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CLAY FIGURINES FROM THE ÅLAND ISLANDS AND MAINLAND FINLAND

Abstract

The Stone Age clay figurines from the Åland Islands and mainland Finland as well as the problems concerning their classification, function and origins are described. Similarities between Early Comb ceramic figurines (c. 4200–3300 bc)¹ from the mainland and the 1000-year younger ones from Åland Pitted ware sites are seen as a possible indication of the survival of early figurine traditions on the islands. The implications of this, the existence of a population group based on the archipelago by 3300 bc, are briefly discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Eighty years ago B. Cederhvarf began his investigations at the Stone Age site of Jettbôle on the Åland Islands. The excavations revealed a large settlement complex of the Swedish Pitted ware culture rich in lithic, ceramic and bone materials. Their occurrence in two distinct zones indicated two utilization episodes: An earlier occupation zone with its lower limit around 35 m a.s.l., Jettbôle I, and a later occupation zone with its lower limit around 30 m a.s.l., Jettbôle II (Cederhvarf 1912).

Jettbôle II yielded, among other things, some 100 fragments of about 60 anthropomorphic clay figurines that were rather unique. Only a handful of Stone Age clay figurines were known then from Fennoscandia, and they differed considerably from the Jettbôle finds (Almgren 1907; Ailio 1909). Since then, however, a number of new figurine finds have been reported from Finland and other parts of northern Europe (Äyräpää 1942; Edgren 1964, 1982; Miettinen 1965; Wyszomirska 1984).

Anthropomorphic clay figurines are a common feature at Neolithic sites in southern

Europe, but are practically absent from central Europe (Tringham 1971; Gimbutas 1974; Miliusauskas 1978; Phillips 1980). Further north, however, they occur frequently again, forming a second figurine zone that extends from Scandinavia to the Urals. This northern zone is associated mainly with food-gathering cultures and it is characterized by both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines of diverse materials. Although anthropomorphic clay figurines occur throughout the zone, they are dominant only in mainland Finland and the Åland Islands (Table 1; Wyszomirska 1984).

Being the 80th anniversary of Jettbôle excava-

Table 1. Frequency of anthropomorphic (A), zoomorphic (Z) and undefined (U) representations according to Wyszomirska (1984). Data on Finland are not updated because all the four regions were presumably compiled according to the same criteria. See also Table 4.

PLACES	FIGURINES			Total	Clay-made
	A	U	Z		
Finland	80	20	17	117	97%
Sweden	11	39	31	81	91%
E Baltic	40	11	74	125	25%
Russia	31	3	54	88	18%
Sums	243	74	94	411	

¹ All dates used here are in uncalibrated conventional radiocarbon years, hence bc.

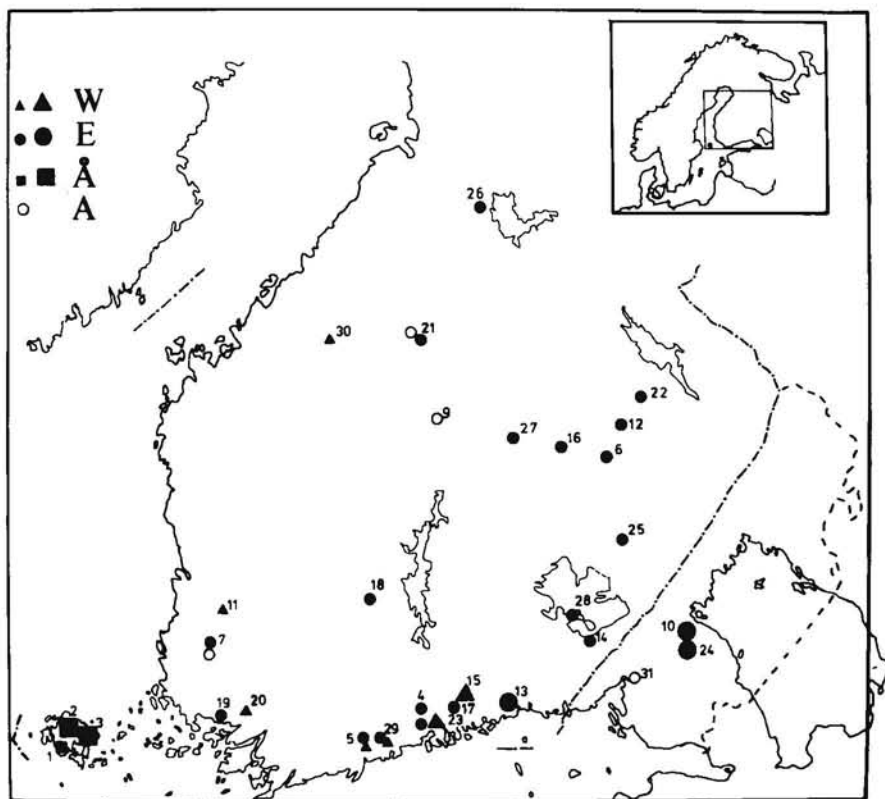


Fig. 1. Distribution of the various groups of clay figurines in the study area: (W) Western; (E) Eastern; (Å) Åland; (A) atypical anthropomorphs. The larger symbols represent two or more sites within a parish. Explanation for the numbers is given in Table 2.

tions, I had planned a study of all the clay figurines from Åland sites. But unfortunately this was not possible because the figurines have not been transferred to Mariehamn yet. Lacking direct artefact information, I was forced to base this work on the available data from both published and unpublished sources.

A DIVISION OF FINNISH FIGURINES

It must be pointed out that the great majority of clay figurines from mainland Finland and the Åland Islands are fragmentary. Isolated heads, headed upper torsos, footpieces or footed lower torsos are a general rule. In a few occasions the decoration has helped to relate certain upper torsos with their lower portions, allowing the reconstruction of a few figurines. But there is not enough information for establishing true types. Consequently, the term type has been avoided

by using more general substitutes such as 'form', 'kind' and 'group'.

Although the often fragmentary state of Finnish clay figurines does not allow an adequate typology, archaeologists have separated three major groups with somewhat discrete geographical and chronological distribution: Western, Eastern and Åland (Fig. 1). The first two groups are part of the Finnish Comb ceramic culture, whereas the last one appears to be associated with the local manifestations of the Swedish Pitted ware culture. Basically the same differentiation was presented by Äyräpää (1942) over 40 years ago, and accepted by later authors (Edgren 1964, 1982; Miettinen 1965; Wyszomirska 1984).

The Western group (W)

The first figurines of this kind were discovered in 1928 in the southwestern parish of Paimio

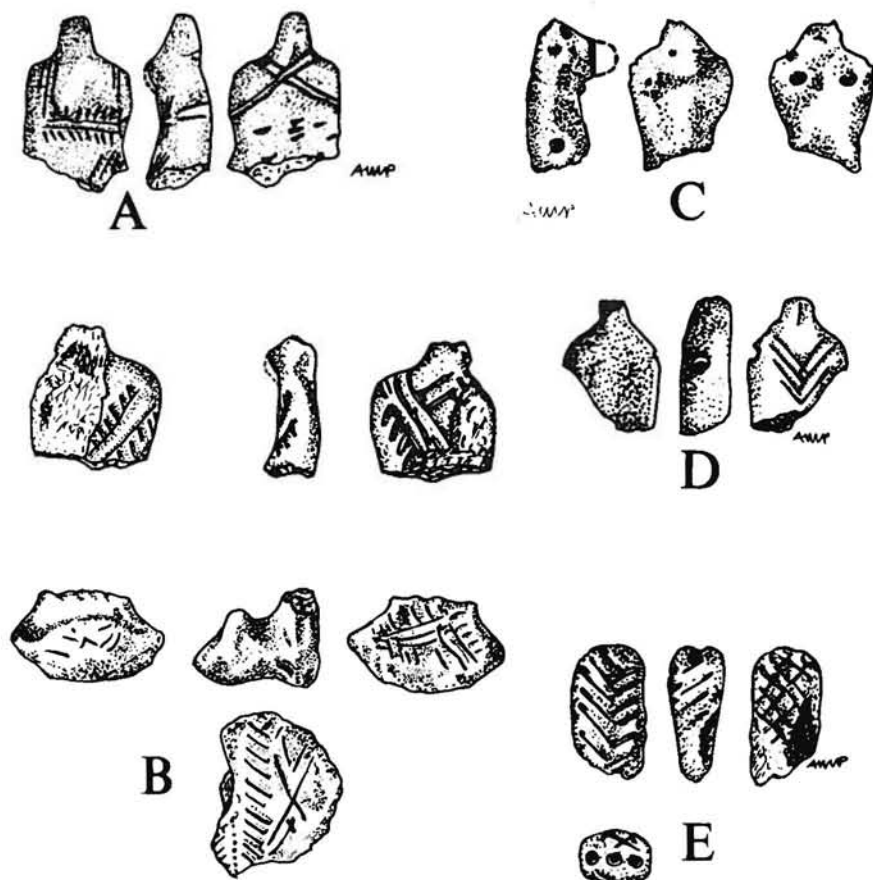


Fig. 2. Western figurines of variants W1 (A–C) and W2 (D–E), with apron-like decoration patterns (A,B) and holes for attachment of extra ornaments (C–D). For size see Table 5. (Äyräpää 1942; Meinander 1947).

(Europaeus 1930b), hence the term "Paimio idols" often met in the literature. Western figurines consist of straightbodied anthropomorphic representations lacking facial features and usually decorated with incised lines and/or punctates. They often show signs of having been painted with red ochre. The head or shoulders of some specimens have small holes for the attachment of additional ornaments (feathers?). As a general rule, figurines of this group are found broken (Europaeus 1930b; Äyräpää 1941; Meinander 1947; Edgren 1982).

Two variants have been observed within the Western group. One (W1) is characterized by figurines with pronounced 'nose' and feet, often "decorated" with what appears to be some sort of apron or poncho (Fig. 2). The other variant

(W2) has a more schematic and flattened body decorated with abstract geometric designs (Fig. 2). The two variants were described by Äyräpää (1942:84) respectively as "human-shaped" and "spoon-shaped".

Western figurines seem to date to the Early Comb ceramic (Ka1) period Äyräpää (1942; Edgren 1982, 1984). This corresponds to c. 4200–3300 bc according to the radiocarbon-based shoreline chronology (Siiriäinen 1974; Núñez 1978) and makes the Western group the oldest figurines in Finland. A few Western-like fragments have been reported from the Åland Islands, which at the time formed part of the territory occupied by the Early Comb ceramic culture (Dreijer 1941, 1983; Väkeväinen 1979; Martinsson 1985).

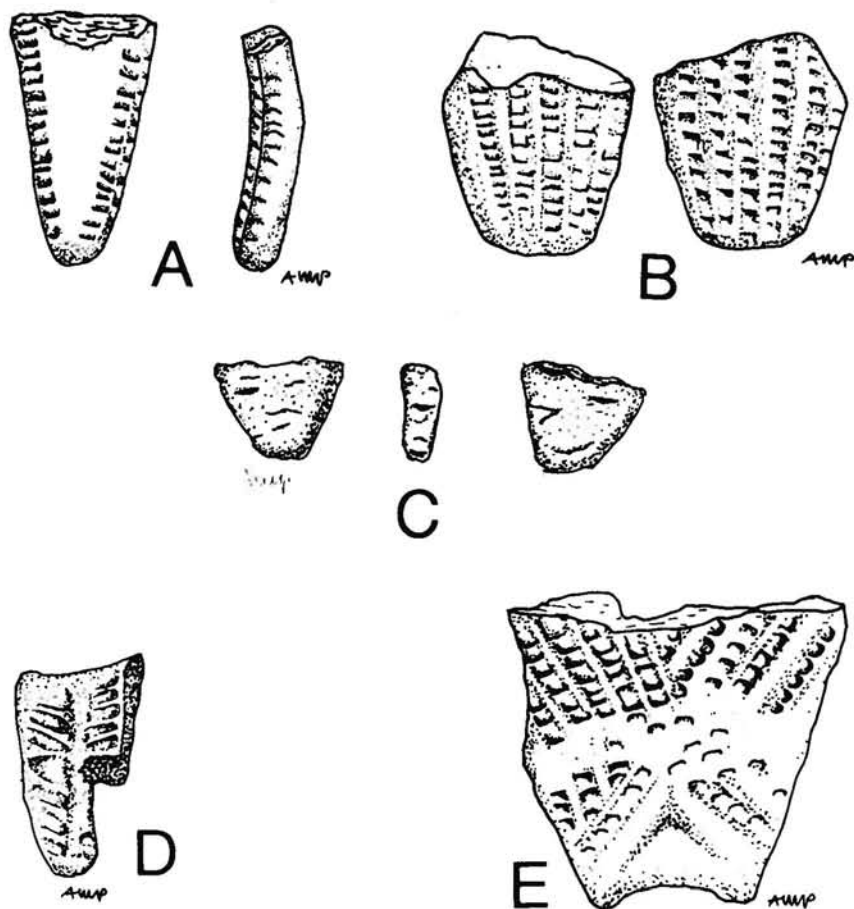


Fig. 3. Eastern figurines of variant E1 with punctate (A–B), incised (C–D) and comb (E) decoration. For size see Table 5. (Pälsi 1920; Dreijer 1941; Äyräpää 1942).

The Eastern Group (E)

The first Stone Age clay figurines found in Finland belonged to this group (Ailio 1909). Eastern figurines differ from their western counterparts in form, date and geographical distribution. A distinct feature is their bent shape, hence the term "bent idols". They often present face features and a dorsal ridge. Decoration, if at all present, consists of incised lines, punctates or comb impressions in abstract geometric patterns. Signs of red ochre paint have been observed on a few specimens, but not as frequently as in the Western group (Ailio 1909; Pälsi 1920; Europaeus 1930a; Äyräpää 1942; Miettinen 1965; Edgren 1964).

Two variants can be separated: One (E1) is

characterized by worm-like cylindrical bodies, and the other (E2) by flatter somewhat leaf-like shape (Fig. 3–4). The incidence of decoration appears to be greater in the flat variant. Äyräpää (1942:94) referred to the flat variant as "tongue-shaped"; for the other variant he adopted Ailio's (1909) terms *Tonhahn* or *savikukko* (*savi*= clay; *kukko*= cock, rooster) and "phallic amulet" (Äyräpää 1942:92,120).

In Finland, Eastern-group figurines have been found in association with Typical Comb ceramics (Ka2) and, in a few instances, with Late Comb ceramics (Ka3) (Pälsi 1920; Europaeus 1930a; Äyräpää 1942; Miettinen 1965; Edgren 1964). This gives a chronological range of c.3300–2200 bc (Siiriäinen 1974; Núñez 1978).

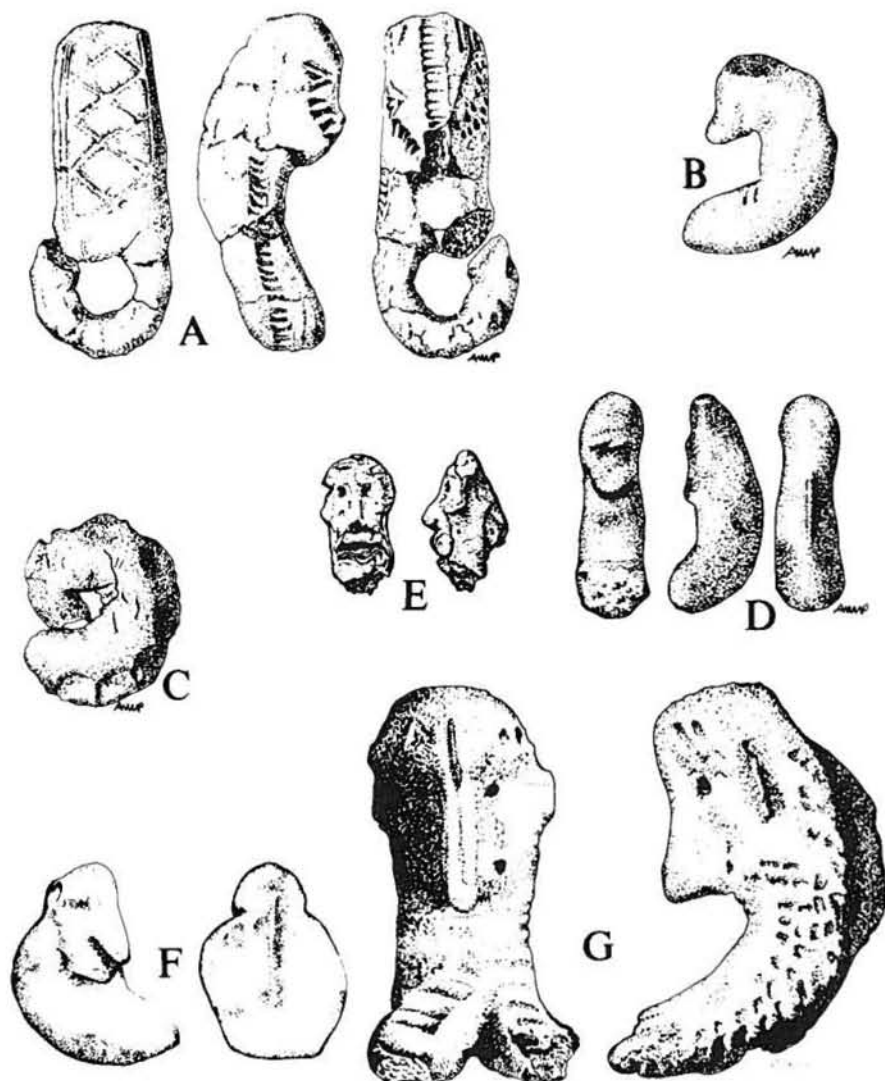


Fig. 4. Eastern figurines of variant E2. Some are decorated (A,G), but most have only face features (B-C only nose) and back ridge. For size see Table 5. (Pälsi 1920; Äyräpää 1942; Miettinen 1965; Kokkonen 1978).

The Åland group (Å)

Åland figurines are somewhat larger and more naturalistic than those of the Comb ceramic culture. They are generally decorated with punctate and/or incised lines forming either abstract geometric patterns or, occasionally, some sort of apron or poncho. Face features tend to be well-defined, and certain markings of some figurines have been interpreted as hair and beard or face painting. Faces are often disk-shaped (mask?).

Judging by the breast-like protruberances, a few figurines represent females. Footpieces are rather simple, resembling those of the Western group; but Eastern forms also occur. Some figurines show signs of red ochre paint. Small holes on the head and/or upper body, presumably for the attachment of extra ornaments, were also reported. Like the Western group, all Åland figurines are broken (fig. 5-6, 11C; Cederhvarf 1912; Äyräpää 1942; Meinander

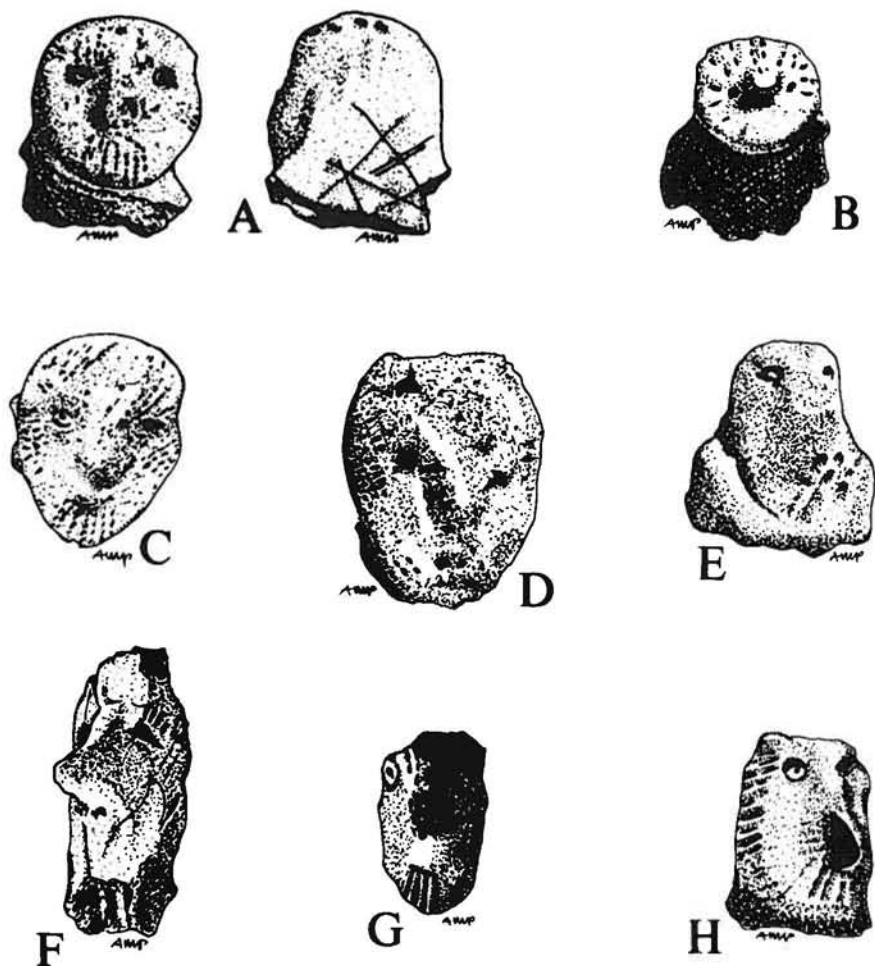


Fig. 5. Head fragments of Åland figurines (See also Fig. 11C) with incised, punctate and sculpted face features. Some show disk-shaped faces (A–D, 11C) and/or hair/beard-like markings (A–D, F–H, Fig. 11C). For size see Table 5. (Cederhvarf 1912; Edgren 1984).

1957; Dreijer 1983; Edgren 1984; Wyszomirska 1984).

All figurines of the Åland group have been found at local sites of the Swedish Pitted ware culture (Cederhvarf 1912; Äyräpää 1942; Meinander 1957; Dreijer 1983; Edgren 1984). Numerous radiocarbon dates for this culture in Sweden fall within the range of 2800–1800 bc, concentrating between 2700 and 1900 bc (Wyszomirska 1984). Since the Åland figurines appear to be associated with the younger Pitted ware phases (Cederhvarf 1912; Meinander 1957; Dreijer 1940, 1983), the date of the figurines can be placed towards the later half of this interval.

Other forms and materials

A fourth group could be formed with all atypical figurines that do not fit in the other three (Fig. 7). As can be expected, such a variegated group of figurines is spread in both spatial and chronological sense. For example there is the Virtala limbed torso from a Typical Comb ceramic (Ka2) site from Central Finland, and the head-piece from a Jäkärälä (KaJ) level at the site of Kolmhaara in Southwest Finland (Fig. 7; Äyräpää 1942; Edgren 1966). In any event, they all fall within the fourth and third millennia bc.

The few zoomorphic clay figurines known

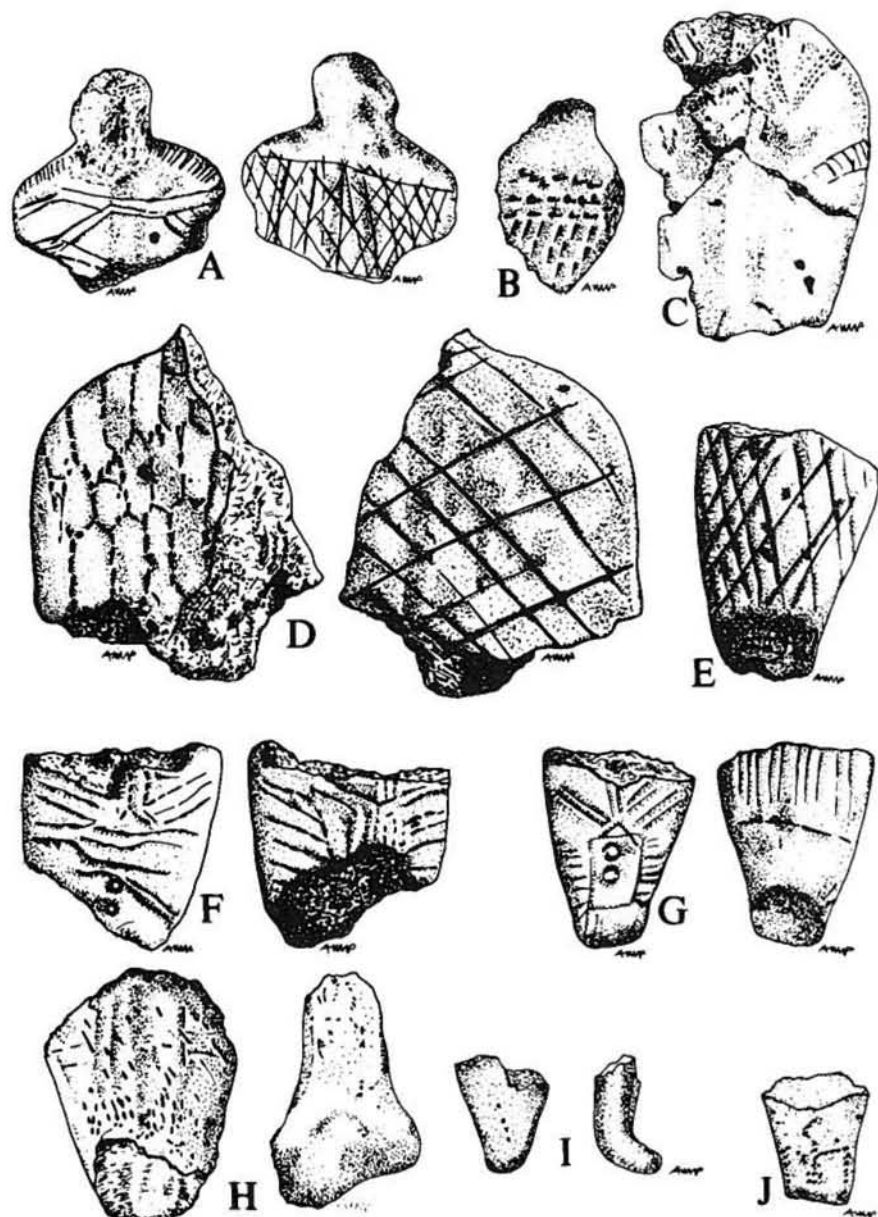


Fig. 6. Torso (A–D,F) and foot (E,G–J) fragments of Åland figurines (See also Fig. 11C). Notice the rib-like pattern (A,F–G,11C) and button-like features (F–G,11C). In some fragments the decoration suggests some sort of aprons or ponchos (A–C,D,11C). One figurine (C) has plastically represented breasts. For size see Table 5. (Cederhvarf 1912; Pälvi 1920; Äyräpää 1942; Edgren 1984).

from mainland Finland have Typical Comb ceramic (Ka2) association. Zoomorphs are dominant among Pitted ware figurines in Sweden, but only a couple have been reported from this culture's sites on the Ålands (Cederhvarf 1912; Äyräpää

1942; Koskimies 1967; Edgren 1982, 1984; Wysocka 1984).

At this point it is worth mentioning a figurine from the Early Comb ceramic (Ka1) site of Västra Jansmyra, the Åland Islands (Fig. 7). It has

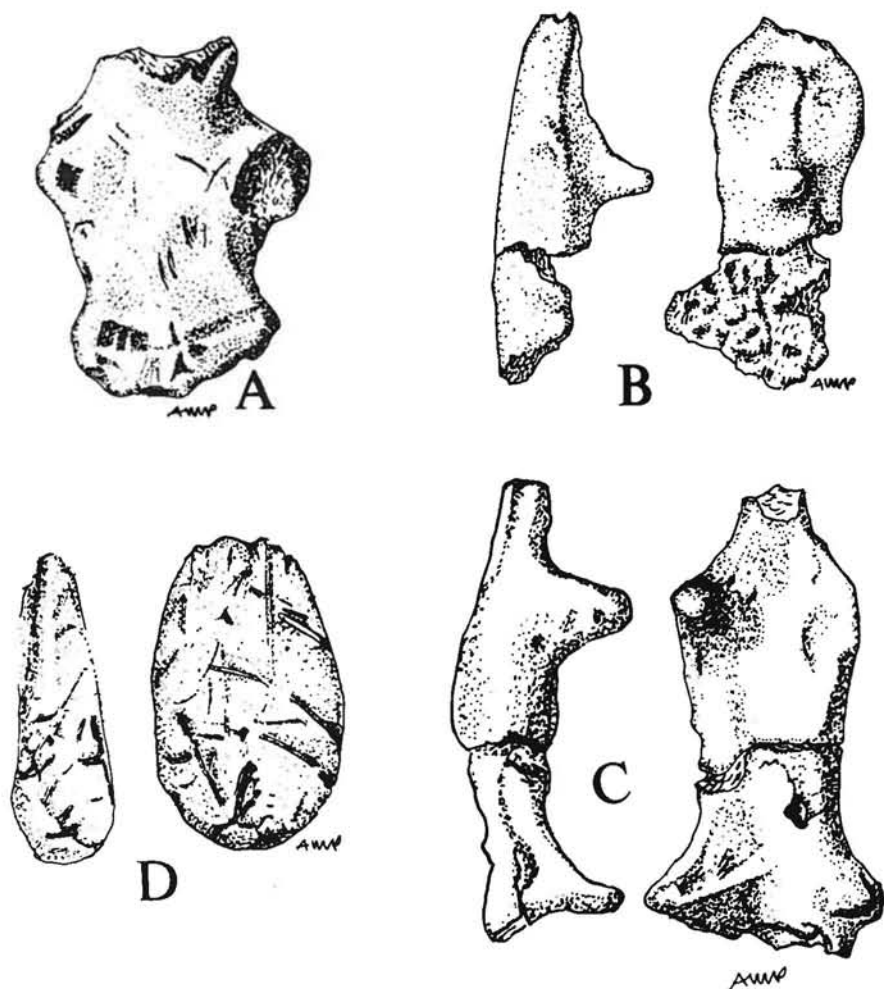


Fig. 7. Atypical clay figurines: A) Ka2 limbed torso from central Finland; B) Headpiece from a Jäkärle style Comb ceramic site in southwest Finland; C) Ka1(?) torso from the Åland Islands, traditionally interpreted as zoomorphic, but it could have been an anthropomorph with a head like B; D) carelessly decorated oval clay object from the Åland Islands similar to that in Fig. 2E. For size see Table 5. (Dreijer 1941; Äyräpää 1942; Edgren 1964).

been interpreted as a zoomorph (Dreijer 1941, Wyszomirska 1984), but its proportions suggest that it may be actually an anthropomorph. The body of most quadrupeds is narrowest from side to side, whereas that of humans is broadest along this direction. For this reason, the Västra Jansmyra fragment could belong to an anthropomorphic figurine similar perhaps to that from Kolmhaara (Fig. 7).

Figurines of materials other than clay are rare in Finland. They are represented by only four anthropomorphs of wood, sandstone, amber and

flint respectively. All seem to date to the Typical Comb ceramic period (Leppäaho 1937; Hyyppä 1937; Kivikoski 1964; Sarvas 1975; Äyräpää 1945). Zoomorphic carvings have been found as effigies on various wooden objects, and sculpted zoomorphs are common on stone weapons. It is worth mentioning that, in contrast to the anthropomorph-dominated figurines, all these representations are zoomorphic. The only exception is a human-effigied shaft-holed weapon from Kiuruvesi (Carpelan 1974, 1977).

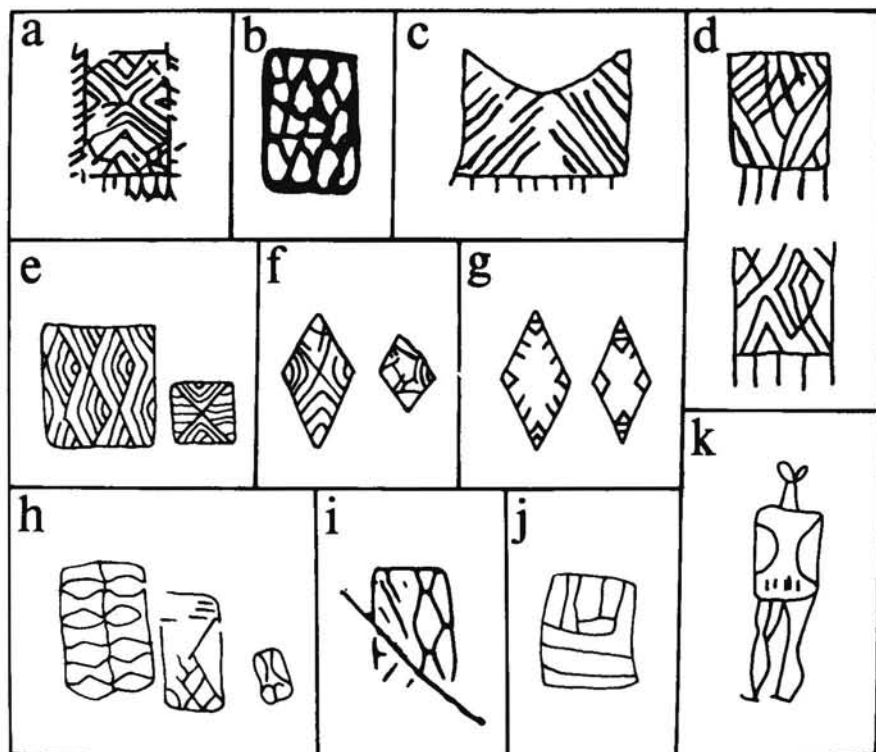


Fig. 8. Blazons (a–j) and an anthropomorph from Fennoscandian rock art bearing resemblance to decoration patterns of clay figurines, e.g.: a,c,e,f to Fig. 2A–B, 3E, 6F–G, 11C; b,d, to Fig. 6A,D–E; g to Fig. 3A; h left to Fig. 6A,F, 11C (Gjessing 1931; Hallström 1952; Bakka 1975; Núñez 1981a, 1981b).

ON THE QUESTION OF FUNCTION

Figurines are generally seen as cult objects (Äyräpää 1942; Gimbutas 1974, 1976; Wyszomirska 1984). This interpretation is supported by a large body of ethnohistorical data and, in the case of northern figurines, certain features tie them to prehistoric rock art and burial rites.

Since Wyszomirska (1984) has recently dealt with graves and figurines, it suffices to say that they are linked by red ochre and the use of figurines as grave goods. Red ochre also connects figurines with the Finnish rock paintings (Núñez 1981b). Furthermore, there is a series of motifs that occur in both clay anthropomorphs and Fennoscandian rock art (Gjessing 1931; Hallström 1952; Äyräpää 1942; Núñez 1981a, 1981b; Edgren 1984). Some of the shared motifs are simple enough to have originated independently, but more elaborated counterparts to certain figurine decoration patterns can be found in the

so-called blazons of Fennoscandian rock art (Fig. 8; Núñez 1981a, 1981b; Wyszomirska 1984). The connection needs not be direct, however; similarities may be due to a common ancient origin.

Ethnohistorical data link the red-painted figurines with ritual. Red, the color of blood, appears to have played an important ritual roll among northern Eurasian peoples. A red paste made from alder bark was used in Lapp bear cult ceremonies (Karstén 1955). Red was also the color of the drawings on Lapp shaman drums (Manker 1950). Moreover, certain idols revered by ancient Lapps, Finns and other north Eurasian peoples were ritually smeared with blood (Schefferus 1673; Macritchie 1908).

Further connection with shamanism could be drawn on the basis of the shape and markings of many figurines, which have counterparts in Siberian shaman costumes. The fringed garments portrayed on some figurines (W1, Å) are very

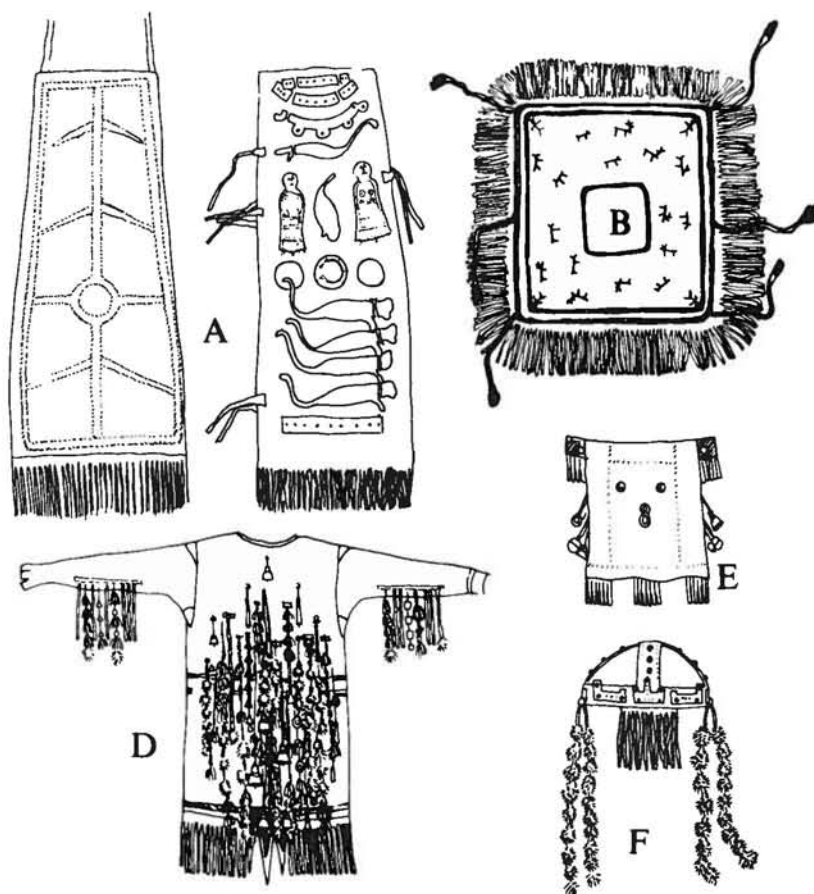


Fig. 9. Fringed items of shaman attire: aprons (A), poncho (B), jacket (D), mask (E) and headgear (F). Compare with decoration patterns of certain figurines, e.g. Fig. 2-3, 5-6, 11. (Okladnikov 1950; Ozols 1971; Prokofyeva 1972).

much like shaman aprons, ponchos and jackets. Also torso designs reminiscent of ribcages, feathers/scales and 'buttons' (W,E2,Å) parallel features of shaman costumes. The same applies to figurine heads. Disk-like faces, circle-eyes and 'hair/beard' markings (Å) could represent masks and other headgear, protruding noses (W1,E1) zoomorphic masks. Moreover, figurines, both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, were important items of shaman paraphernalia (Figs. 9-10; Anisimov 1963; Prokofyeva 1963; Okladnikov 1970; Ozols 1971; Siikala 1980; Lönnqvist 1985).

Finally, the fact that figurines are generally found in pieces suggests some sort of ritual. As Meinander (1947) has pointed out, it is likely that they have been intentionally broken. It certainly seems strange that so many figurines are

involved: all of the Western group (W), most of the flat variant of the Eastern group (E2), and all of the Åland group (Å). The destruction of images of enemies in order to harm them is a common magic practice among primitive peoples. The systematic destruction of ceremonial objects after their use could also come into question (cf. Chernetsov 1963).

Little else can be said on the question of function. The ritual connection seems logical, but it is difficult to prove or disprove. Obviously figurines had several functions. Ethnohistorical data indicate that they served as ceremonial objects, as images of dead relatives, as fetishes or idols; and there is the possibility of some being merely toys or decorative objects (Äyräpää 1942; Rauhala 1977; Wyszomirska 1984). In any event, the fact that Western and Åland figurines

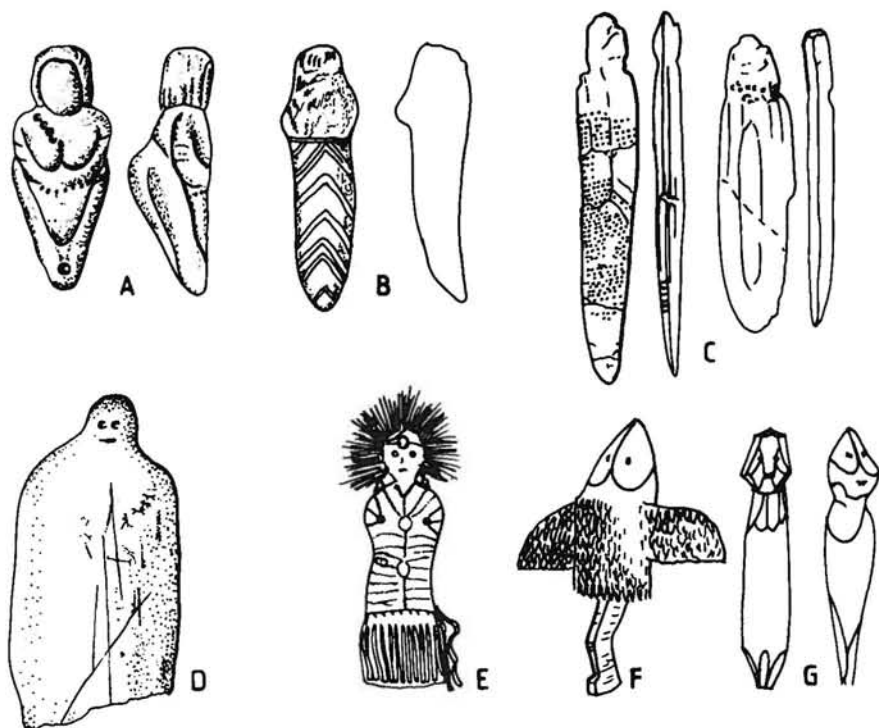


Fig. 10. Anthropomorphic figurines of various materials and cultural association: Ivory/bone Upper Palaeolithic anthropomorphs from Siberia (A) and Ukraine (B–D), image of Yakutian goddess Kyys-tangara (E), and wood-feather (F) and wooden (G) representations of shamanic spirits. (Indreko 1957; Okladnikov 1970; Ozols 1971; Anisimov 1972; Pidoplitchko 1976).

are invariably broken and Eastern ones usually complete suggests different uses.

ORIGINS OF COMB CERAMIC FIGURINES

Äyräpää (1942) suggested that Finnish Comb ceramic figurines were the result of Palaeolithic-rooted traditions that became expressed in clay with the adoption of pottery. This is a feasible idea. Somewhat similar anthropomorphs in ivory, bone, antler and marl have been reported from East European Upper Palaeolithic sites (fig. 10; Boriskovsky 1953; Delporte 1964; Klein 1969; Pidoplitchko 1976). Furthermore, many decoration motifs on Finnish figurines have counterparts in Fennoscandian and East Baltic Mesolithic art, which in turn appears to have Upper Palaeolithic roots (Loze 1973; Bakka 1975; Clark 1975; Edgren 1977). According to Äyräpää Palaeolithic figurine traditions could have survived in Mesolithic Finland until the in-

troduction of pottery. Prior to this event, figurines would have been made of organic materials (wood, bone, antler) not preserved in the acid Finnish soil. As evidence he pointed out that the decoration of early Finnish clay figurines corresponds to that normally applied to bone or wood, and that their shape suggests a long stylization process. He felt that if figurines had originated spontaneously as a by-product of pottery manufacture, they would have been more naturalistic and analogous in paste and decoration to the local pottery (Äyräpää 1942).

As an alternative, Äyräpää also suggested diffusion from the figurine region of Southeast Europe. Certain morphological traits of early Finnish figurines occur in fifth millennium statuettes from Neolithic southern Europe (Äyräpää 1942; Gimbutas 1974). But such traits are not found together in a singular type, site or culture; instead they occur isolated here and there across the territory of the southern figurine complex. Furthermore, it is difficult to esti-

mate the importance of certain decoration motifs shared by figurines from Subneolithic (Comb ceramic) Finland and Neolithic South-east Europe: they were in use in Fennoscandia and the Baltic region since Mesolithic times (Indreko 1948, 1957, 1964; Loze 1973; Clark 1975; Edgren 1977). It is possible that such motifs were symbols or ideograms rooted in the Upper Palaeolithic (cf. Gimbutas 1976), which would imply that the similarities of southern Neolithic and northern Mesolithic and Subneolithic manifestations stem from a common origin and, consequently, not necessarily from interaction between the two regions.

Nevertheless, the possibility of southern Neolithic influence on early Finnish figurines cannot be discarded. Although no fifth millennium clay anthropomorphs have been reported from the Subneolithic territories separating Finland from Neolithic Southeast Russia, we must bear in mind that pottery spread to Finland ultimately from this very area (Äyräpää 1942, Suliminski 1970; Dolukhanov 1973, 1979; Gurina 1973; Núñez 1984, 1986). Needless to say that the two alternatives are not exclusive of each other. It is possible to have both the survival of Palaeolithic-rooted traditions in the north and weak southern Neolithic influences, giving rise, via the newly acquired pottery craft, to an independent flowering of clay figurines.

The Eastern group may be explained in terms of local or other northern figurine forms. The worm-like variant (E1) is traceable to the east, where practically identical clay anthropomorphs occur throughout the vast territory of the Russian Pit-comb ware. Moreover, in Finland this variant is often associated with pottery and lithics of eastern affinities, pointing to its likely source. Certain morphological, regional and chronological features suggest that the Eastern flat variant (E2) may be a hybridization of traits from the flat Western variant (W2) and the more common worm-like Eastern form (E1), but there are not enough data to draw any conclusions (Ailio 1909; Pälsi 1920; Äyräpää 1942; Meinander 1961; Miettinen 1965; Kokkonen 1978; Edgren 1982; Wyszomirska 1984).

ORIGINS OF ÅLAND FIGURINES

Since Åland figurines are found with Pitted ware (Cederhvarf 1912; Meinander 1957; Wyszomirska 1984), it would be logical to seek their source in Sweden. In other words, they could have been brought to the Ålands by Pitted ware set-

tlers. But this seems unlikely. Despite extensive excavations in Sweden, this culture has yielded only a handful of clay anthropomorphs with some affinity to Åland figurines (Fig. 11A-B; Segerberg 1978; Wyszomirska 1984). A more likely hypothesis is that those few Swedish figurines with Åland-like traits are the result of Pitted ware activities on the Åland Islands.

Few parallels were known from northern Europe when Cederhvarf (1912) derived the Jettböle figurines from the south, but the situation had changed when Äyräpää (1942) dealt with the subject three decades later. Although not ruling out the idea of southern influences, Äyräpää felt that more likely links could be found in the north and emphasized the similarity between Åland and Comb ceramic figurines, particularly those from Purciems, Latvia. Similar views were presented later by Miettinen (1964) and Edgren (1984). Dreijer (1941, 1983), on the other hand, found little resemblance between Comb ceramic and Åland figurines, but left open the possibility of a renaissance of ancient Comb ceramic figurine traditions on the Åland Islands.

Regardless of the degree of similarity each author may find between Åland (Å) and mainland figurines (W,E), they all agree that certain traits are shared by both groups. The fact that some rather special traits are found in figurines from both the Ålands and mainland Finland (Table 2) suggests some sort of connection.

Morphologically, the closest mainland counterparts for Åland figurines are found in the Western group, but they are separated by a gap of at least 1000 years. However, Åland figurines also exhibit traits typical of the Eastern group. Face features such as mouth and eyes have not been reported from Western figurines, but they occur in Eastern figurines. Moreover, certain footpiece forms of the Eastern group are paralleled by some Åland figurines (Cederhvarf 1912; Pälsi 1920; Äyräpää 1942). On this basis it is possible to formulate a hypothetical model for the development of Åland figurines:

Figurines of the Western kind would have been introduced in the Ålands during the Early Comb ceramic period (c.4200-3300 bc). It is noteworthy that there seems to be a correspondence between a particular decoration pattern of Early Comb ceramics and Western figurines, and that this very decoration pattern occurs on the islands (Äyräpää 1942; Edgren 1982). Although in mainland Finland Western figurines did not overlive the Early Comb ceramic period, they could have survived on the more isolated

Table 2. Frequency of selected traits of anthropomorphic clay figurines from Åland and mainland Finland with respect to their associated pottery types: (*) common; (+) present; (-) absent.

TRAITS	ASSOCIATION		
	Ka1	Ka2-3	Gr
HEADPIECES:			
- Only nose	*	*	-
- Other face features	-	+	*
- Hair/beard	-	-	*
- No face features	+	-	-
- Disk-shaped face	-	+	*
- Holes for ornaments	*	-	*
FOOTPIECES:			
- Boot-shaped	*	+	*
- Flat, U-shaped	+	*	-
- Flat, V-shaped	+	*	+
- Not flattened	-	*	-
- Bisected	-	+	-
TORSOS:			
- Back ridge	-	*	-
- Not decorated	+	*	-
- Decorated	*	+	*
- Abstract(?) figures	*	*	*
- "Poncho"/"apron"	+	-	+
- With incisions	*	*	*
- With punctates	+	+	*
- With comb stamps	-	*	+
STATE:			
- Fragmentary	*	+	*
- Whole	-	*	-

islands. There the tradition could have continued, evolving locally under moderate mainland influences into the Åland figurines.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

With the exception of the Eastern group, Finnish clay figurines are badly broken. Various forms of heads, torsos and footpieces can be distinguished, but seldom can they be related to each other. The traditionally called 'types' – groups or forms in the present paper – stem from only a handful of specimens that have been put together on the basis of decoration. Consequently, it is not at all clear if a given head form always belongs to a particular kind of torso or footpiece. The situation is further complicated by the generalization and use of these 'types' as true types. In many cases isolated small fragments have been defined according to this dubious 'typology', giving rise to a rather confused picture of Finnish figurines. For this reason, instead of using this classification, I have presented figurine traits in relation to their associated pottery in Table 2. Hopefully, future finds

will show the existing classification correct or, more likely, whether it needs further elaboration.

The interpretation of Swedish clay anthropomorphs as Comb ceramic influence from the Ålands is not new (e.g. Segerberg 1978). It would seem logical to search for other cultural features that could have been assimilated in the same manner, i.e. via the Pitted ware occupation of the islands. A possible candidate would be tempering with limestone grits, which appears moderately in the Fagervik III phase and is characteristic of the subsequent Fagervik IV phase – the very phases recorded at Åland sites (Meinander 1957; Kaelas 1976; Hulthén & Janzon 1982). Interestingly, limestone grit temper is often found in Comb ceramics from the Southwest Finnish coast and it was particularly common on the Ålands since c.4000 bc (Europæus-Äyräpää 1930; Meinander 1954; Edgren 1966; Väkeväinen 1979; Alhonen & Väkeväinen 1982; Vikkula 1984).

The proposed idea of Early Comb ceramic (Ka1) figurine traditions surviving on the Åland Islands until the late third millennium bc has interesting connotations: It would imply some sort of cultural continuity on the islands at least between c.3500 and 2500 bc – in other words, from some time before the end of the Early Comb ceramic period to the arrival of the Pitted ware settlers. This does not necessarily mean year-round occupation of a same site, but rather the existence of a distinct population group(s) based on the archipelago by 3500–3300 bc.

It is generally thought that the Comb ceramic sites of the Ålands reflect seasonal sealing expeditions from the Finnish mainland, that the islands were practicably uninhabitable prior to the arrival of the Pitted ware culture after c.2500 bc (Welinder 1976; Väkeväinen 1979; Dreijer 1983; Martinsson 1985):

These were seasonal sites and it is probable that they were inhabited for short periods at a time. Longer stays on the islands were hardly possible, certainly not in the middle of the winter when food was not readily available (Alhonen & Väkeväinen 1982:67).

This interpretation may well be correct, but much more data is needed to prove its feasibility and, moreover, alternative models are no less viable. First of all, midwinter was not a particularly productive season in the mainland either. It only offered the possibility of fishing and sporadic hunting. Ethnohistorical data suggest that it was the time for the consumption of preserved

foodstuffs from spring, summer, and autumn, complemented with fresh protein from winter fishing and hunting. Admittedly the archipelago lacked large land mammals during Comb ceramic times, but probably this could have been compensated with sporadic seal hunt.

In comparison with the mainland, the greatest drawbacks of the archipelago would have been poor selection of edible plants and the lack of salmon runs. But although the islands lacked the diverse flora of the mainland, the supply of plant food may have been adequate. Palaeoenvironmental data suggest that by 3500 bc some of the islands were large and high enough to sustain arboreal vegetation and small fresh water basins. Pine, birch and certain aquatic plants would have provided respectively cambium, sap and nutritious roots. There were also berries and possibly mushrooms. Furthermore, there are good indications of hazel and oak growing locally, which would imply a supply of nuts and acorns. Of greatest economical importance would have been fishing and sealing, which offered a steady year-round food source with high seasonal peaks, together with the productive fowling and egg-collecting seasons (Backman 1934, 1955, 1964; Glückert 1978; Väkeväinen 1979; Núñez 1984, 1986).

All these resources should have sufficed to sustain a small band year-round. Nevertheless, as Table 3 suggests, summers may not have been specially productive in the archipelago. Therefore, after the egg-collecting and fowling seasons, the yearly cycle of the hypothetical archipelago people may have included the exploitation of the rich salmon resources of the mainland.

By 4000 bc the Ålands had been discovered, probably in connection with sealing activities.

Table 3. Availability of resources in the archipelago during Comb ceramic times: (*) high season; (+) available; (–) not available.

RESOURCES	SEASONS			
	S	S	A	W
Fish	+	+	+	+
Ring seal	*	+	*	+
Other seals	*	+	+	+
Waterfowl	*	+	+	–
Eggs	*	–	–	–
Sap, cambium	*	+	+	+
Roots	*	+	*	+
Mushrooms	–	+	*	–
Berries	–	–	*	–
Nuts, acorns	–	–	*	–

Possibly they were the object of sealing expeditions from the mainland for some time after; but at some point the advantages of being based on the archipelago would have been realized: The holders of the islands controlled their rich maritime resources.

Table 4. Clay figurines from the Ålands (1–3) and mainland Finland (4–31): W= Western; E= Eastern; Å= Åland; A= Other anthropomorphic forms; Z= zoomorphs; Ka= Comb ceramics: Early (1), Typical (2), Late (3), Jäkälä (J), Säräisniemi (S); Gr= Pitted ware; Ki= Kiukais ware. (Cederhvarf 1912; Pälä 1920; Dreijer 1941; Åyräpää 1942; Meinander 1947, 1957; Edgren 1964, 1966, 1982; Miettinen 1965; Koskimies 1967; Luho 1967; Rauhala 1977; Kokkonen 1978; Vikkula 1981; Wyszomirska 1984).

Map #	PARISH (sites)					ASSOCIATION
	W	E	Å	A	Z	
1 Jomala			c.60		2	Gr
2 Saltvik (2)				1		Ka,Gr,Ki
3 Sund (2)			1	1	1?	Ka1 Gr,Ka3
4 Askola		1?				Ka3
5 Espoo	1	1				Ka2
6 Heinävesi		1				Ka1*
7 Honkalahti				1		Ka2
8 Johannes					1	KaJ
9 Kangasala				1	1	Ka2
10 Kaukola (2)		7		1		Ka2
11 Kokemäki	>50					Ka1**
12 Kuusjärvi		1				Ka2
13 Kymi (3)		4+				Ka2
14 Lappee		1				Ka
15 Lappträsk	4					Ka1
16 Leppävirta		2				Ka2
17 Liljendal		12+				Ka2,KaJ
18 Luopioinen		1		1	2	Ka2
19 Maaria		1				Ka2
20 Paimio	8					Ka1
21 Pihtipudas (2)		1		1		Ka2
22 Polvijärvi		1				Ka2
23 Porvoo (3)	2					Ka1
24 Räisälä (4)		1				Ka3
25 Sääminki		8				Ka2
26 Säräisniemi		1				Ka2
27 Suomenjoki		1				KaS,Ka2
28 Taipalsaari		2				Ka2
29 Vantaa (3)		2				Ka1
30 Veteli	1					Ka2–3
31 Viborg				1		Ka1
APPROXIMATE TOTALS:						
	>68	52+	60	8	7	

*) Strayfinds, but come from near a Ka1 site.

**) Edgren (1982) mentions c.70 fragments.

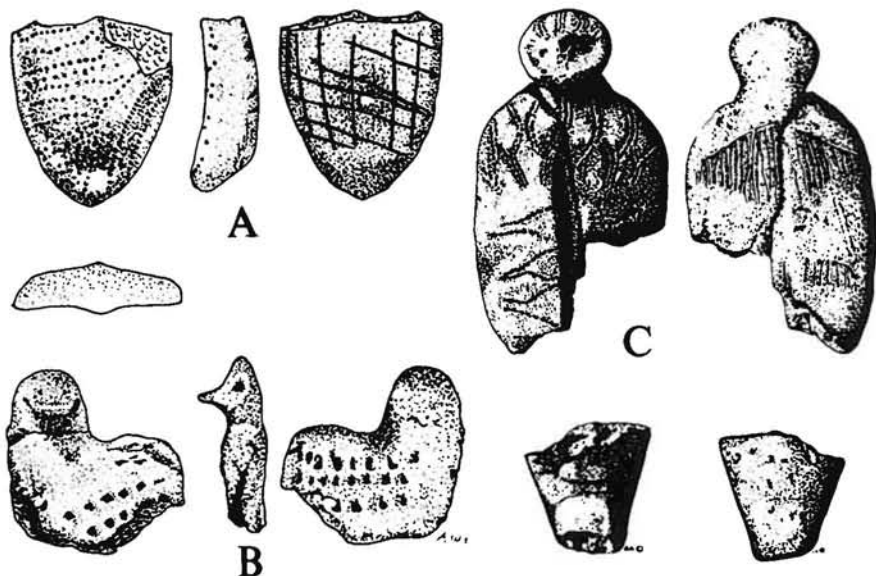


Fig. 11. Two Pitted ware clay figurines from Sweden (A–B) alongside a nearly complete typical Åland figurine from Jettböle (C). Footpiece A resembles those of the Eastern group (Fig. 3–4) but its decoration is closer to the Åland group (Fig. 6A,E,D). Headpiece B has been interpreted as an anthropomorph, but the high shoulder and duck-beak nose suggest it could represent a bird as well (cf. C, Fig. 5–6). For size see Table 5. (Cederhvarf 1912; Dreijer 1941; Segerberg 1984; Wyszomirska 1984).

The successful exploitation of the archipelago would have required both the mobility to reach the different resource spaces at high season and the ability to preserve the harvested foodstuffs for winter use. Travel over ice or water was certainly mastered by the Comb ceramic people and, moreover, being based on the archipelago reduced distances and travelling time (Luho 1948; Núñez 1984). Methods of food preservation were well within the means and technology of the Comb ceramic culture (cf. Eidlitz 1969).

It is not clear if or when an Early Comb ceramic group would have taken over the islands, but the viability of such event should be borne in mind. Instead of being content with the traditional model of seasonal sealing expeditions from the mainland, future research should be directed to test the feasibility of this and alternative models. It might be worthwhile to have a closer look at the pottery from Åland Comb ceramic sites. If there was indeed a distinct archipelago-based population, this could be reflected in the form of local pottery variants. In order to obtain dates we tend to ignore atypical sherds, concentrating mainly in those that fall within Äyräpää's typological scheme for the mainland; yet the more 'typical' sherds may be

merely the result of exogamic practices (Núñez 1984). In the future it may pay to study and map those often overlooked atypical manifestations. Edgren (1982) has recently shown that there is much more to Comb ceramics than Äyräpää's traditional model, and there are certainly indications of originality on the Ålands also (Väkeväinen 1979). In order to do this, however, fieldwork is needed to increase our knowledge of Åland Stone Age, which is rather limited: The total excavated surface of all the Åland Stone Age sites together, including those of the Pitted ware culture, adds up to less than 3000 m².

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Table 5. Information about the clay figurines illustrated in Fig. 2–7, 11: height, museum number and provenience.

FIG.	HEIGHTS (mm)	MUSEUM No. NM	PARISH Locality
2A	40	8955:130	PAIMIO Toispuolannummi
2B	36,24*	9390:158,108	PAIMIO Toispuolannummi
2C	42	11600:1	VETELI Hautaketo
2D	31	8955:199	PAIMIO Toispuolannummi
2E	31	9390:230	PAIMIO Toispuolannummi
3A	34	5174:117	KAUKOLA Riukjärvi
3B	30	5563:28	KAUKOLA Piiskunsalmi
3C	15	11509	SUND Trännmyra
3D	29	9273:260	LILJENDAL Kvarnbacken
3E	43	6296:9	RÄISÄLÄ Juoksemanjärvi
4A	90	4577:12	RÄISÄLÄ Papinkangas
4B	54	12520:13	PIHTIPUDAS Madeneva
4C	53	15341:17	SOLA Polvijärvi
4D	56	8829:31	ASKOLA Honkaniemi
4E	41	17075:30	KYMI Niskasuo
4F	49	15194:354	KYMI Nikkari
4G	45	16356:34	LUOPIOINEN Hietaniemi
5A	40	4782:471	JOMALA Jettböle
5B	24	4782:356	JOMALA Jettböle
5C	40	?	JOMALA Jettböle
5D	29	4782:355	JOMALA Jettböle
5E	24	5180:367	JOMALA Jettböle
5F	33	5180:556	JOMALA Jettböle
5G	20	4789	JOMALA Jettböle
5H	23	4782:330	JOMALA Jettböle
6A	74	5180:168	JOMALA Jettböle
6B	43	5180:53	JOMALA Jettböle
6C	49	5180:237	JOMALA Jettböle
6D	83	5180:67	JOMALA Jettböle
6E	57	4782:328	JOMALA Jettböle
6F	48	4782:429	JOMALA Jettböle
6G	45	5180:487	JOMALA Jettböle
6H	58	4782:308	JOMALA Jettböle
6I	28	4782:330	JOMALA Jettböle
6J	31	?	JOMALA Jettböle
7A	55	5278:3	PIHTIPUDAS Virtala
7B	85	15512:194	HONKILAHTI Kolmhaara
7C	45	11509:?	SALTVIK Västra Jansmyra
7D	85	11509:?	SALTVIK Västra Jansmyra
11A	38	SHM21307:A13	TIERP Torslunda (Sweden)
11B	37	?	TIERP Torslunda (Sweden)
11C top	121*	5180:57,90	JOMALA Jettböle
11C foot	39*	4782:451	JOMALA Jettböle

* The total height of these specimens can be estimated to c.65 mm for the W1 figurine of Fig. 2B, and to c.175 mm for the Å figurine of Fig. 11C. Full heights of complete E2 figurines fall mainly within 40–55 mm.

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