The Anthropomorphic Stelae of the Ukraine:
The Early Iconography of the Indo-Europeans

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Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph No. 11
The Institute for the Study of Man
P.O. Box 34070
N.W. Washington, D.C. 20043

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ISBN 0-041694-45-3

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Foreword

In 1594 Erik Lasote, ambassador of the Austro-Hungarian emperor, visited the Zaporozhian Cossacks. While travelling along the Dnieper, he wrote 'we passed by the seven beacons, images cut from stone, and they numbered more than twenty and were standing atop the kurgans or barrows...'. These same 'beacons' or anthropomorphic stone images were encountered even earlier in the southern Ukraine and commented upon by Ruysbroeck, a Flemish monk, and the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami. Later these sculptures were included in the 'Book of the Great Drawing,' the first map of the Russian empire, where we find specific references to such figures as a 'stone man' on the river Ternavka near Bilogorod and two 'stone girls' on the river Samara.

As recently as the last century, thousands of such ancient 'sentinels' stood as if on guard in the Ukrainian steppe; now only a tenth or perhaps a twentieth of their earlier number survives. Today, many of these stone-images or idols have been transported to museums while others still lie half-destroyed on the ground.

The first of these stone stelae were erected about 5500 years ago during the transition period of the Copper to Early Bronze ages. These figures, which are normally life-size, are known from the Crimea and the Ukrainian steppe and they were hewn from flat stone slabs. Some stelae are quite primitive, reflecting only the crude outline of the human figure with a rounded top to indicate the shoulders and a deeply set head. Others bear clear-cut facial features, parts of the body, clothes, ornaments, weapons, etc. They belong to the finest examples of early monumental sculpture in Europe and are invaluable artistic expressions of the ancient societies that produced them.

The later stone sculptures of the Iron Age Cimmerians and Scythians, and the early mediaeval Slavs and steppe nomads, were markedly different from the earlier prehistoric figures. The Cimmerians, for example, who flourished in the 9th and 8th centuries BC, created the equivalent of stela-obelisks, decorated with stylized anthropomorphic features dressed in full warrior panoply including the belt from which their weapons were suspended. The Scythian sculptures, which replaced those of the Cimmerians, were more naturalistic than their predecessors. Although their subject remained the same, the warrior-chieftain in full regalia, the features of the body and face were more finely sculptured. The figures bear the standard Scythian weapons of the *akinakes* ('sword'), the *gorytus*, the combination bow-case and quiver, and much

more rarely the battle-ax and whip. The majority of figures are depicted with a cornucopia in their hands.

Our evidence for Slavic sculptures emerges in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD when the Slavs between the Dniester and the Carpathians erected stone idols. Typical among them are four-faced figures, the most famous of which is the Zbruch idol, a four-sided stone pillar covered with images of daily life and the cosmological beliefs of the ancient Slavs. Sanctuaries dedicated to such deities have also been discovered.

Among the most numerous stone sculptures of the Ukraine are the Polovtsian *baba* or 'stone women.' Several hundred or thousands of them may exist and, it is recorded, that during the reign of Catherine II, these images often served as milestones along the highways of the Ukraine. These are perhaps the subject of an ancient tale that recorded how 'everywhere in the fields stand stone figures like men, erected according to some ancient custom, but now already covered with moss.'

The passing millennia, therefore, has seen various tribes emerge and disappear from the historical arena of the southern Ukraine while the tradition of creating and erecting these monumental stone sculptures persisted. The details naturally changed from the period to the next as the shape and ornamentation of these figures could not help but express the cultural background of their creators, their social structure, and especially their ideology. Moreover, schools of unique styles emerged, flourished and disappeared into the oblivion of time, leaving us with a priceless record of the development of folk art in the Ukraine from the earliest times.

The stelae of the Ukraine, particularly those of the Copper Age, have far more than a regional or a narrow artistic importance. The territory in which these earliest stelae were erected has long been pivotal in discussions of Indo-European origins and no matter where one might seek to derive them, one invariably assigns the steppe region of the Ukrainian Copper Age to early Indo-European-speaking populations. In the theories of Marija Gimbutas, this territory is generally represented as part of the Indo-European homeland and she makes frequent reference to the Ukrainian stelae as evidence for the earlier religious beliefs of the Indo-Europeans. Similarly, the Ukrainian stelae are often brought into discussion of the stela art of Alpine and western Europe, again in clearly Indo-European contexts.

For those who believe the Indo-European homeland either to have encompassed a much larger territory than the Pontic-Caspian region or have been originally set elsewhere, the Ukrainian steppe is most frequently attributed to the earliest Indo-Iranians. As the stelae date from

the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, they may then be seen as the earliest expressions of Indo-Iranian religious art. Consequently, no matter what one's views on the earliest location of the Indo-Europeans, it is likely that the Ukrainian stelae provide some of the earliest figurative expression of Indo-European mythology.

The primary purpose of this brief account of the Copper Age stelae of the Ukraine is to present the religious iconography of either the earliest Indo-Europeans or at least a portion of the earliest Indo-Iranians. This is an area which has been largely neglected, at least by those occupied with the study of the comparative mythology of the Indo-European peoples. For this reason, the authors hope that Indo-Europeanists, encountering this material for the first time in some detail, may be stimulated to attempt their own interpretations of this material. For our part, we have attempted to further such studies by reviewing previous 'readings' of the stelae and suggesting some possible lines of research.

This book began as a popular introduction to the Ukrainian stelae by the senior author, D. Ya. Telegin, which was published in Kiev in 1991 under the title *Vartovi Tysyacholit* ('Sentries of the Millennia'). Prof. Telegin has augmented the text with a brief catalogue of the Copper Age stelae. The second author has edited, enlarged and extended discussion particularly with reference to Indo-European interpretations of the stelae.

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Chapter 1
Stelae of the Copper Age

Introduction

In the territory comprising the Ukraine, Moldavia, the northern Caucasus and the land north of the Caspian Sea, the Copper Age comprises the period from *c.* 4000 to 2000 BC. During this period the Pontic-Caspian region witnessed the full development of mixed farming and stock-breeding economies and the earliest appearance of the domesticated horse and wheeled vehicles. Metal ores were begun to be exploited and tools of copper and then bronze gradually began to replace technologies based solely on stone and bone permitting an increasingly more productive labor.

The economic changes in the early Copper Age helped stimulate deep social changes within society. Leaders began to emerge who might command and persuade and, perhaps equally important, the common population began to learn the necessity of obedience, subordination and submission. This stratification of early society is most evident when studying mortuary practice (Gimbutas 1991; Mallory 1990). In the cemeteries of the mesolithic and neolithic populations of the region, one encounters large family or communal burial plots (Telegin and Potekhina 1987) with little to distinguish between the status of the deceased. If the system of interment reflects the social organization of a people, then the pattern of these burials suggests relatively egalitarian corporate groups which, on occasion, might evidence an elder accompanied by a mace but who was buried in association with what would appear to be many other 'commoners.' In the Copper Age, we find a shift to individual burial rather than communal and here the leaders of society are set apart from the rest of their communities in huge burial pits topped with high *kurgans* or mounds. It is also at this time that there first appears a new form of expressing social distinctions, the monumental stone stelae that served as beacons of a new social order.

It was in 1863 that the first anthropomorphic stone stela was discovered in the village of Natalevka (Fig. 1.1) in the Dnepropetrovsk region. Then in 1915 a number of stelae were found in the village of Belogrudovka (Fig. 1.2-3) in the Uman region. Since then the greatest concentration of stelae has been recovered from the Ukraine where they number in the hundreds. The Ukraine covers about half the overall territory of their distribution which ranges from the north Caucasus in the east to Romania and Bulgaria in the west (Fig. 2). The stelae are

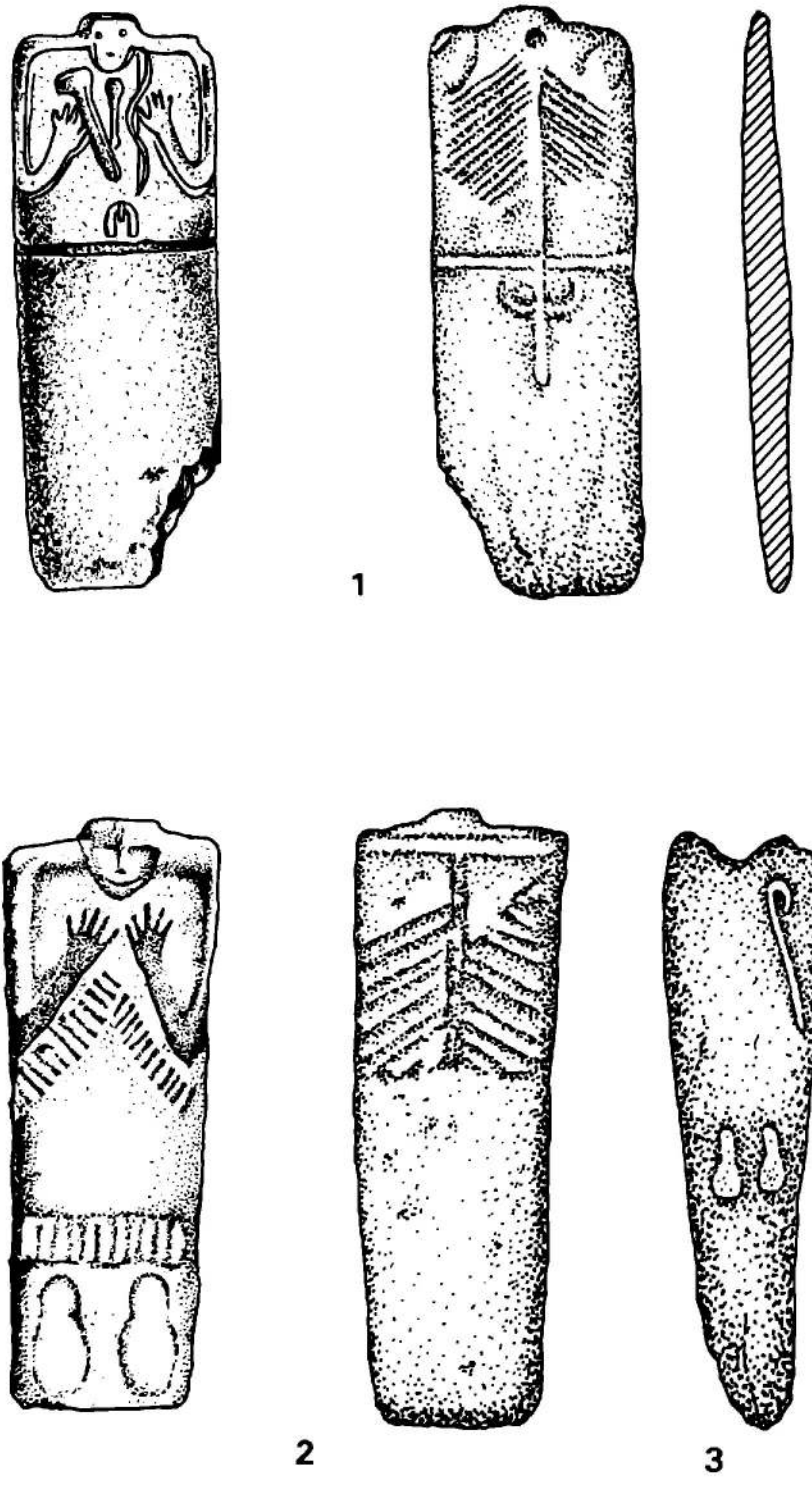


Figure 1-1. Natalevka (h = 1.6m); **1-2.** Belogrudovka I (h = 1.03 m); **1-3.** Belogrudovka II (h = 2.37m).

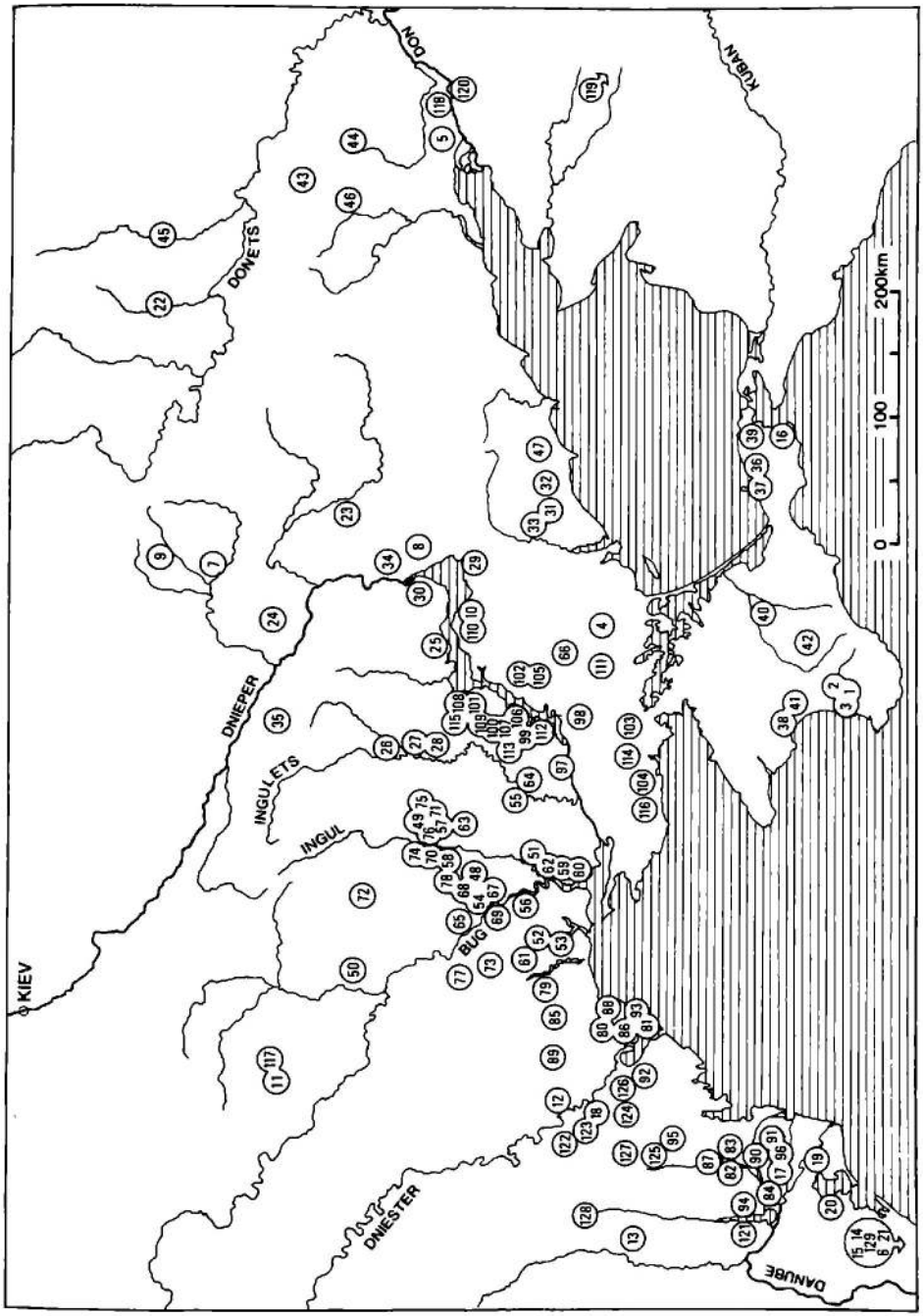


Figure 2. Distribution of stelae cited in text and catalogue.

often found near kurgans or beneath them, usually in groups of two to four, where they were employed to roof over burial pits which were then topped with a kurgan (Fig. 3.1).

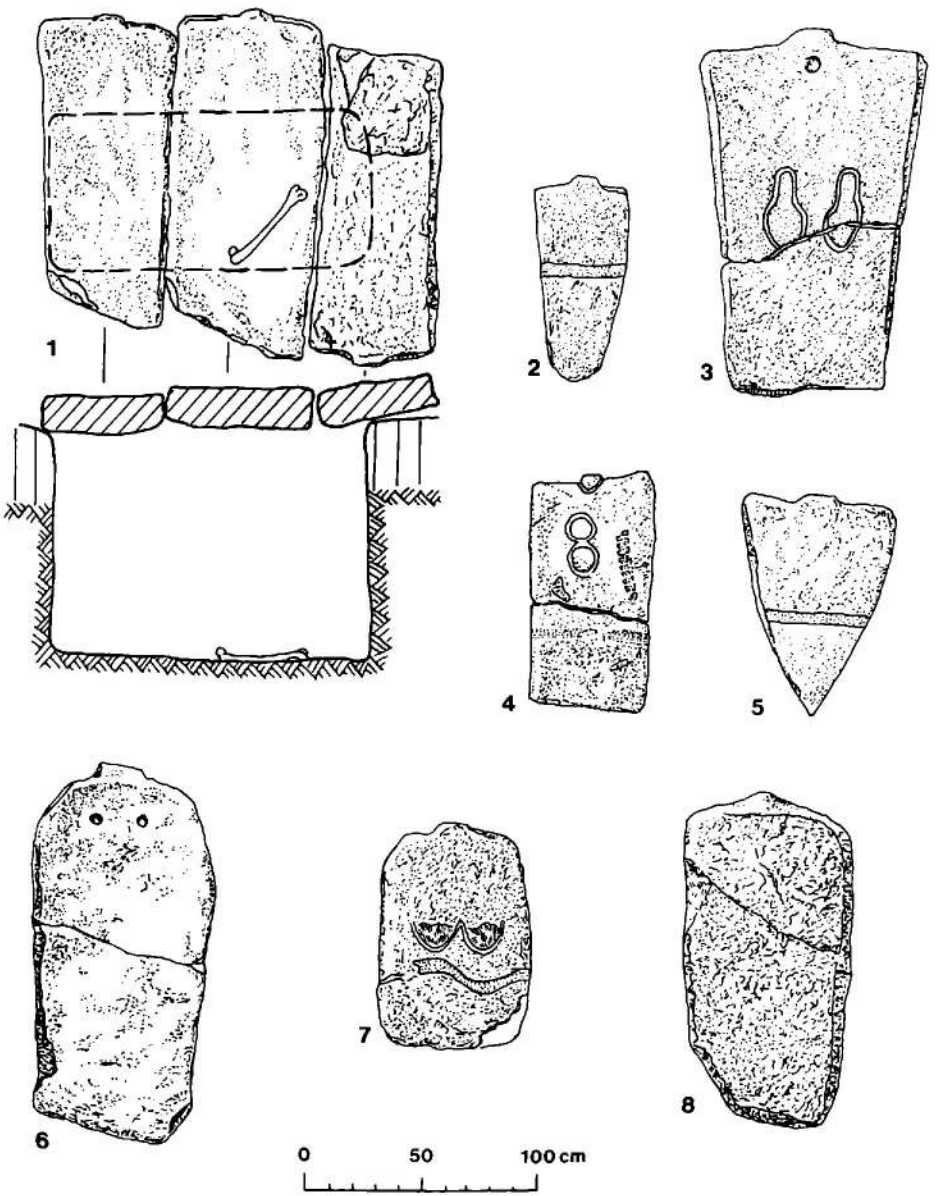
These anthropomorphic stelae were carved from a variety of stones — granite, limestone, and sandstone — and so far there is no evidence that the stone was imported over any considerable distance. Usually, they are monumental in size, often life-size or even larger. For example, one of the stelae found at Belogrudovka measured more than 2.4 m in height.

The precise number of Copper Age stelae is unknown and the amount increases each year. Today we know of approximately 300 or more examples with about 170 of these situated in the region between the rivers Bug and Ingulets.

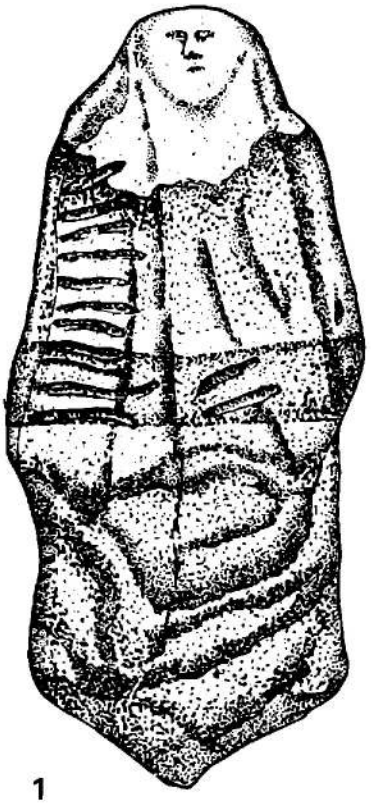
Simple Stelae

The stelae have been divided variously into two, three or more groups according to the fineness of their execution and the nature of the images portrayed upon them, e.g. A. O. Shchepinsky (1963), A. A. Formosov (1969), T. D. Zlatkovskaya (1963). We prefer to divide the stelae initially into two broad groups. The first one comprises simple schematic forms that exhibit only a protruding head, rounded shoulders, and, as a rule, little if anything else, although of the 149 examples from the southern Bug area, 45% retain some form of ornament, often consisting of a belt applied in ochre. In some instances, after the sculpting of the head, there were no further alterations to the stone. In the Crimea we find a subgroup of the simple variety often distinguished by a large head or the absence of shoulders, e.g., Ilichovo, Popovka, Konstantinovka (Fig. 4.1), etc. The simple schematic types constitute the overwhelming majority of stelae.

Although schematic in form and realization of physical features, the simple stelae have been divided into as many as 12 types (e.g. Fig. 3.2-8) with some of them further divided into sub-types (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986: 25-30). The typology is based on general form (rectangular, trapezoidal, triangular), position and height of neck, angle of shoulder, etc. Half the number of the stela types are distributed in discrete geographical areas, however, of the 12 types, 9 are found in mutual association. There is also a small category of multi-headed figures in the Pontic-Caspian region. Generally they portray two or three heads at the top of the statue, e.g. Limany (Fig. 21.3), but recently a stela with heads on opposing ends has been recovered from Utkonosovka. Finally, there are a series of phallic stones that have also been recovered from the Ukraine.



Figures 3-1. Stelae over Yamna grave (Mefodiyevka 1/2); **3-2.** Ivanovka I 3/7; **3-3.** Kasperovka 1/1 (Type 8); **3-4.** Starogorozheno 2/3; **3-5.** Starogorozheno 3/1 (Type 11); **3-6.** Antonovka 1/2 (Type 6); **3-7.** Starogorozheno 3/1 (Type 8); **3-8.** Starogorozheno 3/3.



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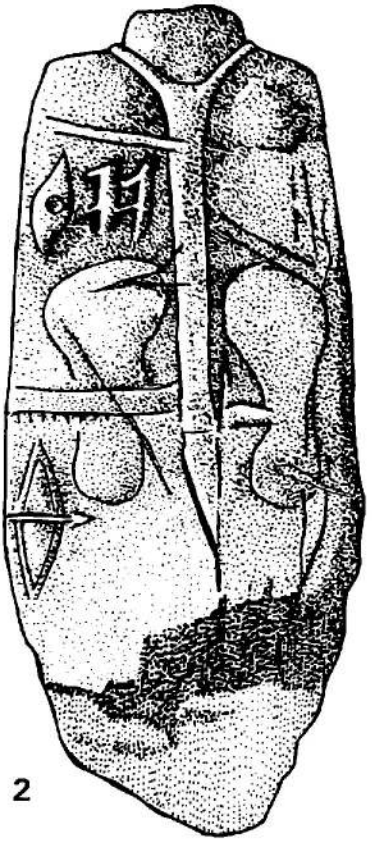

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Figure 4-1. Konstantinovka (h = 1.18 m); **4-2.** Svatovo (h = 0.98 m).

Statue-menhirs

The second type of stelae, which we classify as 'statue-menhirs,' not only displays the parts of the body but also many other attributes such as weapons, ornaments, human and animal figures, etc. They number relatively few, somewhat over 20 specimens so far; however, they still provide an abundance of material requiring interpretation.

The statue-menhirs of the Pontic region are fine examples of stone-carving which required an assortment of sculptural techniques combined with great artistic skill. It seems clear that artists shared a common approach to the manufacture of these realistic figures, paying attention to certain parts of the anatomy rather than others and employing different techniques in order to realize the different parts of the body or the ornamentation. For example, when dealing with the human form, the artists concentrated primarily on portraying the upper part of the body — the head, shoulders, face, hands and arms — to the neglect of the legs. Only occasionally was the lower part of the body indicated, particularly what would appear to be 'foot-prints', perhaps employing the *pars pro toto* principle where the foot-prints were intended to represent the entire leg (although there are other possible interpretations of this feature as we will see in the next chapter). These foot-prints would generally be situated in the lower part of the sculpture, either on the front or the back, but could also be indicated behind the belt, e.g. Svatovo (Fig. 4.2), or they might be superimposed on it, e.g. Kernosovka (Fig 8), Fedorovka (Fig. 14). Rarely does one find them above the waist, e.g. Novocherkassk (Fig. 5.3).

Regardless of the hardness of the material (granite, sandstone, limestone) or the primitiveness of the copper or bronze tools, the sculptor managed to emphasize specific poses which may have signaled the social role of the individual portrayed. This was accomplished primarily by varying the positions of the arms, modelling the head and the facial expression, and by the ornament indicated on the upper part of the stela. Such differences suggest some grounds for dividing them into three types: Kazanki, Natalevka and Yezerovo-Tiritaka.

The best examples of the Kazanki type are known from the Crimea and Sea of Azov region, e.g. Kazanki (Fig. 5.1), Verkhorechye (Fig. 6), Akchokrak (Fig. 5.2), Novocherkassk (Fig. 5.3), etc. Generally, these are tall gracious sculptures. The head is high, the face is stern and glowers under the eyebrows; the hands with fingers straight are held proudly against the stomach, the thumb usually pointing up and away from the fingers. Most of these statues are decorated with weapons such as the battle-ax, the bow, quiver, etc., along with figures of animals and

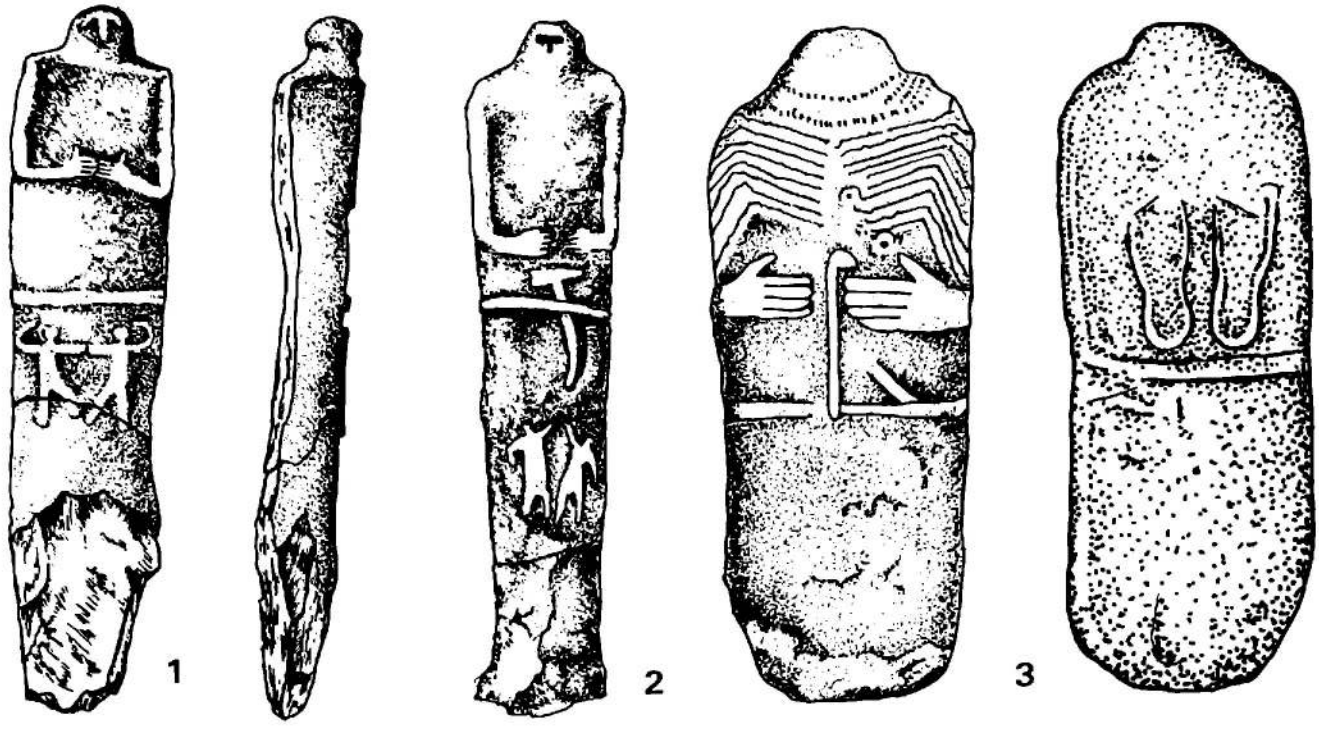


Figure 5-1. Kazanki (h = 1.45 m); **5-2.** Akchokrak; **5-3.** Novocherkassk (h = 0.98 m).

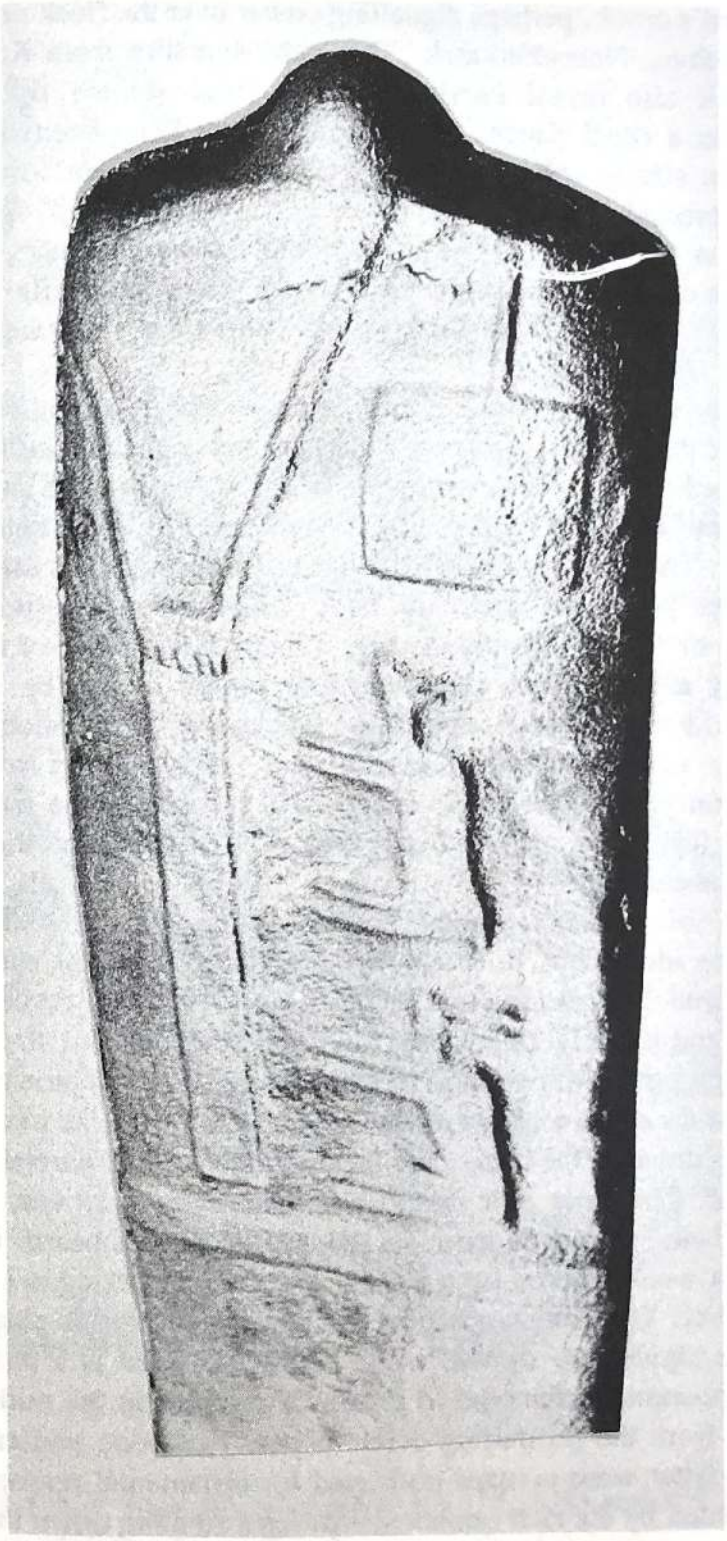


Figure 6. Verkhorechye (h = 1.75 m).

a shepherd's crook, perhaps signalling power over the flock or herd, e.g. Verkhorechye, Novocherkassk. The statue-menhirs from Kazanki and Akchokrak also reveal carvings of two small human figures posed duelling in a ritual dance. These figures may have been deliberately reduced in size to enhance the importance of the client for whom the stela was erected. Two such pairs were discovered by A. O. Shchepinsky in 1968 on the Verkhorechye stela. Here one of the pairs of figures reveals the clear-cut representation of a male and a female figure. Unlike other statue-menhirs of the Kazanki type, there are also paired animals and other figures (Fig. 6).

Statue-menhirs of the Natalevka type are distinguished by the position of their hands and arms which are bent upwards at the elbows, hands together, e.g. Pervomayevka (Fig. 10.2), or with straightened fingers pressed against the chest e.g. Natalevka (Fig. 1.1), Belogrudovka (Fig. 1.2). The head usually sits low and almost sunk into the shoulders with a clear relief-line under the chin. On some stelae, such as those from Baia de Cris (Körösbanya; Fig. 7.1-3), the contour of the head is completely absent. These statue-menhirs appear to convey a figure at worship, its face (when depicted) displaying humiliation, awe or repentance. Compared to the Kazanki stelae, the Natalevka stelae exhibit less weaponry and there is no shepherd's crook. On the necks of the Plachydol (Fig. 7.4) and Yezerovo (Fig. 7.5) stelae, even the braids of hair are indicated.

One of the best Natalevka-type stelae is undoubtedly the Kernosovka idol (Figs. 8, 9). It was carved out of a flat slab of stone that measured 120 cm long and 36 cm wide. The statue reveals a clear-cut head and slightly rounded shoulders. The sides of the head are marked with ears with openings in their center. The sculptor utilized the contours of the stone to show a bald-spot on the top of the head with the hair falling down to the back. The face is flattened and narrows towards the bottom. The eyes and mouth are marked by grooves, the same technique being employed to model the moustache and beard. Both sides of the stela were covered by a variety of geometric designs carried out in deep relief. The arms are bent at the elbows, the hands placed on the chest. The nipples are shown, while below the waist is a phallus. The sculptor apparently attempted to portray the figure in the nude and this is evident from the protruding collar bones, backbone and ribs on the back. The latter were perhaps portrayed for ornamental reasons and are complemented by the rich ornamental designs running down the sides of the stela. It is possible that this ornament represents an attempt to indicate tatoos. Other than a belt, there are no other traces of clothing.

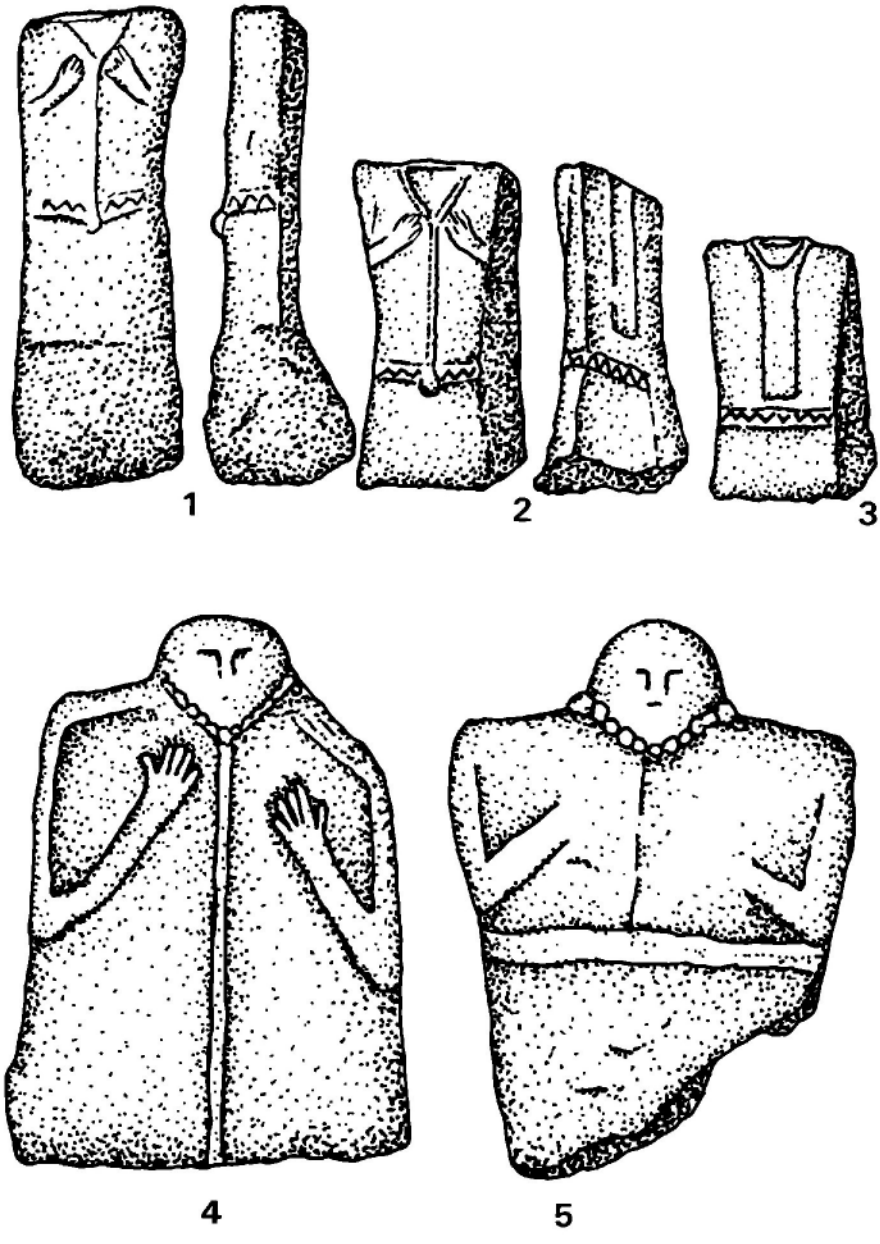


Figure 7-1,2,3. Baia (Krörösbanya; h = 1.4, 1.05 and 0.9 m); **7-4.** Plachydol (h = 1 m); **7-5.** Yezerovo (h = 1.13 m).

Figure 8. Kernosovka (h = 1.20 m).

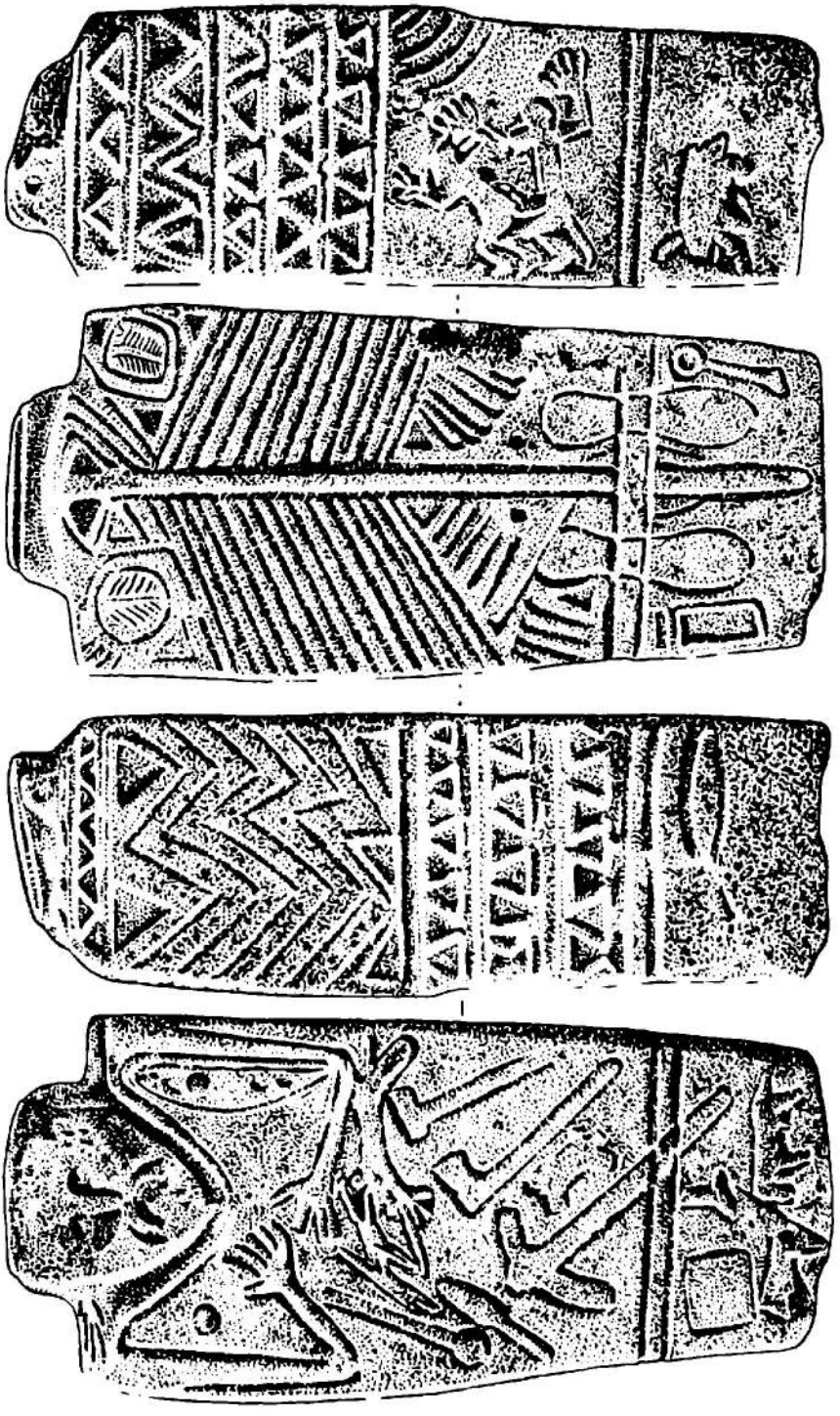


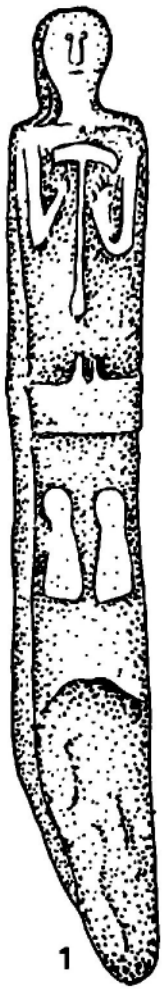
Figure 9. Kemosovka (h = 1.75 m).

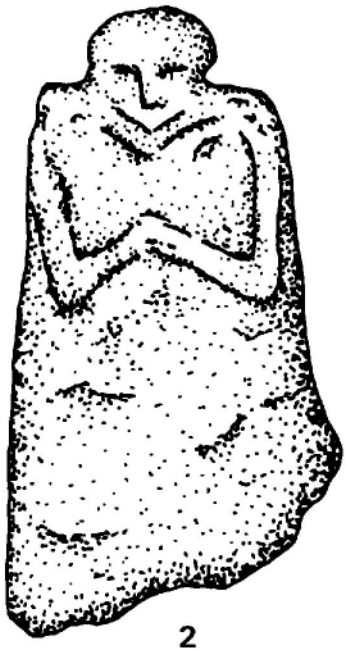
The entire front of the stela is covered with various figures. The most interesting of these is the scene depicting hunters armed with a long stick chasing two small animals. There are also various weapons figured on the stela. These include a bow, arrows, a mace, two battle-axes and the tip of a spear or a knife. Behind the belt, an ax-like object is depicted. Two horses are shown on the lower part of the stela. On the left side of the statue is a creature with large horns (a bull?) and above the belt two human figures in sexual intercourse. In addition, there are four figures — a quadrangle, an ellipse and more ambiguous designs on the front and back of the stela. In general, the Kernosovka idol is one of the finest statues of its kind in Europe with respect both to the variety of its ornamentation and perfection of its execution. In addition to the Kernosovka stela, other Natalevka-type stelae are known from Chobruchi (Fig. 10.1), Pervomayevka (Fig. 10.2) and Nevsha (Fig. 10.3).

The Yezerovo-Tiritaka stelae are distinguished by having a more massive and stocky body, and although the head is drawn into the shoulders as with the Natalevka type, the position of the hands is different. These hang down, sometimes with arms bent at the elbows, fingers outstretched, resting on the belly. In some instances a belt is depicted, e.g. Novoselovka (Fig. 11.1) and Hamangia (Fig. 11.2); otherwise no other items of clothing are depicted. Other decoration is limited to ax-hammers which are found engraved on the back of a stela from Hamangia and a shepherd's crook depicted behind the belt of the Novoselovka stela. Among the statues from Tiritaka (Fig. 12), one is male and another female with clearly cut breasts while a stela from Aleksandrovka (Fig. 13.1), Moldavia, has a row of furrows cut into it.

One of the finest examples of this type of stela comes from the eponymous site of Yezerovo in Bulgaria (Fig. 13.2). It stands about 2 m high and was cut from a flat block of sandstone. The facial features of a strong-willed person are perfectly executed. The hands hang down slanting toward the waist and appear to clasp a large pendant. The pendant, to which most of the attention of the sculptor was directed, is suspended from a massive chain. Possibly the pendant is a symbol of status of the person depicted. Near the right hand, above the belt, is seen the contours of an engraved ax. The buckle of the belt is itself clearly depicted and it may possibly represent a metal original.

Although we may divide the stelae from the North Pontic region into a number of different types, it must be admitted that they do not differ according to their iconography. Quite often stelae may embody features of two or even three different types while some stelae resist classification into any of the proposed types, e.g. Svatovo (Fig. 4.2), and





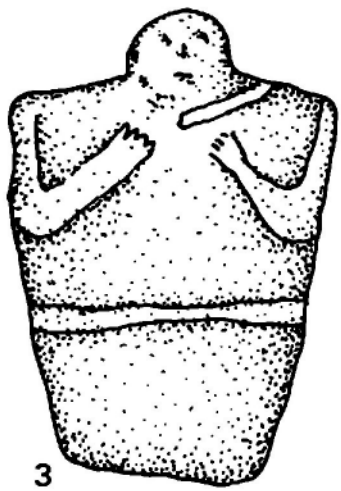


Figure 10-1. Chobruchi (h = 2.58 m); **10-2.** Pervomayevka (h = 0.52 m); **10-3.** Nevsha.

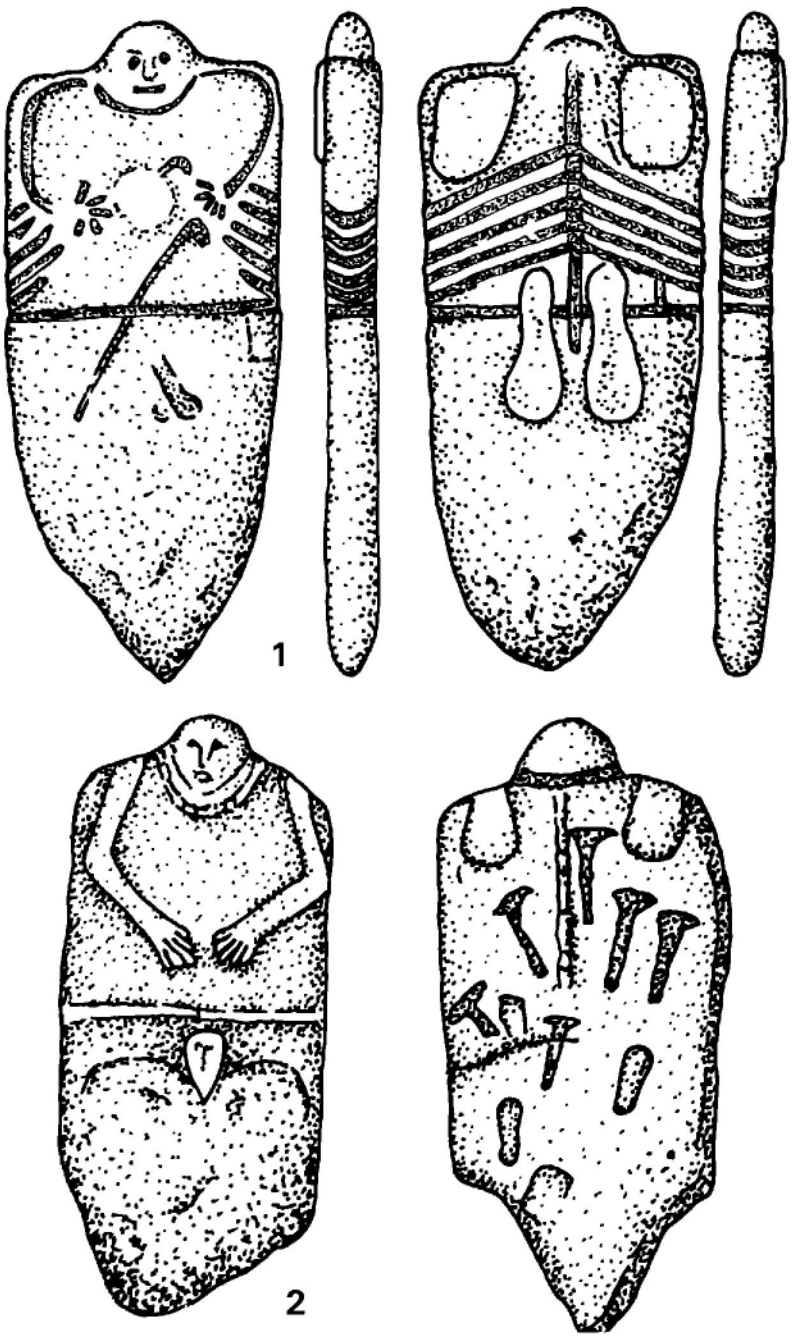


Figure 11-1. Novoselovka (h = 1.2 m); **11-2.** Hamangia (h = 1.95 m).

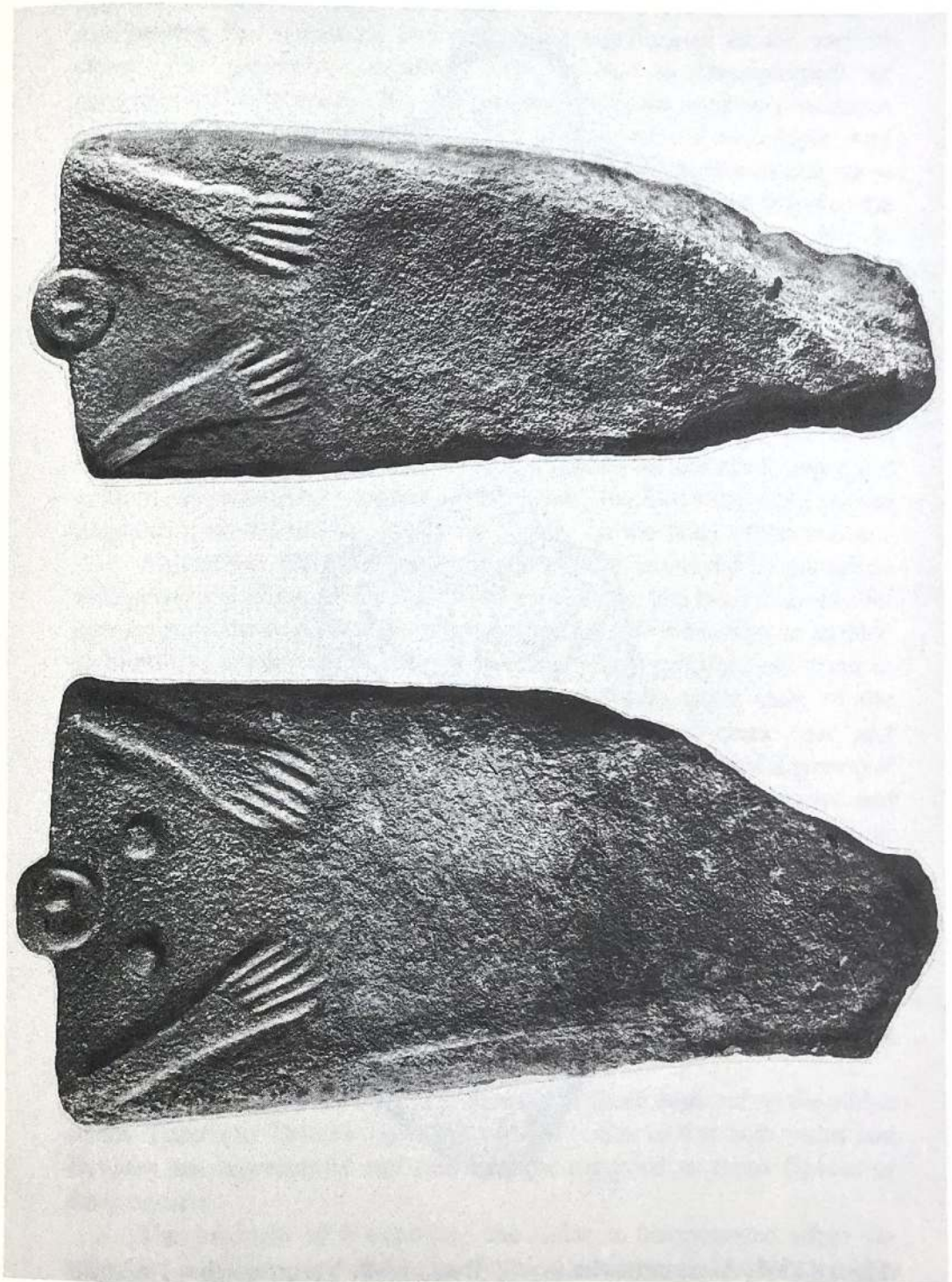
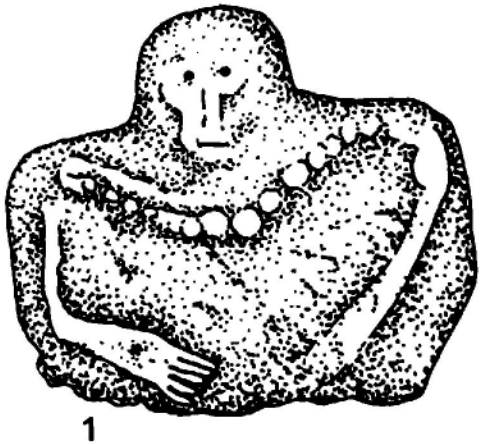


Figure 12. Tiritaka stelae (female = 0.72 m; male = 1.85 m).



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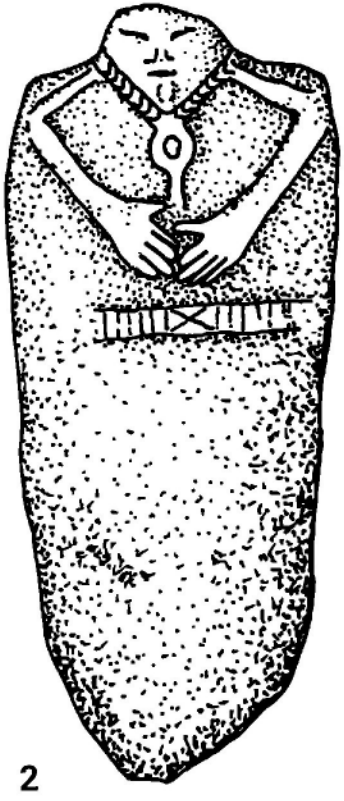

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Figure 13-1. Alexsandrovka (h = 0.72 m); **13-2.** Yezerovo (h = 1.85 m).

perhaps Fedorovka (Fig. 14). This, obviously, poses difficulties in interpreting the semantics and underlying significance of the various types. For example, variation may be due to chronological or geographical differences. We still lack, however, the necessary evidence to discern such patterns. Quite often, all the various stela types may occur in the same region, although there is some evidence for some patterns of distribution, i.e. the Kazanki type are more often found in the Crimea, the Natalevka type along the Dnieper (although also in Moldavia, e.g. Chobruchi) and the Yezerovo-Tiritaka variant in the east Balkans and Crimea.

Among the many factors that influenced the appearance of the statue-menhirs, we may perceive the intent of the sculptor to represent the images of various members or roles of the society of the time. For example, the stelae of the Kazanki type with head raised high, glowering face and hands positioned on the belly suggests an attempt to represent a chief, commander or master of the herds, the latter indicated by the shepherd's crook and the miniature figures on the body of the master.

An entirely different meaning seems to be conveyed by the artists who produced stelae of the Natalevka type. Here, the head is deeply set into the shoulders with hands raised to the face and it conveys an attitude of humility, obedience or even fear. This would certainly not seem to represent the same individual portrayed with the eagle stare of the Kazanki and Verkhorechye stelae. The attitude of meek face and suppliant posture suggests that here we may be dealing with the portrayal of a priest or shaman whose duties were to secure through prayer and magic the fruits of the hunt, the fertility of the herds and the well-being of the tribe. It is also on such stelae that we find the surface covered with numerous figures, among which are ornaments and weapons and various, presumably esoteric, designs. The decoration and ornaments may have been intended to recall the details of clothing and amulets appropriate to the priests in a primitive society. On the other hand, the specific significance of the two hunting scenes and intercourse on the Kernosovka stela remains a mystery.

It is more difficult to define the role of those depicted on the stelae of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type. We can only observe that both males and females are represented and they may be regarded as status figures of their society.

The problem of interpreting the stelae is compounded when we take into consideration the entire Pontic-Caspian region where we not only find single-headed individuals but also two and three-headed figures. One of these, for example, is exhibited in the museum in

Figure 14. Federovka (h = 1.33 m).

Nikolayev. While the multi-headed stelae generally figure the heads on the upper end of the stela, a recently discovered figure from the village of Utkonosovka, now housed in the Odessa museum, is quite exceptional. Here we find the two heads positioned on opposite ends of the stela.

One of the more troubling features of defining the stelae into different types — those portraying chiefs and those indicating priests or shamans — is that the same kinds of weapons and animals are depicted on both. Perhaps we must deal with polyvalent meanings where animals, for example, may indicate the master of herds on a chieftain's stela but fertility on a stela associated with a priest much in the way that the Norse god Thor possessed a hammer that served as both a weapon and symbol of fertility. Finally, some of the stelae appear to combine the features of chief and shaman together, e.g. Chobruchi (Fig. 10.1), as may have also been the case in the society itself.

Sanctuaries

The bottom ends of the statue-menhirs were unworked and there is no dispute that the stelae were intended to be inserted upright into the ground. On other aspects opinions do differ concerning two outstanding problems: where were the stelae supposed to have been erected and for what purpose? Some, for example, have regarded the stelae as grave slabs that were erected atop the kurgans of the Copper Age Yamna culture about 3000 BC. While such a theory is easily understood, recent systematic excavations in the Ukraine disprove this theory since stelae are recovered not on the surface of the mounds but underneath them where they served as coverings for burial pits. Moreover, it is also obvious that this was not their original position since they are found intermixed with unworked stone slabs to form the roofs of the burial pits. In some cases, such as at Kichkas where stelae were employed in the construction of a cromlech surrounding the kurgan (Fig. 15), they were even inserted upside down. In many instances they had even been broken.

N. D. Dovzhenko (1980) has proposed a possible explanation for this situation where we do have clear evidence that the stelae had been dug up prior to their final use. She suggests that the stelae were intended for double use: they were initially established in the vicinity of the grave and then, after interment, they were employed to cover the pit. This explanation is interesting but there is a more likely solution to this problem.

It should be recalled that the stela tend to be found together, in

Figure 15. Kichkas cromlech with inverted stelae.

groups of anywhere from three to five in a single grave. Along with the stela there are often found rectangular stone slabs that have been worked on all sides and cup-marks have been found on the surface of the stones. This has prompted several archaeologists (Häusler 1966; Telegin 1971) to suggest that these Copper Age stelae had originally been erected upright and along with the other stone slabs were constructed as sanctuaries in a manner reminiscent of somewhat similar ritual structures only recently known from Italy (Fedele 1990) and Sicily. I. M. Chechenov (1973: 63) came to similar conclusions with regard to the neolithic Kabardino-Balkaria stelae having been used twice, initially in sanctuaries.

It would seem that *c.* 3000 BC the southern steppe region was dotted with such sanctuaries that employed stelae and stone altars for rituals and sacrifices. It should be emphasized that the assumption that the Pontic-Caspian cultures were early Indo-Europeans and that they *did not* employ altars or religious sanctuaries (*pace* Gimbutas 1991: 396) is refuted by this archaeological evidence and these stelae provide fragmentary evidence of the earliest Indo-European religious structures (alternatively, one might prefer to argue that these stelae represent the iconographic evidence for the religion of non-Indo-Europeans, specifically north Caucasians). Unfortunately, the sanctuaries have generally been severely damaged or totally destroyed in antiquity or through subsequent agricultural activities. On the other hand, we have been fortunate enough to discover several of them preserved intact under earthen mounds. One is known from near the village of Kalanchak in the Kherson region, excavated by I. D. Ratner (1984), another from near the town of Krivoy Rog (excavated by L. P. Krylova) and a third in the Nikolayev region which O. G. Shaposhnikova excavated near the village of Nova Odessa.

The ritual structure at Kalanchak was situated under a circular earthen embankment, 5.5 m in diameter and surrounded by a ditch about 0.5 m wide. The entrance into the precinct was on the south-west side where the ditch was interrupted by a causeway. In various places within the ditch one whole and two broken stelae were recovered. Red ochre was found adhering to the stelae and also in the ditch where remains of Copper Age vessels were found. The ritual structure itself was near a small kurgan dating to the Yamna period, i.e. the 3rd millennium BC, and both the ritual precinct and the kurgan grave were covered by an enormous earthen mound which was presumably erected in the later Catacomb period.

Remains of a similar sanctuary, more than 10 m in diameter, were

discovered near the town of Krivoy Rog under the earthen fill of the Rakhmanovka kurgan. There, in the center of the round enclosure, lay a stela with a table-like altar that had been carved from a stone block. The altar measured about 2 m long and was accompanied by a box-like structure, the interior of which had been painted red. A human skeleton was found inside. Near the altar were several stelae, either heavily damaged or completely shattered, and they had been deposited as rubble. Undoubtedly, they had been transported here from the ruined sanctuary.

The sanctuary near the village of Nova Odessa was of a generally rectangular shape, its entrance cut through the western side. Around the precinct was a ditch from which seven worked stones were recovered, one of which resembled a primitive anthropomorphic stelae (Fig. 16). Three slabs were found side by side and it is possible that the altar was originally surrounded on three sides by a wall consisting of worked stone slabs and stelae. This is supported by the presence of numerous small support stones in the ditch. The entire structure was about 7 m across.

There are other traces of ancient sanctuaries in the Pontic region. These would include one near the village of Burgunka in the Kherson region, Ivanovka in the Nikolayev region and Yezerovo in Bulgaria. Unfortunately, all of these were damaged centuries ago. It is also possible that the well-known ornamented blocks of stone from the Verbovky kurgan (Fig. 17) in the Chyhyryn region were also originally part of a Copper Age sanctuary. The ornamentation on the stones is stylistically close to the types of decoration seen on stones from Rakhmanovka and Voikov in the Krivoy Rog region, that were excavated by L. P. Krylova. Similar ornamentation is also known from the stone cists of the Kemi-Oba culture near Staroselya in the Kherson region.

To sum up then, we find a series of ritual enclosures, either oval or rectangular, across the north Pontic area. The actual altars of these precincts included stelae, worked slabs of stone or perhaps simple elongated blocks. As we have seen above, both the stelae and the worked stone slabs were often re-used later on to cover the pit-graves of the Yamna culture. As was the case for the stelae, the lower part of the stone slabs was completely unworked. In some instances the slabs formed a wall about 1 m high and the upper part would be ornamented with motifs resembling trees. Such slabs from near the villages of Otradny and Pisky, in the Ingul region, show in some cases motifs also encountered on the walls of the altars. More often, however, the walls of the altar were painted with red ochre. The entrance into the sanctuaries appears to have been on the western or south-western side.

In the center of the sanctuary stood a menhir, which is at least

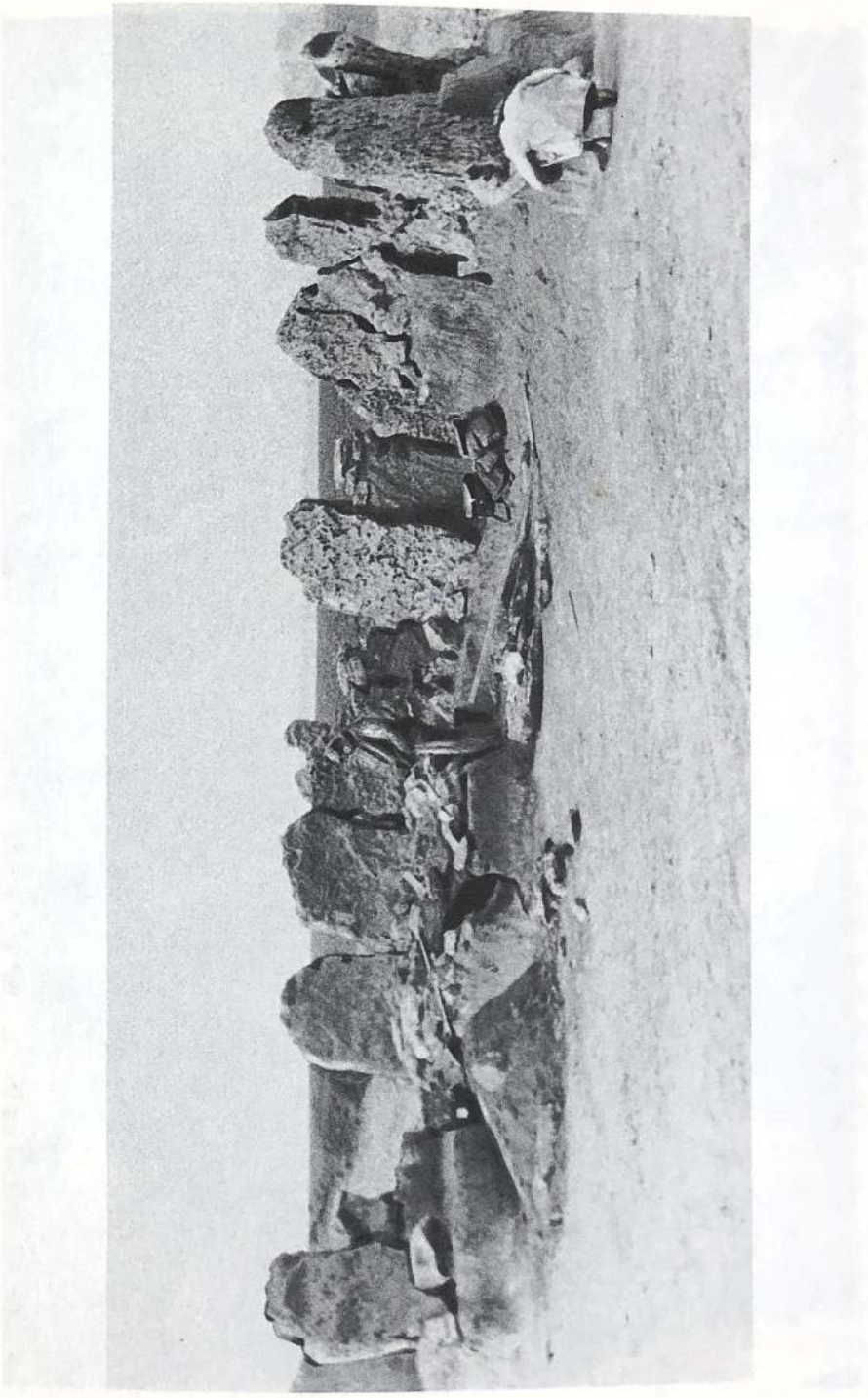


Figure 16. Nova Odessa

Figure 17. Verbovky kurgan.

supported by the kurgan near Krivoy Rog where the richly ornamented stelae was erected. Sometimes, in order to adjust a stela, a special slab of stone was employed as can be seen from A. O. Shchepinsky's excavations near the village of Blyzhnye-Boyove in the Crimea. It was irregular in shape and at its center was a rectangular opening made to fit the base of the stela. The surface of the stone was full of deep cup-marks which numbered about forty, some in small groups of 2 to 4 with an interconnecting groove.

It is quite possible that a non-anthropomorphic slab stela from Bakhchi-Eli (Chervona Gorka) near Simpheropol in the Crimea is closely connected with these altars (Fig. 18). It was discovered in a secondary layer close to a Bronze Age burial. In form it is rectangular and measures about a meter long. It was obviously intended to be erected vertically since all the images on it were located on the upper part while there were two rows of small spherical depressions also on the edge of the upper end. These are likely to be associated with sacrificial acts. The combination of the images and the depressions helps emphasize the cultic nature of the slab.

The most interesting figures are the two human beings on what is presumably the front surface of the slab. On this side there are also depicted battle-axes and some other objects such as a plow (?), a rake (?), etc. One of the two human figures on the front of the slab is entirely inverted with respect to the other which suggests a scene loaded with symbolism. A. A. Formozov (1966: 99-100; 1969) sees in this a duel between two heroes while B. A. Shramko (1972) has attempted to relate it to a myth of the dying and reviving god, i.e. a version of the Egyptian Osiris motif. A. A. Formozov emphasized the fact that the upside-down figure has his fingers clearly depicted while the upright figure does not display any fingers. Therefore, he concludes that the upright figure embodies a 'living person' while the second, inverted figure with outspread fingers suggests someone who is dead, an interpretation which may not be far off the mark.

The Creators of the Stelae and Sanctuaries

Who created the stelae and the altars and why were most of them destroyed in antiquity? The first question is not too difficult since we know that at the time the stelae were erected, the territory of their distribution was occupied by two major cultural groups: the Kemi-Oba culture and the Yamna cultural-historical horizon (Fig. 19).

The Kemi-Oba culture emerged in the early 4th millennium BC and the Yamna appeared between *c.* 3600 and 2000 BC. Both cultures

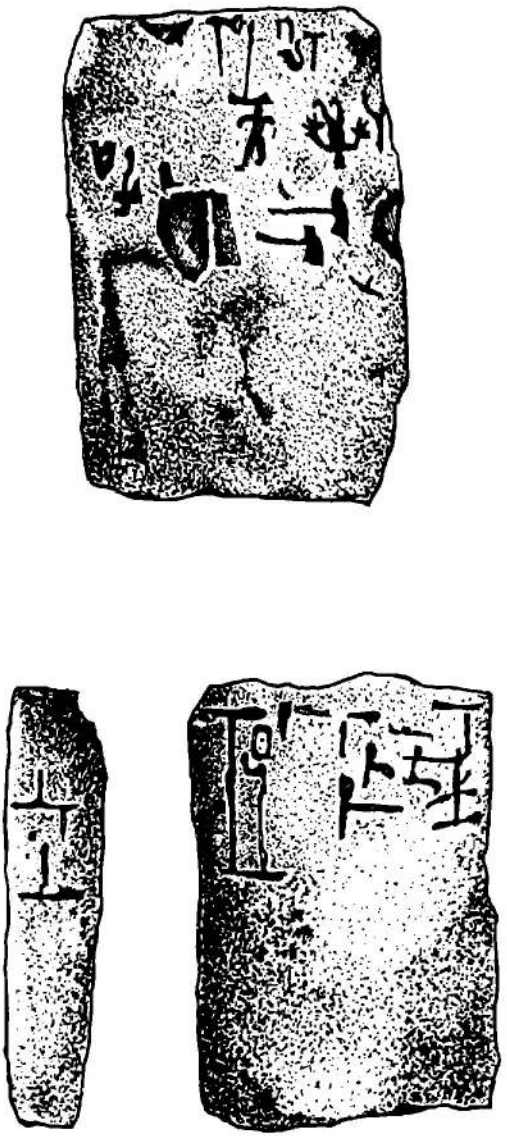


Figure 18. Bakhchi-Eti.

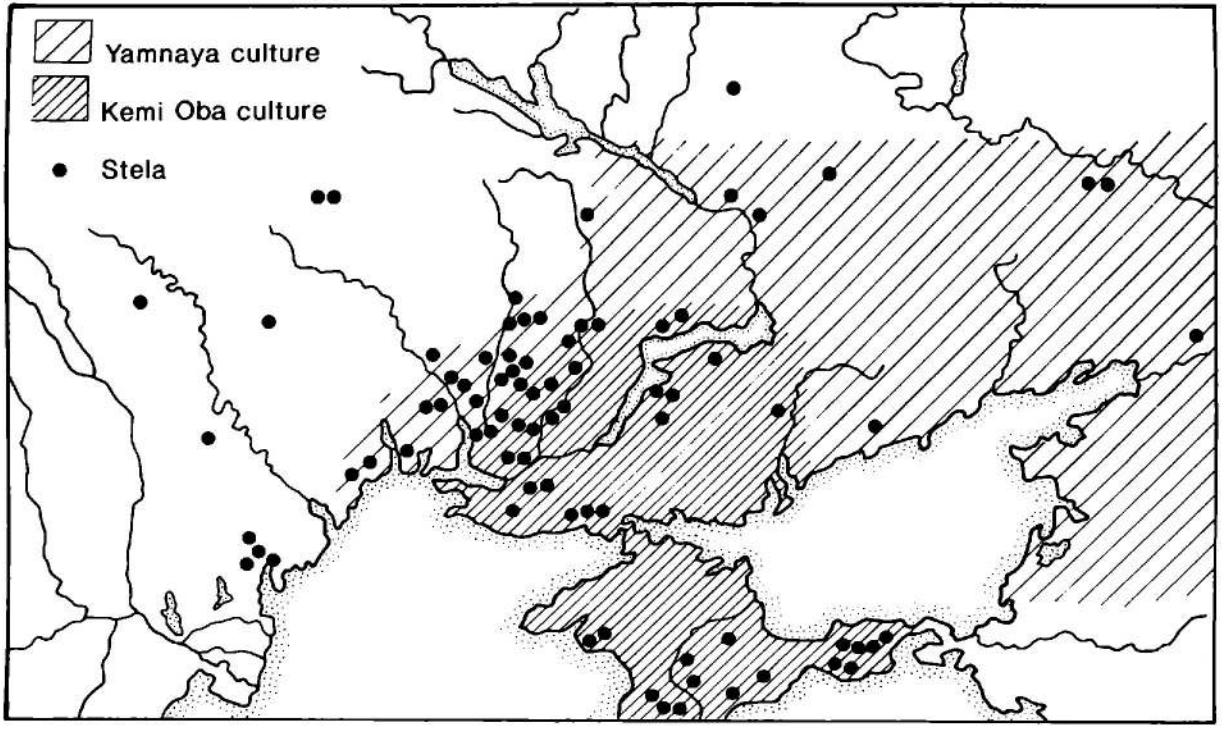


Figure 19. Stelae and the Kemi-Oba and Yamna regions.

practiced economies that were predominantly based on cattle-raising and apparently lived a (semi-?)nomadic life. Settlements are very few and what we know of their history, culture and every-day life derives principally from their kurgan burials. The Kemi-Oba culture was primarily distributed along the shores of the Black Sea steppe region within the Ukraine while the Yamna culture occupied a much larger territory, extending from the western Ukraine to the Volga-Ural rivers, an area far beyond that of the Kemi-Obans.

Although similar in economy, the two cultures differ considerably in material culture, mortuary practice and, possibly, even with respect to physical type.

The Kemi-Oba culture derives its name from a kurgan burial in the Crimea (Shchepinsky 1985). Sites of the culture are largely concentrated in the Crimea and the territory immediately to its north, particularly the lower Bug and Dnieper rivers east to the Taman peninsula. The economy reveals the remains of cattle, sheep, goat, pig and horse and agriculture is suggested by the presence of sickle blades and stone querns. Unlike the cruder vessels of their Yamna neighbors, they produced a much finer ceramic, the surface of which was polished black or grey-brown, a type of ware which is also familiar both in the north Caucasus and further north in the Lower Mikhaylovka culture of the Middle Dnieper, all of which have been included together in Marija Gimbutas's 'North Pontic Maikop Culture' (Gimbutas 1991: 370). The material culture includes both flint tools — arrows, dagger blades, sickles, scrapers, etc. — and occasionally copper tools such as awls, knives, spearheads, axes and chisels. Burial was in the flexed position and placed in either a pit or often in a stone cist under a kurgan. The cists are pivotal in understanding the background of the stelae since they clearly indicate a tradition of stone working among the Kemi-Oba tribes. The technical skills involved in their manufacture include the preparation of slots on the surfaces of the wall slabs so as to provide the cists with an exceptionally tight fit. On occasion, simple stelae uncovered in Yamna burials reveal their earlier provenience by the grooves (Fig. 39.7-9) which indicate that they were intended to have served in a cist. Moreover, there is frequent evidence that the walls might be decorated (Fig. 20), either through engraving or painting, again characteristics that find some parallels in the Early Bronze Age cultures of the north Caucasus (Rezepkin 1992), and sometimes the same style and form of animal figures recorded in the cists can also be found on the stelae. Its seems clear that it was the Kemi-Obans who were the creators of the anthropomorphic stone stelae and the stone altars.

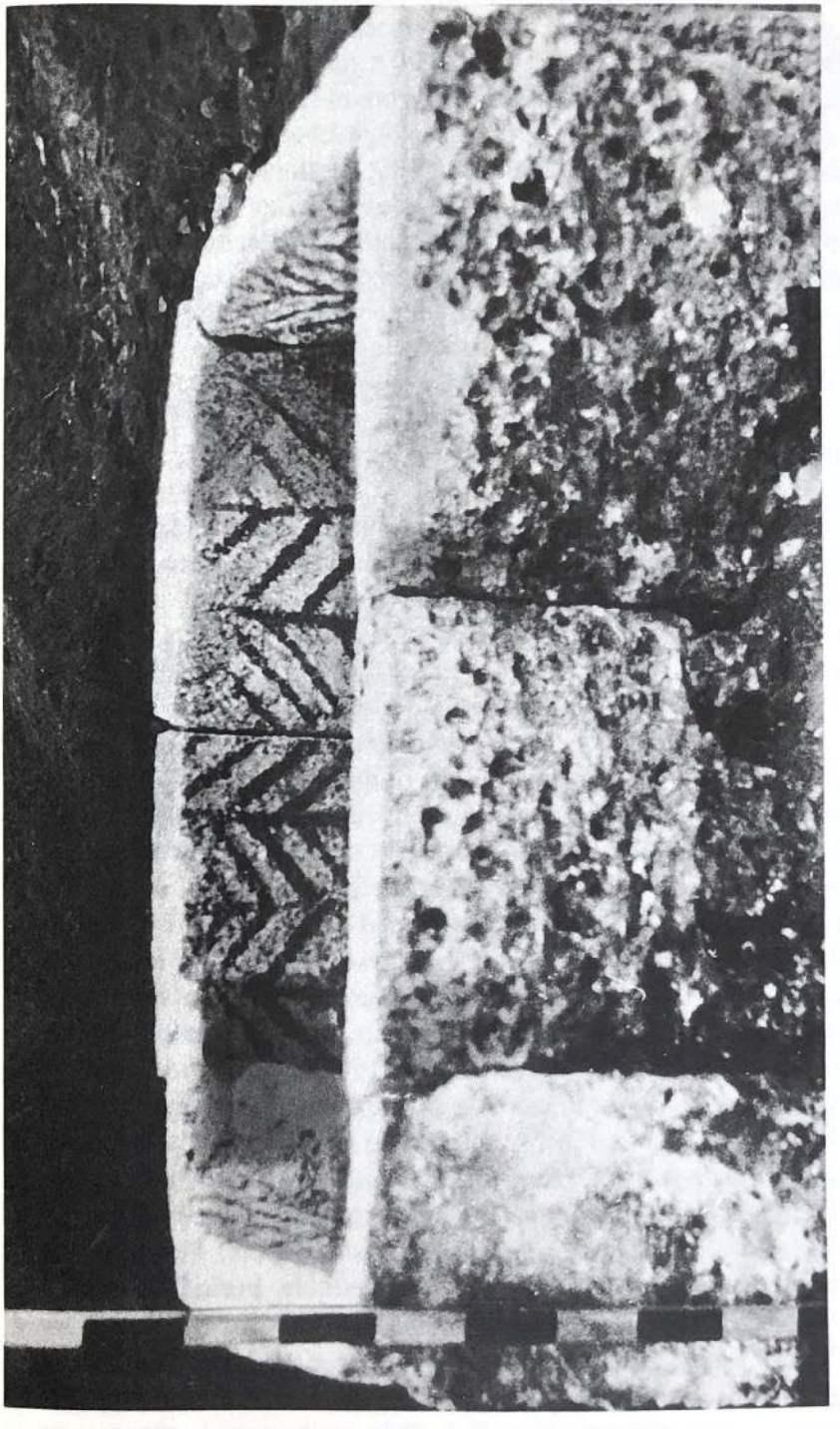


Figure 20. Kemi-Oba cist.

By the late 4th millennium BC, the Yamna tribes appeared in the lands of the Kemi-Oba culture and they extended not only across the west bank of the Dnieper but deep into the Crimea, the heartland of the Kemi-Oba culture. The Yamna culture is a broad term that incorporates many regional variants ranging from the Volga-Ural region west to the Danube (Merpert 1974; Shaposhnikova 1985; Mallory 1989: 210-215). The culture seems to have come into existence about 3600 BC and it flourished until about 2200 BC. Although some settlements are known, including the stone-built fortress of Mikhaylovka in the Ukraine, usually only camp sites are encountered and the presence of the horse and wheeled vehicles along with an economic emphasis on livestock, particularly mobile livestock such as cattle, sheep and horses (rather than the relatively immobile pig), have all suggested a highly mobile pastoral economy. Nevertheless, agricultural implements are known from Yamna sites.

Yamna burial was typically in a pit or shaft with the deceased in the flexed position, either on the back or side. Some form of grave elaboration is frequently evident such as the installation of a grass or timber floor or roof or the construction of wooden box-like chamber. The fact that there is no evidence for stone-working among the Yamna tribes of the eastern regions supports the notion that the Yamna culture lacked the appropriate background for the construction of stone stelae.

It would appear that religious beliefs of the Yamna tribes may have been opposed to the erection of stelae and stone altars and actively destroyed those that they found. As they did have a tradition of employing either logs or stone slabs to cover over the tops of their pit graves, they turned to the already processed slabs and stelae of the Kemi-Obans as building material for their own graves. An analogous process seems to have occurred in western Europe where late neolithic or Copper Age statue-menhirs were reused in the construction of Bell Beaker and Early Bronze Age graves (Fedele 1978: 311). Evidence from the Velikodolinskoe kurgan in the Odessa region suggests that they not only re-used stelae and altar slabs but also the sides of Kemi-Oba cists. One curious pattern that has emerged is that there is no evidence that the Yamna tribes utilized any of the highly decorated statue-menhirs in covering a grave but only the simple undecorated forms. Possibly, the more highly decorated stelae had been deliberately buried by Kemi-Obans to prevent their destruction by Yamna tribes.

Perhaps we are witnessing a struggle between two sets of religious ideologies in the north Pontic region where there is some evidence that the Yamna attitudes ultimately prevailed. This can be seen in the change

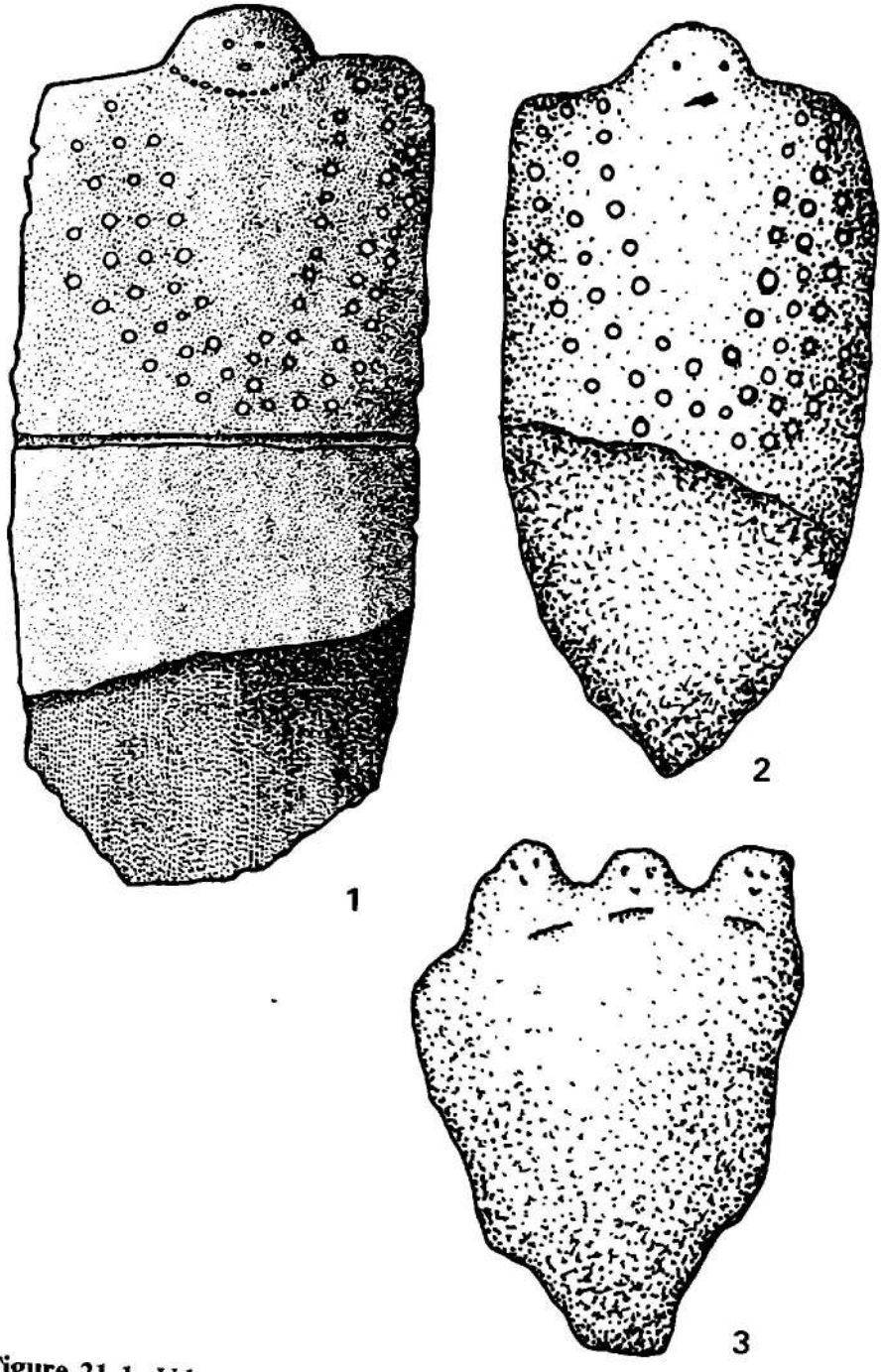


Figure 21-1. Utkonosovka; **21-2.** Shevchenkovo (h = 1.7 m); **21-3.** Limany.

of attitudes to the stelae by the Kemi-Obans after the intrusion of Yamna tribes. Not only did the Kemi-Obans themselves stop producing the stelae but they too began employing earlier stelae to cover over stone cists and even in forming the side-walls of the cists. For example, in a recent excavation near the village of Pokrovka, Veselynsky district, Nikolayev region, G. T. Kovpanenko discovered a Kemi-Oba burial in a decorated stone cist. One of the short walls of the cist was formed from an anthropomorphic stela and in order to improve the fit, two grooves were cut on a flat surface towards the end of the slab where the butt-ends were to be slotted.

The religious influences were not entirely one-way and there is some evidence that the former Kemi-Oba religion, where it was in contact with the Yamna tribes, did have a certain amount of influence. It is possible, for example, that the so-called non-standard stelae found in the steppe region were produced by Yamna tribes attempting to copy the forms originally produced by the Kemi-Obans.

Chapter 2
Imagery and Myth

Whether any meaning can be ascribed to the Pontic stelae depends to a great extent on what may be gleaned from the context of their deposition and the imagery that they convey. Both of these aspects are of particular importance to understanding the social or religious behavior of their creators, especially since both their context and their iconography have been interpreted explicitly within the framework of early Indo-European belief. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a survey of some of the interpretations that have been published in the past and to suggest and 'test' some possible explanatory models of the statue-menhir.

Context

As indicated in Chapter 1, the context of the stelae can be generally regarded as secondary to their original provenience, i.e. they were removed from some form of sanctuary and employed as stone slabs, generally as roofing material for Yamna burial pits. This is at least true of the plain stelae while the more elaborate and decorated statue-menhirs tend to lack any precise archaeological context, perhaps with the exception of some of the Bulgarian menhirs which are also found on clearly mortuary sites. Despite their secondary position, even their burial context may at least shed some light on the behavior of the Yamna and Catacomb tribes who employed the stelae if they were not their original creators. There have been at least two observations concerning the stela-capped burials.

Alexander Häusler (1964:38-39) has noted that there is a strong tendency for the stelae to be associated with the burials of children. He excludes a purely functional explanation, i.e. that the small size of the children's burial pits would be more easily covered by stelae, since they are also found with very large pits containing children as well. Häusler suggests that what would appear to be status burials for children are known since the Palaeolithic and that in the Yamna culture it is frequently children who have the majority if not the only grave goods in accompaniment.

More recently, N. Dovzhenko and N. Rychkov (1988) have seen the stelae as one of the markers of the highest status burials in the Bug-Ingulets region. They have argued that the labor estimates for the construction of the burials, measured in terms of the construction of the chamber and the size of the mound, distinguishes between three levels

of effort. These three degrees of labor are translated into three social classes and Dovzhenko and Rychkov make explicit reference to the Indic system of *brahmán*, *ksatriya* and *vaisya*. The largest pits and burials, those assigned to the priest class, were also marked by central location in their kurgans, primary burials, eastern orientation, rectangular pit, the positioning of one hand on the pelvis with the other extended alongside the body, and the presence of stone stelae. Approximately 50% of the putatively 'priest' burials were covered by a stone stela (with only 14% of those in the second class, i.e. *'ksatriya'* burials.

The frequent lack of ageing and sexing of skeletons accompanying many of the Yamna burials mitigates against the type of correlations or, at least the testing for such correlations, that one would require to advance a case for some form of social definition of the stelae burials (Mallory 1990). In the published compendia such as Yevgeny Yarovoy's (1985) summary description of 1000 Yamna burials from Moldavia, only 26 have stelae in their construction and of these only 2 are positively associated with the burial of a child. In the compendia of Yamna burials from the Bug-Ingulets (Shaposhnikova *et al.* 1986), about 111 of 931 burials listed are associated with some form of decorated stone (simple stelae and other forms). Of those offering some evidence for age, 74 (80%) are assigned to adults with 4 burials identified as those of juveniles and 15 of children; of the latter, 4 of the children were in burials accompanied by adults.

On the basis of such evidence, it seems clear that while children most certainly may have been buried with stelae, this was far from an exclusive practice and the majority of stelae were used to cover the burials of adults. As for their status, it is still very difficult to arrive at concrete conclusions. The correlations cited by Dovzhenko and Rychkov between size, i.e. effort of construction, and the presence of stone stelae does suggest some possible social patterning since it is this variable, the labor expended on the burial ritual, that shows the greatest ethnographic correlation with social status (Tainter 1978: 126). But it is necessary to add that this '*brahmán*' class was also marked by a distinctive absence of grave wealth and that there are serious difficulties in accepting the specific correlations between the three grave groups and the three Indic (or Indo-European) social classes (Mallory 1990). But setting aside a specifically Indo-European interpretation, if the correlation between mortuary effort and the presence of stelae is not invalidated by other factors, e.g. the confusion of social patterns with purely chronological, then there is some grounds for arguing that the stelae, no matter from where derived, found their way into Yamna tombs by some form of

social criterion and were not acquired randomly as pre-worked stone slabs. This is further emphasized by certain patterns of placement, e.g. headless stelae are generally placed over the feet of the deceased, etc. But without better evidence for the age and sex of the individuals buried in the stela-covered graves, little else can be proposed.

Anatomy and dress of the stelae

The statue-menhirs provide the largest single body of iconographic representation of what has sometimes been regarded as the earliest IE religious imagery (Gimbutas 1991: 399). In the past, this imagery has been interpreted largely in an *ad hoc* fashion, the figures on the stelae being interpreted in general Indo-European terms. Thus, Marija Gimbutas has recently written that solar motifs are:

> *associated with the belt, dagger, halberd, horse, stag, plowing scene, and a vehicle. To the specialist in comparative Indo-European mythology, such combinations of symbols will certainly recall the image of the God of the Shining Sky...the axe is connected with the Thunder God; the club, bow, quiver, and arrows are also his* (Gimbutas 1991: 399).

Here it is our intention to provide an overall summary of the Pontic stelae from the perspective of anatomy and imagery, and investigate to what extent Indo-European mythology may provide a key to elucidating these figures.

By definition, the statue-menhirs are anthropomorphic and the expression of the anatomical characteristics of the figures cannot help, to some degree, being a product of the cultural perceptions of their makers. The evidence of anthropomorphism is summarized in Table 1.

The information in Table 1 provides an approximate summary of the cognitive anatomy of the makers of the Copper Age stelae. It makes it evident that when figuring the features of the human form, primary attention was directed at representing the facial features, especially the eyes and nose, and the arms and hands. Other features of prominence were the foot-print motif, breasts, the backbone and ribs. Eight of the stelae show some evidence for breasts or nipples; however, it is not altogether clear that these must represent female figures. For example, the evidence of the pair of statue-menhirs from Tiritaka where the forms are identical but only one displays nipples suggests that both sexes were intended to be represented. On the other hand, nipples can clearly be seen on the Kernosovka menhir which also boasts male genitalia, a

Table 1: Anthropomorphic features of Copper Age stelae.
Mth-mouth, Hnds-hands, Brts-breast, Gen-genitalia, BB-back bone, Sh-shoulder, F-foot print, o-ochre.

Site	Eye	Nose	Mth	Arms	Hnds	Brts	Gen	Ribs	BB	Sh	F
Akchokrak	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aleksandrovskoye	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Antonovka	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Astanino 7/3	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baia	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Balki	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belogrudovka 1	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	x	-
Belogrudovka 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
Burgunka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-
Chemurlija	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-
Chobruchi	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	x
Fedorovka	broken ?		-	-	-	x	x	x	-	x	-
Hamangia	x	x	x	x	x	-	?	-	-	-	x
Ilichovo 4/9	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ivanovka 3/7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kapustino	x	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kasperovka 1/12	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kazanki	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kernosovka	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
Konstantinovka											
9/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	o
9/15	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	o

Table 1. *Continued.*

Site	Eye	Nose	Mth	Arms	Hnds	Brts	Gen	Ribs	BB	Sh	F
Kovale	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natalevka	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
Nevsha	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	x	-
Novocherkassk	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	x	-	-	x
Novoselovka	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	x
Pervomayevka	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	x	-
Plachydol	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	x	x
Respublikanets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	o
Sergeyevka	x	x	?	x	-	-	-	-	x	x	-
Stan	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Starogorozhino											
2/9	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	o
3/1	-	-	-	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-
Svatovo	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	x
Tiritaka 1	x	x	?	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tiritaka 2	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-
Utkonosovka	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Verkhorechye	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yezerovo	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	27	22	17	20	19	7	4	6	5	8	13

Table 2: Ornaments and weapons on Copper Age stelae.
Neck-necklace, Pend-pendant, Crk-crook, Dag-dagger, Spr-spear, B = beads, o= ochre,

Site	Neck	Pend	Belt	Ax belt	Ax free	Crk	Bow	Dag	Mace	Spr
Akchokrak	-	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aleksandrovskoye	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Antonovka	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Astanino 7/3	-	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	x	-
Baia	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belogrudovka 1	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belogrudovka 2	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Burgunka	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chemurlija	?	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chobruchi	-	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Fedorovka	-	-	x	x	-	?	-	x	-	x
Hamangia	x	x	-	-	5x	-	-	-	-	-
Ivanovka 3/2	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ivanovka 3/7	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kasperovka 1/2	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kazanki	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kernosovka	-	-	x	x	2x	-	x	-	x	x
Kobzartsy 8/4	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Konstantinovka										
9/2	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12/2	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2. *Continued.*

Site	Neck	Pend	Belt	Ax belt	Ax free	Crk	Bow	Dag	Mace	Spr
Natalevka	-	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-
Nevsha	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
Novocherkassk	-	-	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Novoselovka	-	-	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Novoshmidtovka 1/4	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pesky 1/12	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plachydol	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shevshenko	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Starogorozhino										
2/3	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3/1	-	-	o	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Svatovo	x	x	x	-	?	?	x	-	-	-
Utkonosovka	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Verkhorechye	-	-	x	x	-	-	x	-	-	-
Yezerovo	?	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	7	6	27	5	6	4	4	1	3	2

moustache, and an abundance of weaponry and other 'symbols of power' and it is also sobering to recall that breasts appear on both female and male stelae erected by the Polovtsians of the Middle Ages in the same region. On another tack, I. L. Alekseyeva (1986) has presumed that those stelae exhibiting large bead necklaces are females.

The second feature of interest concerning the statues is the presence of clothing, ornament and weapons (Table 2). The latter category is perhaps the most complicated since the weapons are placed both in a position of use or carrying, e.g. held in the hand, stuck behind a belt, or they are displayed superimposed on the body of the figure.

Viewed sartorially, the creators of the Pontic menhirs were most interested in depicting the belt, weapons, particularly the ax, followed by necklace and pendants. It is not possible to divide the figures into neat classes of warriors and weaponless but ornamented statues. Excepting the belt as an ambiguous item of clothing (warriors belt or ornament?) and the crook as a possibly multi-valent device, five of the stelae display only arms, six display only ornaments and four show both weapons and ornaments. The interpretation of these items will be investigated further below.

Anatomy and Mythology

The very anthropomorphism that defines the Copper Age stelae of the Pontic region suggests the possibility that the physical features of the menhirs may themselves have carried some mythological message. This is not only to be found in the posture of the hands or the attitude of the head and appearance of the face but also other features, e.g. the ribs, backbone, shoulders, etc. Although there is no clear prehistoric key to interpreting the anatomy of the figures, comparative Indo-European mythology can at least stimulate us to consider possible approaches to understanding the anatomy of the statue-menhir.

One obvious approach, at least in Indo-European terms, is the association between human anatomy and physical and social cosmology. Among the Indo-European populations such as Vedic India, ancient Iran, the Norse and the Slavs, there is evidence for a creation myth wherein both the physical world and the social classes derive from a primordial sacrifice, usually of a human-like figure (sometimes bovine), whose body is dismembered to provide the stuff of creation or metaphors for the various social classes (Lincoln 1986). An analysis of these myths uncovers recurrent patterns that are outlined in Table 3.

The application of Indo-European cosmogonic myth to the study of Copper Age stelae is not entirely new; both E. Anati (1977) and, more

Table 3. Anatomical and cosmological analogues in Indo-European myth.

Anatomy	*Physical World*
Flesh	Earth
Bone	Stone
Hair	Plants
Blood	Water
Eyes	Sun
Mind	Moon
Brain	Clouds
Head	Heaven
Breath	Wind

Anatomy	*Social World*	*Traits*
Head	Priests	Thought, perception, speech
Upper Torso	Warriors	Strength, energy, courage
Lower Torso	Commoners	Support, sexuality, appetite

explicitly, M. Piantelli (1983) have attempted such approaches in their analyses of north Italian statue-menhirs. Anati has asserted that the Italian stelae are frequently divided into three registers: an upper register comprising the head which possesses either an anthropomorphic face or solar or some other astral sign which symbolizes the heavens; a central register from the neck to the belt whereon one finds carved images of weapons and symbols of authority, pendants and symbols of fecundity and wealth, i.e. the earth and world of human activities; and the third or basal part of the stelae, frequently undecorated and buried in the ground, or less well ornamented with wheeled vehicles, plows, serpent-form signs or less easily interpreted symbols which are meant to represent the netherworld (Anati 1977: 49). In this way the cosmology of the IE world is reflected in the statue-menhirs.

Mario Piantelli's (1983) interpretation of a subclass of north Italian menhirs is even more explicitly rooted in IE mythology in that he identities what he has termed 'stele-Purusa.' These derive their name from the Indic origin myth of the creation from the first man, Purusa, who is dismembered to provide the material stuff of the universe. The location of a solar disc (Fig. 22) in the position of the face is seen to reflect the typical correspondences that one finds in the Vedic texts and the social cosmogony that relates arms to the warrior class helps explain the multiplicity of weapons figured on the Italian stelae (cf. Indic

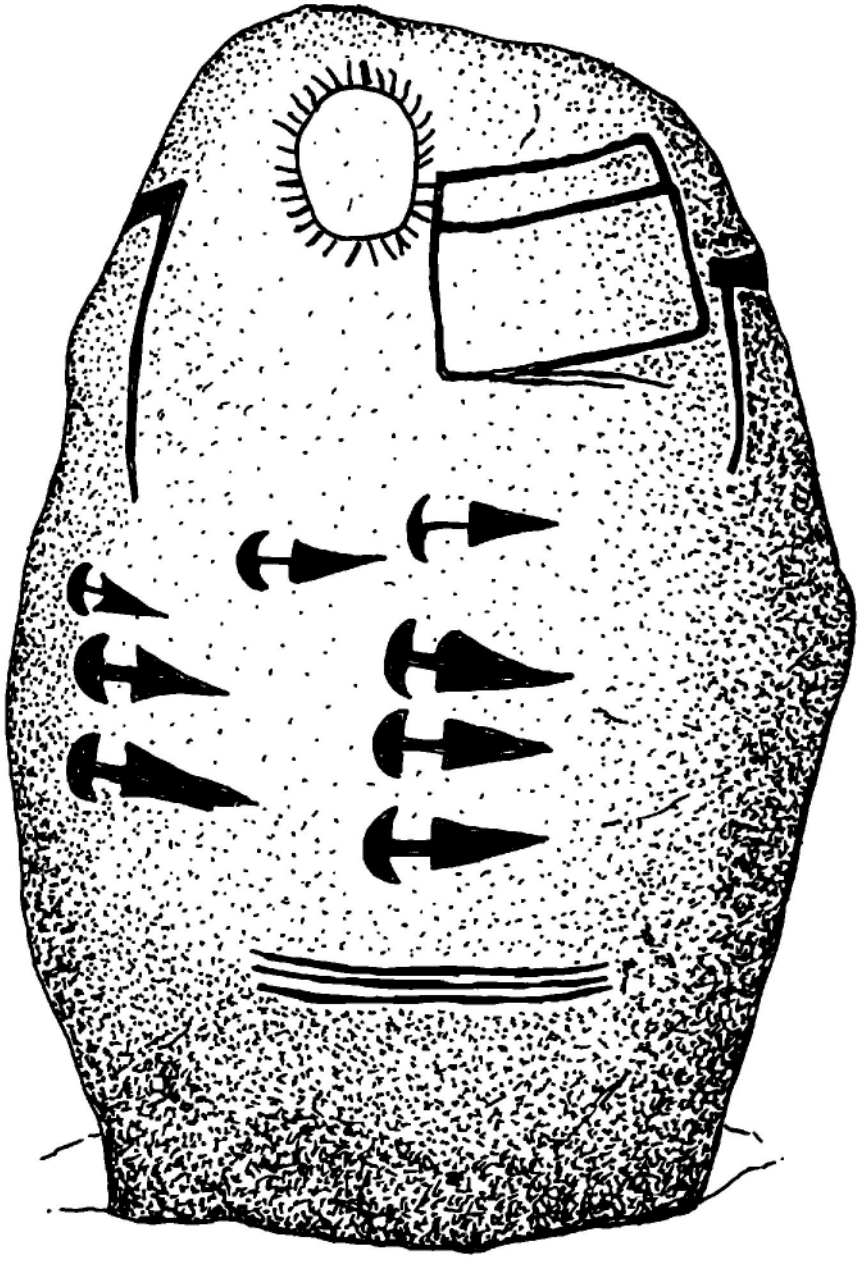


Figure 22. Bagnola 1 (h = 1.12 m).

representational art that depicts the Purusa with as many as 8 to 14 arms) and can be found in other primordial giants such as the Greek Typhon. The weapons are thus to be linked to the warrior class while carts and plows would be appropriate to the *vaiśya*, the agricultural-stockbreeding class.

Finally, Indic mythology has been explicitly applied to the Pontic stelae (Dovzhenko and Chmykhov 1982, Chmykhov *et al* 1992: 165-168). To the type of arguments adduced for the Italian stelae, there is added the quadrilateral section of the Pontic stelae as a reflection of the four-cornered universe of Vedic religion; the division of the stelae as comparable to the divisions of the Purusa; the use of multiple stelae over a grave as a partitioning of a single Purusa into multiples; the application of ochre to the stelae or evidence for burning is linked to the association of the Purusa with fire, the cosmic fire being lodged in his body, etc.

There is some ambivalence in some of these interpretations. For example, Gimbutas sees the cart as the sign of the Sky God while Piantelli associates it with the lower and very much terrestrially occupied class. It is by no means likely that one is going to be able to read off the anatomical or symbolic elements of the stelae as direct expressions of specific IE deities. Nevertheless, we do have a set of expectations, derived from reconstructions of the IE cosmogonic myth, that may be rendered into testable hypotheses.

If the statue-menhirs of the Ukraine are reflections of the IE cosmogonic myth, then one might expect the following:

1. Evidence for associative symbolic correlations between anatomy and its alloforms, e.g. solar symbols in place of eyes, or at least on the head.

2. Recurrent patterns of symbolism ordered according to the vertical register of the stelae, i.e. a tripartition of the figures in terms of anatomical features and symbols.

These 'tests' will now be applied to the various features of the stelae.

The Head

In mythological terms, the head is associated with the heavens and the priest class. This is seen, for example, in the *Purusasukta* where the heavens were formed from the head of the Purusa (man) or the Norse story of Ymir whose head provided the material of heaven, or the Russian *Stich o golubinoy knig* (Poem of the Dove King) where the czars, princes and heroes derive from the head of Adam. Beside the head, one of the eyes is almost universally recognized as the source of

the sun. As Bruce Lincoln has observed, the specific eye is not generally recorded nor is the other eye presented as an alloform of the moon. Finally, the priest is derived from the mouth of the Purusa (man) in both the *Purusasukta* and the *Manava Dharmasastra* (Laws of Manu).

In iconographic terms, this scheme does not receive associative support. The heads are either schematic or relatively naturalistic but they do not show any of the expected substitutions, e.g. solar motif for face, that may be found on the north Italian stelae (Fig. 22) nor any other symbol other than one that can be regarded as schematically anthropomorphic.

The Upper Torso

The hands and arms occur in social cosmologies as the alloform of the warrior class, e.g. the Iranian *Skend Gumanig Wizar* where the hands are 'like warriorhood.' Their role in the physical cosmology is much more limited, e.g. the transformation of arms and hands of Atlas in the *Metamorphoses* into mountain ridges, and there are no grounds for assigning them a PIE alloform.

The associative set of arms (physical) and weapons does, in general, tend to fall in the middle register although it would be extraordinary if they did not. In fact, the positioning of a bow and arrow in the lower register, clearly below the belt, on the Suvorovo stela is a clear exception.

One feature of the upper torso that calls for examination is the presence of a back bone, ribs, and occasionally shoulder blades on a number of the stelae. These features occur about six times each, with a tendency for backbones and ribs to be found on the same stela. None of these features seems to exhibit a strong IE resonance, at least in terms of the cosmogonic literature. The only way that this might be overcome is to ignore the precise anatomical representation and rather treat the presentation of backbone or ribs as 'bones.' If this is the case, then the necessity of depicting bones, the inner structure of the figure, prompted the artists to indicate the concept of bones with those that are clearly distinguished, e.g. backbone, ribs, and which might not be mistaken for actual limbs, e.g. radius, ulna, etc. This then might reflect a homology between bone and stone or between the bones and the warrior function. As Lincoln has observed, in the *Stic o golubinoy knig*, the princes and heroes are derived from the bones of Adam and while the specific bones are not identified, it is clear that they are above the knee from whence derive the peasant class (Lincoln 1986: 145).

It may also be argued on purely perceptual grounds that the

combination of backbone and ribs, at least in some instances such as the Kernosovka stela, is intended also to represent a tree motif, an explanation further supported by the small images included within the outline of the shoulder blades (Figs. 8-9). This would admittedly not tie in well with the IE cosmogonic texts where the alloform of plants, including trees, would tend to be hair (Lincoln 1986, 16-17) although on the evidence of stelae like the Natalevka (Fig. 1.1) menhir and others, some form of homology between 'tree' and 'spine' would seem to be almost irresistible and might be examined further.

Finally, one further cosmogonic element might be expected to appear on the upper torso — the moon. The alloform of the moon in the IE cosmogonic texts is the mind and although it might be thought that the seat of the intellect should be in the head, there is fairly widespread evidence that the early IE-speaking peoples saw the seat of intellect and belief in the region of the chest or diaphragm (Lincoln 1986: 18). The expected iconographic outcome would be a lunar motif on the middle torso. There are no convincing candidates for such a motif (the presence of cup and ring marks on the Novocherkassk stela is hardly strongly supportive).

The Lower Torso

The lower torso of the cosmogonic figure does not feature much in physical creation although parts do play a significant role in explaining the social order of the universe. Hence, the genitals through their obvious association with sexuality are the source of the commoners with whom fertility and food production were major traits. The feet of the Indic Purusa are the source of the earth, although this is not well supported in other IE cosmogonic texts. On the other hand, the feet do seem to be, as the supporters, an alloform for the lower food-producing classes.

The iconographic problem of feet is obvious when one considers that the stelae were intended to be set upright in the ground. If it were necessary to depict them, the base of the stela was obviously excluded and the feet would need to be depicted elsewhere. In actual fact, the feet are nowhere depicted naturally as, for example, they were occasionally shown on the stone *babas* of the mediaeval Polovtsians (Fig. 36). What is depicted is a pair of motifs that would appear to be the soles of shoes or sandals. Similar motifs are found on megalithic art in western Europe and these are sometimes employed to link the two traditions of stone stelae. But are these intended to represent feet?

It is perhaps useful to summarize the position of the foot-print

motifs (Table 4) with respect to the belt, which is here being regarded as not only the iconographic 'dividing line' of the stelae but also the ideological border between the representations of the social divisions.

Table 4. Location of foot-print motif on Copper Age stelae.

Site	Foot
Belogrudovka I	below belt
Belogrudovka II	no belt, foot prints on middle
Burgunka	?
Chobruchi	below belt
Fedorovka	behind belt
Hamangia	no belt, on waist, same height as ax
Kernosovka	superimposed on belt
Konstantinovka 12/2	no belt, middle of stela
Novocherkassk	above belt
Novoselovka	superimposed on belt
Plachidol	no belt, on upper half of stela
Respublikanets	?
Svatovo	superimposed on belt

There is no consistent pattern in the placement of the foot-prints but there is sufficient negative evidence to indicate that the lower register was not the canonically ascribed place for the foot-prints. In this sense, then, it is difficult to support the notion that the belt provided an iconographic 'social' division between the warrior class and a class of commoners, signalled by the presence of foot-prints.

In general then, the utilization of the IE cosmogonic and social myth as a key to explain the iconography of the North Pontic stelae does not seem to be particularly impressive. This suggests that other interpretations may be more plausible.

The Stela as Royal Figure

A second possible mythic 'model' for the Pontic stelae is that of a chieftain or king, more specifically the inauguration of a king. To be sure, there are problems with reconstructing the institution of kingship to the earliest IE society in that the textbook correspondence of Old Irish *rí*, Latin *rex* and Old Indic *raj-* has been dismissed (Scharfe 1985) when the Old Indic form was found to be a 'ghost word' and cognates were limited to west European stocks. On the other hand, a structural similarity between the inauguration ceremony of an Irish and an Indic

king has prompted D. Dubuisson (1978) to suggest the existence of a common underlying inauguration ritual. The Irish evidence derives from the 'Life of St Maedoc' and describes how a king is invested with a silk shirt, a spear and a pair of shoes filled with silver. In the Indic *rajasuya*, the king is presented with the vestment of a priest, three arrows, and shoes made from the skin of a boar. The three talismans are seen to evoke the three estates of IE society (within the Dumézilian sense), i.e. the priest (marked by the white vestments), warrior (weapons) and the herder-cultivator (indicated by shoes, the feet seen as symbols of sexuality and fertility).

The attraction of interpreting the anthropomorphic stelae as possible depictions of inaugurated kings lies in the presence of both weapons and the so-called foot-print motif on so many examples. As the foot-print symbol usually lacks any indication of toes (although admittedly not invariably as toes may be discerned on the later Kalitche stela (Fig. 24.2) from Bulgaria), they are perhaps easier interpreted as representations of either sandals or the sole of a shod foot (or, of course, its impression) rather than a naked foot, cf. the hands where the fingers are regularly distinguished. Moreover, if interpreted as shoes or sandals, their position on or behind the belt on some of the stelae would make still greater sense, i.e. they may be sandals inserted into the belt as is also the case with some of the axes. Incidentally, the existence of at least a late PIE **krh$_1$pí-* 'shoe' (Adams, forthcoming) is supported by cognates in Celtic, Latin?, Baltic, Slavic and Greek (and possibly Germanic). The main question is whether the foot-print motif occurs in such a pattern to reinforce the hypothesis that they do signal royal or chiefly figures. In Table 5 those stelae with foot-print motifs are examined with respect to their associated iconography.

The results are not so systematic as to require belief. Of the 12 examples exhibiting sandals or shoes, seven are also accompanied with weapons (and, it might be noted, two - Kernosovka and Belogrudovka I - display 'breasts'). Unfortunately, the third talisman, the one representative of the priest class, still remains illusive. One might suggest that it was either signalled by ornament or perhaps the crook but even then, all three 'social' categories are rarely filled out (Table 6).

Of these, the Fedorovka stelae with its crook (priest?), weapons and shoes or the two Bulgarian stelae (from Hamangia and Svatovo) with neck ornament, weapons and shoes, might offer the three essential talismans representative of a royal inauguration. Otherwise, the evidence for tri-functional social iconography cannot be regarded as solidly demonstrated.

Table 5. Stelae with foot-print motif and other features.
(Legend per Table 2)

Site	Neck	Pend	Belt	Ax belt	Ax free	Crk	Bow	Dag	Mace	Spr
Astanino 7/3	-	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	x	-
Belogrudovka 1	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belogrudovka 2	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Burgunka	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chobruchi	-	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Fedorovka	-	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-
Hamangia	x	x	-	-	5x	-	-	-	-	-
Kernosovka	-	-	x	x	2x	-	x	-	x	x
Novocherkassk	-	-	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Novoselovka	-	-	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-
Plachydol	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Svatovo	x	x	x	-	?	?	x	-	-	-

Table 6. Royal figures?

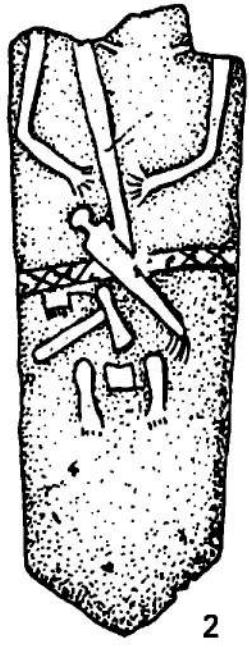
	Ornament	Crook	Weapon	Shoes	Total
Astanino	-	-	x	x	2
Belogrudovka 1	-	-	-	x	1
Belogrudovka 2	-	x	-	x	2
Burgunka	-	-	-	1	1
Chobruchi	-	-	x	x	2
Fedorovka	-	x	x	x	3
Hamangia	x	-	x	x	3
Kemosovka	x	x	x	x	4
Novocherkassk	-	x	-	x	2
Novoselovka	-	x	-	x	2
Plachydol	x	-	-	x	2
Svatovo	x	-	x	x	3

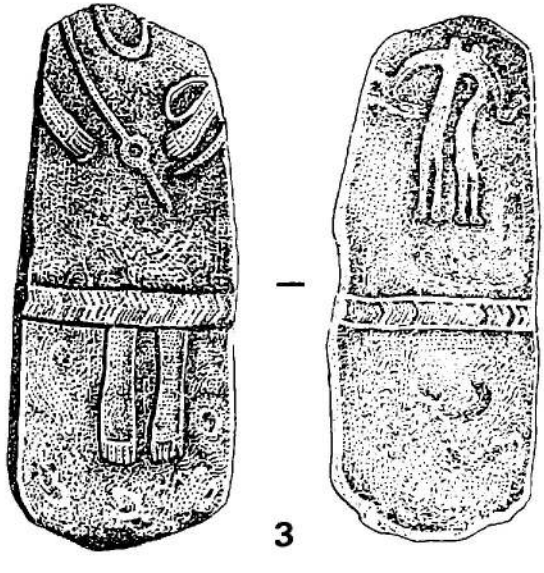
The Stelae as IE Deities?

An obvious alternative hypothesis to those discussed above is that the stelae may represent specific deities of the Indo-European pantheon. This, indeed, is how they have sometimes been interpreted in the works of Marija Gimbutas who has observed patterns of objects which she regards as type-motifs for specific gods. This is an obvious explanation but it also requires some form of testing, i.e. do we find consistent patterns of features or objects that may pertain to a specific deity? Before evaluating this, we should recall that the postures of the statue and the facial expressions, as categorized in the work of Telegin (see above), do not necessarily have a corresponding set of motifs carved onto the actual surface of the stelae (Fig. 23). Moreover, as archaeologists engaged in the study of Italian rock-art have consistently argued, the time separation between the different images may be very great and the assumption that any particular stela represents a single creation is merely that, an assumption which has not been demonstrated. Nevertheless, in the absence of any critical arguments against the stelae being altered by subsequent use, the assumption here will also be that all the figures carved on the stelae are contemporary with one another and are intended to express a common ideological vision.

The problem with examining whether the stelae reflect specific IE deities is all too obvious - with few exceptions, almost all IE deities reconstructed to PIE, i.e. in the linguistic sense, tend to represent natural phenomena, e.g. 'father sky', 'thunder', 'dawn', 'sun', etc. and may lack the type of narrative-specific characteristics, e.g. Thor-belt-hammer-goat, that would help validate a particular interpretation. Moreover, IE

Figure 23. The three catagories of statue-menhirs (after Telegin).





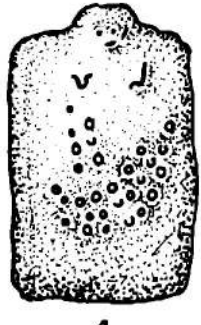


Figure 24-1. Saumecourte; 24-2. Kalitche; 24-3. Morel; 24-4. Epon.

Figure 23. The three catagories of statue-menhirs (after Telegin).

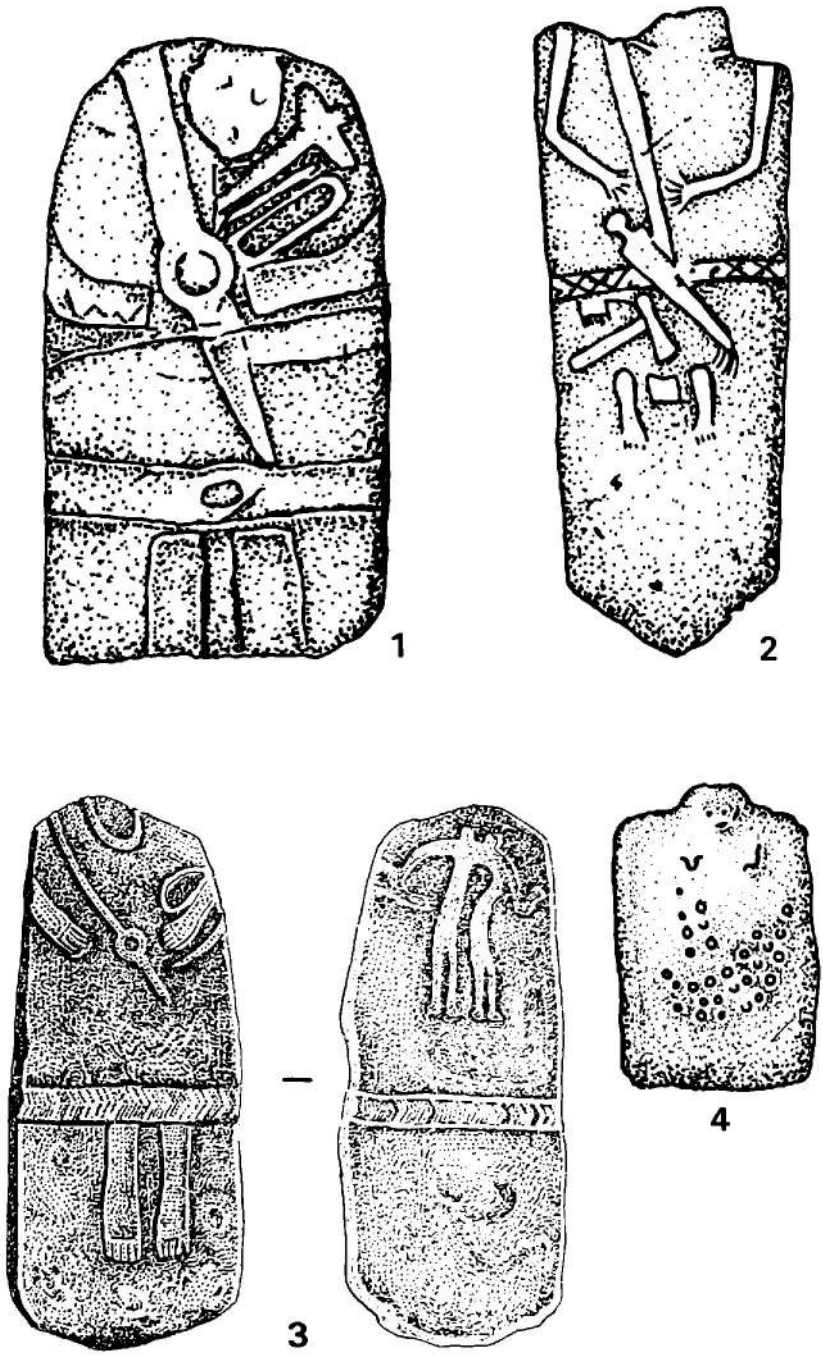


Figure 24-1. Saumecourte; **24-2.** Kalitche; **24-3.** Morel; **24-4.** Epon.

deities whose existence is reconstructed through structural comparisons such as that found in the Dumézil school, e.g. 'priest', 'warrior', etc., tend to generate images that confuse rather than clarify those figures reconstructed from their names alone. For example, in the quote earlier in this section, Marija Gimbutas attributes to the IE sky-god the following features: belt, dagger, halberd, horse, stag, plow, vehicle; and to the thunder-god: ax, club, bow, quiver, arrows. It hardly need be said that the structurally generated 'warrior' figure might carry the sky-god's belt, dagger, halberd, ride his horse and vehicle but also smash his enemies with the thunder-god's ax, club or strike them down with his bow and arrow. Purely for the sake of expediency, Gimbutas's criteria will be regarded as more pertinent to the discussion, and the straightforward question be asked whether among the statue-menhirs, an Indo-European sky-god and thunder-god can be distinguished.

A summary testing of the hypothesis that the two deities may be distinguished illustrates how difficult the ascription of the figures to one deity or another is. To begin with, the 'sky-god's' belt is ubiquitous and in at least 8 instances accompanies the 'thunder-god's' axe, all of his archery kit and two of the three figures with a mace (club) also wear a belt. Of the sky-god's proposed attributes most of the others are not encountered on Pontic stelae, e.g. halberd, plow, vehicle, and this leaves only the horse as his marker. Although animals occur on five of the statue-menhirs (Akchokrak, Fedorovka, Kernosovka, Svatovo, Verkhorechye), it is extremely difficult to distinguish whether the animals depicted are dogs, horses, bears or something else. Only the figures on the lower register of the Kernosovka stela have been identified as horses and this stela also bears axes, a bow and a club, again a mixed deity. If the animals on all the other stelae are identified as horses (purely for the sake of illustration), then it would have to be noted that all carry either an ax or a bow, i.e. the armament of the thunder-god. Obviously, the criteria laid down for testing the identities of the two deities may be erroneous, but as it stands, it seems impossible to distinguish which Indo-European deity is supposedly represented on the stelae and, by extension, it calls into question the validity of assigning the figures *specifically* to the Indo-European pantheon.

Further 'tests' might be devised such as the examination of paired figures, e.g. Akchokrak and Kazanki, as possible representatives of the Indo-European 'divine twins' (Ward 1968). But unless examination of them reveals further mythological sets (solar motif, horse and cow, female figure) or one is able to explain away the inappropriate (and if males, physically improbable) sexual behavior of the paired figures on

the Kernosovka stela, there is insufficient iconographic evidence to build a convincing case for identifying the figures as Indo-European deities. Similarly one might wish to see in the paired 'dogs' (?Svatovo, Fig. 4.2, Kernosovka, Figs. 8-9) the reconstructed, at least from Greek and Indo-Iranian, escorts of the dead to (Yama's) Otherworld or support Alekseyeva's (1986) suggestion that the figures with bead necklaces (e.g. Fig. 13.1, 21.2) are representatives of an Indo-European or, at least, Indo-Aryan mother-goddess with parallels in a variety of other cultures. Another tack would be the isolation of three-headed figures such as the stela from Limany (Fig. 21.3) where it might be compared with the familiar three-headed 'monster' well known in Indo-European mythology (Lincoln 1981, 113). But all such identifications, unless supported by a broad spectrum of other associative elements, are so speculative that their credibility must surely rest solely with their proposer.

These negative conclusions are solely the product of the expectations and 'tests' that were engaged to examine a series of hypotheses. They most certainly do not exhaust the range of possible interpretations of the statue-menhirs in light of Indo-European mythology and others may well propose more valid criteria of examination. But it is hoped that the presentation of the evidence and this initial examination of the material will prompt others to make a more detailed analysis of this material in terms of comparative mythology (Indo-European or possibly even North Caucasian).

Diffusion?

The erection of stelae or statue-menhirs was by no means unique to the Copper Age of the Pontic-Caspian and roughly contemporary with their appearance on the steppe, stelae were also raised across the Mediterranean, in particular in northern Italy and southern France north to Brittany (Arnal 1976). The widespread appearance of such figures has long prompted the idea that the similarities between the west European and Pontic stelae are not merely generic but historically related, i.e. the idea or the motifs for the stelae either diffused or was carried by migrating populations from one end of Europe to the other.

This question is not at present capable of resolution, although one can outline the general scope of the problem. Connections between the Pontic and other parts of Europe are argued on two lines of evidence: archaeological (shape of stela, individual motifs, etc.) and ideological (the shared and assumed Indo-European content of the stelae).

Archaeologically, the similarities between the stelae of Romania and Bulgaria and those of the Pontic region are not at issue and no one would

dispute a prehistoric relationship between these regions. It is the more distant relationships, particularly those between the steppe on the one hand and either northern Italy or the west Mediterranean that pose the greatest problems. Lists of common features have been enumerated by various archaeologists. For example, Alexander Häusler (1966: 42-50) notes the similarity in crude facial features from Yevpatoriya and those on French 'mother-goddesses'; the owl-like countenance of the Kazanki menhir with two arch-like eye-brows (but no eyes) known in France and north Italy; the foot-print motif, which Häusler derives ultimately from the east Mediterranean, is also known in western Europe; the depiction of belts in both regions is common (Fig. 24.2-3); the semi-circular design above the belt found on several Pontic stelae is mirrored by a similar figure on the 'Dolmen gods' of Brittany; axes are frequent in both regions on male statues; the mace from Natalevka and some other Pontic sites finds a parallel in the menhir from Saumecourte (Fig. 24.1), although this is listed as the single west European example; the shepherd's crook is common to both areas; the bow and arrow, found on some Pontic stelae such as Natalevka again finds a western parallel at Saumecourte; and cup-marks are common to both regions. Many of these same features are also compared by J. Arnal (1976: 216-227), A. A. Formozov (1966: 96) and others such as I. L. Alekseyeva (1986) who adds figures wearing beads (Fig. 24.4) to the list of comparative features. They also concur with statements such as Formozov's that there are too many correspondences to be explained by 'chance.'

It is when one considers the direction and precise trajectory of cultural influences that we find considerable debate. Häusler (1966), for example, notes that the southern French menhirs reflect the execution of a common stylistic harmony while the Pontic ones seem to show only a 'faint recollection of the symbolic contents' and he concludes that the Pontic stelae seem to have made use of elements that derived originally from France (or 'Western Europe'; Häusler 1985: 66-67). More recently, Häusler (1992) has rejected the idea that Pontic elements spread the other way, i.e. from east to the west. V. Danylenko (1974: 83) does not discuss their similarities with the west but appears to imply the possibility of a Near Eastern origin for the Pontic stelae, comparing the Natalevka stela, for example, with that of figures of the Near Eastern storm-god Teshub. On the other hand, J. Arnal (1976) has emphasized the coastal distribution of the statue-menhirs across the Mediterranean, from France to the Black Sea, and while acknowledging a local origin in western Europe for the earliest stelae, he also proposes sea-borne contacts, transmitted from east to west, to explain the similarities

between the Pontic and west European stelae. Most recently, Alessandra Nocentini (1993) has also suggested both a maritime diffusion from the Pontic and a continental diffusion which carried the stelae across the Baden culture of east Central Europe into northern Italy.

The argument for an Indo-European background to the emergence of specific statue-menhirs in northern Italy has been argued by E. Anati (1977) and accepted by Marija Gimbutas (1991: 396). Both have agreed that the west Mediterranean stelae, with their frequent goddess-images, have an obvious local origin and A. Nocentini (1993) also finds much that may be explained locally in the west European stelae. However, both Anati and Gimbutas see both the north Italian and Pontic stelae as reflections of Indo-European mythology and argue that they represent an eastern spread involving ideological change (Indo-European religious systems); social change, e.g. increasingly stratified society; and technological change, introduction of wheeled vehicles, arsenical bronzes, etc. Anati dismisses the idea that each group of menhirs can be regarded as purely local developments and sees them as products of a new religion moving through Europe. He also notes how the menhirs tend to be confined to environmentally marginal areas where, he argues, populations were less economically secure and stable. In terms of direct transmission, Anati looks to the Baden culture (*c.* 3300-2800 BC), long seen by Gimbutas as a Kurganized culture, as the immediate source of the new religion.

If we assume that the burden of proof must rest with those who propose that the two regions, no matter how distantly separated, must be historically related, then they are required to demonstrate that the parallels between the two areas are such, in both number and in the complexity of association, to demand some form of historical contact. Although parallels exist, the evidence is not (yet) so strong to require acceptance. For example, the existence of statue-menhirs closely related to the Pontic styles outside of the Ukraine and southern Russia is so far entirely confined to the adjacent territories of Romania and Bulgaria and very similar stelae are simply not known between the northwest region of the Black Sea and the Alpine much less southwest Mediterranean territories. Attempts to ascribe the few intermediary statue-menhirs, e.g. a stela from Souphli-Magoula in Greece, to a Pontic source are hardly convincing and the differences seem to outweigh any similarities it might share with those of the Pontic region (Häusler 1992). Within the strict sense of archaeological argument, there is no line of uninterrupted evidence that would link the Alpine stelae with those of the Pontic. Anati's suggestion that the Baden culture may have been the likeliest

intermediary, while perhaps valid for the cultural transfer of wheeled vehicles and some other items, is rendered highly dubious by the absence of stone stelae in the Baden culture itself (anthropomorphic vessels in the Baden culture are a very poor substitute for stone stelae and do not bear a close resemblance to either Pontic or Alpine stelae).

To be sure, there are motifs that are shared by statue-menhirs across Europe although separating out the generic from the genetic is extremely difficult. The context of the statue-menhirs of both regions requires some comment. As both Häusler and Telegin have suggested, the original context of the Pontic stelae would appear to have been in sanctuaries where multiple stelae were erected and the funerary context in which they are generally found should be regarded as secondary, normally associated with societies removed from their original creators. The recent excavations of several statue-menhirs in primary context on the Ossimo-Borni plateau suggests a similar original context for Alpine stelae (Fedele 1990). The parallelism is interesting but hardly represents a unique or unexpected sharing of a common motif — stelae by definition are to be erected and associated with some ritual behaviour. Similarly, anthropomorphic figures in stone in any region of the world might be expected to be clothed and ornamented and hence the existence of belts, necklaces and the carrying of weapons or other symbols of authority would hardly be unexpected in any culture and, indeed, all of these items can be found on stelae from South America. More interesting, perhaps, is the filling out of many areas of the menhir's surface with replicate weapons or other designs that are ancillary to that actually carried by the individual figured. Taken as a whole, while a certain 'graphemic' similarity may be observed between Pontic and west European menhirs, it is questionable whether these must be any more the result of genetic or contact relationships than, for example, any similarities that one might observe between north European runic characters (futhark) and early Mesopotamian, Cypriot or Chinese writing systems. In short, unless entire sets of associated motifs are brought together to link the two regions, the case of Pontic-Alpine/west European contacts must remain open.

Chapter 3
Stela-Obelisks of the Cimmerian Period

Introduction

The Cimmerians, the earliest people of the Pontic region named in written sources, are mentioned in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* where Homer places them in the dark and cloudy north where they lived off mare's milk. Historically, they are credited with major military incursions into Armenia and Anatolia where they conquered the Phrygians *c.* 696-695 BC. They are also treated briefly by Herodotos who records the destruction of the Cimmerian royal dynasty at the hands of the Scythians. On the basis of the few personal names known to us, at least the ruling class of the Cimmerians appears to have borne Iranian names if not spoken the language itself. Alternatively, some have assumed that the Cimmerians spoke a Thracian-related language.

The material culture of the Cimmerians is distinguished from that of their neighbours primarily by their weapons and horse-gear. Cimmerian swords and daggers are particularly well known and are easily distinguishable from those of the later Scythians and Sarmatians of the same territory. As with the other largely pastoral nomadic peoples of this region, the Cimmerians have left us no settlements and our knowledge of their culture derives predominantly from their burials. A certain number of these have been found in the Ukraine and some of these are rather richly furnished. The deceased was buried in a wooden coffin and among the grave goods were swords, spears, arrowheads, horse bridles and bits, ornaments and pottery. Cimmerian graves are also known from Bulgaria.

The number of Cimmerian stelae known from the Ukraine is small, not more than about ten examples. Moreover, these stelae are unique and bear scant resemblance to either those of the earlier Copper Age or the stelae of the later Iron Age or mediaeval period in this region. Strictly speaking, they are not anthropomorphic statues since the actual figuring of the body is so schematic and they seem rather to represent some form of commemorative obelisk. Although samples of Cimmerian stelae have been found since the turn of the century, they were not recognized as such until recently and this chronological discovery did not occur in the Ukraine but rather Bulgaria.

The Ptychata grave from near the village of Bilogradets in the Varna region had a stela-obelisk on top which had been known for a long time. In the early 1970s, G. Toncheva spent several years excavating the site. The stela stood in the middle of a stone platform below which was

a rectangular tomb with the half-burnt remains of a timber chamber. The chamber included a burial accompanied by a dagger, its sheath and a sword belt, all of which had been covered with gold incrustation; there was also a quiver which held more than a hundred arrows. Nearby were some black burnished vessels. After removal from the top of the grave, the Ptychata stela was examined and clearly seen to be a high post-like stone with a subrectangular or oval section. Neither the head nor other parts of the body were distinctly marked but the surface area of the stela was covered with carvings on every side (Fig. 25.1). The carvings reflect the entire arsenal of Cimmerian weapons.

Once it was clear that the Ptychata stela was Cimmerian, other undated stelae began to fall into place and previously incomprehensible objects in Ukrainian museums began to be redefined. For example, the Odessa Archaeological Museum had been displaying a massive stone post since 1907. The sandstone object stood 1.3 m high and it had been labelled 'A mooring post from the quay at Olbia.' For more than half a century visitors walked past this stone and, from time to time, it was inspected by scientists who saw nothing strange about it until 1967 when N. L. Chlenova (1984) gave the stela a much closer look and saw what everyone else had apparently missed before: carved representations of a bow and arrows, a double-bladed axe and a hone for sharpening metal tools. All of these were suspended from a broad belt which girded the stela (Fig. 25.2). When she compared the images on the stela with those depicted on the Ptychata obelisk, she concluded that it was not a mooring stone after all but a stela-obelisk from the Cimmerian period. This caused an archaeological sensation in the Ukraine since it not only brought to the fore a new type of ancient stone sculpture, but it also helped to fill the gap between the stelae of the Copper Age and the well-known stone figures of the Scythian period. The Ptychata and Odessa museum stelae stimulated the hunt for other such sculptures and by 1978 O. I. Terenozhkin could report that five Cimmerian stela-obelisks were known. In addition to the Odessa stela, another sandstone 'obelisk' was from a grave at Tsareva (Fig. 25.3) near the town of Krivoy Rog (Terenozhkin 1978); another comes from a kurgan cemetery near the village of Tselinoye (Fig. 26.1) in the Crimea (Korpusova 1984) and still another measuring 1.1 m tall from a kurgan at Konstantinovka in the Bashtansk district of the Nikolayev region (Terenozhkin 1978). A 1 m high stela made of granite (Fig. 26.2) was found among the unworked stones by a burial from Kichkas 25/6, Zaporozhye (Miller 1930) and another granite stela (Fig. 26.3), 2.6 m tall, was found over a kurgan burial from Gumarevo in the Orenburg region (Ismagilov 1988). Another

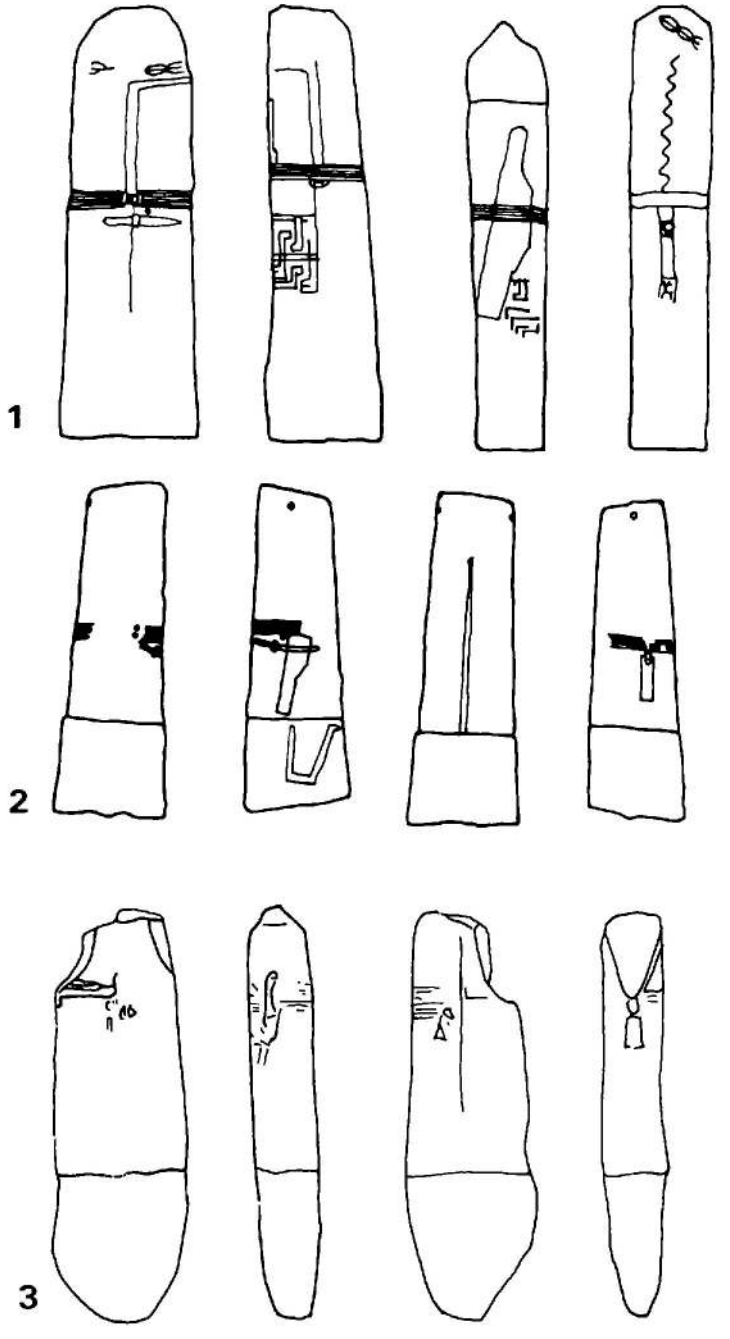


Figure 25-1. Ptychata; 25-2. Olbia (h = 1.3 m); 25-3. Tsareva (h = 1.5 m).

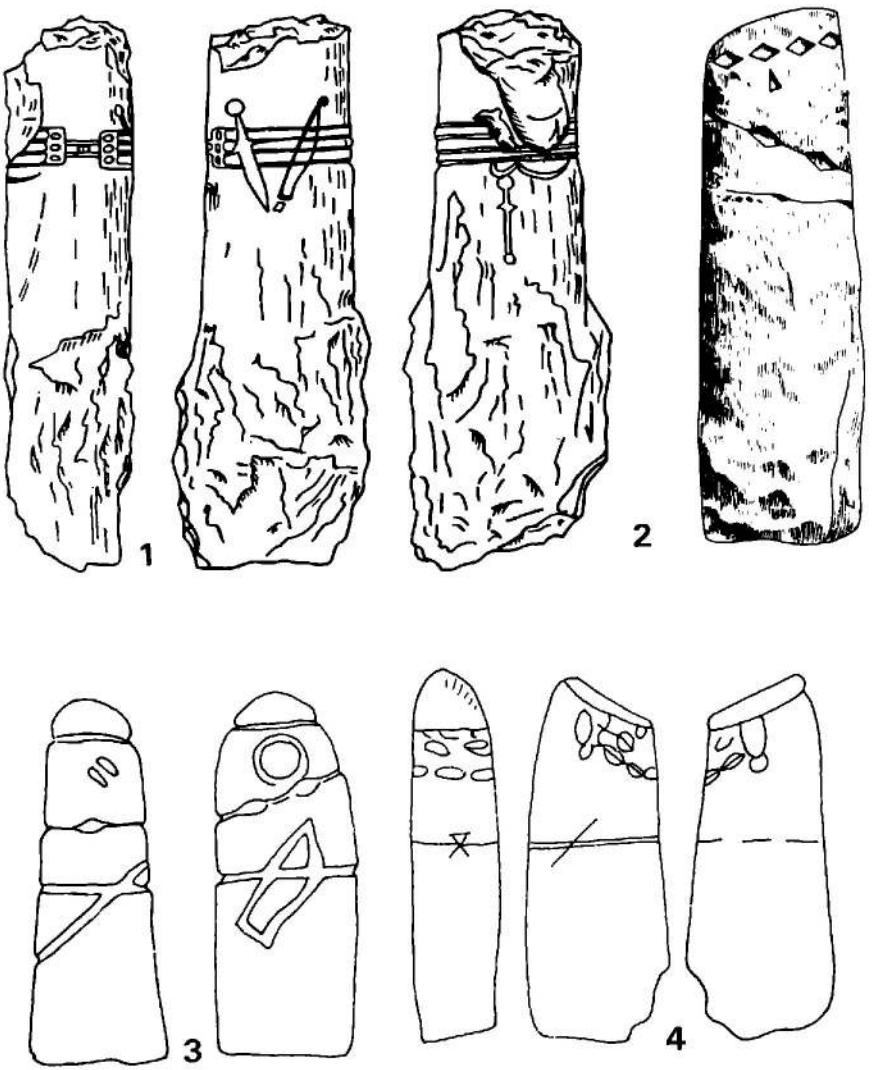


Figure 26-1. Tselinoye; **26-2.** Kichkus (h = 1 m); **26-3.** Gumarevo (h = 2.6 m); **26-4.** Dinogetia-Havran.

Cimmerian stela has been found at Dinogetia-Havran (Fig. 26.4) in Dobrogea, Romania (Toncheva 1972). Others have been found in the north Caucasus where they have been described as 'deer stones' by N. L. Chlenova. In comparison with the single-headed stones, these so-called deer stones or recumbent menhirs ('lying *baba*') are mutually exclusive in terms of distribution and to the pattern of representations, and, therefore, they call for separate analysis.

Single-headed stelae

Stela-obelisks with one head are found in the north and northwest Pontic from northeast Bulgaria and Dobrogea on the west to the Ukraine. They tend to measure about 1.5 m tall, are subrectangular in section, and their tops are generally cut obliquely from front to back. Neither the head nor any other part of the anatomy is depicted. However, there is a considerable number of images on the surface of the stela. These are carved in deep relief and appear on all sides of the obelisk. The compulsory components of a Cimmerian stela includes a broad belt which girdles the figure at the waist. The belt is normally indicated by a number of parallel lines. The belt is fastened by a clasp which one presumes to have been originally made of bone or metal. The buckles tend to be fairly complicated in both form and structure. Generally, a Cimmerian sword, a whetstone, and a quiver are depicted suspended from the belt. The sword usually hangs from the front while the quiver is generally either on the left side or the front of the stela. Sometimes the quiver seems to have been simply placed behind the belt. The whetstone is commonly positioned on the right side or at the back of the stela and it seems to have been held in some form of box. All of these items are known from Cimmerian burials.

In addition to weapons, three of the stelae also figure necklaces of large rhomboidal or sub-oval form suspended around the upper part of the obelisk. The stela from Verchnyaya Chortitsa had two rows of such necklaces. Other figures on these stelae are confined to other ornaments or indications of the garments worn. On the Ptychata stela, for example, there is a rather complicated ornament carved below the belt on the left side and back of the figure. It consists of several recumbent L's. On the back of the same stela appears what has been interpreted as a bag decorated with a similar ornament. Perhaps the series of vertical lines on both the chest of the statue and down the back are intended to represent some form of garment. On the Olbia stela there are broad vertical lines carved on its back while some small pits situated on both sides of the top of the stela may have been intended to represent earrings. Less

comprehensible ornament appears on the stela from Konstantinovka. As a rule, the lower part of these single-headed stelae lack any figures and this distinguishes them further from the two-headed stelae of the north Caucasus.

Deer Stones of the North Caucasus

There are only four or five examples known of the so-called 'deer stones'. These derive from Zubovsky (Fig. 27.1) and Ust-Labinskaya (Fig. 27.2) in the Kuban river region, lake Marinskoye in Uzberezhia near the town of Armovir, and Kizburun (Fig. 27.3) in Kabadino-Balkaria (Chechenov 1978; Batchayev and Keferov 1980). A fifth stela has recently been reported from a kurgan near the village of Buchuika in the Rostov region. The first two stelae were unbroken while the second two were found broken in half; it is possible that they were not actually double-headed stelae but belong to the category of single-headed obelisks.

The four listed north Caucasian stelae are sub-rectangular in section. They vary in height, the one from Ust-Labinskaya measuring 1.6 m long while the Zubovsky stela was 2.26 m. The sides are markedly flattened. One gains the impressions that the warrior is not depicted *en face* but in profile since the facial features, especially the nose, tends to be marked by only two oblique lines.

The carving is superior to that of the other Pontic stela-obelisks. There is regularly some form of diadem or cap indicated at the top of the stela while the Marinskoye stela seems to wear some form of field cap. In addition, all the stelae have a broad belt which may also include a clasp marked by a single incised line. The Ust-Labinskaya stela had two belts, one for each 'half' of the statue. The necklace received special attention by the artist who figured large oval beads and small round or elongated beads. The larger beads are considered to represent cowrie shells. The necklace was fastened at the back by a large round clasp or pendant which, when it appears on the front of the figure, hangs down over the breast or stomach. Round pendants are also indicated in the vicinity of the ears where occasionally subrectangular pendants seem to be fixed.

Weapons are clearly depicted on the stelae and include the sword, whetstone, quiver and in some cases battle-axes and knives. The Kizburun stela carries both a sword and a dagger.

The most characteristic decoration of these Cimmerian stelae is the complicated ornament and the representation of animals which reflect a high artistic level. The Zubovsky stela offers the largest number of

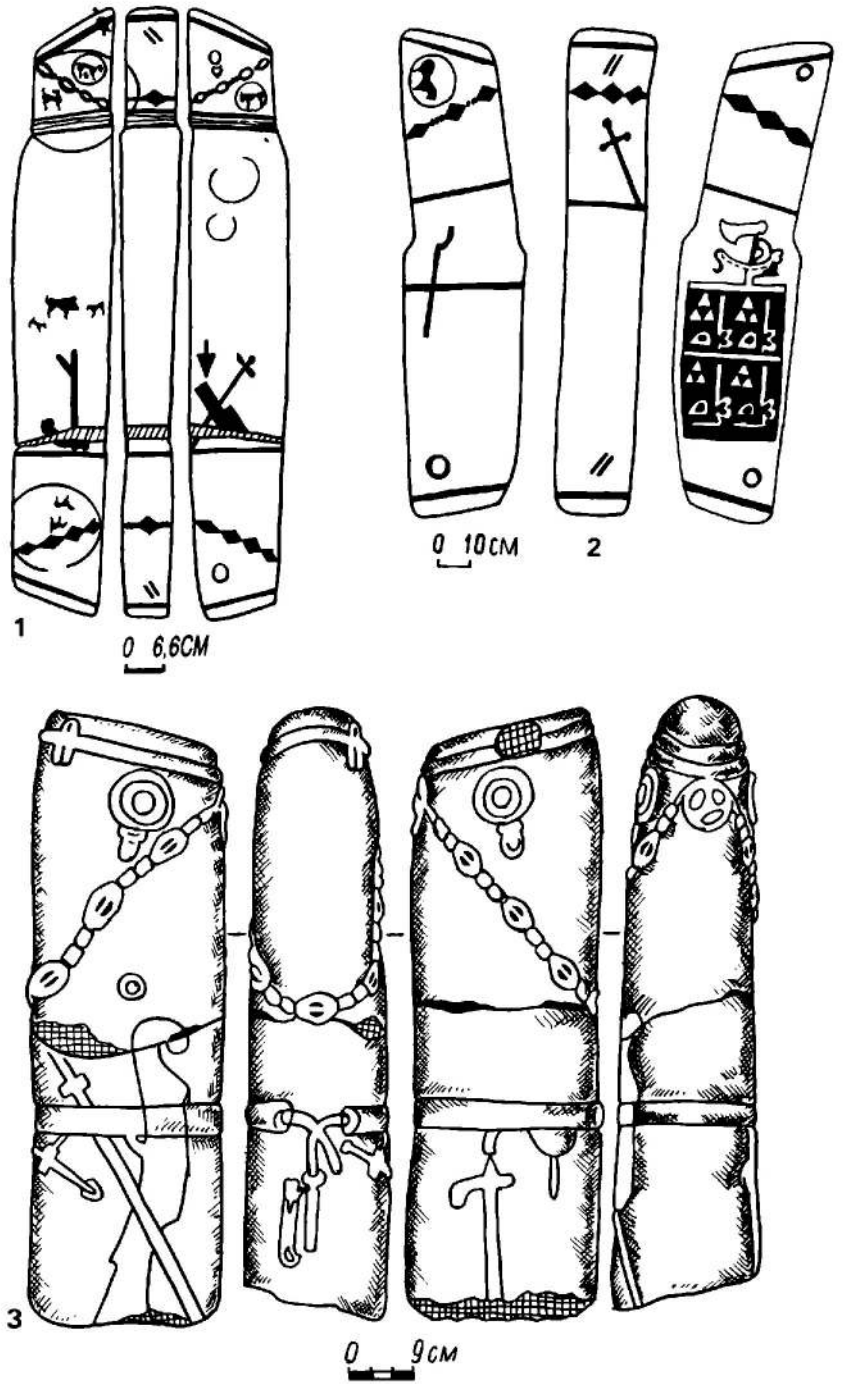


Figure 27-1. Zubovsky Khutor (h = 2.26 m); **27-2.** Ust-Labinskaya (h = 1.68 m); **27-3.** Kizburun (h = *c.* 0.8 m).

animals with the depiction of eight figures including a wild boar, horses, dogs or some other animals. In one case we find a scene where two dogs appear to be hunting a wild boar. Horses are shown within borders suspended near the 'head' of the stela.

The stela from Ust-Labinskaya offers an example of especially intriguing ornamentation situated over much of its lateral sides. The composition is divided into three registers (Fig. 27.2). The two upper registers are identical and they depict a series of triangles adjacent to a vertical line that descends into a volute. The lower part shows a battle-ax which emerges out of the top of the middle register. Across it again appear vertical lines with volutes running off horizontally as well as segmented figures. The complication of the design, the number of different signs and the confinement of their position may suggest that we are dealing not so much with pure ornamentation as some form of pictographic inscription.

The Function of the Cimmerian Stelae

It would seem clear that our first category of stelae, the single-headed obelisks that are known from the Ukraine to Bulgaria, were intended to mark the graves of distinguished warriors. This is supported by the discovery of both the Ptychata and Tselinoye stelae atop kurgan graves. The absence of designs on the lower part of these stelae suggest that they were intended to be erected within the earthen mound itself. In some instances, the lower part of the stela appeared to have been shaped as a pedestal.

The function of the double-headed 'deer stones' is an altogether more complicated problem. N. L. Chlenova (1984) suggests that these also served as stela-obelisks in which either end might be inserted into the earthen fill from time to time, an explanation that seems a bit incomprehensible. More likely is the theory of O. I. Terenozhkin (1978) who maintains that the two-headed stones were intended to be laid horizontally over the graves as recumbent menhirs.

There is no debate concerning the chronological context of the stelae and all are agreed that they date to the Cimmerian period of *c.* 8th - 7th centuries BC. There is, however, some disagreement concerning their ethnic affinity. For example, G. Toncheva has suggested that although a Cimmerian sword accompanied the Ptychata burial and stela, the individual buried was himself a Thracian rather than Cimmerian warrior. O. I. Terenozhkin, on the other hand, believes that the Ptychata and all other examples from Dobrogea to the Ukraine should be attributed to the Cimmerians themselves. The so-called north Caucasian

'deer stones' pose a more difficult problem of cultural affinity in an area where we draw our cultural names not from ethnonyms but rather archaeological cultures. The swords and daggers depicted on these stelae are attributed by D. G. Savinov (1977) and N. L. Chlenova to the Kamenomostska culture while the axes are of the Koban type. From the perspective of the stone sculpture itself, D. G. Savinova sets the Pontic-north Caucasian stelae in the wider circle of megalithic cultures of this region which reflect different cultural groups.

Chapter 4
Stelae of the Scythians and Samartians

Introduction

In the 7th century BC Scythian tribes penetrated into the north Pontic region to dominate the native peoples of the steppe and forest-steppe. They occupied the region for about five centuries except for those who retreated into the Crimea in the face of Sarmatian pressure where they survived into the first centuries AD. Scythian influence also spread to the north Caucasus where their linguistic neighbors, the Maeotes, are known.

Like the Cimmerians, the Scythians were warlike pastoral nomads with their own special set of weapons: the *akinax* short sword, the bow and arrow, armor, helmets, etc. Renowned for their archery, the very name 'Scyth' was taken by the Greeks as synonymous for 'archer'. Linguistically, they and their Sarmatian successors were Iranian-speakers.

Scythian art, especially that in gold, is justifiably famous and they are credited with the introduction of the so-called animal style. Scythian treasures such as the pectoral piece from the Tolstoy tomb, the Solokha comb, the decorated vessels from Kul-Oba, Chortomlyk and Gaimonova are world famous. But their stone sculpture was also highly developed and represents another significant artistic contribution to the ancient world.

More than a hundred Scythian anthropomorphic stelae are known, distributed over the north Pontic region, especially in the steppe zone. It is important to note that this form of sculpture did not spread north into the forest-steppe of the Ukraine while it does appear further west in Romania. Moreover, a considerable number of examples have been found in both the Lower Danube region and in the north Caucasus.

The Scythians manufactured their stelae from a variety of stones and there is also some variation in their general appearance. Their height may range from 70-80 cm to 2 m or more. Generally, they tend to be flat and bulky with round to sub-rectangular cross-sections. Unlike their Cimmerian predecessors, the main characteristic of these stelae is their attention to anthropomorphic features with carefully executed head, shoulders and, usually, also the neck.

As with the Copper Age stelae, it is convenient to divide the Scythian stelae into two major groups on the basis of the degree to which anthropomorphism has been realized. The first group, the 'statue-stelae,' comprises those examples with more realistic detail with respect to

anatomy and other attributes while the second group is represented by more schematic portrayals of the human body and we will refer to them simply as 'schematic stelae.' By the late Scythian period there appeared a third category of sculpture which may be called 'statuary reliefs' and these differ considerably from the other two main groups.

Statue-stelae

The realistic statue-stelae were generally made life-size although only the upper part was carefully worked while the lower part, which was inserted into the ground, was not, although its surface may have been smoothed a bit. All features were executed in deep relief. A primitive realism embued with naturalism pervades the production of these statue-stelae and can be readily seen from the intention of the artist to depict even invisible details of the human form on the statues. A warrior shown in full battle-dress, for example, will also reveal such parts of the body as shoulder blades, backbones and often a phallus below the waist. Or in attempting to show simultaneously a *gorytus*, the combination bow-case and quiver, with the bow inside it, the contours of the bow are indicated on the surface of the *gorytus*. The statue-stela from Butory (Fig. 28.3) displays a belt and hand through a 'transparent' *gorytus*.

All statue-stelae have clearly defined head, shoulders and neck. The arms can always be seen although not always in the same position. There are two main poses — the first with the arms bent at the elbows and hands placed on the stomach and the second involves an asymmetrical arrangement with one arm straight while the other is bent with the hand on the breast. These different poses, as we will see below, are significant in distinguishing the iconographic 'meaning' of the figures.

Almost every stela has fine facial features with the nose, eyes, mouth and sometimes ears, eye-brows, beard and moustache all indicated. Nearly all statues wear a belt. The Scythian belts differ from the earlier Cimmerian belts in both detail and the manner they are depicted. Here as a rule the buckle is absent and the contours of the belt are indicated with only two lines rather than the multi-linear Cimmerian belt. Sometimes there were only vertically hatched lines, e.g. Sibioare (Fig. 28.2). The weapons were suspended from the belt — the *akinax* sword, the dagger and the *gorytus*. Occasionally we find depicted a battle ax or a whip, the latter generally shown in the hand of a warrior, e.g. Olkhovchik (Figs. 28.1, 29). The swords depicted on Scythian stelae match the variety that are found in Scythian graves with such accuracy that an archaeologist can date the stelae themselves within about one or

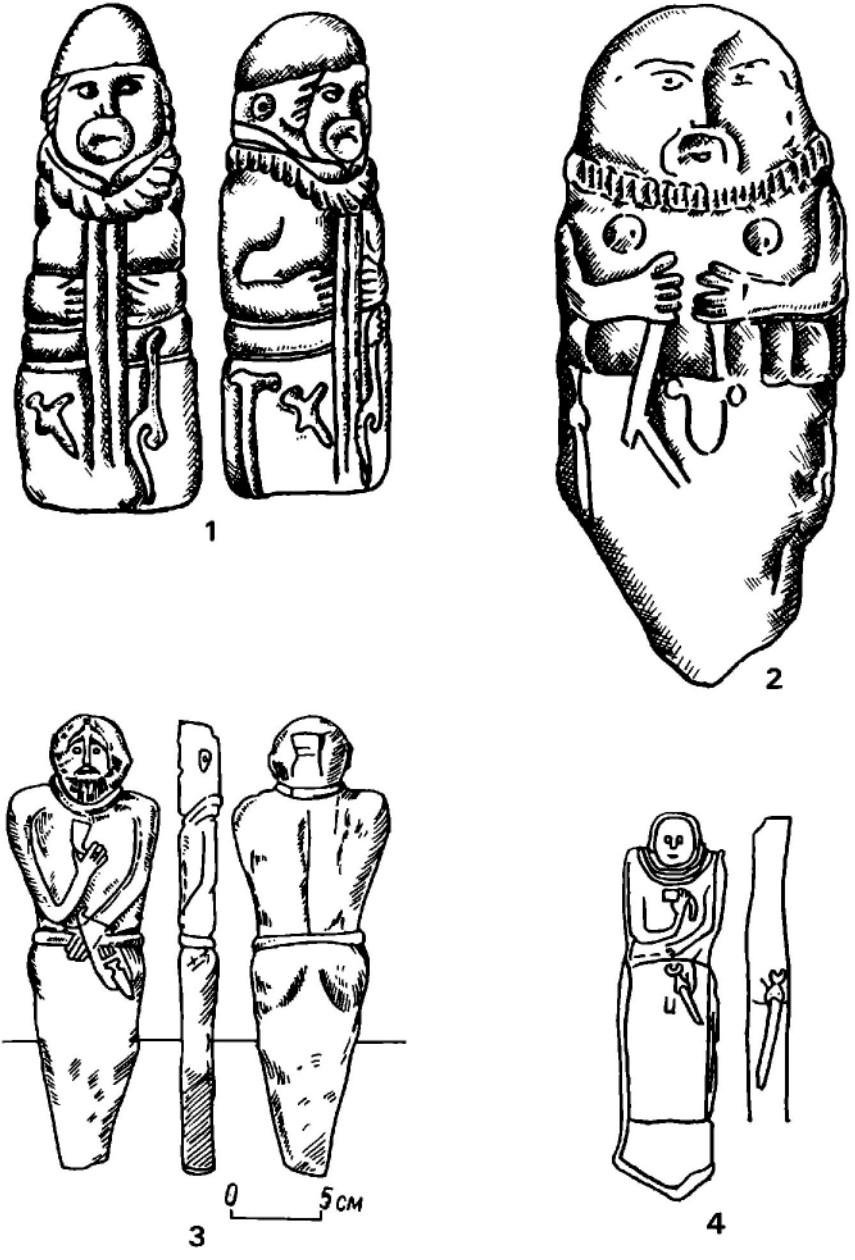


Figure 28-1. Olkhovchik; **28-2.** Sibioare; **28-3.** Butory; **28-4.** Kirovograd.

Figure 29. Olkhovchik stela.

two centuries.

Armor is sometimes shown on the stelae in the form of helmets, coats of mail, corslets, etc. Other objects portrayed include rhytons, whet-stones and a knife while necklaces, sometimes massive and indicating twisted metal, appear on the necks of the figures.

Unlike both the Copper Age and Cimmerian stelae, there is almost no ornamentation known from the Scythian stelae. Animals, for example, are portrayed extremely rarely and even then are not particularly expressive. On the other hand, we find a certain amount of variety of poses and other features of these statue-stelae. We can distinguish a first group of sculptures without a rhyton and with the hands placed on the stomach. The second group, the larger of the two, finds the compulsory depiction of a rhyton and the arms displayed asymmetrically. This second group also tends to reveal a greater amount of armament than the first.

A classical example of a stela of the first group is the figure from Olkhovchik (Figs. 28.1, 29) in the Donbass region (Shults 1976). Here we see a warrior or perhaps war-chief wearing a classical helmet with a massive twisted necklace about his neck. He is dressed in a long caftan with the front richly decorated. The beard and moustache are clearly carved. The hands rest grandly on the stomach, the outstretched fingers touching one another. He holds a whip in his left hand while a dagger and battle-ax hang from his belt. Everything about this stela speaks for the importance of the figure depicted. Similar statue-stelae of what would appear to be war-chiefs are known from Sibioare (Fig. 28.2), etc.

The second group of stelae, the type with a rhyton, is best represented by examples from Butory (Fig. 28.3), Mederovo, Kiev, etc. The head, shoulders, and facial features are all clearly carved with a necklace in one to three rows on the breast. The compulsory feature of these stelae is a rhyton, usually depicted in the right hand held up to the breast with the left hand supporting it from below, although this posture is occasionally reversed. Weaponry is less profuse on these stelae than those without a rhyton. Usually it consists of a single *akinax* suspended from the belt.

Except for the presence or absence of a rhyton, there are really no significant differences between the two types of stelae. The two types of stelae may reflect the same social roles that we saw in the Copper Age stelae where one type seemed to reflect a warrior, master or herdsman while the other, with the rhyton, seemed to more closely represent a priest. The division between the more heavily armed stelae and those bearing a drinking vessel may also reflect different social personae that

still remain enigmatic to us.

Schematic Stelae and Statutory Reliefs

The schematic stelae distinguish themselves from the more realistic types by their simplicity, and are generally flat, less broad, subrectangular in section and a half to a third the size of statue-stelae. The essential anthropomorphic features of the heads, shoulders and sometimes necks tend to be clearly portrayed while the facial features or other parts of the body are either partially carved or not shown at all. In some cases we can see a slightly carved belt, necklace or a bead. The detail of the hands is very rarely depicted but they still conform to the two basic postures — on the stomach or asymmetrical. The majority of these primitive stelae (Fig. 30.1-9) are found along the Dnieper and in the Crimea.

Archaeologists universally accept that the statue-stelae preceded the schematic stelae. The realistic stelae date to *c.* 8th-5th centuries BC while the more primitive ones, which are reminiscent of the grave slabs found in the Greek colonies of the north Pontic, date a bit later and a great many of them are marked with Sarmatian signs of the first centuries AD.

The statutory reliefs are characterized by a high level of artistry and careful execution of the body parts and other features. Usually we find the images of war-leaders, dressed in a caftan with a *bashlyk* on the head. The other details are much like a stela-statue, i.e. they depict the belt, the *akinax*, whip, battle-ax and *gorytus* with arrows. There may be a rhyton in the hand and a *phyala*, a drinking bowl, at the side. We also find the depiction of armor at Krasnodar (Fig. 30.10). The Krasnodar relief also shows gryphon and stag heads on the shoulders. The figures are capacious with broad shoulders, well carved waist, bulky legs, each depicted separately and there are traces of a penis sheath. The hands are separated from the body by gaps. The rhyton is bulky and on some statues it is even hollow in its upper part, a feature absent from the statue-stelae.

Unlike the massive statue-stelae, the statuary reliefs convey their images of war-chiefs in a classical pose, full of dynamism and energy. They are regarded as the next stage in the development of Scythian stelae and they are dated to the late Scythian period. In the Crimea these stelae undoubtedly belong to the Scythians while those from the north Caucasus probably belonged to the related Maeotic tribes.

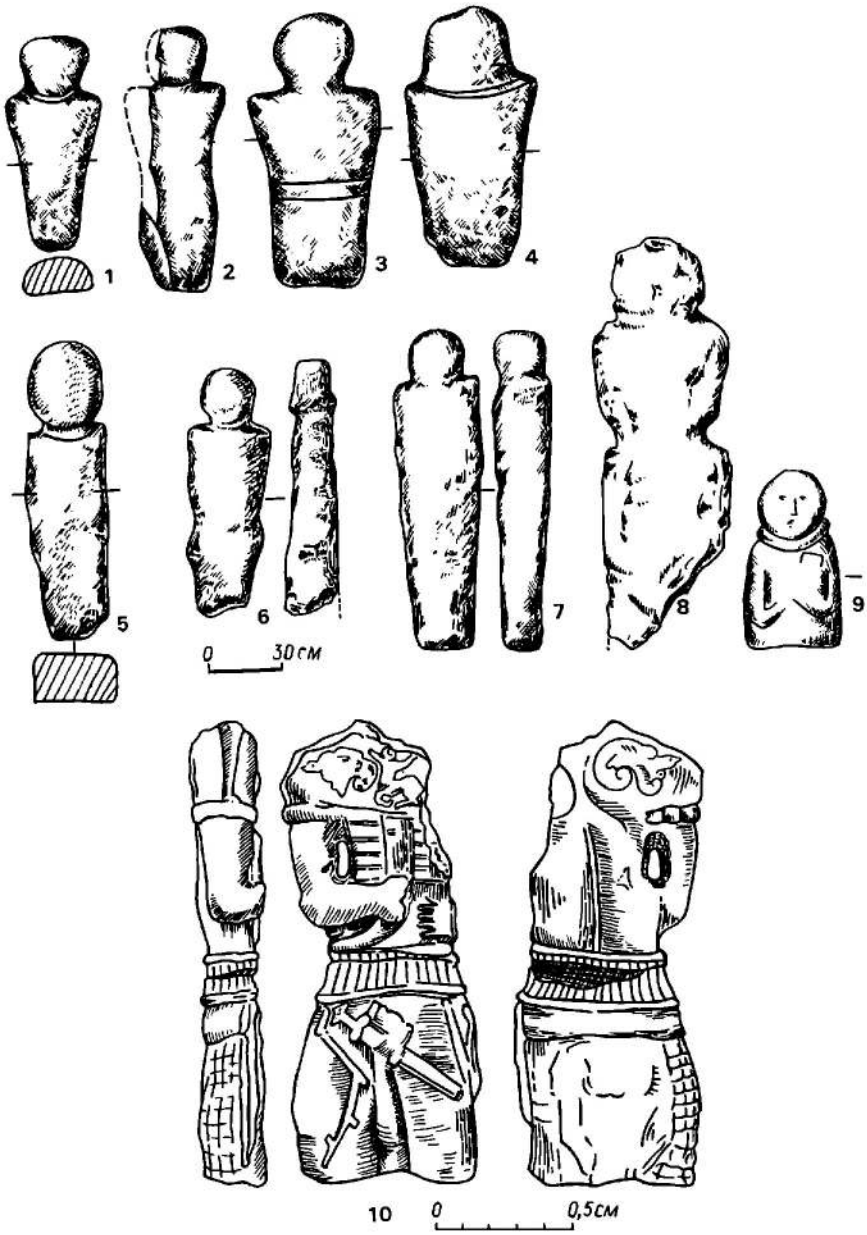


Figure 30-1,2. Balki; **30-3.** Blagovishchenka; **30-4.** Velika Belozerka; **30-5.** Pervomayevka; **30-6,7.** Vasilevka; **30-9.** Lower Dnieper; **30-10.** Krasnodar (h = *c.* 0.17 m).

The Georgiyevka Stela

In 1968 a new form of stela (Fig. 31.1) was discovered near the village of Georgiyevka in the Zaporozhye region. It was of considerable height, measuring about 1.8 m, and was found lying on a small kurgan near the village. The same kurgan also revealed some other stone slabs, one of them measuring about 0.7 m in section and two others were natural without traces of working. The stela was taken to the Zaporozhye Museum where it is still exhibited.

The head on the stela is clearly carved along with the shoulders and the body becomes thin at the waist. The facial features are not depicted and this part of the figure has been flattened and smoothed. The hands extend downwards and they were cut in a peculiar manner with two slightly rounded grooves 5 cm wide and 2 cm deep, a technique never encountered on any other stela in the Dnieper region. The range of possible analogs is very restricted with perhaps the anthropomorphic sculpture from Giliach in the Kuban region, discovered by T. M. Minayeva, as one possibility. Both have an excessively large head which is connected to the body without a neck and employ the same technique in depicting the hands that were extended downwards. Large headed, neckless anthropomorphic stelae are also known from three other places in the Ukraine, e.g. Krasnogorsk in the Kherson region, Zvane (Fig. 31.2) in the Artemisky district of the Donets region. It has a zig-zag on the upper part of the breast which consists of two parallel lines and a bit lower large female breasts are shown. On the stela from Krasnogorsk a small half-bent figure of a person is depicted near the stomach and breast of the statue. Possibly, this technique was intended by the artist to represent a baby in the womb of a pregnant woman.

It would seem then that the large-headed neckless anthropomorphic stelae differ considerably from those typical of the Scythians and they may represent a separate class of sculpture. Their chronological position would seem to fall after the Scythian period since a similar stela from Giliach was associated with archaeological material dating to the 3rd-2nd centuries BC and would seem to derive from the Sarmatian period, thus helping to fill the chronological gap between the stelae of the Scythians and the early Slavs.

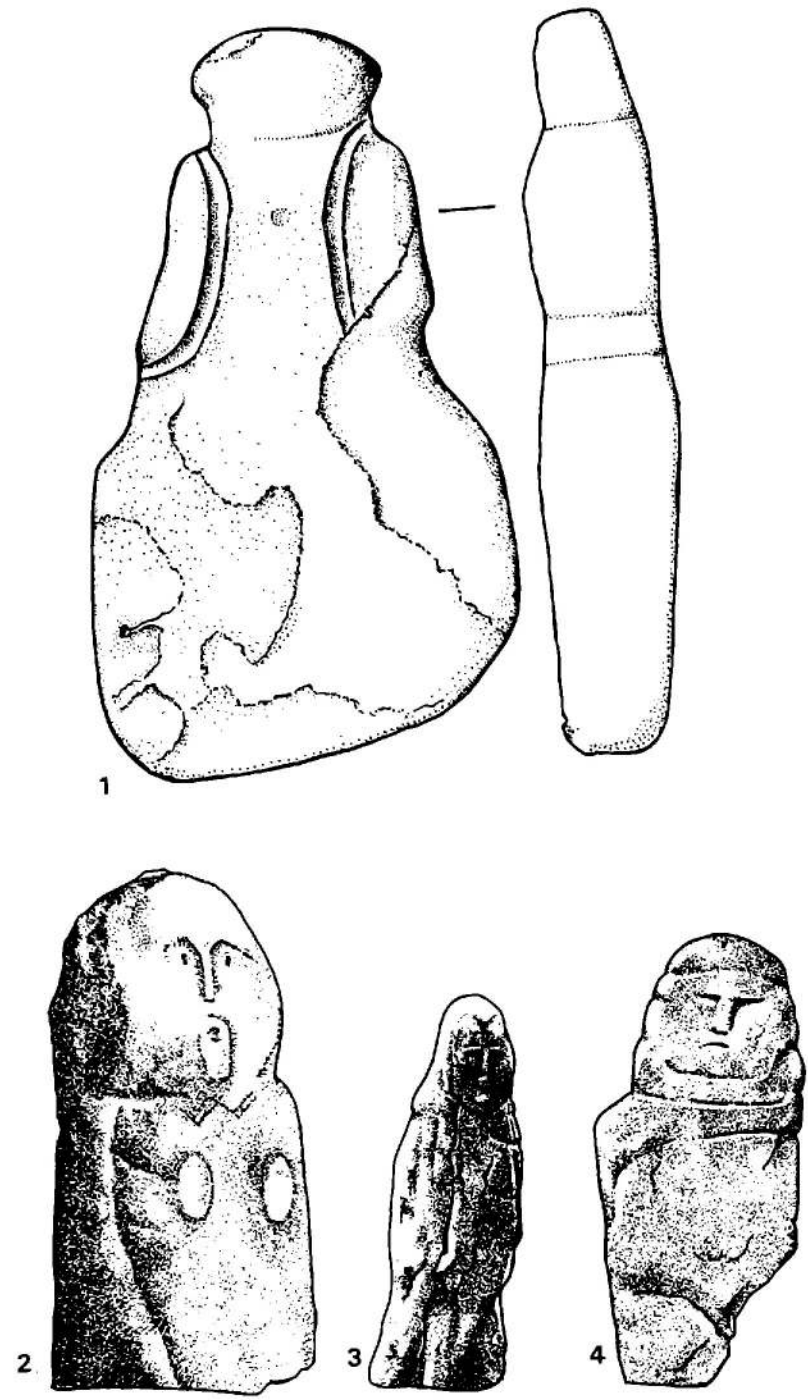


Figure 31-1. Georgiyevka; **31-2.** Zvane; **31-3.** Zaporozhye; **31-4.** Novoamvrosiyka.

Chapter 5
Stelae of the Early Slavs

The Zbruch Idol

Among the sculptural exhibits in the Krakow museum in Poland one of the most interesting and important is undoubtedly the so-called Zbruch (Polish *Zbrucz*) idol from the Ukraine. It was brought to the museum long ago when Krakow belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its eastern frontier with Russia was along the river Zbruch.

It was in 1848 when the level of the river Zbruch dropped considerably because of a great drought that a strange object appeared in the river bed. It looked like a hat. Austrian border guards were the first to notice it and one can imagine their surprise when the hat turned out to be made out of stone and it sat on top of a large stone column. The lower part of the pillar was buried in the river silt but through the water they could see that the hat rested on a four-faced statue. Three pairs of oxen were required to pull the post out of the water.

M. Pototsky, a student of local antiquities, was surprised by the discovery and immediately recognized the great scientific importance of what would be called the Zbruch idol. In 1851 the column was transported to Krakow where it has been on exhibit ever since.

The object created great excitement in scientific circles since it was the first time that the statue of an ancient deity had been discovered in Slavic territory and, moreover, one of such artistic quality. Interest was heightened because four-faced Slavic deities had been known from written sources. The mediaeval Saxo Grammaticus had described such a statue, depicting the old Slavic god Sviatovit, at the sanctuary of Arkona on the island of Rügen in the Baltic region.

The Zbruch idol is a stone post about 3 m tall and square in section (Fig. 32). On the top there is a head with four faces under a single peaked hat, trimmed from under with fur. The faces look in all directions. The oval faces, eyes, noses and mouths are carved schematically but with expression. Each of the faces tends to differ from one another and all four sides of the column are covered with carvings. Although there is repetition of a number of the carvings, it is still possible to distinguish the front of the idol from its back.

All sides of the pillar are divided into three sections: upper, middle and lower. The most expressive and informative is undoubtedly the upper where we find the torsos of the figures girded by a common belt. The position of the hands is similar on all figures; the right hand is placed on the breast while the left is set lower on the stomach. The

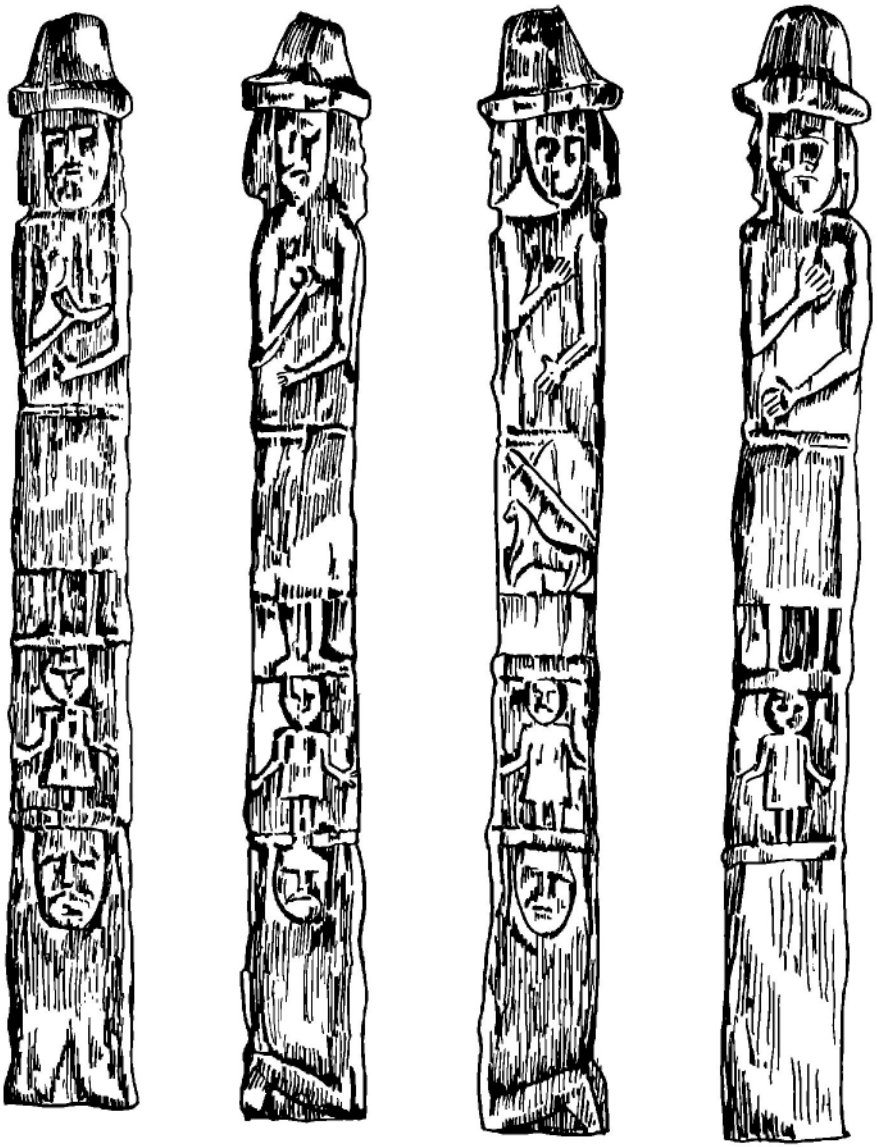


Figure 32. Zbruch idol (h = *c.* 3 m);

figures are dressed in long garments and on three sides (excluding the left hand side) one is able to see short and relatively thin legs. On two of the sides one finds female breasts depicted. One of the female figures, which is on the left side of the post, holds a horn of plenty in her right hand. The other female figure, on the right side opposite the former figure, holds a small ring. A man appears on another side and under his belt there is shown a sword and the figure of a horse.

The middle range reveals four small human figures with outstretched hands, shown as if engaged in a round dance. Among them are two men and two women. The lower range differs considerably from the other two. A single human figure appears to be kneeling and supporting the weight of the upper tiers. We see him *en face* on the front of the pillar and in profile with legs flexed on the two sides. Curiously, there are faces on each of the side panels but they are a bit smaller in size.

There is little doubt that the Zbruch idol conveys either a complicated image of a single Slavic deity or perhaps an entire pantheon. It may be that the tripartite division of the figures reflects the three spheres of human existence: the upper would represent the heavens where the gods dwell; the middle may indicate earth, the region where humans live, here perhaps depicted dancing a round dance; and the lower, the realm of evil spirits.

We have a fair idea of the richness of the world view of the ancient Slavs from written and ethnographic sources. At the head of the assembly of the gods was Perun, the god of thunder and lightning; the sky was the throne of Dazhbog, the sun was rolled through the sky by Khors; fire was managed by Svarog and the wind was ruled by swift Strybog. The 'cattle god', Veles or Volos, was also responsible for the cult of the ancestors, the dead souls. Among the goddesses were Makosh and Lado, the first a goddess of fertility whereas the second was goddess of marriage and merriment. The world of fantasy was then filled out with numerous mermaids, fairies, brownies, forest-spirits, etc.

B. O. Rybakov (1981) has argued that the idol displayed the images of at least four of these Slavic deities — Perun, Makosh, Lado and Veles. According to him, the central figure shown with a horn of plenty was the goddess Makosh; and, on the left side of the idol the figure with horse and sword is identified with Perun; on the right side is Lado, the goddess of marriage, shown with a wedding ring. The 'cattle god' Veles is shown then as a chthonic deity while the figure on the back of the stone still defies interpretation.

The Zbruch idol was not the only stone sculpture to be recovered

from the Dniester region. In the middle of the 19th century along the same river near the village Lopushany, a similar stone pillar with carvings was found. Unfortunately, it fell into the unsympathetic hands of the local priest, who had the monument broken into pieces. Only the pedestal survived with its carved legs because a cross had been installed upon it. Such were the techniques employed by Christianity to fight against paganism right on up into the mid 19th century.

For a long time the Zbruch idol had been unique, and even its original place of installation, before it had been thrown into the river Zbruch, was unknown. Recent research, however, has clarified some of these problems a bit and now there are a number of early Slavic sculptures and even the original context of the Zbruch idol has been determined.

We now have evidence for more than thirty sites along the middle Dniester region where stone anthropomorphic idols attributed to the early Slavs have been found. Among them are the three-faced deity from Ivankovka (Fig. 33.5) in the Khmelnits region and the two-headed idol from Yarivka (Fig. 33.8) in the Chernovtsi region. The majority of finds, however, have but a single face, e.g. Stavchany (Fig. 33.2), Kalus (Fig. 33.3), Kremonna (Fig. 33.7), Myshkov (Fig. 33.1), etc. or, sometimes, they are only simple abstract pillars. The idols are occasionally found in groups such as the three idols recovered from Ivankovka (Fig. 33.4-6).

In terms of technique of manufacture, degree of craftsmanship, and wealth of illustration, all of these other stelae compare poorly with the Zbruch idol. Sometimes we can distinguish a horn of plenty in the hands of a deity or, on the back of the stela from Stavchany a horse was figured.

Most of the stelae have been found in comparatively recent times. For example, the group of idols from Ivankovka were found in 1952, that from Stavchany in 1963 and the one from Yarivka in the early 1970s. As a rule, they were discovered by antiquarians and were then followed up by archaeological excavations. An account of the discovery of the two-faced idol at Yarivka by B. A. Timoshchuk (pers. comm.) provides an interesting example of a phenomenon found in many countries where local farmers encounter earlier relics of the past.

One of the students of the historical faculty at Chernovtsi University reported that a local farmer had discovered a stone idol. The farmer had used the stone as a threshold step in front of his house. B. O. Timoshchuk took a truck and hurried to the village of Yarivka to find the house of the farmer but no idol in front of it. The farmer explained: 'My

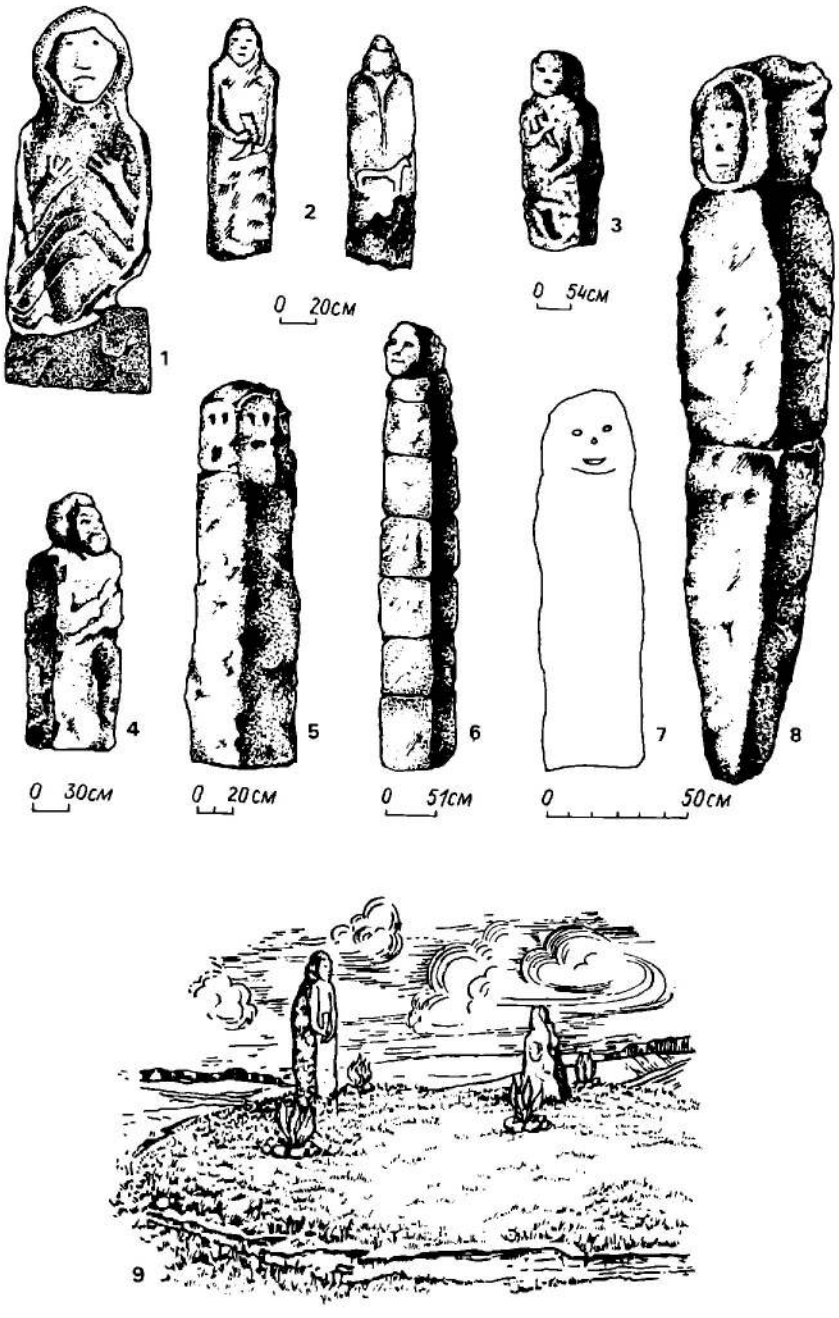


Figure 33-1. Mishkov; **33-2.** Stavchany; **33-3.** Kalyus; **33-4,5,6.** Ivankovka; **33-7.** Kremonna; **33-8.** Yurovka; **33-9.** Reconstruction of sanctuary at Stavchany.

neighbours told me not to make a threshold out of the idol because it was a statue of a human being or deity and it would cause me trouble. But I didn't listen to them and I made a threshold out of it. That night I felt a pain in my stomach and in the morning I decided to bring it to the cemetery. So I took the damned stone and dumped it in the graveyard.'

'We drove to the cemetery,' Boris Timoshchuk related, 'where the idol, which was about man-size, was lying among the coffins. Together with the driver we managed to lift it onto the truck. We carried it to the museum, but in the morning I too felt a pain in the stomach. But then the pain disappeared.'

There is no doubt that many early Slavic sculptures are still hidden in the fields of the Dniester valley which could be discovered during public works. There are also wooden idols that may have escaped destruction. For example, after Kiev adopted Christianity, the figure of Perun was thrown into the river but didn't sink and floated downstream while, according to legend, those who remained pagan ran along the river bank shouting to the figure of the god to swim away. The chronicles suggest that Perun and other pagan deities of the Kiev pantheon were made of wood. A chronicle relates how Prince Volodimir 'established the gods in a yard on a hill: Perun was made of wood, his head was of silver and his mouth was gold; around him were Khors and Dazhbog, and Strybog and Symargla and Mokosh.' The fate of the idol of Perun is unknown and it might well be lost. According to the Kiev chronicle, Volodimir ordered his soldiers to follow the idol of Perun as it floated downstream to the Dnieper rapids. The order was carried out and the deity reached the rapids. Where it ultimately floated to is difficult to say. It may have grounded on one of the shallows and found its last refuge on one of the islands near Kiev. One of the islands above the rapids, now submerged under the waters of the Lenin Lake, was popularly known as Perun's island. If it were to survive, the ancient sculpture would have to have been buried in very moist ground or bog where access to the air is limited. Oak tends to survive well on the bottom of the river and near Kiev a sacred oak with the jaws of a wild boar inserted into it was recovered. The two-faced deity of the western Slavs, recently discovered on the island of Tolensee in eastern Germany, was also made of wood.

The Sanctuary on Bogyt Mountain

The excavations carried out of the group of idols at Ivankovka and Stavchany indicate that such figures were erected on the sites of the Chernyakovo culture of the early Slavs in the 3rd-4th century BC. Here

there were also found traces of cult pits which were obviously connected with some sort of sanctuary (Figs. 33.9, 34.1). Unfortunately, the original placement of the majority of ancient Slavic sculptures is unknown. We have already seen that the original location of the Zbruch idol long remained a mystery. But even in 1848 the local antiquarian M. Pototsky, when surveying the banks of the river Zbruch near where the idol was discovered, suggested that the idol may have originally been erected on one of the hills nearby which was named Bogyt. The truth of this conjecture was borne out more recently by an expedition carried out by I. P. Rusanova and B. O. Timoshchuk (1986).

'We had been walking a long time in a dark dense forest,' wrote the authors of the discovery, 'the local people didn't follow us since they were afraid of such places; that is why we went by ourselves to search on Bogyt mountain. We climbed hills, forced a passage through the brush, all without result. Then we heard Marina Yagodinskaya shout '"I've found it! I've found it!," and here right before us was the pagan sanctuary, the cult center of the early Slavs. A thick forest, stone slabs covered by moss, the silence of a kingdom that had fallen asleep..'.

The fortunate discovery of the sanctuary where, as we will see below, the Zbruch idol had been initially installed, had been preceded by the examination of all the evidence of written sources about the sanctuaries of the early Slavs and the results of earlier archaeological excavations.

The Arab traveller, Ibn-Fadlan, has left us with a description of the sanctuaries of the early Slavs, one of which he examined himself on the Volga. The sanctuary, according to him, was circular and enclosed by a fence with an idol erected at its center. The figure itself was made of wood. Statues of other deities were also erected but smaller than the central idol. In their ceremonies, the early Slavs would sacrifice animals and hang their heads from the surrounding posts.

Such description is borne out almost completely by archaeological evidence. The sanctuary in Peryn near Novogorod was circular, measuring 21 m in diameter. In the center had been erected a statue of Perun, just as the idol described by Ibn Fadlan for the Volga. Along the perimeter of the sanctuary were eight pits forming the figure of an eight petal flower. A fire had been set in each of the pits and in one of them ash was so thick that it would appear that a fire had been sustained constantly. Similar sanctuaries have been found further west such as in the Rzhavinsky forest of Bukovina, in Gnylyi Kut near Gorodok in the Podolia region, and in the village of Shumanske near Zytomir, etc. Early Slavic sanctuaries with stone figures, for example, one on Starokievskaya

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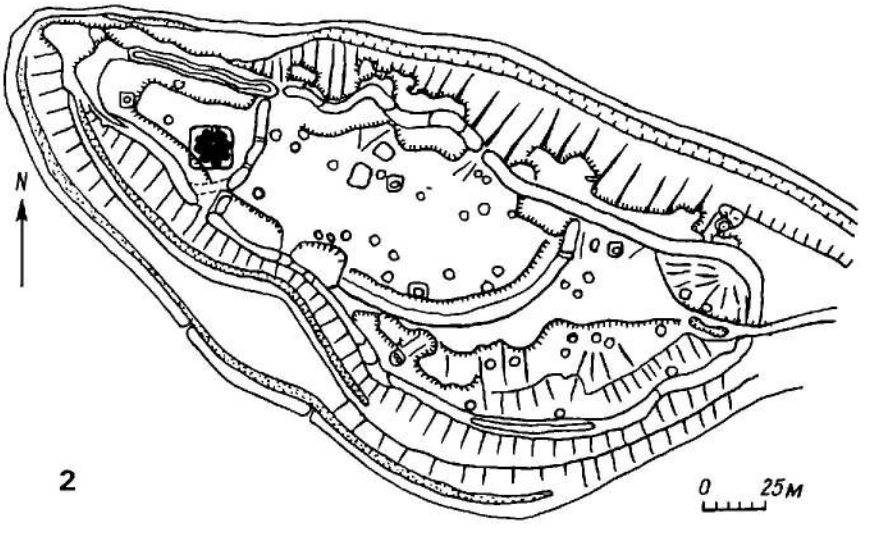

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Figure 34. Early Slavic sanctuary in Podolia; **34-2.** Plan of Mount Bogyt sanctuary, source of the Zbruch idol.

mountain excavated by V. V. Khvoiko, are also known.

But to return to the sanctuary discovered on Bogyt mountain (Fig. 34.2) near the village of Gorodnytsia. The first test pits of the excavation proved to be disappointing; they revealed nothing other than Scythian pottery, However, the situation swiftly became clearer when it was discovered that the early Slavs had re-used an earlier Scythian site for their sanctuary. They had repaired the mounds and cleared the ditches and on the uppermost part of the site a large platform had been constructed measuring 70 by 50 m. In its center was further erected another elevated platform, paved with stone and 9 m in diameter. At the center of this 'altar' was a stone-lined pit in the shape of a square which precisely matched the size and shape of the base of the Zbruch idol. There could be no doubt that the idol had originally been erected within the sanctuary atop Bogyt mountain. Possibly, the name of the mountain, Bogyt from Russian *bog* 'god' had been retained from the pagan period til the present. Such continuity of place name and earlier pagan sanctuary may also lie behind the site of Pyryn near Novogorod where the temple to the god Perun stood .

Beyond the sanctuary there was evidence for semi-subterranean houses where the cult priests may have lived and a long surface building which may have served for the congregation during the night. At the foot of Bogyt mountain there were also found a kurgan and some early Slavic settlements in the vicinity. The inhabitants of these settlements could have climbed the sacred mountain to worship the god whose idol had been installed there.

Around the platform on which the idol stood, eight 'sacrificial' pits were discovered as had also been the case at Pyryn. A little further away was another cult structure, smaller than the pedestal which carried the idol. It too had been paved with stones and in its center was a large pit, filled with sacrificial offerings. Two unusual large pits were also excavated on Bogyt mountain. They occupied about 5 sq m each with one pit 5 m and the other 6 m deep, both cut into the bedrock. As with the other 'sacrificial' pits, remains of offerings were found inside them — animal bones, sherds of Slavic pottery dating to the 10th-13th centuries, and fragments of ornaments. The presence of human bones suggested that human sacrifice was also practised.

To conclude our summary of the work of Rusanova and Timoshchuk on the river Zbruch, they have now expanded their excavations to include the neighbouring mountain of Zvenigorod. Here they have uncovered remains of another Slavic sanctuary with three altars and sacrificial pits about them. Fire was made on the altars and

offerings were scattered about. They included silver rings, glass bracelets, axes, arrows, scythes, and scissors. There was even a silver icon of the virgin Oranta which shows that although Christianity had already been introduced, such images could also be offered to pagan deities who, here at least, the population would appear to have venerated more than the Christian.

The excavations on Bogyt and Zvenigorod mountains continue still and their finds indicate that they both date to the 10th - 13th centuries. The idols such as the three-faced figure from Ivankovka or the four-faced deity from Bogyt mountain would appear to have existed among the Slavs from the 3rd-4th centuries up to the 10th-12th centuries. The Zbruch idol itself had been made of a local limestone and it seems to have stood on Bogyt mountain all the way to the 13th century. Then it was carefully removed from its pedestal — there were no signs of damage on it — and it was transported about 1.5 km before it was hidden below the waters of the Zbruch until the 19th century.

Chapter 6
Stone 'Babas' of the Polovtsians

Written sources indicate that the Polovtsians (Kipchaks or Cumans) migrated out of Asia to appear in the Ukrainian steppe in the 11th century. They were a Turkic-speaking people and, according to their physical features, a Mongoloid racial type with broad face, high cheek bones and flattish nose. They were organized into tribes migrating as pastoral nomads; land was not held in private and they did not yet build settlements, although the *Chronicle of Kiev* suggests that they did maintain some permanent settlements at Shurukan, Sugrov, etc. Perhaps these served as craft and trade centers and we do know that the Polovtsians both knew and used money in their transactions.

Their social relations with their neighbors, the people of Kiev Rus, were uneasy and unstable. The Polovtsians sometimes raided the Russian towns while Kiev princes responded in kind. Sometimes the Polovtsian khans and Kiev princes made temporary alliances and even consolidated them through dynastic marriages. The complicated relations between the Polovtsians and the Kiev Rus are immortalized in the *Slovo o Polku Igorevim* 'The Song of Igor's Army'.

The Polovtsians practised the cult of the ancestors and believed that they originated from animals. The totem animals of some of the Polovtsian tribes included the dog, ox, horse and sheep. Even the personal names of Polovtsian khans reflect their close association with animals, e.g. Kobiak 'puppy' and Konchak 'bitch'. This belief, however, did not interfere with their also borrowing foreign names from their Slavic neighbours, and the son of Khan Konchak was named Yuri.

The ancestor cult of the Polovtsians was manifested in their erection of stone statues. The Flemmish monk Wilhelm Rubruk, the ambassador of King Ludovik XIV, visited the Mongolian king Mangu-khan in 1253. He recorded that the Cumans were erecting statues in the memory of the deceased above their barrows. The statues were reputed to have been placed facing the east and every figure held a cup in its hands at its belly.

In the Ukraine, the Polovtsian statues number in the hundreds and they display both sexes roughly equally, the men normally portrayed as warriors. Their pose, irrespective of sex, is canonical: broad open face, eyes looking into the distance, and with hands holding a small bowl near the lower part of the stomach (Figs. 35-36). Woman are regularly depicted with distended breasts, apparently full of milk, and the breasts

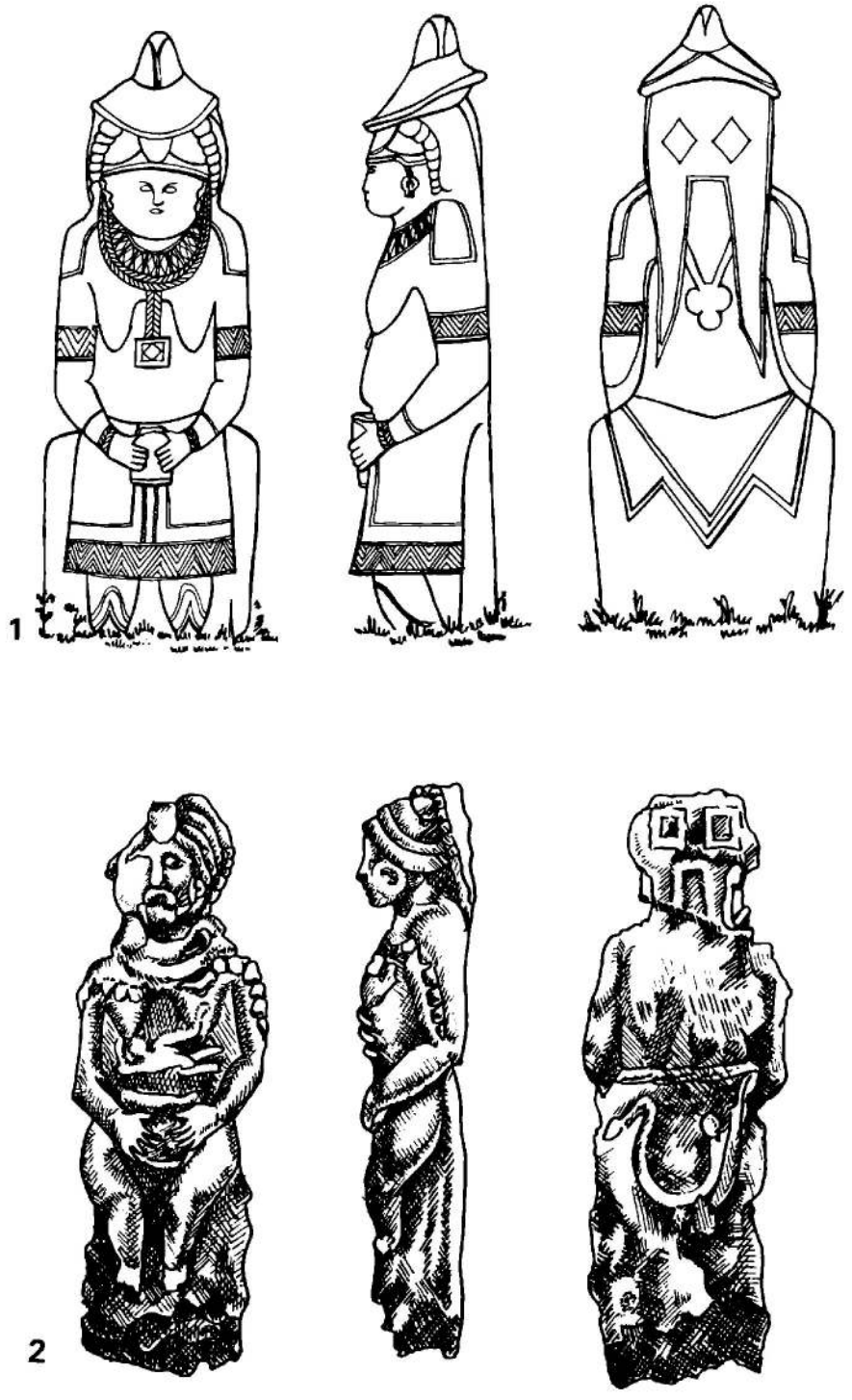

Figure 35-1. Polovtsian 'baba'; **35-2.** Chornukhino 'madonna'.

Figure 36. Stone 'babas' of the Ukraine.

are bared even when the figure is wearing other garments. Interestingly enough, the breasts of males are also shown as well and emphasize the difficulties of using the presence of nipples or breasts as the sole criteria for identifying the sex of a figure.

Primary attention was directed at carving the upper part of the body and lesser attention was devoted to the lower. The legs, for example, are generally not in proportion but are quite small and short. On the basis of the information gained up into the 1970s, S. O. Pletneva examined more than 1300 statues and divided them into three main categories: 1) those with the head deeply set on the shoulders so that the chin is buried into the chest; 2) those whose chin is at the same level as the shoulders; and 3) those whose chin is a bit higher than the shoulders. We have already seen a somewhat similar system of classification applied to Copper Age figures.

Considerable attention was devoted by the artist to modelling the face of the figures. Usually it is wide, massive, with high cheek bones and a rounded or pointed chin. The eye-brows and nose are conveyed in relief as a figure T; the nose is straight, the eye-brows arched while the eyes are marked with deep oval pits. The lips were depicted in a similar fashion although male faces were shown with a moustache also in relief. The beard was rarely shown, and if depicted it tended to be a short goatee with contours slightly carved.

Almost all statues are shown with rich garments, ornaments, weapons and other things. Interpreting the objects shown on the stelae provides few problems since the majority of them can be found in the graves of the Polovtsians. Indeed, it is the fact that they are also depicted in stone that enhances our understanding of their culture. In the absence of the stone figures we would never know about the complex head-dress and hair-do of Polovtsian women, the cut of the clothes of either the men or women, the patterns of their embroidery, the forms of their shoes, or some of their weapons, especially their coat of mail.

The head-gear on male statues was often a helmet which might be spheri-conical, half-conical or egg-shaped. More rarely was a hat, either spherical or resembling a *bashlyk*, shown on the head. Women had complicated head-dresses, including a hat, flap and plaits. Hats varied in shape; some had brims, others were wound like bandages or were in the shape of hoods. The flaps appear to have been made from some rich fabric and were attached to the hat by a decorative fastener of rhomboid, square or triangular form. The flap, hair-do and felt hat is represented on the sides of the head with oblique hatches while at the back of the head one can discern the flap and two or three plaits of hair. One or two

plaits of hair can also be found on male statues.

Generally men and women were clothed in the same fashion: caftan and trousers. Under the caftan there was sometimes a long shirt. Footwear comprised boots which were tied by cords above the knees. The flaps and sleeves of the caftan were decorated with various embroidery and other designs. Special attention was paid to the embroidered sleeves. Excavation has revealed that in reality they were made of fabric imported from Byzantium and that the designs on them might have been employed in distinguishing the status of the individual. Occasionally, female figures wore a pelerine-cloak. Many of the statues either depict or at least imply (the hands tend to cover the belt) the existence of belts from which other objects were suspended.

Outside of the garments and primarily but not exclusively on male statues were depictions of weapons, both offensive and defensive. We have already mentioned the helmets. Nearly all warriors are shown with two pendants connected by narrow cords across their chest. Although it is rarely depicted on the statues, the Polovtsians employed the coat of mail, made from thick hide onto which had been attached sheets of metal.

The offensive weapons of the Polovtsian warrior consisted of a sword and a bow. Swords were generally curved, attached to the left side along with the bow case while a quiver with arrows was suspended from the right side. Excavated material provides us with further evidence concerning their archery equipment. The Polovtsians employed the composite bow, made from a combination of wood and bone plates while the quiver was fashioned from birch bark and decorated with bone plates. A rather well preserved bow and quiver with arrows was recovered from a kurgan near the village of Vilnianka in the Zaporozhye region. It was a small kurgan about 1 m high. It covered a cenotaph; only the warrior's gear was found, he himself having apparently died far from his native settlement. Among the grave goods were two pairs of stirrups, horse bits, remnants of a coat of mail and a well-preserved birch bark quiver. It was cylindrical in shape and about a half meter long and consisted of birch bark decorated with bone plates. In some places one could see the traces of white paint and remains of a skin which covered the quiver. All that survived inside the quiver were the metal arrowheads and the dust of the arrow shafts. Here also were preserved the remains of the bone plates from which the bow was fashioned.

Weapons are not confined to male statues but also appear on those of women, a pattern also witnessed in the excavation of female graves. In the Nikolayev museum there is a statue some 3 m tall of an

'Amazon', armed with a sword and a quiver which was suspended on one side. She also had two round plates of armor over the breasts as might be found on a male warrior's statue.

Aside from weapons, the Polovtsian statues also display a whole arsenal of utility tools: knife, sharpening stone, purse, comb, etc. Knives ranged in size from short to long, the latter which could have served also as a weapon. Sometimes small mirrors are depicted on women's statues. These would have originally been made of discs of polished metal, and as is the case for most of the objects portrayed on the statues, they are also found in Polovtsian graves.

There is a large assortment of ornaments shown on Polovtsian statues with the greatest variety on those of females. Earrings range from round, ring-like, drop-like, rhomboid, etc. There are also necklaces and pendants. The necklaces consist of beads with the same range of forms as the earrings. Many female statues wear a pendant of round or square form on the upper part of the breasts. Other objects depicted include a whip and some musical instrument shaped like a small harp.

In some instances we can discern traces of black or red paint on the surface of the sculptures. It has been presumed that the paints had been used to portray the facial figures on those statues where these features had not been carved. Unfortunately, such paintings have not survived.

Unlike many of the earlier series of statues, the Polovtsian figures generally lack representation of animals on their surfaces. Figures of animals only occur on a few statues. A statue in the museum in Simferopol depicts a dog chasing a hare, while a dog and a bird are shown on another figure now on display in the museum in Krasnodar. A statue from Askania-Nova displays two deer and what may be a hunter with his shield. As a rule, these pictures are located on the lower part of the sculpture and on the side which, on the majority of statues, has been left bare of carvings.

One of the most interesting statues comes from Chornukhino (Fig. 35.2), Perevalsky district, Voroshilovgrad region, dated to the 12th century. It was discovered in 1971 in a destroyed kurgan. The statue depicts a half-seated women with breasts modelled in relief. Her legs were slightly bent at the knees and her feet rested on a small pedestal. The hands were located on the lower part of her stomach where, according to tradition, she held a small bowl. What makes this statue so unique is that lying across the woman's lap there is also shown a baby-girl (the sex of the child is clearly indicated) with her hands stretched towards her mother's breasts, one hand touching the mother's right bosom. To all intents and purposes, this statue reflects the well-known

mediaeval image of the madonna but which, so far as Polovtsian art is concerned, is still without parallel.

There is no consensus among scholars for whom precisely the Polovtsian statues were erected although the majority hold to the notion that they were made to honor the outstanding members of society, primarily the Polovtsian nobility. The rich armament, garments and ornaments depicted on the figures supports this assumption. That they were fashioned to honor individual members of society is supported by the individuality of the sculptures — standing and siting postures, male and females – and the variation in iconography and details. Their facial features are rather individual although S. O. Pletneva (1958) reminds us that this individuality probably has more to do with the artist than the person being honoured. Nevertheless, some of the sculptures undoubtedly suggest a direct portrait. Pletneva has proposed that the standing figures, which are more fully armed than the sitting ones, were probably erected for warriors while the sitting figures may represent the elders of the families and tribes. Female statues are also quite important as can be seen in the madonna from Chornukhino, the female warrior from Nikolayev or those statues that depict a woman from the nobility. Such an important role for women is seldom encountered in the type of tribal society that we would normally ascribe to the Polovtsians.

The stone figures are often found in groups of two or three to as many as twenty, standing atop kurgans. Generally, they were mounted on kurgans which, after excavation, failed to yield any evidence of burial. In this light, the concentration of statues in a certain place takes on the appearance of a sanctuary or particular Polovtsian outdoor altar. When Rubruk wrote of the Polovtsians, he noted that they sometimes built either pyramids or rectangular house-like constructions for their dead and it is possible that here he was attempting to describe the Polovtsian sanctuaries.

One of the Polovtsian sanctuaries was recently excavated by the Donets' archaeologist, M. L. Shevtsov (pers. comm.). It formed an irregular square, 8 by 12 m, fenced by a stone wall. Two stone images had been placed at its center. At the foot of the statues were the bones of animals — horse, ox, sheep and dog — suggesting sacrifice. Other sanctuaries have yielded the graves of children and animal sculptures such as the one found near the village of Chornozemne, Tokmak district, Zaporozhye region. It comprises a small barrow around which stood a series of stone figures – two bears, a wild boar, a wolf, four horsemen and a stela (Fig. 37).

The high artistic level of the 'babas' strikes a chord among the

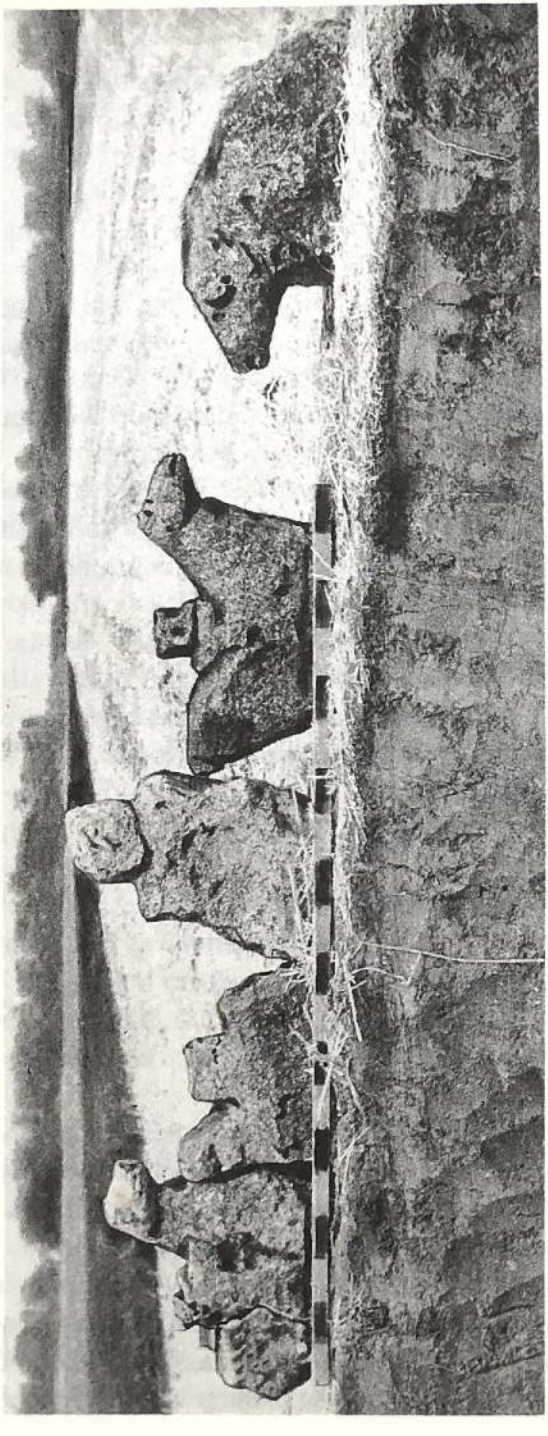

Figure 37. Polovtsian sanctuary at Chornozemne.

people of the area. Of them, the great Azerbaijani poet Nizani wrote:

> The tribes of the Kipchaks are coming here,
> And they worship their idols...
> The horseman holds back his horse
> And sends his arrow to the foot of an idol
> Gives a sheep as a present to it.

Erected in the open steppe, these statues have long outlived their creators. Even after the passing of the Polovtsians, these statues were undoubtedly venerated by succeeding generations. These 'evil gods' were revered by the first Slavic settlers of the southern steppe as late as the 16th and 17th centuries. Even as late as the 19th century the local population ascribed supernatural forces to them. The renowned Russian archaeologist, I. E. Zabelin, who undertook excavations of the famous Scythian kurgan at Chortomlyk in 1862-1863, related the following story. He once saw a woman approach one of the statues holding a baby in her arms. She crossed herself, bowed, kissed its feet, hands, bosom and shoulders and then raised the baby to do the same again. She then walked around the statue, pouring some water, and finally put her scarf about its shoulders and went away. At the foot of the statue erected on the Chortomlyk kurgan many coins of the 17th-19th centuries have been found, evidently offerings of the local population. Similar veneration is to be found in the west where the statue-menhir at St. Martin's on Guernsey received offerings during the last century, and garlands are still placed on 'her' on Midsummer and New Year's Day (De Guérin 1921, 33). All of this is a useful reminder that the cultural importance and ritual behavior associated with these stelae may have long outlasted the intentions of their creators.

Chapter 7
Conclusions

This brief work has surveyed the stone sculptures of the south Ukraine from the Copper Age to the Early Middle Ages. Throughout the millennia we find a variety of changes in artistic style, content, function and meaning of the image, but also we discern certain constant patterns. Confining our main attention to the earliest of the stelae and utilizing the later monuments for comparison, we may suggest a number of generalizations or, at least, hypotheses.

1. The earliest stelae were erected in the Copper Age, sometime about 4000-3000 BC, and apparently by populations of the Kemi-Oba culture and perhaps closely related neighbors. In general, it would appear that the abundant association of the stone stelae with the peoples of the Yamna cultural-historical tradition was later and represents a secondary use of the earlier stelae.

2. The original context of the stelae appears to have been as components in ritual areas which consisted of a (circular) ditched enclosure, altars and surrounding columns of stone stelae. If the Kemi-Oba culture is to be associated with the earliest Indo-Europeans, then the evidence does not support the suggestion that the earliest Indo-Europeans lacked ritual structures.

3. The identification of the figures on the stelae must remain open and it is still impossible to determine whether they represent deities or human figures of the society that created them. Attempts to interpret the statue-menhirs as Indo-European deities can perhaps be made on the basis of individual examples but there is no systematic pattern that requires us to accept the menhirs as reflections of an Indo-European trifunctional socio-ideology, nor can we confidently distinguish various Indo-European gods from one another.

4. Although the statue-menhirs have traditionally played an important role in the discussion of Indo-European mythology and contacts, it should be recalled that in its use of stone, mortuary practice, and ceramics, the Kemi-Obans were also closely associated with eneolithic cultures of the north Caucasus. The possibility that the statue-menhirs may have derived originally from a north Caucasian ethno-linguistic milieu cannot be entirely dismissed.

5. The statue-menhirs of the Pontic region do share a number of figurative similarities with other stelae of Late Neolithic/Copper Age

Europe and the recently discovered evidence from northern Italy also indicates some grounds for contextual comparisons as well. It is still very difficult, however, to determine if these similarities are largely generic or whether there is some form of historical connection between the different regions. Given the tradition of megalithic construction and stone-working from the north Caucasus to the Crimea and Lower Dnieper, it is difficult to accept the argument that the Pontic stelae *must* be derived from impulses from western Europe and it is far easier to see them as a purely local phenomenon. Similarly, it is also questionable whether the Pontic stelae had a direct influence on the design of those known from the Alpine region or western Europe, since there is no evidence of Pontic stelae much beyond the northwestern coast of the Black Sea.

6. The stone sculptures from all periods appear to be largely confined to the steppe region. Once erected on a small elevation, these sculptures could be clearly seen across the open steppe whereas they would have been largely invisible in the forested lands to their north. While it might be attractive to imagine that it was the nature of the open steppe itself that prompted their construction, similar statue-menhir are also known from mountainous locations such as the Italian Alps where visibility would be extremely constrained.

6. The stylistic vocabulary of the stelae was by no means homogeneous through time and a comparison of the various motifs suggests some grounds for caution in the interpretation of statue-menhirs anywhere in Europe. For example, both the Kernosovka stelae and much later ones erected by the Polovtsians suggest that the indication of breasts or nipples is not in itself sufficient grounds for identifying a figure as female. Indeed, figures like the Kernosovka stela suggest that we may have to deal with hermaphroditic or bi-sexual figures, an interpretation that may also be valid for some of the stelae of western Europe. Conversely, as some of the Polovtsian stelae also remind us, the presence of weapons on a menhir need not be confined solely to males.

7. A survey of the stelae through the millennia suggests that the function of the stelae was not necessarily constant. In some instances, e.g. the earliest Copper Age or the Early Slavic and Polovtsian stelae, an original function associated with ritual seems to be suggested while Cimmerian and perhaps Scythian stelae seem more easily explained as commemoratives for leaders. Interpretations may also range from

viewing those portrayed as deities, idealized representations of social classes, or actual portraits of real individuals, e.g. the Polovtsians.

8. The ideological life of stone stelae far exceeds the duration of their creators' own culture and we have already seen many examples of the later re-use of earlier stelae, e.g. the employment of Kemi-Oba stelae as coverings for Yamna burials, the inclusion of Cimmerian stelae in classical architecture, or the veneration of Polovtsian stelae by later Slavs. Problems of chronology are not confined solely to the date of the original carving of a monument or its original context but also extend to the various 'meanings' it had for the societies that encountered it.

Appendix
Catalogue of Copper Age Stelae

The following catalogue provides a summary description of the Copper Age stone stelae of the Pontic region. In the frequent absence of full site reports, thorough descriptions of each individual stela, and the social (e.g. sex, age of the deceased) context of their discovery, a full catalogue is not yet possible. According to N. D. Dovzhenko (1991), by the mid 1980s the number of Copper Age stelae known from the north Pontic numbered nearly 300, of which 80% were concentrated between the rivers Ingul and Bug. In general they are found in the steppe region, much less frequently in the forest-steppe. Some anthropomorphic stelae are also known from the Crimea. Outside the Ukraine, similar stelae are known from Moldavia, Romania and Bulgaria on the west and from the north Caucasus on the east.

This catalogue includes all the documented stelae known from the Copper Age. The majority were discovered in burials, usually of the Yamna (Pit-grave) period, where they served as covering slabs for burial cists. Some are also known from the somewhat later Catacomb period.

In the following descriptions, the stelae are numbered as per the map in Fig. 2 and divided into the previously defined typological groups:

I. Statue-menhirs. Complicated stelae where one finds such features as the face, hands, 'foot-prints', details of clothing, weapons, ornament, images of animals and people, and sometimes 'narrative' scenes, e.g. Kernosovka, Kazanki, Verkhorechye and others. The complicated stelae may be divided into the three types described in the text, i.e. Kazanki, Natalevka and Yezerovo-Tiritaka. Complicated stelae which cannot be placed in any of the above types are treated descriptively in the catalogue.

II. Simple schematic stelae in which only the head and shoulders are delineated, usually without any other details of the human anatomy or ornament. Sometimes these stelae are extremely primitive where even the head protuberance is only slightly indicated.

On occasion both groups reveal traces of red ochre marking details of the body or indicating the line of the belt. Also some of the more complex stelae, e.g. Konstantinovka, have been placed with the simple stelae (Nr. 31) when they do not easily fit into the major categories of the statue-menhir.

The stelae are usually manufactured from local sources of stones. In the Donbass, for example, according to I. A. Pislary (personal

communication), they are made of sandstone or carboniferous limestone. In the Dnieper region the stelae are of granite, diabase or some other local stone.

In addition to the anthropomorphic stelae, worked slabs of stone without any signs of anthropomorphism (or the non-anthropomorphic sections of broken stelae) are known (Novitsky 1990, Yarovoy 1989). These slabs as well as a category of phallic figures have not been included in the catalogue.

Below follows a description of the stelae arranged first by type and then according to the major regions of the Ukraine. Standard burial notation is employed, i.e. Kovalevka II I/3 is to be understood as burial number 3 in kurgan I of kurgan group II at the site of Kovalevka. The catagory *simple stelae* is sufficiently long that the following index by regions is provided:

Statue-menhirs

Kazanki type

1. Akchokrak, Bakhchisaray district, Crimea (Fig. 5.2).

The stela of the Kazanki type was discovered in 1967 on the slope of a kurgan which contained burials of the Kemi-Oba, Yamna and late nomadic period. The stela was made of diorite. The front revealed the basic facial features (eyes, nose), arms with hands placed on stomach; a battle-ax was inserted into the belt; below this were two human figures, each with one upraised arm. The lower rear of the stela revealed a pair of animals (Formozov 1970).

2. Verkhorechye, Bakhchisaray district, Crimea (Fig. 6)

Chance find in 1968 of a stela of the Kazanki type. The statue was fashioned from diorite and stood 1.75 m tall, 0.45 m wide and 0.15 m thick. The front of the stela exhibits facial features (eyes, nose), arms and hands, two pairs of animals, four human figures representing both sexes, a battle-ax, bow, quiver and a belt. The sides of the stela had

been ornamented. It is held in the Simferopol Museum. The stela is not yet published and only one side is figured here.

3. Kazanki, Bakhchisaray district, Crimea (Fig. 5.1).

This stela, which gives its name to one of the sub-types of statue-menhirs, was discovered in a field of kurgans. It was made of diorite and stood 1.45 m tall. On the front were facial features (eyes, nose); the arms rested on the stomach above the belt; below the belt were two human figures. The stela is displayed in the Simferopol Museum (Shchepinsky 1963).

4. Sergeyevka, Novotroitskoye district, Kherson.

Several stelae were recovered from kurgans containing burials of the Yamna-Catacomb period. One of these, found in a grave of the Catacomb culture, was a Kazanki-type stela with marked facial features, hands placed on stomach and traces of the backbone and shoulder blades on the back of the figure (Ratner 1984).

5. Novocherkassk, Rostov region (Fig. 5.3).

Chance find of a stela of the Kazanki type. It was made from sandstone and stood 0.77 m high, 0.38 m wide and 0.17 m thick. There were no facial features; the hands were placed on the stomach while holding a crook; the belt and ornament were marked. Two foot-prints were displayed on the back of the stela above the belt. The stela is exhibited in the Rostov Museum (Häusler 1966).

6. Stan, Shumen district, Bulgaria.

Only the upper fragment of the stela is known. From the execution of the facial features it would appear to belong to the Kazanki type (Toncheva 1981).

Natalevka type

7. Kernosovka, Novomoskovsk district, Dnepropetrovsk (Figs. 8-9).

While excavating a silo pit, schoolboys discovered a unique stela of the Natalevka type. The stela stands 1.20 m tall, 0.36 m wide and 0.44 m thick. The facial features include not only eyes, nose but also a drooping moustache; the arms are arranged asymmetrically on the breast and stomach and the nipples of the breast are clearly marked. Above the belt are depicted a mace, three axes, and running animals (dogs?); an ax is inserted behind the belt; in the lower register is a rectangular shape and two horses. The back of the stela indicates shoulder-blades, a backbone and ribs; foot-prints are positioned about the belt while several other figures are also depicted. On display in the Dnepropetrovsk Museum (Krylova 1976).

8. Natalevka, Zaporozhye district (Fig. 1.1).

Chance find of a stela in 1862. The stela is made of gneiss and stands 1.60 m tall, 0.61 m wide and 0.12 m thick. The facial features include eyes and mouth; hands are positioned on breast while between them are figured a battle-ax, mace and a bow; immediately above the belt is a bow-shaped object. On the rear of the statue are seen shoulder blades, backbone and ribs; below the belt are two semicircles on either side of a vertical line, possibly representing buttocks or a phallus. The stela is displayed in the Dnepropetrovsk museum.

9. Fedorovka, Karlovka district, Poltava (Fig. 14).

Chance find of a stela, which may be of the Natalevka type, was found in the area of two plowed-out kurgans. It was carved from sandstone and measured 1.33 m tall, 0.51 m wide and 0.30 m thick. The upper part of the stela had been broken off. The front revealed traces of what might have been a shepherd's crook, a dagger, spear, animals and human figures with upraised hands; a battle-ax had been inserted in the belt. The rear of the figure was covered with a back bone and ribs; the belt had been decorated with 'beads' and two foot-prints were superimposed on the belt. The stela is displayed in the Poltava Museum.

10. Pervomayevka, Verkhny Rogachik district, Kherson (Fig. 10.2).

Two stelae were discovered during the kurgan excavations of 1953-54. One of them was of the Natalevka type and it was found in a child's grave of the Catacomb period. It was made of limestone and stood 0.52 m tall, 0.21 to 0.29 m wide and 0.10 m thick. It displayed facial features (eyes, nose, mouth) while the hands were raised to the breasts. The rear of the statue indicated shoulders (Titenko 1955).

11. Belogrudovka, Uman district, Cherkassy (Fig. 1.2).

During tree-uprooting in 1915, five stelae were discovered of which only two have survived. One of them was of the Natalevka type. It was made from sandstone, stood 1.03 m high, 0.4-0.35 m wide and 0.10 m thick. Besides the facial features (eyes, nose, mouth), the hands were raised to the face and breasts were clearly seen; the belt was decorated with linear ornament and foot-prints were displayed below the belt. On the rear was figured a backbone, shoulder blades and ribs. The stela is on exhibit in the Historical Museum in Kiev (Kurinoy 1930).

12. Chobruchi, Tiraspol district, Moldavia (Fig. 10.1).

A stela of the Natalevka type was found on the slope of a kurgan. It stood 2.58 metres tall, had well-worked facial details and one could see a battle-ax, belt, foot prints and ornament along the sides (Dergachev 1968).

13. Baia (Körösbanya), Hunedoara, Romania (Fig. 7.1-3).

Three stelae similar to the Natalevka type in the Ukraine were found in 1881 in a field. One was whole and measured 1.4 m tall, 0.51 m wide and 0.17 m thick; the other two were broken and measured respectively: 0.90 x 0.54 x 0.20 and 1.05 x 0.63 x 0.20 m. Unlike the Ukrainian stelae, they are rectangular in section and their heads are only slightly marked. Hands were raised to the breast, a neckband with pendant was found down the center of the chest and the belt decorated with zig-zag ornament (Häusler 1966).

14. Nevsha, Varna district, Bulgaria (Fig. 10.3).

During excavations of a Bronze Age tumulus in 1976, a stela of the Natalevka type was uncovered. The facial features, hands raised to the breast, a belt and a pendant are depicted. On the back of the stela are the shoulder blades and an ax stuck behind the belt (Toncheva 1981). The stela is displayed in the Varna museum.

15. Plachydol, Tolbukhin district, Bulgaria (Fig. 7.4).

In 1965 two stelae were found in a kurgan, one of which was of the Natalevka type. It measured 1.0 m tall, 0.60 m wide and 0.20 m thick. On the front of the stela were the facial features (eyes, nose, mouth), necklace with long pendant hanging down to the belt, and hands raised to the breast. On the back were traces of the shoulder blades, two foot-prints and ornament (Toncheva 1981).

See also No. 129.

Yezerovo-Tiritaka type

16. Tiritaka, Kerch district, Crimea (Fig. 12).

Three stelae of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type were discovered in 1933 in the foundations of the town that dates from the classical period (6th-5th centuries BC); only two, apparently a male and a female figure, have survived. They are made from diorite and the male figure stands 1.40 m high, 0.55-0.24 m wide and 0.77 to 0.23 m thick; the female figure measures 1.28 x 0.63-0.30 x 0.13-0.18 m. Both share similar facial features (eyes, nose, semi-circular lower face); arms run diagonally from shoulder toward stomach. The presumably female figure has breasts marked in relief (Formozov 1969).

17. Novoselovka, Kiliya district, Odessa (Fig. 11.1).

The menhir was found not far from a kurgan. It measured 1.2 x 0.6 x 0.16 m. The front carried the facial features (eyes, nose, mouth), hands on chest, ribs; there was a shepherd's crook in the belt and an unidentified object below. On the rear of the stela the spinal column, ribs, shoulder blades and two 'foot-prints' over the belt are indicated

(Novitsky 1990). The stela is displayed in the Odessa Archaeological Museum.

18. Aleksandrovka, Floreshty district, Moldavia (Fig. 13.1).

Chance find of the upper section of a limestone stela. The preserved height is 0.72 m, width 0.64-0.73 m, thickness 0.20 m. The menhir revealed facial features (eyes, nose, mouth); hands were set on stomach; a string of beads across the neck (Zlatkovskaya 1963).

19. Hamangia, Dobrogea, Romania (Fig. 11.2)

A stela of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type was found during work on a railway. Later, in the area of the discovery, a kurgan was excavated. The stela, which stood 1.95 m tall, revealed facial features (eyes, nose, traces of mouth), a band around the neck, hands lowered to the stomach; two semi-circular depressions on the lower part of the stela may indicate sexual organs. On the rear were five axes; two foot-prints were situated at the waist along the same line as one of the axes (Häusler 1966).

20. Chemurliya-de-Jos, Dobrogea, Romania.

A stela of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type with facial features (eyes, nose, mouth), pendant, belt and possibly indications of female sex (Häusler 1967).

21. Yezerovo, Varna, Bulgaria (Fig. 13.2).

Three stelae were discovered during construction works at a depth of 2 m. The stelae were situated about 2 to 2.5 m apart from one another and were inclined into the ground. Possibly a tumulus had been here since human bones and potsherds were found beneath one of the stelae. One of the stelae was of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type. It was made of sandstone, stood 1.85 m tall, 0.9 m wide and 0.2 m thick. The front displayed facial features, a pendant, hands placed on breast; possible traces of an ax can be seen near right hand and above the belt which appears to have a buckle. The rear exhibits a battle-ax inserted into the belt (Toncheva 1967).

Undetermined type

22. Svatovo town, Lugansk (Fig. 4.2).

Chance find of sandstone stela covered with figures. It stood 0.98 m and was 0.48 m wide. It lacked any facial features but bore a large pendant suspended from the neck, left hand on breast; paired animals and other figures above belt; two foot-prints were at the belt while below it was a bow and arrow; possibly an ax at the belt (Bratchenko 1989).

Simple Stelae

Dnepropetrovsk Region

23. Bulakhovka, Pavlograd district.

During excavations in 1972, I. F. Kovaleva discovered an anthropomorphic stela on which were some slight traces of images which the discoverer suggests was a stag. Kovaleva, I. F., Report of the Institute of Archaeology, 1972/39: 88.

24. Verknyaya Mayevka, Dnepropetrovsk district.

A simple stela was discovered in the third kurgan group, kurgan 8 (Marina 1981).

25. Nikopol, Nikopol town, Dnepropetrovsk

Simple stela covering a Yamna grave; discovered in 1938 by B. N. Grekov (Formozov 1969).

26. Ribasovo, Krivoy Rog district.

A simple stela was discovered by chance on the left bank of the Saksagan river by A. A. Melnik in 1983.

27. Shevchenko Collective Farm, Krivoy Rog district, Dnepropetrovsk.

During excavations of a kurgan in 1981, A. A. Melnik discovered three simple stelae covering a Yamna grave (burial 7). Pers. comm.

28. Sirokoye, Krivoy Rog district, Dnepropetrovsk.

During excavations of a kurgan in 1965 a simple stela was discovered along with two stone slabs covering a Yamna burial. The stela measured 1.35 m. One of the other slabs was partially worked and was probably a stela blank (Krylova 1971).

Zaporozhye Region

29. Balki, Vasilevka district

A stela with poorly realized facial details was discovered covering a Yamna grave. The burial yielded a vessel with corded decoration (Bodyansky 1964).

During the excavation of this kurgan in 1971, known locally as Vysokaya mogila ('high mound'), some fragments of the upper portion of a simple stela were discovered along with the remains of a Copper Age cist. The Copper Age burial had been destroyed by an intrusive burial of the Cimmerian period (Bidzilya and Yakovenko 1974).

30. Kichkas, Zaporozhye town (Fig. 15)

During excavations of a kurgan in 1928, V. G. Grimchenko discovered a cromlech consisting of large stone blocks, among which were two simple stelae with their heads inverted. Archive of VUAK, Institute of Archaeology, N. 32.

31. Konstantinovka, Melitopol district (Fig. 4.1).

In 1974, a stela measuring 1.18 m long was discovered beside the main Yamna burial (I/3) within a kurgan. The stela was of somewhat unusual type with its excessively wide head as well as a series of horizontal grooves (Mikhaylov 1985).

32. Novofilipovka, Novovasilevka district

A simple stela covered the main burial 5/9. It was of unusually long dimensions, 1.8 m, and was made from sandstone (Terenozhkin 1960). Another primitive-looking stela covered the end of a pit burial (I/3), which had been excavated in 1983 by B. D. Mikhaylov.

33. Sadovoy Collective Farm, Melitopol district.

Two simple stelae were discovered near a plowed-out kurgan. One of them measured 0.72 m, included two arc-like lines and was made of Sarmatic sandstone; the other stela was 0.92 m tall and of limestone. Both stelae are in the Melitopol museum.

34. Yasinovatoye, Volnyansk district.

Amateur excavations uncovered the probable remains of a sanctuary which included four primitive stelae. The monument has not been excavated (S. I. Kravchenko, pers. comm.).

Kirovograd Region

35. Aleksandriya town.

Chance find of a simple stela made from light-gray granite; height 1.92 m (Telegin 1971). In local museum in Aleksandriya.

Crimea

36. Astanino, Lenin district.

During kurgan excavations in 1966-67, A. M. Laskov discovered two anthropomorphic stelae. One of them covered a Kemi-Oba burial pit (7/3). It was made of limestone and badly preserved but traces of a hammer-ax and mace can be seen on it. The second stela covered a burial pit of oval form (26/14). This was a simple stela and also badly preserved.

37. Ilichovo, Lenin district.

Anthropomorphic stela found among stones lying over burial 11/9. The stela was of limestone, poorly preserved; the only features, marginally visible, are the oval face, eye pits and a horseshoe-shaped figure in the region of the chest. Excavated by A. M. Laskov.

A simple stela more than 2 m tall was found in a destroyed kurgan where it had apparently covered a grave of the Yamna period (Stolbunov 1978).

38. Mamay, Yevpatoriya district.

Two simple stelae were discovered by Shchepinsky in 1960 covering over a Yamna burial (Shchepinsky 1963).

39. Mikhaylovka, Kerch district.

A simple stela was found in 1965 in the fabric of a building dating to the 2nd-3rd century AD. Several pits were marked on the facial part (Formozov 1969).

40. Novoyemelyanovka, Nizhegorsk district

Simple stela, 1.0 m tall, recovered from a plowed-out kurgan (Shchepinsky 1963).

41. Popovka, Yevpatoriya district.

Two primitive stelae were discovered in 1969 during kurgan excavations. They were found side by side near a cromlech. They measured 1.06 and 1.07 m tall respectively and were made from limestone (Dashevskaya 1969).

42. Chukurcha, Simferopol district.

A simple limestone stela, height 0.95 m, covering a burial pit. Three cup-marks on the front side of the stela (Shchepinsky 1963).

Lugansk Region

43. Aleksandrovka, Lugansk district.

Simple sandstone stela discovered during excavations in 1972 by S. P. Bratchenko and I. A. Pislary. The stela blocked the entrance into a Catacomb burial (10/4). The stela is kept in the Lugansk Museum.

44. Astakhovo, Sverdlovsk district.

Simple stela, discovered in 1975 in a plowed field by L. G. Yevdokimov (S. N. Bratchenko, personal communication).

45. Novo-Aleksandrovka, Belovod district.

Two simple stelae were found at the entrance of Catacomb burial 5/1. A quern fragment was also found among the stone covering (Filatov, Vysotskaya and Shevtsov 1974).

46. Novonikolskoye, Kremen district.

Simple stela discovered in excavations of a kurgan by S. N. Bratchenko in 1973.

47. Pereslav, near town of Nogaysk in Berdyansk district.

Simple stela covering a Yamna burial of an adult. Discovered by B. N. Grakov in 1951 (Formozov 1969).

Nikolayev Region

48. Antonovka, Novaya Odessa district (Fig. 38)

During kurgan excavations near the village, O. G. Shaposhnikova

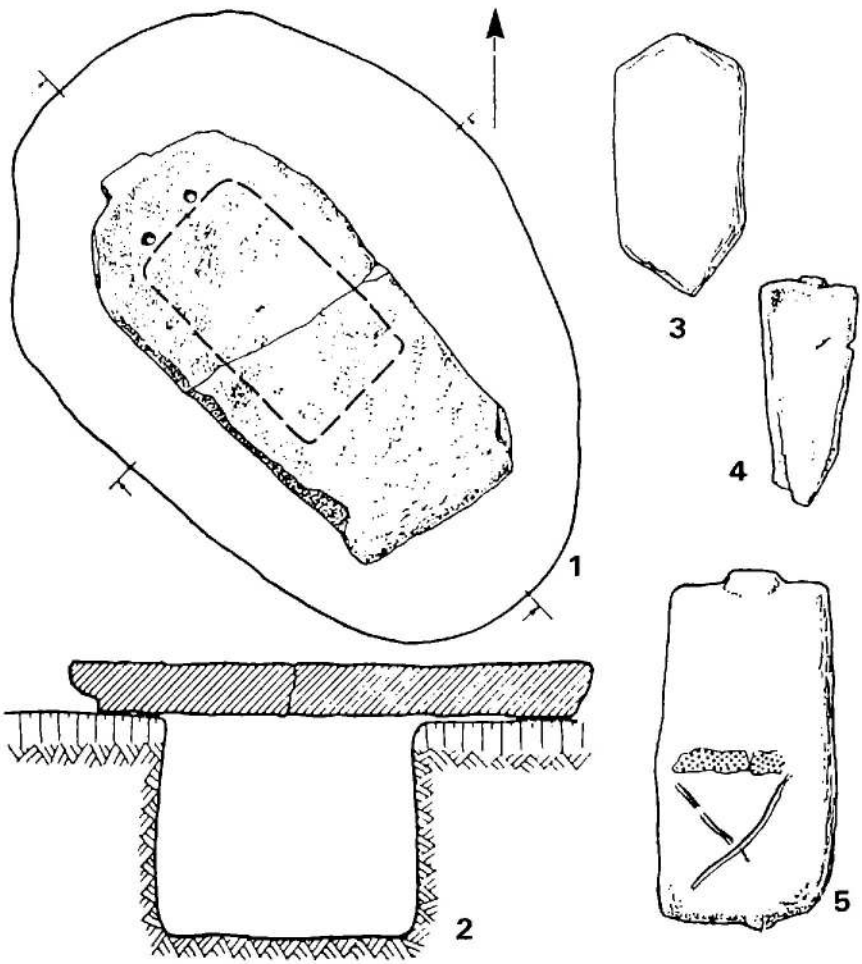

Figure 38. Antonovka

uncovered five stelae. One of them was nearly 2 m tall and covered a Yamna grave (I/2). The breasts were indicated by circles. Two simple stelae were found in the stone covering of pit burial 5/23. Kurgan 7 yielded another two simple stelae, one in burial 1 and another in burial 10. Traces of red ochre, probably indicating a belt, were found on the front of one of them (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1968).

49. Baratovka, Novy Bug district.

Three simple stelae were in the covering of a late Yamna burial in kurgan I (Yelagina and Petrenko 1969).

50. Bugsky, Arbuzin district.

A simple stela was discovered in burial 6/18 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

51. Gorokhovka, Snigirovka district.

Two stelae are known from this site. One stood 1.55 m high and was made from sandstone and was found covering the pit of a Yamna burial under a kurgan. The other stela was made from limestone and discovered among some late crosses dug into the kurgan. The kurgan itself was not excavated. Both stelae are in the Nikolayev Museum (Nikitin 1965).

52. Ivanovka, Nikolayev district.

Three simple stelae were found accompanying a late Yamna burial (3/7). Two of them revealed the line of belts marked in ochre. By the skeleton was a hammer-head pin, bone ?points/awls and other objects (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

53. Kamenka, Ochakov district.

During the kurgan excavations here, a whole series of stelae were discovered, among which four have been published. Two large stelae were found lying with many unworked stone slabs over burial 13/6. Stelae were included in the stone coverings over burials 15/5 and 17/5. On the rear side of one of the stelae was a groove running cross-wise (Fig. 39.8), which suggests that it may have served as part of a stone cist (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986). A simple stela was found near the Catacomb burial 13/8 (Dovzhenko 1991).

54. Kasperovka, Novaya Odessa district (Fig. 40).

A series of stelae were discovered of which five were published. Three simple stelae were found together over a Yamna burial 1/12. The interstices of the stones were filled with clay. Another simple stela covered burial 1/1 of similar date. One of the stela, with unusually raised shoulders, revealed facial features indicated by small holes and a belt marked with ochre.

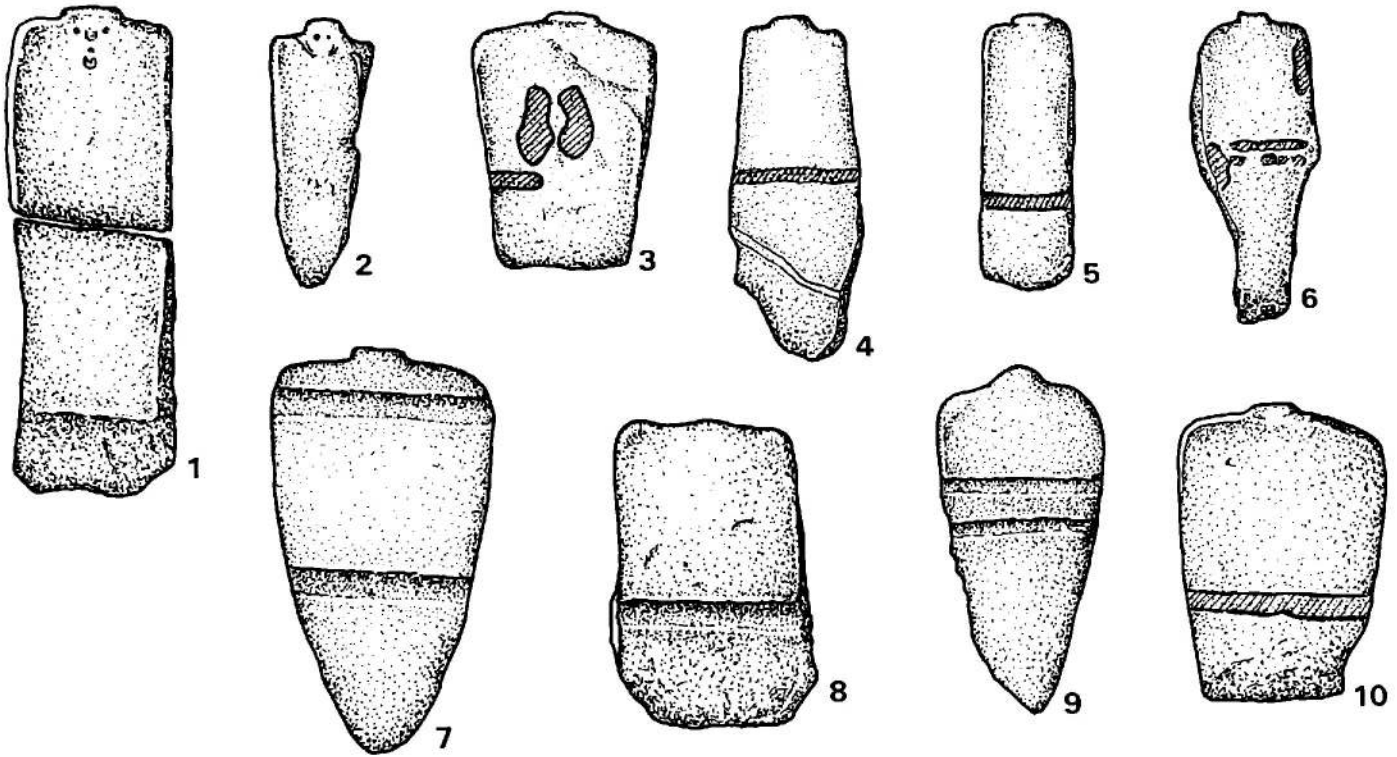

Figure 39-1. Konstaninovka 9/15; **39-2.** Starogorozheno 2/9; **39-3.** Konstaninovka 9/2; **39-4.** Kozbartsy 6; **39-5.** Novoshmidtovka 26/3; **39-6.** Peski; **39-7.** Pokrovka; **39-8.** Kamenka 15/5; **39-9.** Taborovka; **39-10.** Ivanovka.

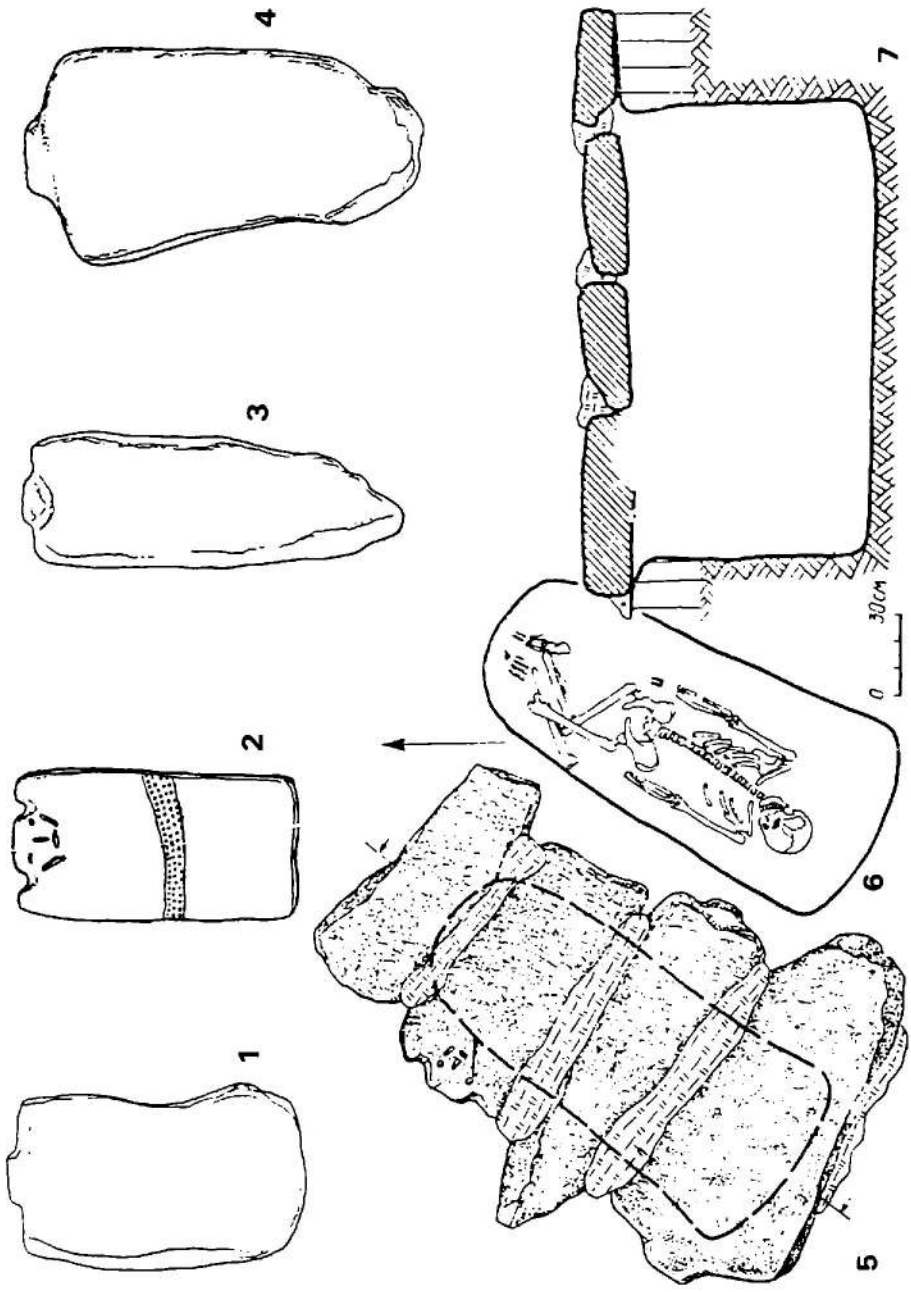

Figure 40. Kasperovka.

55. Kozbartsy, Snigirovka district (Fig. 39.4)

An oblong stela, with belt marked in ochre, was recovered from the mound of kurgan 6 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

56. Kovalevka, Nikolayev district.

The expedition headed by O. G. Shaposhnikova in 1969-72 and 1974-76 excavated eight groups (I-VIII) of kurgans, the majority of which contained simple stelae made from limestone (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

Group I yielded three stelae in the mound of kurgan 1 and accompanying two of the burials. One of them was 1.18 m high and covered Yamna burial 6/2. A second stela, along with two unworked slabs, covered another burial of the same period.

Group II yielded ten more simple stelae, three of which lay across the top of Yamna burial 6/7. These measured 0.9, 1.2 and 1.8 m in height. One of these had two little holes, probably intended to represent eyes. Another three stelae covered Yamna burial 8/3 while another stela was recovered from the mound itself. Single stelae were found covering each of the following Yamna burials: 8/4, 8/5 and 9/1.

Group III produced three simple stelae and some crude stone slabs over Yamna burial 2/4.

Group IV had a single stela over Yamna burials 1/6, 1/7 and 1/11.

Group VI had two simple stelae over Yamna burial 2/23, one of which was executed in a very primitive fashion.

Group VII revealed two simple stelae, one over Yamna burial 1/6 and the other in burial 4/19 where it lay with a heap of unworked slabs.

Group VIII contained three massive stelae (Fig. 41). One was found overlying Yamna burial 1/9 while two overlay burial 1/6.

57. Konstantinovka, Bashtanka district.

Three stelae overlay Yamna burials. In burial 9/15 were two stelae, one of which had facial features marked with small holes (Fig. 39.1) and on its back, traces of the spinal column; both stelae had been broken in half. The covering of Yamna burial 9/2 contained a simple stela with the characteristic 'foot-prints' marked on the front side and possibly traces of a belt (Fig.39.3; Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

A simple stela was also found over Catacomb burial 2/2 (Dovzhenko 1991).

58. Kostychy, Arbuzinka district.

A simple stela was placed over burials 1/5 and 2/4. The first one was triangular in form while the other was quite primitive, and contained indistinguishable figures in ochre on its front side (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

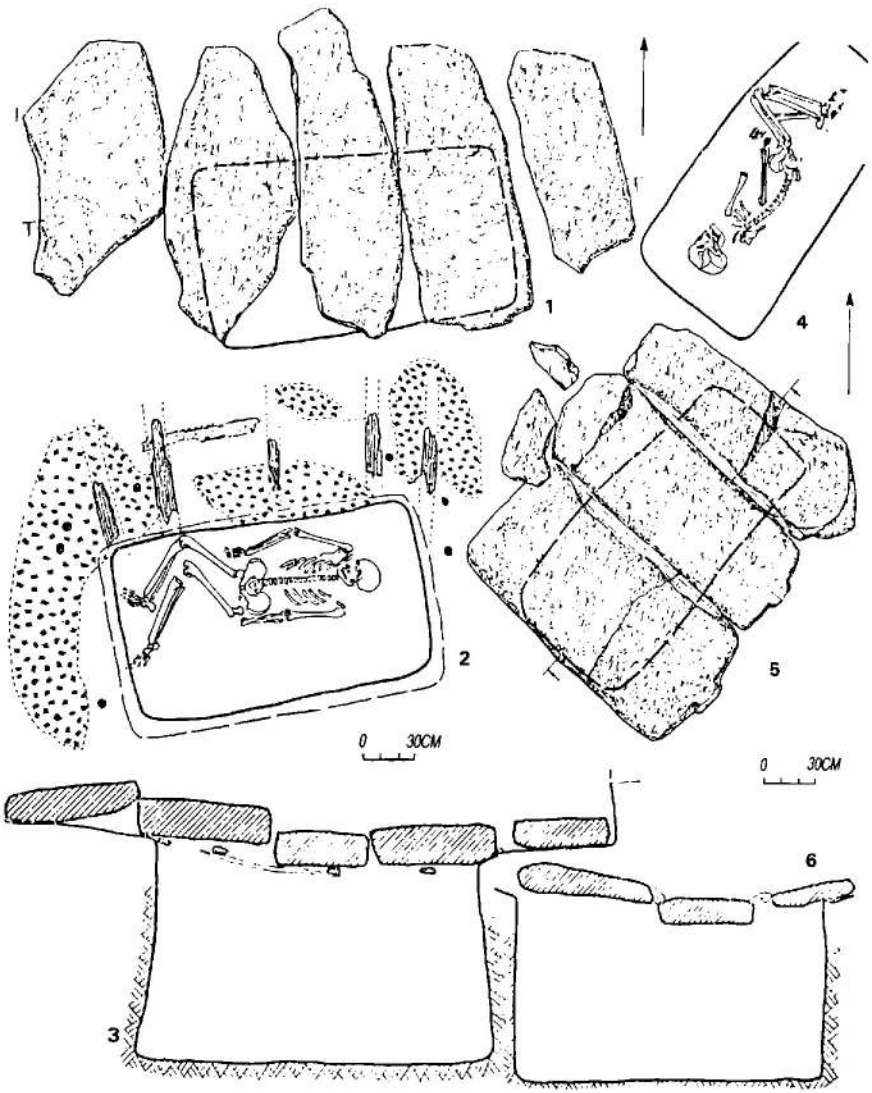

Figure 41. Kovalevka VIII.

59. Limany, Zhovtnevoye district.

In 1969 excavators uncovered in burial 1/14 a highly unusual three-headed stela (Fig. 21.3), made of limestone. It is displayed in the Nikopol Museum. A simple stela was also found covering Catacomb burial 1/26 (Dovzhenko 1991).

60. Luparevo, Zhovtnevoye district.

A simple stela served as a lintel over the entrance into Catacomb burial 1/18. Dovzhenko relates it to type 9 of the series of simple stelae (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986; Dovzhenko 1991).

61. Mefodiyevka, Nikolayev district.

Three simple stelae covered burial 1/2 while a single stela was found over burial 4/4. A trace of ochre was found in the region of the belt on the third stela (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

62. Nikolayev town.

On the site of a destroyed kurgan two simple and massive stelae were discovered (V. I. Nikitin, pers. comm.). One of them covered a Yamna burial, flexed on its right side. It measured 1.74 m long and was accompanied by two unworked slabs. The second stela was found in the fill of the mound. Both stelae are in the Nikolayev Museum.

63. Novoaleksandrovka, Bastanka district.

A simple stela with traces of ochre on the front side was discovered with burial 1/18 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

64. Novovasilevka, Snigirovka district.

Four Yamna burials each yielded a single simple stela, i.e. 1/2, 1/13, 1/19 and 26/3. Three of the stelae had been damaged (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

65. Novogrigorevka, Voznesensk district.

A simple stela, broken in half, was found across the top of Yamna burial 1/2. Near it was another stone slab (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

66. Novomayachka, Tsurupinsk district.

A simple stela from burial 2/25 (Dovzhenko 1991).

67. Novopetrovka, Novaya Odessa district.

Simple stela from burial 3/5 (Dovzhenko 1991).

68. Novoshmidtovka, Novaya Odessa district (Fig. 39.5)

A simple stela and an unworked stone slab covered a Yamna burial; the belt had been indicated in ochre (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

69. Novaya Odessa, Nikolayev district.

A simple primitive stela was found on the edge of Yamna burial 1/11 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

70. Otradny, Bashtanka district.

Yamna burials 1/10, 4/3, 22/4 and 28/4 each yielded simple stelae, one of which displayed traces of ochre (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986). Many similar finds were recovered from other of the Otradny burials but these have not been published.

71. Peski, Bashtanka district.

A simple stela was included in the stone covering over Yamna burial 8/1. Two similar stelae were found with burials 1/8 and 1/12. One of the latter had traces of ochre in the region of the belt and forearms (Fig. 39.6; Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

72. Petropavlovka, Bratskoye district.

A simple stela with Yamna burial 4/3 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

73. Pokrovka, Veselinovo district.

Among the large and small slabs covering a Yamna burial (1/6) was a simple stela (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986). In subsequent excavations of the kurgan mound, G. T. Kovpanenko discovered a stone cist of the Kemi-Oba period. One of the walls of the cist was made up of a simple stela which included grooves to receive the cross slabs (Fig. 39.7).

74. Privolnoye, Bashtanka district.

Yamna burials 2/8 and 2/17 each had a simple stela included in their covering. No. 133 measured 2 m high, the other 1.3 m, and both had been broken (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986). A small stela (0.42 m) along with other stones covered the entrance to Catacomb grave 2/27.

75. Sokolovka, Bashtanka district.

In the earthen mound of kurgan 1 was a simple stela (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

76. Starogorozhino, Bashtanka district.

Two stelae were recovered from the stone covering of Yamna burial 2/9. The first was simple with traces of ochre on the shoulders and the head and had been set face up over the burial pit (Fig. 39.2). The facial features of the second stela were indicated by grooves. Yamna grave 3/1 also had two stelae, both with traces of ochre and one displaying breasts (Fig. 3.5). Burial 3/3 was covered by a simple stela and two worked slabs laid across the top of the burial pit. Finally, a single stela was found to accompany burials 1/10, 1/25 and 2/3. The last of these had both traces of ochre and displayed a pair of circles (?breasts) in relief (Fig. 39.2; Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

77. Tambovka, Voznesensk district.

The stone-slab coverings of burials 1/20 and 1/22 included one simple stela each. On the back of the stela in 1/22 were two deep grooves.

78. Kristoforovka, Bashtanka district.

Near burial 8/2 was a simple stela with an unusually large head protuberance (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

79. Yablonya, Berezanka district.

A simple stela covered Yamna burial 1/6 (Shaposhnikova, Fomenko and Dovzhenko 1986).

Odessa Region

80. Bolshoy Dalnik, Odessa district.

A simple stela, 1.4 m tall, along with other worked slabs covered burial 1/5 (Novitsky 1990).

81. Velikodolinskoe, Ovidiopol district.

A simple stela (1.4 m tall), possibly unfinished, covered a burial (Novitsky 1990).

82. Vyshnevoye, Tatarbunar district.

Simple stela (1.2 m high) over primary burial pit 56/1 (Novitsky 1990).

83. Glubokoye, Tatarbunar district.

During excavations of kurgan 1, four simple stelae were discovered. Three of them had been placed along with other slabs over the pit of burial 7. The fourth stela was 2 m long and was set along its long axis covering burial 11. The stela had been heavily damaged (Smagly and Chernyakov 1970).

84. Dzinilor, Izmail district.

A simple stela, 0.68 m tall, was found over a child's burial (Novitsky 1990).

85. Kapustino, Kominternovo district.

A stela had been discovered in the ruined kurgan. It stood 0.92 m tall and its facial features were indicated. It may have covered a burial of the Cimmerian period (Simonovich 1954).

86. Mayaky, Belayevka district.

Two simple stelae covered the entrance to a Yamna grave, one of which was markedly anthropomorphic; its height was 1.2 m (Novitsky 1990).

87. Novoselitsa, Tatarbunar district.

A simple primitive anthropomorphic stela and another with no expression of anthropomorphism were found over Yamna burial 19/17

(Subbotin and Dvoryanikov in Institute of Archaeology 1978).

88. Odessa (town)

On the outskirts of the town, the upper part of a simple anthropomorphic stela was discovered in a kurgan (Latysheva 1959).

89. Sanzheyka, Odessa district.

During the kurgan excavations of 1973, a stela was discovered in a stone cist containing three eneolithic burials (Alekseyeva 1974).

90. Lake Sasyk, Tatarbunar district.

During excavations in 1979, five anthropomorphic stelae were found together along with unworked stone slabs covering burials 19/12 and 19/17 (Subbotin 1980b).

91. Strumok, Tatarbunar district.

A simple stela, 1.8 m tall, was found covering the primary burial 1/8 (Novitsky 1990).

92. Semyonovka, Belgorod-Dnestrovsky district.

Some stela-like slabs were recovered from Yamna burials 2/14 and 19/2, one of which had traces of anthropomorphism (Subbotin 1980a).

93. Usatovo, Belayevka district.

A fragment of a simple stela was discovered in 1940 by M. F. Boltenko during the excavation of the Usatovo kurgans (Formozov 1969).

94. Utkonosovka, Izmail district (Fig. 21.1)

A limestone stela, on which were marked the eyes, nose, and four strings of beads, covered a Yamna burial (Alekseyeva 1986).

95. Kholmskoye, Artsiz district.

During kurgan excavations of 1982 and 1984 along the river Tashlyk, five stelae fashioned from limestone were discovered. Two simple stelae together with two unworked slabs were found over Yamna burial 1/17 in which four wagon wheels had been discovered. Burial 5/7 consisted of a cist which included three simple stelae, one serving as a cover and two others as sides (Chernyakov, Stanko and Gudkova 1986).

96. Shevchenkovo, Kiliya district.

Simple stela lying face down over the burial of a child (1/1; Alekseyeva 1976). Two large stelae covered Yamna burial 3/13. One of them was 1.7 m tall and displayed facial features and three strings of beads (Fig. 22.2). The stelae lay with their heads at opposite ends (Alekseyeva 1976, 1986).

Kherson Region

97. Belozerka (district centre), Kherson.

Three simple stelae were recovered from a kurgan near the

settlement site of Belozerka 3. Some of them possibly served as coverings for a Yamna burial. Along with one of the stelae covering a pit was a stela-like slab without a head. It as well as the stela had been broken in two (Skadovsky 1887).

98. Bolshevik Collective Farm, Golaya Pristan district.

A simple stela from a destroyed kurgan; examined by I. D. Ratner in 1965 (Formozov 1969).

99. Burgunka, Berislav district.

During the excavations of kurgan 2, an interesting construction of stones was discovered which included anthropomorphic stelae. In the center of a kurgan and under its mound was a cromlech constructed of partially worked stone slabs approached from the east by a walk-way paved with stones. The approach was 4 m long and 0.8 m wide and a simple stela stood at its end. South of the walk-way was a stone-paved area which included two more simple stelae which, in the excavator's opinion, had been erected earlier. One of these stelae was simple and schematic, while the second revealed a back-bone and 'foot-prints' as well as a belt. The burial of a child lay in the center of the cromlech and a male burial lay nearer the walk-way. The burial position suggests that they belonged to the Yamna culture (Yevdokimov 1984).

100. Borzenskoye, Velikaya Aleksandrovka district.

Two simple stelae were found within a kurgan that included burials of the Yamna, Catacomb and Srubna cultures (Ratner 1984).

101. Zolotaya Balka, Novovorontsovka district.

Two simple stelae, each about 1 m tall, were discovered in 1978 in the area of a plowed-out kurgan. They are exhibited in the Borispolsky Museum.

102. Kairy, Gornostayevka district.

Two simple stelae were recovered from a destroyed kurgan; they are in the Kherson Museum (Ratner 1984).

103. Kalanchak, Skadovsk district.

A circular ditch measuring more than 5 m in diameter and 0.5 m deep was found under Kurgan 9, a tumulus containing graves of the Yamna and other periods. Within the ditch were the remains of three simple stelae, one of which could be restored almost completely. The excavator suggested that these were the remains of a Copper-Early Bronze Age sanctuary (Ratner 1964). The restored stela was made of limestone and stood about 0.5 m tall. It is in the Kherson Museum. Another simple stela was recovered from the foot of a kurgan by O. G. Kolosov near the village of Kalanchak.

104. Krasnoye, Skadovsk district.

A simple stela was discovered in a kurgan with Copper-Bronze Age and later burials (Ratner 1984).

105. Lyubimovka, Kakhovka district.

During kurgan excavations in 1968 two simple stelae were recovered.

106. Lvovo, Berislav district.

A very primitive stela-like sculpture was found during a kurgan excavation (Ratner 1984).

107. Maxim Gorky, Berislav district.

A simple anthropomorphic stela was found near the village; it is in the Kherson Museum (Ratner 1984).

108. Mikhaylovka, Vorontsovka district.

A simple stela was found not far from the village; it is in the local school museum (Ratner 1984).

109. Olgovka, Berislav district.

A simple stela was found in a kurgan that contained both Kemi Oba and Yamna burials (Ratner 1984).

110. Pervomayevka, Verkhny Rogachik district.

Two stelae were discovered during the kurgan excavations of 1953-54. One of them was of the Natalevka type (No. 10, Fig. 10.2). The second stela was simple, stood 1.63 m tall, and blocked off the unworked slabs of a Yamna burial (Kanivets 1955). There is also a chance find of a similar stela (Ratner 1984).

111. Podo-Kalinovka, Tsyurupinsk district.

During excavations in 1979 a simple stela was discovered blocking the entrances of a Catacomb burial (Yevdokimov 1980). During excavations of another kurgan, Kovanky Mogila, a similar stela was discovered (Ratner 1984).

112. Respublikanets, Berislav district.

In a kurgan not far from the village, V. Ye. Illynsky found a simple stela with feet marked in ochre on one side (L. L. Zalyznyak, personal commmunication).

113. Chervony Yar, Berislav district.

A simple stela was discovered by G. L. Yevdokimov during the kurgan excavations of 1978 (Ratner 1984).

114. Chernobayevka, Skadovsk district.

A simple stela, measuring 1.7 m tall, was found covering a Yamna burial; it is preserved in the Kherson Museum (Ratner 1984).

115. Shevchenkovka, Novovorontsovka district.

In 1978-79 during excavations of kurgans not far from the village,

A. I. Kuybyshev discovered two simple anthropomorphic stelae (Ratner 1984).

116. Shirokaya Balka, Skadovsk district.

In 1965 a simple stela was found in a destroyed kurgan; it measured 1.2 m tall and is held in the Kherson Museum (Formozov 1969). A similar stela was found in a kurgan excavated in 1977 by L. G. Yevdokimov (Ratner 1984).

Cherkassky Region

117. Belogrudovka, Uman district.

During tree-uprooting in 1915, five stelae were discovered of which only two have survived. One of them (No. 11, Fig. 1.2) is of the Natalevka type while the others are simple.

Rostov Region, Russian Federation, Northern Caucasus

118. Kushany, Rostov district

A simple anthropomorphic stela was found near the village (V. Ya. Kiyashko, personal communication).

119. Nalchik (town), Kabardino-Balkaria.

During kurgan excavations in 1966 I. M. Chechenov (1973) discovered a Maykop tomb consisting of 24 stone slabs set into the ground either vertically or forming a vault. Among the slabs were six anthropomorphic stelae along with some slabs with engraved ornament. The stelae had been set with their heads downwards and the height of some of them exceeded 4 m. They often contained ornament in the upper part.

120. Rostov-on-Don, Rostov district

Two anthropomorphic stelae were found covering Catacomb burials. One of them was similar to those recovered from the Ukraine while the other was 'executed in a more realistic manner' (Demchenko 1968). West of the town during excavations in 1968 another stela was discovered covering the entrance to a Catacomb burial (S. P. Bratchenko, pers. comm).

Moldavia

121. Balaban, Vulkaneshty district.

A simple stela of limestone, measuring 1.4 m tall, was found covering the entrance of Yamna burial 13/6 (Yarovoy 1989).

122. Baltsaty, Kriulyany district.

A simple stela was found in a field not far from the village (Rikman 1968).

123. Grigoripol.

A stela-like figure with marked head protuberance was found covering an eneolithic burial (9/11). The stela measured 1.2 m. tall (Yarovoy 1989).

124. Kaushany, Suvorovo district.

A simple stela, 1.3 m tall, was found covering Yamna burial 1/1 (Yarovoy 1989). A similar stela was found making up the side wall of a stone cist. One more simple stela was found in the vicinity of the same village (Novitsky 1990).

125. Kazakliya, Chadyrlungsky district.

Chance find of a simple stela (Novitsky 1990).

126. Oloneshty, Suvorovo district.

A simple stela made of limestone along with two unworked slabs were found covering eneolithic burial 1/2 belonging to a child. The stela was 1.2 m tall. Some worked slabs, possibly primitive stelae were also discovered in the same kurgan associated with burials 2 and 5 (Yarovoy 1990).

127. Tomay, Chadyrlungsky district.

A simple limestone stela, measuring 1.29 m tall, was found within the fill of Kurgan 1 (Yarovoy 1989).

Romania

128. Gerla, Dobrogea.

Chance find of the upper part of a simple stela (Häusler 1966).

Bulgaria

129. Yezerovo, Varna district.

Three stelae were discovered during construction works at a depth of 2 m. The stelae were inclined in the ground and situated about 2 to 2.5 m apart from one another. Possibly a tumulus had been here since human bones and potsherds were found beneath one of the stelae. One (No. 21, Fig. 13.2) of the stelae was of the Yezerovo-Tiritaka type. The other two stelae were simple and they measured 1.2 and 0.8 m respectively. They were fashioned from sandstone and one of them had been broken in half.

In the vicinity of the village another stela, of the Natalevka type, was found of which only the upper portion has been preserved (Fig. 23.12). The facial features, necklace, belt and hands raised to the breast were shown and on the rear of the figure are traces of a battle ax inserted into a belt (Toncheva 1967).

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Abbreviations

AO - Arkheologicheskiye Otkrytiya
AP - Arkheolohichni Pamyatky
BCCSP. - Bollettino del Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici
JIES - Journal of Indo-European Studies
KSIA - Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Arkheologii
SA - Sovetskaya Arkheologiya
SE - Sovetskaya Etnografiya

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