

## A NEW STATUETTE OF THESSALIAN TYPE DISCOVERED AT GUMELNIȚA

Twenty years ago I had the opportunity to publish the description of a burnt clay statuette of Gumelnița<sup>1</sup> which, in view of its characteristics, I considered to belong to a well-known Thessalian type — that of the statuette provided with a hole on the upper side, where to introduce its head which had been worked separately; although I have long wanted to revert to the same discovery, in order to make precise certain aspects of the problem, the circumstances have prevented me from all but a very casual mention of it, on the occasion of the discussions on one of the characteristics offered by the statuettes which I discovered in the urnfield at Cîrna, dating back in the Bronze age<sup>2</sup>. A few years ago, Barbu Ionescu, from the Museum of Oltenița, discovered another statuette of the same type, still at Gumelnița. He was kind enough to hand it over to me in order to describe it, in a paper. In this way, by proceeding from this new discovery the problem which I presented for the first time twenty years ago can be resumed and completed.

The statuette which we are publishing here is an almost complete piece (fig. 1/1) with a slightly flattened cylindrical body, somewhat narrower in its lower part, bulging in front and much flattened behind. In fact, the body is like a quasi-cylindrical and hollow tube, whose walls are thicker at the basis (up to 1.5 cm.) and thinner at the upper side (nevermore than 1 cm. thick). As a matter of fact the surface is not uniformly thick either up or down, and on the other hand both the basis and the upper part are cut almost horizontally. From the cylindrical frustrum come out the arms stretched laterally which are a few cm. long. The end of the right arm is blunted, and that of the left arm has long been broken. The height of the statuette is 17 cm., the maximum dm. of the body exceeding 8 cm., while the distance between the extremities of the two

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Une figurine de type thessalien découverte à Gumelnița*, in «Dacia», VII–VIII, 1937–1940, p. 97–102.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *Cîteva observații în legătură cu modelarea prismatico-cilindrică a capului la statuetele de lut ars din cultura cîmpurilor de urne din epoca*

*mijlocie a bronzului*, in SCIV, VIII, 1957, p. 89–102; idem, *Les statuettes de l'âge du bronze découvertes dans la nécropole de Cîrna (R.P. Roumaine)*, in IPEK, 19, 1954–1959, p. 16–48 and pl. 13–20; idem, *Necropola de incinerare din epoca bronzului, de la Cîrna* (in the press).

arms is 17.2 cm. The clay from which the statuette was modelled is very fine and dense, as can be seen from the notches at the basis and from the section of the broken arm. While the body exterior was burnt red in the oven, the inside of the broken arm is a bit greyer. The slip used to be brown and still preserves the original lustre in many portions (especially on the back). On the other hand, the face of the statuette is partially blackened and partially

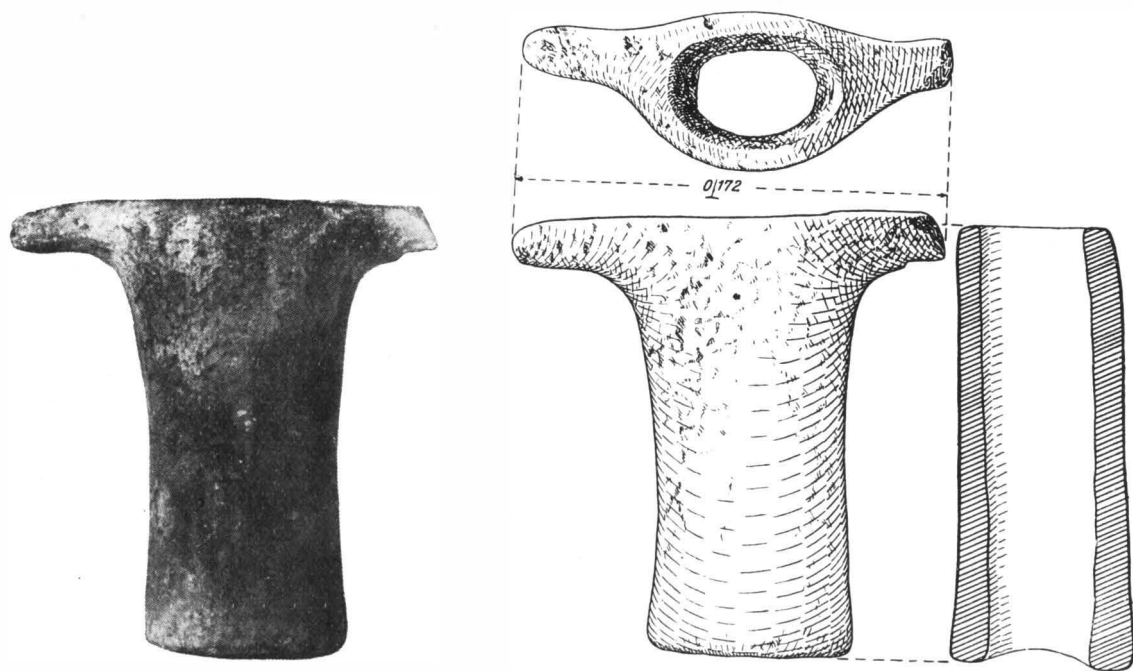


Fig. 1. — The second Gumelnița statuette of Thessalian type (photograph and drawing).

peeled, of course following the contact with the fire which destroyed the dwelling where it probably was.

From the above description it results that we have here a statuette «torso», rather rudimentarily modelled, which belongs — as already said — to the same type as that published in 1941. A few differences of detail can however be perceived (for instance as concerns the relation between the height and breadth of the pieces), but the most important difference lies in the fact that, unlike the older one (fig. 2/1) the piece we now describe has no indication of the breasts; in this way it resembles even more the Thessalian prototype. But neither here do we dispose of the mobile head. It must have been of clay or — perhaps — of stone.

We generally hold valid the conclusion we reached to 20 years ago; both the first piece found at Gumelnița and the second, which we are now describing, belong to a specifically Thessalian type — whether such representation discovered on Greece's territory must be attributed to the second Thessalian period, or be dated from the beginning of the third period<sup>3</sup>. As however, since the publication of the first piece although no identical piece was discovered on the middle and the lower Danube, certain pieces belonging to a related type have been discovered, and on the other hand because certain elements I had not taken into consideration deserved discussion, we think it necessary to resume the whole question.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *Une figurine de type thessalien...*

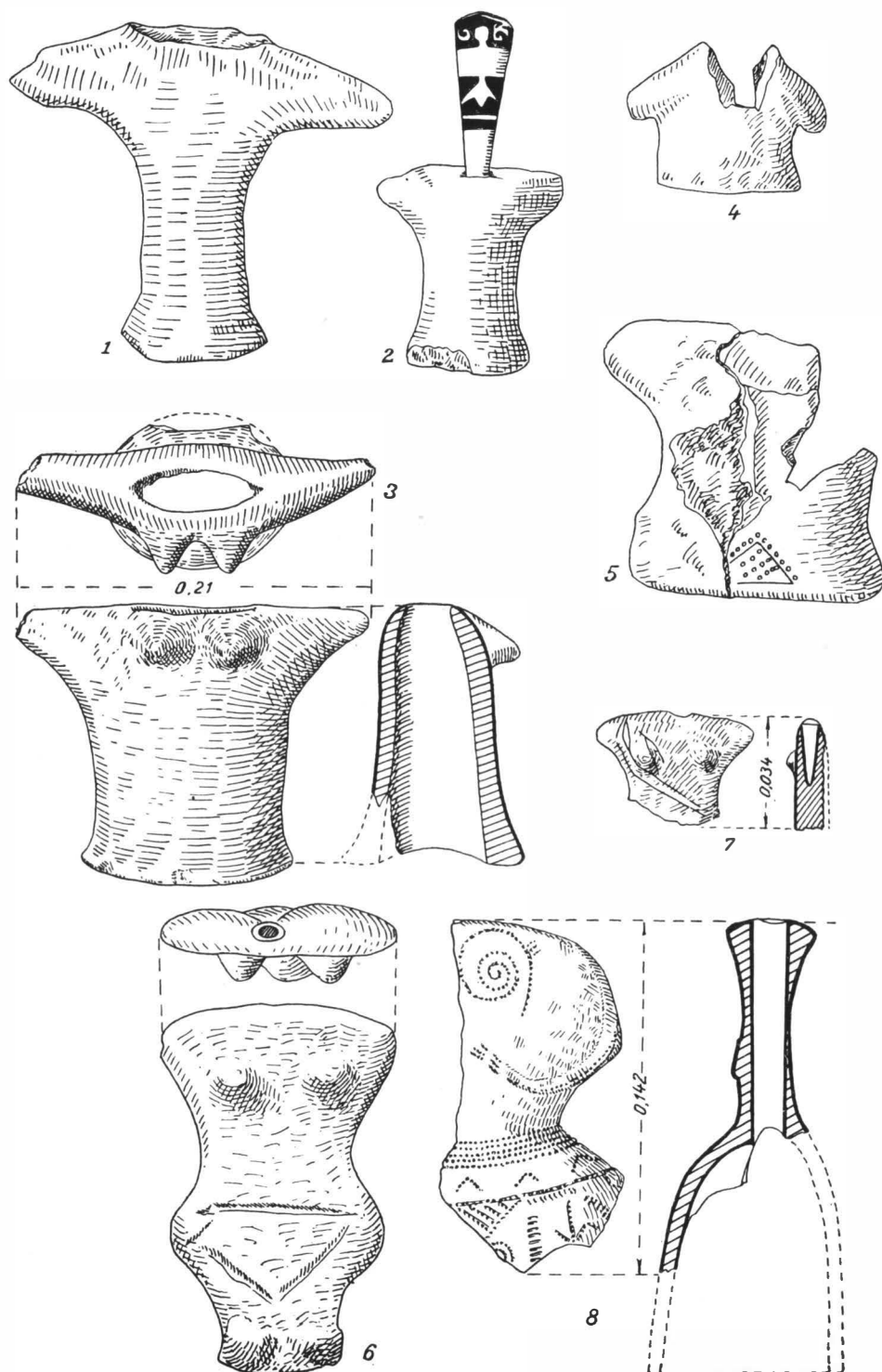


Fig. 2. — 1–2, Thessalian statuettes discovered at Rakhmani (Thessaly); 3, first statuette of Thessalian type found at Gumelnița; 4–5, statuettes of the same type found at Ul — in Kuban; 6, statuette with a hole for introducing the head, found at Vinča; 7, fragment of statuette of the same type found at Cernavoda; 8, fragment of statuette from the Bronze Age, found at Cîrna (it belongs to the same general type, moulded and provided with a hole for inserting the head).

In 1941, lacking a good reproduction of the figurines discovered in the Kurgan at Ul, in northern Caucasus<sup>4</sup>, I thought the absence of the head with some of these pieces originating from Kuban, was due only to their fragmentary state; that determined me not to support the relation established by Childe<sup>5</sup> between some of the Ul figurines and the Thessalian ones, belonging to the headless modelled type. Soon after, I could see, from the minute description found in Hančar's ample work «Urgeschichte Kaukasiens»<sup>6</sup>, that the relation established by Childe was perfectly founded, because three of the Ul figurines were moulded without their head and with a small hole between the shoulders, for the head which had been worked separately (fig. 2/4—5). In this way, the Gumelnița discovery appears less isolated and so — before passing to other discoveries made or published before — we ought to summarize the opinion formulated on the Ul figurines.

Although recalling the similitude between the clay and alabaster figurines of Ul and the figurines from the Ljubljana region, N. I. Veselovsky<sup>7</sup> connected the former with the «pre-Mycenean» figurines from the Aegea, dating them in the 3rd millennium before our era. V. Müller<sup>8</sup> underlined the connection of the Ul figurines with those of Thessaly, pointing out that the headless moulded figurines are connected with the similar type from the same region of Greece. For Müller, the southern origin of the type of these Kuban figurines is beyond doubt, although he generally thought Asia Minor as the origin of the European idols. On the other hand, in the above-mentioned works, Hančar — speaking about the similitude between Kuban and Ljubljana, also dwells on the model of «hut or waggon» in the same Kurgan of Ul, and quotes a number of models of neolithic dwellings of the Danubian area — Moravia, Yugoslavia and Rumania<sup>9</sup>; as a matter of fact we do not think this parallelism an adequate one, because there is no doubt that Rostovtsev<sup>10</sup> and the other authors who considered the Ul piece as a waggon model are right — so that there cannot be any resemblance with the dwelling models.

Reverting to the Ul figurines, we can say that, with the exception of the Soviet scholar A. A. Iessen, not one of the archaeologists who dwelt on them, and whose works we have been able to consult, has attributed them to a local type, independently developed on the spot. Iessen thinks that one «does not notice an absolute and complete formal coincidence» between the Ul statuettes and the Southern ones, the resemblance being very general; and as older feminine statuettes, made both of stone and of clay, have been found in the neolithic settlement at Agubek and in the Nalcic cemetery, therefore in the immediate proximity of Kuban, he considers that these appeared thanks to the local needs and evolution and not by loans from «the remote West»<sup>11</sup>, referring himself especially to the connections with the Ljubljana figurines.

As concerns resemblance with the Ljubljana region, we can generally agree with Iessen, because the statuettes in the Eastern Alps resemble only very slightly the alabaster ones in Kuban and not at all those on purpose left headless and with a hole where to fix a separately moulded head. For the Kuban alabaster statuettes, however, we think more correct the solution

<sup>4</sup> Nor did it result from the description given by Tallgren, *La pontide prescythique*, in ESA, II, 1926, p. 112—114, that certain statuettes found at Ul had been modelled without the head, precisely as the author referred to the connections with the Cyclades; and in the illustration reproduced on figure 66 (p. 111), one can very well assume that the holes are the result of the statuettes' breaking.

<sup>5</sup> V. Gordon Childe, *The Dawn of European Civilization*, ed. II, p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> Fr. Hančar, *Urgeschichte Kaukasiens*, in the collection *Bücher zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte*, vol. VI, Vienna, 1937, see p. 342 sqq.

<sup>7</sup> Concerning the old bibliography, see Fr. Hančar, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> V. Müller, *Frühe Plastik in Griechenland und Vorderasien*, 1929, pl. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 344.

<sup>10</sup> M. Rostovtzev, in *Rev Arch.*, 1920, p. 32—35.

<sup>11</sup> A. A. Иессен, *К хронологии «Больших Кубанских Курганов»*, in SA, XII, 1950, p. 157—200.

adopted by A. M. Tallgren, who considered them derived from the type of the Cretan and Cycladic figurines<sup>12</sup>, and stated later on that those statuettes do not seem imported from the Aegea into Kuban, and that the respective type struck roots and evolved first in the Southern regions of Europe<sup>13</sup>. Without dwelling specially on this problem, let us mention that this conclusion corresponds to the fact that in the Gumelnița culture, for instance, besides the type with the hole for the head, there are also figurines like the alabaster ones made at Ul, that is schematically representing the feminine type seated in a typically oriental position, with bent legs under the body<sup>14</sup>. However, as we do not know the Agubek and Nalcic materials on which among others Iessen relies for his above-mentioned conclusion, the problem whether this type of headed statuettes is of local or alien origin, remains still open, and it can in no way influence the solution that we shall have to stop at in connection with the statuettes which have a hole for the insertion of a head separately moulded.

Reverting to this special type, represented by both statuettes of Gumelnița, one must stress the fact that the Ul specimens also have rather the aspect of torsos with laterally stretched arms, but much more primitively modelled, while the hole does not pierce the whole statuette. In this way they somehow differ from the two pieces found at Gumelnița and from Thessalian statuettes of the same kind (which we consider the prototype of this group) and they are a somehow intermediate series, for their body is similar enough to that of the statuettes sitting in the «oriental position» which we mentioned above.

But while at the date when the first Thessalian type statuette at Gumelnița was published, no other pieces were known in the Danubian region and in the Balkan zone between the Danube and Thessaly, which should be placed on the same plane with this type, later on — and especially in recent years — a number of statuette descriptions have been published, which — without belonging to the very same group — are nevertheless a very closely related group.

Indeed, almost ten years ago prof. J. Korošec published two statuettes from Vinča<sup>15</sup> having a small hole between the shoulders, of course for fixing a separately moulded head. One of these (fig. 2/6) with a rather flat body but with prominent breasts, strongly arched hips and the legs broken below the knees, was found at a depth of 7.80 m. and belongs, according to Korošec, «to the older phase of the Vinča culture»<sup>16</sup>. Considering the depth at which the figurine was found, it is clear that prof. Korošec has in view the periodization which divides the Vinča culture into two main phases (Vinča I and Vinča II). Otherwise, as part of the periodization establishing four or more phases of the culture strata at the famous settlement near Belgrad — this statuette would be attributed to the phase Vinča B. The second piece, much more typical for the Vinča culture, by both its form and the rippled ornament covering its body, belongs — according to the same author — to the late periods<sup>17</sup> although its stratigraphic position is not known, the statuette having been found incidentally. Considering its shape and especially its ornaments,

<sup>12</sup> A. M. Tallgren, *op. cit.*; Childe too made it clear (*op. cit.*, p. 142) that the alabaster statuettes of Ul resemble old Cycladic types.

<sup>13</sup> A. M. Tallgren, in *ESA*, IV, 1929, p. 39–40.

<sup>14</sup> Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Une figurine de type thessalien...*, p. 100–101, where in fact we too recalled the presence of this type in the Ljubljana region. On the other hand there are some more statuettes of Ul (e.g. Tallgren, *ESA*, II, figure 66/6 = Fr. Hančar, *op. cit.*, pl. LI/3 a–b) which look very much like certain figurines of the Gumelnița culture, both as concerns the general type and certain details.

The Ul object indicated above may be compared with certain Gumelnița pieces, as for the moulding of the head in the shape of a disk with the nose «en bec d'oiseau», for the relatively cylindrical body, the flattened base, the outstretched hands and even the way in which the back is stylized.

<sup>15</sup> Josip Korošec, *Statuettes of Vinča culture with head made apart*, in «*Arheoloski Vestnik*», III, 1, 1952, p. 5–12–13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

we incline to attribute this piece to the end of the Vinča B phase (B 2) or even to the beginning of Vinča C, which corresponds with the beginning of Vinča II. Recently, prof. Garašanin from Belgrad has recalled other statuettes of the same kind, namely another Vinča piece (Vinča II phase) as well as one discovered a long time ago in the Gradac Zlokučany settlement<sup>18</sup>, which, as a matter of fact, is unknown to me. In fact, unlike prof. Korošec, Garašanin attributes all these headless statuettes to the Vinča-Turdaş II phase, thus including also in the same phase the first of the statuettes published by Korošec. Moreover, Garašanin considers that from the typological point of view, these statuettes belong to the series of idols of the end of the Vinča-Pločnik phase<sup>19</sup> (= Vinča II). But as this time we no longer are in presence of torsos only with arms (and with or without the indication of the breasts) as at Gumelnița and in Thessaly, it is clear that here we have another group, even if there is no doubt that the peculiarity presented by the separate modelling of the head and its setting in the hole between the shoulders brings this group near the specifically Thessalian one, encountered at Gumelnița too.

To this same group of statuettes, whole in body but headless and pierced between the shoulders for setting a separately modelled head, belong some pieces discovered recently at Cernavoda (fig. 2/7), in a settlement which is part of a cultural complex called by the discoverer the Cernavoda culture and dating back in the final phase of the Neolithic, in the period of transition from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age and in the early Bronze Age<sup>20</sup>.

On the other hand, as we already had the opportunity to show a few years ago<sup>21</sup>, certain statuettes of the Gîrla Mare-Cirna culture of the middle Bronze Age urnfields from Oltenia have also a hole between the shoulders, where the separately modelled head was to be fixed (fig. 2/8), which means that this variant is to be found up to the middle Bronze Age.



After this review of all statuettes with separately modelled head discovered on the Danube and in Kuban, we must return to the essential problem — namely whether these statuettes may be organically connected with the Thessalian statuettes characterized by this peculiarity. As far as we are concerned, we do not believe we have any reason to give up the conclusions formulated 20 years ago, when we published the first statuette of this type discovered at Gumelnița<sup>22</sup>. As a matter of fact the group represented by the two pieces of Gumelnița may be called — without any exaggeration — typically Thessalian, because both items may be considered identical with those in Greece even if one of them has also the prominent representation of the breasts. Both the fact that they are just statuettes torsos and have lateral extended arms as well as the fact that they are pierced throughout, or only between the shoulders, and finally their general aspect justify

<sup>18</sup> Milutin V. Garašanin, *Neolithikum und Bronzezeit in Serbien und Makedonien*, in 39.BerRGK, 1958, p. 1 sqq.; s.p. 22.

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

<sup>20</sup> D. Berciu, Sebastian Morintz and P. Roman, *Săpăturile de la Cernavoda*, in «Materiale», VI, 1959, p. 95–105; s. fig. 2/4. It is worth mentioning here moreover that this statuette has a scarf incised obliquely on the body, from this point of view recalling the type of scarfed statuettes in phase B of the Cucuteni culture in Moldavia. As concerns the parallel drawn between the crossed scarf statuettes of Ul with the one of the Ljubljana region figurines (s. A. M. Tallgren, in ESA, IV, p. 22–40 and Fr. Hančar, *op. cit.*, p. 343–344) I think more sug-

gestive the parallel which may be drawn with certain Alischar statuettes (s. K. Bittel, *Prähist. Forschungen in Kleinasien*, pl. IX/5) and those found in other places of Anatolia (for instance Ahlatibel: *Türk Tarih arkeologija ve Etnografia dergisi*, II, p. 82–83, no. 367 and 507). It is obvious however that the finding of these scarves on the various Neolithic and Copper Age statuettes do not necessarily indicate also a direct genetic connection — if we may say so — between all the figurines on whose bodies scarves have been drawn, if we cannot also find relations between the respective regions and civilization.

<sup>21</sup> Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Cîteva observații...*, p. 98–99.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem*, *Une figurine de type thessalien...*

our stating the identity of the type and our conclusion that between the numerous Thessalian pieces and the two statuettes from Gumelnița there is a strong dependence, the latter being just the local reproductions of a Thessalian type. From the chronological point of view too, however difficult it may be to indicate exact data, it seems to me beyond doubt that this conclusion is also justified. For both the first item of Gumelnița and the second have been discovered in the upper stratum of culture from this important settlement (the last item at 0.40 m. depth) which belongs to the Gumelnița B phase (= III, according to another periodization of this culture), a phase which is generally situated at the end of the 3rd millennium and the beginning of the 2nd millennium before our era. As we have already mentioned, the precision in the field of absolute chronology is more difficult now than 20 years ago (even though this assertion may seem paradoxical), among other things because the absolute data obtained by the C 14 method for certain Neolithic cultures on the Danube and in Central Europe are very high as against the data which most archaeologists had retained till a few years ago — and especially as against those suggested and more or less generally accepted for Asia Minor and Greece. That is why, before the examination with C 14 of the rests of the Neolithic and Middle Bronze Age cultures in Aegea and in the neighbouring regions and especially before the removal of the uncertainties of this dating method and therefore the justified reserves about its results<sup>23</sup>, we must stick to the results given by the stylistic-typological criteria. The latter justify the conclusion on the priority of the appearance of a number of culture elements in Asia Anterior, Aegea and Continental Greece and of their subsequent transmission to the Balkan Peninsula and the Danubian regions. In this way, and as there can be no doubt that the end of the 2nd period of the Thessalian Neolithic and the beginning of the 3rd period in which such statuettes appear, generally dated before 2500 b.o.e., are previous to the Gumelnița B phase, the conclusion we formulated above is also correct from the chronological point of view. The same standpoint has been adopted by Garašanin in discussing the chronological and cultural relations between the Danubian and Greek cultures<sup>24</sup>. Still, I do not know his conception in detail, because I have not been able to read the Serbian text of the review discussing these problems, and these details are absent from the German sum-

<sup>23</sup> In a review published in SCIV, IX, 1958, p. 162–170 (*Poziția arheologilor față de rezultatele metodei radiocarbonului C<sup>14</sup> în domeniul cronologiei absolute*), we had the opportunity to show how different are the appreciations of very experienced archaeologists on these results. Of course the discussion went on and one cannot summarize it here. However it seems to me opportune — in order further to justify our reserve — to quote a few sentences of a well-known American palaeontologist, who deals with the study of animal rests discovered in the strata of the various ancient cultures in Asia Anterior, and according to whom the results obtained by the C<sup>14</sup> method are not at all conclusive: «A last difficulty, and at the moment, one of the most frustrating, is the failure of the radiocarbon (C<sup>14</sup>) technique to yield dates of certain dependability. Although it was hailed as the answer to the prehistorian's prayer when it was first announced, there has been increasing disillusion with the method because of the chronological uncertainties (in some cases, absurdities) that would follow a strict adherence to published C<sup>14</sup> dates. This is not to question the validity of

the physical laws underlying the principle used, or the accuracy of the counters now in operation around the world; the unsolved problem, instead, seems to lie in the difficulty of securing samples completely free from either older or younger adherent carbon. At least to the present, no kind of chemical cleaning can guarantee one-age carbon, typical only of the site from which it was excavated. What bids to become a classic example of «C<sup>14</sup> irresponsibility» is the 6000-year spread of 11 determinations for Jarmo, a prehistoric village in northeastern Iraq, which, on the basis of all archaeological evidence, was not occupied for more than 500 consecutive years» (Charles A. Read, *Animal Domestication in the Prehistoric Near East*, in «Science», Am. Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, vol. 130, nr. 3389, 11 Dec. 1959, p. 1629–1939; see p. 1630).

<sup>24</sup> M. V. Garašanin, in «Arheoloski Vestnik», II, 1951, p. 243–252–254 (review of prof. Fr. Schachermeyr's study, *Die orientalmittelmeerrischen Grundlagen der vorgeschichtlichen Chronologie*, published in PZ, XXXIV – XXXV, 1949/50, p. 17–48).

mary. His conclusions of a chronological nature have however been opposed by prof. J. Korošec<sup>25</sup>, who — considering that this type of statuettes recurs at various times, denies its value for chronological statements. Following these objections, Garašanin seems to have given up his former standpoint<sup>26</sup>. Of course neither do we attach the value of an absolute chronological indication to the Gumelnița statuettes, which should determine the dating of the respective phase, so that from this point of view we do not think necessary to discuss the objections of prof. Korošec all the more so as the summary of his article is very concise. Yet, we do not believe that — at least as concerns the Gumelnița objects — one could speak about altogether independent appearances. As for the other aspects of the problem, we shall deal with them further on.

On the other hand, although formerly it has even been objected<sup>27</sup> that the type represented by the Gumelnița statuettes (at that time a single one) would be older on the Danube than in Thessaly and recalled also the existence of another type of statuettes brought from Thessaly to the Danube, we do not consider this objection as well-founded, because as far back as the early Neolithic, and especially the middle and late Neolithic, the various types of statuettes from the Aegean area and in the contiguous zones had spread northwards and reached the Danube. No cases are known of the Danubian clay statuettes having influenced that in the Aegean regions. The most recent eloquent proof of this is provided by the rich and very typical plastic art of the Hamangia culture, discovered in Dobrudja these last ten years, which is entirely connected at its origin with the early Neolithic art of Thessaly and of the other regions of the Aegean. As a matter of fact I do not think it possible to admit that in two relatively near regions — with permanent cultural intercourse in the Neolithic period — there could have been created independently identical plastic representations, belonging to the same very special type, which at the same time is absent from other regions. That is why, in our opinion, both from the stylistic-typological point of view and from the chronological one, the two statuettes of Gumelnița — and probably also those pierced between the shoulders found in Kuban — must be considered local imitations of a type imported from Thessaly. As concerns the Gumelnița pieces, we are even entitled to speak — as stressed above — of pieces quite identical with those in Greece.

Another aspect of the problem refers to the other group of Neolithic and Bronze Age statuettes mentioned before — namely those whose body is entirely modelled (having therefore more than a mere torso with arms, like the items in the first group) with the exception of the head, and on the other hand having a hole between the shoulders for holding a head modelled separately.

We admit that in fact this peculiarity alone links this group — a bit more numerous and at the same time more longlived, going down from the Neolithic to the Middle Bronze Age, — with the series of the statuettes included in the Thessalian type proper. That is why, first of all we have to see whether one can accept again the filiation Thessaly-Danube which we admitted

<sup>25</sup> J. Korošec, *loc. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> M. V. Garašanin, *Neolithikum u. Bronzezeit* (see p. 22, note 114).

<sup>27</sup> This objection has been raised by I. Nestor (RIR, XI–XII, 1941–1942, p. 435–436). His assertion that the attribution of the first Thessalian statuette at Gumelnița to a cultural influence, coming from the South, is based on some «preconceived ideas» of ours, is altogether groundless, because we have to do with facts which cannot be interpreted differently. However much we would bring nearer the dating of the late Neolithic II and the early III period of Thessaly, and however much we would

try to raise at the same time the dating of the Gumelnița B phase, it is obvious that the latter is more recent than the former, so that the connection can only be established from the South towards the Danube. The existence of another type of statuette of the Gumelnița culture which has also been found in Thessaly (but about which no details have been given) could not change the situation unless one proved that it belonged to an earlier phase of Gumelnița culture, and that it appeared in Thessaly later, without having any prototype in the previous periods there. As for us we do not know of any such Gumelnița statuettes.



for the first group, and secondly whether we ought or ought not consider the typological connection between these groups so close as to compel us to admit different origins for the two variants.

Of course, as concerns the chronological aspect of the problem the same observations as for the first group are to be retained so that — either the beginning of the Vinča culture must be placed in the first half of the 3rd millennium b.o.e. (according to the data accepted till lately by almost all archaeologists) or we must place them in the first half of the 4th millennium (according to the results of several C 14 examinations) — we have to answer only the question whether the oldest objects of this type at the Danube (that is at Vinča) are or not older than the typical Thessalian statuettes. As seen above, J. Korošec established the depths at which one of these statuettes was found at Vinča (7.30 m.) and attributed it to an older phase, while Garašanin asserts that all these objects belong to the Vinča-Turdaş II phase, respectively to the end of the Vinča-Pločnik phase<sup>28</sup>. But since, in order to admit that this group too derives from that of the typical Thessalian statuettes, it is apriorically necessary that even the oldest statuettes of Vinča should be at the most contemporary with if not subsequent to the Thessalian statuettes, and so, in order to avoid any possibility of misinterpretation, we must accept as a basis of discussion to locate the oldest Vinča statuette in the Vinča I phase — as J. Korošec did — with the correction that (considering the depth where it was found) it certainly belongs to the second half of this phase, namely Vinča B. That is why, and taking account of the fact that the 1st Neolithic period in Thessaly is generally synchronic with the Starčevo-Criş culture, which precedes the Vinča culture, one can generally accept that the statuette discovered at Vinča at the depth of 7.30 m. is not older than the Thessalian statuettes of the special type. It can be at the most contemporary with them and probably more recent than the latter. The conclusion which seems to us obvious is that from the chronological point of view there can generally be no objection to the derivation of the series of statuettes with a hole between the shoulders and found at the Danube, from the specific Thessalian type.

As concerns the typological-cultural aspect of the problem, it is directly connected with the way in which one must consider the whole important cultural phenomenon of the relations between the Danubian regions and the Greece and Aegean in the Neolithic period, as well as their direction. Indeed, almost all archaeologists agree that in the early and middle Neolithic, the cultural influence (to speak only of it) was exerted predominantly (if not exclusively) from the south towards the Danube and not vice-versa; and in the field of plastic art (as was already mentioned) most types of the anthropomorphous statuettes of the Neolithic Danubian cultures are strictly dependent, both formally and even ideologically on the Aegean, Greece and West Asian statuettes. That is why, if one can suppose a connection between the group of the pierced statuettes on the Danube and the typically Thessalian statuettes, I think that the direction of this connection can only be from the south to the north (Thessaly-Danube) and in no case the reverse. However, in order to refer also to the last aspect of this problem, let us see whether it is possible to admit that the Danubian group at Vinča must be considered a local, independent one, without any direct or indirect connection with the Thessalian group and with the two Gumelniţa statuettes, certainly related to the Thessalian pieces, which in fact are their prototype. Prof. Korošec even says that these statuettes « must be considered an isolated fact which cannot and must not be connected with facts belonging to another, very remote country », because « with the exception of the holes, they have nothing in common with the Thessalian ones<sup>29</sup> ». Taking into account the elements which distinguish the Vinča group from the Thessalian one, we

<sup>28</sup> M. V. Garašanin, *Neolithikum u. Bronzezeit*, also quotes in this respect a work by R. Bizic-Drechsler, published in «Peristil», I, 1954, p. 174

sqq., which however we have not yet consulted.

<sup>29</sup> J. Korošec, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

could possibly think ourselves justified to see in them two independent and relatively synchronic phenomena. But this does not seem possible, unless one supposes that the cultural relations between the two civilizations — and especially between the two regions where these groups are situated — should have been either entirely absent or very casual. However, it is common knowledge that the situation is exactly the reverse, for the existence of many-sided cultural (and also ethnical) relations between these regions was repeatedly traced down and established in detail.

In the special field of the statuettes, almost each more important and more characteristic type of the Danubian Neolithic depends on the plastic of the south. That is why it seems rather hard to believe that such a special type, like that of the statuettes with separately modelled head, could have appeared and developed independently in two relatively proximate regions which have always been closely connected, from the point of view of their manifestations, by the same cult of fertility. That is all the more so as the Gumelnița statuettes are in themselves the evident proof of the penetration of the Thessalian type of statuettes down to the Danube. And the presence of the few objects of the same type in Kuban can also be attributed to this same phenomenon of the spreading of a specifically Thessalian type up to the north-east of the Black Sea, either directly or rather through the Danubian regions. For, while it is natural to admit that the same stage of social-economic development can give birth to similar aspects of superstructure, on the other hand it is not at all natural to admit that such a special type could be explained exclusively by the fact that the tribes in the respective regions were at the same stage of economic and social development. If this explanation were valid, then we ought to meet similar forms in many cultures of the tribes which have reached the same stage of development and therefore in different regions, and not only in a few regions which form a zone of close and permanent contact with the pre-Hellenic Aegean. On the other hand this situation — similar from the point of view of the stage of social-economic development — has made possible the adoption of a type born in another region. That is why we think that the similitude between the Ul figurines and those in Thessaly, established — as above-mentioned — by Childe and approved by Hančar<sup>30</sup>, is justified.

At the same time it seems truthful that the group constituted by the Vinča figurines — and as a matter of fact represented only by a few objects out of the thousands of statuettes belonging to this culture and known to us — is also due to the influence exerted by the Thessalian group of torso statuettes modelled without the head, and can only be explained by the latter.

In fact we also think it significant that the latter statuettes belonging to the same general type were discovered in two cultures connected with the Danubian region: the Cernavoda culture in Dobrudja and the eastern zone of the Gîrla Mare-Cîrna urnfields culture, dating back in the Middle Bronze Age. As a matter of fact, as rightfully asserted by the discoverers of the Cernavoda culture<sup>31</sup>, this was formed on the local background of the Gumelnița culture, so that the transmission of the Thessalian type formerly adopted by the Gumelnița culture must be considered a very natural phenomenon.

As concerns the presence of the headless statuettes in the Gîrla Mare-Cîrna culture, we have shown that it is a bit difficult to acknowledge the same filiation<sup>32</sup> — namely because on the one hand there is a difference in time between the Gumelnița pieces of this type (of course the latest known till then) and on the other hand « we do not see to what extent one

<sup>30</sup> Fr. Hančar, *op. cit.*, p. 342–343.

<sup>32</sup> Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Cîteva observații...*;

<sup>31</sup> D. Berciu, Sebastian Morintz and P. Roman,

s. p. 99.

*loc. cit.*

can speak of elements of Gumelnița tradition in the culture of the Middle Bronze Age». Considering however the relatively recent discovery of this type of statuettes in the Cernavoda culture, which covers for the most part the interval between the Gumelnița B phase and the Middle Bronze Age, the first difficulty (the chronological one) can be considered as eliminated. But since that special type of statuettes seems to have been quite deeply rooted in the Danube region, it is not very risky to admit also a common filiation for the statuettes with the separately modelled head, dating back in the Bronze Age. A few years ago we said that «the tradition could have been maintained also in the period from which none of these statuettes has been preserved to our days (or has been found so far), and maybe even through objects modelled in perishable materials (wood)»<sup>33</sup>.

Nowadays, when at least for part of the period in which at that time we had no such statuettes, the type has been established, the only unsettled aspect of the problem seems to be the lack of connections between the Gumelnița and Cernavoda cultures, on the one hand, and the Gîrla Mare-Cirna culture, on the other. Nevertheless, we are inclined to believe it is not a new finding of this type but a transmission along formal-cultural lines. Whatever the final solution of this last aspect of the problem, we can certainly reach two conclusions:

1. The torso-statuettes of Gumelnița (that published 20 years ago and the one which has given a starting point to this discussion) are identical with the typically Thessalian objects. Therefore they must undoubtedly be considered local Danubian imitations of this type, resulting from the permanent contact and the material and super-structural influences between the Aegean and the Danubian regions. 2. The Vinča variant can also be connected by its origin with the Thessalian type, even though this time we can no longer speak of identity<sup>34</sup>. The items found in the Cernavoda culture can be considered derivatives from the same type which had reached the Danube and struck roots here, and the Kuban objects, representing the remotest forms of this type, could be connected with the Thessalian prototype, also through the Danubian cultures.

All this proves once more the powerful cultural radiation of the Greece and the Aegean over the Danubian and even remoter regions, this being another element to be reckoned with when one will try to synthetize these relations between the Danubian Neolithic cultures and the Aegean-East Mediterranean Neolithic.

VLADIMIR DUMITRESCU

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> It is only after this paper was under press that I became aware of some facts which seem to me to corroborate my conclusions. In the Neolithic level of Phaistos, in Crete, a female statuette was found indeed, whose body had been modelled without a head: between the shoulders there is a hole for the head to be inserted in (s. L. Pernier, *Il palazzo minoico di Festòs*, Roma, vol. I 1935, p. 105, fig. 48/1--2). Therefore the type the two statuettes of Vinča represented is certainly Aegean. And the Thessalian type itself may be considered a somewhat

regional variety of an earlier Aegean type. Finally, a recent synthesis about Malta allowed me to ascertain that this type of statuettes, with a head separately moulded and afterwards inserted in the hole between the shoulders, is found in the Neolithic period of Malta too (I. D. Evans, *Malta*, London, 1959, p. 142 and pl. 53--56) which means that it was more frequent in the Mediterranean area. These facts are indeed a confirmation of our conclusions concerning the statuettes, (belonging to both Danubian groups) direct dependency on the Aegean and Mediterranean types.