



Small marble female figurine with folded arms

Not on display

Title/Description: Small marble female figurine with folded arms

Born: 2700 c. BC - 2400 c. BC

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Marble, Pigment

Measurements: h. 219 x w. 65 x d. 45 mm

Inscription: in black: 'FROM TERINTHOS GREECE. P. 530'

Accession Number: 339

Historic Period: Early Cycladic II (c. 2700-2400 BC), 3rd millennium BC

Production Place: Cyclades, Europe, Greece

Cultural Group: Keros-Syros

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

This small but intact marble figurine shows us many of the typical features of Early Cycladic sculpture. While limbs, torso and head are all present, particular features such as eyes, ears or mouth, hands, fingers or toes are not indicated. The figure is in the characteristic 'folded-arm' pose, and is clearly female. With its feet pointing downward, the figure cannot stand unsupported, and when not held in the hand must either lean against an upright surface or lie down.

Some features are indicated by light incisions. These include a groove at the bottom of the neck which continues round to the back and meets the spine in a V-shape. This groove may have traces of red pigment, a clue as to how features were sometimes represented on these figurines: there are examples of eyes, hair and other shapes (sometimes thought of as indications of tattooing) on some such figurines. On this one, only at the neck are any traces preserved, but this may be a clue that other features were originally painted in this way.

The shoulders of this figure are unusually angular, with the upper arms incuse. These support a very thick neck, on top of which the head is thrown back, as is normal. The head is oval in shape, with triangular nose slightly off centre, and a markedly flat area at the back of the head (the 'cranial plane').

Michael Boyd, March 2022

Further Reading

C. Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

M. Marthari, C. Renfrew & M.J. Boyd, *Early Cycladic Sculpture in Context* (Oxbow Books, 2017).

Doumas, C. & V. Lambrinoudakis, 'The cemetery at Aplomata on Naxos', in *Early Cycladic Sculpture in Context*, eds. M. Marthari, C. Renfrew & M.J. Boyd (Oxbow, 2017), 184-218.

Legaki, I., 'Sculptures from Phiondas, Naxos', in *Early Cycladic Sculpture in Context*, eds. M. Marthari, C. Renfrew & M.J. Boyd (Oxbow, 2017), 219-54.

Provenance

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1966. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.

