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AN EARLY BRONZE AGE III LEAD FIGURINE FROM KÜLLÜOBA

Fatma Şahin*

Abstract

Early examples of lead figurines and trinket moulds are dated to the last quarter of the Early Bronze Age. This group of finds is known mainly from North Mesopotamia, North Syria and Southeast Anatolia. The Trojan EBA lead figurine was, until recently, the only excavation find of its kind which came from the western part of Anatolia. From the two trinket moulds with the negatives of such figurines, one was bought in Izmir. Therefore, the provenance is unknown. The other one is said to have come from Akhisar (Manisa). However, similar finds have recently been recovered in the stratified layers of ongoing excavations at Küllüoba (Eskişehir) and Seyitömer (Kütahya). The lead figurine introduced here was found at Küllüoba in 2012. This lead figurine – together with the Küllüoba and Seyitömer trinket moulds – proves beyond doubt that this group of finds spreads as early as the EB III period in western part of Anatolia. Both the trinket moulds and the lead figurines found in this region not only support Turan Efe's 'Great Caravan Route' theory and J.V. Canby's thesis, that 'these molds were distributed over large areas by smiths who travelled along with caravans', but they also make an important contribution to the establishment of a more reliable chronology of these finds.

INTRODUCTION

Lead figurines and their stone moulds have a wide geographical distribution area stretching from Upper Mesopotamia in the east, to the northwestern Anatolian coast in the west. While they first appear in the late third millennium BC, they seem particularly common in the early second millennium BC, the so-called 'Assyrian Trade Colonies' period (Emre 1971: 1). Such finds have also been recently recovered in the ongoing excavations at Küllüoba and Seyitömer Höyük in inland northwestern Anatolia and the present article aims at introducing and contextualising the lead figurine from Küllüoba, representing so far one of the earliest examples of this category of items.

Küllüoba, a mound that rises 10 m above the plain level and measures 300 x 150m, is situated near the Yenikent village (Seyitgazi, Eskişehir), just east of the Yenikent-Seyitgazi road and 1300 m to the south of the village. The site has been under excavation under the direction of Turan Efe uninterruptedly since 1996 (cf. Efe, Ay-Efe 2001; Fidan 2012; Sarı 2012; 2013; Türkteki 2012).

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A GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF ANATOLIAN FIGURINES

Figurines, especially those with exaggerated sexual organs, are linked with the fertility of women and defined also as the 'fertility goddess' or the 'Mother Goddess'. Along with the socio-economical conditions and religious beliefs, political developments also play an important role in the human depictions (Bilgi 2012: 17). Human representations emerging with the Paleolithic period continue increasingly during the subsequent Neolithic period. They were produced in different shapes and materials during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. Especially plastic female figurines exhibiting a homogenous character become more abstract and schematic in the Chalcolithic period (Bilgi 1980: 7; 2012: 27; Ay-Efe 2006: 90; Sarı 2014: 8).

Schematic figurines and idols become more characteristic in the succeeding Early Bronze Age, and they form stylistically certain groups shaped, to some extent, according to the cultural regions determined by pottery distribution areas (Aydingün 2003: 90; Ay-Efe 2006: 90; Bilgi 2012: 202 ff.; Sarı 2014: 8). With the second half of the Early Bronze Age, in parallel to the increasing use of metal for tools, weapons and ornaments, metal figurines also appear, and naturalistic figurines become characteristic again (Ay-Efe 2006: 90; Bilgi 2012: 202 ff.).

Although baked clay figurines are extremely common in the EBA II period in inland northwestern Anatolia where Küllüoba is located, this situation changes in the EBA III period (Ay-Efe 2006: 90). Trade relations between West Anatolia and the distant areas are intensified during the EBA III. As a result of this trade, the potter's wheel is introduced in West Anatolia, first along the 'Great Caravan Route' (Efe 2007) presumably established between Cilicia and the Troad. Parallel to this development, together with new wares and shapes in pottery, marble and bone idols appear across almost all of West Anatolia (Sarı 2014: 9). While these idols still continue to be seen in the last quarter of the EBA III period, trinket moulds and their lead figurines appear for the first time.

It is widely accepted that these are representations of deities, which people kept in their houses (Emre 1971: 82; 1994: 73 ff.; 2007: 135; Özgüç 2002: 246). The flat reverse side of the figurines gives a hint about how they were used. Just like D. Van Buren (Buren 1954: 112), Emre is of the opinion that lead figurines were possibly used not by sewing them to a leather and textile or by fitting them to a wooden frame or in a slot, but rather by leaning them against something so that they could be viewed from the front (Emre 1971: 82).

Lead figurines and their moulds actually are better known from northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia. As the research shows, they were in use from the last quarter of the Early Bronze Age up until the end of the 'Assyrian Trade Colonies' period (Emre 1971: 18, 81; Efe 2006: 301; Marchetti 2003).

We have so far a limited number of lead figurines and moulds from the last quarter of the Early Bronze Age. In addition to those found at Troy (Schliemann 1881: no. 226; Genouillac 1929: 3, pl. 1,2; Canby 1965: 58, pl. Xc; Emre 1971: 30, pl. 1/1; Bilgi 2012: 324, fig. 961), Izmir (Canby 1965: 43, pl. IXb; Emre 1971: 32, pl. 1/3), Manisa/Akhisar (Delaporte 1923: 231, pl. 128,3; Genouillac 1929: 4, pl. I,A; Canby 1965: 58, pl. X,a; Emre 1971: 33, pl. III/1; Bilgi 2012: 325, fig. 965) and Abu Habba/Sippar (Canby 1965: pl. IXd; Emre 1971: pl. II/1), there are also early examples recorded from in the Louvre (Canby 1965: pl. IXe; Emre

1971: pl. II/3a-b), the British Museum (Emre 1971: pl. II/5), the New York Metropolitan Museum Lipchitz (Emre 1971: pl. I/2), Venice (Emre 1971: pl. II/4). Even though all these pieces are assigned to the last quarter of the Early Bronze Age on stylistic grounds, none of them was found in a stratigraphic context. However, datable stratified examples come from Assur phase G (Akkadian period) (Wartke 1980: 226, fig. 3; Canby 1965: pl. Xb; Efe 2006: 301), Titriş Höyük Late EBA III (Pittman *et al.* 1997; Laneri 2002), Akkadian period levels at Tell Brak (Oates 2001: 246-8, fig. 267; Canby 2003: 172) in the Khabur region and at Urkesh/Tell Mozan (Canby 2003) (fig. 1).

Lead figurines and their moulds in Anatolia, dated mostly to the Assyrian Trade Colonies period (Emre 1969; 1971; 1993; 2007), are known from centers such as Achemhöyük (Özgüç 1968), Alishar (Schmidt 1932; Osten 1937), Boğazköy (Bittel-Nauman 1939; Emre 1971), Konya-Karahöyük (Alp 1962; 1967; 1972; 1974), Kültepe (Emre 1969; 1971; 1993; 2007) in central Anatolia, and Tel-el Cüdeyde (Emre 1969: 1; 1971: 17) and Zincirli-Samal in Southeast Anatolia (Andrae 1943; Emre 1971: 18) (fig. 1). Studies on the subject have demonstrated that these finds reflect Anatolian stylistic features.

One of the few examples of lead figurines from West Anatolia was found at Troy (Schliemann 1881: no. 226). The other two pieces are not the figurines themselves, but the so-called trinket moulds with the negatives of these figurines. The one which was bought by a tourist in Izmir is in a private collection in USA (Canby 1965: 43, pl. IXb; Emre 1971: 32, pl. I/3). The other one in the Louvre Museum supposedly came from Manisa-Akhisar (Thyateria) (Canby 1965: 58, pl. X,a; Emre 1971: 33, pl. III/1). New lead figurines and their moulds have recently been recovered in the systematic excavations of Küllüoba and Seyitömer (Bilgen *et al.* 2010: 348; Bilgen 2011: 193, fig. 283; Bilgi 2012: 325, fig. 963; Efe 2006).

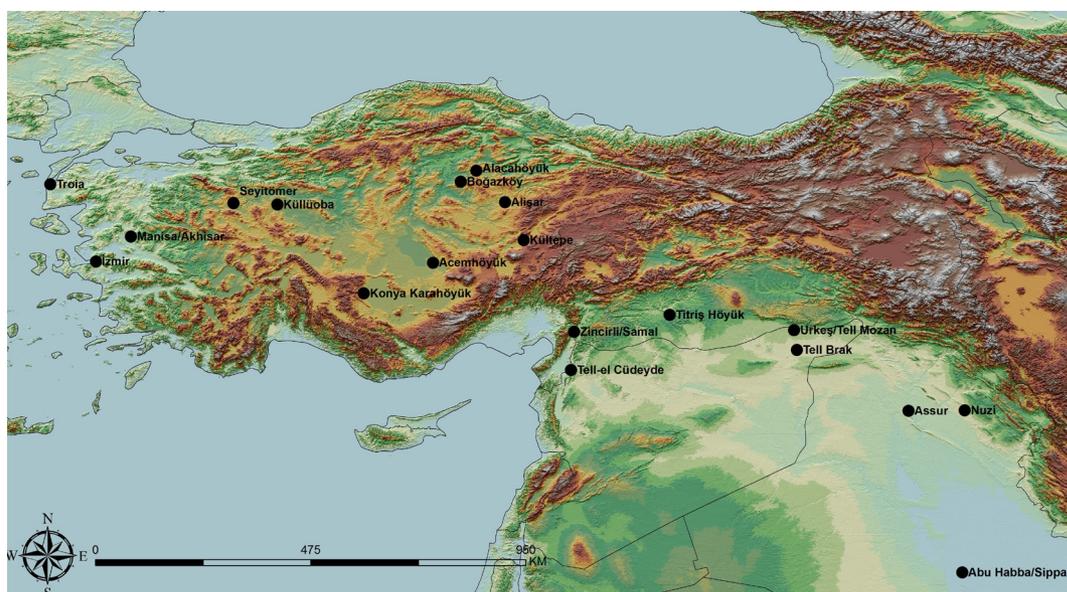


Fig. 1. Sites mentioned in the text.

THE LEAD FIGURINE OF KÜLLÜOBA

The lead figurine (figs. 2-4) (inv. no. V17.4) measures 6.6 cm in height, 3.1 cm in width, and 0.5 cm in thickness and it is preserved by Eskişehir Archaeological Museum. It was made by pouring lead into a bi-valve stone mould, with the observe valve bearing the dice for the figurine and the reverse valve flat and devoid of details. It is a composition of an adult woman (on the right side) and a female adolescent (on the left side), both standing.

The figures are joined to each other above at the elbows and the girl stands on the tip of a boss projecting from the woman's hip. The legs of both figures are shaped as a single pillar without a split. Details of the legs and feet are not indicated. Both figures were frontally designed, naked and with the arms raised upward from the elbow. The left arm of the woman is broken off. The woman has a large forehead, although her hair is not shown, and her eyes are large with the irises executed as round dots in high relief. The figure has a large nose, small mouth, and pointed chin, necklace on her neck, which is shown as two parallel lines in relief. The breasts, placed just below the neck, are small. The arms stick out not at shoulder level but just immediately under the chest and the shoulder itself is not shown. The part from the neck down to the hip is almost in the same width and relatively schematised. There are some embosses on its stomach; a round hole indicates its navel. The hips are reminiscent of a wheel with six radial lines in relief radiating from a small nipple just in the middle. The girl's figure is a smaller version of the woman's figure, the only difference is that the girl is without breasts.

FIND CONTEXT AND DATING

The figurine was found during the 2012 season in a votive pit on the west slope of the mound (in trench V 17). According to the pottery finds recovered in the pit, we can date the context to levels II E-D (early phase of the Late EBA III), corresponding to the so-called 'Pre-Transitional Period' and these levels have been dated to 2200-2100 BC (Şahin 2013; 2014; Efe and Fidan 2008, fig. 8).

COMPARISONS

The Küllüoba lead figurine does not show close similarities with the other examples so far known. In the first place this example is a twin figurine that represents mother and daughter. Body shape, details, and the positions of the arms raised up from elbow are unique. Hair and shoulders are not shown; the hips worked in the shape of a wheel do not exist on any other example. As it is the case with other figurines, these figures are not standing on a platform. In addition to this, some undefined embosses on the belly of the mother figure suggest that she was depicted as pregnant.

The figurine carved on the Louvre Museum's mould (Emre 1971: pl. III/2) and the one found at Acemhöyük (Emre 1971: pl. III/3; Bilgi 2012: 325, fig. 966) are the pieces most resembling to the Küllüoba figurine. The similarities include the rendering of the faces with a



Fig. 2. Külliöba Lead Figurine (front).



Fig. 3. Külliöba Lead Figurine (back).

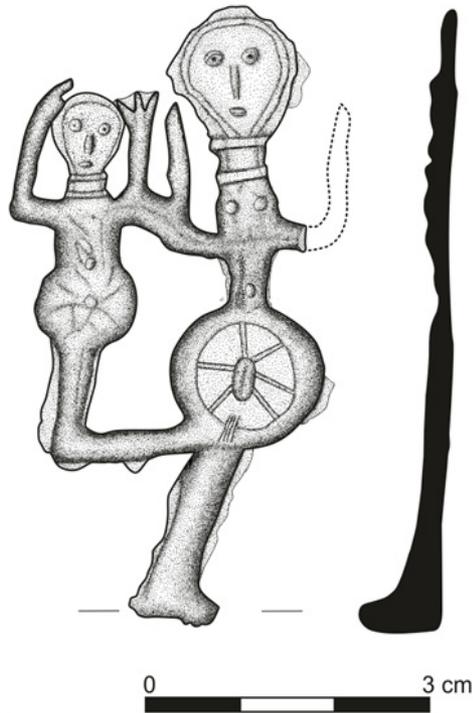


Fig. 4. Külliöba Lead Figurine (drawing by Deniz Ay Efe and Yusuf Tuna).

long pointed chin, a double pendant line on the neck, and a schematic body. A further point of contact with these two examples are represented by the depiction of the 'divine family'. However, both mentioned comparanda are composed by three figures: mother, father and a child in the middle, while the Küllüoba figurine depicts a woman and a girl. This might be taken as proof that the Küllüoba example represents one of the earliest versions of the 'divine family' concept.

Until now, the arms raised upward have been encountered only in a figurine mould found at Tell Brak which is dated to the last quarter of Early Bronze Age. But the arms of the figurine in Tell Brak mould – in contrast to the Küllüoba example – were depicted as fully raised, with the hands joined to the head. Actually, examples depicted with the raised arms flexed from the elbow seem to be rather late in date. A high relief, naked female figurine on a baked clay plaque in the British Museum (possibly from Iraq), was depicted with arms opened out to two sides (Frankfort 1937: fig. 1). This plaque, known as the 'Burney Relief', dates to the 18th century BC and the naked woman on it has been identified as a goddess – Inanna/Ishtar or Lilitu (Frankfort 1937: 128-135). A similar example is also known in Anatolia from Kültepe and is dated to the 'Assyrian Trade Colonies' period (Emre 2007: 136-7, fig. 4a-b,5). However, the very schematic Kültepe examples, evaluated as 'stick figures' (Emre 2007: 137), are similar in position but different in style. In addition, a lead winged naked goddess figurine from Konya-Karahöyük of the same date is also depicted with its arms opened to each side and raised up from the elbows (Alp 1974: 703-7, pl. 225-6; Bilgi 2012: fig. 1047). Because of this feature, Bilgi is of the opinion that this piece represents the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar (Bilgi 2012: 362). Also A. Erkanal has evaluated the naked goddess depictions on the lead figurine and moulds, especially from Kültepe, as Ishtar/Shauska (Erkanal 1993: 107). Frontally depicted, naked human figures with both arms raised have something to do with a mythological concept in relation to carrying the world and universe. A frontally depicted human figure on a cylinder seal impression from Konya-Karahöyük is shown with two upraised hands carrying a standard with crescent. S. Alp is of the opinion that this figure represents Upelluri, an Atlas figure (Alp 1972: 121, pl. 44/107). This subject has been evaluated also by A. Erkanal among seals and seal impressions of Syrian origin (Erkanal 1993: 55, pl. 19/IV-B/02a-b). A sun standard motif carried by a griffon-human figure on a cylinder seal belonging to the 'Second Syrian Group' is considered by S. Alp in the same context (Porada 1948: 124-125, fig. 941E; Alp 1972: 121). Late Bronze Age female figurines with arms opened to two sides have been defined as type 'Psi' (Y) in Furumark's morphological categorization of Mycenaean figurines (Furumark 1941: 86-87, fig. 1). In addition to the idea that this type of female figurine has a religious meaning (French 1971: 105-107), they are interpreted as a 'blessing goddess' (Mylonas 1966: 114). When all these data are taken into consideration – even though most examples mentioned above are dated to a much later period than the Küllüoba example – there is no doubt that the Küllüoba lead figurine with its praying position represents a goddess. Its early dating makes this lead figurine one of the oldest among those with this religious rendering.

Any lead figurine or mould with wheel-shaped hips has not been encountered so far. However, we can make a correlation with the shape of a standard on the Akhisar trinket mould (Canby 1965: pl. Xa; Emre 1971: pl. III/1; Bilgi 2012: 325, pl. 965). It is divided into six segments and called pendant or hanger (Canby 1965: 45; Emre 1971: 45 ff.). This example,

together with a similar wheel-shaped hanger found on the Abu-Habba/Sippar mould (Canby 1965: pl. IXe; Emre 1971: pl. II/1), was evaluated as a god ideogram by H. Bossert (Bossert 1944: 196; Emre 1971: 45). Also Canby compares this one (Canby 1965: 45) and the purchased Izmir mould (Canby 1965: pl. IXb; Emre 1971: pl. I/3) with a wheel on a mold from Nuzi (Canby 1965: 45, pl. Xb) dated to the Akkadian period and also with a standard from an EBA III grave at Kültepe (Özgüç 1963: 13, pl. VII/2). Both Canby and T. Özgüç have the opinion (Özgüç 1963: 13; Canby 1965: 45) that these are foreign to Anatolia, as they are mostly represented in the Ur Royal Cemetery (See Woolley 1934 for the Royal Cemetery at Ur). At the same time, these hangers have been compared with the ones on the Alacahöyük sistra by Emre (Emre 1971: 45, fig. 11/D41). Although the Alacahöyük examples are very similar, they are divided into four or five sections (Koşay 1938: 114, pl. XCI; 1951: pl. CXCIV; Akurgal 1961: pl. 8-9). The hanger on the Tiriş lead figurine mould (Pittman 1997: fig. 19-20; Laneri 2002: fig. 11-12) shows similarities as well. If we think that male and female figurines on the moulds represent gods or a divine family, then, the existence of similar symbols on sistra in Alacahöyük interpreted as symbol of religious belief supports the view of Bossert.

CONCLUSION

The lead figurine from Küllüoba introduced here has great importance due to its early dating and unique features. When we take into consideration that other examples previously found in West Anatolia are not stratified, this piece and the trinket moulds found at Küllüoba and Seyitömer as well, prove beyond doubt for the first time that this kind of lead figurines and their moulds existed in West Anatolia as early as the EB III period just as the lead figurines and their moulds which previously had been found in northern Syria and southeastern Anatolia. One gets the impression from the correlations and evaluations made above that the Küllüoba lead figurine shows more like northern Syrian features rather than Anatolian. J.V. Canby is of the opinion that the trinket moulds and their lead figurines were 'distributed over large areas by smiths who travelled along with the caravans' (Canby 1965: 53). It might not be a coincidence that all three excavation sites from which these lead figurines so far came are all situated along the 'Great Caravan Route' which might have been established between Syro-Cilicia and the Troad (Efe 2007). These sites also yielded other materials of Syro-Cilician origin (Türkteki 2012: 56 ff.). J.V. Canby goes ahead and proposes a rough itinerary for the smith travelling from north Mesopotamia toward the west over inland as far as the Troad: '... He would have travelled from North Mesopotamia to Cilicia, north to the Halys region and down to the west part of the Konya plain, then up to the Troad...' (Canby 1965: 53). This coincides very well with that of the 'Great Caravan Route'.

The twin lead figurine presented here makes an important contribution, not only to the chronology of this group of finds, but also to the establishment of their motives and stylistic features of the EB III lead figurines in West Anatolia.

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