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Sommaire

ARTICLES ET ÉTUDES

CONSTANTIN-LIVIAN RĂDOESCU, **SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CORPOREALITY REFLECTED IN PREHISTORIC VISUAL CULTURE**.....7

DENIS CĂPRĂROIU, **CHRONOLOGY AND NUMISMATIC INFERENCES OF THE FIRST MUŞATIN STONE FORTRESSES**.....25

MARIA GEORGESCU, **THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE ROMANIANS' ANTI-OTTOMAN FIGHT BETWEEN THE 15TH AND THE 18TH CENTURY**.....33

NOTES ET DISCUSSIONS

TIHAMÉR BARTI, ELENA-CRISTINA NIŢU, **THEORIES AND IDEAS AHEAD OF THEIR TIME: MÁRTON ROSKA AND THE PALEOLITHIC ARCHEOLOGY IN ROMANIA**53

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

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Abstract: Without wishing to set out an exhaustive discussion of the subject, we mention that our approach envisages a brief analysis of some of the stances of body "lived" in prehistory, reflected through the visual culture and symbolic communication. The variety of human representations, expression of prehistoric mental forms in which divine feminine archetypes coexist with the male ones, illustrates the role played by the corporeal environment in asserting body-subject as a bridge between the physical and the metaphysical reality. Corporeality of anthropomorphic figurines contributed to the integration of the human body into a whole (common corporeality) and was the most effective means of communication of self, artistic representations becoming its substitutes or of a particular archetype that led to a symbolic thinking, specific to those times.

Keywords: Neolithic; visual culture; corporeality; symbolic communication; anthropomorphism.

Reconstitution of the mental universe of the prehistoric man represented a major challenge for those concerned with researching the early period of human history. The precariousness of the archaeological sources and, especially, their "opacity" requires a more thorough and more complex analysis of homo sapiens sapiens' symbolic thought, which in turn implies the diversification of the means of investigating and approaching related fields such as psychology anthropology, ethnography, sociology, semiotics etc.

Various formae mentis that governed the behavior of prehistoric communities correspond to a sacralized world, whose logic allows decrypting by means of obvious evidence, of artistic and religious order, peculiar to a symbolic thinking. Ability to express themselves in a symbolic manner was discerned ever since early Upper Paleolithic, artistic creations specific to this period, especially anthropomorphic figurines highlighted the possibility of homo sapiens sapiens to develop material systems with universal meanings

objectifying their own metaphysical feelings.

Following the exploration of the environment, prehistoric human psyche has been marked by the assertion of the identity complex, which was reflected in the first attempts of symbolization of his own body. The anthropologizing vision on the world to which he belonged, allowed the prehistoric man to attribute a magical touch to the sculptural anthropomorphic representations, making them carriers of messages, whose semantic depth reflect a reality that hardly allows discerning.

Known in the specialized literature under various names –idols, figurines/ anthropomorphic representations, statuettes etc. (D. W. Bailey, 2005, p. 26), these artifacts entail nuanced discussion on the possibilities of interpreting them (P. J. Ucko, 1962; D. W. Bailey, 1994, p. 321-331; J. Marcus, 1996; P. F. Biehl, 1996, P. F. Biehl, 1997; S. Nanoglou, 2009; B. Watson, 2010; G. Naumov, 2010; A. Niculescu, 2011; C.-L. Rădoescu, 2014; *** *Anthropomorphism* 2014). Symbolic thinking, specific to groups of hunter-gatherers of the late Upper Paleolithic (E. Bánffy, 2005), revealed the

need and ability of *homo sapiens sapiens* self-representation as a way to communicate and cooperate with fellow-men (R. Stănese, 2010); the fact that Paleolithic statuettes are considered feminine self-representations (Le Roy D. McDermott, 1996) and are associated with the idea of fertility (P. Mellars, 2009), proves that the body bears the mark of individual consciousness, becoming the messenger of a corporeal identity. Through this type of figurative expression, the subject turns into an object, the identity becomes interchangeable, so that in a *corporeal* environment, the encoded language of the anthropomorphic statuettes reveal the cognitive evolution of the individuals (P. F. Biehl, 2006, p. 201), particularly the ability to create the symbolic image of the body: a landmark of the human being and a part of the community integrating it.

Thus, between the individual, society and the environment develops some form of dialogue, of symbolic touch, based on the continuous redistribution within the community of various communication units- signs, decorative items etc; according to this mechanism, the individuals defined and identified themselves in their communities precisely by those distinctive traits emphasizing the corporeal entity of the individual person.

Expressions of the biological and cultural nature of the body, various corporeal hypostases reflect the permanent relationship of *homo religiosus* with the profane and the sacred through ritual practices designed to *re-produce* primordial realities related to community life. Propensity to anthropomorphism, characteristic to prehistoric communities, was meant to "fix some ritual gestures" (R. Guénon, 1970) which explains the large number of anthropomorphic representations (as *corporealized* objects of a physical reality) in certain hypostases, capturing the gradual transformation of the body from *sign* into *symbol* (R. Stănese, 2010).

This form of identity expression of the members of the community through such artifacts, which have been attributed magical-religious significance, denotes the qualities of *homo symbolicus* to accede to a transcendent reality through the very sacredness of feminine anthropomorphism. Used in household or community rituals, anthropomorphic representations, carriers of visual and plastic signs,

transposed ideas and religious themes that provided identity and social cohesion.

Analysis of anthropomorphic figurines revealed the fact that each anatomical part is associated symbols, rendered through a series of geometric motifs, arranged according to stylistic, well-defined canons. Considered effigies of divinity, but also exceptional features of characters in the community, the symbols may illustrate the existence of a maternal archaic pantheon, or may enhance the social status of individuals involved in processions carried on the occasion of celebrating certain events.

Configured ever since Upper Paleolithic, the religious archetype of the *Great Mother Goddess* (E. Neumann, 1974, p. 3-38; C. G. Jung, 2014, p. 69-170) reflects its continuity through the polyvalency of the hypostases identified in various Neo-Eneolithic cultures. If in the Upper Paleolithic, the symbols existing in figurative art emanated a strong magic message (J. Kozłowski, 1992; V. Chirica, I. Borzic, 2005, p. 76; M. Cărciumaru, 2006, p. 93), in the Neolithic, they will be attached to sacred femininity (A. Whittle, 1996).

The old system of values specific to the communities of Paleolithic hunters, relying on the "mystical solidarity between man and animal" will be abandoned, with the discovery of agriculture and adopting sedentary life in favor of another type of symbolic representation (T. Watkins, 2006, p. 82), linked to the fecundity and fertility of the Great Goddess. The old symbolic registers enrich their content and offer this time, new bases of rendering religious beliefs. Determined by the new social attitude, the process of standardizing religious and magical concepts and institutionalizing the sacred finds its confirmation in the existence of canons that *homo symbolicus* applied to the various categories of human thought.

The massive presence of female representation in neo-Eneolithic art until recently justified, obsessively, by the existence of a cult uniquely dominated by an almighty female divinity can be analyzed in terms of the social relationships implied by the woman's status (source of life) in a community with a matrilineal organization. The affirmation of female identity by recognizing maternal parentage is illustrated at the artistic level by the large number of representations of this kind, which is equivalent to a substitution of the male characters and a redistribution of the prestige within

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture



Fig. 1- Archetype of the *Thinker*. Starčevo-Cris culture: 1-Șimnic (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. III/3. Precucuteni culture: 2-Târpești (<http://maecpn.muzeu-neamt.ro/galerie-foto.html>). Gumelnița Culture: 3-Vidra (<http://www.cimec.ro/arheologie/gumelnita/cd/default.htm>)
Mythical hero archetype. Cucuteni culture: 4-Dumesti (edu.nbu.bg/pluginfile.php/586999/mod_resource/content/1/Anthony%20et%20al%20ed_2010_The%20Lost%20World%20of%20Old%20Europe%20Catalogue.pdf). Vinča culture: 5a, b-Zorlențu Mare (after Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014, p. 139, fig. 75).

the group.

Fertility rites and ceremonies of initiation, along with those dedicated to the worship of ancestors, updates a mythical past, scattered with model characters that legitimate a new social order in which the status of woman becomes prevailing (R. Caillois, 2006, p. 131-133). Nubile women, those in state maternity matrons etc., all strictly fulfilled their role within a standardized social system, structured according to an interior behavior imposed by the "revolution of symbols" (J. Cauvin, 1997).

Expressing the social, spiritual and, not least, the biological status of the woman in different stages of life, the archetype of the Great Goddess may suggest the existence of maternal deities, with a well defined hierarchy in a polytheistic pantheon which did not exclude, however, the presence of male archetypes. Whether they performed roles related to the regeneration of vegetation, protection of the animal world, these deities had apotropaic, psychopomp etc attributes, with implications on the life of human communities; according to age, status or gender/sex, the goddesses exercised their prerogatives through *replicas* (modeling clay), who were used in various rites of passage related to birth, marriage, death (D. Boghian, 2015).

The variety of positions and gestures illustrated by the anthropomorphic feminine representations, discovered in the Carpathian-Balkan space, highlights a certain kind of symbolic visual communication. Shaped usually in clay, miniature representations embodying divine traits, illustrated young characters on the verge of marriage, women with well shaped plumpness of body, displaying qualities of *Mater Genitrix*, *kourotrophoi* (nannies), matrons, ancestry; all these hypostases related to the feminine biological cycles, a reflex of divine sexuality and effigies of the Great Goddess, gave a diffuse sacredness to the body transposed in clay, further emphasizing the social status of each embodied character.

Instead, the male representations, whose scanty number does not necessarily mean the existence of a lower status of the man in the community, credit the archetype of *Thinker*, identified in the case of the representations from Șimnic (Cârcea III) (M. Nica, 1998, fig. 1/1a-1b) (Fig. 1/1) Slatina (Vădastra II) (M. Nica, 1998, fig. 1/2a-2b), those belonging to Gumelnița culture –Glina (R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, pl. 7/7), Căscioarele (R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, pl. 31/2) Vidra (R.-R. Andreescu,

2002, pl. 37/5) (Fig. 1/3), Sultana (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, B. Ionescu, 1967, pl. IX-X; R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, Pl. VI/4) etc., Precucuteni –Târpești (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1974, fig. 73/7) (Fig. 1/2), Cucuteni -Drăgușeni-Suceava (D. Monah, 2007, fig. 169/3), Hamangia (D. Berciu, 1966, fig. 1), but also the mythical hero, personified by belted and diagonalled idols such as those identified in the culture of Vinca at Zorlențu Mare (Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014, p. 139, fig. 71-75, Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014a, p. 226, fig. 71-75) (Fig. 1/5a, b) in the precucutenian area in Târgu Frumos (N. Ursulescu, D. Boghian, V. Cotiugă, 2014, p. 377-414), or in Cucuteni culture, at Scânetia, Berești, Petricani, Dumești (D. Monah, 1997, fig. 38/1, 2, 4, 5; 40/1-3) (Fig. 1/4), Costești-Cier (D. Boghian, S.-C. Enea, S. Ignătescu, L. Bejenaru, S. M. Stanc, 2014, p. 83-85, pl. C-CIX) and so on.

Through these two archetypes, deeply rooted in the mind of Neolithic and Eneolithic communities (D. Boghian, 2015a), the individuals were able to manifest their own identity within the community; male statuettes, concrete representations of multidimensional psychic identity, "equipped" with such accessories (diagonals, belts, weapons), reflected an obvious corporeality and defined the social status of the (re) presented one.

The emergence of male idols implies, on the one hand, the genesis of a differentiated society, in which the role of man becomes predominant, and spiritually, imposing a new Uranian cult. The presence of figurines and masculine statuettes in some ritual ceremonies as phallois or small cones proves once again the application of the *pars pro toto* principle, whereby male divinity male makes its presence felt through a representative element (Fig. 2/1, 5). Appearance of the phallic cults is a consequence of the transformations in the collective subconscious, caused by the increased role and importance of the male element in the community (E. Neumann, 1974). *Phalloii*, symbols of regenerating power, were widely spread in neo-Eneolithic cultures from the North and South of the Danube, and their association with female divinity sanctioned the sacredness of procreation.

Although the vast majority of figurines are modeled in clay and represent characters with feminine traits, the sexual characteristics are not always explicit and, because of this, the

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

interpretation of artifacts by gender or sex must take into account a number of social parameters, such as age, status, representativeness, cultural level, etc. Bisexual representations identified at Tărtăria- Gura Luncii (S.-A. Luca, 2016, p. 189, fig. 147, foto 213), Zorlențu Mare (Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014, Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014a, fig. 76) (Fig. 2/3), the two-headed statue from Rast (VI. Dumitrescu, 1974, fig. 193) (Fig. 2/4) "Lovers"

from Gumelnița (R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, p. 50-53, pl. IV, V/11-12) (Fig. 2/2), the idol of Mihoveni (N. Ursulescu, V. Batariuc, 1987, p. 309-312.) etc., attesting the existence androgynous cult in the Neolithic, implying the idea of perfection and "continuing tendency of the individual to approach this plenitude through rites or mystical techniques of reintegration" (M. Eliade, 1995, p. 101).



Fig. 2- Phallic representations. Vădastra culture: 1-Hotarani (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XXVI/2); Gumelnița culture: 5-Drăgănești-Olt (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XLVII/3).

Androgynous representations. Gumelnița culture: 2-Sultana <http://www.cimec.ro/arheologie/gumelnita/cd/default.htm>; Vinca culture B: 3-Zorlențu Mare (after Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici 2014, p. 140, fig. 76/1); Vinca C culture: 4-Rast (after VI. Dumitrescu, 1974, fig. 193).

The presence of "divine couples" in different poses, represents the consequence of the personification of the attributes of a primordial androgynous deity, whose creative power reveals originary totality where all the possibilities are to be found in perfect harmony (M. Eliade, 1995). Using bisexual statuettes as accessories/cultic *paraphernalia*, in rituals re-enacting Androgyny

makes possible, reversal of participants' behaviors in a certain time of the procession and transposition in a state that preceded their particular situation. There is a transcending of its own condition and a reintegration in the initial plenitude, in primary totality, after which world periodically (re) creates and time regenerates (M. Eliade, 1991, M. Eliade, 1992, M. Eliade, 1995).



Fig. 3 - Anthropomorphic representations. Vădastra Culture: 1, 5, 6 -Hotărani; 2- Museum of Oltenia Collection, Craiova; 3, 4 -Fărcașu de Jos (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XXI/1, 4, 5; XXIII /1, 4, 5).

Handled in the key moments of magic and religious rituals, according to the degree of representativeness, anthropomorphic figurines, besides the protective role they assumed by virtue

of " mythalized higher powers belonging to inaccessibility and the unexpressing" (C. Rivière, 2000, p. 26) illustrate at the same time the aesthetic concerns of Neo-Eneolithic creators who modelled

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

and decorated certain areas of the body depending on certain socio-cultural requirements (S. Archambault de Beaune, 2000). The symbolic nature of these ornamental elements confer plastic creations not only a religious value, but also an artistic one, the act of representation being the consequence of extracting from the social process the kind of information (M. Conkey, 2001) that ultimately is conceptualized and structured on semantic categories (G. Durand, 2000).

Sculptural representations value the system of symbols and transpose it through an artistic synthetic language, in immutable, eternal forms, which are transmitted over time, which reconfirms the use of the same stylistic canons (S. Hansen, 2004). The Semantics of gestures, especially the institutionalized ones that are practiced ritually and in cults represents an important direction of researching the spirituality of prehistoric communities given the role images and symbols play in defining the mentality of a group. The existence of cultural codes, storing real stocks of information, to which members of a social group resort to for communication and on whose interpretation the stability of community (L. Caillet, 1997) depends also requires a corresponding gestural activity in which the movement has a specific verbal meaning (B. Bril, 1997).

The corporeality of anthropomorphic figurines contributed to the integration of the human body into a whole (common corporeality) and constituted the most effective means of communication of the self, the artistic representations becoming its substitutes or of a particular archetype that led to a symbolic thinking specific to those times. Identified, mostly in the interior of dwellings, the anthropomorphic representations appear as reflections of a way of thinking that illustrates the existence of new social structures that had been created and maintained precisely by strict observance of the established rules; religion, art, corporeal language etc., are just some of the elements of communication that revealed the existence of social statuses and roles existing in prehistoric societies.

Used during ritual processions, anthropomorphic representations undergo operations of consecration, and then, at the end of the ceremony they are destroyed. This habit, first attested in the Near East and Anatolia, has spread in the South-eastern Europe (J. Chapman, 2000, J. Chapman,

2001) and subsequently, north of the Danube, with the first wave of neolitization (S. A. Luca, Fl. Marțiș, A. Tudorie, A. Luca, 2013, S. A. Luca, Fl. Marțiș, A. Tudorie, A. Luca, 2103a). Ritual destruction of artifacts means not only loss of the prestige that they initially had but also disruption of the ties with the celestial world, a way to ensure permanent effectiveness of the ritual (S. A. Luca, Fl. Marțiș, A. Tudorie, A. Luca, 2103a; R. Caillois, 2006). This everyday practice, in which the sacred and the profane are intertwined, is a means of community integration, related to the entire community participation to ritualistic leaving of the dwelling; depositing of figurines in well-defined frames, suggesting some cultic scenes (S. Hansen, 2007, p. 381), is another form of expression of corporeality through which the living by using these material fragments maintain contact with the world of the dead.

Thus, the practice of ritual fragmentation of the idols and objects of worship (Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2008) is found in the earliest communities Starčevo-Cris (stage IA) who appeared in Romania (the mask of clay found in "House of the Dead" from Cristian I, Sibiu county) (S. A. Luca, 2015, p. 201, 204-205), in the Vincian area (Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2014, p. 116), Tărtăria (Gh. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, 2005, p. 211-212, fig. 16a-d; S. A. Luca, 2016, p. 70; 78; 189, fig. 41/2; 52/2; 147), Zorlențu Mare (Vinca B1) (Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2008, fig. 4, 5, p. 13), Gornea (Gh. Lazarovici, 1977; Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, 2008, fig. 3, p. 13), Liubcova (S. A. Luca, I. Dragomir, 1987; S. A. Luca, 1990, S. A. Luca, 1990a, S. A. Luca, 1991, S. A. Luca, 1998, S. A. Luca, 2001, S. A. Luca, 2002), Uivar (W. Schier, F. Drașovean, 2004) etc.; similar situations were found in Vădastra (M. Nica, 1980; C.-L. Rădoescu, 2014, Pl. XX/3a, b; XXI/1,4,5; XXII/3, 4; XXIII/1, 4, 5 and other) (Fig. 3/1-6), Gumelnița (R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, p. 13, 19), Precucuteni (N. Ursulescu, F. A. Tencariu, 2006; I. Palaguta, M. Mitina, 2014), Cucuteni-Tripolie (D. Monah, 1997), Sălcuța (P. F. Biehl, 2003, p. 327) cultures. Through such an operation is performed not only an economic transfer, intra- and inter-community, but also one of symbolic nature, the fragments, loaded with a certain "dose" of sacredness, also carry the message to those who used them in rituals.



Fig. 4 - Anthropomorphic representations. Vinca-Dudești cultural aspect: 1 -Cârcea "La Hanuri"; Dudești culture: 4a, b-Reșca, 5a, b -Drăgănești-Olt "Corboaica"; Vinca culture C: 6a, b, 7, 8- Rast; Vădastra culture: 2, 3 - Poiana Mare, Fărcașu de Sus (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XIII/3, 1a, b, 4a, b; XVI/4a, b 3; XXI/2; XXVI/3).

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

Decoration of figurines with incised motifs or painting some parts in red suggests the tattoo (Vi. Dumitrescu, 1974, p. 87-88); the manner of disposing the decorative elements, depending on the specific of the anatomical region, reveals the existence of strict artistic rules, hard to decipher at this time, bearing in mind the symbolism of geometric figures, but also a possible form of communication between the individual and the community.

Thus, in the shoulder and back, but also in other parts of the body are represented the concentric circles (Fig. 4/2), the V-shaped incisions decorate the neck (Fig. 4/2, 3) tapes and angles listed on the thighs, buttocks, and legs (Fig. 4/1, 4a, b, 5a, b, 6a, b, 7, 8; 5/2, b, 5; 6/3a, b), the abdomen is marked using spirals (especially the lower part) and rhombs (Fig. 4/6a, 8; 5/2a, b), and the incised triangle always highlights the female sexual attribute (Fig. 3/2; 5/4, 7). The variety of decorative motifs, always ordered by the canons that were used imposes a delimitation on stylistic categories, depending on the degree of representativeness: those which clearly indicate tattoo, respectively, those suggesting clothing pieces.

In anthropomorphic representations where the incisions and impressions were used in various combinations, the artistic effect demonstrates the creators' intention of rendering pieces of clothing (Fig. 4/1, 3, 8; 5/1, 3; 6/1a, b, 2a, b, 3a, b, 5) ornaments (Fig. 6/4) and hairstyles (Fig. 5/6) and the presence of traces of white red or black paint, gives artifacts a certain symbolic aura (P. T. Vucovič, 1972; S. Debois, M. Otte, 2005; S. Petru, 2006; L. N. Stutz, 2010; C.-L. Rădoescu, 2014).

Women's garment is illustrated primarily by tight waist dresses and models "en cloche", decorated with angular, meander, rhomboid, spiral motifs etc. (Fig. 4/1; 5/1), scarves worn at the neck, decorated with grooves or incised and painted diagonals. Even if the diagonal-belt combination occurs in the female and bisexual representations, too, it is generally considered a clothing attribute of masculinity, being associated with the emblem of the warrior, a character that differentiates in status from the rest of the community members.

Although the appearance of color and decorative patterns differentiated the representations of worship from the common ones, the scarcity of means of interpretation does not allow a comprehensive analysis of ritual clothing,

knowing that divinity was endowed with a variety of symbols that did not always have the same meaning, but which were correctly interpreted by officials.

Body markings used during rites of passage, in addition to the fact that they temporarily or ultimately modify the social status or the natural state of the individual, reveal the existence of a set of symbolic values which, once learned, legitimize the identity and affiliation of the group, in all respects (D. Boghian, 2010). The custom of the Neanderthals to paint their body during some magical-religious processions (F. Bordes, 1952; A. Leroi-Gourhan, 1990) was certified on Romanian territory at Mousterian level from Cioarei Boroșteni Cave (Gorj county), the containers for preparing the ochre, the oldest in the world, being a clear proof of the practice of corporal or facial tattoo (M. Cărciumaru, 2000, p. 157, fig. 57, M. Cărciumaru, 2006, p. 43, fig. 21; M. Cărciumaru, M. Țuțuianu-Cărciumaru, 2009; M. Cărciumaru, E.-C. Nițu, A. Nicolae, F. I. Lupu, R. Dincă, 2015).

Anthropomorphic representation of Aurignacian man such as those from Hohle Fels (N. J. Conard, 2009; M. Mărgărit, 2010, p. 123; D. Boghian, 2010, Fig. II/1a, b) or Stratzing (J. Kozłowski, 1992; M. Cărciumaru, M. Mărgărit, 2002; M. Mărgărit, 2003) illustrate concerns about using the markings intended as a means of asserting gender identity and the anthropomorphic, zoomorphic figurine (*Löwenmensch*) from Hohlestein-Stadel (J. Hahn, 1970; 1986; M. Mărgărit, 2003, p. 29-30; M. Cărciumaru, 2006, p. 94; ****Descoperiri arheologice din Germania*, 2011, p. 11, 12) has parallel lines engraved on the left arm, perhaps traces of a tattoo made during some magical-religious ceremonies linked to the mystical human-animal solidarity. The same symbolical attitude is signaled in Gravettian art, parietal representations of hands from Gargas cave suggest potential amputations of fingers or of the entire hand in ritual operations (M. Cărciumaru, 2006, fig. 69).

In the Near East and Anatolia, once the "revolution of symbols", body markings will know a stylistic diversification, all these symbolic forms of expressing collective or individual identity, widespread in Neo-Eneolithic art (D. W. Baily, 2005; D. Boghian, 2010, Fig. III/ 1a-1c, 6, 7; IV/1-14, 19; V/1a-1b). Such cultural markers were reported in the Balkan-Danube area at Sofia-Slatina



Fig. 5 - Anthropomorphic representations. Vădastra culture: 1- Hotărani, 2- Fărcașele, 3- Vlădilă, 5- Fărcașu de Sus; Gumelnița culture: 4- Drăgănești-Olt; Vinca C culture: 7 -Hotărani; Sălcuța culture: 6 - Sălcuța (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XXXIII/6, 4; XXVII/4a, b: 1; XLIV/1; XIX/5; XLI/6).

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

(Karanovo I) (V. Nikolov, 2001, V. Nikolov, 2001a; S. Hansen, 2001), Durankulak (Hamangia III) (H. Todorova (Hrsg), T. Dimov, J. Bojadžiev, I. Vajsov, K. Dimitrov, M. Avramova, 2002, p. 54, 68, 72, 74, 77, fig. 77/18, 126/12, 138/11, 142/4, 161/3-4) Vinca (J. Chapman, 1981) which highlight the perennial nature of body marking practices due to the permanent contacts with neighboring populations.

The diversification of the set of body marking practices (ear, facial perforations, cranial deformations, etc.) encountered, especially in Gumelnița (H. Todorova (Hrsg), T. Dimov, J. Bojadžiev, I. Vajsov, K. Dimitrov, M. Avramova, 2002; D. Boghian, 2011), Precucutenian (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1974, fig. 83/2, S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1981, fig. 88/5) and Cucutian area (VI. Dumitrescu, 1974, fig. 219, 220, 221, 222, 227, 228, VI. Dumitrescu, 1979, fig. 160, 161, 164, 165, 176; A. P. Pogoševa, 1985, Abb. 549, 569, 570, 746, 795-802, 805-806, 906; R. Maxim-Alaiba, 1987, p. 272, fig. 1; D. Monah, 1997; C. Bem, 2007, fig. 418/1-4; C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Țurcanu, 2009, p. 244-347) show a change in mentality regarding the role of the individual within a hierarchical society, following the influx of new populations coming from the eastern Mediterranean area.

In the category of definitive markings, along with the deliberate distortion and mutilation of certain parts of the body, the tattoo has a specific role, well-defined in the process of personalization of the individual or the group with higher prestige.

The issue of the significance of the tattoo rendered by incisions was widely discussed (VI. Dumitrescu, H. Dumitrescu, M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, N. Gostar, 1954; S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1974a, S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1981; E. Comșa, 1994-1995, E. Comșa, 1995, p. 107-110; S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, A. Bolomey, 2000), but the approach in terms of medical representation of anatomical cutaneous and subcutaneous (H. Dumitrescu, 1973) details can not be sustained in the absence of data justifying the psychological and cultural motivation of practicing this type of body marking. Given the continuing tendency of prehistoric man to imitate the divine model, the act by which women painted or tattooed some body parts considered the exemplary repetition of a primordial gesture committed *in illo tempore*, identification with the archetypal image of the Great Goddess, who holds attributes of

fecundity and fertility.

North of the Danube, anthropomorphic representations depicting the tattoo were identified in Zorlențu Mare (Vinca B1/B2) (Gh. Lazarovici, 1979, p. 211, fig. 39) in the final phase of the Boian culture (Dinu V. Rosetti, 1938, pl. 12/2; 14/3, 4, 5; 16/10; 17/1, 5, 8), in Gumelnita culture (R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, pl. 8/1, 5; 19/3; 26/8; 30/1; 40/4; 42/1; 43/2; 46/1,2, 6; 48/5-9; 49/1, 5, 8) and indicate female characters who usually have a number of three tiny recesses in the chin area (Fig.7/1, 2).

Analysis of Gumelnița plastics proved that application of the tattoo was done only in the case of female figurines, the number of stings varying according to the age of the person (E. Comșa, 1995; S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1974a, S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1977, S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1977a). The fact that some statues indicated a tattoo, proves its magical-religious value, and the absence in some cases is linked to the belief that at a certain age, practising it no longer makes sense, since it lost its meaning (E. Comșa, 1995). The setting marked by sunken dots on clay statuettes and the flat Gumelnița bone (E. Comșa, 1995; R.-R. Andreescu, 2002; D. Boghian, 2011) ones is found in Salcuta anthropomorphic plastics (C.-L. Rădoescu, 2014), a proof of the constant contact between the two cultures carriers, including the magical-religious domain.

Anthropomorphic and anthropomorphized vessels are also an expression of identity and its sacredness (C.-L. Rădoescu, 2012; D. Boghian, 2012) reflects the cognitive level of the community translated into a kind of public communication, based on signs and symbols, providing information on the manner of perception of the female body.

Illustrating, in particular, the attributes of femininity, especially, breasts, abdomen, omphalos, cteis, buttocks, thighs, etc., this type of cult representations reflects the symbolic interdependence between body and object, the means by which certain anatomical details were used as "metaphors" of visual communication that allowed access to archetypal corporeality. Possibility of visualizing and materializing the principal attribute of the *Mother Goddess* (autoprocreating that Divinity has assumed as guarantor of the prehistoric world) as allegorical vessels modeled in the shape of the human body or those decorated with human attributes, suggests the permanent trend of the prehistoric man to experience the sacred and to consider his own body



Fig. 6 - Female anthropomorphic representations. Gumelnița culture: 1-Drăgănești-Olt; Vădastra culture: 2a, b, 3a, b-Hotărani; Cucuteni culture: 4- Istrati-Capșa collection, Drobeta Turnu-Severin; Vădastra culture: 5- Fărcașu de Sus (after C.-L. Rădoescu 2014, pl. XLII /2a, b; XXIX/2a, b; XXX/3a, b; XXXI/1).

Some Observations on the Corporeality Reflected in Prehistoric Visual Culture

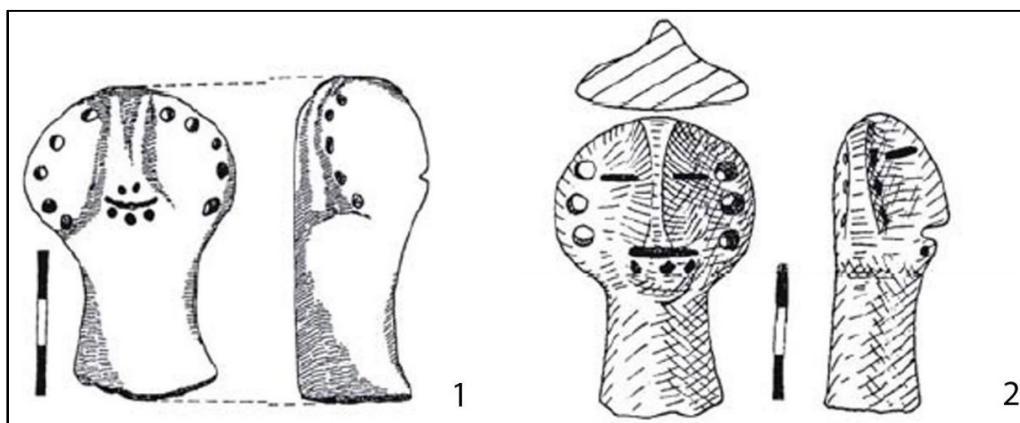


Fig. 7- Anthropomorphic figurines. Gumelnița culture (A2): 1-Lișcoteanca; 2- Ciolăneștii din Deal (after R.-R. Andreescu, 2002, Pl. 8/1, 5).

as a mediator between the real world and the divine.

This type of expression of personal and collective identity, which dominated the entire reality of prehistoric society, has influenced the Neo-Eneolithic visual creation, capturing, spectacularly, the metamorphosis of individuals and different groups of people.

The variety of human representations demonstrates that anthropomorphism led to the neo-Eneolithic creation and imposed corporeality as a visual agent to decrypt the symbolic processes that have implemented this way communication of self through body assembly.

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