

## SYMBOLIC CONNECTIONS IN THE SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN CHALCOLITHIC: COPPER AND ANTHROPOMORPHIC PLASTIC ART\*

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**Cuvinte cheie:** *Cucuteni-Tripolie, plastica antropomorfă, inserții metalice, analize XRF, asocieri simbolice*

The anthropomorphic representations always polarized the attention of archaeologists, anthropologists and art historians. Their extended and varied range supported approaches and systematizations that evolved to be more and more complex, au pair with the evolution of the research. Most frequently, the interest towards such artifacts was generated by the fact that they might contribute to the deciphering of various aspects of the spiritual life of the communities that created and used them. In the last decades, some new avenues of interpretations allowed to outline the social potential of the plastic representations, as means of continuous maintenance of the social identity and cohesion<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> D. W. Bailey, *Balkan Prehistory. Exclusion, Incorporation and Identity*, London and New York, 2000; J. Chapman, *Fragmentation in Archaeology. People, Places and Broken Objects in the Prehistory of South Eastern Europe*, London, 2000; S. Hansen, *Bilder*

The most representative part of the prehistoric miniature universe, the anthropomorphic plastic art is conversely an extremely believable documentary source on some of the most important channels of non-verbal communications of human communities, i.e. adornments, hairstyles and clothing that act as coded symbols, which cover several types of differentiation: social, religious, and possibly ethnical and cultural, and quite difficult to reconstruct today<sup>5</sup>. Often the interpretation of the same decorative element implies, equally, aesthetic as well as social and symbolic values. In the same complex regard, the origin of our paper is investigation of a previously unknown type of decoration applied to the anthropomorphic plastic artworks<sup>6</sup>, pertaining to the Cucuteni-Tripolie cultural complex, i.e. the metallic insertion.

The artifact that provided the information was identified in the storage of the History Museum of Moldavia in Iași. It is one of the finds uncovered during the systematic excavations carried out, between 1961 and 1966, by the team coordinated by professor Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, within the eponymous multi-level site of Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași Co., România)<sup>7</sup>. The item is the upper part of a female anthropomorphic statuette, uncovered in a dwelling pertaining to Feature III (according to the labeling), probably dwelling LIII/15, excavated during 1962 (Fig. 1).

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*vom Menschen der Steinzeit. Untersuchungen zur anthropomorphen Plastik der Jungsteinzeit und Kupferzeit in Südosteuropa*, Mainz, 2007; J. Chapman, B. Gaydarska, *Parts and Wholes. Fragmentation in Prehistoric Context*, Oxford, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Y. Taborin, *Langage sans parole. La parure aux temps préhistorique*, Paris, 2004; S. Enea, *Some Observations on the Neolithic and Aeneolithic Ornaments in the Romanian Area*, in *SAA*, XIII-XIV/2007-2008, p. 26; J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant (coord.), *Dictionar de simboluri. Mituri, vise, obiceiuri, gesturi, forme, figuri, culori, numere*, Iași, 2009; S. Țurcanu, *Podoabe pentru gât reprezentate pe statuetele antropomorfe ale culturii Cucuteni-Tripolie*, in *CI*, XXVII-XXIX/2008-2009, 2011, p. 9-35; D. Monah, *Plastica antropomorfă a culturii Cucuteni-Tripolie*, BMA XXVII, Piatra-Neamț, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> S. Țurcanu, M. Gebă, N. Vornicu, *Insertii metalice în arta plastică Cucuteni-Tripolie. Studiu de caz: statueta antropomorfă de la Cucuteni-Cetățuie*, in *ActaMT*, XII/1, 2016, p. 150-159.

<sup>7</sup> The item is recorded in the inventory of the Moldavia's History Museum in Iași with the number 13527.

The find was published in the monograph of the site, with no mention of its unusual manner of decoration<sup>8</sup>.

Typologically, it falls with the habitation layers pertaining to Phase A (sub-phase A<sub>3</sub>) of Cucuteni culture = Tripolie BI, dated between 4600 and 4100 cal. BC<sup>9</sup>.

The statuette is made of semi-fine reddish-yellow paste with small inclusions. The preserved fragment shows the flat torso, slightly bent backwards, with so-called stumps instead of arms, which are shaped according to Cucuteni A cannons. The dimensions of the fragment are: height = 51 mm; maximum width = 42 mm; thickness = 10 mm; thickness of the head area = 17 mm. The manner of representing the head is unusual for the cultural area under scrutiny, being, on our opinion, a southern influence. Placed on a robust neck, which is an extension of the body, the head is flat on the back and top, with a wide, horizontal and pointed protrusion in front, on the "face", imitating the bill of a waterfowl.

The decoration is made by deep incisions with an instrument with a sharpened flat end (not pointed) similar to an engraver's chisel. On the back there is a chevron of three rows of incisions, which is flanked symmetrically, in the shoulders area, by two slanting lines. On the front, the decoration is slightly asymmetrical (like the object) consisting of four rows of outward facing arcs. The two arcs closest to the center are joined in a sort of point of a triangle. This sits on top of a convex horizontal incision, which is probably the remaining part of a spiral or circle (Fig. 1). The statuette is broken at waist level.

We were concerned initially with the presence of a small rust-brown discoloration on the chest of the statuette (on the neckline), in the central area of the decoration, at the convergence of the incised lines, slightly to the

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<sup>8</sup> M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M.-C. Văleanu, *Cucuteni - Cetățuie. Monografie arheologică*, BMA XIV, Piatra-Neamț, 2004, fig. 209/6.

<sup>9</sup> C.-M. Lazarovici, *New Data Regarding the Chronology of the Precucuteni, Cucuteni and Horodiștea - Erbiceni Cultures*, in J. Šuteková, P. Pavúk, P. Kalábková, B. Kovár (eds.), *Panta Rhei. Studies on the Chronology and Cultural Development of the South-Eastern and Central Europe in Earlier Prehistory Presented to Juraj Pavúk on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, Studia Archaeologica et Medievalia XI, Bratislava, p. 74, fig. 4.

right of the chest axis. The examination of the area using a magnifying glass revealed that the item has a small insert (3-4 mm x 1-2 mm in size), enclosed at the lower end by a simple horizontal spiral (approx. 3-4 mm).

The insert was applied in the soft clay, before firing, during the shaping of the item. The outline of the spiral is smooth and its ends are terminated by two well-defined point-like dips. These two aspects support our belief that the said decorative feature was, in fact, the slot for another minute insert, similar to the one that is still preserved.

The analysis of the item consisted of macroscopic visual inspection, optical microscopy and X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF analysis). The latter method is frequently used for quantitative and qualitative determinations for the elemental chemical composition of inorganic samples (minerals, ceramics, metals, soils etc.)<sup>10</sup>.

The analyses included in the present paper were carried out by means of an „Innov X Systems Alpha Series” XRF spectrometer, with wolfram anticathode tube, 35 kV, 40  $\mu$ A.

The X-ray fluorescence spectrometry was employed for determining the elemental chemical composition of both the insert and the ceramic paste of the artifact. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 1 and Fig. 3-4.

Cucuteni - <i>Cetățuie</i> , Iași	Elemental composition						
	%			ppm			
	Fe	Cu	Zr	Ca	K	Fe	Ti
metallic insert	80.54	18.65	0.81	-	-	-	-
Ceramic	-	-	-	67582	30686	45884	8946

Table 1. The elemental chemical composition analysis of the anthropomorphic statuette of Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași Co., Romania)

The microscopy analysis revealed the presence of red discoloration, showing as a halo around the insert, due to the presence of cuprite ( $\text{Cu}_2\text{O}$ ),

<sup>10</sup> H. Bennett, G. J. Oliver, *XRF Analysis of Ceramics, Minerals and Allied Materials*, Chichester, 1992.

a corrosion product of copper. Moreover, a blue discoloration was also identified, due to the presence of another corrosion product of copper, the copper carbonate ( $\text{CuCO}_3$ ) (Fig. 2).

Figure 3 presents the composition of the metallic insert of the ceramic artifact. The XRF analysis was carried out using “Analytical Mode” software (specific for metal samples) and it pointed out, for the metallic insert, the element **Copper**. Is worth mentioning that, taking into account the millimeter size of the insert, the X-ray beam could not be focalized exactly on it. We interpret the high percentage of copper (18.65%) as illustrating, without any doubt, the presence of a component in metallic copper. In case the X-ray beam could have been focalized exactly on the sample, the returned percentage of copper could have been above 90%. The high content of iron (80.54%) illustrates the composition of the ceramic paste (ferruginous clays).

Figure 3 presents the results of the analysis carried out on the ceramic paste used for making the statuette. The XRF analysis was carried out using “Soil Mode” software (specific for light elements-based matrices - ceramics); the results are characteristic for the composition of a ferruginous clay-based ceramic paste. The result of this analysis allows the confirmation of the authenticity of the artefact and its inclusion in the Phase A of Cucuteni culture. The chemical composition revealed is similar to other XRF analyses carried out in time on several ceramic artefact pertaining to the Cucuteni-Tripolie communities from the same geographic area, included already in specialist databases and certified<sup>11</sup>.

The research on this artefact it is just started. Future investigations will also include micro-Raman analyses, which will allow the exact identification of the chemical composition of the metallic insert.

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There are no to-date known direct analogies for this unusual type of decoration of the anthropomorphic plastic art featured by the Cucuteni-Tripolie cultural complex.

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<sup>11</sup> M. Geba, A.-M. Vlad, S. Țurcanu, C. Lăcătușu, N. Vornicu, *Contributions to the Study of Neolithic Painted Ceramics of Cucuteni Civilization*, in *Relics and museology*, 6, 2009, Shangai, p. 365-370, fig. 7.

It is difficult to reconstruct the meanings implied by the association between the two elements, i.e. the metallic insert and its associated spiral. It is evident the fact that these elements make a single feature, representing, most probably, the central component (the pendant) of a particular type of neck decoration, in the category defined by us as “implicit representations”<sup>12</sup>.

The presence of the spiral motif, as well as the role metal plays in the cultural and social processes of the time<sup>13</sup>, allows the conclusion that the symbolic value encased by such adornment and, by extension, by the anthropomorphic statuette it decorates, is particularly meaningful. We are aware of the complexity of the issues involved and, consequently, we only attempt, in the following argumentation, to point out some aspects that might be connected to the semiotics of this unusual manner of decoration and symbolic association.

The simple spiral, as depicted in miniature on the neck of the statuette, is a highly frequent occurrence in the painted decoration of the Cucuteni-Tripolie Phase A pottery<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 5, 6/5). It also appears occasionally in the decorative registers of small altar tables or of *pintaderas*, as well as in the decoration of special-purpose vessels (Fig. 6/1-4)<sup>15</sup>. It is seldom employed in the decorative portfolio of later phases pottery (Fig. 7/3). Its particular symbolic load continues to play a role, as indicated

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<sup>12</sup> The implicit representations suppose only the depiction by incision or painting of various types of pendants on the neck or chest of the statuettes, without including the representation of the necklace on which such adornments are attached, cf. S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 16, table 1.

<sup>13</sup> S. Burmester, S. Hansen, M. Kunst, N. Müller-Scheeßel (eds.), *Metal matters: Innovative Technologies and Social Change in Prehistory and Antiquity*, Leidorf, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Vl. Dumitrescu, *Arta culturii Cucuteni*, București, 1979, 33-35; C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, S. Țurcanu, *Cucuteni – A Great Civilization of the Prehistoric World*, Iași, 2009, *passim*.

<sup>15</sup> C.-M. Mantu, S. Țurcanu, *Catalog*, in V. Chirica, C.-M. Mantu, S. Țurcanu (eds.), *Scânteia. Cercetare arheologică și restaurare*, Iași, 1999, p. 100, cat. no. 168; C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 176, cat. no. 61.

by its occurrence on the facades of miniature buildings, regarded as models of temples or sanctuaries<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 7/1-2).

It is worth mentioning the fact that this decorative motif is only exceptionally used in the decoration portfolio of the anthropomorphic plastic art<sup>17</sup>. In fact, the one exception we identified is a male anthropomorphic statuette uncovered in Scânteia (a site dated in the same chronological level as the find analyzed in this paper, Cucuteni A - Tripolie BI), which bears on its chest a finely incised spiral (painted over with red paint)<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 8/1). The Scânteia find is shaped in the typical manner of the male anthropomorphic statuettes of this phase, with legs built as separate pieces and strongly sculpted genitalia. A “ribbon” of clay was applied around the hips, representing a girdle (belt), decorated with incised lines, which are still preserving the red paint used for emphasis. The item is fragmentary (the head and feet are missing). The spiral is located on the upper part of the body, on the torso, in a slightly oblique position. It was argued for its symbolic meaning<sup>19</sup>. We believe that there is a similar argument for the interpretation of the minute spiral that, taken together with the hardly visible metallic insert (or inserts) framing it, decorate the statuette of Cucuteni - *Cetățuie*. This is, most probably, a high-status mark (of cultic or social significance).

Regarding the metallic insert, this should be connected, first of all, to the problematic implied by the existence of copper body decorations. More than any other metal artifacts, from a typology point of view, the manufacturing of body decoration items is a characteristic feature of the beginnings of Neolithic-Chalcolithic metallurgy. It is believed that the initial development phases of metallurgy were not determined by economic

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<sup>16</sup> L. Stratulat, N. Ursulescu, S. Țurcanu, F.-A. Tencariu, C. Hriban (eds.), *Cucuteni - Trypillia: A Great Civilization of Old Europe*, Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome-Vatican, 16 September - 31 October 2008, București, 2008, p. 181, 262, cat. no. U84.

<sup>17</sup> D. Monah, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> C.-M. Lazarovici, *Anthropomorphic Statuettes from Cucuteni-Tripolye: Some Signs and Symbols*, in *DP*, XXXII, 2005, p. 151, fig. 11/3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

or technologic reasons, but rather by esthetical and social ones<sup>20</sup>. The idea that the emergence and development of metallurgy is based on reasons of „social display” is one of the central tenets of several scholarly works dedicated to the emergence and early development of metallurgy<sup>21</sup>. Practically, the human communities did not particularly need the metal, but desired it for decorating and beautifying the bodies, both during and after life.

Regarding this aspect, our prior study on the body decoration artifacts of Cucuteni-Tripolie communities revealed that most of such items (as number of items and not finds) are made of copper<sup>22</sup>. Without insisting on this very interesting subject, it is worth mentioning that such finds, which are preserved, are various types of pearls/beads, circular or “en violon” pendants, bracelets, rings and hoops, most of them concentrated in the notorious hoards of prestige items<sup>23</sup>. Their value was never only esthetical, as most of our contemporary interpretation of “jewelry” goes, but included, as repeatedly demonstrated, symbolic value, as very important non-verbal communication means, i.e. signs of social distinctions and prestige and legitimacy markers<sup>24</sup>.

Moreover, one of the directions of investigating the semiotics of the metallic insert of the Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* statuette is, in our opinion, the color symbolism and the various meanings the prehistoric communities under scrutiny assigned to colors. In close connection to this perspective, it

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<sup>20</sup> C. S. Smith, *Metallurgy as a Human Experience*, in *Metallurgical and Material Transactions A*, 6(4), 1975, p. 603-623.

<sup>21</sup> C. Renfrew, *Varna and the Emergence of Wealth in Prehistoric Europe*, in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 141-167; B. Roberts, C. P. Thornton, V. Pigott, *Development of Metallurgy in Eurasia*, in *Antiquity*, 83, 2009, p. 1012-1022; M. Murillo-Barroso, I. Montero-Ruiz, *Copper Ornaments in the Iberian Chalcolithic: Technology versus Social Demand*, in *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 25.1, 2012, p. 53-73.

<sup>22</sup> S. Țurcanu, *Cucutenian Body Ornamenting Items: A Raw Materials Perspective*, in *ArhMold*, XXXVI, 2013, p. 71-73.

<sup>23</sup> I. Mareș, *Metalurgia aramei în civilizațiile Precucuteni și Cucuteni*, Suceava, 2012, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> S. L. Venable, *Gold: a Cultural Encyclopedia*, California, 2011, p.179; on line: [http://www.brucemetcalf.com/pages/essays/nature\\_jewelry.html](http://www.brucemetcalf.com/pages/essays/nature_jewelry.html).



is worth mentioning the use of mineral coloring matter for body decoration and, by extension, for the decoration of anthropomorphic plastic art<sup>25</sup>.

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Apart of the item analyzed by us, this category of Cucuteni-Tripolie finds includes only one case of metal insertion used for the decoration of a ceramic artefact. In this case, the host artefact is a zoomorphic statuette (a bovid, apparently), with two small inserts on its forehead (Fig. 9)<sup>26</sup>. Preserved at present in the collections of the National History Museum of Moldova in Chişinău, the artefact was uncovered by the 1969 excavations of I. V. Melnik in the Cucuteni A -Tripolie BI site of Bulboci (Sorocea

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<sup>25</sup> J. Chapman, *Colour in Balkan Prehistory (Alternatives to the Berlin & Kay Colour Paradigm)*, in L. Nikolova (ed.), *Early Symbolic Systems for Communication in Southeast Europe*, BAR 1139, t. 2, 2003, p. 31-56; B. Gaydarska, J. Chapman, *The Aesthetics of Colour and Brilliance – Or Why Were Prehistoric Persons Interested in Rocks, Minerals, Clays and Pigments?*, in R. I. Kostov, B. Gaydarska, M. Gurova (eds.), *Geoarchaeology and Archaeomineralogy. Proceedings of the International Conference, Sofia, 29-30 October 2008*, Sofia, 2008, p. 63-66; P. Zidarov, *Green Bone Pin from Pietrele: Possible Evidence for Intentional Colouration of Bone Artefacts during the Copper Age in the Balkans*, in R. I. Kostov, B. Gaydarska, M. Gurova (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 73-74; Idem, *Tattooing in the Balkan Copper Age: Bone Needles and Mineral Pigments from Pietrele, Romania*, in *Saxa Loquuntur*, Sofia, 2009, p. 327-330; D. Boghian, *Les marquages corporels chez les communautés Néolithiques et Énéolithiques Carpat-Danubiennes (II)*, in *CC*, XVI, 2011, 1, p. 5-35.

<sup>26</sup> The artefact shows a horizontal transversal perforation through the muzzle, a morphological detail that individualizes it. The zoomorphic statuettes with such perforations occur as early as Early Neolithic and are relatively frequent, through various cultures, up to Early Bronze Age. The muzzle perforations were interpreted by various authors as nose-ring holes. The use of nose-rings for leading and mastering a dray-beast is still present in traditional farming societies, with the particular usage of controlling bulls. In this direction were interpreted as well the perforation occurring on archaeological finds. Within the Cucuteni-Tripolie cultural complex, such artefacts occur throughout all the phases, making approximately 13% of all the known zoomorphic statuettes (cf. V. Balabina, *Figurki životnykh v plastike Cucuteni-Tripol'ja*, Moskva, 1998, p. 37). For a discussion on this subject, see also S. Țurcanu, *Considerații privind statuetele zoomorfe pictate din arealul civilizației Cucuteni-Tripolie*, in *CI*, XXXIV, 2015, p. 12-13.

district, Republic of Moldova)<sup>27</sup>. There are no known data on the find context. The copper inserts show specific greenish corrosion products. As far as we know, there were no specific analyses conducted on this artefact. Such ornament can only be interpreted (in this particular case) in a symbolic key, excluding the possibility of purely esthetical value. One cannot overlook the hypothesis that the minute copper inserts might have ensured the integration of the item in a ritual scenography, employed for illustrating myths in which one of the characters was the Bull, the prime male symbol, inseminating deity and epiphany of the all-father god<sup>28</sup>.

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We believe that the symbolic value of the associating the metal to the two representations illustrated here is incontestable. The reconstruction of their meaning remains, in this context, an inaccessible desiderate. The building of a database of similar finds, which are preserved, with a high degree of probability, in other collections, or will be uncovered by the future archaeological excavations, shall be the first step of a tentative to decipher the symbolic values of this type of association. A reference collection including several finds of this type will allow, in the meanwhile, more pertinent reconstructions.

One first step in this direction is another recent “discovery” in a museum collection. The find with the special decorative feature was uncovered in the Tripolie BII - Cucuteni A-B site of Kolomyschyna (Fig. 8/2). The find occurred several decades ago. The figure is shaped in a sitting position and it seems to represent a pregnant woman. Due to taphonomic reasons, a fragment of the statuette’s abdomen fell off several years ago, revealing the presence of a small metallic fragment (copper),

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<sup>27</sup> The find was included, with a summary descriptive sheet, in the illustration of the book *Mărturii ale trecutului Dalekoe-Blizkoe. These Remote Near Ages*, Kișinev, 1985, p. 68, 164.

<sup>28</sup> The subject was treated in more detail (with an overview of the literature) in: S. Țurcanu, *Anthropomorphic and Zoomorphic Plastic Art*, in S. Kadrow (ed.) & editorial cooperation E. Trela-Kieferling, *Bilcze Złote. Materials of the Tripolye culture from the Werteba and Ogród sites*, Biblioteka Muzeum Archeologicznego w Krakowie V, Kraków, 2013, p. 78-80.

which was embedded in this body part<sup>29</sup>. Invisible to the naked eye, the metal insert was though present in the conscience/memory of the maker and, most probably, of the knowledgeable viewer. The symbolic value of such association is probably a different one. According to which reasons the metallic piece was embedded in the unfired paste of a clay female statuette, in its belly, to be precise? Which were the behavioral pushrods that caused such act? This is not a grain of wheat that might germinate, but a piece of metal, which had a certain symbolic value at the time, unknown to us, which is difficult to frame in the logical schematics of our, present-time, abstract thought.

Could its presence be explained as evidence for the performance of a magic ritual, as was hypothesized for relatively similar situations in other historical periods<sup>30</sup>? The answer to this question is difficult, at least at this time and level of knowledge. The usage of such figurines in certain magic rituals (both black and white) is documented ethnographically and archaeologically as well as by written sources, as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, in Egypt and Babylonia, being known in Assyria, Greece and Roman Republic, as well as mentioned by the Homeric texts<sup>31</sup>.

The known texts indicate that anthropomorphic figurine of various materials were used in Babylon and Assyria in magic rituals with various desired outcomes: ensuring the victory of the king in its wars, strengthening the oaths sworn by soldiers or the commitments taken through political treaties, fighting against demons, ghosts, witches and live enemies, banishing the spirit of dead, healing diseases caused allegedly by hostile magic action (witch, enemy or demon), etc.<sup>32</sup>.

The historical logic dictates that one should regard such facts as actions that were undertaken by humans also in older times. Might one

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<sup>29</sup> N. Burdo, *Anthropomorphic plastic art of Trypillia culture: dialectic of similarities and differences*, in C.-E. Ursu, S. Țerna (eds.), *Anthropomorphism and symbolic behavior in the Neolithic and Copper Age communities of South-Eastern Europe*, Studies into South-East European Prehistory 1, Suceava, 2014, p. 323, fig. 14/5.

<sup>30</sup> N. Palincaș, *Figurină de lut de epocă Latène cu caracter magic descoperită la Poienest, jud. Giurgiu*, in *SCIVA*, 46, 2, 1995, p. 93-104 (and the Bibliography).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*.

include the find of Kolomyschyna in this category of artefacts? We cannot conclude decisively, at this time, in either direction. Is worth mentioning that there are finds among the Neolithic zoomorphic artefacts discovered in the Middle East that, due to certain shaping characteristics, were interpreted by archaeologists as representing remains of rituals involving magic. It was hypothesized that the purpose of such magic objects was to ensure successful hunts or multiplication and health of herds<sup>33</sup>. The existence of similar items is documented as well in the East Carpathian Neolithic-Chalcolithic<sup>34</sup>.

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Although the practice of symbolic association of plastic art representations with metal accessories is not quite frequent during the second half of 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, in the regions bordering to the south the Cucuteni-Tripolie cultural area, it is documented both in the area of Varna culture (Fig. 10/4, 7) and the Gumelnița - Karanovo VI cultural complex (Fig. 10/1-3, 5-6, 8-9; 11/1-2)<sup>35</sup>. The copper elements are present both in

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<sup>33</sup> Among these one can mention finds from Çatalhöyük and Aïn Ghazal, cf. E. Coqueugniot, *Figurines et représentations animales dans les villages Néolithique du Proche-Orient*, in *Anthropozoologica*, 2003, 38, p. 35-48, fig. 5-6.

<sup>34</sup> The artefacts originating this findings were included in the doctoral research of R.-G. Furnică (the thesis *Reprezentări zoomorfe din neoliticul și eneoliticul României de la est de Carpați*, defended publicly in 2014, at „A. I. Cuza” University in Iași, unpublished as of 2016), to whom we express once again, here, our gratitude for the information provided for this research.

<sup>35</sup> Vl. Dumitrescu, *Arta preistorică în România*, București, 1974, p. 246-247, fig. 271; R. Andreescu, *Plastica antropomorfă gumelnițeană. Analiză primară*, Monografii III, București, 2002, pl. 41/3; 42/2; pl. V/4; H. Todorova (hrsg.), *Durankulak, Band II. Die prähistorischen Gräberfelder von Durankulak*, Teil 2, Katalogteil, Sofia, 2002, tabl. 27/5; 71/17; C. Bem, *Considérations sur quelques types de pièces gumelnițeniennes en cuivre*, in *Dacia N. S.*, XLVI-XLVII, 2002-2003, p. 159, fig. 23; S. Hansen, A. Dragoman, A. Reingruber, N. Benecke, I. Gatsov, T. Hoppe, F. Klimscha, P. Nedelcheva, B. Song, J. Wahl, J. Wunderlich, *Die kupferzeitliche Siedlungshügel Pietrele an der Unteren Donau. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen im Sommer 2005*, in *EurAnt*, 12, 2006, p. 41, abb. 85; S. Hansen, M. Toderăș, A. Reingruber, D. Nowacki, H. Nórsgaard, D. Spânu, J. Wunderlich, *Die kupferzeitliche Siedlung Pietrele an der Unteren Donau. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen und geomorphologischen Untersuchungen im Sommer 2010*, in *EurAnt*, 17, 2011, p. 96, 99-100, fig. 78, 83-84 (and the Bibliography); S. Hansen, M. Toderăș,

association with ceramic (Fig. 10/4, 7) and bone artefacts (Fig. 10/1-3, 5-6, 8-9; 11/1-2). Among the latter ones, the flat and prismatic statuettes are both “accessorized” with metal inserts<sup>36</sup>.

The metallic elements represent, mainly, body ornaments (Fig. 10), like necklaces, girdles, diadems, bracelets, earrings, as well as the more difficult to explain ribbons around the lower legs, which might figure both a certain type of clothing accessory for legs and the depiction of magic practices (Fig. 11).

The association of *ronde bosse* representations (ceramic, stone/marble, alabaster or bone) with various elements of mineral and animal origin (copper, stone, obsidian, gems like turquoises, pearls, nacre), seems to have represented practice that was regularly employed by Neolithic-Chalcolithic farming-herding communities, even though with lower frequency, on a vast geographical area, from the Indus Valley, over Asia Anterior and to Egypt and the Balkans (Fig. 12)<sup>37</sup>.

The practicalities of this symbolic association were quite diverse. The craftsmen used both inserts, like in the case of Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* find, as well as inlay and applique.

Beyond the esthetic value, the purpose of these “unions” is, in our opinion, to empower the value of the anthropomorphic “support”, to emphasize or even redefine its symbolic value. Moreover, the role of such associations could be to integrate the artefact, by these key components, with a certain mythology or ritual scenography.

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A. Reingruber, J. Wunderlich, N. Benecke, I. Gatsov, E. Marinova, M. Müller, C. Nachev, P. Nedelcheva, D. Nowacki, A. Röpke, J. Wahl, S. Zäuner, *Pietrele an der Unteren Donau. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen und geomorphologischen Untersuchungen im Sommer 2011*, in *Eur.Ant*, 18, 2012, p. 45-47, fig. 53/4-5; D. Boghian, *op. cit.*, 2011, fig. VII.

<sup>36</sup> S. Hansen *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 2011, p. 96, fig. 78/1.

<sup>37</sup> A. Radunčeva, *Kurzer vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Dolnoslav*, in J. Lichardus (ed.), *Die Kupferzeit als historische Epoche*, Symposium Saarbrücken und Otzenhausen 6.-13. 11. 1988, Bonn, p. 107-110; M. Polk, A. M. H. Schuster (eds.), *The Looting of the Irak Museum*, Abrams, 2005, p. 73; S. Hansen, *Neolithic Figurines in Anatolia*, in M. Özdoğan, N. Başgelen, P. Kuniholm (eds.), *The Neolithic in Turkey. 10500-5200 BC: Environment, Settlement, Flora, Fauna, Dating, Symbols of Belief, with views from North, South, East, and West*, Istanbul, 2014, p. 269, fig. 6.

Remaining, unfortunately, at the level of interpretation hypotheses, one can only remark upon the fact that the types of artefacts analyzed in this research trace new directions for analyzing the place and the role played by the anthropomorphic plastic art in the life of prehistoric human communities. We are aware that it will never be possible to completely reconstruct the prehistoric imaginarium to which these artefacts were integral part, but we hope that the future finds, either in the field or in the storage rooms of the museums, will provide new relevant data.

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*ASOCIERI SIMBOLICE ÎN CHALCOLITHICUL EUROPEI  
SUD-ESTICE: CUPRUL ȘI PLASTICA ANTROPOMORFĂ  
(Rezumat)*

*În lucrare sunt trecute în revistă, în primă instanță, cele două noi tipuri de piese identificate în ultimii ani în cadrul reprezentărilor antropomorfe aparținând complexului cultural Cucuteni-Tripolie, care implică asocierea cu metalul, cu cuprul, mai exact.*

*Prima piesă (care provine de la Cucuteni - Cetățuie (România) și datează din faza Cucuteni A/ Tripolie B I) (Fig. 1-2), a fost inițial decorată, în zona pieptului, cu o inserție milimetrică de metal, flancată de o spirală. Cea de-a doua (care provine de la Kolomyschyna (Ucraina) și este încadrată în faza Tripolie B II/ Cucuteni A-B) (Fig. 8/2), a avut înglobat în pasta piesei, în zona abdominală, un mic fragment metalic.*

*Apreciem că valoarea simbolică a asocierii cu metalul a celor două artefacte este incontestabilă. Reconstituirea valențelor lor rămâne, în acest moment, din*

*păcate, un deziderat inaccesibil. Este evident, însă, că noile tipuri de piese jalonează noi direcții de analiză ale locului și rolului jucat de plastica antropomorfă în viața comunităților umane preistorice.*

*În consecință, sunt trecute în revistă câteva posibile „chei de lectură” ale acestor piese. De asemenea, sunt identificate și amintite succint și alte cazuri de asocieri simbolice ale reprezentărilor în ronde bosse (realizate din ceramică, piatră/marmură, alabastru sau os) cu diferite elemente de natură minerală sau animală (cupru, piatră (obsidian, pietre semiprețioase - turcoazele, de exemplu), perle, sidef), practică la care comunitățile agro-pastorale neo-eneolitice au recurs regulat, chiar dacă nu foarte frecvent, pe o vastă arie geografică care se întindea din Valea Indusului, peste spațiul Asiei Anterioare, ajungând chiar până în Egipt și Balcani (Fig. 10-12).*

### **Lista ilustrației:**

- Fig. 1. Statuetă antropomorfă cu inserție metalică, Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (jud. Iași, Romania): a, foto; b, desen.
- Fig. 2. Statuetă antropomorfă cu inserție metalică, Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (jud. Iași, Romania). Imagini microscopice: a, detalii; b, inserția metalică (cupru): produși de coroziune (tenorit, cuprit); c, halou de culoare roșie datorat produșilor de coroziune.
- Fig. 3. Analiza XRF realizată asupra inserției metalice a statuetei descoperite la Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (jud. Iași, Romania).
- Fig. 4. Analiza XRF realizată asupra compoziției ceramice a statuetei descoperite la Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (jud. Iași, Romania).
- Fig. 5. Ceramică pictată cu motive spiralice, cultura Cucuteni, faza A/ Tripolie B I (România): 1, capac (Scânteia); 2, vas piriform (Bălțați); 3, vas globular cu picior înalt (Pocreaca); 4, fructieră (Scânteia) (1-4, după Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009).
- Fig. 6. Artefacte decorate cu motive spiralice, cultura Cucuteni, faza A/ Tripolie B I (România): 1, pintaderă (Ariușd); 2, detaliu (aplicație) de pe un *pithos* (Scânteia); 3, masă-altar (Scânteia); 4, vas prismatic (Izvoare); 5, strachină (Trușești) (1-5, după Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009).
- Fig. 7. Artefacte decorate cu motive spiralice: 1, 3, cultura Cucuteni, faza B/ Tripolie C I; 2, Tripolie CII. 1, complex de cult (Ghelăiești, România); 2, model de sanctuar (regiunea Cherkas'ka, Ucraina); 3, vas de tip amforetă (Ghelăiești, România) (1-3, după Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009).

- Fig. 8. Statuetă antropomorfă masculină, cultura Cucuteni, faza A/ Tripolie B I (Scânteia, România); 2, statueta antropomorfă feminină, cultura Cucuteni, faza A-B/ Tripolie B II (Kolomyschyna, Ucraina) (1, după Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009; 2, după Burdo, 2014).
- Fig. 9. Statuetă zoomorfă cu inserție metalică, cultura Cucuteni, faza A/ Tripolie B I (Bulboci, raionul Soroca, Republica Moldova) (după Țurcanu *et al.*, 2016).
- Fig. 10. Plastică antropomorfă cu accesorii realizate din cupru. 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, cultura Gumelnița - Karanovo VI; 4, 7, cultura Varna II-III. 1, 3, Hotnica (Bulgaria); 2, Pietrele (România); 4, 7, Durankulak (Bulgaria); 5, Razgrad (Bulgaria); 6, 8, Karanovo (Bulgaria); 9, Căscioarele (România) (1, 3-7, după Hansen *et al.*, 2011; 2, după Hansen *et al.*, 2012; 8, după Bem, 2003; 9, după Dumitrescu, 1974).
- Fig. 11. Plastică antropomorfă cu accesorii realizate din cupru, cultura Gumelnița - Karanovo VI; 1, Pietrele (România); 2, Lovetz (Bulgaria) (1, după Hansen *et al.*, 2011; 2, on line: <http://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/bulgaria-sofia-natsionalen-istoritcheski-high-res-stock-photography/96506450>).
- Fig. 12. Asocieri simbolice în arta plastică neolitică: 1, Urfa Balıklıgöl (Turcia), mileniul XI BC, calcar și obsidian, 2, Egiptul Predinastic, mileniul IV BC, lemn, foiță de aur și lapis lazuli; 3, Dolnoslav (Bulgaria), mileniul IV BC, lut și sidef; 4, Tell es Sawwan (Irak), mileniul VI BC, alabastru, scoică și turcoaze (1-3, on line: <https://ro.pinterest.com>; 4, după Polk, Schuster, 2005).



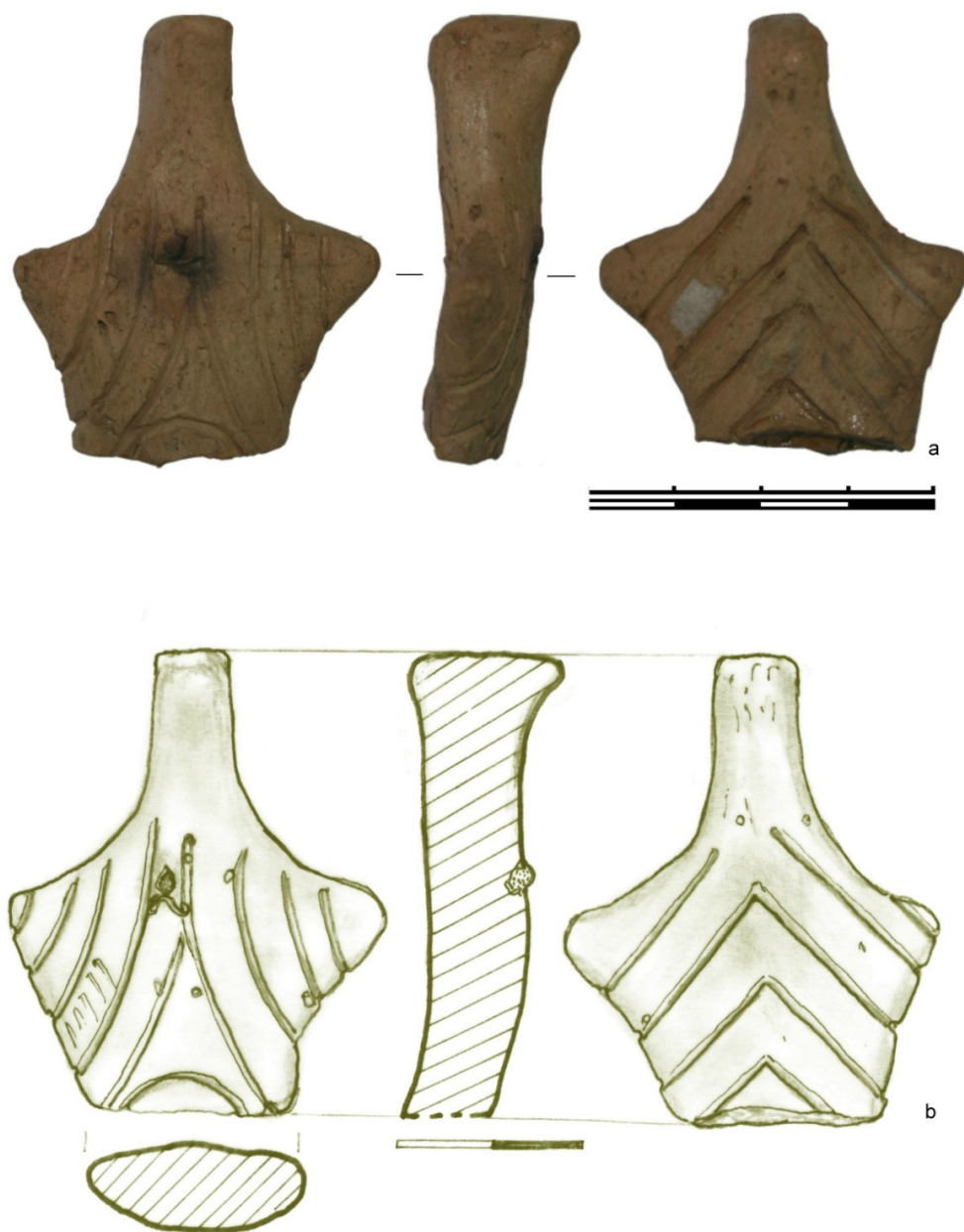


Fig. 1. Anthropomorphic statuette with metal insert found at Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași co., Romania): a, photo; b, drawing



Fig. 2. Anthropomorphic statuette with metal insert found at Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași co., Romania). Microscopic images: a, details; b, metal insert (copper): corrosion products (tenorite, cuprite); c, red halo produced by corrosion products

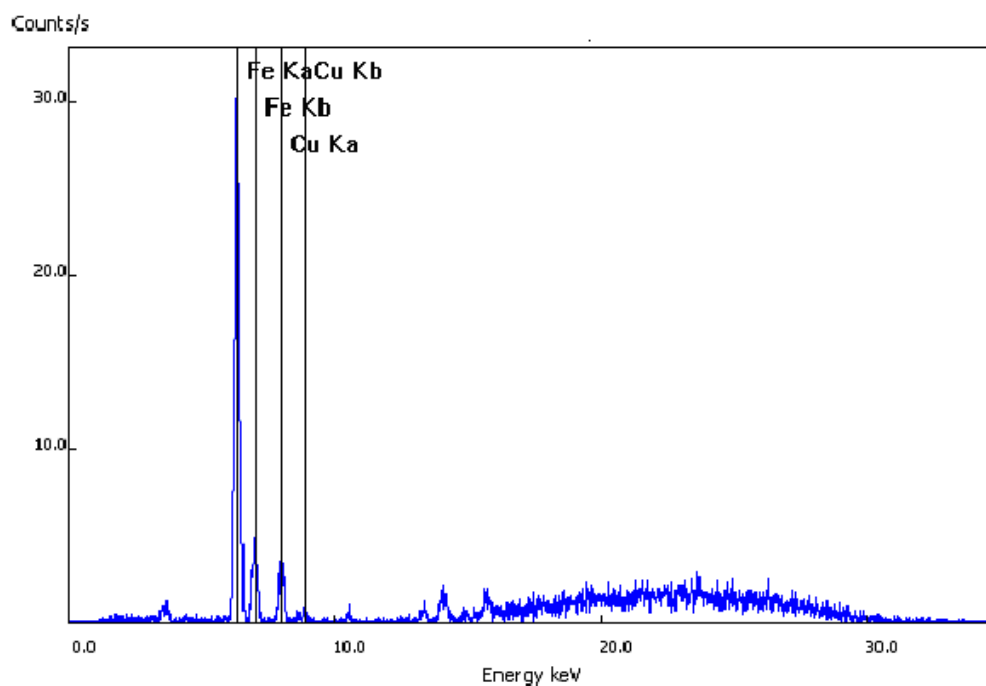


Fig. 3. XRF analysis performed on the metal insert for the anthropomorphic statuette with metal insert found at Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași co., Romania)

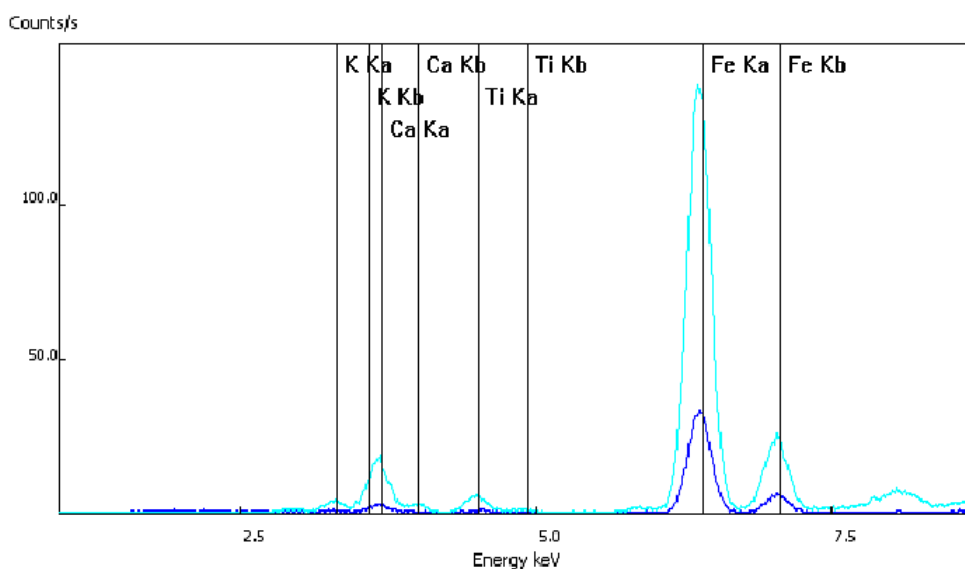


Fig. 4. XRF analysis performed on the clay composition for the anthropomorphic statuette with metal insert found at Cucuteni - *Cetățuie* (Iași co., Romania)



Fig. 5. Pottery painted with spiral motifs, Cucuteni culture, Phase A/ Tripolie B I (Romania): 1, lid (Scânteia); 2, pear-shaped vessel (Bălțați); 3, tall-stemmed globular vessel (Pocreaca); 4, “fruit platter” (Scânteia) (1-4, after Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009)





Fig. 6. Artefacts decorated with spiral motives, Cucuteni culture, Phase A/  
Tripolie B I (Romania): 1, *pintadera* (Ariușd); 2, detail (applique) from a *pithos*  
(Scânteia); 3, altar-table (Scânteia); 4, prismatic vessel (Izvoare); 5, dish (Trușești)  
(1-5, after Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009)



Fig. 7. Artefacts decorated with spiral motives: 1, 3, Cucuteni culture, Phase B/Tripolie C I; 2, Tripolie C II. 1, cult complex (Ghelăiești, Romania); 2, sanctuary model (Cherkas'ka region, Ukraine); 3, amphorette-type vessel (Ghelăiești, Romania) (1-3, after Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009)



Fig. 8. Male anthropomorphic statuette, Cucuteni culture, Phase A/ Tripolie B I (Scânteia, Romania); 2, female anthropomorphic statuette, Cucuteni culture, Phase A-B/ Tripolie B II (Kolomyschyna, Ukraine)  
(1, after Lazarovici *et al.*, 2009; 2, after Burdo, 2014)





Fig. 9. Zoomorphic statuette with metal inserts, Cucuteni culture, Phase A/  
 Tripolie B I (Bulboci, Soroca district, Republic of Moldova)  
 (after Țurcanu *et al.*, 2016)



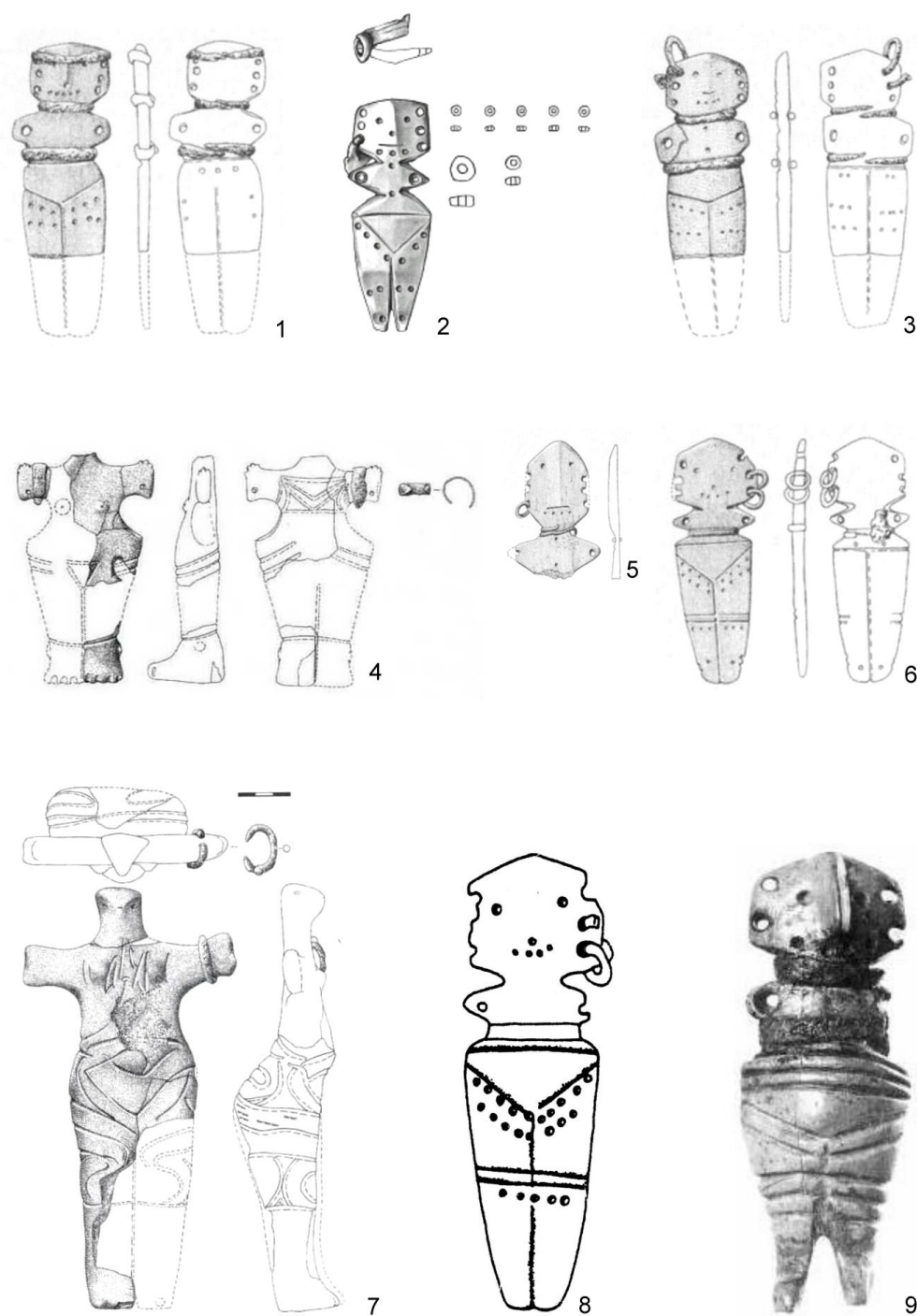


Fig. 10. Anthropomorphic plastic art with copper accessories (ornaments). 1-3, 5-6, 8-9, Gumelnița - Karanovo VI culture; 4, 7, Varna II-III culture. 1, 3, Hotnitsa (Bulgaria); 2, Pietrele (Romania); 4, 7, Durankulak (Bulgaria); 5, Razgrad (Bulgaria); 6, 8, Karanovo (Bulgaria); 9, Căscioarele (Romania) (1, 3-7, after Hansen *et al.*, 2011; 2, after Hansen *et al.*, 2012; 8, after Bem, 2003; 9, after Dumitrescu, 1974)



Fig. 11. Anthropomorphic plastic art with copper accessories (ornaments), Gumelnița - Karanovo VI culture; 1, Pietrele (România); 2, Lovetz (Bulgaria) (1, after Hansen *et al.* 2011; 2, on line: <http://www.gettyimages.in/detail/photo/bulgaria-sofia-natsionalen-istoritcheski-high-res-stock-photography/96506450>)



Fig. 12. Symbolic associations in Neolithic plastic art: 1, Urfa Balıklıgöl (Turkey), 11<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, limestone and obsidian; 2, pre-dynastic Egypt, 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, wood, gold foil and lapis lazuli; 3, Dolnoslav (Bulgaria), 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, clay and nacre; 4, Tell-es-Sawwan (Iraq), 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, alabaster, shell and turquoise (1-3, on line: <https://ro.pinterest.com>; 4, after Polk, Schuster, 2005)