

## SOME REMARKS ON MARBLE IDOLS OF AN UNUSUAL TYPE

ÖNDER BİLGİ

Two idols of white marble displayed at the Afyon Archaeological Museum attract attention of not only archeologists, but also visitors by their heads rendered in different shapes from the known ones in Anatolia. Both of these objects are chance finds: the first is from Susuz Höyük (Pl. I. Fig. 1), which is situated 16 kms. north of Afyon, and the second was found at Kusura (Pl. I. Fig. 2) long after the closure of the scientific excavations and was bought by the museum<sup>1</sup>.

Although these idols do not show any differences either in their sizes<sup>2</sup> or manufactures from the Early Bronze Age examples, they display a tapering projection on one sides of heir heads that gives them a distinct appearance. The meaning of these projections is unknown and is difficult to determine. They may be taken as a highly stylized hairdress or a head gear, or they are meant to represent a religious symbol. In order to identify one of these alternatives to shed light on these projections, there are no sufficient evidence since anthropomorphical representations in Anatolia besides idols are confined to human-shaped pots and a few statuettes<sup>3</sup> dating from the end of Early Bronze Age, which again do not reflect the realistic images of the Early Bronze Age people of Anatolia. However, since these idols are generally accepted as the symbols of the religion<sup>4</sup> of the Anatolian people in this period, it would be suggested that these projections may

<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to the authorities of the Afyon Archaeological Museum, who are kind enough to supply the necessary information and to give permission to publish these idols.

<sup>2</sup> The idol of Susuz höyük: H. 9.9 Th. 1.4, The idol of Kusura: the lower part of the body missing; H. 10 cm. Th. 1.6 cm.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "Hasanoğlan İdolu", *V. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, 1960 p. 80 and "The Statuette from Horoztepe", *Anatolia III*, 1958 Fig. 18.

<sup>4</sup> T. Özgüç; "Ön Tarihte Anadolu idollerinin Anlamı", *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1943-44.

be connected to a religious belief rather than a head decoration which is hardly indicated on idols.

Both in Anatolia and Aegean Islands<sup>5</sup> where numerous flat marble idols were also recovered there are not any idols having projections on their heads. However, in the systematic excavations at Beyce Sultan a broken head<sup>6</sup> was unearthed in building level XIV. This head, again made of marble but damaged, shows that it had once a projection on one of its side<sup>7</sup> (Pl. II Fig. 3). Relying on this stratified fragment not only is it possible to date the Susuz and Kusura examples but also it can be determined that these chance finds are authentic objects. Another example to be added to this group of idols is that found at Karataş-Semayük (Pl. II Fig. 4) in one of the pithos-burials. But, M. Mellink, director of excavations at Karataş-Semayük, has put forward that the notch-like rendering of a projection on the head of this idol is a trace of damage which occurred while intentionally breaking the head off before the idol was placed into the pithos as a burial gift<sup>8</sup>. She has based her suggestion that many other idols also recovered in the burials were found with their heads broken at the necks<sup>9</sup>. The idol in question is 3 cm. in height and 1 cm. in thickness. It is not too difficult to break off the head of an idol in these dimensions with a tool or even by bare hand without any damage. Besides, the notch is on the side of the head as seen on the above-mentioned idols. On the other hand, the notch might not have been completed into a projection because of hurry, or the object is too small so that an intended projection could only be rendered by a notch.

On the Karataş-Semayük idol the stump-arms are not indicated in contrast to those from Susuz and Kusura. Absence of arms on idols is one of the factors of the development of the deformation alongside the stylization of anatomy of the human body which apparently start-

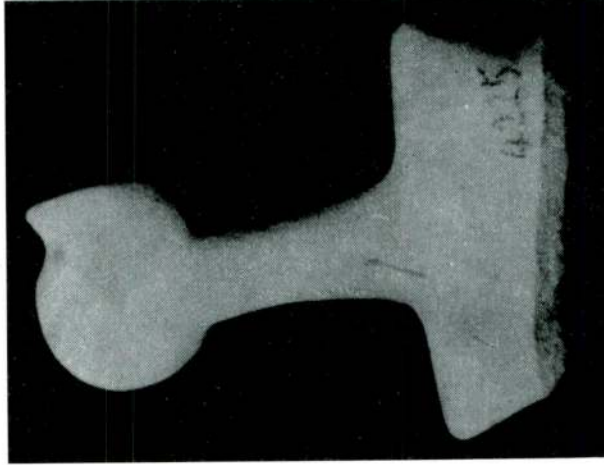
<sup>5</sup> C. Renfrew; "The Development and Chronology of the Early Cycladic Figurines", *American Journal of Archaeology* 73, 1969 pp. 1-32 Pls. 1-10.

<sup>6</sup> S. Lloyd - J. Mellaart; Beyce Sultan I, London 1962 Fig. F. 1 No. 20 H. 2 cm.

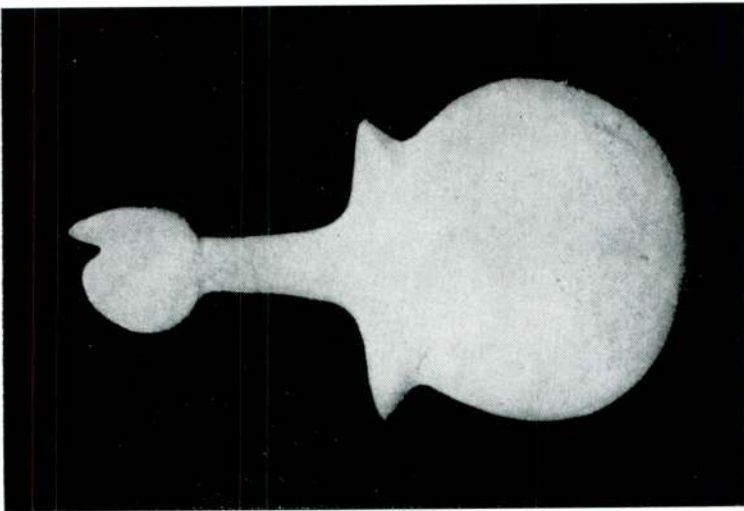
<sup>7</sup> This broken head could not be found among the Beyce Sultan objects which are kept at the Ankara Archaeological Museum.

<sup>8</sup> M. Mellink; "Excavations at Karataş-Semayük, 1966", *American Journal of Archaeology* 71, 1967 Pl. 77 No. 14.

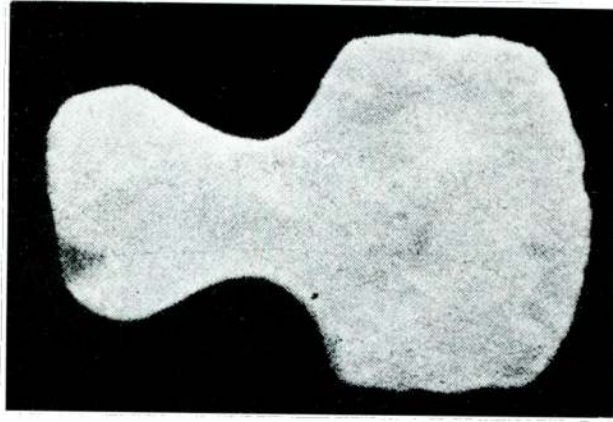
<sup>9</sup> M. Mellink; *Ibid.*, p. 254.



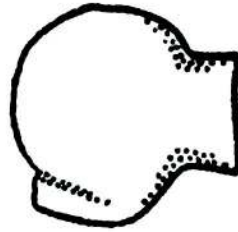
Res./Fig. 2 — Kusura



Res./Fig. 1 — Susuz höyük



Res./Fig. 4 — Karataş - Semayük



Res./Fig. 3 — Beyce Sultan

ed in Anatolia from the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic or even towards the end of the Early Chalcolithic period. This development of idols which is a gradual process is the result of the deformation of the statuettes of the Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic periods<sup>10</sup>. In fact, no human figures from the graves at Karataş-Semayük have stump-arms<sup>11</sup>. At Beyce Sultan the idols from the building level of XVII which represent the end of the Early Bronze Age I period are accomplished with stump-arms<sup>12</sup>. After the XVIIth building level at Beyce Sultan idols are found with or without stump-arms<sup>13</sup>. Relying on this evidence it can be said that the idols of Karataş-Semayük are produced after Early Bronze Age I, and the idol with a notch on the head is contemporary of building level XIV of Beyce Sultan<sup>14</sup>. Rendering of idols still with arm-stumps in Early Bronze Age II period would suggest that the development is less progressive in the Afyon region than the Elmalı plain where Karataş-Semayük is situated. Another evidence reinforcing this suggestion is that idols at Kusura<sup>15</sup> in the Afyon region and even at Troy<sup>16</sup> are produced with or without stump-arms.

As pointed out above, the broken head of Beyce Sultan enables one to date both the chance finds of Kusura and Susuz Höyük and the burial gift from Karataş-Semayük to the second phase of Early Bronze Age, i. e. 2700-2300 B. C., besides a new type of representation

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Ö. Bilgi; Development and Distribution of Anthropomorphic Figures in Anatolia from the Neolithic to the End of the Early Bronze Age, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of London 1972.

<sup>11</sup> M. Mellink; *Ibid.*, Pl. 77 Nos. 3 and 15, "Excavations at Karataş-Semayük, 1963" *American Journal of Archaeology* 68, 1964 Pl. No. 24.

<sup>12</sup> S. Lloyd - J. Mellaart; *Ibid.*, Fig. F. 1.

<sup>13</sup> S. Lloyd - J. Mellaart; *Ibid.*, Fig. F. 1 No. 19 Pl. XXXII Nos. 2 and 3 with stump-arms and Pl. XXXII No. 4 and an unpublished idol, which is kept at the Ankara Archaeological Museum, are examples for the idols without arm-stumps.

<sup>14</sup> M. Mellink has already dated the pithos-burials with idols to this period.

<sup>15</sup> W. Lamb; "Excavations at Kusura near Afyonkarahisar", *Archaeologia* 86, 1936 Pl. VI Nos. 9b and 10 Fig. 11 Nos. 2 and 5, "Excavations at Kusura near Afyonkarahisar", *Archaeologia* 87, 1937 Pl. LXXXIV Nos. 8 and 11 Fig. 17 Nos. 1, 2 and 5.

<sup>16</sup> C. W. Blegen and others; *Troy I: The first and Second Settlements*, Princeton 1950 Vol. I plates Figs. 21 and 360.

is added to the corpus of idols which are highly stylized and flattened anthropomorphic figures that reflect the religious beliefs of the Anatolian people in the Early Bronze Age<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Since the submission of this article to the printer, a recently published museum exhibition catalogue containing mostly figurines and idols from Cycladic Islands is also included the type of idols we are dealing with in here. See *Kunsts der Kykladen*, Karlsruhe 1976 (Kunst und Kultur der Kyklianinseln im 2. Jahrtausend V. Chr.) p. 386 Figs. 511 - 515 and 518. These illicitly dug or chance - find idols, smuggled out of Turkey by illegal antiquity traffic and kept in Europe (Karlsruhe Badischer Landesmuseum, Basel, Geneva) and USA (Houston D. and J. de Menil Collection) would indicate that the type of idols, which we have here tried to show as genuine objects, are commonly produced in Anatolia.