A325-EUR-Vinca-Neolithic-Ceramic-Anthropomorphic Figurine, 5500-4500 BCE

MASTER 2

Figs. 1-3. Vinča-Neolithic-Ceramic-Female Anthropomorphic Figurine, 5500-4500 BCE

**Case no.: 3**

**Accession Number: A325**

**Formal Label:** Vinča-Neolithic-Ceramic-Female Anthropomorphic Figurine, 5500-4500 BCE

**Display Description:**

The Vinča culture was named for its type site, Vinča-Belo Brdo tell or mound, on the right bank of the Danube River in Belgrade, Serbia.

These Vinča-Neolithic-Ceramic-Female Anthropomorphic Figurine were made by individual households. The Vinca people incised their figurines with lines that were meant to represent clothing. These people were the very first Neolithic or settled people of the central European plain from the Black Sea to what today is Germany. Being among the first Neolithic people they also still practiced the Mesolithic relocation of their villages every generation (about every 30 years). When they did leave a village they left everything behind that was no longer useful. We guess that these figurines were involved in coming-of-age rituals, so they were  "things f the past generation" no longer useful. What is remarkable is that when they left their villages they burned their former houses with these figurines which is why they are all blackened with the "fire of removal." it was like they were moving on to better pastures,, which it was. Probably they practices slash-and-burn agriculture which depletes the soil after one generation or so, and thus they moved on leaving these figurines behind amidst the charred remains of their previous residence.

Early phase anthropomorphic figurines from this site have triangular heads, flat bodies with short outstretched arms and closed legs. The treatment of facial and body features was done by simple incisions into the clay without modeling. Later phase anthropomorphic figurines are more polygonal, with more pronounced facial features, such as modeled noses and distinctive half-moon eyes and modeled arms. For both periods no indication of a mouth is present. Some theorize that these figurines are deities for ritual practice, while others see them as ancestral cult objects.

This Vinča male anthropomorphic figurine is from the later period, and has a pronounced nose. No mouth is indicated. Its eyes are large, oblong and are set midway on the head and are incised. It wears hair that extends to the nape of its neck. Its upper body is covered by a blouse. Its lower body has trousers that extend to the ground from the waist. Feet are not indicated.

**LC Classification:** GN776.2.V5

**Date or Time Horizon:** Middle Neolithic/Copper Age-5500-4500 BCE.

**Geographical Area:** SE Europe

**Map, GPS coordinates:** 44°45′43″N 20°37′23″E (Vinča Belo-Brdo, Serbia)

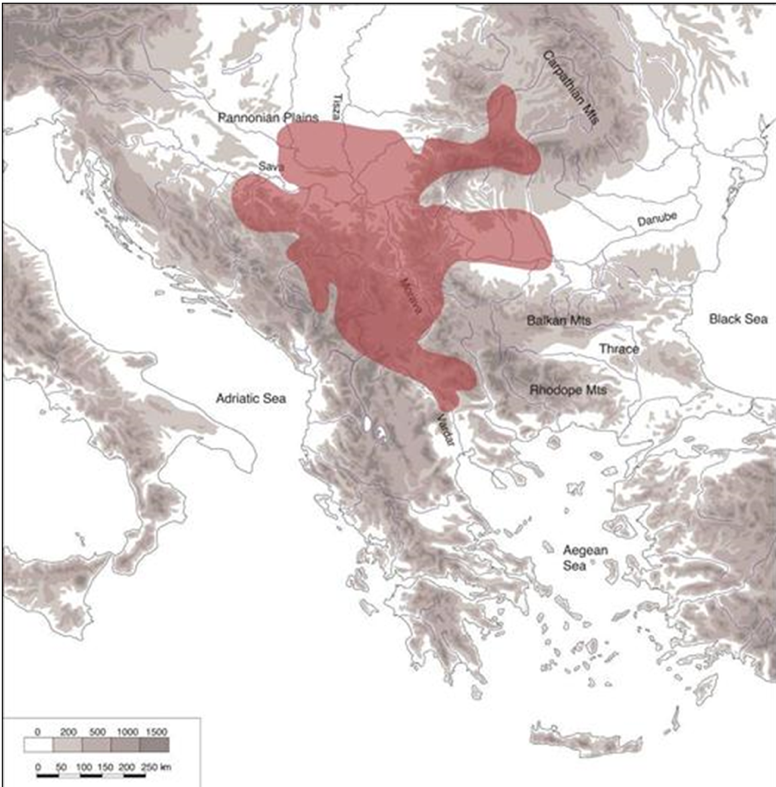


Fig. 4. Map of the extent of Vinča culture. Adapted after Kaiser and Voytek (1983: 333, fig. 1) and Chapman (1981); from https://www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/rise-metallurgy-eurasia/images/5.1.jpg?hires

Fig. 5. Map of the Central Balkans. Beograd = Belgrade, Serbia, and the approximate location of the Vinča Belo-Brdo site. From http://drakenberg.weebly.com/uploads/6/7/4/7/6747442/9582880.jpg?578

**Cultural Affiliation:** Vinča Culture

**Medium:** clay

**Dimensions:** H 132.69 mm, 5.22 in

**Weight: 131 gm, 4.5 oz**

**Provenance:** Anglo-Antiquities, 33 Medlock Grove, Didcot, Oxfordshire, ox11 7xy, United Kingdom

**Discussion:**

The Vinča culture emerged at the inception of the Middle Neolithic/Copper or Chacolithic Age (5500-4500 BCE) with origins that are debated as either having derived from the earlier Starčevo culture (6200-4500 BCE) of the area, which has been reputed to have been the source of a Proto Indo-European language (PIE), or from migrations from a PIE homeland of a Kurgan or mound-building culture in the Pontic steppe north of the Black Sea (The Kurgan Hypothesis).

Vinča settlers initiated a cultural uniformity that they expressed in farming, making dark pottery fired under reducing conditions comprising zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines and making clay tablets with so-called Vinča symbols, which have the appearance of proto-writing (Winn Luca 2008: 26). The type site of the Vinča-Belo Brdo comprised 7 m of Vinča cultural debris overlying 2 m of the previous Starčevo culture. Elsewhere in Serbia and the western part of Romania large Vinča tell villages ranged up to 100 ha in size.





Fig. 6. The extent of the Starčevo culture (6200-4500 BCE) in southeast Europe. After https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/ea/Starcevo\_culture.png/450px-Starcevo\_culture.png

Fig. 7. Overview of [Marija Gimbutas](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Marija_Gimbutas&action=edit&redlink=1)' [Kurgan](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kurgan&action=edit&redlink=1) hypothesis showing the PIE migrations from the Pontic Steppes into southeastern Europe. Made by [en:User:Dbachmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Dbachmann) and originally at [en:Image:Kurgan map.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Kurgan_map.png).

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