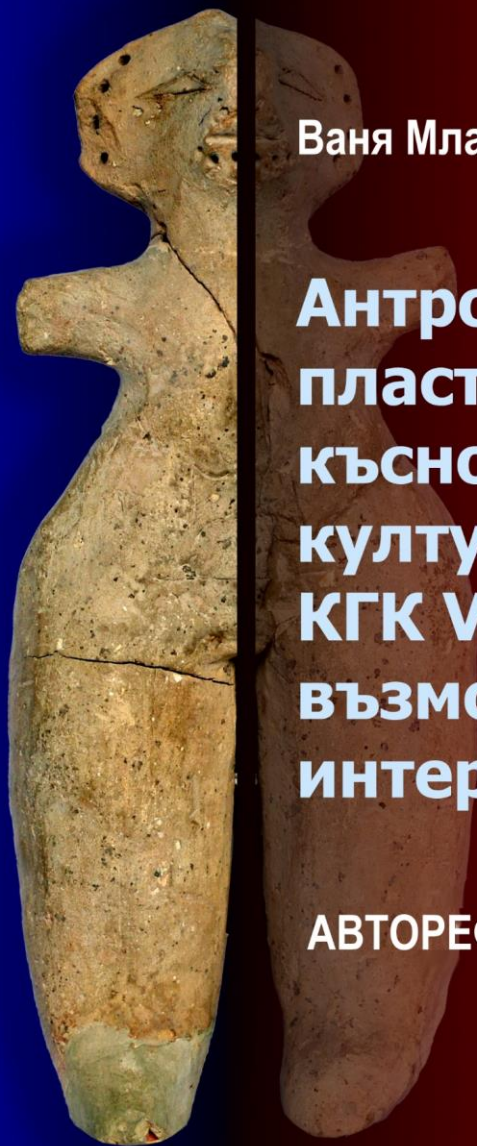




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**Антропоморфната
пластика на
късноенеолитните
култури Варна,
КГК VI, КСБ –
възможности за
интерпретация**

АВТОРЕФЕРАТ

Научен ръководител: Доц. д-р Петя Георгиева
СОФИЯ 2022

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for defense at an extended meeting of the Department of Archeology at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", protocol No. 10/ 02.11.2022

The dissertation consists of two parts - text and appendices. The text part contains 423 pages, of which 353 pages are author's text and 66 pages are bibliography. The catalog of objects contains 60 pages, the catalog of figurines – 207 pages. Applications include 297 tables and 27 maps.

The defense of the dissertation will take place on from hours in Auditorium 41A, Rectorate, South wing of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" at an open meeting of the scientific jury composed of:

Prof. Dilyana Boteva-Boyanova, Dr. habil.
Prof. Dr. Krasimir Lestakov, PhD
Acad Prof. Vasil Nikolov, Dr. habil.
Prof. Ivan Marazov, Dr. habil.
Assoc. Prof. Tanya Dzhanfezova, PhD

The materials for the defense are available in room 31 of the Department of Archaeology, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.

The anthropomorphic plastic art of the Late Eneolithic cultures Varna, KGK VI and KSB - possibilities for interpretation

General characteristics of the dissertation

The present work is concerned with the anthropomorphic plastic from Late Eneolithic Kodjadermen-Gumelnița-Karanovo VI, Krivodol-Sălcuța-Bubani and Varna cultures and the possibilities for its interpretation.

Relevance of the Topic

Most studies on anthropomorphic plastic from Bulgaria and the neighboring countries examine its typological features. There are numerous works dedicated to the promulgation of individual collections and the development of formal-typological classifications. The rich empirical material has not been subject to a comprehensive analysis. Interpretation questions are poorly represented, sometimes completely absent or discussed laconically, due to their complexity rather than neglect. The Late Eneolithic cultures' territorial borders are not covered by the analytical studies of the Bulgarian, Romanian, and Serbian literature, which are restricted to discoveries made in the contemporary nations. The accumulation of a large amount of basic material in recent decades and the availability of a methodological framework for its analysis and interpretation are a good basis for filling this gap.

Goals and tasks

The aim of the present work is to analyze the anthropomorphic plasticity and to propose, possible interpretations of its role in the socio-economic context of the Late Eneolithic Varna, KGK VI and KSB cultures, according to the current state of research.

Based on this goal, the following tasks have been formulated:

1. To review the interpretations of anthropomorphic plastic from the studied cultures existing in the literature.
2. To collect and systematize a sufficiently representative collection of anthropomorphic figurines and create a textual and graphic catalogue.

3. To carry out a formal, stylistic and iconographic analysis of the collected material, to define criteria and to identify the main characters and themes in Late Eneolithic sculpture.
4. To study and analyse the archaeological context.
5. To make a comparative analysis of the distribution, frequency and regional specificities of the identified characters and of the contexts of their occurrence in the three cultures, in order to clarify the general and culturally specific patterns.
6. Through a diachronic analysis, to search for images and/or elements in iconography chronologically and culturally indicative of the Late Eneolithic.
7. To offer possible interpretations of the meaning, functions and use of anthropomorphic plastic based on a synthesis of archaeological information and correlation with ethnographic and historical data. Since the study starts from interpretations already defined in the literature, to verify whether they are confirmed by the collected data.
8. To attempt to clarify the relationship between anthropomorphic figurines and socio-economic and ideological changes during the Late Eneolithic.

Chronological and territorial scope

The chronological and cultural-historical frameworks of the study were set when formulating the topic. The Varna, KGK VI and KSB cultures are part of the block of graphite pottery cultures defined by H. Todorova (Тодорова 1990, 9). They cover the territory of Bulgaria, Southern Romania (Muntenia, Oltenia, Banat), the Western Black Sea coast, and Eastern Serbia (Георгиева 2012; Тодорова 1986; Voinea 2005).

H. Todorova determines their development approximately from 4450/4400 to 4200/4150 BC (Todorova 2003, 276–290), and Y. Boyadzhiev – in the period 4500/4400 - 4100/3800 BC, as the last date 3800 BC refers to Western Bulgaria and the Rhodopes (Boyadzhiev 1995, 171-179). According to the new C14 date series obtained in the last two decades, the beginning of the KGK VI and Varna cultures dates back to about 4600 BC. The latest dates from the Varna I necropolis and the prehistoric Provadia-Solnitsa complex are around 4350 BC, and for sites from the KGK VI culture in Northeastern Bulgaria and Romania - around 4250 BC (Higham et al. 2007, 652; Reingruber 2014, 217-218; 2015, 313-314; Krauß et al. 2017, 297; Nikolov 2017, 318).

When establishing the study's temporal and geographic scope, it was taken into account that these were the years when the creation of anthropomorphic sculpture was expanding and flourishing—its quantity rose, new materials were used, and iconographic types diversified. On the other hand, as a result of the active archaeological research in recent decades, extensive collections have been gathered, which can be used to explore interpretational options. Although it is limited to the three cultures, the study also covers archaeological data from synchronic and diachronic cultures, some of which are cited as parallels and have supported the analysis and the conclusions drawn.

Methods

The approach chosen in the present thesis follows the main steps proposed by L. Talalai, which are a modified version of P. Ucko's methodological framework (Ucko 1962, 37-38; Talalay 1993, 38). Two groups of sources were used in the topic investigation. The first includes published and unpublished anthropomorphic figurines from the cultures studied. Sources from Bulgarian literature and periodicals, as well as foreign sources available to the author, were used: preliminary reports and reports from archaeological excavations, primary publications and monographs, articles summarizing works and studies of particular aspects of anthropomorphic figurines, catalogues. Information from published anthropological studies has also been included.

In order to fulfill the set goals and tasks, 3349 whole and fragmented anthropomorphic figurines from the three cultures were collected. The finds are from 232 sites. Of them, 168 are from the KGC VI culture, 104 from the territory of Bulgaria, and 64 from the territory of Romania. Figurines from 11 sites from the territory of Bulgaria are known from the Varna culture. The KSC culture is represented by finds from 53 settlements: 31 from Bulgaria, 10 from Romania, 12 from Serbia.

The second group of sources includes ethnographic materials - monographs, thematic studies and articles, with particular attention being paid to Bulgarian sources. However, fundamental works from English, German, Russian and Romanian researchers were also used.

Structure and content of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of a text part and appendices. The text part includes an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and a list of abbreviations.

Introduction

The need for the research is established in the introduction, along with its aims, objectives, chronological and territorial framework, methods, and sources.

CHAPTER I. Theoretical issues

Chapter I. is devoted to the theoretical and methodological issues relevant to the interpretation of anthropomorphic plastic. The experience accumulated over the years provides the basis for their study and analysis, which incorporates approaches and knowledge from other scientific disciplines such as art history, cultural anthropology, history of religion, sociology, and cognitive psychology alongside contemporary purely archaeological discourses. The theoretical level reached and the debates conducted in the past and relevant today are presented.

The paper discusses the art historical research on prehistoric anthropomorphic figurines and the possibilities for its study with the methods of art history. An overview of theoretical formulations of figurines as part of material culture - from their production to the end of their "life", with an emphasis on the *chaîne opératoire* approach, problems of fragmentation and transformation. In a separate section, the importance of the archaeological context in developing interpretations is justified. Approaches to the study in terms of religion, magic, ritual, and the relationship of anthropomorphic plastic to the formation of cultural memory are discussed. The objective limitations to the interpretations of the prehistoric figurines are presented.

CHAPTER II. Overview of the main interpretations of anthropomorphic figurines

The interpretations of prehistoric figurines that exist in the literature can be generally divided into two major groups. The first is the so-called religious concept, which offers an orderly scheme for interpreting the figurines in connection with agricultural cults and the worship of the mother goddess. The second group is not homogeneous and includes a set of diverse hypotheses, common among which is the understanding of polysemanticity and

multifunctionality of figurines. The division between the two concepts is to some extent conditional, since some of the contemporary proponents of the religious concept also allow other possible interpretations. Archaeologists, who believe the figurines to be polysemantic and multifunctional, do not entirely reject their cult-religious usage but rather see it as one of many.

The interpretation of prehistoric figurines as objects related to the cult and depictions of the mother goddess was largely predetermined by the evolutionism in anthropology, the Marxist theory of the development of social systems and the cultural-historical approach, which were dominant in Europe until the 1960s. The universalist theory of societies passing through the same stages of development and the presence of matriarchy had a strong influence. The religious-mythological interpretation relates to the abundance of female figurines, the presence of mother goddesses in later religions, and the anthropological data showing the widespread practice of fertility cults and associated deities among prehistoric tribes. One of the serious shortcomings of these analyses is that in most of them the anthropomorphic figurines are detached from their archaeological and socio-economic context and considered in their own right.

Since the 1960s, systematic excavations of numerous sites over large areas with strict application of the stratigraphic method confronted archaeologists with the finding of figurines in archaeological contexts that raise doubts about their interpretation as representations of the mother goddess. Contrary to the traditions of universalism, the understanding that data from one chronological period in a certain region can be generalized and applied to all figurines, and that only the mother goddess can explain their diversity, is questioned. The publication of new ethnographic studies on non-literate societies reveals a variety of uses of figurines in magical practices and initiation ceremonies, their use as toys, amulets, teaching aids, and objects of worship. These data were quickly re-translated into archaeological interpretations, and at the end of the 1960s the first publications appeared that attributed similar functions and uses to prehistoric figurines. Since the 1980s, the development of contextual archeology is the new starting point for the study of figurines, making efforts to consider it in the specific social, economic and ideological context and the social processes within which it is produced and used. New theories from anthropology and sociology place them within the paradigm of studies of group and individual identity, social relationships and practices, and the social role of gender (gender archaeology).

Contemporary trends continue efforts to contextualize figurines and direct attention to their materiality as one of their essential characteristics. Their biography - their creation,

transformation and destruction, places their consideration not only in their essentiality as "passive" once-and-for-all objects, but as products of social practices applied for specific reasons and subject to certain rules. This direction of research focuses on the relationship between the social and the material.

CHAPTER III. Principles and criteria for systematization of anthropomorphic plastic

This chapter is devoted to the systematization of anthropomorphic plastic. The existing classifications of Late Eneolithic figurines and the criteria by which they were developed are reviewed. They are sufficiently comprehensive in terms of systematization of the material and analysis of the chronological development of the forms. Their use in the interpretive analysis of the meaning, function and use of figurines faces certain difficulties. The approaches traditionally applied are not different from those used in the classification of any other artefact. For the study of items with a clear functional purpose, such as vessels, tools, and weapons, formal-typological classifications are sufficient; however, anthropomorphic figurines, as a materialized product of spiritual culture, are very specific due to the symbolic meanings embodied in them and need a different treatment.

The chosen approach of how to systematize the anthropomorphic figurines collected in the catalogue part is presented in the second part of the dissertation. The systematization and its implementation are concerned with looking for the main visual images and themes embodied in the figurines. Uniform criteria are defined for their differentiation and grouping. The first level of systematization is the separation of individual figurines from plastic compositions of two figurines that make up a whole. For stand-alone figurines, the selected leading content elements are:

1. Sex - the marks for recognizing female, male, androgynous and asexual figurines are defined.
2. Presence of specific features in the iconography, such as depicted pregnancy, deformities or special signs and accessories on the body and head, figurines with two faces.
3. Hand gestures. Their choice is influenced by their function in the communicative non-verbal behavior. The use of certain gestures is usually a conscious, deliberate communication effort that conveys coded messages that are comprehensible to the community and that replace or supplement verbal statements (Ekman, Friesen 1969, 59-66). Through the study of gestures, one can understand what the figurines represent, what their function is, and what they mean

(Biehl 1996, 163). 4. Facial expression, as an expression of emotion or of an action being performed (e.g. shouting, singing, speaking), is another criterion applicable in cases where it is available.

The variations of the images that have been identified are based on the body's position, how it is modelled, and the raw material.

CHAPTER IV. Main visual images and themes in the anthropomorphic plastic of the KGK VI, Varna and KSB cultures

Grouping the anthropomorphic figurines into a comprehensive classification that would cover all the diversity in their iconographic representation is impossible. If such an attempt has been carried out within a strict framework, the result would be an overly complex scheme with many separate units. That is why, simple, easily recognizable visual pictures are presented in this dissertation. Included in the analysis were all whole and near-whole figurines and figurine fragments that contained enough information to be assigned to one of the identified images. Possible interpretations regarding their semantics are also suggested. The proposed groupings reflect the way in which content elements – sex, gestures, posture, presence of special characteristics and attributes – were selected and represented in the anthropomorphic figurines.

1. Plastic composition of an adult with a child

In the figural groups of an adult and a child, two subjects are distinguished: a woman with a child on her lap and a man with a child on his back. The mother and child composition is one of the persistent themes in Neolithic and Eneolithic cultures, although it is extremely rare. Four examples are known in the KGK VI culture, one was found in the settlement from the contact zone with KSB Draganest-Olt. The second theme is represented in only one plastic composition found in Chatalka. It represents a seated human figure with a child on his back. According to secondary sexual markings, it can be assumed that it is male. On the thighs there are traces of an additionally adhered object, probably a vessel.

2. Plastic composition of a man and a woman

Another major theme is the group of statues of man and woman. The composition of two anthropomorphic figurines is rare, but it is nevertheless represented in various compositional schemes – standing, sitting, next to each other or tightly pressed against each other figurines. This theme is found in some reliefs on vessels in which the anthropomorphic images are placed in close proximity and are therefore seen as part of a common composition.

3. Plastic composition of a human and a horned animal

Various personages are embodied in the plastic combinations of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery, representing a chariot or a man riding a horned animal. The sex of the animal (being either a cow or bull) and that of the human (male, female, androgynous) is an important characteristic that gives reason to argue that these are different subjects with different connotations. In all cases, however, the common thing is that the dominance of man over the animal is demonstrated.

4. Anthropomorphic images with a vessel

Anthropomorphic images with a vessel are found in different iconographic variants, which could represent the same image, but also different characters.

With a vessel on the head. This is the most popular variant of figurines holding or carrying a vessel. In most cases they are upright, i.e. they are in an active body position, thus possibly depicting an action (carrying) and not just holding a vessel on the head. Several variants are distinguished: hollow figurines with a vessel on the head; solid figurines with vessel on head; vessel shaped like an anthropomorphic figure holding a vessel.

Figurines with a head-vessel. They are distinguished from the rest by the presence of a large depression on the crown, which sometimes reaches the base of the neck. The head shaped in this way looks like a vessel.

Figures with vessel on hips. These are figurines in a sitting position with a vessel on their hips, which have been known since the Neolithic and are represented in various cultures. The known specimens are fragmentary and the presence of a vessel is suggested by marks on the thighs and abdomen.

Figures with a vessel on shoulders. The only image is from s.m. Ruse. The right hand is folded and directed to the face, there is a shallow bowl on the right shoulder. The left shoulder is broken. The marks on it suggest that there was also a vessel on it.

Figures with hands forming a bowl. One specimen is known from Krivodol. The arms of the figurine are folded and placed on the abdomen, forming a slightly concave oval shape, strongly resembling a shallow vessel.

5. Two-faced anthropomorphic images

The two-faced images represent a human body with two mirrored faces. From the specimens known to date, the same sex is represented on both sides - female. Two-faced images have so far been attested only in materials from the KGK VI culture area, in its developed phases II and III. A figurine from s.m. Cascioarelle is of uncertain interpretation, but is supposed to be female on one side and male on the other.

6. Bisexual images

Despite the extremely rare appearance of bisexual images in the plastic art of this period, they are documented in both the KSB and KGK VI cultures. These images have mixed male and female sex features. The presence of breasts in male figurines in some of the cases probably represents an anatomical feature, which has also been inherent to the male sex, rather than being related to the androgyny of the image.

7. The image of the pregnant woman

The image of a pregnant woman is found throughout the studied territory and is found in almost all types of figurines - upright cylindrical, with separately modeled legs, bell-shaped, with a "robe cloche", seated. Almost all of them have their hands raised horizontally to their sides. The shape of the abdomen - from slightly protruding to strongly swollen - is associated with different stages of pregnancy. The typological diversity in the representation of pregnancy is probably related to the functionality of the different figurine types.

This group includes the hollow closed figurines. *Rattles* are hollow figurines with clay balls or pebbles inside that make a sound when shaken. Anthropomorphic rattles during the Late Eneolithic are standardized and follow a common iconographic canon. They are spherical, elongated spherical, almost pear-shaped, or with a flat back and a strongly bulging belly. *Hollow figurines with an opening in the abdomen or chest area* are probably functionally related to rattles, as they largely repeat their iconography, but differ in having an opening on the abdomen and, in one case, on the back. *Hollow closed figurines with arm holes* are the most common type. *Anthropomorphic vessels shaped as a pregnant woman* are also known.

The disc-shaped figurines of gold, bone, stone and clay are interpreted as schematic female representations of a woman giving birth.

8. The image of the "adorant" with arms horizontally raised to the side and turned from the elbows upwards

The gesture of horizontally raised to the side and pointing from the elbows upwards or obliquely raised arms is found only in figurines with an upright body position, which are almost always female. In only two cases the sex could not be determined due to the fragmentary state of the specimens in question. The most representative examples are the four figurines from the Ovcharovo cult scene. This hand position is characteristic of a small number of solid figurines, but is most common in incised anthropomorphic figurines and in low-relief images on vessel walls. Vessels with anthropomorphic features with obliquely placed hand-handles resembling a prayer gesture are found mostly north of the Danube.

9. Figurines with arms horizontally raised to the side

Clay figurines with this arms gesture represent the largest part of those found from the Late Eneolithic cultures in the considered territory. Numerous representations of the hands exist, including short growths, conical extensions or flat elongated hands with a rectangular cross-section. At their end, there are sometimes one or two vertical or horizontal perforations, the appearance of which is a chronological indicator of the Eneolithic. In isolated cases, hands with marked fingers are found. Most of the standing figurines depicting pregnancy, the figurines with humps, those with the presence of special signs and symbols in the ornamentation, the figurines with an open mouth, have outstretched arms.

The figurines with split model legs is the largest group of over 250 examples. Almost all are female, but there are figurines without sex markings and a few males. Cylindrical and conical are also a numerous group. Females predominate, but there is also a large group of figurines without sex markings. With arms raised to the side are some anthropomorphic vessels and seated figurines.

A special group are "grotesque" figurines with a disproportionate, grotesque-looking body with too short legs, a disproportionately large head and upper torso. Since they are located in several communities, it is doubtful that their look was created by accident, therefore it cannot be attributed to the craftsmanship of the artisans who constructed them alone. All have the female gender marked.

10. The female image with hands on belly

It is presented in standing figurines made of various materials - clay, bone, shell, marble, gold, as well as in sitting clay figurines. In clay figurines there are some variation as to which part of the abdomen the hands are placed, but there is no objective reason to consider these as separate variants. Most often they are placed opposite and in most cases they touch or merge. Less often, the forearms completely or partially overlap and lie one above the other. According to the location of the arms in relation to the torso, figurines are distinguished with a distance from the torso or closely adjoined to it. The first mode of modeling is typical of the late stages of the Late Eneolithic. The character is found on hollow and solid seated figurines, standing solid figurines, anthropomorphic vessels, flat bones, marble and gold figurines.

11. Figures with one hand to the face

This group is represented by relatively few specimens in which one hand is folded and directed toward the chin, while the other supports it at the elbow. It occurs in standing and seated figurines and one anthropomorphic vessel. Of the twenty-eight known specimens, fourteen are without sex characteristics, nine are female, one is male, and four are indeterminate. These figurines are usually labeled as the "Thinker" type. The present

dissertation argues that they may represent an emotional state of grief. Such an interpretation finds grounds both in the overall implication of the images themselves and in later archaeological and historical data.

One standing and two seated figurines have unusually presented "snake hands". Since it is not very clear exactly what they depict, they are included here, but are discussed under the images of disease. The combination of this hand gesture and the depiction of humps occurs on five figurines. According to the accepted criteria, the leading characteristic in this case is the presence of a hump, and the gesture of the hands is an additional content element that nuances the semantics of these specific samples.

12. Figurines with a hand to the ear

Only two figurines with this gesture are known, of which the head with the upper torso and one arm are preserved.

13. Figurines with hands on the chest

They are rare. In the standing figurines, in only one found in Azmashka settlement mound, the hands are precisely shaped and there was even an attempt for the fingers to be shaped. In the remaining known specimens, the arms are cone-shaped outgrowths, usually disproportionately short.

14. Figurines with body bent forward

These are a rare type of figurines that are distinguished by the position of the body, in which the upper part is arched and bent forward. Six specimens are known, five of which have a cylindrical or conical body, and one has split modeled legs.

15. Figurines with deformations represented

With a hump. These are specific depictions of human bodies with "humps" formed as conical or spherical bulges on the upper back. The "humps" are variously shaped and, apart from the most widely represented rounded type, some are notched, others are drooping and bag-shaped, while others are small and sharp cone-shaped growths. Different types of "humps" probably represent images with different connotations.

With a hump and a bulge on the chest. They are widespread in the area of the KGK VI culture and date mainly to its last phases.

Diseases. Certain diseases could be recognized in the iconography of some figurines, such as Down's syndrome, prognathism, scoliosis, *manus vara congenita*, obesity.

16. Figurines with special symbols and attributes

With special symbols and attributes on the body. These are figurines with specific features, in the arrangement of which there is a repeating pattern.

Feature N1 is rectangular or hexagonal in shape with arcuate sides curved inwards. It occurs in two versions: without additional elements and with additional elements located in the inner field. It is most often incised on the neck and painted or inlaid with red ocher. It is rarely found elsewhere on the body.

Feature N2 is composed of two or three parts – a rectangular or hexagonal figure with arcuate sides, to which an inverted triangle is added above and/or below it. It is found in three variants: without additional elements; with additional elements located in the inner field; with additional elements outside the inner field. The hexagonal shape in most cases has all the corners pointing outwards, but there is also a variant in which the two opposite corners on the horizontal sides are turned inwards. The inverted triangle above the central figure is identical to the representation of the head in some of the anthropomorphic figurines incised on the walls of vessels and on loom weights. The triangle below the central motif is sometimes similar to the triangular legs in some anthropomorphic depictions on vessels. The sign is usually large in size, occupies a central position on the abdomen and/or chest, and is almost always the only ornament on that area of the body. They are found only on female figurines whose sex is represented by an incised sex triangle and/or breasts. In almost all specimens with preserved arms, they are raised horizontally to the side. The exception is two figurines - one with hands on the chest and one with a hand under the chin. It is found in solid and hollow figurines, in anthropomorphic vessels, but also in loom weights.

Another special symbol is two symmetrically placed circles on the pelvis or the waist of the female figurines.

With special symbols and attributes on the head. Images that have specific attributes, such as a diadem, a "cap" or a small conical growth in the center of the crown, tentatively called a "bun". The shape of some heads suggests that they may reflect modified skulls. Exceptionally, there are heads with masks.

17. Figurines with represented emotions

Figurines with smiling faces. In a few realistically shaped heads, a conveyed emotion could be recognized with relative certainty, which, according to subjective judgments, could be defined as, for example, bliss, happiness, ecstasy.

Figurines with open mouths. This group includes three different variants of figurines, which are united by the presence of an open mouth. The iconographic features of each of them are probably associated with the different symbolic load of the images.

Specimens with very wide open mouths follow a general canon of construction. They are hollow, the mouth shaped like a circle or ellipse, usually with perforations below, which

vary from three to seven. The iconography of figurines with a moderately open mouth, the cavity of which is connected to a channel passing vertically through the torso, is different. In a group of figures with hollow or solid heads, the open mouth is marked without a real opening.

18. The image of the man

The male clay figurines are few in number, but are represented by a variety of hand gestures: with one or both hands towards the genitals; with asymmetrical position of the hands, one of which is directed towards the phallus; with hands on the abdomen; one hand towards the face; with hands on the chest; arms raised horizontally to the side or forward; one hand on the knee, the other extended forwards; with arms along the body; their hands are placed sideways on the hips. The variability of the male images is complemented by the masked, hunchbacked, forward-bent figures. Most of the heads with portrait elements have coarser facial features, which suggest they are male.

In the present work, it is assumed that the convex bone figurines probably have male symbolism. The simple and detail-free form combined with their large size suggests a sense of strength and power - a perception that is perhaps one of the goals of their iconography.

19. The image of the child

Images of children are very rare outside of plastic compositions representing an adult and a child. Among them are a realistically modeled child's head from Golyamo Delchevo settlement mound and several clay figurines that create the impression of small children wrapped in swaddling clothes.

20. Hybrid images

The most widespread image in this group is anthropo-ornithomorphic and it represents a bird with a human head. There are anthropo-zoomorphic figurines representing human heads with horns or animal heads with anthropomorphic features of the head or bodies.

21. Sexless figurines-busts

The clay figurine busts have a modelled head and neck or head and upper torso without any gender indication. Prismatic bone figurines that resemble a stylized human body are also referred to here. Sometimes they have one or two pierced ear-holes and a mouth marked by incision. Several of the specimens found are decorated with copper earrings, and one with a belt.

It was established that the same image was represented in different types of figurines: solid, hollow, anthropomorphic vessels, reliefs or incised on vessels. The female image with hands on the abdomen is made of various raw materials: clay, bone, marble, gold, seashell. During the Late Eneolithic, new typological variants of some images appeared. Such are the

hollow figurines with holes for the arms; the hollow figures with an opening on the chest/abdomen; the hollow seated figurines with hands on abdomen and open bottom.

The diachronic analysis of the identified images shows that most of them originated during the Neolithic and continued their existence during the Eneolithic, but new ones also appeared, which are a chronological indicator of the Late Eneolithic. These are: 1. Figurines with one hand to the face (the so-called "thinkers"). 2. Figures with body bent forward. 3. Figures with a hump and a bulge on the chest. 4. Two-faced images. 5. Figures with specific signs (sign No. 1 and sign No. 2) and attributes (a small conical protrusion in the middle of the crown, tentatively called a "bun"). 6. Hollow figurines with an open bottom and a vessel on the head. 7. Figures with vessel on shoulders. 8. Figures with a "grotesque" appearance. 9. Hollow figurines with wide open mouths. 10. Anthropomorphomorphic figurines. 11. Convex bone figurines.

Not in all cases the display of a visual image means that a certain character is recognized in it. The female image with hands on her abdomen and the female image with pregnancy represented, for example, are rendered as two separate visual images due to their iconographic differences. In the present dissertation it is assumed as more likely that their semantics are also different, but whether they represent two separate personages or one personage in different hypostases can hardly ever be said with certainty.

It is quite possible that a character is visualized differently depending on mythological accounts, folk narratives and true stories. It is not excluded that some of the characters were distinguishable by the additional attributes with which they may have been provided, as was the case in later eras. The images of gods and heroes in ancient art were presented in different ways, but they were unmistakably recognized precisely by their inherent attributes with which they were depicted.

In the mass case, no additional elements are clearly visible, but it is very likely that they were added from non-durable material or were painted on the figurines. It should be borne in mind that the figurines may have been combined with certain miniature objects that made the image embodied in them recognizable. An example of this is the "cult scene" from Ovcharovo and the ensemble from Stubline.

The issue that still exists is that no logical assumption regarding the internal content of the recognized images could be formed. This is due to the fact that we lack knowledge of the mythological and folkloric narratives of this non-literary period. And in order to conduct a thorough analysis and comprehend a picture, the observer must be familiar with certain themes or ideas derived from the meanings given in literature or oral tradition (Panofsky 1986, 75-84).

Some cultural specifics have been identified:

KGK VI culture

Only in KGK VI culture are found: figural composition; figurines with a hump; with a hump and a bulge on the chest; with a body bent forward; figurines with specific signs and with a "bun"; hollow figurines with an open bottom and a vessel on the head; with a vessel on the shoulders; with a "grotesque" appearance; hollow figurines with a wide open mouth; the figurines with "robe cloche", two-faced images.

Varna culture

The published materials from Varna culture are limited and based on them, culturally specific images cannot be distinguished. Maybe for this reason, compared to the other two cultures, the imagery range appears to be more constrained.

KSB culture

Hollow seated figurines with open bottoms are found only in the KSB culture, and they are considered to be chronological and cultural indicator. This also applies to the seated figurines of the "Zaminets" type. Only here are figurines with a horizontal perforation in the chest area, which passes through the body and exits on the back. Narrow vertical grooves across the bodies of standing, seated, and semi-seated figures are also common. These features are related to their functionality. Hollow bell-shaped figurines are often found, which is probably due to the presence of such a tradition in Vinča culture and to some extent in Gradešnica. The recognizable appearance of the heads from the KSB culture is due to their discoidal shape with a large beak-like nose and sometimes with a pronounced chin.

CHAPTER V. Anthropomorphic plastic in its archaeological context

This chapter analyses the data for the archaeological context of the anthropomorphic figurines' discovery and looks for recurring patterns of deposition in different environments.

The findings that the anthropomorphic figurines in the three cultures are associated to the inhabited space are confirmed, as they are found exclusively in settlements where they were produced, used, stored and finally deposited or discarded and abandoned. They were categorically established to be related to the living and had no significance for the dead and the afterlife.

There are cross-cultural differences in the distribution of certain images and figurines types. The KGK VI culture shows the greatest diversity, with most of the new Late Eneolithic

figurine types distributed primarily within its range. Culturally specific variants of some figurines are also found in KSB culture. Up to date, there are no figures known from the Varna culture that are culturally distinctive.

Some basic conclusions about anthropomorphic plasticity in an inhabited environment are made:

According to the volume of plastic that was used there, there is a discrepancy between the settlements. In some settlements the concentration is less than one figurine per 100 sq. m. of excavated area, while in others the number reaches sixteen per 100 sq. m. The question of why figurines were produced in restricted quantities in some settlements and in bulk in others is challenging to explain given the current state of study. It is striking that some of the most sculpture-rich settlements are in the border zones of cultures, while others probably had a leading place in a cluster of settlements.

In addition to quantitative differences, there are differences in the predominant types of figurines in some settlements: Golyamo Delchevo is distinguished by the large number of figurines representing different phases of pregnancy; Sadievo, Caschoarele and Smyadovo - with the images with humps; Vidra - with heads with a concave crown; Dolnoslav - with specific signs and attributes on the body and the head, etc.

There is a difference in the distribution of the figurines in different contexts within the settlements. Variability refers to the ratio between figurines inside and outside buildings. From buildings in the settlement mound Yunatsite originate about 2/3 of the anthropomorphic figurines, in Dolnoslav – over 1/3, Vinica – 1/3, Caschoarele – 1/5.

The amount of figurines in buildings in a settlement varies widely. In some houses they were not found, and in others the number exceeded twenty. Figurines from the same building are usually different and represent different characters. They were placed in open models of buildings, on the stove, shelves, podiums, the floor or were hung on the walls. Along with them, other miniature objects such as zoomorphic images, models of buildings, furnaces, tables, chairs, "altars", "cult pillars", vessels, tools were found.

The contextual evidence, limited as it is, suggests that the concentration of anthropomorphic figurines cannot be associated with buildings that defined as 'shrines', 'temples' or 'cultic'. If we accept all the hypotheses expressed in the literature about sanctuaries in specific settlements, it makes an impression that they are not distinguished by the presence of more anthropomorphic figurines compared to the rest of the buildings.

The discovery of fragments of large figures points to the possibility that the buildings in which they were found were public or housing of community members with special

functions in which ritual activities were also carried out. These individuals could be chiefs, priests, or chief-priests, but also sorcerers or healers. Despite the limited iconographic information, it is clear that the large figures, for which such information is available, represent images with specific content elements: a pregnancy, two-faced image, a male figurine with a hump and deformation in the chest area, a figure probably with hands on the abdomen, with a specific shape or attributes on the head. The embodiment of these images in large ceramic representations, and not just in ordinary-sized figurines, is a testament to their special significance and use that transcended the domestic sphere.

The attempt to detect ritual contexts in the settlements demonstrates that the archaeological record contains remnants that could be interpreted as ritual activity traces. Structured deposits associated with buildings as well as in open areas in settlements are recognized. The anthropomorphic figurines did not occupy a central place in these depositional practices, but were part of the remaining deposited inventory, which practically included almost all categories of artifacts from this period.

Main conclusions about anthropomorphic figurines in burial context:

From the territory of Late Eneolithic necropolises, 18 clay figurines originate, of which one is from a grave, five are from pits, the remaining twelve were found outside archaeological structures. To these should be added the symbolic graves from the Varna I necropolis, in which large clay figures or a combination of clay and wood were deposited, of which clay heads and/or decomposed black matter remained in the archaeological record.

Clay figurines are used in different ritual practices and have different connotations. When deposited in symbolic graves in the Durankulak and Varna I necropolises, they probably represented a specific individual, a real or mythical ancestor. The possibility that they are idols of deities has no convincing basis. This practice is documented only in the Varna culture. A fragmented anthropomorphic figurine was found in only one grave with skeletal remains in KGGK VI culture, where it was probably placed for protective purposes. Their finding in pits on the grounds of necropolises is probably the result of their use in pre-burial activities or in memorial rituals.

The fragmentation of some of the clay figurines could be interpreted as a deliberate act recreating their ritual death, which is comparable to the death of the individuals for whom the respective memorial rituals were performed. In the present state of research, the question of where the other parts of the figurines are remains unanswered.

At this point, it is impossible to interpret necropolis finds effectively without a precise archaeological context. They do, however, suggest that the anthropomorphic figurines were brought there and abandoned for some purpose.

Anthropomorphic figurines worn as pendants or appliqués have been found in graves in all three cultures studied. The most numerous are the gold disk-shaped figurines. They were found in 31 graves in six necropolises from the Varna and KGK VI cultures. Flat bone figurines were found in six graves, and prismatic ones in two. The flats and prismatic were important for the living, because they are found in the settlements throughout the studied territory, and in some of them their number reaches several dozen, but at the same time, their appearance in graves is extremely rare. They were placed mainly in children's and women's graves, probably to provide magical protection to a certain category of dead - prematurely deceased babies, children and young women.

The convex figurines in the Varna culture are part of the standard burial rite, but only for a certain category of dead in the Varna I and Provadia-Solnitsata necropolises. Although such figurines were distributed throughout the territory of KSB and KGK VI cultures, they have not been found in a grave context. The iconography, the dimensions, the material from which they were made, and the context in which they were found point to the possibility that they were symbols of the male principle. Their placement in graves was not only related to the religious-mythological beliefs, but also to their perception as objects of prestige and a sign of belonging to a certain social group with a higher rank.

The life story of the figurines is different. The convex and the flat ones from the Varna I necropolis show no signs of use, while some of the gold discs appear to have been worn as pendants. Some of the clay ones have documented traces of secondary burning, which is evidence of their possible use in some rituals before being finally "buried".

The information about the pits from the Late Eneolithic in the so-called pit complexes is still insufficient to draw conclusions.

CHAPTER VI. Possibilities for functional interpretation of anthropomorphic figurines

The characteristics of figurines are discussed as a source of information about their functionality. The shape of the feet provides information on whether they could have stood on their own, the presence of vertical grooves or horizontal perforations suggests different

methods of attachment, the figurines with a movable stool could have been moved, unlike the specimens on a fixed stool. The function of the rattles to produce sound is obvious – they may have served as children's toys, but they were also used in ritual activities. The functionality of figurines with a vessel on the head and a hollow lower part is related to the possibility of using the upper part as a vessel, and the lower part - to cover small objects. Anthropomorphic vessels and those with appliquéd three-dimensional figurines probably had a special purpose. Perforations on the abdomen, flanks, arms or heads suggest that they may have been used to add accessories or perform certain rituals. The raw material and dimensions of figurines are other indicators of their meanings and uses.

The reconstruction of religious beliefs in the Late Eneolithic, as far as this is possible, is based on circumstantial evidence. Some of the direct archaeological evidence, such as the existence of sanctuaries and temples, is currently debatable.

The most popular hypothesis in the archaeological literature links figurines from Southeast Europe to fertility cult. The existence of cultic and magical fertility practices seems logical, but their content and form, as well as the place of figurines in them, are difficult to ascertain. The ritual German is often cited as evidence for the use of anthropomorphic images in rain rites. Ethnographically documented fertility customs from our lands involving anthropomorphic images usually took place outside the village. Therefore, analogies with them are not particularly productive in explaining the large amount of figurines in an inhabited environment. It is possible that such practices were also practiced during the Late Eneolithic, since the absence of archaeological data on practices with figurines around the settlements can only be due to the lack of archaeological research in the neighbouring territories.

The nature of the rituals performed in the pit complexes is not fully understood, but it is possible that some of them are related to ensuring fertility. However, the information from the objects studied so far shows that anthropomorphic plastic did not occupy a leading place in them. It seems convincing to argue that the ritual in them (at least as far as Capitan Andreevo is concerned) is rather related to specific and/or mythological ancestors and asking help from them (Nikolov, Petrova 2021, 28, 130).

Some figurines were made and used for a specific occasion, after which they lost their symbolic value and were abandoned or discarded. Such uses suggest magical practices - curing diseases, ensuring the safe pregnancy, childbirth and raising children. Others were probably made to be deposited in various structures and their lives were limited to the process of their creation and deposition, possibly as part of some ritual.

The influence of diseases on the formation of social behavior during the Eneolithic in the studied territory was not the subject of specialized research, but we can assume that in any case they reflected on intragroup relationships, on the symbolic system and ritual practices. Diseases, efforts to treat them and measures to prevent them were probably part of the life of Late Eneolithic societies, and it is in connection with magical rituals with a healing purpose that the making of certain specific types of anthropomorphic figurines with deformities could be considered.

Particularly interesting results were obtained from the study of figurines with a hump and a bulge in the chest. Drawing on data from anthropological, paleopathological and DNA analyses of skeletal remains from synchronous necropolises has led to the proposal that these figurines reflect actually observed conditions caused by a severe form of Pott's disease. In some instances, it's possible that anthropomorphic figurines with deformities did not only represent a specific sick person and were employed in magical healing rituals, but also an anthropomorphized representation of the illness or the supernatural force that caused it, as well as a generalized representation of people with such a disability who, according to the Tartary data, might be a character with magical powers.

CHAPTER VII. Anthropomorphic figurines in the socio-economic context of the Late Eneolithic

The first section of this chapter briefly examines the socio-economic context in which anthropomorphic plastic was produced and used. The possibilities of using anthropomorphic figurines to extract data on the social structure during the Late Eneolithic are discussed. This attempt is made on the assumption that they present images and themes through which a certain understanding of the world and the social structure of society is affirmed. Characteristics of some figurines that could be interpreted as markers of group or individual identity and social status are outlined.

Attention is paid to elements of ornamentation that depict the costume, tattoos, insignia, body or head ornaments and accessories, hairstyles, cranial modifications. The correlation between the iconography of the anthropomorphic figurines with data from the necropolises provides enough evidentiary material to support the claim that it is admissible to think that some of the figurines are images of real high-status individuals or ancestors.

Gender-age representation reflected in the figurines is examined.

Analysis of figurines and fragments containing gender information shows that female images are dominant. Males are significantly fewer in number, but they are distinguished by a great variety of iconographic representation, which is probably related to the different semantics of the images embodied in them. If it is accepted that the heads with portrait features are largely male representations, which is the opinion that prevailed in the scientific literature, then it is obvious that the binary model of society is reflected in the plastic. There are asexual figurines and those with ambiguous gender characteristics (androgynes, hermaphrodites). The connotation of images without marked primary sex marks is more complex, and their appearance could be the result of a variety of reasons.

The opinion that the rising insecurity in society is reflected in the mass manufacture of anthropomorphic figures worn as apotropaics is highly supported. The fortification of settlements, the development of weaponry, the presence of burnt horizons with dead under the ruins of houses, group graves and anthropological evidence of killed individuals attest to military clashes. Indirect evidence is the assemblage of anthropomorphic figurines from Stublin, equipped with weapons. Local armed conflicts were probably triggered by socio-economic developments associated with the emergence of production centres, increased exchange, the accumulation of wealth and the appearance of treasures and attempts to plunder them.

Insecurity has been reinforced by the process of social stratification, the breakdown of egalitarian society, and the competition to accumulate personal prestige. It is logical to assume that insecurity and violence are one of the reasons why supernatural protection was sought, such as the wearing as pendants or appliqués to clothes of flat and prismatic bone figurines and disk-shaped figurines of various raw materials. A similar could be the reason for the mass production of some of the clay figurines. Some were kept in the home to provide protection and well-being, and others were probably used in magical rituals to achieve this goal. Of special importance was the female image with hands on the abdomen, which was materialized in clay, bone, marble and gold figurines. In the clay examples the privileged status of the personage is emphasised by the seated position and the diadems, torcs, earrings, belts and boots of copper with which some specimens were provided. The distribution across the three cultures and the close iconography, especially of the flat bone figurines, suggests that a mythical or deified image is represented, conceived as carrying a strong apotropaic function. The association of the open house models and some of the figurines with the domestic Roman cults – Lares, Penates, Genii Familiares – proposed in the literature is acceptable, as there are common

features. However, it points to only one of the possible ways of using the Late Eneolithic figurines – to be kept in the domestic space and perform an apotropaic function.

Known assemblages of figurines show hierarchically organized groups with a larger central figure, either in a seated position or with a different hand gesture. Regardless of what characters they portray, the structuring of the assemblages could be seen as a reflection of existing social stratification in society.

Another aspect of anthropomorphic figurines is related to its possession, since specimens of rare and valuable raw material, as well as those made of clay, but of particular artistic value, can be seen as a sign of prestige. If we were to discuss the origins of elitist art in these instances, one of the objectives of its creation, along with the other artifacts connected to the show of social position, is to impress. Such are the figurines equipped with ornaments of copper, dentalium and serpentinite, the convex, the marble and gold figurines.

Anthropomorphic plastic is seen to be a good source of data on specialized production and cross-cultural interactions. The development of relations with the societies to the north and to the south of the investigated cultures intensified during the Late Eneolithic as a result of trade in salt, copper, gold, graphite, high-quality flint, minerals, Mediterranean shells, etc. Imports of anthropomorphic plastic from the Kukuteni-Tripolie culture have been found in several settlements in the range of the KGK VI and KSB cultures.

Conclusion

The main results of the study are summarized.

The complex burial ritual, the presence of structured deposits and the use of diverse forms of symbolic representation testify to the existence of developed religious beliefs during this period. Anthropomorphic figurines at least partially related to them, but to what extent the female figurines are mother goddesses and were related to the cult of fertility is difficult to say. It is reasonable to consider the figurines as polysemantic and multifunctional artifacts that were utilized in a number of social behaviors given their broad range and the archaeological and socioeconomic contexts of their creation, use, and distribution. The conclusions about the changes in anthropomorphic plastic during the Late Eneolithic as a result of the socioeconomic transformations during this period are summarized. Prospects for future research are indicated.

The main scientific contributions of this dissertation are:

1. A representative collection of anthropomorphic figurines from the three Late Eneolithic Varna, KGK VI and KSB cultures was collected from the entire territory of their distribution (a total of 3349 pieces). The figurines are presented in a catalog with detailed text descriptions and images (photographs and graphic images).

2. For the first time, two hundred and twenty previously unpublished figurines stored in various museums are described and brought into circulation.

3. A detailed review of the interpretations of prehistoric anthropomorphic figurines, the genesis and development of the main concepts and the factors that influenced their formulation, was made.

4. Based on a formal, stylistic and iconographic analysis of the collected material, criteria have been determined and the main visual images and themes in Late Eneolithic art have been identified.

5. The archaeological context has been studied and analyzed and the culturally specific regularities and regional features of the identified images and themes have been clarified.

6. A quantitative and cartographic analysis of the distribution of figurines and iconographic images by settlements and cultures was made. It is illustrated with maps.

7. Through a diachronic analysis, chronologically and culturally indicative images and/or elements in the iconography of the Late Eneolithic were sought.

8. Possibilities for interpretation of the meaning, functions and use of anthropomorphic plastic are proposed based on a synthesis of archaeological information and correlation with ethnographic and historical data.

9. An attempt is made to clarify the relationship between anthropomorphic plasticity and socio-economic and ideological changes during the Late Eneolithic.

Approbation of the results:

Part of the results in the dissertation were presented at the following conferences:

Scientific conference organized by SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" in honor of the 65th anniversary of Prof. Dr. Totko Stoyanov, 2019; International Symposium "DROBETA. ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORY", Romania, 2019; International Conference "The New Old Europe" - Vilnius, Latvia, 2021; Scientific conference "The Bulgarian Northwest: Past and

Present" IBCT-BAS, Montana branch, 2022; International scientific conference "New Horizons in Prehistory" - Varna, 2022.

List of publications:

1. Stavreva, V. 2020. Anthropomorphic figurines from burial contexts in Varna, Kodjadermen–Gumelnița–Karanovo VI and Krivodol–Sălcuța–Bubani cultures. – Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology | Българско е-Списание за Археология, 10(1), pp. 1–32. Available at: <https://be-ja.org/index.php/journal/article/view/be-ja-10-1-2020-1-32>

2. Stavreva, V. Anthropomorphic figurines with hunchbacks and deformed breasts in Kodjadermen–Gumelnița–Karanovo VI culture. – *Archaeologia Lituana*, in press

3. Stavreva, V. Anthropomorphic hollow figurines from the Krivodol-Salkutsa-Bubani culture - a possibility for social interpretation. – *The Bulgarian Northwest: past and present*. Montana: IBCT-BAS, Montana branch, in press

4. Stavreva, V. The convex bone figurines in the Late Eneolithic cultures from the territory of Bulgaria and Romania. - Collection in honor of the 65th anniversary of Prof. Dr. Totko Stoyanov, in press

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