lozenge with a thin neck; the sharp arms were obtained by carving a long, deep notch that separates them from the hips. The pubic area is indicated by a triangular incision (5).

The lasting popularity of these "idols" is surprising: first appearing at the beginning of the 4th millennium, the Kilia statuettes were not completely abandoned until the middle of the following millennium; they spread to Western Anatolia, the Troades and possibly also to Thrace.

**CYCLADES (6-7)**

Among the stone statuettes from the Neolithic or the Bronze Age, the marble figurines - "idols" - from the Cycladic Islands are probably the most famous and most comprehensively studied. They are classified into two principal groups: schematic figurines (often just simple beach pebbles, sometimes of slightly more elaborate shapes that resemble violins) and more naturalistic figurines (7), with simple plastic forms that never cease to intrigue

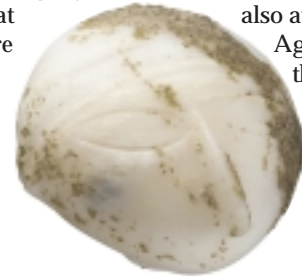


4.

modern artists and observers. Their precise function remains unknown, but it is certain that they played an important role in the religious and funerary spheres of this society. The culture that produced them spread during the 3rd millennium to traverse the Aegean, not only to the central islands but also to the shores of the Greek continent, south-western Anatolia and even to Crete. The lithic industry in the Cyclades did not only produce figurines, but several types of high quality vessels. Mostly made out of marble, but also of other stones (steatite, grey marble, calcite (6), schiste, etc...), which are well documented, even if in terms of quantity, they remain a rarity.

**BECESULTAN-KUSURA**

Contrary to the Cycladic Islands where the tradition of schematic statuettes was also attested during the Bronze Age. As is normally the case, the different types were named after the places where they were made:



5.

4. A Marble Figurine, Cyclades or Northern Greece, ht. 13 cm, 5th - 4th millennium.

5. Head of a Figurine of the Kilia type, ht. 5.4 cm, 4th millennium.

the Beycesultan type (first half of the 3rd millennium) and the Kusura type (probably a little later) are among the most widely known groups.



6.

Their anthropomorphic character was expressed through incisions indicating the hair, the eyes - which resemble sunbursts, and some undulating marks that the archaeologists interpret as tattoos (8); there also exist ceramic vessels ornamented in the same fashion: with a face.

The first group is comprised of figurines characterized by their extremely flat silhouette and by the rounded outline of the bodies; two small pointed stumps indicate the arms, while a long stalk represents the neck, which is sometimes surmounted by a disc-shaped head, with a point on the side of the head perhaps representing a lock of hair. The Kusura variant possesses a tripartite structure: a disk shaped head, a trapezoidal neck and a shield-like bust that often shares the same rough outline as the arms. With the exception of very rare cases, no other incisions indicate the sex of the statuette or any other anatomical details.

**IBERIAN PENINSULA (8)**

In Iberia, the "idols" from the beginning of the Bronze Age adopted very simple forms: rectangular stone plaques of varying sizes, bovine or equine bones or stone cylinders.



7.

These objects appeared either in the Neolithic era or just as the Hispanic Bronze Age was beginning (3rd millennium): the most well known culture from this period was that called Los Millares, which takes its name from a necropolis in the south of Spain, spreading up to the borders of Portugal.

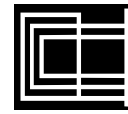
Although it appeared to be a culture based on an agricultural and pastoral economy, the use of metal (tin, copper) was already known and it is possible that some commercial contacts existed with cultures of the central and eastern Mediterranean.

6. A Calcite Vessel (pyxis), Cyclades; Cycladic II, ht. 11.4 cm middle of 3rd millennium,

7. Head of a Cycladic figurine close to the so-called Plastiras type, ht. 5 cm, end of the 4th millennium.



8. An Iberian "idol", ht. 31 cm, 3rd millennium



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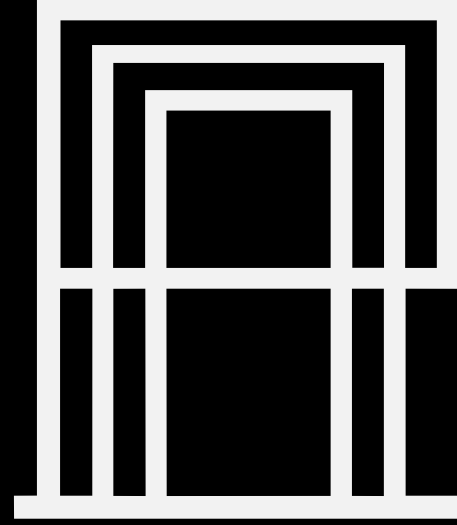
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