

Figurines of Neolithic Thessaly - The A. Bastis Collection

PREFACE

The present volume is a Corpus of unpublished Neolithic figurines from Thessaly, belonging formerly to the private collection of Mr Angelos Bastis, resident of Volos, who kindly offered them in 1992, together with other items of his collection, to the local Museum.

Since they come from an unknown context, and no stratigraphical data exist for almost all of the 186 figurines presented in this volume, their dating has been based exclusively on stylistic grounds.

Publishing these figurines encountered many practical problems. Thanks to a series of persistent and strenuous efforts I made in order to assemble, photograph, classify and study this material collected from the plain of Thessaly, as well as to successfully surmount diverse administrative obstacles, this project has been able to be realized.

INTRODUCTION

Figurine material included in this Corpus follows the typological presentation of the first two volumes entitled respectively *Figurines of Neolithic Thessaly I* and *II*: it is distinguished in two main categories, Heads and Bodies (male, female or parts of them) each one of them comprising naturalistic and schematic figurines (according to their prevailing features) with easily discernible subcategories.

Figurines of the A. Bastis collection are surface finds, hence unstratified. They present additional problems in dating, since they formed part of a private collection for a long time before they were filed as acquisitions of the Volos museum. Thus there has been great loss of information data or no information at all even about their finding spot. On the other hand administrative obstacles or restrictions resulted to avoidance or even rejection of archaeometrical methods such as thermoluminescence, in order to prevent harmful impact on the objects. Consequently, in all cases the most reliable aids to dating have been typological comparisons with similar stratified material (in what concerns the general structure and decoration) and- in some cases- comparison of raw materials.

Information on modelling techniques and decoration exists in the introduction of the first volume of the series.

Publication of the material aims to its first detailed presentation rather to its interpretation and function.

Presented here are 186 clay and stone figurines, of which 70 are classified as heads and 116 as bodies. They all bear a serial number, followed by their file catalogue number in the Archives of the Research Centre for Antiquity of the Academy of Athens (ORF), as well as by their Inventory number of the Archaeological Museum of Volos. Next comes the name of the site where they were found. Information about

their provenance was furnished by the collector. Whenever Mr Bastis was not sure about the exact Thessalian find spot, I classify the specimen as of unknown provenance (unfortunately this is the case of most of these items). For some sites of the Eastern Thessalian plain the name of its location is followed by a site number (ATAE), according to Gallis 1992 (ATAE stands for the initials in Greek of the words Inventory No of the topographical archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larissa). Some of the sites in the Western Thessalian plain are also identified in the same way.

Measurements are maximal, in centimetres, H height, W width and T thickness. The measurements are followed by a definition of colour and by a detailed description of each item.