The Modern Agenda behind Ancient Gender: A Content Analysis on the Engendered Language surrounding Chalcolithic Cypriot Cruciform Figurines.

Blackmore, Georgina

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Figure 1: three Picrolite Cruciform Figurines (www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/254671 - accessed on 14th May 2022)

Title: The Modern Agenda behind Ancient Gender: A Content Analysis on the Engendered Language surrounding Chalcolithic Cypriot Cruciform Figurines.
Author: Georgina Blackmore, s2628430
Course and course code: BA thesis
Supervisor: Dr. B. S. Düring
University of Leiden, Faculty of Archaeology
Leiden

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Introduction

'Those who would codify the meanings of words fight a losing battle, for words, like the ideas and things they are meant to signify, have a history' (Scott 1986, 1054).

This paper aims to study the literature surrounding Cypriot Chalcolithic cruciform anthropomorphic figurines and their gendered identity. Within academia, we see issues arising from gendering of ancient bodies with modern views – creating cross-wired hypotheses on gender manifestation in prehistoric art. Concentrating on the Chalcolithic cruciform figurines, words patterns and trends will be analysed to gain a better understanding of how gendering ancient identities with modern biases is chronicled within the selected literature. As the above quote by gender theorist Scott proselytizes, words hold histories and baggage from previous understandings that are constantly built upon and understood in new ways (Scott 1986, 1054).

I believe that gender theory sits comfortably within the toolbox of archaeology as a key to understanding ancient cultures. The difficulty of interpreting ancient societies is that we are only able to do so through our cultural lens of understanding – thus transposing modern societal views onto ancient cultures. This unconscious bias that looms over archaeology perhaps cannot be avoided, but we must learn to recognize and unpack it. Gender theorist and philosopher Michel Foucault unravels this phenomenon in his work by exploring the act of unpicking current societal biases that are transposed onto the past rather than looking at or simply understanding ancient gender differences. In this way, Foucault calls for the use of genealogy to look beyond finding the 'origins' of society and instead the processes by which we can understand how we got to the present day (Foucault 1977).

Male and female have long been standing as the two main categories for subdividing human forms. However, as we enter more modern understandings of cultural identity (see the impending 'fourth-wave feminism' – explained in chapter 2), it is clear there are an abundance of ways to interpret specific attributes, corporeal and abstract, that do not fit the traditional views of gender. The research question for this paper looks at how gendering of the cruciform figurines of Chalcolithic Cyprus has evolved over time in academic literature. More specifically, if it is possible to draw links between socio-economic and political trends of an era with the type of gendered language used. A final sub-question of this research will look at the necessity of using gendered language when analysing anthropomorphic figurines. As will be discussed in chapter 2, there have been strides to move past gendered categories within academia, such as by academics like Talalay, Winkelmann, or Knapp and Meskell (Talalay 2008; Winkelmann 2020; Knapp and Meskell 1997).

Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the following questions...

Research Question: How has the gendering of the cruciform figurines of Chalcolithic Cyprus evolved over time in academic literature?

Sub-questions:

1. Is there a link between socio-economic or political trends of an era and the type of gendered language used?
2. How necessary is gendered language when analysing anthropomorphic figurines?

Methodology

The method of questioning I will be using is content analysis. This method will allow for an in-depth look into the literature surrounding the figurines, using key search terms, words, and phrases, to follow patterns and possible interpretations of why they are used. Content analysis is a qualitative form of interpreting data, looking at specific trends within a piece of literature and allowing that to inform conclusions about language use and the researcher's biases (Hsieh and Shannon 2005).

Anvari discusses whether the method of content analysis is qualitative or quantitative. Whilst many scholars believe that the quantitative coding process produces results that are quantifiable and numerical, Anvari agrees with the qualitative interpretation: 'if language is analysed, it is the individual researcher who makes the decision whether a combination of words constitutes a certain meaning' (Anvari 2021, 180). This, of course, is something that I will be heavily exploring in this thesis and is a fate I cannot escape myself. Interpretation is always going to be highly subjective and rarely objective. Objectivity is always called into question with any interpretative method of research due to its qualitative nature.

Overview of Chapter Contents

To put this research into a broader framework, Chapter 1 of this paper examines the background and overview of the figurines, the region of Cyprus and the literature used in the content analysis. Subsequently, Chapter 2 will provide a synopsis of gender theory as well as its use in the archaeological discipline. This chapter is used as a reference chapter for later discussion of gendered themes of analysis. Chapter 3 covers the content analysis method and lays a foundation for how the research is carried out. Chapter 4 looks at the tables, figures, and charts from the results of the content analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 analyses and interprets the results shown in the previous chapter. This chapter will deconstruct the literature surrounding the cruciform figurines regarding the content analysis results and search term patterns.

Chapter 1: Background and Overview

A cross-section of literature has been selected for this study and aims to represent different trends within the gendering of cruciform figurines. This chapter will provide a brief introduction to the academics and their texts as well as an overview of Cyprus' history, chronology, geography, and environment as well as an introduction to the Chalcolithic cruciform figurine.

Cypriot Archaeology is often seen as a liminal, 'in-between' field of study – geographically overridden by the imposing European and Asian continents. In fact, A Campo aptly assesses that it is often treated as a 'step-child' by Classical and Middle Eastern archaeologists (a Campo 1994, ii). The word 'Cyprus' derives from the Latin word for copper, 'cuprum' due to the island's rich history of metallurgy. The surrounding region of Anatolia has some of the earliest known metal artefacts in the world (Fidan 2015, 63).

1.1 Geography and Environment

As the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, Cyprus occupies a strategic position: below Turkey, west of the Middle East and above Egypt. Cyprus has four main geological terranes: the Keryneia terrane, the Mamonia terrane, the Troodos ophiolite complex and the Circum-Troodos Sedimentary sequence (Cohen et al 2012, 251 – see fig 2).
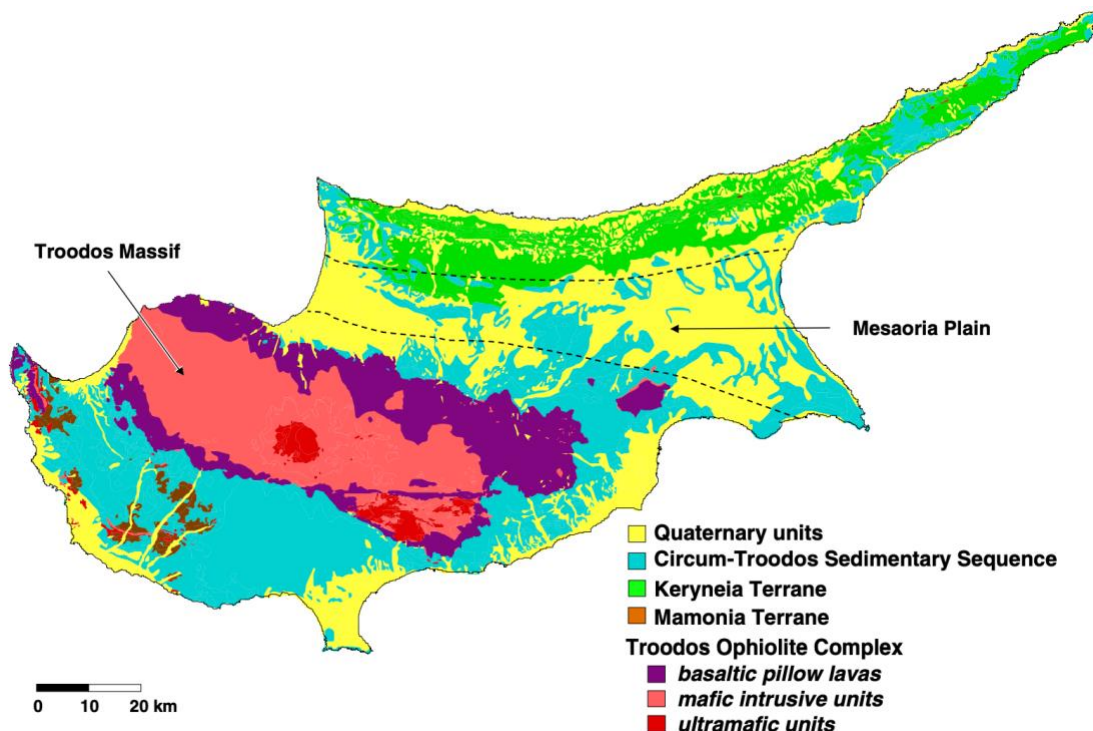

Figure 2: four main geological terranes of Cyprus (Cohen et al 2012, 251)

Huge amounts of copper sulphide deposits can be found in the foothills of the Troodos Massif, in geological formations known as 'pillow lavas' (see figure 2; Kassianidou 2013, 133). This richness in copper supports Cyprus' position in the rise metallurgy, export and production, in the Bronze Age Mediterranean.

1.2 Chalcolithic Chronology and Periodization

The Chalcolithic era plays a key role in the development from classless farming settlements to the urban, socially hierarchical polities of the Bronze Age, it also shows a cultural difference from the Levantine mainland highlighting the island's unique identity and lack of interaction with the mainland – something Peltenburg calls 'exclusionary social behaviour' (Peltenburg 2013, 1). As such, the Chalcolithic was one of the most dynamic periods in Prehistoric Cyprus (Steel 2004, 118). The Chalcolithic is separated into three periods: Early, Middle and Late (table 1).

Spanning from around 4000 BC to 3400 BC, the Early Chalcolithic period sees a shift in settlement patterns on the island as Neolithic villages are abandoned, and people migrate to the west coast which becomes densely populated causing settlement on the island to increase heavily (Knapp 2013, 197). Whilst this change seems rapid and dramatic, this may not be representative of the entirety of the island due to a large archaeology interest in the west of the island but not on the eastern or northern side. This may be due to the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkish forces, which bars archaeological study in that area of the island. Not only do we see the location of settlements change, but settlement formation also changes in this period. The housing type changes also from the Late Ceramic Neolithic period, from a rectangular stone building style to a circular and partially sunken wooden pit houses (Knapp 2013, 197). This change from stone-based to wooden housing structures is tied with subterranean activity that some have suggested could be indicative of squatter-like settlements or economically saving housing options (Peltenburg 2013, 3). Either way, we see that there is a shift in the way people are living and thinking about accommodation in this period. Also, in the Early Chalcolithic, we see the Late Neolithic stump figurines start to develop limbs and articulated heads to become Chalcolithic cruciforms (Peltenburg 2013, 3).

Table 1: Chronological table outlining Chalcolithic Cypriot time periods (as discussed by Knapp 2013, 27)

Time Period	Dates
Early Chalcolithic	circa 3900-3600/3400 cal BC
Middle Chalcolithic	circa 3600/3400-2700 cal BC
Late Chalcolithic	circa 2700-2500/2400 cal BC

The Middle Chalcolithic period started around 3400 BC and stopped around 2700 BC. Steel views this as the 'floruit' of the Chalcolithic, with a tremendous amount of change in art and symbolism, social and economic progression, as well as population growth (Steel 2004, 108; Peltenburg 2013, 4). In this period, the previous round-house structures that are introduced in the Early chalcolithic period become much more prevalent. We see domestic spaces becoming structured, with separate areas for cooking, sleeping, working etc (Knapp 2013, 206). Also, in the Middle Chalcolithic period we see a spike in population on the island, possibly due to the stability of housing structures. The earliest evidence of use of copper on the island can be traced back to the Middle Chalcolithic (Steel 2004, 83). Peltenburg suggests that the cruciform figurine is the 'symbol of the ideological basis of so much of Middle Chalcolithic society' (Peltenburg 2013, 10).

Finally, the Late Chalcolithic period spanned from circa 2700 BC to 2400 BC. As asserted by Peltenburg, this period is often overshadowed by the huge upheaval of the Early Bronze Age

especially due to the patchy evidence we have from this period. There is also a virtual disappearance of cruciform figurines, which Peltenburg links to possible shifts in power dynamics within settlements and social hierarchical differences (Peltenburg 2013, 10). We see more evidence for the use of copper in this period than previously in the Middle Chalcolithic. The Late Chalcolithic is followed by the start of the Bronze Age with the Philia Phase.

The transition out of Chalcolithic, whilst a little late for the cruciform picrolite figurines this thesis will focus on, continues to be a mainstay of heated discussion within the academics studying prehistoric Cyprus. It is distinctive due to the large number of rapid changes in material culture on the island that have no clear explanation – a phenomenon known as the Philia phase. There are two main arguments, firstly that there must have been an influx of people from the Anatolian region who, through substantial migration or colonisation, brought an established 'package' of culture with them (Webb and Frankel 2007). This is a culturally sensitive interpretation due to the recent 1974 Turkish invasion of the northern part of the island of Cyprus, as well as continued occupation, the concept of a largescale immigrant colonist society resonates worryingly. The second line of argumentation is that a smaller scale influx of exterior influences mixed with local culture resulting in a hybridisation hypothesis (Knapp 2013, Bolger 2013). Due to the lack of evidence for the Philia culture, we cannot attest the definitive origin of the cultural shift and may never find it – particularly with recent events in mind, every scholar's hypothesis will be biased. This bias is something that can be examined through gender archaeology and gender theory. It aims to understand <u>why</u> we have such societal expectations and biases, particularly regarding gender.

1.3 Cruciform Figurines

Chalcolithic cruciform figurines are an interesting conduit for examining gender theory in academia as they have been heavily analysed throughout the 20th century. From their first recorded appearance at the excavations in the 1930s at Erimi by Dikaios to current excavations in modern day, they have been influenced by sociobiological narratives and static gender roles (Dikaios 1936; 1962). Anthropomorphic figurine-making is not a new phenomenon for this period or region, with production starting possibly early in the Neolithic period (Peltenburg et al 2000, 2001a, 2001b). In the Neolithic, we see a predecessor of the cruciform figurine in the 'stump' figurines, which were more rudimentary stylistically and not as detailed as the Chalcolithic cruciforms (figure 3). In the following period of the Bronze Age, we see the arrival of 'plank figurines' made of clay which date from 2000 BC until around two hundred years later and have a rectangular plank-like shape with elaborate decorations of incised lime-filled design (Bolger 2003, 90).

Figure 3: [left to right] Cypriot Prehistoric Anthropomorphic Figurines: example of a Neolithic stump figurine (www.si.edu/newsdesk/photos/cyprus-human-figures), example of a Chalcolithic cruciform figurine (www.cycladic.gr/en/page/i-techni-tis-kiprou#), example of a Bronze Age plank figurine (www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/241090)

The Chalcolithic cruciform figurines are mainly made from a soft stone locally sourced called 'picrolite'. The stone is of a bluish-green colour and can be harvested from veins or seams in serpentinised ultramafic outcrops (see figure 2) in certain areas in the centre, south and west of the island – such as the central Troodos, Limassol Forest, up towards the Akamas peninsula - or when eroded chunks of the parent rock is transported down rivers to the coasts, the Karyotis river to the north coast and the Loumata and Kouris rivers to the south coast in great quantities (Peltenburg 2019, 235-236). Picrolite's softness makes it easy to carve, scoring 3.5 on the Mohs scale - meaning sophisticated craftsmanship is possible (Peltenburg 1991, 116). Additionally, the softness of the stone means that wear marks and duration of use can be approximated through both the condition of the surface and the perforation hole in the pendant figurines (Winkelmann 2020, 277). Winkelmann assesses that there is a range of variability when it comes to colour and quality of picrolite used for figurines, perhaps suggesting that finding pieces of intact stone suitable enough for carving was rare (Winkelmann 2020, 291). They originally classified as steatite figurines by early interpretation by archaeologist Dikaios in the 1934 excavations at Erimi, it was Reitler who first classified the figurines as 'kreuzidole' in the early 1960s (Winkelmann 2020, 278). The word 'cruciform' comes from the Latin root of *crux, crucis* (f) meaning cross-like, or even more literally a structure on which criminals are crucified and tortured – an example of which we see in Christianity with Jesus Christ's crucifixion.

There is an extensive debate on use and symbolism of the figurines, most of which is discussed in this paper. The three main interpretations thus far are:
   a. These are childbirth charms or fertility symbols used to aid healthy delivery of babies
   b. They are symbols of an ancient deity, a Great Goddess figure that perhaps lends itself to a higher social status for women
   c. The figurines were erotic imagery and ancient pornography
All these interpretations hold the figurines to be gendered female (see figure 13).

Figure 4: Yialia Cruciform Figurine with Pendant. Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. Taken by Layne Redmond, Feb 6th, 2007. Accessed on 30th May 2022. (www.flickr.com/photos/34706632@N06/4367483113)

Bolger is accredited with the theory that the cruciform figurines are symbolic of childbirth and pregnancy – *'their associations in graves of women and children, as well as their squatting posture that mimics the more elaborate seated figurines in clay, argue for their use as birthing pendants'* (Bolger 2003, 87). In my research, most papers that covered interpretation of figurines cited Bolger multiple times. However, there is evidence that this theory of figurines connection to childbirth already existed before Bolger and that her papers accrued the already present material. For example, Elizabeth Goring in her 1991 article discusses the physicality of the figurines and how that might reflect childbirth – for example, outstretched arms that represent straining in childbirth as well as squatted leg position for delivery (Goring 1991). If the figurines are connected to childbirth, then they also become linked to fertility and fecundity, or the desire for children and could perhaps also be a symbolic charm for the requesting of such qualities. Consequently, we can understand the concept that cruciforms are votive in nature and tied to offerings to higher powers – perhaps even symbolic of those higher powers or deities.

One academic that has pioneered theory b – that the figurines represent a Mother Goddess – is Gimbutas. Gimbutas theorized that pre-Bronze Age, society had a matriarchal structure within the 'Old Europe' culture, in which lifestyles were sedentary farming communities and there was a general peacefulness (Gimbutas 1974). This idyllic, eden-like setting Gimbutas pictures has been heavily debated as a concept that is heavy with the feminist agenda, especially as she blames the beginnings of war and strife with the rise of the patriarchy in the Bronze Age. However, Gimbutas' theory is referenced constantly when interpreting the figurines, as she projects a 'Mother Goddess' or proto-Aphrodite imagery onto the cruciforms. The Aphrodite theory has a strong root in Cypriot culture, as the island is supposedly the birthplace of the goddess of love – she bubbled from the water after Cronus (later the wicked father of the Olympian gods) castrated his father Uranus and threw his testicles into the sea, creating Aphrodite in a bubbling sea-foamy picture. This birthplace has been imaged in many scenarios, such as Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' (figure 5) and standing on the beaches of Cyprus you can understand why. This cultural root and well-known story provide much tourism trade for Cyprus, thus is it understandable why Gimbutas' theory is widely accepted and sought after.

Figure 5: 'Birth of Venus' by Sandro Botticelli, completed c 1684-1886 (artincontext.org/the-birth-of-venus-botticelli/). Accessed 5th June 2022.

There are variable differences in sizes of figurines found, with some that are large enough to be held by two hands and some that are small enough to be held between only two fingers. Cruciform figurines seem to come in two sizes: smaller, more portable pendants or charms

and larger, more stationary figurines. Vagnetti argued that due to perforation holes in the smaller figurines, they were pendants meant to be worn around the neck and carried with someone – 'they imitate the larger figurines and, as we know from the famous figure from Yialia, they were worn threaded on a necklace around the neck' (Vagnetti 1980, 40 – figure 4). The symbolism of these has been interpreted is much like a talisman or apotropaic charm of an evil eye, a Christian cross, or the yin-yang symbol meant to ward evil and bring luck to the wearer. This hypothesis has been widely accepted because the figurines do not seem to be free-standing. A Campo surmises that the larger figurines may have been leant against a wall or fitting in a certain cavity in the ground for display (a Campo 1994, 84). Many academics believe they were grave offerings due to their context – however see table 7 in a Campo as this was not true of all contexts of figurines (a Campo 1994). A Campo maintains that there may have been a combination of functions. For example, the pendants may have been status-linked, magical, religious, or ritual whereas the larger figurines may also be status-linked, play related, educational, magical, religious, or ritual (a Campo 1994, 157-158). In his 1985 book *The Art of Ancient Cyprus*, Desmond Morris was the first to argue for the figurines purely practical function, 'figurines were interpreted seen to function as practical aids in the birthing process "personal good luck charms worn to increase the chances of giving birth"' (Morris 1985, 116).

In more recent times, the Yialia figurine (figure 4) has been adopted as a Cypriot symbol and was put on a €2 euro coin in 2008 (figure 6). This commemorative coin is seen as a symbol of Cypriot civilisation and art in prehistory - an example of how the symbolism of the cruciform figurines is still culturally important and recognizable today.

Figure 6: €2 coin with the Yialia figurine symbol from 2008 (www.fleur-de-coin.com/coin-shop/Cyprus-2-euros-2011-Idol-Pomos_eur16610). Accessed 30th May 2022.

1.4 Studies and Literature on the Cruciform Figurines

This section will provide a brief overview of the key texts used in the content analysis. This will be done chronologically and will correspond to table 2 below.

Table 2: Chronological overview of selected literature on cruciform figurines for use in content analysis

1930s-	Dikaios	Selected works
1974	Gimbutas	*Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe*
1977	Karageorghis	*La grande déesse de Chypre et son culte: à travers l'iconographie, de l'époque néolithique au Vléme*
1985	Morris	*The Art of Ancient Cyprus*
1990	Peltenberg	*Figures in a bowl: evidence for Chalcolithic religion from Kissonerga Mosphilia*
1991	Goring	*Pottery figurines: the development of a coroplastic art in Chalcolithic Cyprus*
1991	Vagnetti	*Stone Sculpture in Chalcolithic Cyprus*
1992	Bolger	*The Archaeology of Fertility and Birth: A Ritual Deposit from Chalcolithic Cyprus*

1994	A Campo	*Anthropomorphic representations in prehistoric Cyprus: a formal and symbolic analysis of figurines, c. 3500-1800 BC*
1996	Bolger	*Figurines, Fertility, and the Emergence of Complex Society in Prehistoric Cyprus*
1997	Knapp and Meskell	*Bodies of Evidence on Prehistoric Cyprus*
2002	Lesure	*The goddess diffracted – thinking about the figurines of early villages*
2004	Steel	*Cyprus before history: from the earliest settlers to the end of the Bronze Age*
2016	Gamble, Winkelmann, and Fox	*Polydactyly in Chalcolithic Figurines from Cyprus*
2017	Lesure	*Representation as Visual Exegesis: The Stone Figurines of Chalcolithic Cyprus*
2019	Bolger, Crewe, and Peltenberg	*Figurine Makers of Prehistoric Cyprus: Settlement and Cemeteries at Souskiou*
2020	Winklemann	*The Neolithic and Chalcolithic figurines of Cyprus*

Dikaios' work was not included in the content analysis but should be mentioned here for purposes of later referencing within interpretations. Dikaios was a prominent figure in early to mid-20th-century archaeology in Cyprus, excavating sites such as Erimi, Khirokitia, Sotira and more from the 1930s until the 1970s. However, his literature is scarcely written on figurines and where it is, it is more focused on later Bronze Age plank figurines. Nevertheless, much of his academic work lays the groundwork for later interpretation of figurines and therefore is referenced.

In her 1974 book entitled *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe*, Gimbutas does not write on Cyprus specifically, in fact, the only mention of the island in her entire book is when mentioning the birthplace of Aphrodite – 'Homer regarded Cyprus as her true home, but pre-Phoenician Cyprus was within the sphere of Minoan culture. There is strong reason to believe that "Aphrodite" was a goddess-name originally common to the language of both islands' (Gimbutas 1974, 149). However, despite the lack of the control search term 'cruciform', I examined a chapter of her book due to its large impact on many of the sources that write on cruciform figurines.

The 1977 Karageorghis book was written in French, therefore I had to translate my search words into French to search for them. For the literature selection of this text, I used the entirety of the introduction as well as the relevant pages of chapter 1 that regarded the Chalcolithic cruciform figurines (pages 22 – 32). In this book, Karageorghis uses phrases such as 'Mother Goddess' or 'mother' linking the figurines with religious symbolism and fertility and building on Gimbutas' theory.

Morris's 1985 book entitled *The Art of Ancient Cyprus* has more of a dedication to art than it does to academics, which makes it an interesting addition to the content analysis. Morris's profession as a painter, ethologist, and sociobiologist places him as the only non-archaeologist academic included in the literature studied.

Peltenberg's 1990 article looks at evidence of religion at Chalcolithic site Kissonerga-Mosphilia, particularly using a ritual hoard. Within the hoard were anthropomorphic figurines, both pottery and stone in a variety of forms including cruciform and what seems to be seated figures on a birthing stool (Peltenberg 1990, 27). Peltenberg looks linking this assemblage with traces of cultic imagery and possibly religion.

Goring also looks at the ritual hoard at the site Kissonerga-Mosphilia in her 1991 paper but focuses on the 8 pottery figurines out of the 18 figurines found (Goring 1991, 153). She discusses the symbolism and childbirth hypothesis extensively, and this paper is often used as a reference for later discussion on this theory.

Vagnetti discusses Neolithic and Chalcolithic figurines, looking at many examples of cruciform figurines and analysing their physical forms in the 1991 paper. Vagnetti's conclusion is that whilst the cruciform figurine has roots within the Neolithic, the level of craftsmanship in Cypriot art 'remains unrivalled in the eastern Mediterranean world in the fourth millennium BC' (Vagnetti 1991, 149).

Bolger's 1992 article covers concept around the childbirth ritualisation of the figurines. Bolger sums up the discussion and interpretation surrounding the figurines in the following questions she asks: 'there has been much speculation concerning the meaning and function of Chalcolithic figurines. Did they represent mother goddesses? Did they serve as fetishes or votive objects in rituals of sympathetic magic? Or were they merely children's toys?' (Bolger 1992, 150).

A Campo's book 1994 entitled Anthropomorphic Representations in Prehistoric Cyprus: a Formal and Symbolic Analysis of Figurines, c. 3500-1800 B.C. provided compelling insights as well as informative overviews of study on the figurines up to its publication in 1994. For the content analysis, two separate chapters were chosen – chapter 4 and chapter 7.2 – due to their in-depth interpretative and analytical overview of the cruciforms. Chapter 4 is entitled Chalcolithic Cruciforms: description and context and provides a schematic overview of interpretations of the figurines by authors such as Vagnetti, Peltenberg and Karageorghis, and therefore includes only a small amount of a Campo's own interpretation, rather it serves as a discussion of other's interpretations. Alternatively, chapter 7.2 is entitled Chalcolithic Cruciforms: interpretation – therefore adding her own hypotheses and discussing possible analysis as to the use, meaning, symbolism and context of the cruciforms. A Campo asserts the possibility that differences in the figurines could be due to artistic choice rather than calculated or conscious decisions (A Campo 1994).

Bolger's 1996 paper is a continuation of her earlier work from the 1990s on linking the cruciforms with female fertility and childbirth. It provides an overview of interpretations of figurines from not only the Chalcolithic but also Neolithic and Bronze Age plank idols. She concludes, similarly to Gimbutas, that the emergence of social complexity linked with the decline in cruciform birthing figurines marked a loss of social and economic status for women in a progressively more patriarchal society (Bolger 1996, 371-372).

In their 1997 paper, Knapp and Meskell look at prehistoric Cypriot figurines through academic discussions that were upcoming in the late 1990s when it was published e.g.

sociology, anthropology, queer theory, masculinist and feminist studies. Their aim is to examine the figurines from the Chalcolithic and Prehistoric Bronze Age in Cyprus in a 'perspective which does not privilege sex' (Knapp and Meskell 1997, 183). This attempt seems to be the first of its kind within the dialogue around the figurines.

Lesure's 2002 paper is a comparative analysis on anthropomorphic figurines in both the Neolithic Near East and also formative Meso-America looking at why figurines predominantly seem to be female (Lesure 2002). Lesure also aims to provide a framework of understanding of the figurines that allows for examining similarities and evaluation of different interpretations without dismissing the complexity of diversity in prehistoric art (Lesure 2002, 587).

Chapter 4 of Steel's 2004 book titles at the 'Age of Copper' examines the Chalcolithic on the island. She writes on a range of figurines, from the male seated figure found at Souskiou as a possible symbol of male fertility to the cruciforms and the importance of childbirth in Chalcolithic communities (Steel 2004, 102).

Gamble, Winkelmann, and Fox's paper is the first of its kind to look at biological expression of a certain phenomenon within Cypriot art, discussing the concept of polydactylism – addition of fingers and toes – with figurine examples from the Chalcolithic. There were no examples of figurines with fingers and toes in Cyprus before the Chalcolithic period (Gamble, Winkelmann, and Fox 2016). This review of material through the lens of biological differences that are not linked with gender or sexual differences is refreshing and goes in-depth analysis on the presence or lack of limbs represented.

In a more recent article from 2017 by Lesure, he suggests that rather than being symbols of people the stone figurines were more logo-esque with a vague hint of anthropomorphism – interpretations of subjects much like modern cartoons who distort faces in modern society (Lesure 2017, 33). Discussing picrolite cruciforms, phalliforms and tripartite figurines, Lesure acknowledges the childbirth hypothesis but considers them as more abstract, less definitive depictions of people (Lesure 2017, 47). This paper agrees with A Campo's 1994 hypothesis that artistic choice creates variability in representation rather than a deliberate plan (A Campo 1994; Lesure 2017, 40).

Figurine Makers of Prehistoric Cyprus is a 2019 book written by Bolger, Crewe and Peltenberg. It covers a vast amount of literature on figurines, so I have chosen only three chapters that cover cruciform chalcolithic figurines. Chapter 11 and 12 are more on the materials side, simply listing the objects and their details rather than interpretation. Chapter 21 entitled 'Ritual, Identity and Community at Souskiou: traditions and transformations' cover more theoretical interpretations of the settlement. It includes theories on the ritual economy and use as well as the general economic status of inhabitants – ranging from egalitarianism to ritual economy and the decline of cruciform symbolism (Bolger, Crewe and Peltenberg 2019, 323). In placing cruciforms within society, we can examine not only their use but also possibilities of identity and status 'the central role of cruciform symbols in the ritual economy is further attested by the transformation of these symbols from markers of personal identity to ritual symbols used exclusively for funerary purposes during the MChal.' (Bolger, Crewe and Peltenberg 2019, 333).

Winkelmann's 2020 book is the most recent publication chosen for the content analysis and acts as a comprehensive anthology of both Neolithic and Cruciform anthropomorphic figurines in Cyprus. Chapter 6 has been chosen for the content analysis as it covers the Chalcolithic cruciforms; both the 'classification' and 'appearance' sections will be analysed. Winkelmann's writing is more descriptive than interpretative, rather she discusses the interpretations of others than adding her own definition however the book is a useful corpus.

Chapter 2: Gendering of the Human Form

'By engendering the past, we are obliged to question our own views of human relationships, and to formulate explicit theories based on conscious social perspectives rather than unmediated presentist norms' (Bolger 2003, 10).

Within academia, gender studies and feminism has held an aura of bra-burning, homemade activist placards and shouting chants from protests whilst walking down the street. As outlined by Gilchrist, 'feminist archaeology is defined by its political motivation, to recognize and work to change the patriarchal nature of society, archaeology and our perception of the past' (Gilchrist 1991, 496). It is a tool to deconstruct binaries of masculinity, femininity, and to look beyond the engendered categorisation that has been imposed on the past.

2.1 Gender Theory 101

Gender theory is the study of masculinity, femininity, and the construction of gendered identity within a given context. Within this study, we must clarify that there are two modes of gendering ancient bodies. Firstly, modern gendering that is done by contemporary academics with modern societal underpinnings and biases. Secondly, gendering done in the past within ancient societies. The latter will never be truly ascertained due to the lack of concrete evidence but is informed and shaped by the former.

It must be noted here that sex and gender are not the same – sex pertains to biological attributes given at birth, whereas gender is a culturally and socially constructed identity such as masculinity and femininity. When sexing figurines and ancient bodies, we are looking at their sexual physical characteristics that might contribute to how they are perceived in society. Within gendering figurines, we are using context, sexual characteristics, and other attributes to understand gendered identities within a society.

Whilst it is not restricted to only the feminist agenda, much of the discipline is intertwined with the foundations of feminism, a field of study that is so diverse it cannot be explained in one definition. However, some key terminology within feminism can help understand the field better. Firstly, feminism strives for *equality* between sexes as well as between wider minority communities. Feminism would explain that inequality between sexes has been cultivated and upheld under the *patriarchy*, which is a male-dominated societal system that ensures male superiority through many methods. This can also be explained by the term *androcentrism*, which literally translates to 'man-centred'. Much of feminism also calls for *interdisciplinarity*, which is the understanding that every individual in society has their own set of experiences particularly regarding social categorizations of race, gender, or class. These social categorizations work together to make up the framework of society, granting privilege to some as well as upholding systems of discrimination and disadvantage. These are just a few terms of many which make up the field of thought of feminism, and much like other disciplines it holds various uses and understandings for different individuals. For example, feminist archaeologists may use feminism and gender theory to examine the imbalances of the field regarding studying androcentric narratives rather than gynocentric narratives (gynocentric being the opposite of androcentric, therefore being 'woman-centred'). But in the same way that androcentrism is a tool that can be used to cultivate inequality, gynocentrism has been used in the past to promote the superiority of female narratives over male therefore upsetting the equality which feminism ultimately strives for.

Both terms also leave out the possibility for more genders, or differing genders to simply male and female.

Feminism as a movement is termed as being in 'waves'. While there is much disagreement among feminists as to when exactly these dates were, we have seen three waves of feminist thus far – and are possibly entering a fourth. Gilchrist summarises the most common chronological framework in her 1999 book *Gender Archaeology*: 'first wave' feminism spanned from around 1880 to 1920 eluding to the women's suffrage movement where women demanded and achieved better rights concerning education, voting, employment, and politics. 'Second wave' feminism peaked in the late 1960s where women sought after rights within their private sphere such as reproduction and sexuality as well as more equality with men – it is during second wave feminism we see the rise in academic and intellectual movements and terminology such as the patriarchy and research into the origins of female suppression. 'Third wave' feminism arose in the 1990s where postmodernism encouraged feminist theory and the subjectivity of engendered behaviour, as well as looking at specific cultural gender differences (Gilchrist 1999, 2). Due to the cyclical 20-to-30-year nature of feminism waves, it could be predicted that we are entering a new wave now or perhaps are already in one – the Me-Too movement and its consequential ability to raise sexual allegations, Black Lives Matter and tackling white supremacy, rights for same-sex marriage and supporting the LGBTQIA+ community, looking beyond gender binarism, as well as the continual fight for reproductive healthcare are perhaps a few factors. Socio-economic movements are hugely informative in academic research, and thus one of the hypotheses of this paper is the possible link between gendered vocabulary interpretation and writing with the contemporary socio-political movements of the time. This will be explored in the *Interpretations* chapter.

We see that there is quite often a delay in the uptake of theories, not only in academia but also in wider society. This might also account for the waves of feminism, as the 20-to-30-year gap between major upheavals in mainstream society takes place. However, there are issues with the metaphor of feminism 'waves', as it implies periods of stagnation versus periods of upheaval and change in discourse. For example, whilst we may be in a new wave today, we may also be in a period where multiple forms of feminism exist at once and interdisciplinarity (www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth, accessed 6th June 2022).

In the same way that feminism is a key part of gender theory, so is masculinism. Through looking at how masculinity is constructed, we can compare this and incorporate feminism into the entirety of societal understanding, and vice-versa. They act as counterpart components in the wider discussion. Knapp and Meskell are concerned with the balancing of both feminist and masculinist theory in their 1997 paper. As explained in this paper, masculinist theory should not be confused with androcentrism; rather it is the formulation of the masculine subject through the understanding of engendering (Knapp and Meskell 1997, 185). Started in the 1980s, masculinism and male studies focuses on how masculinity is a historically situated social construct and enacts certain behavioural types. The term 'hegemonic masculinity' was coined by Connell and is concerned with social hierarchy and conventional masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This is the concept that the social hierarchy within a patriarchy excludes non-macho and feminine men as well as

women and other minorities – thus excluding any form of masculinity other than dominant. This ensures the continued control and subordination of any threat to the patriarchy, even by targeting men with a differing type of masculinity.

2.2 Gender in Archaeology

Gender archaeology, as Gilchrist states, 'is part of the study of the social structure, as significant as rank in the social stratification and the evolution of past societies' (Gilchrist 1991, 497). As archaeologists, we aim to understand the social behaviours of people in the past and therefore require multi-vocality to achieve this. One tool for this job is gender archaeology, another tool is decolonializing archaeology and yet another is non-Eurocentric archaeology.

Keeping in mind that archaeology can be used as a tool for political agendas, it is vital to apply gender theory within hypothesises and findings to understand *why* certain interpretations were made. By discovering our underlying, societally imbued bias we can deconstruct our unconscious beliefs. A useful definition for this phenomenon is an 'incorrigible proposition', which is an assumption or belief that cannot be proved wrong despite there being no concrete evidence to support it – supposed truths that are unquestionable and unexplainable in their basis (Fausto-Sterling 2020). This definition will be used throughout this thesis in understanding what moulds societal views and will form an ongoing theme of questioning *why* we have such biases.

As stated by Bolger in her book 'Gender in Ancient Cyprus', the first publication to address gender within the archaeological discipline was by Conkey and Spector in 1984, which looked at some of the factors of why gender was so neglected within the academic field (Bolger 2003, 10). Factors included: 'pervasive androcentric bias and western ethnocentrism with regard to interpretation of male and female roles in the past and their application to non-western pre-industrial societies' as well as being 'linked to static views about men's and women's roles in society' (Conkey and Spector 1984). Whilst Conkey and Spector's paper seemed outlandish to academia at the time, it paved the way for embedding gender theory into mainstream archaeological interpretation, and thanks to many papers written in the 1990s and 2000s we have reached a point where their interpretations are valued within the discipline. Gilchrist summarises that we see a difference from pre-1970 ungendered, and perhaps male-biased, narratives that evolved into greater need for women in publication during the 1980s and 1990s, and then onto the concern of studying the masculine and feminine (Gilchrist 1999, 1). Thus, we see the emergence of gender theory, both masculinist and feminist, entering the world of archaeological interpretation.

> 'An engendered re-balancing of the scales is long overdue and critically important to the trajectory of the discipline. However, emphasis on one sex to the exclusion of the other is not only detrimental to serious gender/feminist studies, but threatens the interpretative integrity of archaeology' (Meskell 1995, 84).

Meskell gives an example of an academic using gynocentric narratives to cultivate female superiority by discussing Gimbutas' interpretation of the Mother Goddess religion in her 1995 paper. Gimbutas' 1974 *book entitled The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* hypothesizes that before the Bronze Age metallurgy and weapon-production, society was

peaceful, productive, and matriarchal – an Eden-like utopian analogy she calls 'Old Europe' (Gimbutas 1974). Old Europeans were ruled by matriarchy and matrilineal family structures, all sublimated through a Great Goddess who was worshipped through anthropomorphic figurines (Gimbutas 1974). This use of archaeological evidence to cement personally motivated narratives is extremely damaging. We see it within colonial archaeology, androcentric archaeology, as well as in Eurocentric narratives that flow into museums and therefore into cultural identity. This, as stated by Meskell above, not only threatens the interpretative integrity of the discipline but also risks basing cultural identity and heritage knowledge on a crumbling foundation of misinformation (Meskell 1995). Taylor believes that we can trace matriarchal narratives in our modern sense from Victorian ethnographers, who explored the 'primitive' parts of the British colonial empire and concluded that because men weren't in charge, women had to be – despite these societies simply being egalitarian (Taylor 1996, 8).

2.3 The Anatomy of Gender

Anthropomorphism and the creation of human-like figurines ultimately leads to discussion of bodies and their physicality. In order to study these figurines, we must dissect components – e.g. anatomical and bodily features. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, sex is the physical sexual attributes biologically given at birth whereas gender is a culturally influenced construct such as femininity and masculinity.

Breasts have strong connotation with femininity and the female sex in the modern era. As part of the reproductive system, as well as a highly eroticised part of the body, breasts make up the largest part of the literature around engendering bodies other than genitalia, as seen with the language used with the cruciform figurines. In her book Monuments and Maidens, Marina Warner hypothesises that there are two modes of meaning for the breast: both as an area of power and life-giving sustenance, but conversely also as an area of eroticism that is linked with vulnerability going on to state that 'in English, the words "breast" and "bosom" were not sex-specific either until possibly very recently' (Warner 1987, 278). Due to the high eroticism of breasts in modern times, there is a temptation to link their imagery with the concept of fecundity, fertility, and childbearing – solidifying their relationship to the female form and womanhood. However, the links between the sexual characteristics of the human form the figurine emulates and the gender roles that human embodied within ancient society is too complex to simply codify into breasts equals fertility, womanhood, eroticism, or goddess figure. In the chapter *Performing Gender* in her 2003 book, Bolger hypothesises 'figurines without breasts are presumed to be females by analogy with those that have breasts; accordingly, the portrayal of breasts would not have been necessary since anyone viewing the figurine would have assumed their existence' (Bolger 2003, 101). Academics such as Talalay have suggested that the lack of breasts could have been a deliberate choice on the artists behalf that suggests a possible gender-free concept, or perhaps even transcending the gender binary (Talalay 2008, 134).

When a baby is born, an examination is conducted on the genitals to assess and assign the child's sex – this sexing of the child can also happen midway through pregnancy in an ultrasound scan. In most cases in modern society, this determines how that child is raised and influences their gendered identity. Vulvas and Phalluses, pubic triangles and genital regions hold an intersectional space in the debate on gender and sexing individuals. For

example, in archaeology when a body is sexed as male or female, they are then assigned secondary characteristics as to how their sex lived or even how gender might have been performed. But what does this mean for intersex individuals? And what about transgender or gender-nonconforming individuals? These categories show that social lives are not always informed by genitalia or body physicality.

Androgyny in anthropomorphic art is debated as stylistic choice, representation of gender-nonconforming individuals or even error in the literature surrounding the cruciforms. Gimbutas' theory on the seemingly phallic nature of figurines is that the figurine remains female at its core despite the obvious phallicism, and this representation is probably error due to Neolithic people not being able to comprehend biological conception (Gimbutas 1974, 237). However, Meskell counters this by asserting that this does not explain the male, zoomorphic and sexless figurines that are also found (Meskell 1995, 80). Winkelmann, Talalay and Knapp and Meskell as well as many more urge academia to look beyond the sexual coding of the physical body when looking at an individual's experience (Winkelmann 2020; Talalay 2008; Knapp and Meskell 1997).

Chapter 3: Content Analysis

3.1 The method of content analysis

As discussed in the introduction chapter, the qualitative and quantitative nature of this method works together to enable researchers to create results that reflect the depth and breadth of the research. For this research, specific word analysis will provide a

A certain number of papers will be chosen from the discipline, a selection that will reflect the literature surrounding the figurines. From these papers, search terms will be counted and analysed. Selection of search terms will be included below and will include words such as 'fertility' or 'goddess'. The number of times a search terms is used should reflect the authors biases and perhaps the chronological nature of certain terms used. This qualitative data will be displayed visually through charts and graphs (see 'results' chapter).

According to Hsieh and Shannon, there are three main types of content analysis: conventional, directed, and summative. The conventional method uses coding categories derived from text data, the directed method uses theory or relevant research as guidance for the initial codes and the summative method uses counting and comparisons, usually of key words or content, that is followed by interpreted (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). In this paper, both the directed and summative method will be used. In using existing theories surrounding the figurines, such as the concepts of childbirth by Bolger and Peltenberg, search terms of 'birth' and 'fertility' will be used. The summative method will make up most of the methodology, with a quantitative amount of search terms being compared between certain papers to create qualitative analyses and interpretations (see 'interpretation and analysis' chapter).

3.2 Introduction and selection of key texts

The selection of texts must be indicative of the academic discipline which it aims to represent, therefore a broad scope of papers from variety of authors and backgrounds will be chosen. However, as only a certain amount of literature can be used within this study; therefore, the results will not represent the entirety of engendered language surrounding these figurines.

To represent chronological differences, papers published from the mid-20th century until modern day will be used. The chronology will be analysed in later chapters.

3.3 Search terms

The search terms for this method will need to be considered carefully, as it must be variable enough to apply to academics from different backgrounds but also unifying to create the quantitative content. There are four main categories of search terms that will be explored: anatomical, childbirth, eroticism, and deification.

The list of anatomical search terms includes:
1. 'breast'
2. 'pubic triangle'
3. 'phallus'

4. 'genitalia'
5. 'female'/'male'

The list of child-birth related search terms includes:

6. 'birth' (or any variation of 'birth', such as 'childbirth', 'birthing', 'birth-giver' etc)
7. 'fertility'

The eroticism search terms includes:

8. 'concubine'
9. 'virgin'
10. 'ménage-à-trois'

And finally, the deification search terms includes:

11. 'goddess'
12. 'Aphrodite'
13. 'ritual'

These search terms will allow for some variations (such as the case of 'birth') to enable the research to get as many results from the papers as possible, whilst also understanding the differing writing techniques of the authors. These are the preliminary search terms, and whilst it is sometimes customary to alter or change the terms throughout the content analysis process, I hope this will not be necessary due to the variables.

Footnotes, figure headings and the like will not be included in the content analysis.

3.4 Discussion of search term selection and hypotheses:

Initially, the content analysis search terms were selected in categories such as 'anatomy' or 'deification' however this did not produce directed enough results and therefore specific search terms within these categories will now be analysed. The terms were selected through reading the material and analysing

The category of anatomy will rely upon 'anatomy' section of the previous chapter and aims to examine the sexual features of the physical forms of the figurines. Using search terms such as 'breast', 'pubic triangle', 'genitalia' and 'phallus' will look at how writers interpret the physicality of these anthropomorphic figurines. This will also lead to understanding some of the gendered theories that are based on sexual differences and the physical manifestation of gender. I hypothesize that until very recent, or even contemporary discussions, gendered language that looks at categorization of 'male' and 'female' attributes will be prevalent. For example, that there will be many analyses that base their engendered interpretations on the presence of 'breasts' or 'genitalia'.

Currently, my hypothesis is that childbirth related search terms will become more prevalent in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the third-wave feminist movement as well as academics such as Goring, Peltenburg and Bolger. However, it will be interesting to examine the occurrence of the search terms before this time – particularly regarding fertility and how that can be related to both deification and perhaps even eroticism.

The category of eroticism is perhaps going to be the smallest but most interesting set of results. So far, the only search term that occurs more than once in this category is 'concubine' – due to the theory of figurines representing a concubine symbol in funerary

contexts. Whilst I hypothesize that earlier academics, for example pre-1980s, will theorize pornographisation and eroticism– whilst during later times of more feminist interpretations that these earlier eroticisms will be discussed and discarded accordingly.

Deification can pertain to many difference discourses, from ritual deposits and behaviour to the Great Goddess religion of Old Europe (Gimbutas 1974). This category is too broad to be a singular dialogue, and this breadth is reflected in the search terms. Therefore, five search terms have been chosen: 'goddess', 'Aphrodite', 'cult', 'ritual', 'magical'.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will showcase the charts and tables of results from the content analysis. There will be seven main results charts, starting with the overall levels of search terms found.
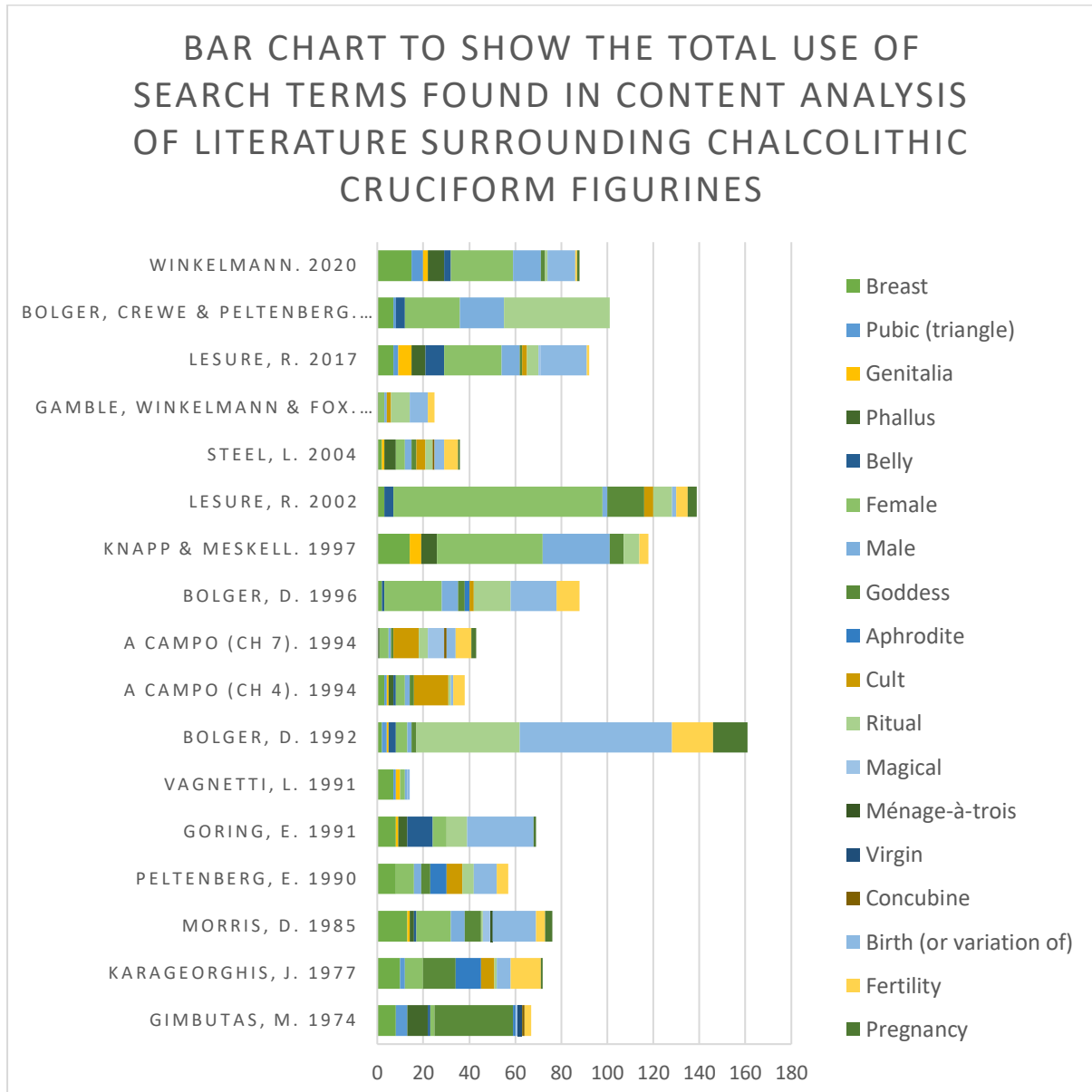
Figure 7: Bar chart showing the total number of search terms found in content analysis of literature surrounding Chalcolithic cruciform figurines

This chart shows the levels of engendered language in all the literature analysed, also shown chronologically from top to bottom. This highest count of search terms is Bolger's 1992 paper, which shows a total of 161 search terms identified. The lowest number of search terms found was in the 1991 Vagnetti article, only identifying 14 search terms. The lowest search term category found was eroticism, with only 6 search terms identified throughout all literature (see fig 12). The highest search term found is 'female' with 298 occurrences (see fig 13).

LINE GRAPH TO SHOW THE USE OF THE WORD **'BREAST'** IN LITERATURE SURROUNDING CHALCOLITHIC CRUCIFORM FIGURINES CHRONOLOGICALLY
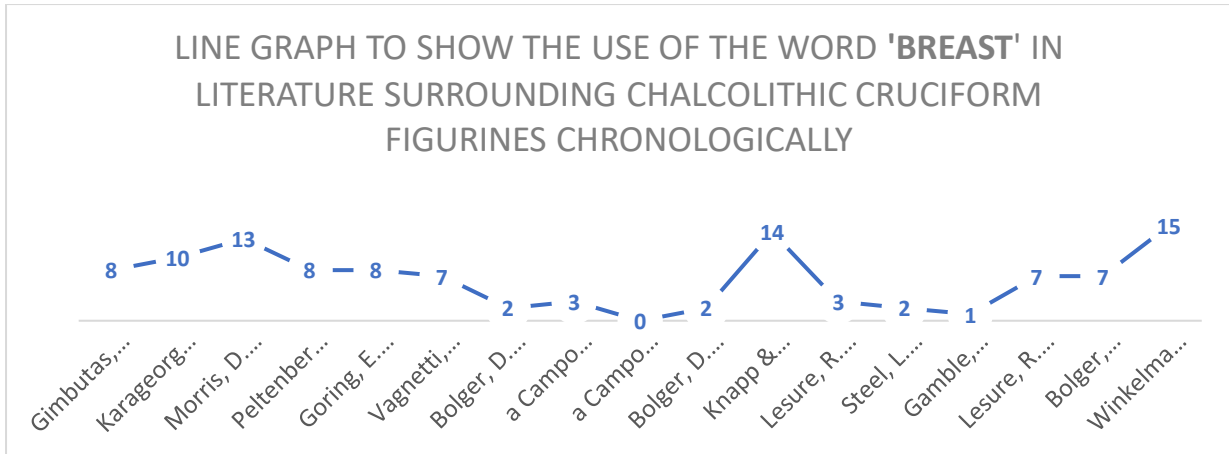
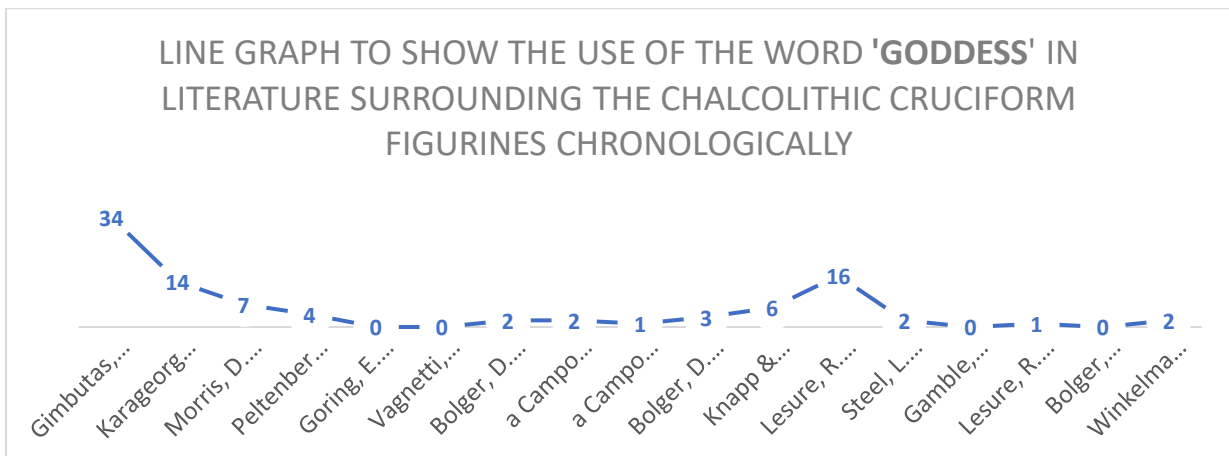*Figure 8: Line graph to show the use of the word 'breast' in literature surrouding Chalcolithic cruciform figurines chronologically*

The term 'breast' was used at an average of 6.5 times throughout the literature and is found a total of 110 throughout all literature. Winkelmann uses the word 'breast' the most at a count of 15, closely followed by Knapp and Meskell who use it 14 times (Winkelmann 2020; Knapp and Meskell 1997).

LINE GRAPH TO SHOW THE USE OF THE WORD **'GODDESS'** IN LITERATURE SURROUNDING THE CHALCOLITHIC CRUCIFORM FIGURINES CHRONOLOGICALLY

Figure 9: Line graph to show the use of the word 'goddess' in literature surrounding the Chalcolithic cruciform figurines chronologically

In this graph we see a downward trend of the use of the word 'goddess' chronologically. It is used 34 times by Gimbutas in her 1974 book, followed by 14 times by Karageorghis (Gimbutas 1974; Karageorghis 1977). However, there is a spike where it is used 16 times by Lesure in the 2002 article, where Lesure discusses prehistoric goddess theories (Lesure 2002).
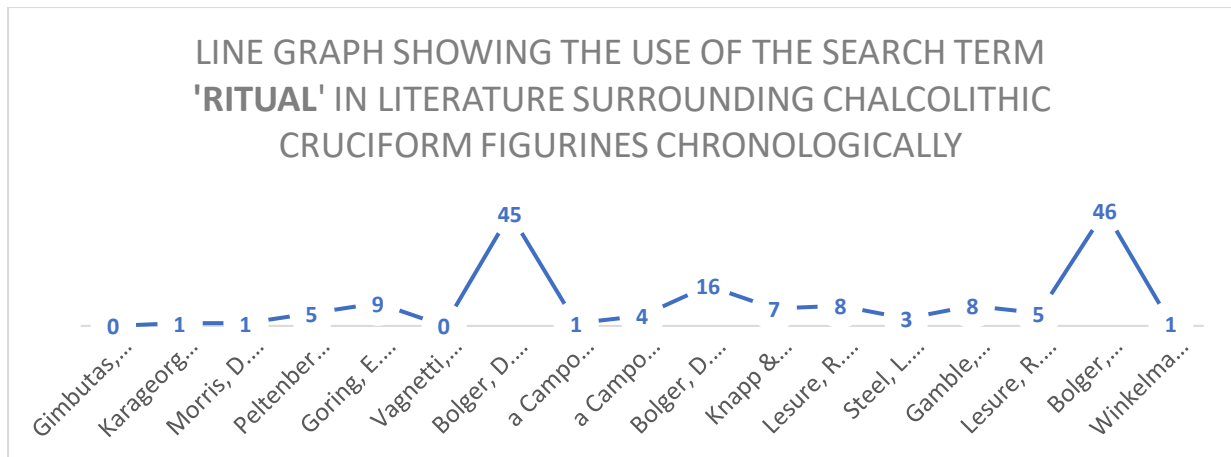
LINE GRAPH SHOWING THE USE OF THE SEARCH TERM 'RITUAL' IN LITERATURE SURROUNDING CHALCOLITHIC CRUCIFORM FIGURINES CHRONOLOGICALLY

Figure 10: Line graph showing the use of the search term 'ritual' in literature surrounding the Chalcolithic cruciform figurines chronologically

The search term 'ritual' is mostly employed by Bolger in her writings, as we can see in this graph. In her three papers included in the study, she used the search term 107 times (Bolger 1992; 1996; Bolger, Crewe and Peltenberg 2019).

BAR CHART SHOWING THE USES OF BIRTH-RELATED, FERTILITY AND PREGNANCY SEARCH TERMS IN LITERATURE SURROUNDING CHALCOLITHIC CRUCIFORM FIGURINES
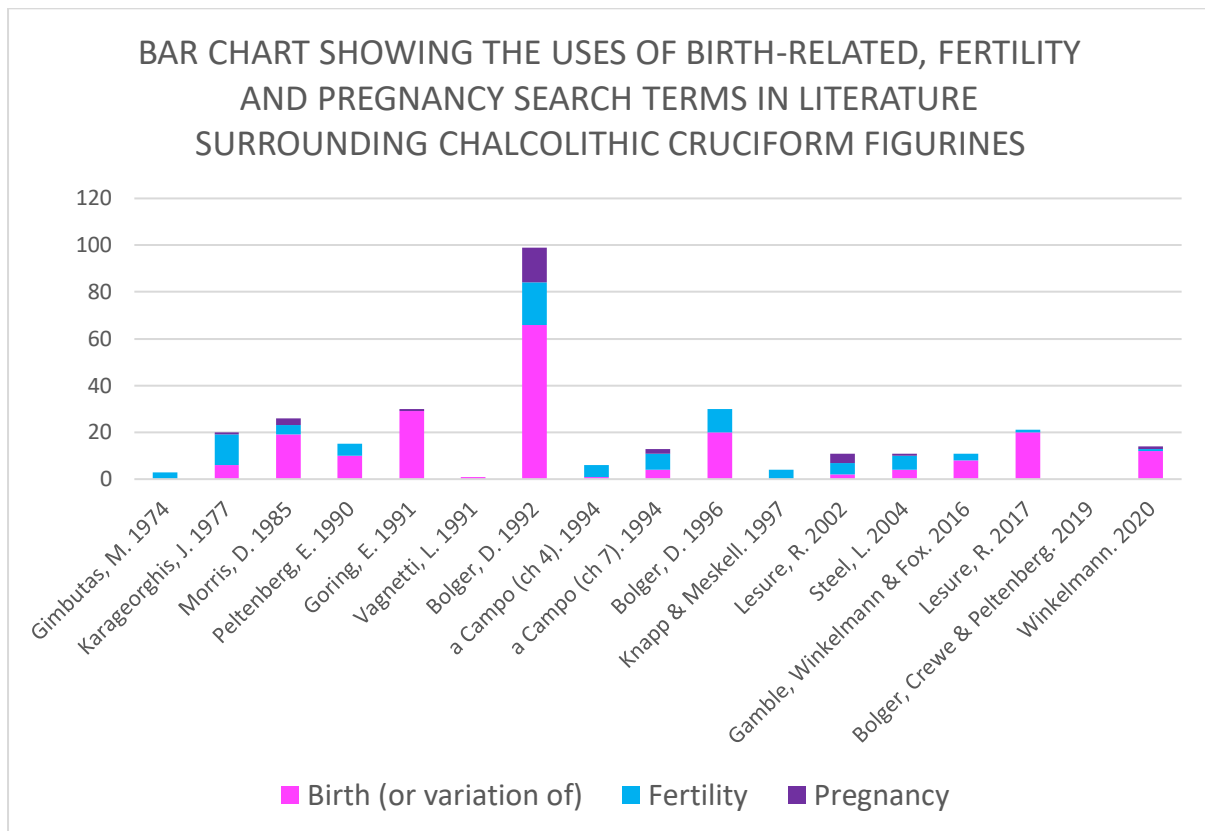
Figure 11: Bar chart showing the uses of birth-related, fertility, and pregnancy search terms in literature surrounding Chalcolithic cruciform figurines

In this chart, we see a clear definition of birth-related, fertility and pregnancy search terms are found in Bolger's 1992 paper. Gimbutas does not mention either 'birth' or 'pregnancy' but uses search term 'fertility' three times – this difference is possibly due to linking fertility with deities and goddess symbolism. Bolger, Crewe and Peltenberg's 2019 writing is the only piece of literature in which these search terms do not show.
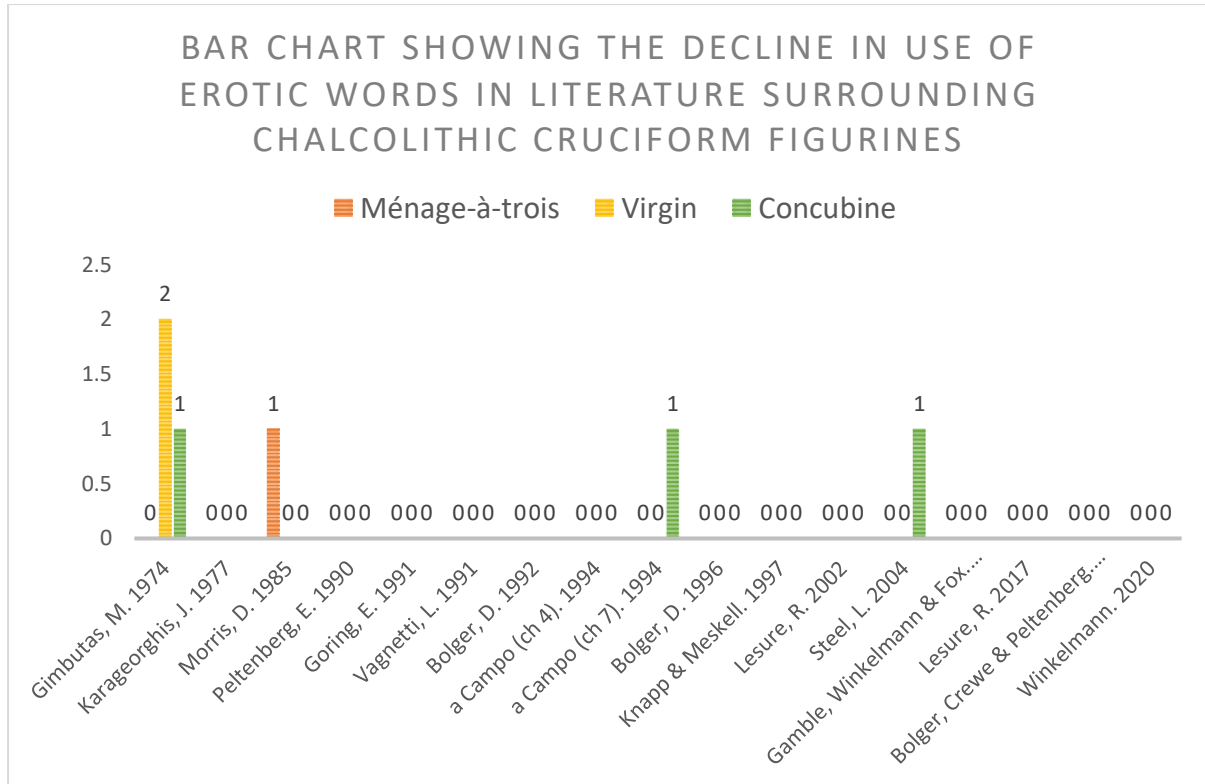
Figure 12: Bar chart showing the decline in use of erotic words in literature surrounding Chalcolithic cruciform figurines

Search term 'concubine' is found in three pieces of literature; Gimbutas 1974, a Campo 1994 chapter 7, and Steel 2004 – but only a singular occurrence in each of these papers. Gimbutas 1974 paper identifies the search term 'virgin' used within an erotic context twice, placing it at the highest rating of eroticism found within all literature with only 3 search terms.
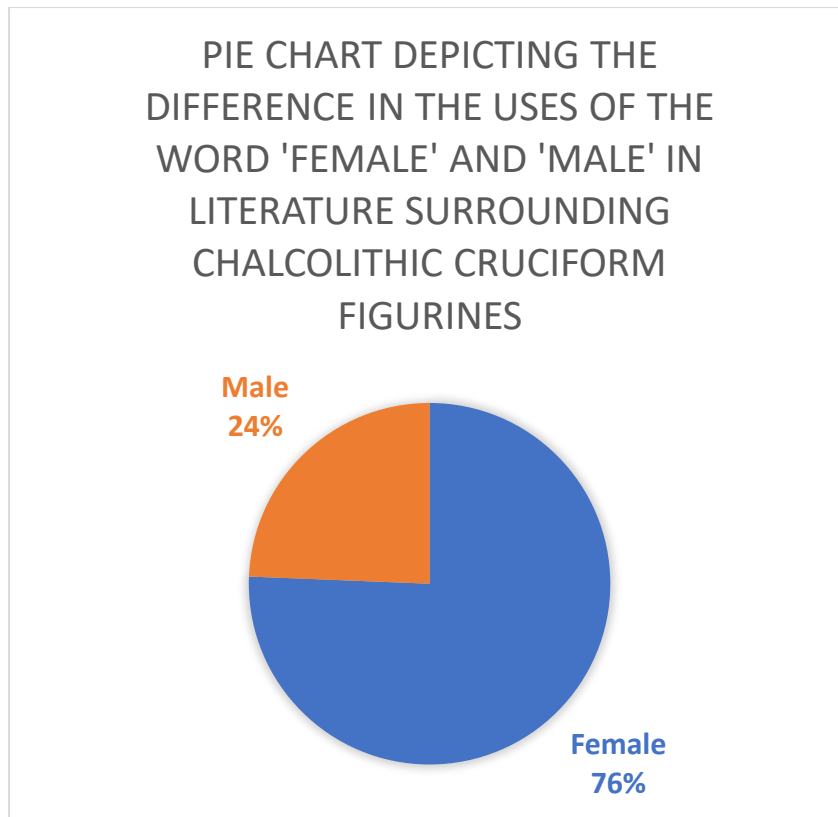
PIE CHART DEPICTING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE USES OF THE WORD 'FEMALE' AND 'MALE' IN LITERATURE SURROUNDING CHALCOLITHIC CRUCIFORM FIGURINES

Male
24%

Female
76%

Figure 13: Pie chart depicting the difference in the uses of the word 'female' and 'male' in literature surrounding Chalcolithic cruciform figurines

The final figure is a pie chart to look at the difference in the use of the word's 'female' and 'male' within the literature. The use of search term 'female' outweighs the term 'male', with less than a quarter of the literature using the term. This will be examined in the interpretation chapter following. Total use of the word 'female' is 298 whereas 'male' is only used 96 times.

Chapter 5: Interpretations and analysis of results

'If we insist that gender is discursively constructed and context-dependent, we might well ask whether it is even possible to compare female imagery from different parts of the globe. There are certainly no universal criteria by which images of women can be recognized. Identification must instead proceed through careful local assessments of gender iconography' (Lesure 2002, 595).

Analysis and interpretation of these results is highly subjective and can only be done within the framework of ones understanding of gender theory and context. As outlined in chapter 2, I will be using gender theory as well as masculinist and feminist discourse to analyse the results from chapter 3.

Firstly, it is important to stress that language differences make the content analysis method difficult to define categorical search terms. Each writers uses their own style regarding vocabulary and language use. The problem with the lack of universal language to describe figurines, is that we see that descriptive language becomes interpretation - for example, 'protruding belly' becomes 'pregnant belly' and there is very rarely argumentation to support the interpretation (Lesure 2002, 588). This, of course, is often due to cultural or language vocabulary choices which are subjective and specific for the researcher much the same as their interpretations are. However, it means there are problems with the level of universality and therefore slightly incomparable word choices are necessary to look at within the content analysis method.

Additionally, it should be noted that different lengths of literature are used in this study, which also makes comparison more difficult. Ideally, the number of pages would be considered when analysing, however for the length of this study this was difficult to achieve. More work should be on this topic to achieve substantial results; however, it will be attempted in the following.

5.1 Founding Theories: Words of Dikaios and Gimbutas

Whilst it is not useful to use any of Dikaios' writing to compare with the other literature due to its lack of focus on chalcolithic cruciforms, it is interesting to pull some quotes of language used when describing figurines found in the archaeological record. In the follow quote, Dikaios interprets a find from Vounous-Bellapais in his 1940 book:

'On one of the necks of this jug appear in relief two human figures, a man and a woman indicated by the breasts. The man puts his left arm round the woman's neck while, with his right hand, he touches the body of the woman a little below the abdomen. The woman joins her hands on her abdomen. On the same neck, behind the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief with four horns, while on the back appears again a head of a horned animal. Between the two necks there is a bird modelled in the round, and in front of it, placed in the small cup. Here we see that the bird, which occupies a prominent place, is found in some connexion with a group of a man and a woman, the attitude and nature of which suggest fertility' (Dikaios 1940, 126).

His language is descriptive and categorical in attitude. This is perhaps one of the first examples of gendering bodies in the Cypriot archaeological record, and we see the same style carried on in some of the following academic work. For example, we see the phrase 'and a woman indicated by the breasts' which renders being a woman to anatomical

attributes. Equally, when describing a stone of limestone that is oblong and four-sided in a later published book from 1953, Dikaios suggests that it was 'probably phallic symbol (?)' (Dikaios 1953, 292 – question mark writers own). This therefore continues in the explicit and unwavering use of gendering perceived bodies in his work. We also see that Dikaios introduces natural elements of birds, snakes, and bulls to concepts of religion, cult and fertility – even defining the bull and the snake as 'divine attributes' (Dikaios 1940, 126). This is picked up on by Gimbutas in her work in the late 1960s and 70s as part of cult-like symbolism of The Female.

Chapter 8 of Gimbutas' book, entitled *The Great Goddess of Life, Death and Regeneration*, covers 'goddess' figurines dating from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic period in Central Anatolia and the Near East. When describing the physical form of the figurines, Gimbutas asserts that 'the physical strength of the female body was an ideal. The Old Europeans never held in esteem the meagre feminine appearance fashionable in our own day' (Gimbutas 1974, 157). This seems like a direct criticism in response to the contemporary struggles she was enduring in the 1960s and 1960s western world, where second wave feminism was fighting to gain more equality with men and against misogynistic and submissive female beauty standards of the time. Gimbutas' message fits in well with the second wave feminism movement, not only chronologically but also in the sense that women were looking for a message of female-empowerment and Gimbutas gave that in spades. Writing on the symbolism of pubic triangles: 'through the act of engraving an enormous triangle in the centre of the sculpture the artist perhaps visualized the universal womb, the inexhaustible source of life, to which the dead man returns in order to be born again. In this sense the great goddess is the magician-mother' (Gimbutas 1974, 159). There seems to be a high use of mystical and mythical language to cement her ideology, with perhaps highlights the audience she was looking for was not academic and rather more public. Interestingly, Gimbutas has a low number of repetitions with words particularly with search words surrounding childbirth. This could be a comment on her use of language to keep the reader engaged, or perhaps her vocabulary is more extensive than in the other texts. Regarding eroticism, Gimbutas includes 'concubine' and 'virgin' in her writing as well as the phrase 'lady of the beasts' (Gimbutas 1974, 152). Whilst this places the female within nature very heavily, it also has a degree of carnality about it which the reader cannot help but feel that it is linked with sexuality. This sexually-liberated, nature-driven female form would certainly appeal to the hippy and Free Love movements of the contemporary time in the 60s and 70s.

Karageorghis' conclusion was that the Great Goddess was worshipped in the 3rd millennium, particularly around the region of Paphos is where we see her cult predominantly - but after this time the chalcolithic sites are abandoned and very few traces of settlement are seen, calling into question whether the religious traditions of the chalcolithic will survive (Karageorghis 1977, 32). Different to what was expected, there was more discussion of childbirth and possibility of tying childbirth to deities, for example a pregnant goddess figurine. Once again, this writing echo's the second wave feminist movement of the 1970s, through tying ancient deities to possibly a politically motivated agenda.

5.2 Anatomical and Physical Language

Phalluses, breasts, and vulvas are self-evident topics of gender politics. However, an overwhelming amount of literature written on cruciform figurines include the word 'breast',

with the total number of times used at the count of 110 throughout all literature. As seen in figure 8, the amount of search term 'breast' can be seen to spike within certain articles such as Morris, Knapp and Meskell and also Winkelmann (Morris 1985; Knapp and Meskell 1997; Winkelmann 2020). Winkelmann discusses the word 'breast' heavily, as within her own interpretation she prefers to use the word 'bosses' as she does not agree that the mounds on the front of some of the figurines are categorically breasts, thus also linking the figurines with female sexual coding (Winkelmann 2020).

Desmond Morris' language is anatomically quite clinical, using words such as 'labia' and 'pelvic lump' as well as covering much of the theory surrounding childbirth analyses of the figurines. Interestingly with the word 'pubic triangle', instead Morris uses the phrase 'pelvic lump' however, and discusses how one might interpret the pelvic shape to be a broken penis, or perhaps a rendering of the female labia (Morris 1985, 128). He also goes on to compare ancient art to the modern art practice of cubism, 'all these features are formalised in a cubist manner - that is to say, the subtle biological shapes are reduced to simple geometric units, and the head itself is squared off.' (Morris 1985, 124). Cubism, an early 20th century art movement spearheaded by artists such as Picasso and Cézanne, is an interesting parallel to draw to these figurines that has not been made in the other sources examined. This is an example of imposing modern notions into ancient societies – drawing parallels to aid understanding that may lead to harmful interpretation down the line.

Knapp and Meskell use terms such as 'hermaphrodite', 'sexual ambiguity' and 'androgenous' (Knapp and Meskell 1997, 194) as a possible category other than the more commonly used 'male' and 'female'. The large discussion of gendering and sexuality of the figurines explains the high count of the anatomical category in figure 1, with a count of 49 search terms using a variation of 'sex' or 'sexual' such as 'sexuality', 'heterosexual' and 'bi-sexual' (Knapp and Meskell 1997). Knapp and Meskell also use the word 'binary' – which is not seen in the literature before this publication – with a level of 16 search terms found. This article seems to be an echo of current day gender debate but within the atmosphere of the late 1990s, in which we see other articles starting to come to terms with gender theory but not at the level of Knapp and Meskell. Much of their research and questions are like work by Talalay, who looks at working beyond the gender binary within archaeology – something that retains a 'ghettoised status' (Talalay 2008, 130). See the following quote for Knapp and Meskells stance on binarism, gender categorisation and the dangers of subjective interpretation.

'Any attempt to identify and compare female imagery needs to tread with care, since it is important not to imply thereby that gender categories are universal and outside of history' (Knapp and Meskell 1997).

Steel's urges the viewer to look beyond the obvious female anatomy on the Lemba Lady and look at it in entirety 'attention is focused on the incised female genitalia and breasts; however the depicted of the head is rather phallic, and recalls the sexual ambiguity of the few human representations that have been recorded for the ceramic Neolithic' (Steel 2004, 102).

Due to the focus on extremity rather that central body, there is a lower gendered anatomical search-term count in Gamble, Winkelmann, and Fox's 2016 paper. However, the

writers do describe a figurine as having 'pronounced femininity (pendulous breasts, fairly broad hips)' (Gamble, Winkelmann and Fox 2016). The adjective 'pendulous' is evocative and incredibly descriptive, bringing up certain imagery in the reader's mind that was certainly the authors intent.

Vagnetti's 1991 article does not strive to understand the use or meaning of the chalcolithic figurines, rather to compare the physical attributes and imagery of several examples. This allows for the writer's language and visualisation of the figurines to be understood without being jumbled with further interpretations. Due to this, Vagnetti included almost no childbirth, erotic, or deifying search terms in their article, focusing more on the anatomical attributes of the figurines. This is a great contrast to some of the other articles which are highly intent on interpretation.

Figurine Makers, being more recent, used the vocabulary in a far different way to Gimbutas and Karageorghis - 'there are four instances of females buried with figurative picrolite pendants/figurines near the pelvic area and no instances of this practice with males' (Peltenberg 2019, 327). We see more of a hesitancy to gender without absolute, or more certain, evidence. When comparing this to Dikaios' decisive engendered narrative, it allows identity to be interpreted more freely and with less regard for binarism.

5.3 The Deification Process

Mythological, mystical, and magical language is a dominating companion to literature surrounding the figurines. The difficulty with deification is the following question: why do we believe that ancient societies believed in higher powers like we do? Once again, it imposes modern notions onto ancient societies and imbues an incorrigible proposition that religion was a driving factor in social behaviour. Ritualistic, symbolic, and cultic language that surround these figurines overshadows possibilities for their original use and take contexts such as funerary or domestic to equate with theological beliefs. Foucault might theorise that it is our inability to understand social function without hierarchical elements of a higher power or an institution that drives our actions – that institution being religion, faith, or a god. It could be said that theorizing a past that does not hold these values is almost impossible for our modern minds to comprehend, however it is important to imply that even if we cannot imagine exactly *how* it might look, we can at least acknowledge that it could look very different to perceptions.

> 'The female reproductive symbol, which had been in existence on the island for over two millennia, thus served as a convenient vehicle for transmitting the new social messages of the emerging state. It was simply a matter of pouring new ideological wine into old spiritual bottles. As a sacred symbol, the mother icon sanctified new gender roles, including a woman's role as mother and perhaps its frequent corollary, premarital virginity. Moreover, the symbolic presentation of these powerful messages as part of the "natural" world order may have helped to mediate, pacify, or even override many of the social contradictions inherent in the transition to state society, particularly those regarding the relationships between women and men' (Bolger 1996, 371).

Procreation is a natural point of understanding for social behaviour as it is a primal drive of society, in modern, ancient, and future times – outside of food, water, shelter it is one of our most basic desires and needs. The combination of deification and childbirth seems natural, especially within the Cypriot context as projecting the goddess Aphrodite can be

not only a safe interpretation but also a popular one with the island's history (Bolger 2003, 93).

As Morris aptly points out when analysing the Lemba Lady figurine, 'it cannot seriously be considered as a deity figure, since no self-respecting goddess would need the protection of her own image hanging from her neck' (Morris 1985, 126). Morris favours the concept of the figurines and pendants as protective birthing charms to help with a healthy delivery as well as fertility and fecundity.

The search term 'magical' is favoured in A Campo and Morris' writing, however it has not been used much at all by other writers (figure 7). When it is used in more recent writing – such as by Lesure 2017 – it is in conjunction or as an alternative to the word ritual 'the well-handled, schematic, tripartite figurines were ritual/magic devices experienced as creating effects' (Lesure 2017, 52).

5.4 Eroticism

Gimbutas on the creation of figurines as pornographic art 'love-making is clearly far from the thoughts of the ancient artist' (Gimbutas 1981, 32). Her use of the word 'virgin' has been classed as an erotic search term due to the language used around it, it seems to signify a symbolism towards the construct of virginity – something that is a modern construct and an incorrigible proposition to impose onto ancient societies.

Morris' use of the word 'menage-a-trois' is perhaps more acceptable because his paper is art based rather than academic. Morris uses this when describing the tripe cruciform joined at the feet found at Souskiou and suggests that it could be an aid for fertility depicting a 'husband and two wives, or vice-versa' (Morris 1985, 132). This

The levels of eroticism are so low in this study that no substantial conclusions can be made, however there does seem to be a decline trend in the occurrence of erotic search terms (figure 12) which we can conclude shows a reduction in the tendency to classify ancient art as erotic or pornographic.

Conclusion

'The emergence of new kinds of cultural symbols may make it possible the reinterpreting or, indeed, rewriting of the oedipal story but it can also serve to reinscribe that terrible drama in even more telling terms. Political processes will determine which outcome prevails – political in the sense that different actors and different meanings are contended with one another for control. The nature of that process, of the actors and their actions, can only be determined specifically, in the context of a time and place. *We can write the history of that process only if we recognize that "man" and "woman" are at once empty and overflowing categories. Empty because they have no ultimate, transcendent meaning. Overflowing because even when they appear to be fixed, they still contain within them alternative, denied, or suppressed definitions*.' (Scott 1986, 1074 – emphasis writers own)

When carrying out this content analysis, the categorisation and binarism prevalent in literature surrounding the human form is at times overwhelming. It formed the main context of many passages, providing precise measurements of breasts, phalli, vulvas, and bent knees. These anatomically gendered words and phrases that linger around the figurines greatly influence how we interpret their use – sometimes harmfully.

Echoing Foucault's theory on transposing modern views onto ancient art, in this study we can see a decline in the trend of using absolute language when assessing the cruciform figurines in recent literature. For example, Winkelmann using the word 'bosses' rather than 'breast' when analysing the physical attributes of the figurines (Winkelmann 2020). As Talalay agrees, the determination of sexual coding within anthropomorphic art has been greatly distorted and defined by our modern cultural filters (Talalay 2008, 133). To use Fausto-Sterling's definition again, we can see many incorrigible propositions in the discussions around the cruciform figurines (Fausto-Sterling 2020). Firstly, that they are sexually coded as female as well as carrying the feminine gender. Linking the figurines as fertility charms or childbirth devices also imbues them with symbolic and intrinsic femininity – but in the way we see it embodied in modern society. They are then tied with the concept of heightened status and possibly female deification, which becomes ammunition for a political agenda within academia and outside of the discipline. Through using gender theory in archaeological interpretation, we can work towards understanding objects such as cruciform figurines in a way that does not feed into any univocal or harmfully gendered dialogues. Whatever their use, and whatever their intended identity, it should be at the forefronts of our minds that we are not able to label prehistoric objects categorically and specifically with such modern stereotypes, biases, and agenda's.

Roberta Gilchrist on the furthering of the archaeological discipline: 'here the ultimate aim would be to move beyond the naming of sexual difference, to its analysis and disruption' (Gilchrist 1991, 498). Gilchrist raises a problem with the discipline previously, which is that differences have only been recognized rather than understood. To add to the understanding of ancient peoples, we need to move past the token of purely naming the quantitative data. In this paper, I hope to have named differences as well as explain such differences – setting an example of how this type of analysis can be done. In moving forward, we can start to think outside of our modern binaries of understanding. An example of how this has been done recently in academia is Lesure's 2017 paper, in which he looks at if anthropomorphic imagery does not always have to represent people rather it could be an image symbolic of

human depiction (Lesure 2017, 48). The symbolism of cruciforms is the key ingredient of interpretation – as well as misinterpretation.

In conclusion, interpretation of the cruciforms is predicated on the researcher's specific contemporary view of gender, becoming a Rorschach test of that individuals' preconceptions. We see that this can be linked to socio-economic factors, politically motivated agendas, activist movements as well as scientific understanding of biology. These are ingrained, unconscious biases that are made more obvious through cross-analysis and in analysing these preconceived notions one can view of the cruciforms with a renewed clarity.

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Figures

Tables