

# **BETWEEN ORNAMENTS, SOCIAL STATUS AND SYMBOLISM. SPECTACLE-SHAPED PENDANTS OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN BRONZE AGE**

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Amidst the fashionable ornaments that were in use at the beginning of the Bronze Age, the spectacle-shaped pendants (Brillenspiralen) played a special role. Charged with an obvious symbolism and used for expressing a high social status they are extremely rare for Transylvania, appearing at the end of the Aeneolithic and existing until the first Iron Age.

In this study we aim to discuss the items that were found in Transylvania dating since the beginning of the Bronze Age, as they form a particular category, with no significant typological variations. Spectacle-shaped pendants known up to now in Transylvania come entirely from the Apuseni Mountains. All pieces were part of a certain context, without exception, belonging to the inventory of tumular burials (Livezile-Dealul Sârbului, Poiana Aiudului-Dealul Velii, Ampoița-Peret, Mada-Chiciorele). These ornaments were worn around the neck, at Mada being also discovered a twisted string of vegetal matter, used for hanging the pendant.

We also emphasize an interesting aspect. In the particular times and cultural evolutions that have produced the pendants there were no pottery or plastic representations and vice-versa. In the Transylvanian area of the Coțofeni culture, such artefacts are missing but in the final phase (III) we have numerous representations of them on pottery. A similar situation we have for the Wietenberg culture, also lacking such pendants<sup>1</sup>, but with one representation on a vessel. The same situation occurs in the area of the Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare culture, where no artefacts have been found, but some anthropomorphic statuettes are depicted such pendants wearing around the neck. For the same large area, in the Early Bronze Age there are such artifacts but no pottery representations.

Early Bronze Age specific type to Transylvania is defined as a distinct type from the “Danubian group”, which we call “western Transylvanian”. Spectacle-shaped pendants in burial tumuli discovered in the Apuseni Mountains from Transylvania are dated at the end of the EBA II and culturally they belong most likely to the Copăceni cultural group.