

New Perspectives on Deliberate Fragmentation

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Abstract:

This article advances fragmentation by integrating landscape fragmentation into the existing framework of object and human body fragmentation. We propose a revised "Fragmentation Premise": places, bodies, and objects have been deliberately fragmented, with the resulting fragments often being reused 'after the break.' Through three refitting studies from European prehistory - a Late Neolithic anthropomorphic face-pot from Öcsöd (Hungary), marble figurines from Kavos on Keros (Greece) from the Early Bronze Age, and heavily fragmented deposits of human and animal bones, ceramics, lithic materials, and singular finds from the LBK site at Herxheim (Germany) - we demonstrate how enchainment and synecdoche operated at different scales and with different materials. At Öcsöd, fragmentation consolidated the local identities of households. At Kavos, systematic pilgrimage transported deliberately fragmented marble objects from several Cycladic islands, evidencing complex curation practices. At Herxheim, we propose a bodily mobility model: parts of recently deceased ancestors from upland and lowland communities were transported to this ritual centre for fragmentation and final deposition over a span of 10 to 75 years.

Keywords: *deliberate fragmentation, landscape fragmentation, Öcsöd face-pot re-fitting, Kavos marble figurine fragments, Herxheim fragmented human and faunal bones, Herxheim pottery assemblage*