Interpreting Ancient Figurines

This book examines ancient figurines from several world areas to address recurring challenges in the interpretation of prehistoric art. Sometimes figurines from one context are perceived to resemble those from another. Richard G. Lesure asks whether such resemblances should play a role in our interpretations. Early interpreters seized on the idea that figurines were recurringly female and constructed the fanciful myth of a primordial Neolithic Goddess. Contemporary practice instead rejects interpretive leaps across contexts. Dr. Lesure offers a middle path: a new framework for assessing the relevance of particular comparisons. He develops the argument in case studies that consider figurines from Paleolithic Europe, the Neolithic Near East, and Formative Mesoamerica.

Richard G. Lesure is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He conducts archaeological fieldwork in Mexico and has authored papers on prehistoric figurines in *Current Anthropology* and the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*. His most recent book is *Settlement and Subsistence in Early Formative Soconusco*. 
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*Context, Comparison, and Prehistoric Art*

Richard G. Lesure

*University of California, Los Angeles*
To my parents,

Frank and Nancy Lesure
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