

SPONDYLUS SHELL ARTEFACTS IN HAMANGIA CULTURE

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Abstract: The recent archaeological researches done in the settlement of Cheia (Constanța county), situated in Casimcea valley, in the central Dobrujan karstic area have enriched a lot the old impression on the settlements and the economical life of Hamangia communities¹. The new found *Spondylus* items determined us to take into consideration older hypotheses regarding the origin, the cronology, the typology and the functionality, and not least their semnification.

A simple cronological and chorological analysis of the finds indicates their homogeneous distribution, no matter of the stage, region or site type. The most numerous *Spondylus* items are gathered in the necropolis in Cernavodă, Mangalia, Limanu and Durankulak. Less items are to be found in settlements, in Ceamurlia de Jos, Medgidia - Satu Nou, Cheia.

Among numerous shellfishes used, both as food and as raw material necessary to make some special artefacts, *Spondylus* attracted the attention to many specialists, provoking numerous disputes, provoking the origin of the raw material, the processing centres, its distribution directions, the signification of the made objects. The number and the diversity of the *Spondylus* type items produced by Hamangia communities have been considered reasons for the role of main „provider” of these ones in the framework of a „pan-european change system”. We do not exclude the possibility of the own production, the most convincing example being the antropomorphic pendants - specific for the stage Hamangia III. Though, a simple analysis of the archaeological realities in the Dobrujan area does not indicate, up to present, the existence of an exploitation/processing centre of *Spondylus/Glycymeris* shells. As a consequence, the problem of the raw material is still not solved, the necessity of physical - chemical analyses is more tahn obvious.

The value of the *Spondylus* items is to be seen mostly in a funerary environment. The association of the jewels made of *Spondylus* with rich necropolis demonstrates the ornaments were very appreciated, being not only decorative elements on fashion, but also indicating the social status of their owner. The existence of privileged social groups can be also clearly identified in the necropolis area building - the tombs with *Spondylus* items shows are associated in two distinguished groups, corresponding to the stages Hamangia I-III and IV.
