

THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC PENDANTS. MARKER OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND DISTURBANCES ON THE LATE ENEOLITHIC PERIOD

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Cuvinte-cheie: *pandantive antropomorfe, schimbări socio-economice, eneoliticul târziu, Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, Varna, Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani.*

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Rezumat: *Producția de figurine antropomorfe în estul Peninsulei Balcanice, în a doua jumătate a mileniului al V-lea a.Chr., este asociată cu o tendință de masificare, standardizare, utilizare de noi materii prime, diversificarea tipurilor iconografice și creșterea dimensiunii acestora. În articol, autorul analizează una dintre schimbările care au avut loc – apariția unui grup mare de figurine din os și aur, care au fost purtate ca pandantive sau ca aplicații pe îmbrăcăminte. S-a propus o ipoteză cu privire la motivele interesului crescut pentru utilizarea lor în culturile Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, Varna și Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani. Potrivit autorului, producția de pandantive antropomorfe apotropaice din aur și os a fost cauzată de incertitudinea crescută ca urmare a schimbărilor socio-economice, a prăbușirii societății egalitare, a competiției în interiorul grupului pentru dobândirea prestigiului și a conflictelor dintre comunități pentru accesul la materie primă și resurse. Ipoteza se bazează pe dovezile arheologice ale conflictelor armate: cantitate crescută de arme, date care sugerează un număr mare de oameni uciși, gropi comune, straturi arse în movile de așezări cu persoane care au murit pe loc și fortificații ale așezărilor. Alte argumente provin din analiza pandantivelor și aplicelor antropomorfe.*

Abstract: *The production of anthropomorphic figurines in the Eastern Balkans in the second half of the fifth millennium BC. is associated with a tendency towards massification, standardization, use of new raw materials, diversification of iconographic types, and increase in their sizes. The article examines one of the changes that occurred – the emergence of a large group of bone and gold figurines that were worn as pendants or as appliqués to clothing. A hypothesis has been proposed regarding the reasons for the increased interest in their use in the Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, Varna and Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani cultures. According to the author, the production of bone and gold anthropomorphic amulets was caused by increased uncertainty as a result of socio-economic changes, the breakdown of egalitarian society, intra-group competition for the acquisition of prestige and conflicts between communities for access to raw materials and resources. The hypothesis is based on*

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the archaeological evidence of armed conflicts: increased amount of weapons, data suggesting large numbers of people killed, mass graves, burned layers in settlement mounds with individuals who died on the spot, and fortifications of settlements. Other arguments come from the analysis of anthropomorphic pendants and appliqués.

Data

Anthropomorphic bone figurines are a cultural and chronological indicator of cultures from the Eastern Balkans in the second half of the fifth millennium BC. However, the use of bone to make figurines was not a Late Eneolithic innovation. They were made during the Late Paleolithic and were found in various places around Europe and Asia, including in the Kozarnika cave in Bulgaria¹. In the Neolithic cultures of the Balkans, they are almost absent, although bone was an available raw material and the bone industry was well developed. The only known exception from the territory of present-day Bulgaria is an anthropomorphic bone figurine from the Early Neolithic settlement of Slatina².

The production of bone figurines began in the Middle Eneolithic. During the Late Eneolithic, their quantity rapidly increased and in its second and third phases there was significant growth³. Different numbers of flat (**Fig. I, 1–4, 7**) and prismatic (**Fig. I, 10–11**) bone figurines have been found in over 80 sites in the area of the Varna, Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani cultures⁴. Their quantity in some settlements is significant: in the Smyadovo settlement mound over 130⁵, Ruse over 60⁶, Căscioarele–35⁷, Hotnitsa over 30⁸, Golyamo Delchevo–30⁹, etc. Their production is specialized, an indication of which is the high quality of most samples and the presence of workshops in the Hotnitsa settlement mound¹⁰ and Yunatsite¹¹.

The flat and prismatic bone figurines were used as pendants or appliqués, as evidenced by signs of wear and polishing. Tracological examination of broken specimens show that some figurines were reused with additional perforations for hanging or sewing (**Fig. I, 5**), on which traces of wear were found¹². Evidence of their use is provided by some grave finds. Five flat figurines of the Mediterranean shell *Spondylus* were found in Hamangia culture graves in the Durankulak necropolis, which were part of strings¹³. A string of clay beads with an anthropomorphic shell figurine has also been found in the Ruse settlement mound¹⁴.

¹ SIRAKOV *et alii* 2015, p. 27.

² NIKOLOV, TAKOROVA 2021, p. 125.

³ BOYADZHIEV 2007, p. 88.

⁴ AVERBOUH, ZIDAROV 2014, p. 184–185. Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, hereafter referred to as KGK VI and Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani, hereafter referred to as KSB.

⁵ POPOV 1993, p. 151–154.

⁶ GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1952; GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1957.

⁷ ANDREESCU 1995; ANDREESCU 1997.

⁸ ELENSKI 1997, p. 81–89.

⁹ TODOROVA *et alii* 1975.

¹⁰ ANGELOV 1961, p. 34–38.

¹¹ BOYADZHIEV, BOYADZHIEV 2022, p. 37.

¹² AVERBOUH, ZIDAROV 2014, p. 187.

¹³ VAJSOV 2002, p. 261–262.

¹⁴ GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1957, p. 96.

In the last phases of the Late Eneolithic, the production of a new type of bone figurines, called in the literature vaulted, convex, *en violon*, began (Fig. I, 12). Just over 100 specimens were found in about thirty settlements and two necropolises. After finding them in the rich graves in the Varna I necropolis, the opinion that they are anthropomorphic images related to the religious-mythological sphere and to the burial practices prevailed¹⁵. They were most likely worn as appliqués¹⁶. They were made from long bones or shoulder blades of large animals, most often cattle. Some figurines of considerable size are believed to have been made from *Bos primigenius* bones¹⁷. It was the largest wild animal species in Southeast Europe in the second half of the fifth millennium BC., which differed significantly in size from domesticated cattle¹⁸. The sex of the animals whose bones were used is impossible to determine, but the raw material had a symbolic meaning and is probably related in some way to the widespread image of the bull and cow since the Neolithic.

Two types of figurines were produced from gold: flat ones, whose iconography is close to the flat bone figurines, and schematic disc-shaped figurines with standardized dimensions of 2 to 3.5 cm, also called Ringidole or Trojan-type flat idols¹⁹. There are only two flat gold figurines—from Ruse and Košaritsa (Fig. I, 6). Disc-shaped figurines are the most widespread anthropomorphic images in a grave context – they were found in the Durankulak, Varna I, Varna III, Provadia-Solnitsata, Sava necropolises from the Varna culture and Smyadovo and Vărăști necropolises from the KGK VI culture (Fig. I, 8–9). They are known from the settlement mounds of Gumelnița, Vitănești, Vidra, Sultana, Pietrele, Yunatsite, Hotnitsa, and in three cases they were deposited as treasures (Sultana, Pietrele, Hotnitsa). Their distribution in the area of the KSB culture is limited to one accidental find from the settlement of Sofronievo, Vrachansko and one with an unclear context from the Sofia area. They are known not only in the three studied cultures, but also from other cultural contexts from the territory of the Balkans, Hungary, Anatolia, and apparently, they represented a supra-regional symbol²⁰.

Social context

The accumulation of empirical material from intensive excavations in recent decades provides archaeological evidence to support the hypothesis of a transition from an egalitarian society to a society with a complex social structure in the second half of the fifth millennium BC²¹.

Technological innovations, the change in the nature of production – from self-satisfaction of needs to specialization, accumulation, distribution and exchange

¹⁵ GIMBUTAS 1977, p. 47; IVANOV 1982; IVANOV, AVRAMOVA 2000; ANDREESCU 2002, p. 67; VOINEA 2008, p. 80.

¹⁶ TODOTOVA *et alii* 1975, p. 35; BIEHL, MARCINIAC 2000, p. 197; TODOROVA, VAJSOV 2001, p. 94.

¹⁷ AVERBOUH, ZIDAROV 2014, p. 189; MANOLAKAKIS, AVERBOUH 2004, p. 162.

¹⁸ BEM, BĂLĂȘESCU 2005.

¹⁹ BELDIMAN, SZTANCS, BUZEA 2010, p. 233.

²⁰ HANSEN 2009; HANSEN 2011; HANSEN 2015.

²¹ CHERNIH 1978, p. 263; MASSON 1995, p. 16–17; NIKOLOV 2011, p. 261, 281–282; GEORGIEVA 2018, p. 101, 130.

trade, cause changes in intra-group and inter-group social organization. The process of consolidation of large communities, the coordination of the efforts of various unrelated groups to ensure food, access to raw materials and resources and guarantee their security, requires strong leadership, unlike life in small groups. The attainment of social status and power is based on acquired prestige or on coercion based on dominance. In dominance, social power is achieved through the use of threat or force, as opposed to prestige, which is acquired due to the qualities of an individual²². Although both dominance and prestige can coexist within the same society, competition for prestige is the more common route to power in non-state societies²³. In the Late Eneolithic cultures of the Eastern Balkans, the change in the individual status of certain members of the community and social stratification was based on the system of prestige, which in this period was acquired, but not inherited²⁴. On the other hand, socio-economic changes lead to a significant concentration of wealth in some centers and weaker development of others.

The impressive wealth of the Varna I and Varna II necropolises is solid evidence of the existence of cross-cultural socio-economic inequality, in which the area around the Varna Lakes stands out. It is believed that the accumulation of wealth is due to the geographical position, which makes it a center from which the exchange trade with metal products by sea takes place²⁵, as well as the production of salt in the prehistoric complex of Provadia-Solnitsata²⁶.

During the development of the settlement system, a hierarchization of settlements was observed²⁷. Around many settlement mounds, "satellite" flat settlements or smaller mounds have been found-Pietrele, Vitănești, Radovanu, Sultana, Vătași, Tangâru, Kozareva mogila, Bereketska, Dyadovo, Chataalka, etc.²⁸ It has been hypothesized that the settlement mounds played the role of centers for the population from the unfortified settlements or smaller mounds. In this division, the habitation of the settlement mounds was the privilege of dominant families and clans. The Pietrele settlement mound is supposed to have been the core of the settlement, which spread over a vast area at its foot. The mound represented the social and political leadership, where the houses of ruling families or public buildings were located²⁹. In the middle of the Early Eneolithic, the settlement near the Yunatsite settlement mound acquired an organization similar to that of later cities: a settlement with an area of more than 10 ha, in the highest and naturally protected part of which a "citadel" was erected and designed to protect the population and to ensure the performance of basic craft activities³⁰. The population of the satellite settlements

²² SMITH *et alii* 2015, p. 56.

²³ MATTISON *et alii* 2016, p. 196–197.

²⁴ NIKOLOV 2011, p. 261.

²⁵ TODOROVA 1985, p. 42–47; SLAVCHEV 2010, p. 26.

²⁶ NIKOLOV 2011, p. 258, 281.

²⁷ GEORGIEV 1982, p. 7; TODOROVA 1986, p. 180; ANDREESCU, MIREA 2008, p. 32; NIKOLOV 2011, p. 261; GEORGIEVA 2018, p. 130.

²⁸ COMȘA 1990, p. 70; RADUNCHEVA 2003, p. 8; HANSEN *et alii* 2005, p. 342–346; BEM *et alii* 2012; BEM *et alii* 2013; GEORGIEVA 2018, p. 105; LAZĂR, ANDREESCU 2018, p. 130; ANDREESCU, MOLDOVEANU 2019.

²⁹ HANSEN 2015; TODERAȘ *et alii* 2009, p. 42.

³⁰ BOYADZHIEV, BOYADZHIEV 2022, p. 46.

had a subordinate position and gathered in the central settlement mounds on various occasions or in case of danger³¹.

Social hierarchization finds expression within settlements, in residential architecture and the appearance of large buildings. There is a significant increase in two-story buildings compared to earlier periods, which is an expression of a higher social status of the families who live in them³². They were defined as residences of elders or chiefs and even as palace buildings³³.

Discussion

The economic differentiation that has occurred and the accumulation of wealth are a possible reason for the emergence of military clashes to seize the accumulated and to impose power and control over raw materials, roads and production centers³⁴. This required them to be protected, and the realization of an exchange required rules, organization, a structure to support them and sanction violators³⁵. At the same time, the sense of insecurity was probably reinforced by the process of social stratification, the breakdown of egalitarian society, and the competition to accumulate personal prestige. The difference between the high consumption of prestige items by only a small part of the population may have led to conflicts. Reduced growth and limited access to resources associated with growing inequality are reflected in the graves in the Durankulak necropolis³⁶.

The alternation of periods of war and peace, and intra-tribal conflicts were part of social life during the Eneolithic, as archaeological data testify³⁷. The evidence of military conflicts is visible, and can be traced in the burned building horizons in the settlement mounds layers from the second and third phases of the Late Eneolithic.

Information about individuals killed in armed clashes comes from the Yunatsite, Hotnitsa, Ruse, Provadia-Solnitsata, Omurtag, Liljak, Petko Karavelovo, and Pietrele settlement mounds. In the last burned Late Eneolithic levels in the Yunatsite, Ruse and Hotnitsa settlement mounds there is unequivocal evidence that the burning took place during a conflict. It was sudden and some of the inhabitants found their deaths in the ruins of the houses. Human skeletal remains were found in the completely burned last settlement from the Late Eneolithic in Yunatsite. Relatively well-preserved skeletons or single human bones of about 70 individuals of various ages were found inside and outside the burned dwellings. There is reason to assume that a partial burial ritual was performed in 11 graves between the dwellings³⁸. Anthropological examination of 13 skulls has found evidence of trauma that caused death³⁹. Bone remains of about 100 individuals originate from the Ruse

³¹ MORINTZ 1962, p. 282; COMŞA 1990, p. 113; RADUNCHEVA 2003, p. 8.

³² NIKOLOV 2019, p. 8; NIKOLOV, PETROVA 2021, p. 172.

³³ TODOROVA 1986, p. 177; LICHTER 2014, p. 126.

³⁴ TODOROVA 1986, p. 84–85; RADUNCHEVA 2003, p. 159; BOYADZHIEV 2014, p. 143, 215; GEORGIEVA 2018, p. 122.

³⁵ GEORGIEVA 2018, p. 122, 130.

³⁶ WINDLER, THIELE, MÜLLER 2013, p. 209.

³⁷ TODOROVA *et alii* 1983, p. 96; IVANOVA 2007, p. 45–46.

³⁸ MATSANOVA 2000, p. 121; BALABINA, MISHINA 2011.

³⁹ ZAÜNER 2011, p. 52–54.

settlement mound⁴⁰. It is assumed that they died in one or several enemy attacks⁴¹. Skeletons of five individuals were found under the ruins of a burned-out house in the Hotnitsa settlement mound⁴².

A flint arrow was embedded in the spine of a man in grave No. 27 in the Provadia – Solnitsata necropolis⁴³, and skull injuries were reported for those buried in graves No. 5 and No. 6⁴⁴. Six individuals were buried in collective grave No. 26, one of whom was killed with a stone adze in the abdomen, four with skull injuries⁴⁵. Two men in the Omurtag necropolis were found to have skull injuries⁴⁶, as well as the man in grave No. 2 in Liljak⁴⁷. Five men from a collective grave in the Petko Karavelovo settlement mound have multiple injuries, the result of particularly brutal violence. The researchers' working hypothesis is that captured raiders may have been executed and buried within the settlement as a "trophy" in the collective memory of the mound's inhabitants⁴⁸.

The peculiarities of settlement architecture during the Eneolithic with the presence of settlement fortifications is another argument in support of the hypothesis of the conflicts that accompanied social transformations in this period.

A diversification of weapons during the Early Eneolithic can be traced, an increase in their number during the Middle Eneolithic and during the Late Eneolithic they are practically found in almost all settlements. A significant concentration of weapons has been archaeologically documented in Ruse, Smyadovo, Durankulak, Căscioarele, Gumelnița, Sultana, Pietrele settlement mounds⁴⁹. At this time the creation of a military stratum began. The concentration of weapons in the graves of the Varna I necropolis testifies to the increased role of warriors, whereby the weapons themselves (battle axes) become symbols of social status and "testify to the direct connection between power and military command"⁵⁰. The ensemble of anthropomorphic figurines from the settlement near Stubline, dated to 4600 BC., appears as indirect evidence. It is supposed to present a model of a community with a leader. The tool models with which the figurines are equipped reflect the roles that people played in a community with vertical social stratigraphy⁵¹.

It is logical to assume that insecurity and violence are one of the reasons for seeking supernatural protection, such as wearing bone anthropomorphic figurines. The assumption that their bearers perceived them as apotropaic and not simply as ornaments finds confirmation in the burial rite. In many cases, the dead are buried with their personal ornaments – bracelets, earrings, strings of beads and pendants,

⁴⁰ GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1952, p. 182–186; GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1957, p. 112–121.

⁴¹ TODOROVA 1986, p. 74–75; MATSANOVA 2000, p. 124; BOYADZHIEV 2001, p. 21.

⁴² ANGELOV 1958, p. 389–402.

⁴³ NIKOLOV *et alii* 2014, p. 91.

⁴⁴ NIKOLOV 2012, p. 55.

⁴⁵ NIKOLOV *et alii* 2014, p. 91; MCSWEENEY 2016, p. 495.

⁴⁶ YORDANOV *et alii* 2006, p. 143–201.

⁴⁷ OVCHAROV 1963, p. 53–56.

⁴⁸ CHOHADZIEV, ATANASOVA 2019, p. 24–25.

⁴⁹ BOYADZHIEV 2014, p. 134.

⁵⁰ SLAVCHEV 2010, p. 31.

⁵¹ CRNOBRNJA, SIMIĆ, JANKOVIĆ 2009, p. 91; CRNOBRNJA 2011, p. 39–41; BORIĆ 2013; PALAGUTA 2016, p. 334; BAILEY 2017, p. 826.

appliqués, etc., but anthropomorphic figurines are absent from this usual set⁵². This is an indication that they were perceived as objects with symbolic meaning and apotropaic function. It is obvious that they were important for the living, because they are found in settlements throughout the territory of the Kodjadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI, Varna and Krivodol – Sălcuța – Bubani cultures, but at the same time, their appearance in graves is documented in only a few cases. In the Smyadovo settlement mound, for example, 119 flat and prismatic bone figurines were found, but none in the necropolis⁵³.

The same trend can be observed in the other sites where settlements and the necropolises belonging to them have been studied. Bone figurines appear as an exception in the funeral rite in a few graves. Flat and prismatic bone figurines were found in children's graves: No. 55 in Provadia-Solnitsata, in a children's grave in Yunatsite, graves No. 61, 108 and 110 in Varna I, grave No. 1 in Telish Lîga, No. 5 in Smyadovo, No. 13 in Gumelnița. It is noteworthy that the graves in Smyadovo, Telish Lîga and Gumelnița are among the richest, and the three graves in the Varna I necropolis contain grave goods made of gold. The fact that apotropaic figurines accompanied primarily children and adolescents provides some direction in finding an answer why they were placed in graves, even though they were attributes for the protection of the living. It is possible that these exceptions to the funeral rite were prompted by the desire to provide protection to prematurely deceased individuals who were perceived as important members of the community. The two figurines from graves in Provadia-Solnitsata and Ruse are of the rare type with copper ornaments on them.

The traseological analysis of the specimens from the Varna I necropolis establishes that, unlike those found in the settlements, there are no traces of use on them⁵⁴. It is possible that they were made specifically for the funeral or that they were a household rather than a personal amulet. This would explain the lack of signs of use, especially since the specimens found are relatively large (about 10 cm preserved height) to have been worn as pendants by the buried child. The researchers of the Pietrele settlement mound allow in one particular case that two flat bone figurines were placed on the wall or the entrance of a building⁵⁵.

The iconography of bone and gold anthropomorphic figurines in the three Late Eneolithic cultures is identical. This suggests that the characters were recognizable to communities in the region and they shared similar ideological understandings. However, the clarification of their semantics is difficult due to the absence of written sources to verify the hypotheses. Apparently, the figurines embodied characters that were believed to provide magical protection. The opinion that the flat bone figurines represent a female image with hands placed on the stomach is substantiated by A. Chilingirov⁵⁶. It was adopted in the literature, and later received direct evidence in the found marble figurines, which repeat the iconography of the bone's ones, but in their case the gesture of the hands is clearly represented. Based on the

⁵² STAVREVA 2021, p. 15–17.

⁵³ POPOV 1992; CHOHADZHIEV, MIHAYLOVA 2014.

⁵⁴ AVERBOUH, ZIDAROV 2014, p. 191.

⁵⁵ TODERAȘ *et alii* 2009, p. 55.

⁵⁶ CHILOINGIROV 1909, p. 8–10.

analysis of the different way of depicting the crossed hands in the marble statuettes, Ya. Boyadzhiev deciphered their schematic presentation in the flat bone figurines. Figurines with lateral perforations in the chest area are assumed to represent arms crossed over the abdomen and separated from the body, figurines without holes are represented with arms folded and attached to the body. There is also an opinion that the holes in the chest had a functional meaning, but this does not explain the presence only of depressions in some figurines⁵⁷. The character's special status is emphasized by the copper, serpentinite and Dentalium ornaments with which some of figurines are equipped. Chronologically, they belong to the second half of the KGK VI culture. One is from KSB culture, from Lepitsa.

The steady spread of the female image with hands on the abdomen, its production from a variety of raw materials – clay, bone, gold, shell and marble, the different functional purpose-to be worn as a pendant or appliqué to clothes, to be displayed in houses or used in domestic or public ceremonies, there are reasons to believe that these figurines are associated with the worship of a female character, possibly a mythologized ancestress. The use of sustainable raw materials emphasizes the desire for the crafted artefacts to be stored and used for a long time. In this way, the ideological information encoded in the hand-on-belly images is preserved and transmitted not only within the community that produced them, but remains for future generations.

The prismatic bone figurines must also be interpreted in this paradigm, but they must have had a different semantics than the flat ones. In the current state of research, the interpretation proposed by H. Todorova, based on a specimen from Ovcharovo with a tooth mounted at its base, seems convincing, that “they represent images of the spirit of some notable deceased member of the tribe or of an animal whose positive qualities (courage, flexibility, etc.) the bearer of the idol wished to inherit”⁵⁸.

Various hypotheses have been put forward for the vaulted bone figurines. In earlier publications, they were considered as objects with a utilitarian function⁵⁹. H. Todorova assumes they are pectorals that were symbols of power⁶⁰. After finding them in the rich graves in the Varna I necropolis, the opinion that they are anthropomorphic images related to the religious-mythological sphere and to burial practices prevailed⁶¹. Finding them alongside artefacts of gold, copper, Spondylus, their particular shape and large sizes are grounds for considering them as supra-regionally recognizable symbols of power⁶². The finding of vaulted figurines in the Pietrele settlement mound and their absence in the village at its foot is evidence that its inhabitants were of a higher social status than the inhabitants of the satellite settlement⁶³.

⁵⁷ BOYADZHIEV 1981, p. 87; BOYADZHIEV 2007, p. 86–87.

⁵⁸ TODOROVA *et alii* 1983, p. 95; TODOROVA 1986, p. 201.

⁵⁹ GEORGIEV, ANGELOV 1952, p. 174; COMŞA 1977, p. 51; SMOLENOV, KOSTOV 2009, p. 227; ROSSETI 1934, p. 28.

⁶⁰ TODOROVA *et alii* 1975, p. 35.

⁶¹ ANDREESCU 2002, p. 67; IVANOV, AVRAMOVA 2000; GIMBUTAS 1977, p. 47; IVANOV 1982; TODOROVA, VAJSOV 2001; VOINEA 2008, p. 80.

⁶² ANDREESCU 2002; HANSEN 2011, p. 4; HANSEN 2013, p. 553; KOTSOV 2017.

⁶³ HANSEN 2015, p. 279.

The figurines from the Varna I necropolis lack traces of use, as is the case with the flint extra-long blades and the flat bone figurines⁶⁴. This suggests that they were made specifically for the burial ritual. In contrast, those from the settlements show traces of use⁶⁵. It is possible that they had a cultic and a practical function, without the two functions being mutually exclusive⁶⁶, which seems logical for a society with syncretic thinking. It is possible that they were used in community rituals, had a protective function for the entire settlement, or were worn only by a certain category of individuals who had a high social rank or belonged to a special class.

The semantics of disc-shaped anthropomorphic pendants is more obscure due to their large schematicity and the ambiguity of whether they depict a human face or a full figure. It could only be said with some confidence that they are a female character. Some researchers interpret them as schematic female images representing a female body during childbirth⁶⁷, "amulets associated with the magic surrounding pregnancy and childbirth" that depict whole figurines⁶⁸, "a stylized female image associated with the cult of the mother goddess"⁶⁹. An opinion has also been expressed that they represent anthropomorphic heads⁷⁰. Their wearing as pendants is confirmed by the traces of use on some of the specimens from the Varna I necropolis⁷¹.

It is noteworthy that during the considered period, pendants and appliquéés with a zoomorphic shape were not used. The only exceptions are from the Varna I necropolis, where two gold zoomorphic figurines and 30 gold appliquéés in the form of stylized zoomorphic heads with horns were found in symbolic grave No. 36 and one gold zoomorphic figurine in symbolic grave No. 26. They date to the end of the third phase of the Late Eneolithic, after which the life of the Late Eneolithic cultures ends. Perhaps because of this, there was not enough time for the use of such pendants and applications to spread.

Conclusions

It is important that the vaulted bone figurines, the gold disc-shaped, and the flat and prismatic figurines were used as pendants and appliquéés throughout the Late Eneolithic period. Their use could be the result of the wearer's desire to demonstrate his respect for the depicted character. However, it is more likely that wearing them is also related to the belief that they can provide protection. The production of bone and gold anthropomorphic amulets was caused by increased uncertainty as a result of socio-economic changes, the breakdown of egalitarian society, intra-group competition for the acquisition of prestige and conflicts between communities for access to raw materials and resources. The hypothesis is based on the archaeological evidence of armed conflicts-increased amount of weapons, data suggesting large

⁶⁴ MANOLAKAKIS, AVERBOUH 2004.

⁶⁵ AVERBOUH, ZIDAROV 2014, p. 191.

⁶⁶ TODOROVA, VAJSOV 2001, p. 92; GEORGIEVA 2014, p. 231.

⁶⁷ IVANOV 1982, p. 22.

⁶⁸ TODOROVA 1992, p. 71; TODOROVA, VAJSOV 2001, p. 66.

⁶⁹ NIKOLOV 2000, p. 453.

⁷⁰ RADUNCHEVA 1971, p. 53.

⁷¹ LEISCH *et alii* 2015, p. 364–365.

numbers of people killed, mass graves, burned layers in settlement mounds with individuals who died on the spot, and fortifications of settlements. Other arguments come from the analysis of anthropomorphic pendants and appliquéés themselves.

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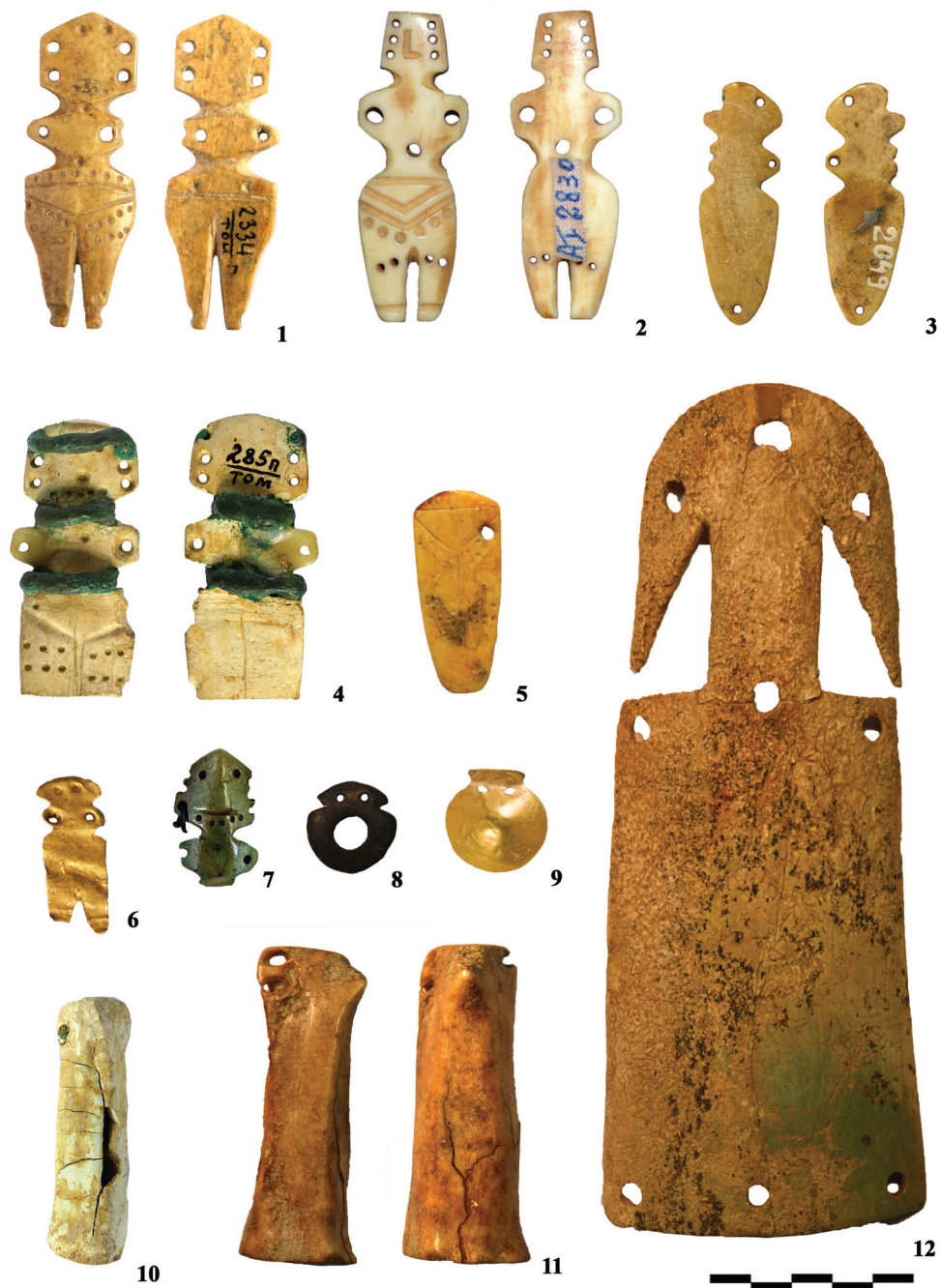


Fig. I: Anthropomorphic bone figurines: 1. Hotnitsa. 2. Krivodol. 3. Krapchene. 4. Hotnitsa. 5. Smyadovo. 7. Razgrad. 10. Hotnitsa. 11. Golyamo Delchevo. 12. Varna I necropolis. Anthropomorphic stone figurine: 8. Golyamo Delchevo. Anthropomorphic gold figurines: 6. Košaritsa (photos: Vanya Stavreva). 9. Vărăști (photo: NHI, [http://clasate.cimec.ro/Detaliu.asp?tit=pandant iv&k=eb0296b905a8421a9c2cf270e37788](http://clasate.cimec.ro/Detaliu.asp?tit=pandant%20iv&k=eb0296b905a8421a9c2cf270e37788)).