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Neolithic Vinca figurine of a girl in a short skirt and ornate top, discovered in the Plocnik  
Stevan Lazarevic / Reuters

## [7,000 Years Ago European Women Dressed Sexy](#)

### *A sophisticated metal culture in the European Neolithic*

They may have lived during the "New Stone Age" (Neolithic), but according to European figurines which are 7,500 years old, women liked to look sexy even back then. Recent digging at the site of a settlement of Vinca culture, Europe's biggest known Neolithic civilization, on Plocnik (southern Serbia), uncovered a sophisticated prehistoric metropolis, with a developed taste for art and fashion and it appears now to be Europe's first civilization using metal. Vinca culture, whose name comes from a Serbian village on the Danube where 8 Neolithic villages were discovered at the beginning of the 20th century, was spread over modern Bosnia, Serbia, Romania and Macedonia 7500 to 6000 BC years ago. This people knew how to melt copper for tools, raised cattle and dressed in a fashionable manner even according to today's standards. "According to the figurines we found, young women were beautifully dressed, like today's girls in short tops and mini skirts, and wore bracelets around their arms," said archaeologist Julka Kuzmanovic-Cvetkovic. The 7400 to 6700 years old settlement covered 120 hectares and points that its dwellers enjoyed trade, handcrafts, art and metallurgy, while a close-by thermal well could represent Europe's oldest spa saloon. "They pursued beauty and produced 60 different forms of wonderful pottery and figurines, not only to represent deities, but also out of pure enjoyment," said Kuzmanovic. Houses were warmed by stoves with holes for trash and the dead were buried in a concentrated graveyard. There were no beds; people slept on fur or mats made of wool and wear clothes made of wool, flax and leather. Many artifacts were children toys. Researchers were most impressed by the complex metal workshop; the ancient smiths employed a copper chisel and a two-headed hammer and ax. "This might prove that the Copper Age started in Europe at least 500 years earlier than we thought," Kuzmanovic said. Copper was the first metal processed by humans and its use was believed to have begun around 6,000 years ago in south-eastern Europe, coming from the Middle East. The site also revealed the oldest European mine, located close to the Mlava river. "These latest findings show that the Vinca culture was from the very beginning a metallurgical culture. They knew how to find minerals, to transport them and melt them into tools," said archaeologist Dusan Slijivar of Serbia's National Museum. The Plocnik's metal workshop chamber covered 25 square meters, its walls being made of wood wrapped in clay and was very sophisticated for its age: the outside furnace had earthen air pipe vents, permitting the air to circulate into the furnace for keeping the fire and pushing out the smoke without human intervention. "In Bulgaria and Cyprus, where such workshops have also been found, they didn't have chimneys but blew air on the fire with straws, exposing man to heat and carbon dioxide," Slijivar said. "The early metal workers very likely experimented with colorful minerals that caught their eye - blue azurite, bright green malachite and red cuprite, all containing copper - as evidenced by malachite traces found on the inside of a pot." "By 7,000 years ago, a devastating fire could have wiped out the settlement, found after that in 1927 during the construction of a rail line. War, lack of funds and the opposition of the land owners impeded too much research till 1996." "The saddest thing for us is always the moment when we finish our work and everything has to be covered up with earth again. That's the easiest for the state, conservation is very expensive and the land owners want to work in their fields. But there was some hope that the latest excavation would be preserved due to its importance. We dream of uncovering the entire town one day, and people will be able to see prehistoric life at its fullest," said Kuzmanovic.