

Chapter 8. West Africa.

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1. Introduction

Archaeological figurines, predominantly ceramic, have been recovered from diverse locations in West Africa. These seem to have served various purposes. They date from as early as 2000 BC to as recently as the late 19th century AD. All, however, have to be essentially considered as prehistoric as there are no indigenous texts that record their uses and the meanings ascribed them in the past. External historical sources, either European (e.g. Allison 1968: 36; Atherton and Kalous 1970: 304; Garrard 1984: 172-173; Vivian 1992: 157) or in Arabic (e.g. Levtzion and Hopkins 1981: 77, 86, 151) that mention figurines or what might be figurines and their uses are also variable in content, geographically restricted, often lack detail, and are not always unproblematic. Indigenous oral traditions are equally limited, and suffer from problems of a lack of time depth.

This chapter will first describe the figurines by grouping them within the countries in which they have been found. Some of the dominant themes that have been applied in their interpretation will then be evaluated and other interpretive possibilities introduced. Finally, some concluding thoughts on potential future research directions are outlined.

Quite why some past populations in West Africa decided to make clay figurines, and more rarely stone or metal ones, whilst others did not, is unknown. The impetus to

figurine production could have been varied, encompassing availability of time, materials, and expertise, aesthetic and stylistic considerations, ritual and religious requirements and curiosity. Figurines might in some contexts have functioned as agents to cohere memory across generations, providing a conduit for “social memory” (Connerton 1989: 3) in durable form. Figurines could capture but also transform qualities and essences of persons and bodies. Ideals, anomalies, monstrosities, combinations of representations and substances, the material possibilities of figurines were potentially varied, and usually rendered in miniature form, in itself making further statements (e.g. Stewart 1993; Bailey 2005).

Yet an archaeological absence of figurines cannot, per se, be interpreted as indicating that they were not made. For it is possible that they were produced of organic materials such as wood that does not survive archaeologically, but which ethnography indicates was a material widely used to produce figurines of diverse forms for equally diverse purposes (e.g. Van Beek 1988; Picton 1995: 339; Wolff 2000). Hence the following regional description merely indicates where figurines have survived rather than necessarily being indicative of all the contexts in West Africa in which they were made and used in the past.

The focus of discussion is also, generally, upon the main groups of figurines that have been found in archaeological contexts, so some isolated examples have been omitted. The discussion is structured so that the reader is led west to east (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria) before moving north, and again west to east (Mali, Niger, Chad and northern Cameroon) (**Figure 8.1**). This does not imply any form of evolutionary or chronological sequence.

2. Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia

Soapstone or steatite, and more rarely harder stone (e.g. granite) *nomoli* and *pomta* figurines are widely southeastern Sierra Leone, the Kissi area of Guinea, and in western Liberia (Atherton and Kalus 1970; Lamp 1983; Hart and Fyfe 1993). Most examples lack context having been found during farming or digging wells or graves rather than excavated (Mauny 1961: 174; Allison 1968: 37). *Nomoli* mainly depict human figures and heads, but according to Atherton and Kalus (1970: 303) also animals, or forms combining human and animal attributes. They are usually between 10-30 cm height and have common features described by Lamp (1983: 220, 224) as including a forward projecting large head, bulbous eyes, as well as facial and/or bodily scarification and elaborate hairstyles (**Figure 8.2**).

Pomta differ with typically a cylindrical form and a globular head, between 7-15 cm in height, and with male representations dominating (Allison 1968: 37) (**Figure 8.2**). The dates ascribed the manufacture of these stone figurines varies. They are placed between the 7th-8th and 16th centuries AD by Atherton and Kalous (1970: 315-316) who are also in agreement with Allison (1968: 41) that production might have continued until more recently. Lamp (1983: 231) suggests that the stone figurines of Sierra Leone may have “considerable antiquity”. Further research on their dating is required.

Contemporary uses of *nomoli* as a means of ritual purification or to increase agricultural yields seem to differ significantly from their possible original purpose as ancestor figurines representing important people (Atherton and Kalous 1970: 312).

Pomta have been more unequivocally interpreted as ancestor figurines (Allison 1968: 39), and among the Kissi stone figurines were recorded in the mid-20th century

functioning as corpse substitutes being carried on a bier “wrapped with amulets, sacrificial blood, and strips of cotton in order to invoke the power of the deceased” (Lamp 1983: 229).

3. Ghana

The oldest figurines in Ghana come from Late Stone Age contexts predominantly north of the Akan region in the centre of the country. These have been dated to approximately 1500 to 800 BC (Garrard 1984: 169). Some of these are linked with the Kintampo Tradition dated to between 3,600-3,200 bp by Watson (2008: 138). At Ntereso three figurine fragments were found including the torso of an animal. At the eponymous Kintampo site an anthropomorphic figurine was recovered, and from Bonoase and Mumute parts of either caprid or gazelle figurines (Posnansky 1979: 52-53). Whilst at Boyasi Hill near Kumasi, a surface find of what appeared to be a dog that had been attached to a pot was made (Anquandah 2008: 22) (**Figure 8.3**).

Much larger quantities of figurines have been recovered from Iron Age contexts (c. 6th-12th centuries AD) in the Koma Land area of northern Ghana (e.g. Anquandah 1987, 1998; Kankpeyeng and Nkumbaan 2009; Insoll, Kankpeyeng, and Nkumbaan 2012; Kankpeyeng et al. 2014). Figurines have generally been recovered from mound sites, initially interpreted as burial mounds (Anquandah 1987; Kröger 1988), but subsequently as shrines possibly linked with healing (Kankpeyeng, Nkumbaan, and Insoll 2011). Accompanying the figurines, copious quantities of pottery, grinding stones, some human and animal remains, iron bracelets and utilitarian artefacts, and small numbers of stone and glass beads and cowry shells have been found (Anquandah 1998; Kankpeyeng and Nkumbaan 2009).

The figurines are varied and include anthropomorphic forms, horse and camel riders (**Figure 8.3**), combined part human and animal figures, mythical animals, identifiable animals, and representations of objects such as gourds (Anquandah 1998; Insoll et al. 2013). Modelling is generally stylised and the figurines were produced in various sizes from 6-40 cm height. Fragments of potentially larger figurines have also been found, as have Janus and double-headed and four headed forms (ibid). Recurrent figurine types of interest are the cones that range in height between c. 5-18 cm. Some of these are anthropomorphic (**Figure 8.3**), others are undecorated except at the top of the cone where there is a hollow sometimes surrounded by clay modelling suggesting either a cowry shell or female genitalia (cf. Insoll et al. 2013: 23). Cone figurines were possibly inserted into the ground or a secondary structure (Kröger 1988: 133).

The animal figurines, excluding the horse, camel, and dog, represent wild animals such as crocodile, chameleon, hippopotamus, lion, rhinoceros, and various birds. Many figurines appear to have also been fragmented. Excavations of a single mound at Yikpabongo provide an illustrative example, where 238 fragments were represented alongside only 7 complete and 6 largely complete figurines (Insoll, Kankpeyeng, and Nkumbaan 2012: 29). Significant concentrations of figurine fragments associated with other materials were recorded including a cluster that had been deliberately arranged and deposited (ibid: 37). Drawing upon the work of Chapman and Gaydarska (2007) and Fowler (2004) it was suggested that social bonds were being maintained and perhaps personhood was constructed through enchainning the living, the dead, and the figurines (Insoll, Kankpeyeng, and Nkumbaan 2012: 40).

Some 70 km south of Koma Land in Daboya a small assemblage of 153 figurine fragments was also found that are quite different in form. These were recovered from contexts dated to the late first millennium AD through to the beginning of the 20th

century (Shinnie and Kense 1989: 167). The excavators (ibid) suggested different groups of figurines were present. These included seated and standing figurines decorated with comb impression or red painted lines. Extended navels also recur and it is possible that the comb impression depicts scarification, a feature largely absent from the Koma Land material. No complete examples were recorded but estimated figurine heights were between 6-30 cm.

Clay figurines in Ghana were also made for funerary contexts, as evident by their use in Akan "*Asensie*" or "place of pots" (Wild 1937: 68) that have been recorded in southern and south-central Ghana (Vivian 1992). Wild (1937) provides an early description of an undated *Asensie* excavated at Agona-Swedru. This contained pottery portrait figurines, where only the head and neck was modelled and with emphasis placed on depicting hairstyles and facial scarification marks (**Figure 8.3**). These, along with the accompanying pots that had also been deposited, were poorly fired.

Badly fired pots and portrait heads were also found in other sites at Twifo, north of Cape Coast. Radiocarbon dated to between the mid-17th and mid-18th centuries AD the figurines and ceramics were recorded poking through the leaf mould in areas of bush indicating that they "had been placed on the surface of the ground and then promptly abandoned" (Bellis 1982: 4). The pots had been organised into food preparation and dining areas with at their centre a hearth. The hearth seems to have been ceremonial and food appeared to have been served but not prepared at the sites in commemoration of the deceased (Bellis 1982: 6-7).

Two classes of figurines were recorded at Twifo. Small figurines of some 12 cm height attached to the walls or rims of pots and interpreted as attendants at the ritual feast (ibid: 12), and larger freestanding figurines again predominantly heads, heads

and necks, or heads, shoulders, and necks. These were made as portraits of the dead and according to contemporary understandings were only for the leaders of matrilineal clans or chiefs (Bellis 1982: 27). At Site 1 all the figurines were female and as at Agona-Swedru, the “ringed neck” was a feature, where rings of fat were depicted as a “mark of status and beauty” (Bellis 1982: 13). All the figurines had attention paid to their hairstyles and some had facial scarification. Perforations in the back of some heads were possibly made to hold hair or nail parings from the deceased or hair shaved from the heads of clan people during the funerary rituals (Bellis 1982: 16-17).

Vivian (1992) recorded similar terracotta figurines in his excavation of an *asensie* at Adansemanso dated by an absence of tobacco pipes to before AD 1650. Here, again, pots clustered into groups representing specific funerary events were present. Patterns differed at other later *asensie* investigated with the ceramic diversity disappearing and instead everyday rather than specially made pots being used and deposited. The terracotta heads at the later sites of Anyinam and Esiase were also of poorer quality. A decline in quantity and quality explained by increasing Christianization and shifts in Akan funerary rites “from the corporate spirit embodied by the clan to the individual and his or her direct relationship with God” (Vivian 1992: 167). However, whether these terracotta’s were in some way linked with “the European presence on the coast” as suggested by Garrard (1984: 171) remains unproven.

Fragments from vaguely similar figurines, but much less finely made, were also found at the mound site of Dawu near Accra. The dominant type (14 of 15 fragments), like the *asensie* figurines, had a discoidal head and a round or oval neck (Shaw 1961: 55). The facial features are quite different, being very stylised, placed at the centre, lacking mouths, and with the nose and nostrils represented by a triangular boss with

two depressions below it and oval eye rings placed at the side. Facial scarification is indicated and some examples were perforated at various points on their outer edge. The maximum size seems to be about 10 cm width and height. The date of these figurines is not precise but is suggested as post early 17th century AD (Shaw 1961: 87). The midden context could suggest these might have been toys.

Although figurines of materials other than clay are widespread in some parts of West Africa, their recovery from archaeological contexts is much less common. The figurative and geometric brass gold weights made by the Akan provide an illustrative example. DeCorse (2001: 128-129) suggests that as many as three million might have been made between 1400 and 1900 but “few have been recovered from archaeological contexts”. With an exception being several that were recovered from mid-19th century contexts during excavation at Elmina in southern Ghana (DeCorse 2001: 129). These were not produced as figurines but many of the human, bird, and animal figurines could be interpreted as such if their original function was unknown (cf. Garrard 1980: 295-299).

Five brass figurines also made by the lost-wax casting process were recorded at Banda in the Western Volta basin of central Ghana and dated to between the 14th and 16th centuries AD (Stahl 2013). Ranging between 3.5-5.9 cm in height, three are twinned figures, and two single figures (**Figure 8.3**). These are not gold weights and it is possible, based on stylistic and ethnographic parallels, that they were used for divination purposes as they share affinities with similar objects produced by ethnolinguistic groups such as the Senufo and Lobi to the north and west (ibid: 57). Though Stahl (2013: 64) is careful to avoid linking the Banda brass figurines to such groups and instead interprets them as characteristic of the “porousness of ethnic boundaries” in the region.

4. Nigeria

4.1 Northeast. The archaeological figurines from Nigeria are particularly rich and varied with the earliest reported from Borno in the northeast. At the village site of Gajiganna, five anthropomorphic clay figurines and an unspecified number of clay animal figurines were found dated to between 2700-3100 bp (Breunig 1994: 98). Excluding one example, a head perhaps wearing a cap or with the hairstyle depicted, the anthropomorphic figurines are highly stylised (**Figure 8.4**). The animal figurines are more informative with an emphasis placed on cattle representation. This accords with the mammal remains in the faunal assemblage where 60% were from cattle (Breunig 1994: 100). Some cattle are represented by horns alone, others by the modelling of the animal (**Figure 8.4**). Cattle figurines were present with anthropomorphic figurines in Mound A, but were the only category represented clustered together in Mound B (Breunig 1994: 100-101), indicating different patterns of deposition, but suggesting bovine representation was of overall primary significance.

Sitting and standing cattle figurines, c. 5 cm in length were also found in Period 1 levels (c. 550 BC to AD 50) at the mound site of Daima in Bornu. One example had holes for four, presumably wooden, legs to be inserted (Connah 1981: 136). The recovery of two unfired figurines, along with other figurines spoiled during firing indicated they were made on site. Cattle figurines continued but were supplemented by “strange upright figurines with a flat base” (Connah 1981: 156) in Daima II (c. AD 50 to 700) contexts. These possibly hybridize human and animal characteristics. Wild animal representations also appear and these become more common in Daima III (c.

AD 700-1150). Baboon, possible bush pig or porcupine, as well as goat and a humped ox figurine all of between c. 7-10 cm length were also found in Daima III (Connah 1981: 182-185) (**Figure 8.4**). Greater variation is evident and anthropomorphic figurines, previously rare, become more common. These had heavy cylindrical bases probably designed to support loose heads (ibid: 184).

Other fired clay objects found in Daima III levels included a 7.3 cm length model of a papyrus boat of the type used on Lake Chad, two bells, clay balls, a perforated spiked ball, and bracelet fragments (ibid: 185-186). The parallels with certain aspects of so-called ‘Sao’ figurines and related material from Chad and northern Cameroon (see below) are striking, as with the head of an “antelope” (Connah 1981: 184) that could equally be an anthropomorphic representation akin to the Sao masked heads (**Figure 8.4**).

4.2. Nok. The clay figurines from Nok in central Nigeria are much more numerous and the so-called “central period” of Nok has been dated to between c. 900-300 BC (Franke and Breunig 2014: 136). Produced by one of the earliest iron-using peoples in West Africa, they range significantly in size between c. 10-100 cm in height, and were often coil-made with the heads produced separately and added. The figurines are generally modelled on a pedestal regardless of whether kneeling, sitting, genuflecting or standing (Fagg 1990: 22-23). Human figures are common but animal figurines are also found. Individuals with diseases or physical conditions are also depicted (Männel and Breunig 2014: 198-199) including elephantiasis of the scrotum and Bell’s palsy. A disease vector, a bloated tick, also seems to be the subject of one figurine (Fagg 1990: 31-33, 106, 108-9).

Fagg (1990: 39) suggests that the figurines served multiple purposes as “gods or spirit figures or deified ancestors for the benefit of the living”. Certainly, attention seems to have been paid to differentiating some of the figurines through elaborate hairstyles for instance (cf. Männel and Breunig 2014: 197, 204-205) perhaps in recognition of specific individuals (**Figure 8.4**). Otherwise, stylistic similarities recur as in the “paramount emphasis” (Fagg 1990: 24) given to the eyes, and also the careful modelling of the nose and mouth whereas the ears were relatively unimportant (ibid: 25).

Until recently the majority of the Nok figurines had been found accidentally, as a correlate of tin mining for example, with few from excavated contexts. Ongoing research is rectifying this imbalance with 100 sites identified since 2005 (cf. Rupp 2010; Breunig 2014). Excavations in the Janruwa area have indicated that the figurines were commonly deposited in “pit-like structures” (Rupp 2010: 70), 50 cm deep on average. These were sometimes lined with hand-sized unmodified stones (Rupp 2014: 216). Fragmentation seems to have been important. At the 5th century BC site of Utak Kamuan Garaje Kagoro the figurines had been deliberately broken. The absence of scattered fragments and the compact form of the figurine fragments as if once packed into baskets suggested to the excavators (Rupp 2010: 75-76) that fragmentation took place elsewhere.

4.3. Ife, Benin, and Related Areas. At Ife in southwestern Nigeria, terracotta figurines have been recovered along with masterpieces of sculpture in bronze and stone – heads, figurines, and miscellaneous objects – which it is impossible to survey here in adequate detail (cf. Willett 1967; Drewal and Schildkrout 2010). Hence attention will be paid to the clay figurines that were produced in significant quantities during the so-called Classic Period between the 12th to 16th centuries AD. Shrines in

Ife such as the Iwinrin and Olokun Groves acted as repositories for ritually powerful material including figurines, other figurines were found during road building and construction work or as part of archaeological excavation of sites such as Ita Yemoo, Obalara's Land, Odo Ogbe Street and Lafogido (e.g. Willett 1967: 17, 31; Eyo 1974; Garlake 1974). Terracotta figurines were also extensively re-used in Ife and incorporated into later rituals (Garlake 1977: 93), complicating issues of provenance and chronology (cf. Drewal and Schildkrout 2010).

The variety of terracotta figurine imagery defies brief summary. Most famously, it includes human forms ranging in height from near life size to 15-30 cm. Willett (1967: 71) describes how the largest sometimes had iron armatures to help support them at weak points and how they were generally coil made with some elements such as parts of headgear produced separately and later attached. Animal figurines often represent sacrifices, as with rams heads depicted on platters (**Figure 8.5**). Others include chameleons, antelope, owls, an ape and an elephant (Willett 1967: 58; Eyo 1974: 107; Drewal and Schildkrout 2010: 106-109).

The serenity of many of the large terracotta human heads is striking. Some are also depicted with partial or full facial scarification usually as incisions or, in one example from the Iwinrin Grove, with raised weals possibly representing the painting on of an extract of blister beetles (Willett 1967: 85). More stylised conical and cylindrical human heads of between 12.5-19 cm height have also been found. These seem to have been placed on shrines (Drewal and Schildkrout 2010: 102-103). Whilst human heads modelled gagged with rope could represent either sacrificial victims or prisoners (ibid: 110-111).

As with some of the Nok figurines disease is depicted in the Ife corpus. From Obalara's Land, for instance, this included a right hand deformed by elephantiasis, and a possible anencephalic head (Garlake 1974: 126, 130). The latter was a condition that also inspired figurine production in Koma Land, as attested by a realistically modelled anencephalic head recovered from Yikpabongo (Insoll et al 2013: 26). Obalara's Land is also important in giving an insight into some aspects of figurine use. The remains of three stone and potsherd pavements were uncovered along with what seems to have been a shrine formed of a putative timber structure. There was also an array of material at the site including human remains, terracotta figurines, pots, iron staffs, and grinding stones.

The distribution suggests carefully structured deposition, and by inference, associated ritual action (Insoll 2004: 106-111). South of the shrine feature was a compact group of complete and fragmentary human skulls. Resting against the uppermost skull was a terracotta head depicting "an expression of malevolence or horror" (Garlake 1974: 122). Another terracotta head of a diseased individual was near by, along with other figurine fragments, potsherds and human long bones. Further figurine parts, including four naturalistic human heads and six torso fragments were found north of the shrine. Interestingly, some of these depicted facial and body scars, absent on the two heads in the southern group (cf. Garlake 1974: 131, 144). Overall, Garlake (ibid: 143) interpreted the figurines and other material as "offerings at a shrine".

Possible in-situ primary ritual use of figurines and other materials was also recorded at Lafogido and dated to the early 12th century AD (Eyo 1974: 107). Here, a series of nine pots were recorded standing in "round cuttings made through a potsherd pavement" (ibid: 106). On top of some of the pots were placed animal figurines including a ram's head and what might be a bush pig (Eyo 1974: 106-107) (**Figure**

8.5). It is possible that the abstract patterns represented on some of these animals might depict intentional modification, akin to scarification, or painting (Insoll in press).

Whilst the bronzes produced in Benin are justifiably famous, terracotta figurines have also been recorded in this kingdom approximately 260 km southeast of Ife. Ben-Amos (1980: 16) describes how “terracotta sculpture has been coming to light in various rural areas of the kingdom and may indicate a tradition of rural production in earlier times”. She (ibid: 17) also notes that only “a few pre-European sites have been excavated”, and it would seem, even fewer published. Connah (1975) does not report any ceramic figurines from his research in and around Benin City, though a fragment from the base of a bronze head was found at the Clerk’s Quarters Site and possibly dated to the 16th century AD on stylistic grounds (ibid: 53).

Figurines that might be stylistically related both to Benin and Ife were also recorded in the sacred grove of Igbo ’Laja in Owo, 110 km north of Benin and 160 km east of Ife (Eyo 1976). C14 dates of between the mid-15th and mid-18th centuries were obtained and a varied assemblage of clay figurines and figurine fragments recovered. This included males and females, and individuals with full facial scarification, as well as depictions of diseased individuals such as a dwarf with a large probably diseased ear, and a torso covered with holes possibly representing small pox (Eyo 1976: 42, 44). A human head modelled gagged with a rope appeared to refer to sacrifice as did a basket of six decapitated human heads with diverse scarification (Eyo 1976: 43, 47). Animal figurines included the symbolic leopard and mudfish as well as a cock with trussed legs, and the contents of a basket were so realistically modelled that the species present, including kola nuts (*Cola acuminata*) and walnuts (*Tetracarpidium conophorum*), could be identified (ibid: 48, 46).

It is possible that, as at Ife, animal modification is depicted on an indeterminate animal's head, possibly a ram, held between a pair of human hands (**Figure 8.5**). This is decorated on the ears and with strips of decoration extending from behind the ears that might also represent intentional modification (Insoll in press).

4.4. Esie. Approximately 60 km north of Ife at Esie, an assemblage of circa 1000 soapstone figurines, along with an unspecified number of terracotta figurine fragments, has been recorded within a shrine that appears to have been originally in a sacred grove. The stone figurines, the focus here, range in height between 14-100 cm and depict men, women, children, and animals (Stevens 1978: 1, 41; Akinade 2011: 119). Reconstructing what the Esie figurines were used for is hampered by the fact that the site was disturbed and many of the figurines moved after being first visited by Europeans in the 1930s (cf. Daniel 1937: 46). However, they seem to have had varied ritual functions over time including within an annual festival (Stevens 1978: 1-3, 23).

The human figurines are the focus of Stevens' (1978) extensive catalogue and these depict both men and women, generally in a seated position on stools, though others stand or kneel (Stevens 1978: 128, 252) (**Figure 8.5**). Some of the figurines have facial scarification of various types, two have filed incisor teeth and further examples have scarified backs (Stevens 1978: 62-64, 204, 209). A range of elaborate hairstyles and headgear are also represented along with the carrying of staffs, and weapons such as bows or daggers, and the wearing of bead necklaces and skirt-like waist wrappers (Stevens 1978: 64-65, 116-117, 121, 143, 145, 197, 231).

Both the stylistic connection and origins of the Esie figurines as well as their date has been the subject of debate (Allison 1968: 23-24; Stevens 1978; Akinade 2011). Small-scale excavations in the Esie shrine/museum site provided fragments of soapstone

figurines as well as a radiocarbon date of Cal AD 1644-1652 (Akinade 2011: 82). It is possible that these figurines had been deliberately fragmented at the site and then deposited. As such, perhaps Esie was a disposal ground for both complete and fragmentary figurines that might originally have served ritual purposes elsewhere.

4.5. Other Sites. Figurines have been recorded in other Nigerian archaeological contexts. One complete, and part of a fired-clay red-slipped anthropomorphic figurine were recovered from a tell C14 dated to between AD 100-700 on the west bank of the River Niger at Ilorin (Phillips 1995: 524). The complete figurine measured 20.5 cm in height and the hair seems to be depicted by roulette impression. Each limb was perforated by a single hole, and the mouth by a larger hole as well as two smaller holes above and below it (ibid) (**Figure 8.5**).

Small-scale excavations in the Niger Delta have also recovered clay figurines. At Onyama II, a shell-midden site, a human head wearing a hat decorated with cross-hatching and incisions was found. Occupation was radiocarbon dated to between AD 1275-1690. Parallels for the hat were suggested with ceremonial headgear worn by priests in the Brass area (Derefaka and Anozie 2002: 83). Two otherwise undescribed terracotta animal figurines were also recorded at Ogoloma on Okrika Island in a site dated to between AD 1345 and 1850 (ibid).

Terracotta “mask heads” (Derefaka and Anozie 2002: 80) were also recovered from Ke, another shell-midden site. Whether these were associated with the “pre-European” (ibid) period (AD 770-1270) or later (AD 1315-1686) when European trade goods such as gin bottles and copper manillas were present is unclear. The mask head illustrated appears to be wearing a cap with multiple points and has accentuated facial features. Derefaka and Anozie (2002: 83) suggest it resembles the wooden

Opongi mask of the Kalabari. A figurine was also amongst over a hundred terracotta objects, predominantly pots that were recorded in a probable burial context dated to the 8th-10th centuries AD at Abasi Edem Street in Calabar (Slogar 2007: 23). The figurine, 25.3 cm in height, missing its legs, and depicted with its hands placed over its belly, was interpreted as male (ibid).

Finally, fired-clay figurines have also been reported from Zaria in northern Nigeria where various undated deposits of interesting material have been found. These included two figurine heads, one of which was human, and one unidentifiable, in a rock-shelter near Zaria Leper Hospital (Leggett 1969: 30). A cache containing two parts of the torso of a clay figurine (presumably human, but unspecified), and the neck and shoulders of another animal figurine as well as a white quartz hammer stone, and a “ceremonial” pot were found near the top of Hanwa inselberg (Leggett 1969: 31). Ten further figurine parts – torsos, heads, limbs – and three complete figurines were found in another location on the top of the inselberg. The latter figurines might depict a ritual posture via their “crouched position with the knees raised” (ibid: 32). These figurines also had plaited hair and well-defined beards, suggesting they were male. Each also had a hemispherical base that fitted into the top of a small clay pedestal (Leggett 1969: 32-33). A further hoard of figurine parts were recorded “close” to (Norris and Perry 1972: 103), but at an unspecified distance from, Leggett’s reported finds, and these are considered with reference to fragmentation below.

5. Mali

The earliest figurines from West Africa come from the Tilemsi Valley, northern Mali. These are from the Karkarichinkat Nord and Sud sites dated to between c.2000 to 1360 BC (Smith 1978: 223). The assemblage includes anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines as well as other terracotta objects such as beads and clay rings. The former depict humans with extended stomachs interpreted as representing pregnancy (Smith 1978: 225) (**Figure 8.6**). Others have crosshatched designs possibly indicative of clothing, or with stylised arms and legs added. Most of the zoomorphic figurines are of cattle modelled either as the whole animal or, as at Gajiganna, represented by its horns.

The figurines that have perhaps gained the most notoriety in West Africa are the terracotta's from the Inland Niger Delta in Mali. Substantial numbers are known (e.g. Phillips 1995: 489-495) but the vast majority lack provenance having been illegally obtained, as is discussed further below. Earlier descriptions of these figurines also generally lack detail (e.g. Mauny 1961: 100, 101, 102), though some interesting points are made. Ligers (1957: 46), for example, suggests that the elongated cranial shape evident on two figurine heads from Koa was potentially a representation of skull modification caused by head binding when a baby; a practice as yet unsupported by other sources of evidence.

The figurines recovered from excavations at Jenné-jeno provide an important exception (cf. McIntosh and Keech McIntosh 1979; McIntosh 1989). Of particular interest is a single 22 cm height figurine in a kneeling posture with the arms crossed over the chest. The head is prognathous and the eyes prominent (**Figure 8.6**). This was found at the eastern edge of a roundhouse that seemed to have been deliberately collapsed, in contexts dated to between AD 1000-1300 (McIntosh and Keech McIntosh 1979: 52). It was recovered along with other ceramic objects such as a

mortar and pestle and a carinated bowl containing purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) and carbonized rice (*Oryza glaberrima*) (ibid.). The figurine, associated materials, and context, suggest a shrine.

Another significant find at Jenné-jeno was a reclining headless figurine, 31 cm length and 25.5 cm height. Androgynous in form, it was carefully modelled indicating details such as a dagger on the upper left arm and an umbilical hernia emphasised with radial incisions (McIntosh 1989: 81). Figurine production at Jenné-jeno seems to have increased in the period c. AD 1000-1200, perhaps as a reaction to Islam, which challenged indigenous belief and figural representation (ibid: 82).

Different forms of clay figurines have been found at the site of Natamotao near Thial. These are spectacular, as manifest by a 40 cm height by 49 cm length kneeling anthropomorphic figurine with what might be a simian head illustrated by Sidibé (1995a: 20). These differ stylistically to the Jenné terracotta's. However, unfortunately, Sidibé (ibid) also notes that they were not from an archaeological excavation but seized by gendarmes during an operation against antiquities looters.

Some 150 km east of the Inland Niger Delta is the Bandiagara Escarpment where, uniquely, two complete and two fragmentary wooden figurines were recovered from two caves (Bedaux 1988: 45). These were connected with the Tellem (11th-16th centuries AD) who lived in the region prior to the current inhabitants, the Dogon, and who used caves for keeping the dead, as locations for funerary rituals, and to store food (ibid: 38). One of the two complete wooden human figurines, found in a 14th century AD context (Cave K), stylized in form and 15.8 cm in height, was holding an iron shield and wearing a twisted iron neck ring (Bedaux 1991: 33). The other from Cave A is suggested as 11th-12th centuries AD in date. It is 17.3 cm in height and

thickly encrusted with patina from accumulated sacrifices and offerings, (cf. Bedaux 1988: 44, 1991: 33). This blurs the figurine details but indicates the organic materiality associated with ritual practices that are infrequently attested archaeologically (cf. Insoll, MacLean, and Kankpeyeng 2013).

Other isolated figurine finds have also been made in Mali. From the north, Gausson et al. (1994) reported a figurine head in red brown ceramic (7.5 cm x 5.3 cm x 3.7 cm) found on the surface in the Gao region. This is undated, but ascribed a putative Iron Age date on the basis of the head being perforated possibly for metal ornaments. The prominent eyes are also remarked upon (ibid: 103). From the south, further terracotta figurines have been reported from Fakola in the Bougouni region and Bankoni in the Bamako region. These have been TL dated to between the 15th-16th centuries AD (Sidibé 1995a: 21).

6. Burkina Faso

Limited finds of figurines have been made in archaeological contexts in Burkina Faso probably reflecting the lack of research rather than, necessarily, an absence of figurines. At Kissi 3, an occupation mound and associated cemetery in the northeast of the country, a 13 cm high anthropomorphic figurine was recovered from levels dated to the 7th-9th centuries AD (Magnavita 2001). Missing its head, this was finished in red slip with lines of comb decoration on the torso and back interpreted as representing scarification marks (**Figure 8.6**). A prominent navel hernia is also modelled. Magnavita (ibid: 128) suggests the figurine is female based on the “abstracted breasts”. A *cache-sexe* seems to cover the genitalia.

7. Niger

The clay figurines from the Bura-Asinda-Sika complex in southwestern Niger are important because of their unusual form and use. These are from sites located between Gorouol and Sirba on the River Niger dated to between the 3rd-11th centuries AD (cf. Gado 1993, 2004). Here, burial sites were characterized by anthropomorphic clay vessels of two types, long tubular or hemispherical forms often surmounted by busts or heads. The tubular vessels serve as an illustrative example and were usually 70-80 cm in height by 10-30 cm diameter with frequently at their top, “*soit de statuettes anthropomorphes completes de personnages variés ou même de cavaliers montés*” (Gado 2004: 169). Sex and gender were represented by, for example, differences in hairstyles, or the presence of a phallus (Gado 1993: 368). Scarifications were sometimes depicted and age was illustrated by, for instance, modelling a tuft of hair for a child as opposed to “*tresses abondantes pour les adultes*” (Gado 2004: 169). Cavalier (horse and rider) figurines recurred. One example was 62 cm in height by 52 cm width and 20 cm depth. The bridle and reins were modelled on the horses head which was also wearing a type of small hat, whilst the human rider was wearing bracelets and a cross-over harness on their chest (cf. Devisse 1993: 370-371, 548) (**Figure 8.7**). Some heads in their circular form and modeling were like the Ghanaian *Asensie* figurines already described (though no links are being proposed), as, for instance, with a head of 26 cm height by 12 cm width and 6 cm depth that had originally sat on a hemispherical jar (cf. Devisse 1993: 550). Other heads had rectangular or more realistic oval profiles with the majority having facial scarification marks indicated by applied clay decoration (cf. Devisse 1993: 554-556).

The vessels served as containers and were essentially effigies containing fragmented and disarticulated human remains; frequently found inside were cranial bones, skulls, parts of long bones, and teeth. The vessels were also densely clustered together and had been partly inserted into the ground. It seems, but is not entirely certain, that they may have had some sort of relationship with complete human burials recorded at a lower depth. These burials were generally found between 115-145 cm below the surface, and were usually placed lying on their backs, with the head to the north (cf. Gado 1993: 369, 2004: 164-169). Some form of citation practices was seemingly in operation between the vessels and figurines, the fragmentary human remains and the complete burials (Insoll in press).

8. Chad and Cameroon

Significant quantities of clay figurines have been recovered from archaeological sites associated with the 'Sao' in southern Chad and northern Cameroon. Although the term Sao masks considerable social complexity (Insoll 2003: 278-282), certain generalities emerge. They were followers of complex indigenous religions, farmers, and lived in settlements often represented archaeologically by mounds dated to between the 10th and 16th centuries AD (Jansen and Gauthier 1973; Lebeuf and Lebeuf 1977; Lebeuf, Treinen-Claustre, and Courtin 1980). A degree of religious homogeneity is suggested by the similar types of figurines that were incorporated into ritual practices focused on shrines (Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950; Courtin 1965).

Figurine spatial orientation and arrangement appears to have been important in these ritual contexts. At Tago, c. 30 km north of Ndjamena in Chad, three anthropomorphic

figurines had been oriented to the east with one placed on part of a funerary jar along with four balls of fired clay that had been put at the cardinal points (**Figure 8.7**). Hundreds of figurine fragments; people, masked dancers, animals, along with pieces of red ochre, stone pounders and faunal remains from sacrifices had been arranged in three semi-circles to the side of and behind these central figurines (Lebeuf and Masson-Detourbet 1950: 68-70). The excavators suggested that the Tago shrine was a place of pilgrimage where people “*qui y plaçaient des masques modelés suivant le canon particulier de leur cite*” (ibid: 129). Pilgrims bringing figurines from their home area might account for the stylistic variability evident at Tago; alternatively, as at sites in Koma Land varied types of figurines could have been produced by the same artisans.

The emphasis placed upon spatial orientation of Sao figurines was also evident in another shrine at Bout-Al-Kabir (Chad). This was formed of a series of pots in which figurine heads of 20-30 cm height had been placed facing southeast beside a water channel (Courtin 1965). Some heads were modelled wearing masks and one had three horns. Small, necked vessels were also found that had perhaps been used for offering libations along with figurines missing heads, but with projecting navels, cylindrical bodies, and arms and breasts. Traces of red ochre were also found on certain, unspecified, figurines (Courtin 1965: 101-103).

In the Sao corpus, most figurines rarely exceed 18 cm height and the majority are between 3-8 cm. Repeat facial markings are apparent that perhaps represent scarification or could be abstract decoration. Sometimes humans are represented semi-realistically, others are very abstract, as with a figurine from Goulfeil (Chad) where only the mouth and what might be scarification are depicted by incisions in the clay (Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 125-126, 129) (**Figure 8.7**). There is also

accentuation of certain features such as the eyes and mouth/lips, and suppression of others, as with the marking of the nose or ears with an incised hole (Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 122-123). Limbs also seem insignificant in comparison to heads.

Many Sao figurines could best be described as androgynous. Some seem to depict people wearing masks as with the bovid-headed “danseur” from Tago (Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 135) (**Figure 8.7**). Some hybrid human-animal forms might also reflect on concepts of personhood or human/animal relations rather than represent masquerade (Jansen and Gauthier 1973: 24-25). Animal figurines have also been found, hippopotamus, warthogs, tortoises, lizards, for instance, as well as unidentified animals (Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 140; Jansen and Gauthier 1973: 21, plates 29-31; Lebeuf and Lebeuf 1977: 57). A copper alloy gazelle head, 5 cm in height, was also recovered from the site of Azeguène (Lebeuf and Lebeuf 1977: 88). Varied figurine functions have been suggested. As part of an ancestor ‘cult’, as protective agents, related to personhood, and linked to rituals surrounding hunting and fishing (Lebeuf and Lebeuf 1977: 64-64).

Clay figurines have also been recovered from sites linked with the Fali of northern Cameroon (cf. Jansen and Gauthier 1973; Gauthier 1979). Predominantly from funeral sites of post 17th century AD date these represent males, females, and people of indeterminate sex in a stylised way. One example from Waza (late 16th – early 17th centuries AD) depicts a woman of 17.3 cm height giving birth to two separate detachable clay infants of 4.1 cm height (Jansen and Gauthier 1973: Plate 61) (**Figure 8.7**).

9. Interpretive Themes

Archaeological figurines from West Africa could have served varied purposes. Some might have had fixed functions, others might have been multi-functional, and could potentially have changed meaning over time, as ethnography suggests. Dogon wooden figurines, for example, encompassed multi-functionality in being both “a person and an altar” (Van Beek 1988: 58). Meanings ascribed Dogon figurines also altered, for although they grew more powerful as they got older through the sacrifices offered them, they also became more capricious. Hence over time they fell out of active ritual use, ultimately becoming mnemonic objects for the persons they were linked with when they were alive (cf. Van Beek 1988: 62).

9.1. Rituals and Religions. Interpretations linked to figurines functioning within indigenous religious beliefs and ritual practices recur. For example, McIntosh and Keech McIntosh (1979: 52) suggest that the kneeling figurine from the collapsed roundhouse at Jenné-jeno could, along with the associated material, have been “deposited in the course of a ritual directed toward ancestral worship”. Although veneration rather than ‘worship’ is more likely (cf. Insoll, MacLean, and Kankpeyeng 2013), this is a plausible interpretation that draws upon figurine, associated material culture, and context.

Figurine re-use also often had a ritual/religious purpose. Both the sacred grove context and the figurine patterning at Igbo ‘Laja suggested ritual intention. Figurine re-use was also attested. A pit radiocarbon dated to the mid-18th century appeared to have been linked with the rediscovery and curation of figurines from the mid-15th century for ritual use. The pit was marked with a piece of charred wood and as Eyo (1976: 57) notes, parallels practices of figurine re-use at Ife. Ritual re-use of what

seem to be Koma figurines was also recorded in a shrine belonging to the Balsa ethno-linguistic group (Kröger 1988: 131).

The Koma animal figurines have also been interpreted as ‘totems’ or animal spirits based on ethnographic parallels (Anquandah 1987: 180, 1998: 159). Perhaps more feasible is that they represent conceptual and metaphorical links being formed with some wild animals, rather than the specificity of ethnographically derived ‘totemic’ association (Insoll 2011: 1013). Lamp (1983: 227) has also suggested a metaphorical “juxtaposition” to explain the *nomoli* depicting figures mounted on elephants or apparently feline creatures as metaphors for the ruler’s strength (elephant), and powers of seizure and aggression (leopard). More generally, West African animal figurines from archaeological contexts suggest varied human-animal relations and complex surrounding beliefs that merit further investigation.

9.2. Persons and Power Objects. Recurrently, figurines seem to have been viewed as powerful objects and it is possible that some were considered as invested with personhood. Some of the anthropomorphic figurines from Koma Land were potentially thought of in this way. Computed Tomography (CT) scanning indicated that holes could be pierced in the figurines either singularly or in combination, from the top of the head, ears, nostrils or mouth. It is possible that these were used to offer libations (Insoll, Kankpeyeng and Nkumbaan 2012: 31). Externally directed cavities could be deliberately made to facilitate firing (cf. Bellis 1982: 16), but suggesting that technical rationale explains all the cavities, voids, and incisions found in figurines is inappropriate (Insoll in press).

Examples of Fali anthropomorphic figurines from northern Cameroon also have apertures and cavities in them. A figurine from the burial site of Hou, dated to the 17th

century AD had a large slit placed vertically in its chest, a feature interpreted by Jansen and Gauthier (1973: 22) as being “the aperture through which the breath of life enters and leaves”. Another figurine from Hou and two from the Dolu Tibinta burial site likewise had circular holes incised in the upper chest or throat (cf. Jansen and Gauthier 1973: Figures 51 and 52). X-rays of some of the Fali figurines indicated intentional cavities in their bodies connected to these external perforations, leading Gauthier (1979: 107) to suggest that the inner cavities were created by the space left by the combustion of dry herbs – presumably medicinal - around which the figurine was made.

Besides the possibility of additional internal elements, figurines could also have been enhanced with organic components such as sticks or feathers inserted in them, or through holding them, or by being dressed or wrapped in material such as cloth or skins (Insoll in press). The clenched fist found on some *nomoli* has a hole in which a stick representing a small staff could have been inserted (Allison 1968: 38). The small perforations in the anthropomorphic figurine from Ilorin (Phillips 1995: 524) suggest they might have had something attached or inserted in them.

Concepts of figurine personhood and agency might also be indicated by how they were repeatedly fragmented. Accidental breakage can explain some fragmentation; in other instances this can appear more meaningful as already described for figurines from Koma Land and Nok. Deliberate fragmentation, selection, and purposeful deposition might also explain the cache of figurine parts on Hanwa inselberg described by Norris and Perry (1972: 104) who refer to the “disproportion” between the large numbers of heads and limbs found, as opposed to only two torsos present. This, they rightly suggest, cannot be accounted for by survival reasons alone. Thirty heads, for example, were represented in this assemblage that had been deposited in a

flat area enclosed by blocks of rock (ibid: 103). The location might have been chosen for concealment and perhaps used for ritual activities centred on ritual propitiation and ancestral veneration (Insoll in press).

9.3. Medicine and Healing. Figurines could also have been used for medicinal purposes perhaps as part of the process referred to by Wolff (2000: 206) as “magical mimesis”. Their extensive and varied utilization for medicine and healing in West Africa is well indicated ethnographically and this was often linked with secondary medicinal substances. In Burkina Faso, Dagara *Kôtomè* figurines were made of termite earth, were between 25-50 cm in height and were placed under a shelter by the house. They were arranged in two or three pairs and suspended above them were three gourds, one containing kaolin, the others a black, and a white medicine (Girault 1959: 344). The *Kôtomè* were considered especially good for curing children (ibid: 345).

The *Assongu* figurines of southeastern Ivory Coast also served a healing purpose. These were made of fine-grained fired clay, approximately 11 cm in height and usually anthropomorphic in form. Sometimes breasts or rudimentary genitals permit sexual identification, but generally this is difficult (Soppelsa 1987: 56) (**Figure 8.7**). *Assongu* functioned both to cause and cure disease particularly bleeding and as such were ritually propitiated. Because of their blood links the majority had an “anus”, a hole at the centre of the base that related to rectal bleeding (Soppelsa 1987: 61, 68).

Archaeologically, such detail gained from ethnography is usually lacking though figurines can directly depict illness and disease as apparent at Yikpabongo, Nok, Igbo ‘Laja, and Ife. Similarly, northwest of Jenné-jeno two figurines were found in wall foundation contexts. These were a male and female pair, lacking heads, but with their bodies decorated with applied dots of clay, interpreted as possibly representing body

painting, or, more likely, skin disease lesions linked with the parasitic disease filariasis (McIntosh and Keech McIntosh 1979: 53).

9.4. Funerary Objects. Funerary linkages are also apparent in relation to some figurines, as from Bura or the Ghanaian *Asensie*. However, these were complex objects subject, apparently, to restrictions on who was commemorated, and were figurines that could also draw upon primary material such as skeletal remains or hair either from the deceased or from secondary persons. At Bura, for example, more questions can be asked than answers provided to explain the relationship between the vessels and their anthropomorphic figurines, the human remains they contained, and the other burials beneath. Could these have been fragments of ancestors used as part of the commemorative process by the lower burials or were the fragmentary human remains referencing ancestors in relation to constructing a memory of place through citation of the earlier burials? (cf. Insoll in press).

9.5. Toys and Initiation Objects. Not all figurines need have served ritual, funerary, or medicinal purposes, or be linked with personhood and power. It has been argued that archaeologists often neglect childhood (e.g. Sofaer 2007), and it is likely that some figurines were linked with children (e.g. Lebeuf 1970: 68; Jansen and Gauthier 1973: 20-21). Smith (1978: 227), for example, suggests that the clay figurines from Karkarichinkat were toys as were the clay rings (78-130 mm diameter) also found, with the latter perhaps having functioned as model cattle corrals. Connah (1981: 136) suggests a similar interpretation for the Daima cattle figurines.

Lower production quality (e.g. Okoro 2008) could permit differentiation of childhood-associated figurines. However, some child-produced figurines could be of very good quality and produced with significant technical expertise (cf. Mandel and

Brenier-Estrine 1977: 10). Context might be more amenable to identification with children's figurines perhaps discarded anywhere when broken as opposed to being curated or transferred to particular deposition contexts (Insoll in press). Besides a linkage with children as toys, figurines could also be connected with initiation perhaps as didactic instruments utilized in the social construction of the adult person (Insoll in press).

10. Conclusions

Future research directions are varied. CT scanning could be further used to explore both figurine construction techniques and whether internal voids were meaningful. The materiality of the figurine could also be significant, literally what the figurines were made from, and investigated by compositional analysis. For example, Yoruba *sigidi* unfired clay medicine figurines could function as the medicine itself, not just a receptacle for it, through having powerful medicine ingredients mixed into the wet clay (Wolff 2000: 215, 217). Figurine manufacture could also relate to gender and Berns (1993: 141) has stressed how through their ceramic production, "women have long served as producers and transmitters of a symbolic repertoire, participating in the construction of social and ritual meanings".

Enhanced figurine contextual recording is also vital. Publications often lack adequate detail on the contexts in which they were originally deposited and ultimately found. The figurine assumes significance through its representational qualities, but in attempting to interpret past function and meanings context is as vital. Medicine figurines are objects of power, but differentiating these from other figurines that served as power objects but lacked a medicinal function can be context dependent.

Wolff (2000: 207, 209), for example, describes how Yoruba medicine figurines were differentiated through being hidden, or discarded, or destroyed in the ritual process, whereas shrine sculpture would “combine the qualities of display and power” (ibid: 207).

Figurines from West Africa are material representations of complex beliefs. They provide miniaturized, yet durable insights into past cosmologies, how humans and animals were perceived, and the way the world was considered. Unfortunately, when viewed as ‘art’ they also become commodities, and as such can attract the attention of dealers and collectors who are not interested in context or how figurines were but one component of past life-ways.

As has been well documented, severe damage has been done to the cultural heritage of figurine ‘rich’ parts of West Africa such as the Inland Niger Delta of Mali (e.g. McIntosh 1989; McIntosh et al. 1995; Sidibé 1995b; Sanogo 1999) and Koma Land in Ghana (Kröger 1988; Kankpeyeng and DeCorse 2004). This situation is extremely unfortunate for each site looted reduces the possibilities for reconstructing the meaning of these unique objects. Moreover, it is frustrating that some categories of figurines are almost wholly represented by looted material, as with the bronze and fired clay cavalier figurines from the Inland Niger Delta (cf. Sanogo 1995; Picton 1995). This limits knowledge in so many ways and also raises ethical issues about referring to figurines obtained illegally in bona fide academic publication (McIntosh et al. 1995: 69).

The solutions to these problems are complex and beyond the scope of this chapter, but are beginning to be redressed in parts of West Africa (e.g. Kankpeyeng and DeCorse 2004). Enhanced figurine research by archaeologists will help to erode any claims to

legitimacy by those that deal, buy, and curate illegally obtained figurines from West Africa, as well as increasing our understanding of this rich and varied corpus of material.

Suggested Reading

The literature on figurines in West Africa is diverse as the bibliography indicates. For Ife, see Willett (1967) and Drewal and Schildkrout (2010), for Jenné-jeno, McIntosh and Keech McIntosh (1979), for Nok, Fagg (1990) and Breunig (2013), for Koma, Anquandah (1990) and Kankpeyeng and Nkumbaan (2009), and for Sao, Lebeuf and Lebeuf (1977).

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Figure 8.1. Approximate locations of figurines in West Africa. 1. *Nomoli/Pomdo* (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia), 2. Akan Region (Ghana), 3. Koma Land (Ghana), 4. Daboya (Ghana), 5. *Asensie* (Twifo, Ghana), 6. Dawu (Ghana), 7. Banda (Ghana), 8. Gajiganna and Daima (Nigeria), 9. Nok (Nigeria), 10. Ife (Nigeria), 11. Benin (Nigeria), 12. Owo (Nigeria), 13. Esie (Nigeria), 14. Ilorin (Nigeria), 15. Niger Delta (Nigeria), 16. Zaria (Nigeria), 17. Karkarichinkat (Mali), 18. Inland Niger Delta (Mali), 19. Bandiagara Escarpment (Mali), 20. Bougouni (Mali), 21. Kissi (Burkina Faso), 22. Bura-Asinda-Sika (Niger), 23. Sao (Chad, Cameroon), 24. Fali (Cameroon) (copyright T. Insoll)

Figure 8.2. Left. Stone *nomoli* figurine of a male with a plaited beard, probably Sierra Leone, height 17 cm (after Lamp 1983: 225, Fig. 16) (copyright R. MacLean). Right. Stone *pomdo* figurine possibly depicting a female, probably Guinea, height 12 cm (after Allison 1968: Fig. 51) (copyright R. MacLean)

Figure 8.3. a) Clay ‘dog’ figurine attachment from a pot, Boyasi Hill, Ghana, height 7 cm (after Anquandah 1982: 60) (copyright R. MacLean), b) Clay rider and horse or camel figurine, Yikpabongo, Ghana, height 31 cm (courtesy The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester/University of Ghana), c) Anthropomorphic clay cone figurine, Yikpabongo, Ghana, height 9.4 cm (courtesy The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester/University of Ghana), d) Clay head, Agona-Swedru, Ghana, height 30 cm (after Wild 1937: plate 12 [4]) (copyright R. MacLean), e) Brass twinned figurine, Banda, Ghana, height 5.9 cm (after Stahl 2013: 55) (copyright R. MacLean)

Figure 8.4. a) Clay anthropomorphic figurine, Gajiganna, Nigeria, height 3 cm (after Breunig 1994: 99, Fig. 3) (copyright R. MacLean), b) Clay ‘cattle’ figurine,

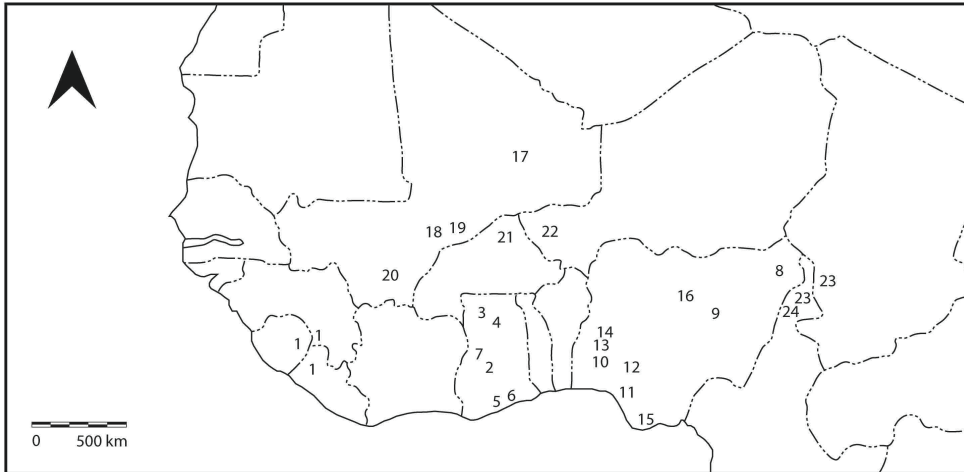
Gajiganna, Nigeria, height c.7 cm (after Breunig 1994: 100, Fig. 5) (copyright R. MacLean), c) Clay goat figurine, Daima III, Nigeria, length c. 8 cm (after Connah 1981: 183, fig. 8.10) (copyright R. MacLean), d) Clay 'antelope' or possibly anthropomorphic figurine, Daima III, Nigeria, height c. 7 cm (after Connah 1981: 184, fig. 8.12) (copyright R. MacLean), e) Clay figurine head, Nok, Nigeria, height 35 cm (after Fagg 1990: 75, plate 13) (copyright R. MacLean)

Figure 8.5. a) Clay ram's head on a platter, Lafogido's Compound, Ife, Nigeria, dimensions not given (after Eyo 1982: 13, fig. 7) (copyright R. MacLean), b) Clay head, possibly of a bush pig, Lafogido's Compound, Ife, Nigeria, height 18 cm (after Eyo 1970: 47) (copyright R. MacLean), c) Clay head possibly of a ram held between a pair of hands, Igbo'Laja, Owo, Nigeria, width 27.5 cm (after Eyo 1976: plate 23) (copyright R. MacLean), d) Stone female figurine, Esie, Nigeria, height 66 cm (after Stevens 1978: 167) (copyright R. MacLean), e) Clay anthropomorphic figurine, Ilorin, Nigeria, height 20.5 cm (after Phillips 1995: 524) (copyright R. MacLean)

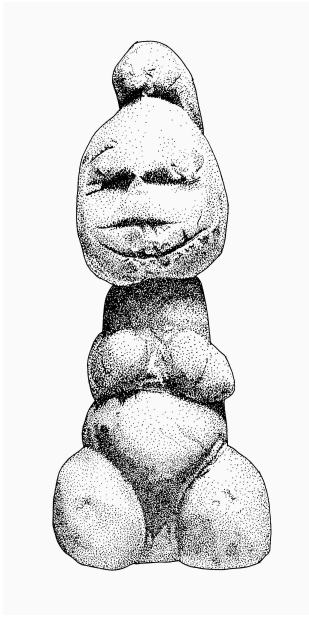
Figure 8.6. a) Clay anthropomorphic figurine, possibly representing pregnancy, Karkarichinkat, Mali, height 4 cm (after Smith 1978: plate 4 [1]) (copyright R. MacLean), b) Clay anthropomorphic figurine, Jenné-jeno, Mali, height 22 cm (after McIntosh and Keech McIntosh 1979: 53, fig. 4) (copyright R. MacLean), c) Clay anthropomorphic torso, Kissi 3, Burkina Faso, height 13 cm (after Magnavita 2001: 129) (courtesy S. Magnavita)

Figure 8.7. a) Clay cavalier figurine, Bura-Asinda-Sika, Niger, height 62 cm (after Devisse 1993: 371) (copyright R. MacLean), b) Anthropomorphic clay figurine, Tago, Chad, height 36 cm (after Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 69, 131) (copyright R. MacLean), c) Abstract clay anthropomorphic figurine, Goulfeil, Chad,

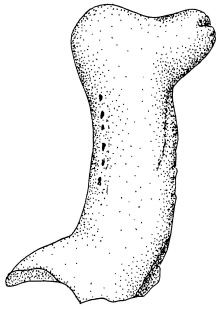
height 7 cm (after Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 126, fig. 35) (copyright R. MacLean), d) Clay 'masked dancer', Tago, Chad, height 43 cm (after Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet 1950: 135, fig. 41) (copyright R. MacLean), e) Clay figurine of woman giving birth with two infants, Waza, Cameroon, height 17.3 cm (after Jansen and Gauthier 1973: fig. 61) (copyright R. MacLean), f) Clay *assongu* figurine, Ivory Coast, average height 11 cm (after Soppelsa 1987: 57, plate 1) (copyright R. MacLean)



8.1



8.2



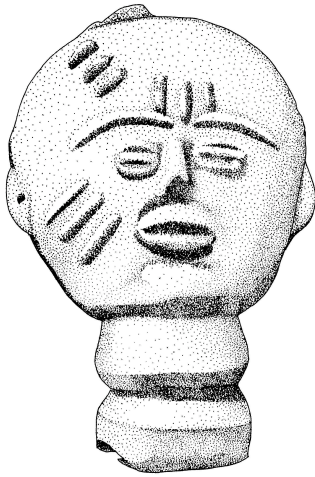
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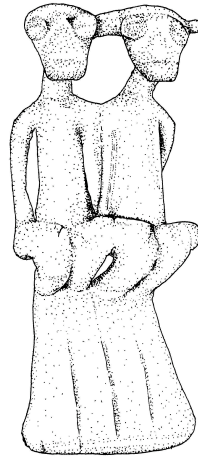
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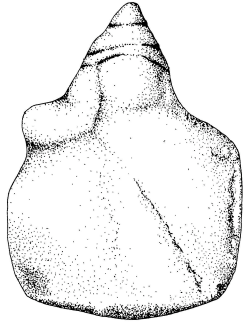


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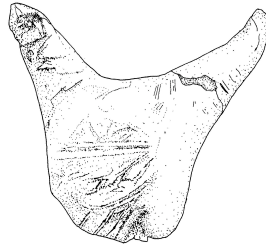


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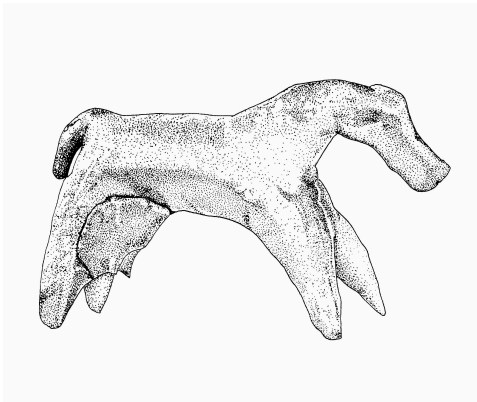
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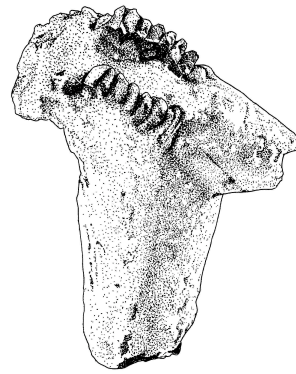
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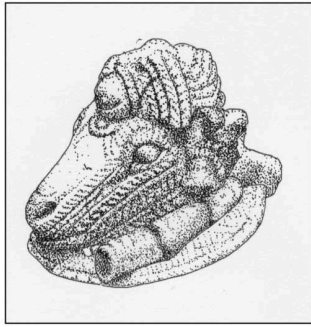


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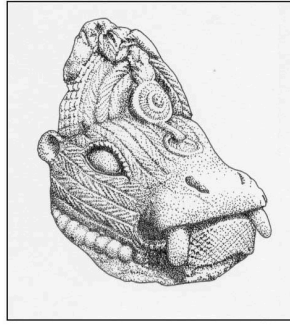


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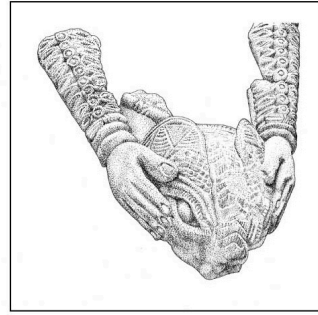
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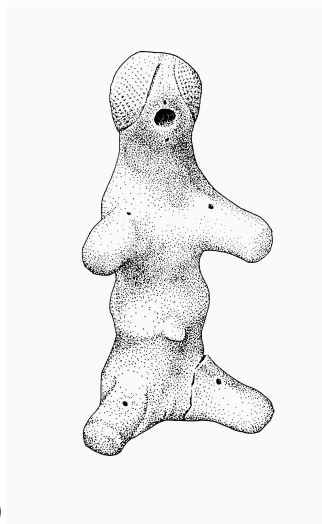
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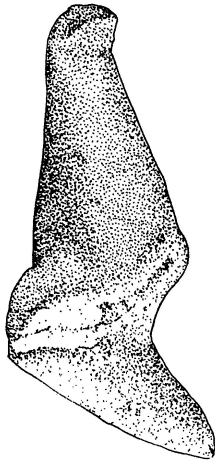


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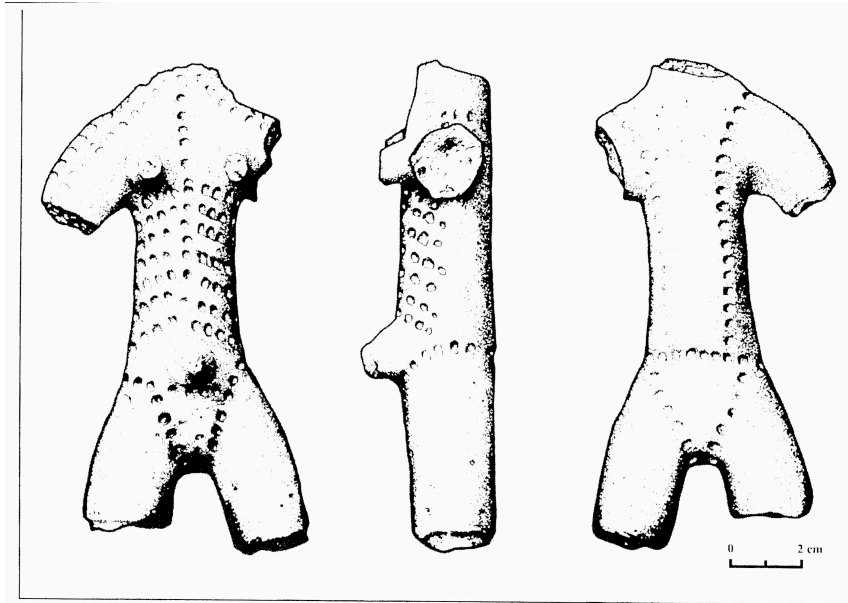
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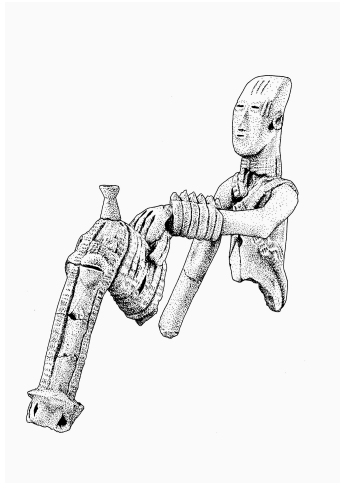


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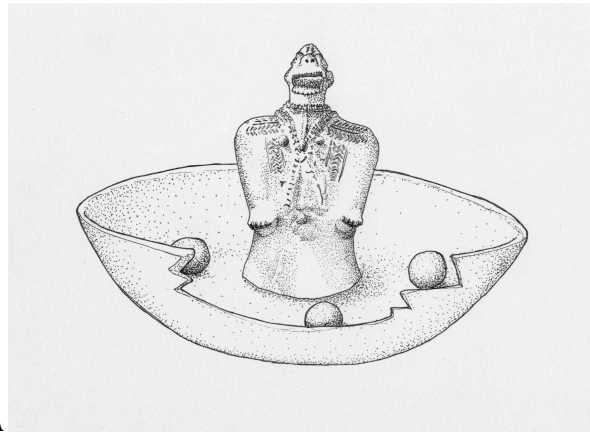


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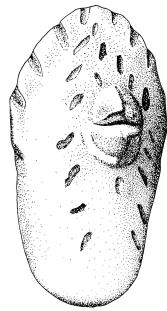
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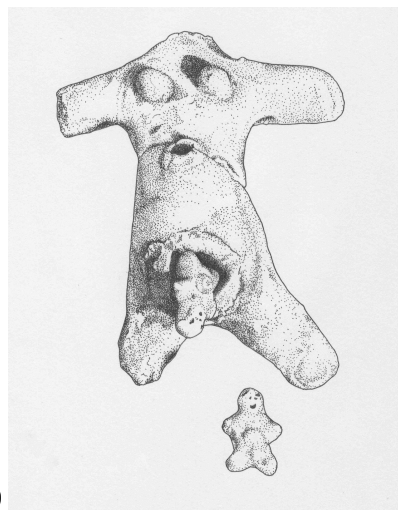
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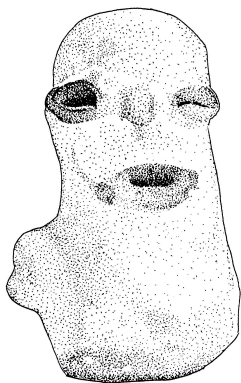
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