

Moon-shaped idols constitute very specific and variable category of ceramic, in rare cases also of stone artefacts. Beginning of their occurrence and spreading in the middle Europe can be associated with the Middle-Danube and North-Alpine Urnfield culture. Their development consequentially continues in the Early Iron Age when they spread outside central European region down to the north east of Spain and the north of Italy. The current total number of findings is higher than estimate from 2004, which was approximately 2000 pieces.

The main objective of the thesis lay in overall processing of results of the research up to now concerning the given issue. At the same time there was an attempt made about critical assessment of the artefact features and the excavation environment with regard to the potential function of the Moon-shaped idols.

The excavation environment of these products is quite variable. As a rule they appear in settlements as secondary refuse, but also in the situations, which can be considered as demonstration of cult behaviour. In northeast France and south Germany, parts of Moon-shaped idols are to be found also in context of the final Bronze Age. From there the custom is spread in a modified form to the east. Such equipped graves can be noticed in the burial sites of Bylany and Kalenderberg culture and also in the environment of Silesian and rarely Saxon-Lusatian group of Lusatian Urnfield culture of the Early Iron Age.

On the basis of the dominant morphological features of the Moon-shaped idols new typology was designed distinguishing 4 types and 13 groups (variations). Some forms are culturally and regionally specific. For Czech environment the prismatic form is characteristic. This form is characterized by simplicity of the shape and ornaments, which proves rather practical function of the artefacts. Part of the thesis is evaluation of chemical and mineral analyses focused on the material composition of the ceramic substance and determination of the highest thermic strain of the selected samples. Outcome of the analyses together with the figures measured during experimental pottery firing of the Moon-shaped idols do not exclude the possibility of using the objects as accessories of fire replace. However, at the same time no convincing evidence has been provided leading to clarifying the purpose of the artefacts.

Opinions on their function are not unified even after over 150 years of the research. They range from simple symbols to religious-cult objects or utterly utilitarian objects. With regard to the current knowledge we have to consider the Moon-shaped idols as multi-functional and multi-semantic objects, which are attributes of the cultural identity with symbolic, social and practical content.