

THE PARAPHERNALIA OF CULT LIFE IN THE LATE COPPER AGE

M. BONDÁR

Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Úri u. 49, H-1014 Budapest, Hungary

The monotony of daily life was and still is coloured by various rituals, festivities and celebrations, and community ceremonies. Repeated community events eventually turn into tradition and mature into a narrative of the events and major incidents between the present and the past, handed down from generation to generation. Tales, narratives of mythical origins, and myths are born, which are incorporated into a community's religious beliefs (the forerunners of later canonised religions). Put very simply, the myths of a particular community serve as the "sacral confirmation" of what members of a community hold about their ancestors and their own past. Myths can be regarded as "miniature dramas", narrated through various rituals. Rituals can be regarded as a set of symbols narrating various customs as defined by tradition. By enacting various rituals, members of the community hope to influence supernatural powers in order to achieve a human goal. Rituals are based on a pre-determined sequence of a set of events, during which various artefacts are used in order to symbolically narrate and present those events. Cults represent the sum of rituals performed with various intentions, which incorporate the symbolic presentation and performance of all events, which are important to the community. In other words, these terms are not synonyms, but express different aspects of a dramaturgical process.

The ability to create symbols is a human faculty, whereby various artefacts are vested with a meaning, which is unambiguous and clear to the members of the community, but elusive to others. Extraordinary paraphernalia were sometimes used for the metaphorical presentation of extraordinary events. Rare, enigmatic artefacts of unknown function are generally described as cult artefacts in archaeological studies.

The archaeological material, settlement features and burials have preserved but a minute portion of the one-time daily life of prehistoric communities. The paraphernalia of mortuary rituals, fertility rites, sacrifices presented before the construction of a new building, initiation rites, and of a host of unknown ceremonies have been brought to light on several sites. The primary context of the artefacts once reflecting religious beliefs and the sacral sphere has been lost, and thus any assumptions and conclusions concerning prehistoric cults, religious beliefs and rituals must be made with extreme caution. Studies in this field are encumbered by the fact that a uniform culture evolved across extensive territories during some periods and thus the artefactual material from distant regions (principally pottery wares) share many similarities. In other periods, even the finds from neighbouring regions differ from each other to the extent that prehistorians tend to assume different ethnic groups settling in those regions.

A tendency towards uniformisation can be noted during the Late Copper Age Baden period (3500–3000/2800 BC) across extensive territories of Europe from the southern Balkans to northern Germany. Several hypotheses have been advanced for the possible causes of this uniformisation. The apparently identical pottery wares and their decoration, the many similar finds brought to light at great distances from each other suggest some sort of integration, whose nature and underlying causes (cultural, ethnic, political, commercial) are still

mainly the stuff of guesswork. The proposed explanations explicitly or implicitly assume population movements, which seems to be supported by the period's great innovation, the appearance and spread of wheeled wagons. These heavy wagons with independently rotating wheels revolutionised trade and travel by enabling the most different wares and trade items, as well as information, to reach distant areas within weeks or months – time not measurable archaeologically – and it also enabled smaller communities or even an entire tribe to pack their belongings and move to a new homeland. The formerly slow and probably cumbersome exchange systems underwent a rapid transformation; the relatively fast spread of innovations and information transformed the modes of contact and communication between various communities. The introduction of wagons represented the first element of globalisation across extensive territories, to use a modern expression: the distribution of identical wares, metal artefacts, raw materials and semi-finished or finished products outline an intricate network of contacts (trade routes, communities living in symbiosis), which can be traced in the archaeological record. These new networks no doubt had an impact on the cognitive sphere and enriched ancient customs and ancestral traditions with new elements.

Figurines,¹ breasted (gynecomorphic) pots,² anthropomorphic funerary urns,³ wagon models deposited in burials,⁴ bipartite bowls,⁵ footed goblets,⁶ ladles,⁷ and a unique clay mask modelled on the human face⁸ are generally interpreted as the cult objects of the Baden culture. These artefacts are regarded as cult objects because their number is low compared to the culture's other finds used in daily life (the only exceptions being anthropomorphic urns and wagon models deposited in burials, whose sacral context is obvious).⁹ Fish shaped shallow pans, suspension vessels and shallow bowls with unusual spiral designs known as Bratislava type bowls are likewise rare finds, but there is nothing to suggest a ritual use.

This study will focus on figurines, part of the cult paraphernalia of the Baden culture, from a fresh perspective.

There has been a welcome increase in the corpus of figurines from the Hungarian distribution of the Baden culture, now numbering over two hundred sites. J. Banner published six fragments in his monograph,¹⁰ to which he quoted two analogous finds.¹¹ Today, roughly 130 flat figurines with removable head,¹² a type regarded

¹ For detailed overviews, cp. KALICZ 1981; NOVOTNÝ 1981; BONDÁR 1999; BONDÁR 2000; KALICZ 2002a; BONDÁR 2006b.

² BONDÁR 2002a; NEVIZÁNSKY 2002.

³ KALICZ 1963; KOVÁCS 1986; KOVÁCS 1987; KOVÁCS 2002.

⁴ Countless studies have been devoted to wagon models and wagon depictions, and to wheeled vehicles in general, including the well-known wagon model from Budakalász, and it seems pointless to review in detail the history of research, the various hypotheses on the origins of wheeled wagons, the ritual role of wagon models, the problems of dating, etc. Suffice it here to quote the most important studies (SOPRONI 1954; CHILDE 1951; CHILDE 1954; BÓNA 1960), monographs (PIGGOTT 1983; PIGGOTT 1992; VOSTEEN 1999; *Rad und Wagen 2004*), a few recent publications (BONDÁR 2004; BONDÁR 2006a; KOVÁCS 2006) and a recent conference volume (*Premiers chariots... 2006*), all of which contain ample literature.

⁵ BANNER 1942; KOREK 1951, 54; BANNER 1956, 141-142; KOREK 1980, 23.

⁶ KALICZ 1999, 86-87.

⁷ KOREK 1980, 20-22.

⁸ HORVÁTH 2002; HORVÁTH 2004.

⁹ It must here be noted that these objects may have been prestige items, designed to express the special status or rank of a community member. A rigid interpretation, a fetishisation of the objects invariably neglects possibilities such as body painting, headdresses made from perishable material, jewellery, etc., or even an unusual bird feather, which could only be worn by a particular member of the community. To quote but one example: there is nothing in the archaeological record to indicate the existence of Celtic priests since

the period's grave goods do not include any artefacts reflecting their special status.

While the relics of cult life, reflecting religious beliefs, and the relics reflecting social rank and exceptional social status express wholly different concepts, these are sometimes interchanged in the archaeological lingo and we are often inclined to exaggerate the importance of a particular find.

Most of the cult objects listed here were found on settlements, with only a smaller portion coming from burials or discovered as stray finds. The find circumstances and the possible special contexts have rarely been examined in detail, and an artefact once interpreted as a sacral object generally retains this "status" from one publication to the next. One may rightly ask, then, which objects can be regarded as cult relics? Even an attempt to answer this question would greatly exceed the scope of this study and I will make no attempt to review the various answers given by scholars of cultural anthropology. What must be borne in mind is that the uncritical use of certain concepts invariably leads to their hardening into clichés and the actual reason why a particular artefact is regarded as a cult object is gradually forgotten, while the possible ritual role of another object, such as a jug or cup, which may appear to be a simple utilitarian object, but may equally well have been used in certain rituals is not even considered.

¹⁰ BANNER 1956, 169-170, Taf. LVIII. 12, Taf. LXVIII. 1-2, Taf. LXIX. 15-16, Taf. LXXVIII. 19.

¹¹ Bogojevo, Vučedol: BANNER 1956, 170.

¹² BONDÁR 2006b, Fig. 9.

as the culture's standard figurine type, are known from the entire distribution. Many studies have been devoted to Baden figurines and one might think that little can be added to what has already been written. However, this is not the case. The figurines found at Balatonszemes–Szemesi-berek during the excavations preceding the construction of the M7 motorway¹³ have raised several new, hitherto neglected issues, such as how the head of these figurines was made, the possible function of multi-headed figurines, and why in addition to standard depictions, figurines modelled in a different manner regularly appear alongside the standard pieces on the same site.

Most Baden figurines have a body fashioned from two rounded geometric parts, usually triangular in form, on which the female character is indicated by small knobs and/or an incised triangle. The folds and the pattern of the dress are marked by incisions on some figurines. The head is missing in all cases. The head did not break off accidentally and become lost, but was an intentionally discarded body part, which was probably not modelled from clay: the head of these figurines was most likely made from some organic material, placed on a small rod and then fitted into the socket(s). Most figurines have a single socket, alongside pieces with two or three sockets for the heads.

An assemblage from Jordan, brought to light during road construction in 1984, proved helpful in the interpretation of headless figurines or figurines with removable head. Unique clay statuettes were found in a 2.5 m deep pit. The Neolithic site of 'Ain Ghazal yielded several large two-headed statuettes (standing 47 cm, 83 cm and 88 cm high resp.; *Fig. 1–2*), whose manufacturing technique could be reconstructed (*Fig. 1.3a–c*).¹⁴ A similar manufacturing technique can also be assumed for the removable heads of the Baden figurines.

The next issue to be examined is the function of two and three-headed figurines among the cult paraphernalia. Figurines of this type are known from several sites: two-headed pieces are known from Balatonszemes,¹⁵ Tököl¹⁶ and LePa,¹⁷ while a three-headed specimen has been reported from Branč.¹⁸ It is quite possible that there were more figurines of this type since in many cases, the upper part of the figurine broke off and the number of sockets thus remains unknown.

Several interpretations can be proposed for the possible role of these two and three-headed figurines. One is that they had originally depicted two or three-headed deities, divine couples or divine triads, or they perhaps symbolised the community's ancestors. Another possible interpretation is that they portrayed rarely-born, two-headed Siamese twins conjoined at the shoulder, whose depiction has been documented from other periods too. Yet another, more practical explanation is that the head was too heavy and had to be supported in two or three spots on the figurine. What is certain is that the sockets were made prior to the firing of the figurines, meaning that their number and intended function was pre-conceived and that the portrayal had a specific meaning for the community using the figurines.

It seems to me that the single and multi-headed figurines were the paraphernalia of a narrative in which heads had a special function: they illustrated something, which can no longer be reconstructed, but was evident to prehistoric communities. The single and multi-headed figurines were perhaps the paraphernalia of initiation rites, which played an important role in archaic societies. The heads perhaps portrayed the most important stages of passage to adulthood. There is ample ethnographic evidence for the rites of passage among aboriginal peoples, conducted amidst great celebrations performed according to strict rules, which called for the use of effigies made from a wide range of materials.¹⁹

The possible connection between two or three headed figurines, and the standard and non-standard figurines of the Baden culture is another issue that remains to be explored. In an earlier study, I discussed the "forgotten" figurines of the Baden culture, which represent a type differing from the ones with removable head in the corpus of figurines. These pieces are generally interpreted as reflecting chronological differences and regional

¹³ Excavation conducted by Sz. Honti and P. G. Németh in 1999–2000, in which I also participated for shorter periods.

¹⁴ EGAN–BIKAI 1998, Fig. 10–11. The figurines from Jordan were exhibited in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute in 1996–1997. The manufacturing technique of the figurines is described on the gallery's webpage (http://www.asia.si.edu/jordan/html/jor_mm.htm).

¹⁵ From Pit 623. KRM. inv. no. 18.3.623.1.

¹⁶ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 8. 4a–b.

¹⁷ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 4.

¹⁸ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17.2.

¹⁹ ELIADE 1999, 23, describing the various figures modelled from clay flanking the path leading to the scene of the ceremony in the sacred precinct, which the initiate was forbidden to see, and were carefully destroyed before the conclusion of the initiation ceremony.

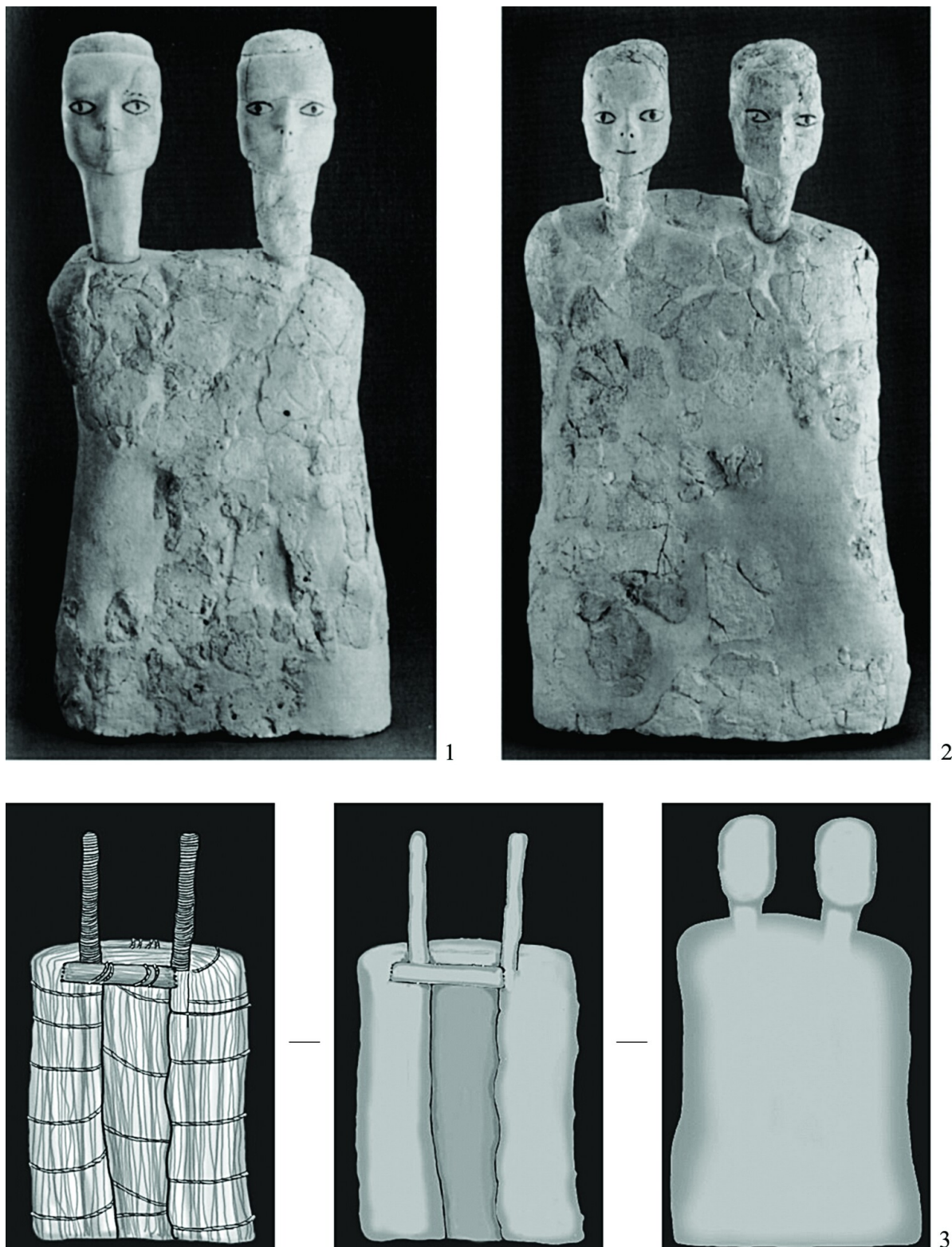


Fig. 1. Two-headed figurines. 1–2: 'Ain Ghazal, Jordan (after EGAN-BIKAI 1998), 3. how the figurines were made (<http://www.asia.si.edu/jordan/html/making.htm>)

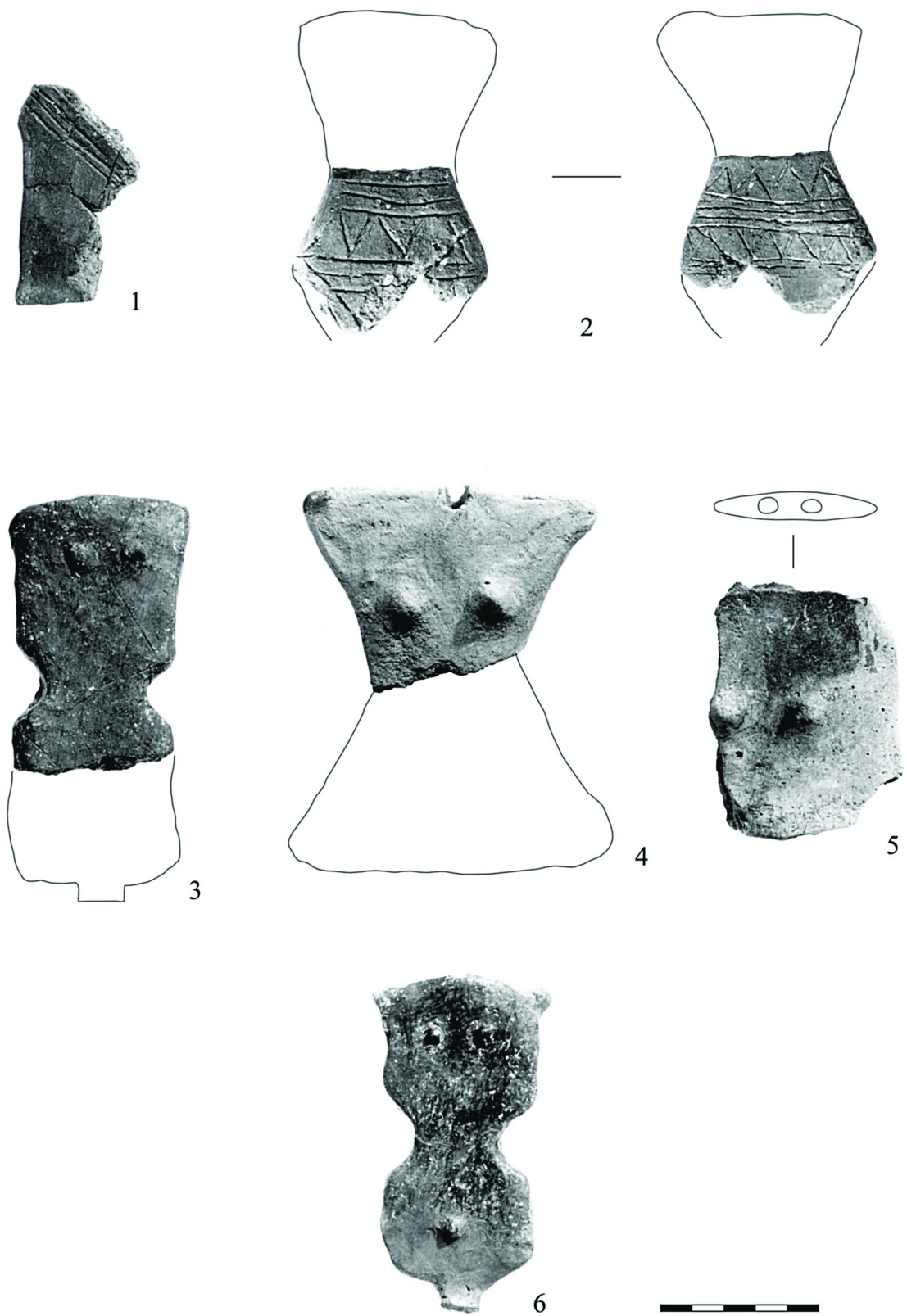


Fig. 2. Figurines of the Baden culture from Balatonszemes (M: 1:2)

variations, i.e. communities with different traditions.²⁰ I would here like to propose another interpretation of the differences between the figurines, based on the evidence of the specimens from Balatonszemes.²¹

Nine figurine fragments came to light at the Balatonszemes, most of which can be assigned to the standard type, although a few differing types were also discovered.²² Pits 502 and 709 each yielded figurines representing two different types. One of the figurines from Pit 502 has a rectangular torso and is shown wearing a garment with flowing folds (*Fig. 2.1*), the other piece, whose sex is indicated with an inverted triangle, is shown wearing lavishly decorated clothing (*Fig. 2.2*). The torso with removable head from Pit 709 portrays a naked woman (*Fig. 2.4*), while the other, more angular and similarly naked figurine from the same pit depicts a man and a woman (*Fig. 2.6*). Pit 453 too yielded the fragment of a rectangular figurine, on which the band slung across the chest is marked with incised lines (*Fig. 2.3*). The figurine from Pit 623 depicts a two-headed woman with naked torso (*Fig. 2.5*).

The differences between the different figurine types of the Baden culture have usually been attributed to chronological differences. The preliminary overview of the finds from Balatonszemes indicates that no major chronological differences can be assumed between the pits yielding the figurines or between the different figurines themselves, seeing that they were recovered from the same pit. It stands to reason that that the different modelling of the figurines can be attributed to the meaning attached to the figurines, which were probably used for illustrating different ideas or narratives. In my view, the figurines diverging from the standard type were also part of the paraphernalia of initiation rites, used for illustrating mythical narratives. The varying size of the figurines and the fact that some are schematic depictions of sexless young children, who had not yet reached the reproductive age, imply that these figurines were used for symbolising the different phases of the same ritual (initiation into male and female roles). The large, two-headed figurine (*Fig. 2.5*) perhaps symbolised man and woman, the already initiated two sexes, who came into possession of the secret of the sexes by the end of the ritual, or the transformation undergone by a child maturing into adulthood with the aid of different heads placed on the figurine.

In order to test this hypothesis, i.e. that the different figurine types are not reflections of chronological differences, but are contemporaneous and were the paraphernalia of the same ritual, I examined the finds from other sites, where figurines of different types had been found as at Balatonszemes. The figurine torsos from Branč,²³ Šarovce,²⁴ and Tököl,²⁵ reflected a similar variety in modelling.²⁶

Three figurines were found at Branč in Slovakia. One is a rectangular torso depicting a naked body with three sockets for the head.²⁷ The two other pieces represent the standard type with a triangular torso: one depicts a naked figure, the other a woman wearing a dress or mantle with folds over the breasts.²⁸

The Šarovce site, also in Slovakia, yielded nine figurines, all brought to light from the same settlement feature. Two portray women; the sex of the other pieces cannot be determined, and neither is it clear whether they are fragments of single or multi-headed figurines. All figurines depict clothed humans. One of the figurines from this site²⁹ resembles the “hermaphrodite” figurine from Balatonszemes. Its lower part is missing and it is therefore uncertain whether the figurine was intended to jointly portray the male and female characteristics. The assemblage from Šarovce too included pieces with a rectangular upper part alongside figurines with a triangular body.³⁰

²⁰ BONDÁR 1999, 44-47; BONDÁR 2000, 30-32.

²¹ BONDÁR 2007.

²² I would here like to thank Sz. Honti and P. G. Németh for kindly allowing me to publish the Baden finds.

²³ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 4, Abb. 17. 2, 4. Unfortunately, the find contexts of the figurines from Branč are not described in earlier publications, and we may merely assume that they formed a closed assemblage. I am grateful to G. Nevizánsky of the Archaeological Institute in Nitra for looking through the institute's records in the hope of discovering some new information, but he did not come across any documents describing the figurines found in 1930.

²⁴ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 1, 3, 7a-b, 8, Abb. 18. 5-9.

²⁵ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 8. 1a-b, 2-3, 4a-b, Abb. 9. 2, 5a-b, 6a-b, 9a-b, Abb. 10. 3, 7.

²⁶ The figurines listed here are generally quoted in the studies discussing finds of this type (NOVOTNÝ 1981; KALICZ 1981; BONDÁR 1999, and I will therefore only quote the most recent study (KALICZ 2002), instead of listing all the publications.

²⁷ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 2.

²⁸ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 4, Abb. 17. 4. It must here be noted that Kalicz mistakenly published one of the figurines from Branč (NOVOTNÝ 1958, Taf. 52. 3) as coming from Levice (KALICZ 2002, 20).

²⁹ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 1.

³⁰ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 3, 7-8.

Pits 1 and 2 of the Tököl site yielded thirteen fragments of twelve figurines, eight of which clearly portrayed young women,³¹ some of which were depicted naked, some wearing clothing with gentle folds. A double comb-like depiction was incised onto one figurine, which according to N. Kalicz resembled a Mesopotamian pictogram.³² The different figurine types were found alongside each other in the same pit at Tököl too. They include single headed³³ and two-headed torsos,³⁴ as well as pieces with a triangular body and the other type with almost square form.³⁵ Although a reconstruction of one figurine was based on the general traits of standard figurines,³⁶ this particular fragment can equally well be assigned to the type with rectangular torso. The foot fragments from Tököl are unsuitable for determining whether they came from male or female depictions, and neither can the figurine body be reconstructed from them.

It would appear that the joint occurrence of various figurine types noted at Balatonszemes is hardly a unique, unparalleled phenomenon, but a repeatedly occurring one, suggesting that at least two distinct figurine types were used for initiation (?) rituals. The paraphernalia of the ritual apparently called for single and two-headed figurines, and the occasional three-headed one. After losing their ritual context, the figurines were broken before, during or after the ceremonial event according to the rules of the ritual and thrown into various pits of the settlement. In lucky cases, the fragments of different figurine types lie alongside each other in the same pit.

The link between Baden figurines and initiation (?) rituals, or other ceremonies celebrating a general *joie de vivre* or fertility, or a spring festival, is supported by the fact that figurines of this type were not deposited in burials, meaning that they played no role in the funerary rite. Intact or near-intact figurines are extremely rare and it would seem that these pieces were not used during rituals.

While these figurines allow a rare glimpse into religious beliefs, the spiritual background and the exact ritual performed during various ceremonies remain shrouded in mystery. The find circumstances, minute archaeological observations and the find contexts can shed some light on a particular aspect of religious beliefs, as in the case of the figurines from Balatonszemes, where the paraphernalia used during various phases of a ritual have perhaps been successfully identified.

The distribution of the figurines (*Fig. 3*) indicates that they occur in greater number in certain regions (County Pest, County Komárom-Esztergom and the Slovakian Danube bank, County Győr-Moson-Sopron, County Somogy, County Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and the neighbouring Slovakian region), while only a few fragments are known from other areas (Counties Békés, Szolnok, Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád, Tolna, Fejér, Veszprém).

Twelve figurines with removable head were found at Tököl in County Pest.³⁷ Three figurines are known from the Budapest area.³⁸ Four pieces came to light in County Komárom-Esztergom: two from Esztergom³⁹ and another two from Pilismarót–Szobi rév.⁴⁰ Kalicz quotes fifteen figurine fragments from County Győr-Moson-Sopron.⁴¹ Several figurines have been published from sites on the Slovakian side of the River Danube.⁴² Sixteen figurines have been reported from County Somogy: nine fragments from Balatonszemes,⁴³ one from Fonyód⁴⁴ and Főnyed,⁴⁵ two from Szőlád,⁴⁶ and three from Balatonőszöd⁴⁷ and Zamárdi.⁴⁸ Six specimens have been

³¹ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 8. 1–4, Abb. 9. 2–3, 5–6.

³² KALICZ 2002, 26, Abb. 11. 2; KALICZ 2002, 26.

³³ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 10. 1–2, 4, Abb. 11. 1–3.

³⁴ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 11. 4–5.

³⁵ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 9. 1–2.

³⁶ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 9. 6.

³⁷ KALICZ 2002, Abb. 8–11.

³⁸ Budapest–Káposztásmegyer (ENDRÓDI 1988), Budapest–Corvin Square (KALICZ 2002, 18; ENDRÓDI 2003; ENDRÓDI–HORVÁTH 2005, 150), Budapest–Rákocsaba-Major-hegy alja (REMÉNYI–ENDRÓDI–MARÁZ 2006, 182).

³⁹ MRT 5. Taf. 7. 4, 7.

⁴⁰ BONDÁR 1999, Fig. 2. 3–4.

⁴¹ KALICZ 2002, 18.

⁴² Bajč (NEVIZÁNSKY 1999, Abb. 5), Beladice (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 6), Bešenov (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 2, Abb. 17. 5, NOVOTNÝ 1981, site 136/4), Bína (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 3, Abb.

19. 3, 4, 6, 7, NOVOTNÝ 1981, site 136/7), Branč (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 4, Abb. 17. 2, 4), Boháta (NOVOTNÝ 1981, site 136/8), Červený Hrádok (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 5), Dolná Stredá (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 18. 1), Dolný Píal (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 18. 3), Kamenin (NOVOTNÝ 1981, site 136/13, NEVIZÁNSKY 1999, Abb. 11), Kopčany (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 15. 3), Krásno (BONDÁR 2000, Abb. 2. 5), Levice (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 16. 1), Leľa (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 4), Nemčiny (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 18. 2, 4), Šarovce (KALICZ 2002, Abb. 17. 1, 3, 7, 8, Abb. 18. 5–9).

⁴³ BONDÁR 2007.

⁴⁴ GALLINA–SOMOGYI 2003, Site 146; GALLINA 2004, Fig. 3.

⁴⁵ T. Marton, pers. comm.

⁴⁶ BONDÁR 2002b, Fig. 2. 1–2.

⁴⁷ HORVÁTH 2006, Fig. 14. 2a–2b; BELÉNYESY–HORVÁTH 2007, Fig. 87.

⁴⁸ KALICZ 1981, Abb. 7. 1, Abb. 7. 3; BONDÁR 2002b, Fig. 1. 2.

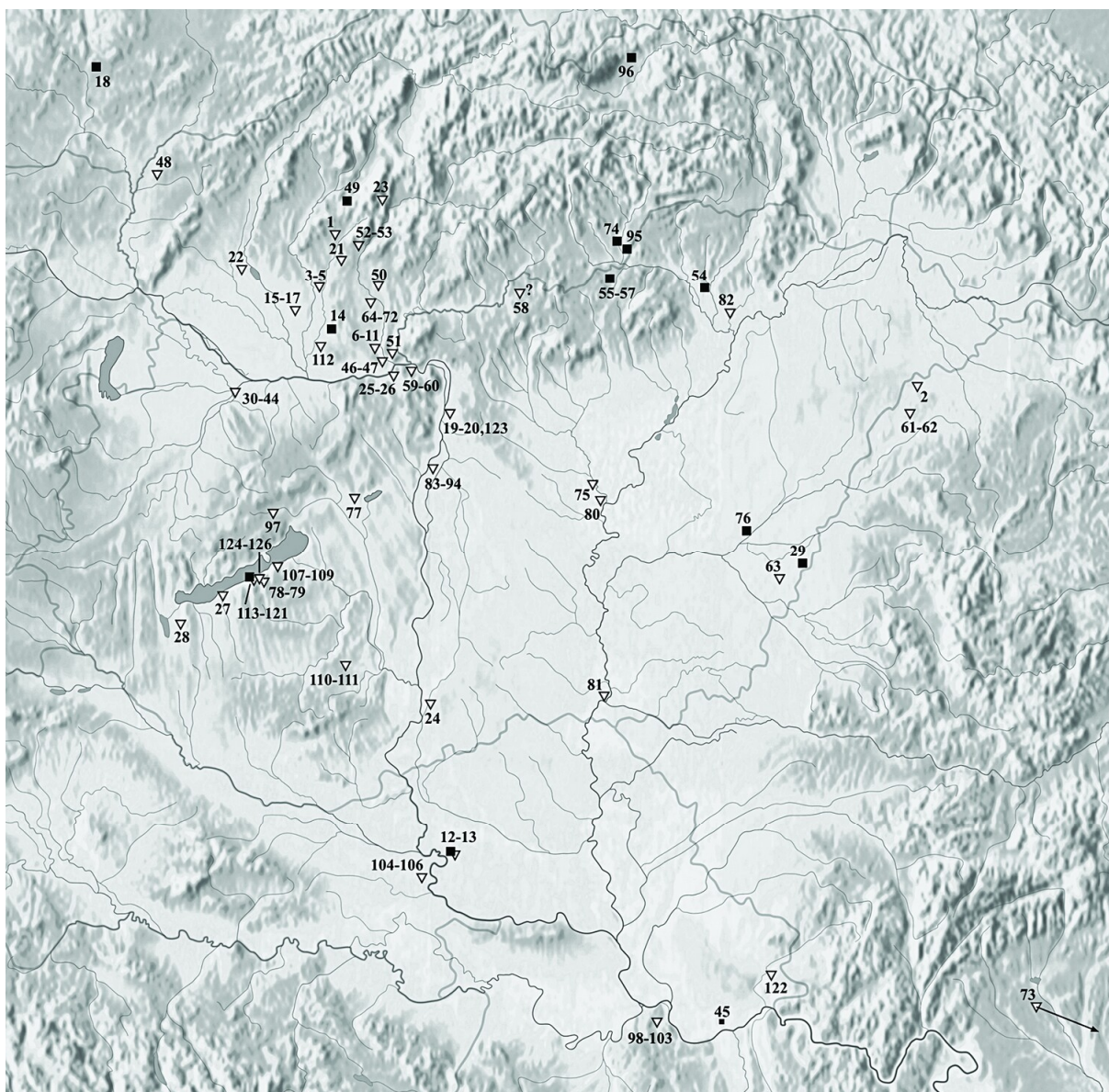


Fig. 3. Figurines of the Baden culture. 1: Beladice; 2: Berea; 3–5: Bešenov; 6–11: Bfõa; 12–13: Bogojevo; 14: Boháta; 15–17: Branè; 18: Brno–Líšen; 19–20, 123: Budapest; 21: Èervený Hrádok; 22: Dolná Streda; 23: Dolný Píal; 24: Érsekcsanád; 25–26: Esztergom; 27: Fonyód; 28: Fõnyed; 29: Geszt; 30–44: Gyõr; 45: Brza Vrba; 46–47: Kamenín; 48: Kopèany; 49: Krásno; 50: Levice; 51: Le¾a; 52–53: Nemèinaòy; 54: Onga; 55–57: Ózd; 58: Piliny; 59–60: Pilismarót; 61–62: Sálacea; 63: Sarkadkeresztúr; 64–72: Šarovce; 73: Slobozia; 74: Stránska; 75: Zagyvarékas; 76: Szeghalom; 77: Székesfehérvár; 78–79: Szólád; 80: Szolnok; 81: Tápé; 82: Tiszalúc; 83–94: Tököl; 95: Vèelince; 96: Ve¾ka Lomnicá; 97: Veszprém; 98–103: Vinèa; 104–106: Vuèedol; 107–109: Zamárdi; 110–111: Aparhant; 112: Bajè; 113–121: Balatonszemes; 122: Banatská Subotica; 124–126: Balatonòszöd.

(the hyphenated numerals mark the number of figurines found at a particular site) Δ figurines with removable head, ■ other figurines

brought to light in County Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (Onga⁴⁹ and Ózd⁵⁰) and in the neighbouring Slovakian areas (Včelince⁵¹).

This regional distribution, which is independent of the extent to which a particular region has been researched, suggested that these areas played a special role in the cult life of the Baden culture. I tested this assumption by examining the distribution of cult finds, such as wagon models and breasted (gynecomorphic) pots, and other rare artefacts, such as Bratislava type bowls. Plotting their findspots on the map showing the distribution of figurines, I found that these unusual objects occur in greater number in the regions where higher numbers of figurines have come to light. This again reflects regional concentrations of the ritual relics of the Baden culture, perhaps an indication of a regional hierarchy and of differences in the status of various settlements in the culture's distribution. It is possible that these regions played a central role in the culture's distribution, and that the permanent settlements of larger communities, acting as the settings of periodically repeated community events and/or economic centres, lay in these regions. While there is no evidence for the existence of Baden settlements resembling the flourishing city states of the ancient Near East in the Carpathian Basin, the regional concentrations of unusual (rare, ritual and prestige) objects can hardly be mere chance.

Further studies are needed in several fields to test the above assumption. The study of settlement patterns and burials, the detailed examination of the economic framework as determined by the broader environment and of trading networks, the determination of the proportion of arable farming and animal husbandry in subsistence, the reconstruction of demographic patterns can all contribute to a better understanding of the intricate relations between Late Copper Age communities and the possible hierarchy between them, while find assemblages with a minutely observed find context can shed new light on various aspects of the cognitive sphere and the identification of new strands in the colourful tapestry of religious beliefs.

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⁴⁹ BANNER 1956, Taf. LXXVIII. 19.

⁵⁰ BANNER 1956, Taf. LXVIII. 1, Taf. LXIX. 15–16.

⁵¹ B. KOVÁCS 1987, 16.

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