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MERSİN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
KILIKIA ARKEOLOJİSİNİ ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
BİLİMSEL SÜRELİ YAYINI ‘OLBA’

Amaç

Olba süreli yayını; Küçükasya, Akdeniz bölgesi ve Ortadoğu’ya ilişkin orijinal sonuçlar içeren Arkeolojik çalışmalarda sadece belli bir alan veya bölge ile sınırlı kalmaksızın 'Eski Çağ Bilimleri'ni birbirinden ayırmadan ve bir bütün olarak benimseyerek bilim dünyasına değerli çalışmaları sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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c-Dipnotlar her sayfanın altına verilmeli ve makalenin başından sonuna kadar sayısal süreklilik izlemelidir.
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Dipnot (kitaplar ve makaleler için)

Richter 1977, 162, res. 217.

Diğer Kısaltmalar

age.	adı geçen eser
ay.	aynı yazar
vd.	ve devamı
yak.	yaklaşık
v.d.	ve diğerleri
y.dn.	yukarı dipnot
dn.	dipnot
a.dn.	aşağı dipnot
bk.	Bakınız

4. Tüm resim, çizim ve haritalar için sadece "fig." kısaltması kullanılmalı ve figürlerin numaralandırılmasında süreklilik olmalıdır. (Levha, Resim, Çizim, Şekil, Harita ya da bir başka ifade veya kısaltma kesinlikle kullanılmamalıdır).

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Scope

Olba is printed once a year in May. Deadline for sending papers is the end of November each year.

The Journal ‘Olba’, being published since 1998 by the ‘Research Center of Cilician Archeology’ of the Mersin University (Turkey), includes original studies done on prehistory, protohistory, classical archaeology, classical philology (and ancient languages and cultures), ancient history, numismatics and early christian archeology of Asia Minor, the Mediterranean region and the Near East.

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1. a. Articles should be written in Word programs.
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Corsten 1995 Corsten, Th., “Inschriften aus dem Museum von Denizli”, Ege Üniversitesi Arkeoloji Dergisi III, 215-224, pl. LIV-LVII.

Footnotes (for books and articles):

Richter 1977, 162, fig. 217.

Miscellaneous Abbreviations:

op. cit.	in the work already cited
idem	an author that has just been mentioned
ff	following pages
et al.	and others
n.	footnote
see	see
infra	see below
supra	see above

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MURAT HÖYÜK EARLY BRONZE AGE METAL FIGURINE

Abdulkadir ÖZDEMİR – Abdulvahap Onur BAMYACI *

ÖZ

Murat Höyük Erken Tunç Çağı Metal Heykelciği

Bu çalışma, Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi, Bingöl İli Solhan İlçesi'nde, Murat Nehri kenarında yer alan Murat Höyük'te 2019 yılında yapılan kurtarma kazısı sonucunda ele geçen bir metal heykelciği tanıtır. Murat Höyük kazısı, Aşağı Kaleköy Barajı su tutma havzası içinde kaldığından, Elazığ Müzesi Müdürlüğü tarafından 2019 yılında kurtarma kazısı olarak tamamlanmıştır. Arkeolojik kazılar sonucunda höyükte Orta Çağ, Orta ve Erken Demir Çağ ve Erken Tunç Çağ olmak üzere dört kültür tabakası tespit edilmiş olup en erken tabakası Erken Tunç Çağı III'e (MÖ 2500-2200) tarihlenmektedir. Anadolu arkeolojik materyal kültüründe yaygın olarak görülen pişmiş toprak, taş ve mermer heykelciklerin aksine metal alaşımdan yapılan heykelcik Murat Höyük'ün Erken Tunç Çağı tabakasına aittir. MÖ III. binde Mezopotamya, Ege ve Balkan heykelcik repertuarında çağdaşı bir örneği olmayan ve üslup özellikleri ile dikkat çeken heykelciğin, elleri ve ayakları stilize, gözleri çukur şeklinde ve ağzı belirtilmemiştir. Elleri iki yana açık, başı hafif sola eğik, göğüsleri kabartma ile üreme organı kazıma ile belirtilen eser başında bir çeşit başlık ile betimlenmiştir. Höyükte ele geçen taş kalıp buluntular ve eritme potaları ile yerel üretim olduğu düşünülen ve kalıp döküm tekniğinde yapılan heykelciğin, döküm çapak izleri kabaca görülebilmektedir. Bu çalışmada ele alınan ve göstermiş olduğu ikonografik özelliklere göre bir tanrıça tasvirini yansıtan metal heykelcik, sahip olduğu ünik özellikleri ile Anadolu-Suriye-Mezopotamya Erken Tunç Çağı

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We thank the General Directorate of Cultural Assets and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey and the Directorate of Elazığ Archaeology and Ethnography Museum for granting permission and providing support for Murat Höyük excavations to be conducted under the directorship of Ziya Kılınc, Director of Elazığ Museum, and with the participation of a scientific team led by Asst. Prof. Dr. Abdulkadir Özdemir. We cordially thank Archaeologist Ergün Demir of Elazığ Museum for supervising the project as Ministry Representative and all team members for their dedicated work. We extend our gratitude to Kalehan Genç Energy Generation Corp. for providing financial, practical, and moral support during fieldwork. And finally, we thank Dr. G. Bike Yazıcıoğlu for providing editorial assistance with English translation and proofreading of this article. We are also thankful to two anonymous referees who reviewed this work and provided us with constructive comments. We are responsible for all the errors that may be found in this work.

metal heykelcik repertuarına, Doğu Anadolu arkeolojisinin Erken Tunç Çağı metalürjisi, inanç sistemleri ve sanatına yeni bir katkı sağlayacağı şüphesizdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Doğu Anadolu, Bingöl, Erken Tunç Çağı, Heykelcik, Metal Eser, Tanrıça.

ABSTRACT

This study presents a detailed examination of a metal figurine found during the 2019 excavations at Murat Höyük, located on the bank of the Murat River in the Solhan district of the Province Bingöl in Eastern Anatolia. Because the mound was to be inundated by the Aşağı Kaleköy hydroelectric dam, extensive salvage excavations were conducted at the site in 2019 under the directorship of the Elazığ Museum. Four main settlement phases (Medieval, Middle Iron, Early Iron, Early Bronze) were documented at the site with the earliest habitation dating to the Early Bronze Age III (2500-2200 BC).

While figurines shaped out of clay, stone, and marble are more common in the archaeological record of Early Bronze Age (EBA) Anatolia, and metal figurines are relatively rare, a metal figurine ('statuette') was discovered in the EBA settlement level of Murat Höyük. In terms of typological and stylistic details, the metal figurine of Murat Höyük appears unique in the 3rd millennium records of Mesopotamia, the Aegean, and the Balkans. The figurine depicts a standing nude with stylized hands and feet. Eye-sockets are marked as shallow pits, while the mouth is not indicated. Arms are stretched out on both sides; head is slightly inclined to the left; breasts are fashioned as appliqué protrusions; and pubic triangle is indicated with incised lines. The fact that stone mold and crucible fragments were found in the same level of the site suggests that the object was most probably produced locally by casting. Casting defects (flash lines) are observable on the surface. In this study, based on a comparative iconographic examination, we propose that a goddess is depicted here. With its unique characteristics, the Murat Höyük goddess figurine is a significant contribution to the repertoire of metal 'figurines' in Anatolia, Syria, and Mesopotamia with broader implications about EBA metallurgy, art, and belief systems.

Keywords: Eastern Anatolia, Bingöl, Early Bronze Age, Figurine, Metalworking, Goddess.

Introduction

The emergence of idols and figurines in the archaeological record of the Palaeolithic is regarded as a reflection of the evolving consciousness of early humans and the symbolic realms they construed. The earliest known examples are the so-called Venus figurines, characteristic of the European Upper Palaeolithic, which are symbolic depictions of goddesses reflecting the mythological realm of early humans¹. While the "goddess" figurines are a manifestation of early Prehistoric humans' cognitive ability to create and express symbols, the fact that these naked depictions always emphasize the procreative power and ability of the female human body also suggests that the act of crafting these images was profoundly linked with the biological instinct of survival. Although depictions of animals become more predominant in the

1 For "Venus figurines" see Szombathy 1909; Szombathy 1910.

following Pre-Pottery Neolithic and early Neolithic as illustrated by sites in Anatolia and neighboring regions, naturalistic human figurines are also known². The majority of human depictions in the later Neolithic Period are naturalistic and well-rounded female figurines with exaggerated features, made of clay, which are also sometimes referred to as “mother goddess” figurines³. It may be argued that the symbolic significance of these naturalistic figurines is still related to fertility, but their social meaning should be understood within a new social context, related to family-based, agricultural societies’ need of demographic expansion. A major shift is observed as the three-dimensional depictions of the Neolithic make way for two-dimensional, schematic representations in the Bronze Ages. While the idols made of clay, stone, marble, bone, and metal alloys in the Early Bronze Age (EBA) are predominantly schematic and stylized human forms, the EBA III bronze object that depicts a female found at Murat Höyük is typologically distinct from the Anatolian EBA idols with its three-dimensional form and well-rounded details. For this reason, we identify this bronze object discovered at Murat Höyük as a ‘figurine’ rather than an ‘idol’. In this study, after a brief overview of excavated findings from the EBA level of the site, we discuss stylistic and typological characteristics of the EBA III bronze figurine from Murat Höyük in comparison to the few known metal figurines from Anatolian EBA sites. In light of this discussion and findings from the site, we evaluate whether or not the figurine was manufactured locally, what cultural spheres of interaction its iconography evokes, and what the broader implications of this finding are with respect to EBA metallurgy.

Early Bronze Age at Murat Höyük

Murat Höyük is situated on the bank of the Murat River, about 250 m south of Murat village in Solhan district of modern Bingöl province in Eastern Anatolia (fig. 1). Because the mound remained within the water reservoir of Aşağı Kaleköy hydroelectric dam, it was registered officially as Murat Höyük among threatened archaeological sites in 2018 by the Directorate of Elazığ Museum and salvage excavations were initiated and completed in 2019 before the inundation of the mound⁴. Murat Höyük lies at 1088 m above sea level and measures 140x120 m along the northwest–southeast axis. The mound is shaped like a rectangle with rounded corners and lies on top of a natural hill, about 15 m higher than the level of the plain (fig. 2). Four main stratigraphic phases were documented in systematic excavations during 2019 at Murat Höyük (fig. 3). The earliest settlement phase dates to the Early Bronze Age and the subsequent phases date to the Early Iron Age, Middle Iron Age, and the Medieval Period. Medieval Period remains, which lie directly below topsoil, are

2 For examples from Göbeklitepe in southeast Anatolia, see Hauptmann 1999: 44-50.

3 Typically, Neolithic figurines have a round face with eyes, nose, ears, and hair detailed out, but the mouth is not depicted. They have a naked and voluptuous body with marked female features such as prominent breasts, bellies, hips, and pubic region; and they are depicted seated or standing.

4 Murat Höyük was registered as an endangered cultural heritage site in 2018 and salvage excavations were carried out at the site from May 2019 to September 2019. For preliminary results of salvage excavations see Özdemir et al 2019; Özdemir 2020.

severely damaged as a result of agricultural activity. Although the architectural layout of the remains can be traced, foundations are poorly preserved, and the settlement phase is represented mostly by small finds and ceramics. Phase IV at Murat Höyük is documented in the southern and southeastern sectors of the mound that overlook the river. Based on two radiocarbon samples from secure archaeological contexts this phase is dated to 2500-2200 BC⁵, which corresponds to Early Bronze Age III⁶ (fig. 4).

The Early Bronze Age settlement, which is founded directly on bedrock, is characterized by rectangular, one-room dwellings built of mudbrick walls with stone foundations. Wall foundations consist of single or double rows of stones and are constructed in dry-stone technique. Ceramics from this settlement phase are predominantly in plain local wares, while examples of Karaz (*Kura-Araxes*) Ware that is characteristic of this period in the region are also present at the site⁷. The architectural layout of the settlement is orientated northeast-southwest, abiding by the orientation of the river, which must have been why this natural hill was preferred as a location by the first settlers. Apart from the rectangular habitation spaces, excavations also unearthed the remains of an open courtyard, where daily chores and food preparation activities were carried out, as can be gleaned from grinding stones and mortars found scattered around a stone-paved bench. Additionally, the courtyard features a circular, mud-plastered hearth, which implies that this outdoor space was used by the community for collective food preparation, cooking, and feasting activities. Furthermore, stone molds for casting metal objects and crucible fragments found in the courtyard and outdoor spaces suggest that not only food production and consumption, but craft production activities were carried out as a community at the settlement, as well⁸ (fig. 5). This settlement phase ends with an intense fire around 2200 BC, after which the site was abandoned for centuries.

Overview of Metal Figurines in Early Bronze Age Anatolia

One of the most striking developments that mark the beginning of the Early Bronze Age in Anatolia is the unforeseen abundance of objects made from precious metals in the archaeological record⁹. The earliest examples of human depictions made from metal alloys in the Anatolian EBA are schematic ring-shaped idols and

5 Samples come from a room floor and an in-situ jar. C-14 analysis of carbonized samples from Murat Höyük were conducted at TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center (MAM), Earth and Marine Sciences Institute, Accelerated Mass Spectroscopy (AMS) Laboratory.

6 The periodization of Early Bronze Age III at Murat Höyük follows the chronological template determined by Arslantepe excavations, which provides the most reliable stratigraphic sequence for culture historical periodization of Eastern Anatolia; for details see Frangipane 2004, 18; Frangipane 2019, Tab. 1; Conti 2004, 152-155; Di Nocera 2000, Fig.1b.

7 For an overview of the history of research on Karaz culture complex, see Işıklı 2011; Işıklı-Altunkaynak 2014; Işıklı 2015; Işıklı 2018.

8 Apart from local and Karaz (*Kura-Araxes*) Ware ceramics, notable finds from Phase IV (EBA III) architectural contexts include andirons, portable hearths, 'çeç'-type stamp-seals, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, spindle whorls, loom weights, and spoons made of baked clay; axes, spindle whorls, weights, and molds made of stone, as well as obsidian arrowheads and blades, and a bronze tool.

9 Lehner 2014.

pendants¹⁰, known from the 3rd millennium cemetery site of İkiztepe¹¹ (fig. 6). Similar ring-shaped schematic idols, made of lead, bronze, and gold are also known from Alışar Höyük, Bakla Tepe, Kalinkaya Tumulus, and Lakes District sites¹². The unique and prestigious metal figurines and schematic idols found in Alaca Höyük Tombs are undoubtedly the most illustrious examples from the Early Bronze Age II and III periods¹³.

Anthropomorphic metal figurines and idols are quite rare in the archaeological record of Anatolia. The most famous examples are the uniquely shaped goddess figurines made of silver-gold and bronze alloys, schematized representations of twin-goddesses with protruding breasts made of gold, and a bronze idol from Alaca Höyük Royal Tombs¹⁴ (fig. 7). Another unique figurine dating to the 3rd millennium BC is found at Hasanoğlan, which is considered to be a precursor of figurines and idols from Alaca Höyük Royal Tombs in terms of metalworking, typology, and style. The Hasanoğlan figurine is made of a copper-silver alloy and is adorned with a pair of gold bands placed diagonally across the torso¹⁵. Casting defects that appear as flash lines on the lateral surfaces of these figurines bear witness to the fact that they were cast in molds¹⁶. Yet another unique EBA metal figurine is found in a hoard deposit at Horoztepe, which is naturalistic in style and reflects characteristic elements of Early Bronze Age / Hattian art¹⁷ (fig. 8). In light of these metal figurines from Alaca Höyük, Hasanoğlan, and Horoztepe, which were formed by a combination of casting and hammering techniques, it may be said that the development of metal figurines follows a general trend from schematic idols to naturalistic figurines. This tradition of naturalistic depictions seems to have come to an end at the end of the EBA, as flat, two-dimensional depictions produced by open molds on lead plaques appear in the archaeological record in the early 2nd millennium BC.

The Early Bronze Age Metal Figurine of Murat Höyük

The Murat Höyük metal figurine was found intact and well-preserved. The figurine depicts a standing nude female¹⁸. Both arms are stretched out laterally with the left hand slightly bent upwards at the wrist and the right hand extending out straight. Hands and feet are highly stylized with no details.

10 Keskin 2011, 207.

11 Bilgi 1984, fig. 18; Bilgi 2004, 29.

12 For Alışar Höyük see Von der Osten 1937, 198, fig. 197 c.753; for Bakla Tepe see Keskin 2011, 203; for Kalinkaya see Mellink 1974, 109; for the unprovenanced example from the Lakes District see Zimmermann 2007, 29; Keskin 2008, 93; Keskin 2011, 205; Lichter 2008, 181.

13 Anık 1937; Gürsan-Salzmann 1992; Özyar 1999, 79-85; Özyar 2000, 101-112.

14 For details on EBA III gold, silver, and bronze idols from Alaca Höyük see Koşay 1938, 73, Lev. CXCIV, L1, L2; Koşay 1938, 83, Lev. LXXXIX; Koşay – Akok 1973, Lev. LXVI, fn. 223; Bilgi 2012, 272-275; Kulaçoğlu 1992, res. 96-98, 103.

15 Dolunay 1960, 81; Zimmermann – Özen 2016, 21.

16 Zimmerman – Özen 2016, 19.

17 Akurgal 1962, 28; Özgüç – Akok 1958. Dimensions of the figurine: height: 5.7 cm; maximum width: 3.23 cm; maximum thickness: 0.95 cm; and weight: 24.35 gr.

18 Dimensions of the figurine: height: 5.7 cm; maximum width: 3.23 cm; maximum thickness: 0.95 cm; and weight: 24.35 gr.

One of the most striking features of the Murat Höyük figurine is the unusual posture of its outstretched arms, which is a rare posture for the period as will be reviewed below. In the Murat Höyük figurine, the right arm is fully stretched out laterally, perpendicular to the torso and parallel to the ground, while the left arm is also stretched out laterally, but slightly bent towards the front, and the wrist is bent with the hand turned upwards. The posture of the left hand implies that perhaps an object was held, although there is no observable soldering mark for attaching such an object on the hand and the object has not survived.

In the figurine, details are omitted on the torso other than the pubic triangle that is marked with prominent incisions; hips are slightly bulbous in the back, and protruding breasts are visible on the chest. Facial features are not prominent; eye-sockets are depicted as two shallow pits, while the mouth is not indicated. The head is slightly inclined and slightly turned to the left and a stylized headdress adorns the top of the head (fig. 9). This semi-conical hat is another significant feature of the Murat Höyük figurine, as will be reviewed below.

The metal figurine of Murat Höyük was found in situ in the Phase IV settlement level in trench T-19, in the courtyard located east of Wall 1¹⁹(fig. 5). The figurine was most definitely shaped by casting in a mold, as evinced by the uneven surface that exhibits flash lines and retouches. Preliminary alloy compound analysis of the object indicates that it was a metal alloy that consisted of 91.5 % copper (Cu) and trace amounts of tin, lead, and arsenic²⁰. When compared with compound analysis results of figurines from contemporaneous Alaca Höyük Tomb H, Murat Höyük stands out with its considerably high copper content, its lower tin content, and the presence of a trace amount of arsenic²¹ (fig. 10).

The breasts that are soldered to the surface of the chest as two appliqué protrusions after casting in the mold point out that the manufacture of the Murat Höyük figurine involved a technically advanced and complex sequence of production. This technique is also employed in the figurines found in Alaca Höyük Grave H, where jewelry items and votive vessels are attached to the figurines after casting²². Although a formal metallurgical workshop was not encountered at Murat Höyük, the discovery of two-part bivalve stone molds and a possible crucible fragment indicate certain steps of metalworking, at least casting, was carried out at the site (fig. 11).

19 Stone molds, ceramic sherds from vessels with typical EBA III forms, ground stone mortars, and other ground stone tools were other notable finds recovered from the Phase IV deposits of the same area, dated to 2500-2200 cal. BC.

20 Because the object is a unique archaeological find, destructive thin-section sampling was avoided; rather, preliminary non-invasive analysis was conducted with a hand-held XRF. Therefore, the low (1%) tin content can be explained by the copper oxide and copper-rich mineral patina that covers the corroded surface of the object. Further, detailed archaeometallurgical analyses are being conducted by Asst. Prof. Dr. Ümit Güder.

21 For metallurgical analyses of examples from Alaca Höyük see Yalçın – Yalçın 2013, 43-44.

22 For details on the metal casting techniques employed in Alaca Höyük metal figurines, see Yalçın – Yalçın 2013, 43. In the Murat Höyük metal figurine, the joints of the two-piece mold are apparent as flash lines on both sides of the object, which have been retouched after casting.

Discussion and Conclusions

From a contemporary point of view, clay and baked clay figurines, which become prominent in the archaeological record of Anatolia from the Neolithic Period onwards, and baked clay, stone, marble, and metal idols and figurines characteristic of the Early Bronze Age may be regarded as prehistoric art objects. However, within the context of prehistoric societies, these visual representations must have invoked symbols related with ideological belief systems and may have been used as potent objects that mediated with the supernatural realm during rites and rituals²³. While the concept of a goddess-cult, focused on the symbolic meanings and functions related with pregnancy and birth rites, has been pivotal for earlier interpretations of these figurines and idols²⁴, more recent interpretative frameworks propose that they were representations of actual human beings and that their symbolic power was vested in ancestor cults²⁵.

A contextual overview of figurines shed light on their possible functions. Since the Neolithic onwards, in many cases, figurines and idols are found in mortuary contexts, suggesting that their function was related with the funerary ritual, after which they were disposed with the deceased to accompany them in afterlife. Figurines are also often found intentionally broken and buried in ritual deposit pits together with other cultic objects²⁶. The practice of intentionally breaking figurines in rituals or magic rites is known by many examples in the ethnographic record. For the Neolithic Period, it has also been proposed that these figurines may have been used in rituals related with purification, healing, or sending away of unwanted spirits, during which the figurine represented an evil force and the breaking of the figurine a release from it²⁷. In other instances, these objects may have been worn as amulets or carried as ancestral relics in commemorative rituals, while they may have also served as markers of individual merit and social status of their bearers²⁸ or they could have been used as indicators of sociocultural group identity²⁹. However, without a thorough contextual evaluation, whether or not these figurines are found predominantly in spaces dedicated to ritual and cultic activity, remains an open-ended question. Nevertheless, in Anatolia, we may cite examples that reinforce the idea of a cultic function attributed to figurines. For example, the EBA III figurine of Troia was found in a megaron, which is identified as a possible temple³⁰, and at İkiztepe, idols and figurines were discovered in mortuary contexts and ritual deposits³¹. Additionally, another commonly attested type of anthropomorphic figurine that appears in Mesopotamia and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age is standing human figures with the lower portion of the body stylized

23 For various perspectives and interpretations, see Marshack 1991; Hansen 2000; Meskell 1995; Ucko 1968.

24 Mellaart 1967, 180; Gimbutas 1974.

25 Whittle 1996, 94.

26 Perlès 2001, 263. The frequent attestation of figurines in mortuary contexts has led to the interpretation that these objects may have acted as mediators in cultic rituals related with funerary rites, e.g. see Laneri 2002, 27.

27 Parsons 1919; Rollefson 2002, 168.

28 Bailey 1994, 328.

29 Pollock 1995, 581.

30 Sazcı 2001, 384-390.

31 Bilgi 1998, 334.

as a nail, fashioned by casting lead and bronze alloys. These figurines are found in foundation deposits of buildings and are interpreted as votive foundation offerings³².

It is notable that in Anatolia bronze and silver figurines are encountered in elite graves, as is best illustrated by Alaca Höyük finds³³. Among the Alaca Höyük Royal Tombs, Grave H has yielded the richest inventory of funerary offerings, which include thirteen metal anthropomorphic figurines and schematized idols. The fact that these idols and figurines are found in elite graves invokes the possibility that these funerary gifts may have been representations of revered ancestors who accompanied the deceased high-status individuals. Their symbolic powers aside, the variety of raw materials (stone, clay, marble, metal alloys, and exotic semi-precious stones) and the diversity of techniques employed in shaping them also qualify these figurines as prestige objects manufactured by craft specialists³⁴. In this regard, these prestige items of the Early Bronze Age elite are also manifestations of a specialized craft economy.

The most outstanding features of the Murat Höyük figurine that depicts a standing, nude female are the outstretched arms and the prominent details of the pubic area. In terms of comparative analyses, to begin with the pubic area, the schematic idols of the early EBA in Anatolia do not allow a comparison in this respect since the human forms are very stylized in these examples and the pubic area is often omitted. Since there are only a few metal figurines in the archaeological record of the Anatolian EBA, for a comparative stylistic evaluation of the Murat Höyük metal figurine, we may turn to the baked clay figurines of the EBA and the Syro-Anatolian lead figurines of the late EBA / early MBA. The earliest examples of clay figurines in which details as dots, crisscrossing lines or a triangle are used for indicating the pubic area date to EBA II (2800-2400 BC)³⁵. In the archaeological record of Eastern Anatolia itself, a clay figurine of a standing nude (head broken) from Arslantepe (Level VI), in which the pubic area is indicated with parallel incised lines and a small rectangle, can be cited as an example in the same stylistic tradition³⁶. EBA III cast-bronze figurines known from Alaca Höyük and Horoztepe also exhibit similar characteristics, such as naturalistic body proportions, nude or semi-nude depiction, and standing pose³⁷.

Beginning with Middle Bronze Age I, new trends emerge in the stylistic development of naturalistic, standing, nude figurines cast of copper-tin alloys. Sexual dimorphism becomes more pronounced with clearer execution of details indicative of gender. In male figures, a new posture emerges, in which the arms are extended forward and bent upwards at the elbows, and the figures hold various weapons such as a spear or a mace. Females, on the other hand, are often depicted frontally with arms crossed over the chest holding their breasts³⁸. This posture with hands holding the breasts is an iconographic norm that is long attested in Mesopotamia and was clearly adapted

32 Bahrani 2017, 79, fig. 3.27.

33 Yakar 2011.

34 Siklósi 2004, 45.

35 Bilgi 2012, res. 253.3.

36 Palmieri 1970, 204, 209.

37 Bilgi 2012, 306.

38 Bilgi 2012, 328.

in Anatolia through cultural interactions³⁹. Illustrative examples of such figurines are best known from Tell al-Judaidah (Phase G) in the Amuq, while examples with outstretched arms are known from Tell Brak (Level 1) in Mesopotamia⁴⁰.

In Anatolia, while clay examples of female figurines with hands holding the breasts are first attested at the end of the EBA III, it is notable that female nudes holding breasts are depicted also with a headdress in lead figurines found at Konya-Karahöyük and Kültepe⁴¹. However, the great majority of lead figurines from Kültepe are highly schematized, and naturalistic examples are almost nonexistent. At Alişar Höyük Level 10-11, female nude depictions also maintain this posture with hands embracing breasts and the pubic triangle is emphasized with punctured dots⁴². In MBA lead figurines from Syro-Anatolia, frontally depicted female nudes typically feature a pubic triangle indicated with deep incisions⁴³.

As pointed out above, one of the most striking features of the Murat Höyük figurine is the unusual posture of its outstretched arms and the possibility that the figurine may have been originally holding an item in her left hand. This posture is rarely attested in the EBA figurines and idols in Anatolia and neighboring regions. Among clay figurines, the posture with outstretched arms is known from MBA I levels of İmikuşağı (Elazığ) and Tilmen Höyük and Zincirli (Gaziantep) in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia⁴⁴. As for metal figurines, as mentioned earlier, some of the bronze female figurines from Alaca Höyük are depicted with arms extended forward holding objects, such as a pitcher, which in light of later depictions of Hittite cult rituals can be identified as a vessel for pouring libations. This association with Hittite cult rituals suggests that the figurines themselves were also cult objects⁴⁵. In Syro-Anatolian lead figurines, arms attain a dynamic posture, separated from the body and outstretched, only in later examples dating to the MBA II period⁴⁶. A lead figurine from Kültepe in standing pose with outstretched arms and a headdress can be seen as a close parallel for the Murat Höyük figurine, however, the Kültepe figurine depicts a male⁴⁷.

A comparative evaluation of the semi-conical hat that adorns the head in the Murat Höyük figurine, which is the second significant feature of this object, is also worthy of consideration. Figurines wearing a headdress are known in Mesopotamian iconography from early prehistoric periods onwards. Earliest examples of standing, nude, female figurines with protruding breasts, a pubic triangle decorated with incisions, and a tall headdress are known from the Ubaid Period (5th millennium BC)⁴⁸

39 Frankfort 1939.

40 For Tell al-Judaidah see Braidwood – Braidwood 1960, fig:240-245; Marchetti 2000, 122, fig. 2; for Tell Brak see McDonald et al. 2001, 269-270, fig. 286-288.

41 For Karahöyük see Alp 1974, lev.225-226; for Kültepe see Emre 1971, 147, Pl. 10.1.

42 von der Osten 1937, 193, fig. 230.e1295.

43 Marchetti 2000, Tab.XXIII.34.

44 Bilgi 2012, 320-321, res. 943-948.

45 Aydingün 2005, 33.

46 Marchetti 2000, Tab. XXIV.36.

47 Emre 1971, 147, Pl. 10.1.

48 For a discussion, see Bahrani 2017, 35, fig. 1.29.

In Anatolia, baked clay figurines wearing headdresses that show a closer similarity with the Murat Höyük figurine are known from the EBA deposits at Kalınkaya and Koçumbeli, as well as the Chalcolithic settlement of Köşk Höyük⁴⁹. Baked clay figurines and idols in the EBA are often depicted wearing some kind of headdress, which may be a cylindrical hat or turban (*polos*), a conical hat, a round cap or a diadem-like headband. In metal figurines, headdresses are most frequently attested in the corpus of Syro-Anatolian lead figurines⁵⁰. Postures become more dynamic only in the MBA III period, when arms are variably depicted flush on both sides of the torso, lifted laterally, or stretched out frontally as if holding a weapon⁵¹. However, these examples exhibit certain characteristics that distinguish them as the products of a distinct tradition. Most notably, they are not nude but clothed and are adorned with an Assyrian-style conical hat⁵². As for metal figurines, although the conical hat of the Kültepe lead figurine mentioned above bears a similarity to the Murat Höyük figurine, the closest examples are the conical headdress worn by the bronze male figurines found at Hittite sites of the Late Bronze Age (fig. 12)⁵³.

Interesting observations also arise when we examine the formal characteristics of the Murat Höyük figurine from a functional point of view. Formal characteristics of the known repertoire of baked clay figurines imply that some were worn or used as a pendentive, while others could be used standing upright on a flat surface. The Murat Höyük figurine, on the other hand, could have hardly been placed upright on a surface, as its legs taper below the knees and terminate in pointed tips. The shape of the legs begs the following question: Was the Murat Höyük figurine, in its original form, mounted on another metal figurine, a vessel or another object that served as a platform to be displayed or used in cult rituals? When we consider the formal similarities between the Murat Höyük figurine and the bronze figurines of the Hittite Empire Period (LBA) that depict a male figure with a pointed hat and an outstretched arm holding a weapon standing on a bull, it becomes plausible to suggest that the Murat Höyük figurine was also mounted on an animal (fig. 13). The position of the arms in figurines depicting a “Storm-God” riding a bull or a horse known from unprovenanced examples in private collections and museums show that this posture was in use throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Ages⁵⁴. Geographically, the closest excavated example of this figurine type in the region where Murat Höyük lies is Salat Tepe located in the Upper Tigris basin, where a bronze figurine of a god mounted on a horse was found in the LBA levels⁵⁵.

49 For Bronze Age clay figurines wearing a headdress, see Aydıngün 2005; for Koçumbeli see Atakuman 2017, fig. 6; for Köşk Höyük see Silistireli 1989, pl. 5.1; Bilgi 2012, fig. 171.

50 Marchetti 2000, Tab. XXI.19-25.

51 Summers 1991, 176; Bilgi, 2012, 366, res. 1048-1050.

52 Müller-Karpe 1980, Taf. 176.A5.

53 For figurines with a headdress similar to the Murat Höyük figurine, see Emre 1993, pl. 32.3. It is notable that the headdress seen in the unprovenanced bronze figurines in the private collection of Haluk Perk Museum bear close similarities, see Bilgi 2012, 420, res. 1125-1126.

54 For examples of MBA and LBA anthropomorphic figurines standing on animals, see Hanfmann 1961; Ekiz 1999; Ekiz 2006; Aydıngün 2008; Aydıngün 2009.

55 Ökse 2020, fig.4-5.

Because the scarcity of metal figurines in the archaeological record of EBA Anatolia does not allow a thorough comparative evaluation of the metal figurine from Murat Höyük, it is somewhat difficult to contextualize this object within the cultural interaction spheres of the period. Nevertheless, iconographic details strongly imply that this figurine probably depicts a goddess. Although a stylistically close parallel cannot be found in the known corpus of metal figurines, a stone mold found in the EBA extramural cemetery of Titiş Höyük, dating to around the 2500 BC provides a clue. Carved in this mold is the negative impression of a metal figurine, which depicts a standing nude female with protruding breasts in a pose that is familiar from Ishtar figurines. This mold that was used for casting lead figurines is a significant find that bears witness to the adoption of Mesopotamian traditions by Anatolian communities. Similar molds found at Kültepe and Oylum Höyük that are also attributed to Ishtar, who represents planet Venus and appears with astral elements such as the morning star / evening star, provide important links that help us trace the connections with iconographic traditions of North Syria in late 3rd millennium BC⁵⁶. The Murat Höyük figurine lacks any specific attributes for it to be associated with a particular goddess. For this reason, it is most likely that the figurine represents a local goddess.

In this study, we have tried to demonstrate that the metal figurine from Murat Höyük is an unusual find within the corpus of anthropomorphic representations in Anatolia since early prehistory to the Iron Age, depicted in various media. In conclusion, based on its stylistic characteristics and iconographic features, the metal figurine of Murat Höyük can be regarded as an individually fashioned figurine like its contemporaries known from Alaca Höyük Grave H, Hasanoğlan, and Horoztepe. It is notable that no close parallels can be found within the known repertoire of figurines from 3rd millennium Mesopotamia, the Aegean, and the Balkans. While the cultural origins and the symbolic meaning of this figurine remain dubious due to the scarcity of comparable material, with its unique features, the locally manufactured metal figurine of Murat Höyük constitutes an important addition to the current repertoire of metal figurines in EBA Syro-Anatolia and Mesopotamia, which will undoubtedly provide new insight into cultural interactions between neighboring regions upon further analyses.

56 For iconography of Inanna/Ishtar see Laneri 2002, fig. 12; for the cosmological persona of Inanna/Ishtar see Wolkstein – Kramer 1983; for Kültepe see Özgüç 1985, fig. 3-36; for Oylum Höyük see Özgen 1993, fig. 4.

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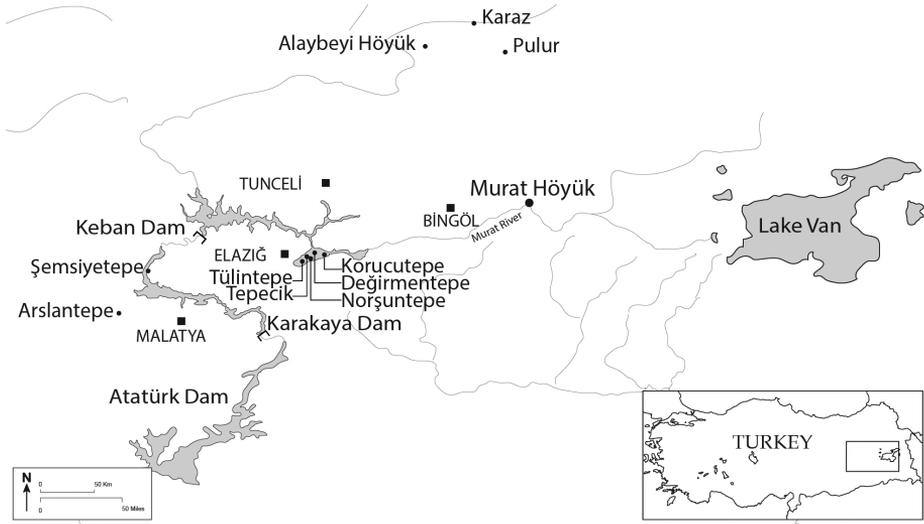


Fig. 1 Location of Murat Höyük and EBA settlements around Bingöl (Map prepared by A. Onur BAMYACI)



Fig. 2 Aerial view of Murat River and Murat Höyük after excavation (© Murat Höyük Archive)

<i>Stratigraphy</i>	<i>Settlement Period</i>	<i>Relative Chronology</i>
Phase I	9th-10th centuries AD	Medieval Age
Phase II	8th-6th centuries BC	Middle Iron Age – Urartu
Phase III	12th-10th centuries BC	Early Iron Age
Phase IV	2500-2200 BC	Early Bronze Age III

Fig. 3 Stratigraphy and chronology of Murat Höyük

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Lab Analysis Number</i>	<i>Sample Type</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Conventional radiocarbon age</i>	<i>Calibrated C-14 Date (cal. 2σ)</i>
Phase IV	Tubitak-0842	Charcoal	Room context, above floor	3951±27 BP	2499-2396 BC
Phase IV	Tubitak-0833	Carbonized grain/seed	Courtyard context, <i>in situ</i> jar	3867±29 BP	2464-2278 BC
Phase IV	Tubitak-0834	Carbonized grain/seed	Room context, inside <i>in situ</i> jar	3812±30 BP	2348-2189 BC

Fig. 4 Conventional and calibrated radiocarbon C14 dates of Murat Höyük samples

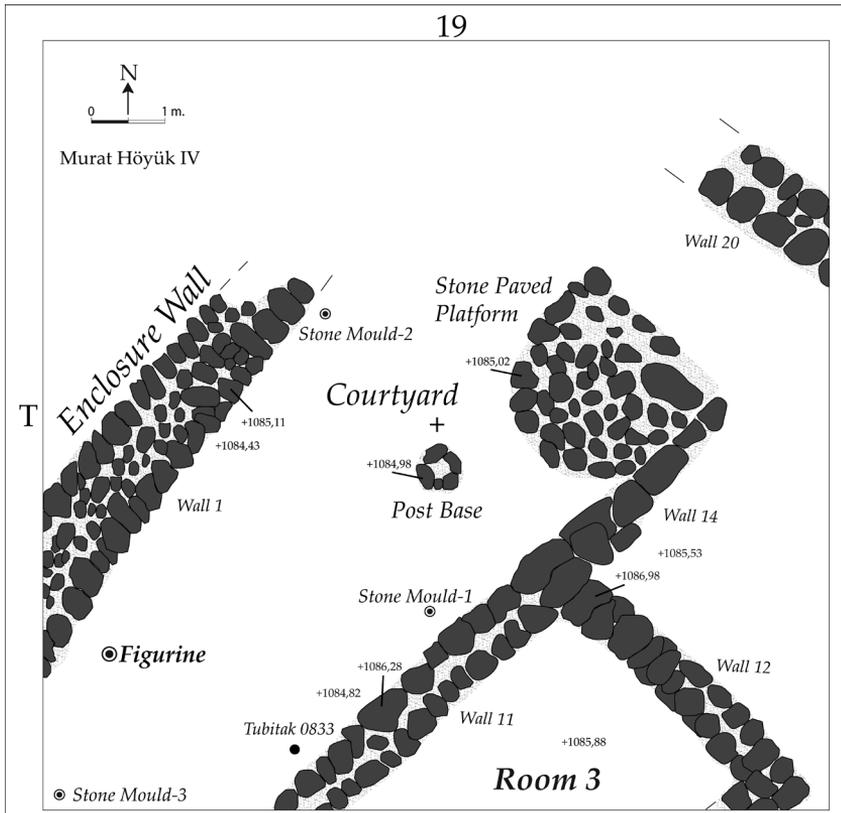


Fig. 5 Plan of Early Bronze Age Level IV at Murat Höyük

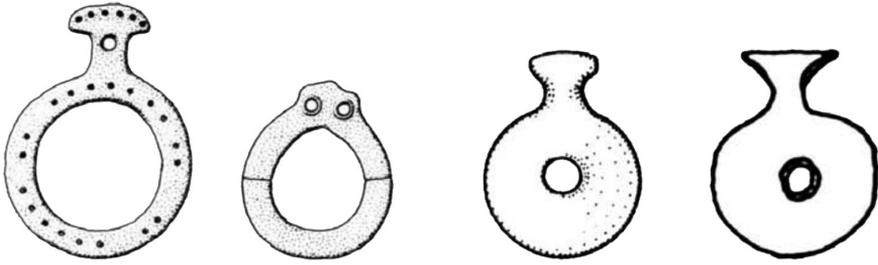


Fig. 6 Lead and gold ring idols from İkiztepe and Bakla Tepe (Bilgi 1984, fig.18.265-266; Keskin 2008, fig. 1-2).

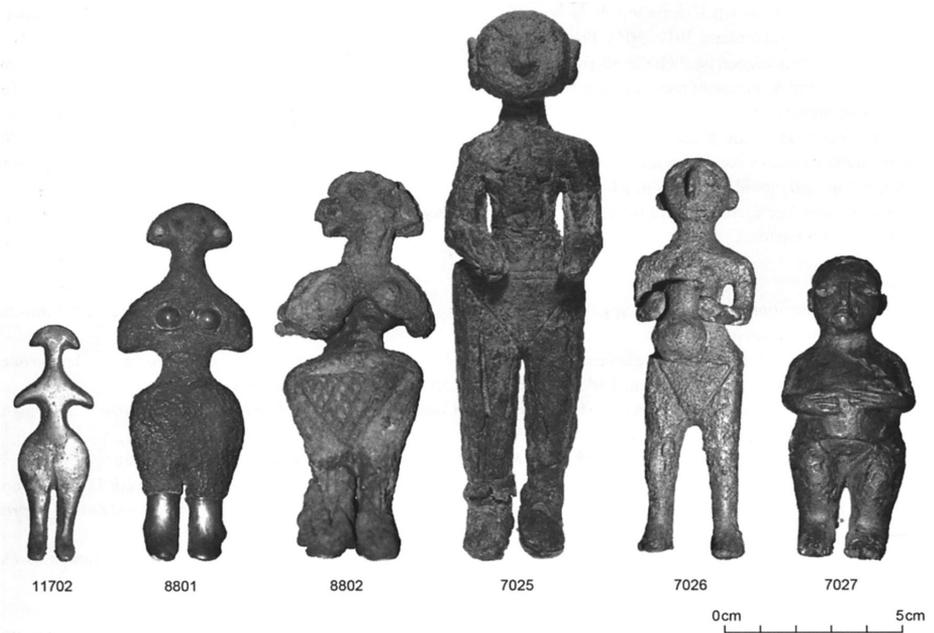


Fig. 7 Silver and bronze figurines from Alaca Höyük Royal Tombs, Grave H (Yalçın – Yalçın 2013, fig.3).



Fig. 8 Bronze figurines from Hasanoğlan and Horoztepe (Yalçın – Yalçın 2013, fig. 12)

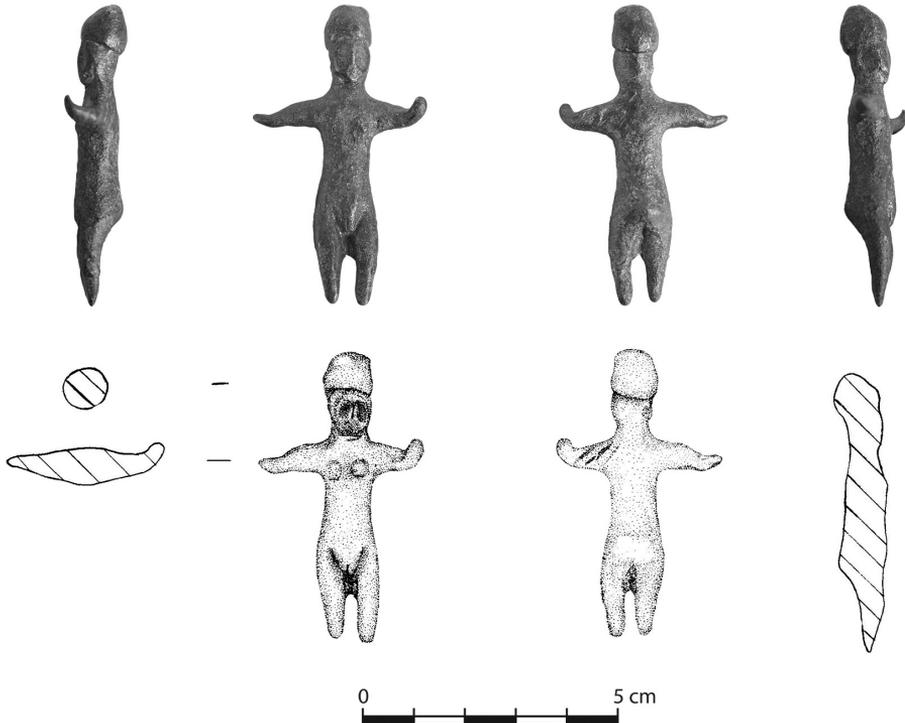


Fig. 9 Metal figurine found in the EBA III level at Murat Höyük (© Murat Höyük Archive)

Sample	Cu %	Sn %	Pb %	Ag %	Sb %	As %
Alaca Höyük 7025	86.4	12.1	1.0	0.5	-	-
Alaca Höyük 7026	55.3	10.6	31.5	2.3	-	-
Alaca Höyük 7027	80.8	10.4	1.5	-	6.9	-
Murat Höyük	91.5	1.15	0.077	-	-	0.18

**Key: Cu: Copper, Sn: Tin, Pb: Lead, Ag: Silver, Sb: Antimon, As: Arsenic*

Fig. 10 Metal alloy compounds of figurines from Alaca Höyük Royal Tombs, Grave H and Murat Höyük figurine

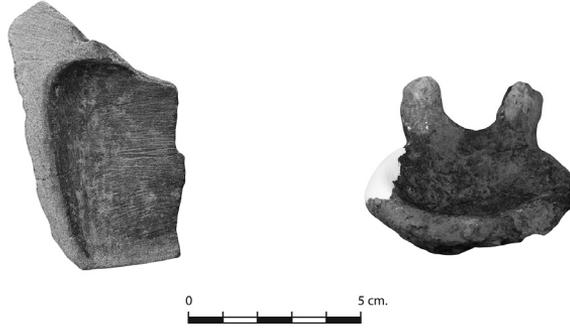


Fig. 11 Stone mold and ceramic crucible found from EBA III level of Murat Höyük (© Murat Höyük Archive)



Fig. 12 Bronze figurine of Hittite god depicted on a bull, attributed to the Late Bronze Age (Hittite Empire Period) (Bilgi 2012, res. 1125)

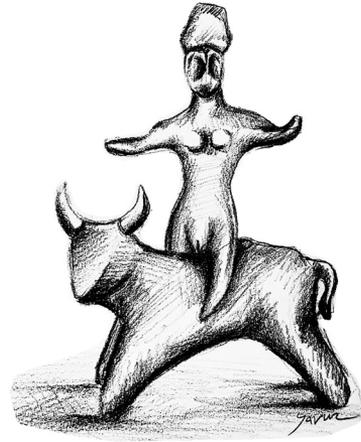


Fig. 13 Hypothetical illustration of Murat Höyük metal figurine depicted on a bull (Illustrated by Yavuz DENİZ)