

ABOUT BOW-SHAPED AND ROD-SHAPED PENDANTS

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Abstract: So-called bow-shaped and rod-shaped pendants are repeatedly mentioned in Bell Beaker research. It was supposed that they were ornaments, or that they were used for fixing garments or as fasteners for bags or quivers. In the following article it is argued that function, use and meaning changed over time, as indicated by the shape and decoration, position and number of objects in the grave, and sex of the buried person.

Keywords: Latest Neolithic – Bell Beaker culture – bow-shaped pendant – rod-shaped pendant

1. Introduction

In 1999 five graves of the late Bell Beaker period were found east of Linz, north of the small village of Tödling, Gem. Gemering, Upper-Austria. These were the graves of one female and four male individuals. In Grave 4, the grave of a 14–17-years-old male, along with a dagger and a bowl containing cattle and pig bones, three bow-shaped and one rod-shaped pendant were found (Kern 2016, Abb. 1-3). In Grave 5, the grave of a 25–35-year-old man, five bow-shaped pendants were associated with two cups, one small piece of flint and a pebble (Kern – Wiltschke – Abd El Kareem, forthcoming). These two graves are the starting point of this study.

2. Bow-shaped pendants

Bow-shaped pendants are distributed from the Upper Rhine valley to Budapest, from Sion in Switzerland to Samborzec in Poland (Bosch 2008b, Karte 2; Růžičková 2009, Fig. 6; Budziszewski – Włodarczak 2010, Fig. 22). Bow-shaped pendants started to be of interest for Bell Beaker research in the 1930s (Schirmer 1936; Willvonseder 1936; Hájek 1939–1946). They were called “halbmondförmige Anhänger” (semi-lunar or crescent-shaped pendants) (Willvonseder 1936, 7), “halbmondförmige Spangen” (crescent-shaped clasps) (Schirmer 1936, 66), or “halbmondförmige Zierrate” (crescent-shaped ornaments) (*ibid.*, 65). Sometimes they were also called “bogenförmig” (arc-shaped). These different meanings are reflected in the Czech literature, where they are called “lukovité závěsky” (bow-shaped pendants) or more usually today “půlměsíčitá spinadla” (semi-lunar fasteners) (Růžičková 2009, 38). They were believed to be ornaments or to have been used for fixing garments. In 1971 Piggott published an article in which he compared these objects to bows and their decoration to the bow bindings, consequently in the recent decades they were usually called bow-shaped pendants (“bogenförmige Anhänger” in German), although their function was still unclear, and this is the term we will use in the first part of this article. Recent publications by Bosch (2008a; 2008b) and Růžičková (2008; 2009) are a good basis for studying bow-shaped pendants. To the sites containing bow-shaped pendants listed by Bosch and Růžičková we should add graves 1, 3, 10, 20 and 21 from Esting, Bavaria (Schefzik 2000–2001, 47, Abb. 3: 48; 5: 51; 12: 54; 21: 55; 22) and grave Obj. 99 from Taufkirchen, Bavaria (Schefzik 2001, 419, Taf. 86: B), a piece from Saghegy, Hungary, which was published along with Urnfield finds (Patek 1968, Taf. 25: 18); and the fragment of a bow-shaped pendant from a settlement pit in Maissau, Austria, found in 2008 (Schmitsberger 2008 (2009), Abb. 37: 1). All of these pieces are horizontally perforated. We should also add the vertically-perforated pieces from grave 1 from the site Rákóczi Fernec-Road, Budapest (Endrödi – Horváth 1999, 31, Fig. 3: 1) and from grave 69, Sierentz, France (Vergnaud 2013, 53, Fig. 7). The site of Wipfing, Austria listed by Růžičková, (2008; 2009, Tab. 4) should be struck out, as the cited pieces (Neugebauer – Neugebauer-Maresch 2001, Fig. 5: 6, Fig. 5: 7) come from Henzing.

2.1 Typology and chronology

In the studies by Bosch (2008a; 2008b) and Růžičková (2008; 2009), the kind of perforation (vertical or horizontal) and the shape of the ends (simple, thickened or horn-shaped) were used as typological criteria. Only the perforation is chronologically relevant, as vertically perforated pendants appear only in the oldest graves of phases A1 and A2 according to Heyd (Bosch 2008a, 71, Abb. 21). Also grave III from Samborzec, site 1, which Bosch wrongly attributes to phase B1/B2 (Bosch 2008a, Abb. 21, 71-72) belongs to this early phase (Budziszewski – Włodarczak 2010, 157). Vertically perforated pendants are distributed from Poland to Eastern France (Budziszewski – Włodarczak 2010, Fig. 22); we should also add to the map the above-mentioned recently published site of Sieretz (Vergnaud 2013, Fig. 1).

Horizontally-perforated pendants appear first in graves in phase A2 according to Heyd (2000) and are also found in the latest of phase B2. In two instances, in grave 11, Altenmark, Lkr. Deggendorf, Bavaria (Schmoltz 1994, Abb. 15) and grave 4, Tödling, Gmd. Gemering, Upper Austria (Kern 2016, Abb. 2) bow-shaped pendants were associated with a straight or so-called rod-shaped pendant. All bow-shaped pendants from Tödling are horizontally perforated and, with one exception, have simple ends – just one has thickened ends. In Moravia and Bohemia horizontally-perforated bow-shaped pendants are found alongside slender Bell Beakers and with jugs with “Bell Beaker” decoration, e.g. Hoštice-I-864/2002 (Růžičková 2008, tab. 10), Jezeřany-Maršovice-I-67/1976 (*ibid.*, tab. 13), Šlapanice-II-4/1934 (*ibid.*, tab. 21), Šlapanice-II-5/1934 (*ibid.*, tab. 22), Šlapanice-II-21/1935 (*ibid.*, tab. 23), Lochenice-I-14/1981 (*ibid.*, tab. 28), Radovesice-II-53/1980-II (*ibid.*, tab. 34) and alongside “Begleitkeramik”. They appear most often in graves of the middle phase (Phase II) and are seldom seen in Phase III (Růžičková 2009, 58). In contrast, in Bavaria and Austria most of the horizontally-perforated bow-shaped pendants are found in more recent graves (Bosch 2008a, 71). Only grave 3 from Barbing (Bosch 2008a, 346) and grave 20 from Esting (Schefzik 2000–2001, 54, Abb. 21) contain a Bell Beaker, all other graves, contain, where pottery is present “Begleitkeramik”.

2.2 Raw material

All the bow shaped pendants from Tödling, as far as we can tell through macroscopic examination, are made of boar ivory. In the literature, boar's tusk, bone, ivory and antler are mentioned as raw materials. Recent studies of Bohemian and Moravian pieces show that most of them were made of boar ivory (Růžičková – Králík 2008). Identification of the material is sometimes problematic, particularly with the decorated pendants. As the tooth enamel could not be cut easily with stone tools, it had to be removed by grinding, leaving just the dentin, which can easily be mistaken for bone from other skeletal parts. Therefore it would be desirable for all known pieces to be microscopically examined, as were the ones from Hulín (Růžičková – Králík 2008).

2.3 Decoration

Most of the known pendants are decorated; there are just a few undecorated pieces. There is a clear difference in decoration between vertically- and horizontally-perforated pendants. Vertically-perforated pendants typically display groups of parallel lines accompanied by small triangles, while horizontally-perforated pendants are decorated with groups of parallel lines sometimes accompanied by X-shaped crosses and triangles. Heyd identified three groups, with partly chronological implications (Heyd 2000, 288–289, Taf. 79).

All bow-shaped pendants from Tödling are decorated, some just with groups of parallel lines, some also with X-shaped crosses or triangles. They fit into Heyd's decoration group 3 (Heyd 2000, Taf. 79.). Patterns of lines are found on almost all bow-shaped pendants from South Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary. Groups of lines together with X-shaped crosses and triangles are also well known (Heyd 2000, 287–288, Taf. 77). Patterns of lines together and crosses appear on the Austrian sites of Deutschkreutz (Ohrenberger 1956, 99, Taf. 1/1c–d; Bosch 2008b, Abb. 9), Henzing (Friesinger 1976, 825, Abb. 3: a–b; Bosch 2008b, Abb. 6.), Oggau (Hicke 1987, Taf. 11/4OS/d; Bosch 2008b, Abb. 7.), Ossarn (Lippert 1964, 22–23, Taf. 7: 7; Bosch 2008b, Abb. 7.); the Bavarian sites of Buxheim (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 2), Haunersdorf (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 9), Irlbach (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 3.), Irlbach-Auwald (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 3), Oberstimm-West (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 4), Osterhofen-Altenmarkt (Schmoltz 1994, 21 und Abb. 15; Bosch 2008b, Abb. 5), Straubing-Alburg “Lerchenhaid” (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 5), Taufkirchen (grave) (Schefzik 2001, Taf. 86: B-7) and Wolferkofen (Bosch 2008b, Abb. 6); and the Bohemian site of Radovesice (Růžičková 2008, tab 34: 12; Růžičková 2009, Fig. 21: 11).

The combination of patterns of lines and triangles is known from Austria: Bad Fischau (*Mühlhofer 1930; Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 8), Deutschkreutz (*Ohrenberger 1956*, 99, Taf. 1: 1a–d; *Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 9) und Oggau (*Hicke 1987*, Taf. 11: 4OS: c; *Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 7); Bavaria: Irlbach-Auwald (*Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 3), Köfering (*Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 3), Riekkofen (*Schröter 1997*, 144, Abb. 1/2–3; *Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 4), Straubing-Alburg “Lerchenhaid” (*Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 5) and Wolferkofen (*Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 6).

Two pendants from Henzing display interconnected crosses and triangles with some triangles resulting from the X-shaped crosses filled (*Friesinger 1976*, Abb. 3: a–b; *Bosch 2008b*, Abb. 6). Looking at the distribution of the decorated pendants, we can see that almost all the sites are situated in the Bavarian and Austrian Danube valley, with a concentration between Regensburg und Straubing. The only exception is the Bohemian site of Radovesice (*Růžičková 2008*, Taf. 34: 12; *Růžičková 2009*, Fig. 21: 11). One piece from Moravia, Želešice I-1/1930, is decorated with small crosses in the middle (*Růžičková 2008*, tab. 25: 1; *Růžičková 2009*, 54). It is worth mentioning that, of 26 finds at 24 sites from Bohemia and Moravia (*Růžičková 2009*, Fig. 6, 7), all the other pendants with horizontal perforation are decorated only with lines. This is in clear contrast to Bavaria, and is presumably a chronological difference, which would accord with Heyd’s opinion on relation to the decoration (*Heyd 2000*, 288–289).

2.4 Position

Most of the bow-shaped pendants were found in male graves. Bow-shaped pendants with vertical perforation are mostly found on the back, near the pelvis, e.g. Sieretz (*Vergnaud 2013*, Fig. 7). In contrast horizontally-perforated pieces are mostly found on the breast or the shoulder. Most of the graves in Bohemia and Moravia contain just one pendant; there are just four with two pieces and only grave 95/2000 from Hulín-I (*Růžičková 2009*, Fig. 7, Fig. 18) included fragments from (probably) six pendants. In Austria only in grave 4 from Tödling (*Kern 2016*, Abb. 1-3) and grave 1 from Deutschkreutz (*Ohrenberger 1956*, 99, Taf. 1: 1c) were four pendants found in one grave. In Bavaria Atting “Aufeld” 4799 (*Engelhardt 2005 (2006)*, 33, Abb. 34), Irlbach, grave 22 (*Bosch 2008b*, 233), Irlbach “Auwald”, grave 1 (*Koch 2005 (2006)*, 26, Abb. 24–25), Oberstimm-West, grave 2 (*Rieder 1987*, 48–50, Abb. 19; 21), Osterhofen-Altenmarkt, grave 11 (*Schmotz 1989 (1990)*, 60; *Schmotz 1991; Schmotz 1994*, 21, Abb. 15), Straubing Alburg “Lerchenhaid” grave 3 (*Hundt 1958*, Taf. 6: 15) and Wolferkofen (*Christlein 1976*, 49) contained more than three pendants. Here we can see chronological differences as identified above. In all the above-mentioned graves, with the exception of Grave 22 from Irlbach, all burials were in a crouched position on the left side, which is typical for male. The grave from Wolferkofen had been destroyed, so nothing can be said concerning the position of the skeleton and the bow-shaped pendants. The well-documented graves show that the ensembles of bow-shaped pendants were found on the breast or near the neck. As they usually are found in close proximity it appears more likely that they were used as pendants – as Christlein suggests (1976, 52) – rather than as toggles. Only a few bow-shaped pendants have been found in graves of women (*Müller 2001*, 596; *Bosch 2008*, Tab. I.) and very few in settlement pits. Pieces found in female graves are often damaged (*Müller 2001*, 596).

3. Rod-shaped pendants

Rod-shaped pendants or toggles have been discussed in recent years as part of studies concerning “southern influence and connections” (*Maran 1998*, 292, Taf. 55; *Rahmstorf 2008*, 158-159, Karte 4) or as ornaments of the Bell Beaker culture (*Nicolis 2001*, 216–217; *Nicolis 2002*, 112–114, Abb. 1; 2; *Fitzpatrick 2011*, 58; *Liesau von Lettow-Vorbeck C. 2016*, 79-80). Until 1970s, only a few pieces were known. Therefore they were not seen as pieces of great relevance and differences between pieces were neglected (*Hájek 1939–1946*, Abb. 4; *Köster 1965/66*, 35). Even today little importance is attached to variations in typology and shape (*Fitzpatrick 2011*, 59). The publications by Maran (1998) and Fitzpatrick (2011, 59) are a good starting point for studying rod-shaped pendants. Different variants are distributed from England to Greece and from Central Germany to Spain (*Fitzpatrick 2011*, Fig. 21), with a concentration in Northern Italy (*Nicolis 2001*, 221, footnote 12).

3.1 Typology

Typologically, rod-shaped pendants can be classified in terms of the presence or absence of a perforation or a loop, and according to whether their terminals are pointed or, alternatively, expanded and collar-like. The piece from Tödling is perforated and has pointed terminals (*Kern 2016*, Abb.2). Most of the Italian pieces have collar-like terminals. These pieces are seen by *Aspes and Fasani* as older than the pieces with pointed ends (*Aspes – Fasani 1976*, 329). Functional differences do not appear to be reflected in different shapes.

3.2 Raw material

The raw material of the rod-shaped pendant from Tödling is bone. For most of the published pieces the raw material is described as “Bein” (a term covering both bone and antler). The rod-shaped pendant from Boscombe (*Fitzpatrick 2011*, 58), Lavagnone and Porto Gaelazzi are explicitly said to be made of antler, as most of the Spanish are (*Liesau von Lettow-Vorbeck C. 2016*, 79). An examination of all pieces is needed.

3.3 Decoration

The rod-shaped pendant from Tödling is decorated with groups of parallel lines, like the bow-shaped pendants of the same grave. Most of the other known pieces have no decoration, a few have collared ends decorated with lines (*Aspes – Fasani 1976*, Abb. 4: 5–8). From the pieces with pointed ends, only the one from Lucone is decorated with lines (*Aspes – Fasani 1976*, Abb. 4: 20). The only highly-decorated piece is the rod-shaped pendant from Osterhofen-Altenmarkt, which displays patterns of lines and criss-cross decoration (*Schmoltz 1989 (1990)*, 60; *Schmoltz 1991*; *Schmoltz 1994*, 21, Abb. 15)

3.4 Position and chronology

Pieces of various shapes were found in male graves of an early phase of the Bell Beaker culture like Boscombe (*Fitzpatrick 2011*, Fig. 11, Pl. 18), Flomborn (*Gebers 1978*, 32/38, Taf. 30: 6) and Ilvesheim (*Gebers 1978*, 126/193e, Taf. 30: 10). They were located on the breast or near the pelvis, in a similar position to the bow-shaped pendants.

Rod-shaped pendants do not usually appear in the same find complex as bow-shaped pendants. There are two exceptions: Osterhofen-Altenmarkt (*Schmoltz 1989 (1990)*, 60; *Schmoltz 1991*; *Schmoltz 1994*, 21, Abb. 15) and Tödling (*Kern 2016*, Abb. 2). In both graves the rod-shaped pendant was found on the breast together with three (Tödling) or four (Osterhofen-Altenmarkt) bow-shaped pendants made of boar ivory. They differ in shape and decoration. Pottery found in the graves – bowls and cups of “Begleitkeramik” – dates them to a later phase of the Bell Beaker culture. In contrast, most of the Italian pieces were found in graves of females, e.g. Vela Valbusa (*Nicolis 2002*, 112, Abb. 1) or Romagnano (*Perini 1971*, Fig. 31; *Nicolis 2002*, 112; *Borello – Dalmeri 2002*, 48, Fig. 9). There they were situated on the breast or near the head, along with beads of various shapes. On average the Italian pieces are smaller than the rod-shaped pendants from Bell Beaker graves (*Maran 1998*, Taf. 55: 9–21; *Fitzpatrick 2011*, 59). It might be better to describe them as rod-shaped beads. Most of the other pieces mentioned by Maran, Nicolis and Fitzpatrick came from collective graves or settlements in Greece and France and give no hints as to use and function. The Italian pieces are dated to the Early Bronze Age Polada culture, and are seen as influenced by the Bell Beaker Culture. In Greece, most of the pieces are also found in Bronze Age contexts (*Maran 1998*, 371–372).

4. Discussion

According to Strahm bow-shaped pendants are part of the Bell Beaker set, together with Bell Beakers, footed bowls, flint arrow heads, Palmela points and Copper daggers (*Strahm 2004a*, 202; *Strahm 2004b*, 113). For him, these objects are typical for the Bell Beaker culture, although it should be pointed out that there is no find where all the named objects are found together, since the distribution of Palmela points and bow-shaped pendants does not overlap. Bow-shaped pendants are typical for the East group of the Bell Beaker culture which stretches from Poland and the Budapest area in the East to the Upper Rhine Valley in the West. Chronologically, they are found in complexes of all phases of the Bell Beaker culture. It is worth mentioning that although boar’s tusks are found in male graves belonging to various periods

from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age either the shapes, decoration and probably the function of these bow-shaped pendants were somehow exceptional. As parts of clothing they may have had a special meaning (Grömer 2010, 299; 2016, 327). Maybe some of them were part of an object that was not put in graves in other periods, reducing the probability of being recorded, as boar's tusks break easily when they dry out or are left in the open air. The same is true of rod-shaped pendants made of antler.

In recent decades, different functions have been assumed for these pieces, from toggles to ornaments and they were seen as parts of garments (Schirmeisen 1936, 66), as pendants or as decoration of the quiver (Fitzpatrick 2011). The fact that in early graves of the Bell Beaker culture bow-shaped and rod-shaped pendants are found in the same position on the breast/shoulder or behind the back, near the pelvis of male individuals, seems to point in the direction of a special function in these cases, probably for fixing a belt or garment. Rahmsdorf sees the rod-shaped pendants – he calls all of them toggles – as things for fastening clothing and sees their appearance in the northern Europe as occurring in connection with woollen clothing (Rahmsdorf 2008, 158). He considers that in southern Europe toggles were not used for holding dresses because these were made of linen there and pins were used to hold them. The link between pins and linen apparel is contradicted by finds (Rast-Eicher 2005, 124) and experiments (Rast-Eicher 2005, 125; Grömer – Rösler-Mauterndorfer 2011, 9). As far as we know, woollen clothing came into broader use north of the Alps as late as the Early Bronze Age, which also sees a development of various kinds of bronze pins. That seems to connect pins with woollen textiles. Until then garments were mostly made of skins and leather (Rast-Eicher 2005, 124). Additionally, we know from experiments that pins damage linen textiles, whereas woollen textiles are scarcely harmed (Grömer – Rösler-Mauterndorfer 2011, Abb. 9). It is also worth mentioning that the oldest known buttonhole is dated to 2600 B.C. (Rast-Eicher 2005, 124–125, Abb. 17). A different interpretation of the pendants is favoured by Fitzpatrick. He sees them as decorative or functional parts of something that was carried on the shoulder like a quiver (Fitzpatrick 2011, 60). In similar vein Bosch interprets the piece from grave 2 at Altdorf as a toggle for closing a bag (Bosch 2008, 486). Unfortunately we do not have many depictions or figurines of humans from that period that show details of clothing or equipment. Among the few exceptions are the stelae from Petit Chasseur, Sion. Although one of the graves there contained a vertically-perforated bow-shaped pendant, no such piece is shown on the slightly older stelae, although they have wealth of details concerning clothing and equipment. But what is shown are belts with loops (e.g. Stele 20, Gally 2011, 24) – for which a bow-shaped or rod-shaped toggle would have been the perfect fixing. Such toggles would also have been ideal for the rear fastening of those belts that are shown running over the breast on Stele 8 (Gally 2011, 142).

Regardless of the function, or perhaps because no function could be proved, bow-shaped pendants were seen as symbolic items. As mentioned above, Piggott (1971) and others (e.g. Corboud 2009, 22–23) compared them to bows and thought that they were symbolizing bows, as they were often found in association with flint arrowheads and their decoration recalled the bow bindings (Piggott 1971, 80). Sometimes bow-shaped pendants have been compared to yokes with the argument being that animal traction was intensified during the third millennium B.C. and thus held an important position in life then (Budziszewski – Włodarczak 2010, 62–66, 150). “Skeuomorphic” interpretations are particularly popular in British archaeology. But there is no need to compare the decoration of the pendants to bindings. Such decorations can be found on the rims of bowls of this period (e.g. Heyd 2000, Taf. 62), on the metopic decorated Bell Beakers (e.g. Heyd 2000, Taf. 37), and they appear throughout prehistory on tools and other objects such as bronze knives of the late Bronze Age (e.g. Říhouský 1972, Taf. 24: 254, Taf. 24: 260). Groups of parallel lines even appear on rod-shaped bronze toggles of the Urnfield-Culture (Kytliková 1967, Abb. 17: 1).

Boar's tusks have been used as tools and prestige items since the Mesolithic (Grünberg 2004, 277). In my opinion, the shape of the bow-shaped pendants therefore has to be seen as a result of the raw material – you cannot make a straight object out of a boar's tusk. Nevertheless, producing and decorating these objects required special skills, as did the killing of a boar, which gave rise to the high value of the objects.

Although bow-shaped pendants made of boar ivory disappear at the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, there are similar anchor-shaped pendants made of bone and bronze in the Carpathian Basin (Szatmári 1999/2000, Fig. 1) and Slovakia and similar pendants made of bronze in southern Bavaria and Switzerland. Some of these even show a similar decoration

(*Bocksberger 1964*, Fig. 22: 6–9, 10–14; *Christlein 1964*, Abb. 21; *Szatmári 1999/2000*, Fig. 1). The western bronze pendants are described as crescent-like and the eastern as anchor-shaped. Both are seen as influenced by the bow-shaped pendants of the Bell Beaker culture (*Moszolicz 1967*, 90; *Heyd 2002*, 353). The bone pendant of the Nitra culture from grave 149 from Branč, Slovakia (*Vladár 1976*, Abb. 5: 2) is seen as a missing link between the bow-shaped pendants of the Bell Beaker culture and the anchor-shaped bronze pendants of the Carpathian Basin. Interestingly, it was found in the grave of a woman. The other bronze pendants are also part of women's ornaments. It is worth mentioning that the distribution area of the bow-shaped pendants of the Bell Beaker culture does not overlap much with that of the metal pendants. The shape, and sometimes the decoration, of the pendants was adopted, but not the raw material, function and meaning. This is quite similar to what we saw for the rod-shaped pendants in Italy, which were used as female ornaments. It also recalls the pieces of horse harness, which were a component of female ornamentation as found in Iron Age female graves, e.g. Hallstatt (*Egg 1989*, 279; *Hodson 1990*, 25; *Pare 1992*, 140, *Metzner-Nebelsick – Nebelsick 1999*, 70–82, Abb. 1–2). In this connection these objects are seen as misused (*Hodson 1990*, 25) or amulets (*Metzner-Nebelsick – Nebelsick 1999*, 76). The amulet interpretation is also complemented by finds of parts of horse harness in Iron Age graves of children, who are seen as being in special need of protection (*Pauli 1975*, 108–109). At the moment we do not know whether at the end of the Neolithic the integration of “male” attributes of boar's tusk into the female costume had apotropaic or mythological implications or whether the decorative aspect was forefronted. The damaged pieces found in women's graves can probably be seen as amulets, but at least in the Early Bronze Age when the pendants were made of metal the decorative aspect seems to have been stronger.

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Summary

In summary, we can state that the interpretation of the so-called bow-shaped and rod-shaped pendants has been problematic, as a result of mixing objects of similar shape and disregarding different positions in graves and different datings. This confusion has served to conceal changes in function and meaning. We can see that bow-shaped and rod-shaped toggles were used originally for fixing garments, belts or bags and were part of male equipment. These pieces are typically found in male burials on the breast, the shoulder or the back near the pelvis. Later on, the bow-shaped pendants in particular began to serve a decorative more than a functional purpose. This is shown by decorated bow-shaped pendants and an increase in the number of pieces found in male graves, as well as in their use as a pendant or amulet in female graves, where they are always found on the breast or near the neck. In the early Bronze Age “bow-shaped” pendants, now made of bronze and rod-shaped beads are part of necklaces worn by females. Therefore we can trace a development from a functional object of male equipment to a component of female ornamentation.

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