PHILISTOR

Studies in Honor of Costis Davaras

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Eleni Mantzourani and Philip P. Betancourt

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*In Greek the word φιλίστωρ (*philistor*) means the lover of learning, of history, the person who constantly seeks new knowledge.*

The characterization of philistor *fits the personality of Costis Davaras because he has always tried to expand his knowledge horizons and has never limited himself solely to his fields of specialization. His entire life is full of diverse activities, philosophical self-reflection, and sociopolitical interests.*

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Biography of Costis Davaras

Eleni Mantzourani

Costis Davaras was born in Athens on the 19th of March in 1933. He grew up in a highly intellectual environment. His mother, Julia, came from an old family of Cephallonia and was awarded the Ouranis Prize for Literature. Costis graduated from the high school of Plaka, located just below the Acropolis. The window of his room overlooked Hadrian's Gate. He studied Archaeology at the Universities of Vienna, Munich, and mainly Athens, from which he received his first degree in 1956. His professors of archaeology, indeed all of them outstanding scholars, were Ernst Buschor in Munich and Spyridon Marinatos, Georgios Mylonas, Nikolaos Kontoleon, and Anastasios Orlandos in Athens.

During his undergraduate years, he took a degree at the Palmer Technical School in Athens as a wireless operator of the Merchant Marine in order to be able to travel, which he actually did for a short time, visiting various countries. This, among other features of his character, shows his inquisitive spirit.

He continued his postgraduate studies as a bursar of the German State in Munich. His Professors were Ernst Homann-Wedeking for Archaeology and Hans Wolfgang Müller for Egyptology. He served in the Greek Army as an interpreter and translator for several NATO languages.

Before entering the Greek Archaeological Service he served, for a short time, as an assistant to the Ephor Markellos Mitsos in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens and Ioannis Threpsiades in the excavations at Athens and the Temple of Artemis at Aulis in Boeotia. Davaras entered the Archaeological Service in 1960 after examinations, which, unfortunately, were later abolished for some decades, indeed a heavy blow in meritocracy. His first position as Epimeletes was in Herakleion under Nikolaos Platon and later under Stylianos Alexiou, both well-known scholars and excellent tutors. At that time, those three men were the only archaeologists serving on Crete.

He was an assistant to Platon in several of his excavations all over Crete, including the peak sanctuary at Kophinas and the palace of Zakros. He also conducted his own excavations, including tholos tomb II at Apesokari and the important caves of Skoteino near Knossos and Eileithyia at Inatos. A second campaign, in collaboration with Nikolaos Platon, was undertaken at Eileithyia. He also brought to light several Minoan chamber tombs and a Geometric tomb at Knossos.

In 1964 he was transferred to Athens as Epimeletes of Attica and Boeotia. There he excavated the Geometric cemetery of Anavyssos and the Thesmophorion of Eretria, later turned over for publication to Ingrid Metzger of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece. During this period he was the first Greek archaeologist to be trained by the Navy in underwater archaeology. He even directed a research team below the temple of Poseidon at Sounion in order to locate fallen blocks and part of its sculpture.

At his own insistence he was re-posted to Crete in 1965, this time as Head of the Archaeological Service for West Crete (Chania–Rethymnon) with Yiannis Tzedakis as his assistant.

Davaras's excavations in the region included the tholos tomb at Maleme, a tholos tomb at Apodoulou, and the rich peak sanctuary of Vrysinas overlooking the Rethymnon area. His main care in this new post was the legal protection of the numerous archaeological sites of West Crete, which, until then, were not officially listed as such and thus "ignored" by the State. It should be noted that the "Palace of Minos" at Knossos and a narrow zone around it, under the auspices of the British School at Athens, was the only legally defined archaeological site on Crete before that time. By specific order of the Ministry he also tried, alas in vain, to protect the Venetian–Ottoman old towns of Chania and Rethymnon and even received serious threats on his life in his office by a furious fishmonger. It was during this period that he married his beloved Dione, a Baroque harpsichordist and his life companion ever since. In 1968 he went to the Sorbonne University in Paris for his Ph.D. under the supervision of Pierre Demargne, Henri van Effenterre, and Jean Deshayes. His two-volume typewritten dissertation was a study on the Minoan-Mycenaean Double Axe, including a corpus of all then-extant axes *in corpore*—the functional ones, the votives, and the representations in painting. The subject was examined mainly from a religious point of view. Davaras managed to show that the functional double axe was definitely a tool and not a weapon, as even today many scholars continue to believe it was a weapon. The dissertation was not published, as this was not required by the French Law, pending the collection of photographs for publication in the German Series *Prähistorische Bronzefunde*, a work that would, by agreement with H. Müller-Karpe, also include the pottery. However, the future reserved much adversity for him and his family.

After his return to Greece in 1970, and during the dictatorship of the Colonels, he was not allowed to go back to Crete, his second home and place of archaeological interests. Instead, he was transferred to Sparta, in Laconia, as well as to Mystras, as an "acting" Epimeletes of Byzantine Antiquities. There he managed to officially establish and define the ancient town of Sparta for the first time as an archaeological site. Additionally, he organized, again for the first time, the extensive archives of Mystras. It also should be noted that Davaras protected with strict rules the Medieval town of Monemvasia. A year later he was again transferred, this time to Patras for six months, under the Ephor Photios Petsas, who was also in disfavor.

At his insistence, he managed to return to Crete. This time he was appointed as a newly promoted Ephor in East Crete (Nomos Lasithiou and Malia). By necessity, East Crete had also been "promoted" to an Ephorate, the now well-known 24th Ephorate of Antiquities. This is the only reason why Crete has three Ephorates, and not two or four.

As a matter of fact Davaras was the first and last Ephor of this Ephorate, for the title of "Ephor of Antiquities," the oldest title in Greece (since 1830), was later abolished by the newly elected administration that advocated "the equality of all civil servants" with titles such as "Director of Antiquities" and so forth. However, the title of Ephoreia paradoxically remained. Characteristically, all administrations that followed until today did not reinstate the title of the Ephor, as archaeologists have obviously been "the black sheep" of the state apparatus, above pressures and other concomitant evils.

When Costis Davaras became the head of the new Ephorate in Hagios Nikolaos, its state was

embryonic, with the telephone on the floor. He had to organize everything *ex nihilo*. He considered it his duty to begin the legal protection of the numerous and highly important archaeological sites of East Crete, as he had done in West Crete. This was, indeed, an onerous and difficult task, as the protected areas (Zones A and B) had to be accurately defined on the map. At the same time this was a very delicate enterprise as these areas were not supposed to be excessively large and beyond the rule of "pan metron Ariston." The trouble was that these new measures went hand-in-hand with the beginning of the touristic development of the island. Thus, a reaction to this novel legality was to be expected.

For instance, Davaras managed to stop the demolition of the Venetian fortress of Spinalonga (albeit outside his official jurisdiction), the spolia of which were being taken and imbedded as decoration in the "grand hotels" then under construction. Unfortunately, he did not manage to bring about the conviction in court of a serious perpetrator of bulldozing part of the Minoan town of Palaikastro, who was actually a school teacher! Again regarding Spinalonga, Davaras managed, despite the serious threats he received, to avert the construction there of a base for torpedo boats, which the administration of the Colonels wished to build. Fortunately, finally they realized the enormity of it and constructed the base near Cavo Sidero. Some years later, after the Colonels were gone, the dismal fate of another small island was also averted: the Air Force wished to make the beautiful, subtropical Chryssi to the south of Ierapetra a target area for bombing. Fortunately, the Ministry of Defense gave up this enterprise, persuaded by Davaras's personal arguments.

After some time he was again transferred to Komotini in Thrace, but he never went there as he was then suspended from his duties. He was reinstated after the happy end of an adventure in a court of justice.

As an Ephor in Hagios Nikolaos Davaras installed a new provisional exhibition at the Museum, and he conducted many rescue excavations under very difficult conditions, some of which, alas, came too late. In any case, the volume of new material collected was so enormous that it would take several archaeological lives to be properly published. Perhaps the most important of these excavations was the exploration of part of the Early Minoan I Cycladic cemetery at Hagia Photia, near Siteia, with no assistants, architects, photographers, or other assistants, but with armed workers watching it at night. This excavation is now partly published in collaboration with his close friend Prof. Philip Betancourt.

Among Davaras's other important excavations were those of several Minoan peak sanctuaries in various stages of plundering, including Traostalos, Petsophas (re-excavated), Prinias Zou, Modi, and others. The re-excavation of the oval house at Chamaizi was also crucial, as he was able to clarify its function. It was neither a peak sanctuary, as usually believed, nor oval because of lack of space. The early burial cave of Hagios Charalambos Gerontomouri on the plateau of Lasithi, with its rich finds—especially seals and a great number of human skulls, some of them showing signs of trepanation, the earliest in Greece—is also included among Davaras's field work. This excavation was later continued with Phil Betancourt as co-director. Other less important excavations include Minoan and later tombs and cemeteries (especially the one at Krya in Siteia) as well as a number of Hellenistic and later houses at Hagios Nikolaos and Ierapetra.

Last but not least in his long list of fieldwork comes the important excavation of the Late Minoan I "cult villa" at Makrygialos on the southern coast. According to his view, this building is unique insofar that it closely imitates the Minoan palaces on a very small scale. He gave the edifice this strange name because of its rich religious elements, although he later thought that it should rather be named a "mini palace," as it is actually a real miniature of a Minoan palace in several of its architectural features. In fact, its central court has the dimensions and orientation of the palace at Petras on the opposite north coast. He does not consider it as a simple "country mansion" aping its superiors. Instead, he believes that, exactly because of its close resemblance, its functions would have been similar to those of the palaces, especially regarding religion. Hence, it was initially dubbed a "cult villa." He has raised the question whether the edifice at Makrygialos could perhaps help us better understand the main function of the palaces, which it so closely mirrors.

It is true that Davaras is very happy and proud that he had the opportunity to re-open East Crete

to the excavations of American archaeologists. This was done under the form of a *synergasia* as a co-director. These excavations took place at Pseira and Mochlos for several campaigns, in collaboration with his eminent colleagues and friends Phil Betancourt and Jeffrey Soles.

These excavations, with extraordinary results, funded with grants from several sources, including the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP) founded by Malcolm Wiener, the great benefactor of this branch of archaeology, are being published by the INSTAP Academic Press in a rhythm and perfection unthinkable for Greece. Thus, Davaras is quite proud of his official archaeological contribution to these projects. Many eminent scholars involved in Minoan archaeology have, on different occasions, praised his role in these projects.

It should be mentioned that the very last official paper out of several thousands Davaras signed as an Ephor was the one that founded, from the Greek side, the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete at Pacheia Ammos, a center that astounds and dazzles every visiting Greek archaeologist.

He has always been happy and proud that he has been the instigator of the new British excavations at Palaikastro, a site that was then seriously endangered by developers, both local and foreign. The new excavations have not only been extremely successful, but they stopped pending threats—at least for the time being. The Cavo Sidero area, property of the Toplou monastery north of Palaikastro, seemed at this time to be safe, and so no special measures were taken.

Another side of Davaras's character may be traced through an interesting event. In an unusual way he was able to contribute financially to the great Greek excavations of Zakros. He refused the offer of a Mexican millionaire to re-open the excavation of the famous Diktaian Cave, which must certainly still contain many treasures in its bowels. Instead, he persuaded the gentleman to support the Palace of Zakros project.

As tourism developed by leaps and bounds at the shores of Crete, it was unavoidable that woes were yet to come. In 1985, as he continued to press to save archaeological sites in the face of mounting pressure from building, Davaras was once more suspended from his duties as an Ephor for East Crete for five long years. He was ordered to go to Herakleion to the "Archaeological Institute of Crete," which until then did not exist. He has confessed that he was personally grateful to the Minister of Culture Melina Merkouri, who graciously allowed him to stay in the Hagios Nikolaos Museum in "suspended animation," as he humorously states. As a measure of clemency he stayed there to supervise its exhibition and cleanliness.

In 1990, under the new "Coalition Administration," Davaras was re-instated in his duties as an Ephor, but as he says, "he had lost his mood" for the Archaeological Service and turned to a new challenge, the University of Athens. In 1993 he was elected Associate Professor of Minoan Archaeology and later Full Professor. There he concentrated on his new duties, a real heaven in comparison to the past, as he usually says. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 2000. To quote his own words, "now I have more time for carefree, less stressful research."

Now his ardent wish and vision is to see in the European Union commission a new member: a Commissioner for Cultural Heritage who would cover a most important area, until now sadly unprotected and badly needed for Greece.

Davaras has received many academic and other distinctions. He is Member for Life of the Archaeological Society at Athens; Honorary Member of the Historical and Archaeological Society of Crete in Chania; Honorary Citizen of the Municipality of Ierapetra; Korrespondierendes Mitglied des Deutsches Archäologischen Instituts, Berlin; Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres de la République Française; Member of the Editorial Board of the periodical *Kadmos*, Berlin; and General Editor of the periodical *Cretan Studies*, Amsterdam. Finally, he has received an Honorary Diploma from the University of Tehran for the protection of the endangered remaining mosques on Crete.

Indicative of Costis's vividness, creativity, and overall devotion to a better future for Greece is his very recent participation in the newly formed party of Greek Ecologists, of which he is an active member. Costis is one of the last noblemen in the Greek and international archaeological family and will always remain "young at heart." From the depth of my heart, I wish him all the best in every aspect of his life. He still has much to offer us.

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List of Abbreviations

ASCSA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
cm	centimeter
dia.	diameter
dim.	dimension
EBA	Early Bronze Age
EM	Early Minoan
EN	Early Neolithic
FAF	folded-arm figurine
gr	gram
h.	height
HM	Herakleion Archaeological Museum
HNM	Hagios Nikolaos Archaeological Museum
HTR	Hagia Triada
kg	kilogram
km	kilometer
L.	length
LBA	Late Bronze Age
LC	Late Cycladic or Late Cypriot
LH	Late Helladic
LM	Late Minoan
LN	Late Neolithic
m asl	meters above sea level
m	meter
MACFA	macroscopic ceramic fabric analysis
max.	maximum
MHS	Minoan Hall System
MM	Middle Minoan
MN	Middle Neolithic

MNI	minimum number of individuals	th.	thickness
pers. comm.	personal communication	w.	width
pers. obs.	personal observation	wt.	weight
pres.	preserved	XRF	X-ray fluorescence
RM	Archaeological Museum of Rethymnon		

CHAPTER

12

Sexuality or Fertility Symbol? The Bronze Figurine from Makrygialos

Eleni Mantzourani

The well-known Neopalatial building at Makrygialos in East Crete (Fig. 12.1) was excavated in two field seasons, 1972 and 1977, by Costis Davaras, emeritus Professor of the University of Athens.* This rescue excavation unearthed a large edifice, dated by the ceramic sequence to the Late Minoan (LM) IB period (Davaras 1997; Mantzourani 2011). Among the large quantity of various types of material including pottery and miscellaneous artifacts made of clay, metal, and stone, there was a bronze figurine—the only figurine, either in clay or metal—uncovered at the site.

This paper attempts to establish the significance of this particular find. Davaras (1997, 126–127 n. 63) was the first to recognize its importance, although he did not provide a detailed analysis. Brief references are also made by Coulomb (1978, 226) and Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1995, 13–14), which will be discussed below.

* To Professor Davaras, who has trusted me with the final publication of this building, I address my deepest thanks. The systematic study of the architecture and the rest of the material was concluded in two years, 2007 and 2008, thanks to the financial support partly of the University of Athens and mainly of the Institute for Aegean Prehistory. I grasp this opportunity to express my gratitude to both institutions for their assistance.

Figure 12.1. Makrygialos ground plan and the built altar of the central court.

Description of the Figurine

The figurine (Hagios Nikolaos Museum [HNM] number 4652) is cast in bronze and measures 6.8 cm high, 1.8 cm wide at the arms, and 2.1 cm wide at the lower body (Figs. 12.2, 12.3). Its head is roundish and schematic, with one eye and eyebrow preserved and rendered in relief; the neck is long, and the torso is small and biconical. Two globular, plastic breasts are placed high on the upper body; the very short arms, with unstructured hands, are bent toward the breasts. The waist is indicated by the ring belt of the attire. The skirt is roughly bell-shaped and hollow inside. One groove in the middle of the front side of the skirt shows the vulva with a protruding clitoris. One hole in the backside of the attire is probably due to damage.

As described above, the figurine is dressed with a slightly flouncing skirt, a fact further underlined by the belt. The well-known Minoan bodice is absent, thus the upper part of the body is nude, for the breasts are fully indicated. The figurine came to light near the altar of the central court along with a steatite seal depicting a distinctive female, perhaps a "goddess" sailing on a sacred boat (Davaras 1997, 126–127, fig. 16).

Discussion

A close examination of the metal anthropomorphic figurines found in Crete and the Aegean, published by Verlinden (1984) and Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1995) in their major works on the subject, is very informative in terms of their technical, morphological, and typological characteristics. The long catalogs of these two monographs are partly complemented by 11 more items belonging to the Mitsotakis Collection (Davaras 1992) as well as by a sample from the plethora of bronze figurines from the peak sanctuary of Hagios Georgios at Kythera, published preliminarily by Sakellarakis (1996, 84–86, pls. 13:d, 14–16:a–c). Most artifacts were cast through the use of the "lost wax" technique, with very few exceptions using the double mold and the wood core methods of production (Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995, 100–101). The cut-out technique, as evidenced by a few examples of bronze votive offerings in the form of man, woman, and other, was also used in Minoan and Minoanizing contexts (Sakellarakis 1996, 86, pls. 17:d, 18:a).

The female figurines, which are the focus of this paper, generally have small dimensions. Their average height ranges from 2.5–14 cm, although there are few instances of taller specimens reaching 18–24 cm (Verlinden 1984, 183–205 for the Protopalatial and Neopalatial examples; Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995, 9–97). They are clad in a full-length concave or conical skirt, usually flouncing, with a belt that is either

plastically rendered or incised. It is not always easily detected if the upper torso is dressed or if the figurines wear the Minoan bodice that reveals their bare breasts, as for example in the case of the well-known figurine from Palaikastro (Verlinden 1984, pl. 32:67). It seems that there are very few instances in which the breasts were added separately to the body in a plastic form, similar to the case of the Makrygialos example (Verlinden 1984, pl. 42:92). Regarding the rendering of the head and facial characteristics, it is interesting to note that on many figurines, the hairstyle and (less often) a head cover/cap is represented. In contrast, the features of the face are not always clearly indicated. The Makrygialos specimen is bareheaded, and its facial details are crudely indicated; this is similar to the two Neopalatial figurines from the Psychro Cave (Verlinden 1984, pls. 55:123, 56:127; Sapouna-Sakalleraki 1995, pl. 33:40, 33:48). It should be remembered that, in general, there are a number of specimens for which, due to their crude rendering or bad state of preservation, such details are inevitably difficult to identify.

The position of the arms (and consequently, the cheironomy) represented is another issue to be examined (Verlinden 1984, 267, see gesture 4 in particular; Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995, 106–111). Hands-to-chest or hands-to-waist are the most common gestures of worship, and they are adopted by figurines of both sexes. The Makrygialos figurine holds its arms bent (in a circular contour), with its forearms and hands set more or less horizontally at chest level. This particular gesture is not frequently attested, and its meaning is difficult to define. Apparent resemblances are present in two bronze figurines from Psychro Cave, already mentioned above. There is also another metal example, again from Psychro and dated by Verlinden (1984, 152, 212, pl. 72:175) to the Postpalatial era, as well as additional clay specimens (Hazzidakis 1921, 75, fig. 38; Rethemiotakis 2001, 5–9, figs. 3–4, 7, color pl. 1).

Through his systematic work on Minoan coroplastic art, Rethemiotakis (1998, 2001) has reached similar observations. Protopalatial and Neopalatial female figurines generally are small in size, with some larger exceptions. They are dressed in a full-length skirt with belt (plastic or painted) and, in a number of cases, a Minoan bodice. They sometimes have exquisite hairstyles and/or head covers or caps. Facial features are rendered plastically or painted. The position of the arms varies, as it also does in their metal counterparts. Postpalatial examples comprise a different category that does not fall into the present discussion (Rethemiotakis 1998, 61–86; 2001, 10–43).

Let us now examine in brief another dimension of the woman in Minoan iconography. How was she presented: dressed, half-dressed, or nude? Why was she presented in one or the other way?

Figure 12.2. The bronze figurine HNM 4652 from Makrygialos.

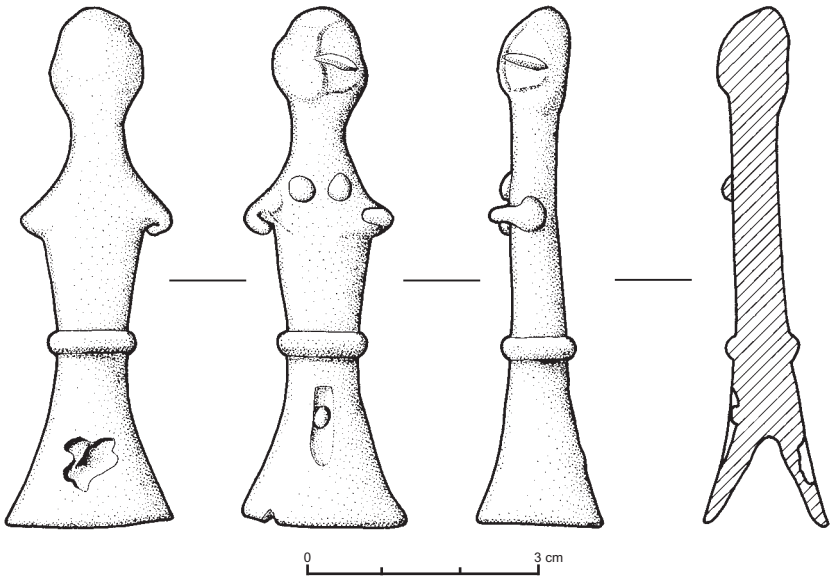

Figure 12.3. Bronze figurine HNM 4652 from Makrygialos (drawn by D. Faulmann).

The idea of the representation of the nude woman expressing fertility and/or sexuality is widely distributed in ancient civilizations (Neumann 1991, 101–102). It occurs both in the Neolithic and Bronze Age eras (Karageorghis 1991; 1993, 3–57; C. Marangou, ed., 1992, 162, 166, 171, 202, 205, 106, 209, 211, 213, 254–256; Gimbutas 1996, 144, 236–238; Orphanides 1998). In some cultures, as for instance in Mesopotamian culture, where both visual and textual evidence on the subject is very rich, it has been argued that female nudity is primarily associated with sexual allure (Bahrani 2001, 40–51, 67–69).

If one turns to Crete, it is apparent that complete nudity appears in the Neolithic and some Prepalatial figurines, often imitating their Cycladic counterparts (Rethemiotakis 1998, 49–50). The issue of the "nude Goddess" in prehistoric and early Greek art has been explicitly discussed by Böhm (1990). During the Bronze Age era of Cretan figurine production, the number of completely naked female representations surprisingly is limited to seated clay statuettes (Böhm 1990, 7–17). Böhm's catalog is supplemented by another specimen of doubtful provenance and Postpalatial date (Rethemiotakis 1998, 65, pl. 84:δ–στ). Thus, based on the archaeological data so far available, Marinatos's (2000, 129) assessment that "nudity is almost absent in the imagery of Bronze Age Crete" has solid ground.

It is unanimously accepted that in Minoan representative art of the Protopalatial and Neopalatial periods—being fresco, seal engravings, gold signet rings, as well as clay and metal figurine production—humans are depicted dressed or at least half-dressed. Kyriakidis (1997, with a rich bibliography on the subject) has demonstrated that in LM I, female figures in seal iconography seem to be dressed. Barber (2005) has also briefly discussed the issue of half-clad women in Minoan representations and its significance, while Rethemiotakis (1998, 107–110), analyzing the Minoan bodice, draws our attention to cases in which the artist intentionally has shown the female figure with bare breasts.

Indeed, in images of women dated to Middle Minoan (MM) and LM I times, nudity focuses on the breasts. Bare-breasted women are depicted in almost all artistic media, although not frequently. To mention only the best-known and characteristic Minoan examples: the faience Snake Goddesses (Evans 1921–1935, IV, fig. 139); the ladies in the miniature frescoes of the Tripartite Shrine (Evans 1921–1935, III, pl. XVII:A–C) and the Sacred Grove (Evans 1921–1935, III, pl. XVIII); the Ladies in Blue (Evans 1921–1935, I, 545–547, figs. 397, 398); depictions of females on seals (Evans 1921–1935, IV, 169, fig. 130); those on gold signet rings; and others. The display of the breasts is not reserved to prehistoric Crete. It appears in the iconography of many prehistoric cultures, and it is usually associated with fertility. However, the iconographical apparatus through which the Cretan

artists underline the breast nudity is a strategic piece of cloth, namely the bodice. This constitutes a peculiarity of Minoan culture as Marinatos (2000, 129) suggests. Both complete nudity and breast display have been thought to attain connotations on social construction of gender and female identity, which, in turn, is connected to one's place on the social ladder and thus to prestige, affluence, and the exercise of power through femininity (e.g., see Goodison and Morris 1998, 123–125; for Cyprus and beyond, see papers in Bolger and Serwint, eds., 2002, especially Budin 2002). Nevertheless, despite such diversity of possible social connotations, "in the Cretan cultural sphere, the uncovering of the breasts is a sacred action pertaining to the cult," as Neumann (1991, 128) convincingly maintains in his seminal work on "The Great Mother."

While it seems that nudity is selectively applied to the upper part of the body of Minoan figures—both male and female—it is evident that the intentional exposure of the lower part of the body, especially the male genitals, is not usual. In the rare instances that the genital area is displayed, it is related with female figurines made of clay. The most characteristic example, actually an anthropomorphic vase, comes from Gournia and dates to Postpalatial times; it depicts a seated female figurine with open legs from which a swollen vulva emerges (Rethemiotakis 1998, 74, pl. 32:γ, δ; 2001, 24–25, fig. 27). According to Rethemiotakis, the figurine represents a pregnant woman awaiting childbirth.

Bearing in mind all the aforementioned archaeological data, let us now turn to the Makrygialos figurine. According to Coulomb (1978, 226), the figurine should be classified in the category of hermaphrodite specimens, as he tends to recognize the particular anatomic feature of the figurine as representing male, not female, genitals. In order to strengthen this argument, he draws parallels to the known terracotta dancing floor with four figures from the MM III tomb of Kamilari, which have at the same time breasts and a penis (Coulomb 1978, 222–226). Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1995, 14), while citing Coulomb's identification, considers the figurine female, apparently following Davaras's (1997, 126–127) identification. As seen more clearly on the drawing (Fig. 12.3), Davaras's initial suggestion looks closer to reality.

It seems that this particular piece of metal work from Makrygialos is so far unique, in the sense that we are dealing with the exposure of female genitals. Although only the upper body is portrayed nude, the opening of the skirt that uncovers the vulva with a protruding clitoris leaves no room for doubt that the artist intended to show the genitals. The skirt, which is meant to cover the genital zone, but does not, here lends more emphasis to this zone.

The body of evidence from Bronze Age Crete and the Aegean in general does not provide any close parallels for the manner in which the sex attribute of our figurine is rendered. Contemporary eastern Mediterranean and especially Syro-Palaestinian imagery often comprises an appropriate source to search for comparanda. A rapid examination of some scholarly contributions on the study of terracotta (Badre 1980; Petty 2006) and metal statuettes of the third and second millennium B.C. (Negbi 1976) from the latter region brings forward more differences than similarities. Figurines of both sexes, in clay and metal, share common characteristics of frontality, statism, and, quite often, nudity. The sexual attribute, whenever depicted, is more frequently marked on the metal masculine than the feminine specimens (Badre 1980, 142–143). An interesting representation of a naked female clearly pointing to her vulva with the clitoris (Fig. 12.4:a), comes from a relief terracotta plaque from Tell Tanaach, dated to the Late Bronze Age (Winter 1983, fig. 44). The closest parallel to the Makrygialos figurine in terms of material and morphological characteristics, when it was possible to be traced, is a flat-cast copper figurine of unknown provenance (Fig. 12.4:b). According to Negbi (1976, 60–61, fig. 71:1503, pl. 58:1503), it belongs to the "Syrian" Group in her proposed typology of Syro-Palestinian figurines. It stands on a mushroom-shaped base, is bareheaded, and has distinctive body and facial anatomic details. It seems to be half-naked, but between the legs the vulva is clearly depicted.

Among other issues such as nudity and the exposure of genitals in artistic representations of women in the Aegean, Iron Age Greece, Egypt, and the Near East, Marinatos has discussed in detail the "Naked Goddess" and the "Goddess who lifts her skirt" (Fig. 12.4:c) and their associations with mythological circles (Marinatos 2000, 1–31, 128–129). An extremely interesting later example of a clay female figurine from Kavousi in East Crete, dated to the Iron Age, clearly portrays the genitals (Alexiou 1956, 11, pl. A:2).

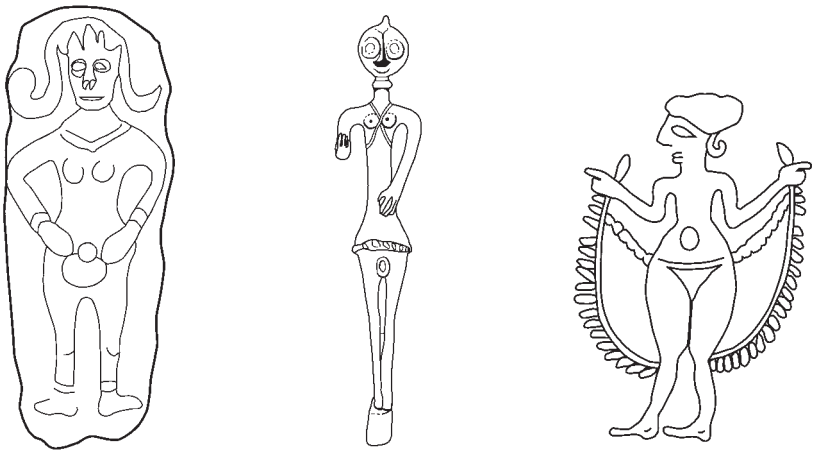

Figure 12.4. Representations of naked females: (a) terracotta relief plaque from Tell Tanaach with a picture of a nude female (after Winter 1983, fig. 44); (b) Syrian bronze female figurine of unknown specific provenance (after Negbi 1976, fig. 71); (c) goddess with uplifted skirt from a cylinder seal from Syria (adapted from Marinatos 2000, fig. 1.11). Drawings by A. Chrysanthi. Not to scale.

The significance of the depiction of genitals and their symbolic connection with fertility and sexuality, and, consequently, with life itself in human art history has been analyzed by Neumann (1991, 101–106, 137–142, 168). He bases his analysis on the principal idea "that the archetypical body-vessel equation is of fundamental importance for the understanding of myth and symbolism, and also of early man's world view" (Neumann 1991, 40). Parts of this "body-vessel" are the male and female sex attributes. In connection with the display of the vulva in prehistoric cult practices, of great interest are the much-later-in-date famous images of Baubo in visual arts and texts, which might have imparted, among other feelings, a forceful power to the spectator. The association of Baubo with the mythical vulva and its psychological, social, and symbolic implications has been well documented by Devereux (1989).

The importance of sex attributes and their connotations in ancient cultures is further stressed by the fact that they are represented per se. While phallic votive offerings in various materials (stone, terracotta, and bronze) are spread widely throughout different areas of the Eastern Mediterranean world (for a few examples, see Dikaios 1961, 201–201, pl. 91:106; Gimbutas 1996, 216–220), including the prehistoric Aegean (Branigan 1970, 138; Chourmouziadis 1974, 64–66, 128–130, pl. 2; C. Marangou, ed., 1992, 162–163, fig. 75:a, b; Peatfield 1992, 74–75, figs. 23 [for phalli], 24 [for testicles]; Sakellarakis 1996, 88 n. 72), vulvae models are rarer. Peatfield (1992, 79) notes that at Juktas, miniature phalli have been recognized while at Traostalos an artifact has been found that "may be model vulvae." A number of the latter type of objects has been identified in religious contexts in Mesopotamia (Bahrani 2001, 50–51) and Egypt (Pinch 1993, 210–211), having been usually related with magic and healing qualities. Davaras (1997, 127 n. 63) has already pointed out the possible meaning of an interesting terracotta find from Quartier Mu at Malia (Detournay, Poursat, and Vandenabeele 1980, 105–106, figs. 142–143), which had puzzled the excavators at the time. It is a base on which a strange object is attached. This particular object was found with a clay model of a phallus. According to Davaras's assumption, the unknown object could be identified with the model of a vulva. Taking into consideration such a possible identification of the models from Malia and Traostalos, one may view another dimension of the role of women in the Minoan world of art and reality.

Conclusions

In sum, the Makrygialos bronze female figurine, with the intentional representation of the genitals, had rather a cultic character, judging from its context—the central court altar where it was found

together with a seal bearing a scene of religious content. Its stance, cheironomy, and dress have parallels to other contemporary Cretan examples. However, it cannot be compared to high-quality Neopalatial products of the same kind, as it is lacking their elaboration and carefully rendered details. Although reminiscent of a Near Eastern taste, it is difficult to trace its origin in this region. It is suggested that it is a Minoan work of a less qualified artist, undoubtedly influenced by Near Eastern prototypes and traditions. The accentuation of the vulva zone and particularly the clitoris brings it closer to the concept of raw sexuality rather than fertility. If one considers both its context and the prevailing significance of the sex attribute, the main idea behind the representation eventually becomes brighter. Future finds may or may not verify this interpretation. Until then "the lady of Makrygialos" can by right bear the title of the "sexiest" and definitely "most shameless" female in Minoan imagery.

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