

LA PICCOLA PLASTICA FITTILE IN CONTESTI FUNERARI DELLA PRIMA ETÀ DEL FERRO A CRETA

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ABSTRACT

This paper, which is mainly based on the data collected for the database of my PhD thesis, presents a contextual analysis of small-scale antropomorphic and zoomorphic Cretan terracotta figures and vase attachments (appliques) of the Protogeometric and Geometric periods recovered in funeral contexts in Central and Eastern Crete. At the present state of research, on the island of Minos the wheelmade human and animal figures typically occurring in sanctuaries of the Early Iron Age, and attested also in other contexts, seem to be almost absent from the contemporary burial sphere and this appear to be in contrast to what have been observed in other regions of the Aegean.

The paper not only acknowledges the difficulties of interpreting the meaning of both the antropomorphic (divinities, ancestors, etc.) and zoomorphic (toys, status symbols, etc.) figurines, but also points to a link of small-scale terracotta plastic to build tombs and specific areas within the burial grounds, probably assigned to the performance of funeral rituals. Despite the scarcity of reliable data, terracotta figurines seem particularly associated with rich tombs as well as infants and child burials, and perhaps, in some cases, male individuals.