Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF GHEORGHE LAZAROVICI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 73RD BIRTHDAY

Institute of Archaeomythology
Sebastopol, 2014

Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations

Festschrift in Honor of Gheorghe Lazarovici

Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations

Festschrift in Honor of Gheorghe Lazarovici

Published by the
Institute of Archaeomythology
1645 Furlong Road
Sebastopol, California 95472 USA
http://www.archaeomythology.org

Edited by Joan Marler

With special thanks to Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici.

Printed by
Editura Lidana
Suceava, Romania

ISBN 978-0-9815249-4-8

Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations

Papers presented at the international symposium
"50 Years of Tărtăria Excavations"
Coronini-Pescari, Romania
1-5 September, 2011.

Festschrift in Honor of Gheorghe Lazarovici
on the occasion of his 73rd Birthday, 2014

Edited by Joan Marler

This international symposium was sponsored and sustained by
Casa Municipală de Cultură "George Suru" in Caransebeş,
by its Director, Dr. Ioan Cojocaru, and by
Universitatea "Eftimie Murgu" in Reşiţa.

Institute of Archaeomythology, Sebastopol
Editura Lidana, Suceava

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS VOLUME

Sote Angeleski
Independent Researcher, Cluj-Napoca
s_angeleski@yahoo.com

Beatrice Ciută
Universitatea "1 Decembrie 1918," Alba Iulia
Institutul de Arheologie Sistemică "Iuliu Paul"
beatriceciuta@yahoo.com

Laura Coltofean
PhD Student Universitatea "Lucian Blaga" Sibiu
laura_coltofean@yahoo.com

Florian Dumitrescu-Chioar
Muzeul Naţional Brukenthal, Sibiu

Miriam Robbins Dexter
University of California, Los Angeles
Institute of Archaeomythology
mdexter@ucla.edu

Florin Draşovean
Muzeul Banatului Timişoara
fdrasovean2000@yahoo.com

Harald Haarmann
Institute of Archaeomythology
European branch, Finland
harald.haarmann@pp.inet.fi

Adela Kovács
Muzeul Naţional al Carpaţilor Răsăriteni
Sfântu Gheorghe
adelina_ab@yahoo.com

Sabin Adrian Luca
Muzeul Naţional Brukenthal, Sibiu
Universitatea "Lucian Blaga," Sibiu
sabin.luca@brukenthalmuseum.ro

Joan Marler
Institute of Archaeomythology, Sebastopol, CA.
jmarler@archaeomythology.org

Florentina Marţiş
Muzeul Naţional Brukenthal, Sibiu
tinamartis2003@yahoo.com

Marco Merlini
Prehistory Knowledge Project, Euro Innovanet
"Virtual Museum of European Roots," Rome
Institute of Archaeomythology
marco.merlini@mclink.it

Carsten Mischka
Christian-Albrecht-Universität, Kiel
carsten_mischka@gmx.de

Adrian Poruciuc
Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," Iaşi
Institute of Archaeomythology
apor@uaic.ro

Adriana Radu
Muzeul Banatului Montan, Reşiţa
oprinescu_ra@yahoo.fr

Cosmin I. Suciu
Universitatea "Lucian Blaga," Sibiu
cosmin.suciu@ulbsibiu.ro

Tiberiu Ioan Tecar
Muzeul Naţional de Istorie a Transilvaniei
Cluj-Napoca
tmtecar@yahoo.com

Nicolae Ursulescu
Centrul Interdisciplinar de Studii Arheoistorice
Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iaşi
n.ursulescu@gmail.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

THE MASTER OF THE SACRAL SCRIPT OF THE ARCHETYPES

MARCO MERLINI

Most jobs are mainly manual or intellectual, i.e., they require and develop "the intelligence of making," or the "intelligence of conceptualizing." Since my youth I have been fascinated by archaeologists at work because, exercising an interpretive practice with fragments of a material reality, they combine the maximum of practical thinking with the maximum of speculative thinking. Archaeological surveying and inquiry involves a spectrum of 360 degree knowledge. The competence of a skilled archaeologist, such as Gheorghe Lazarovici, extends from how to handle a shovel and spatula with patience, thoroughness and attention, to the exploration of the mentality of those who preceded us in more or less remote epochs; from the geo-chemical examination of the territory (land or sea) to the comprehension of how ancient humans under investigation lived, enjoyed, and suffered; from the familiarity with methods of classification and computerized databases, to the understanding of political, economic, and social structures of the deep past; from the managing of sophisticated up-to-date techniques such as aerial photography, georadar, and sonar, to the investigation of ideologies and cultural matrices lost in time.

Gheorghe Lazarovici's lifetime skills as an archaeologist include not only the masterful management of excavation logistics – with catering and housing of participants – but also to the re-creation of ancient biographies and identities; from the knowledge of the chemical composition and physical properties of simple but fundamental materials such as ceramic or wood, to the reconstruction of the history and intimate relationships among the inhabitants of the houses or the village under investigation; from detecting faint epigraphic traces, to understanding what those distant messages actually intended to communicate to other human beings or to super-human powers; from exceptional resilience from physical exertion, to disembodied scientific research with data charts, feedback, seriations, and types of artifacts.

Those who refuse to labor under heavy and dusty work, often without pause, carried on at 40° C at midday, or who avoid addressing the immense questions of human history cannot become proficient archaeologists. They cannot understand, from both fragments and details, the answers to such questions as: What are we? What are we doing on the Earth? Does a divine dimension exist? How have people established contact with it?

When fourteen years ago I was lucky enough to meet Gheorghe Lazarovici at an archaeological dig, I had the clear feeling – even before reading and studying his books and articles on prehistory – that here is a mind distinctly fit for archaeology. He illustrates ancient Neolithic divinities with familiarity, from faint traces of them, as if they are still alive, while also

endeavoring to fix a gasping engine with iron wire and scotch. I noticed how easily he passes from a very careful cleaning and reassembling of an artifact, to the detailed description of its use in a burial ritual.

Gheorghe taught me that archaeology is not only a scientific discipline, but primarily a mindset, a way of seeing and interpreting reality that gives material form to our "duration" in time. His constant effort is to reconstruct a puzzle whose pieces are infinite parts of the uninterrupted flow of history, from prehistory to modern times. This holistic approach is widely documented by his studies. Take, for example, his work on the Teasc Mountain, located close to Borsec in Harghita County, Romania. He identifies this elevation as a sacral place. He consistently interprets a number of megalithic stones with signs and symbols he discovered as indicators of the presence of a prehistoric sanctuary located in the natural environment. These graphic marks prove the occurrence of a system of communication starting from prehistory and used for a long period of time. Ancient traditions and local legends related with the deep-rooted sacredness of the Teasc Mountain are still inspiring shepherds nowadays to engrave inscriptions in order to leave proof of their passing through the area and their reverence of the place.

Wealthy with complex and heterogeneous, systemic expertise made of practical skills, an aptitude for visual assessment, scientific consistency, and an impressive cultural background, Gheorghe Lazarovici is not only one of the most distinguished Romanian and South-Eastern European archaeologists, but a scholar who has opened up new pathways in archaeological research, who has achieved innovative results, and educated generations of promising archaeologists.

The latter aspect is crucial in relation to the present volume. The romantic figure of the secluded archaeologist, as expressed in a work painted by De Chirico in 1937, depicts the archaeologist as a solitary person focused on 'digging within himself.' Gheorghe's attitude is the exact opposite. His trust in the power of cooperation is such that more than once I have seen him opening his computer to offer colleagues unpublished material and documentation. Altruism and generosity towards his students are so strong that some of them – myself included – have lived at his house for a week or more while completing a graduation thesis, or doctoral dissertation. "*Boss*" is the affectionate nickname by which Gheorghe is known among the archaeologists of Banat and Transylvania, nearly all trained under his guidance. A number of them are contributors to this collection of papers. This name reflects the collective recognition by students and colleagues of one of the deans of Romanian and South-Eastern European research on the Neolithic and Eneolithic ages.

The following episode illustrates Gheorghe's complex archaeological capacities and qualities as a teacher. I remember, during one of our excavations in Parţa, a colleague visited who was exhibiting, with a bit of arrogance, the latest model of mobile GIS. He implicitly challenged our results due to our not very up-to-date devices. Gheorghe knew the apparatus in the hands of the guest, but did not comment. Instead, he drove into the bush to cut a straight and hairpin branch, positioned it in the key points of the excavation, then made the sighting with his eyes. The measurements he achieved were of comparable accuracy to the newest device. When

the visitor went away, Gheorghe strongly urged his students to learn to make the proper measurements with the latest GIS technology. The demeanor of this skilled archaeologist is consistent with a sage who is aware of the technological progress in his field, but also how the most sophisticated tools are useless if one does not have eyes to see and a brain to interpret. He has also demonstrated that Neolithic people were no less intelligent than we are. They did not have access to the technologies and methods we deploy nowadays, so they had to be much more inventive and smarter than we are.

The present anthology, *Fifty years of Tărtăria Excavations*, combines four key aspects of the archaeological research carried on by Gheorghe Lazarovici: the enquiry into Neolithic and Copper Age cultures in the Carpathian-Danube area and the Balkans; the methodology of the database of signs and symbols as an ineludible tool for interpretation; an interest in prehistoric communication (i.e., the Danube symbolism and script); and the emphasis on an ethno-religious approach.

Regarding Professor Lazarovici's extensive excavations throughout Romania and wide publication on the Neolithic and Copper Age cultures of South-Eastern Europe, I refer to the article written by Sabin Luca for this volume. In terms of Tărtăria, it is important to mention the professor's effort to hinge the interpretation of the Tărtăria inscriptions on an exemplary analysis of the archaeological context of the dwelling and the ritual pit-grave of the magic-religious practitioner buried with the tablets (*Milady Tărtăria*) within the framework of the village and the related cultural group.

In the book we wrote together, *Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets* (2011), his contribution does not start from the tablets, but arrives to them only after a rigorous archaeological survey. He debugs, in partnership with Magda Lazarovici, the previous results of archaeological research at Tărtăria concerning stratigraphy, cultural ascribing of the archaeological material, and the dynamism of its ceramics.

Gheorghe Lazarovici has published extensive documentation on the ratio of the location, advanced economy, and the exploitation of the environment by the Neolithic communities at the settlement. He reconstructs the layout, fortification systems, and urbanization of Tărtăria that spread to about 3 ha in an oval shaped plan. The structure and architectural elements of (Vinča) pit houses and (Vinča and Petreşti) surface houses are studied in detail. He documents, via statistical analysis, the evolution of Tărtăria pottery (categories of ceramics and pottery technologies), from the Neolithic period (Starčevo–Criş, Vinča A, Vinča B, and Vinča C–Turdaş) up to the Late Copper Age (Coţofeni). He also discusses ceramic imports from several cultures and cultural groups (Zau, Banat or Szakálhát, Linear pottery, Bükk, Precucuteni, and Petreşti), and related networks of cultural linkages, economic exchanges and social relations. He makes a survey on the objects of daily life, examining flint, stone and bone tools, obsidian blades, arms, adornments, focusing on clay objects such as weights, spindle-whorls, small thin discs, and 'clay bread.' The inscribed tablets are contextualized within the rich spiritual life of the Tărtăria communities starting from the assessment of the graves (a Coţofeni or Petreşti ritual burying of a child, and *Milady Tărtăria*'s secondary burial) and cultic objects (monumental

idols, anthropomorphic figurines, cultic vessels, small altars, plastic representations on pots, pot lids, spindle-whorls with signs and figures, anthropomorphic pots, and scepters). Finally, he sets up the *longevous* settlement at Tărtăria within the frame of the relative and absolute chronology of the region from the Starčevo-Criş cultural assemblage up to the Vinča culture, which the tablets belong to. Subsequently, this establishes the time frame for the Late Neolithic (Turdaş level) and Copper Age (Petreşti culture). Only after the above-mentioned remarkable archaeological survey, he braves the sacred tablets, their emblematic inscriptions and messages. However, he does not accept the challenge bare-handed. His *atout* is not less than *Zeus*.

It is impossible to conceive of Gheorghe Lazarovici disconnected from his always in progress database containing information about signs and symbols related to the Neolithic and Copper Age spiritual life. He is persuaded that grouping and statistically analyzing a large number of signs and symbols in a database with a wide and well-articulated structure is a major tool to determine the meaning of the graphic messages left by our ancestors. His software, immodestly named *Zeus,* is both the cross and delight for generations of students in archaeology: a cross due to the difficulties to enter into its complex matrix, to become familiar with its counter-intuitive commands, and tolerate its unfriendliness (in case of an error, it does not offer any explanation); a delight for its productive results.

The fields that constitute the structure of the database are indicative of Gheorghe's approach and interests: *Archaeological information* (e.g., country, region, locality, place, section, quadrate, depth, complex); *Cultural frame* (e.g., epoch, culture, phase, absolute chronology); *Class and subclass of artifacts* allowing standard, minimum and maximum descriptions for their identification (e.g., idol, shrine, seal, pintadera, tablet, pot, cult pot); *Cultural analysis* (e.g., theme, idea, subject, characters, main cult, secondary cult). Gheorghe's method is clear: archaeological context, observed in conjunction with other related information, provides insights for examining the sign system employed in the Danube civilization (Tărtăria included). In turn, sign analysis is utilized as a filter for archaeological data.

Since 1986, Gheorghe has created innumerable catalogues and dictionaries of data to classify this archaeo-semiotic information and to organize it into codes. Fighting against limited computer memory and finding personal smart solutions, he utilizes mathematical algorithms to correlate data in order to discern direct or indirect connections between objects and their semiotic features within definite archaeological contexts. The final results are in seriated and hierarchic tables to indicate the evolution of different categories of signs and symbols and their employment to convey packages of information.

According to Gheorghe, the information obtained from the tables indicates the existence of a mythological realm consisting of several primordial myths, such as the origin of the world, the genesis of light, magic rituals to enhance fertility, and the relation between human beings and divinity. This cultic mythology is hinged on a Great Mother. Spiritual beliefs are reflected and expressed by a language of signs and symbols in which messages are graphically conveyed. Signs were often used to define or sacralize objects. For example, in the Early Neolithic Starčevo–Criş culture the Great Mother was represented by figurines or pots with distinct,

stylized features (e.g., hair, sex, steatopygia). They refer to attributes of the divinity in accordance with symbols, or with written signs employed to transmit archetypal myths possibly functioning as emblematic ideas, attributes, allegories, metaphors, parables, or apologues. In his view, these are the bricks of a "sacral writing" that developed in the Neolithic with a dynamic evolution. Consistently, he defines Neolithic sacral writing as the "script of the archetypes," as expressed by Mircea Eliade.[1] In particular, the Great Mother is represented by the Danube script through her protective attributes to ensure fertility of the fields, germination of cereals, fecundity of animals, and gestation of new humans. Such inscriptions appeared for the first time during the end of the Early Neolithic in the Starčevo–Criş culture (phases IIIB-IVA), but it was in the Developed Neolithic (Vinča A–Polychromy–Karanovo II), i.e., at Tărtăria, where they reached their maximum semiotic efficiency.

Crossing the results of his archaeological survey on Tărtăria with the outcome of the *Zeus* database, Gheorghe suggests reasonable and assessed possibilities, not assumed facts. In his view, the Transylvanian tablets served the role of storing knowledge and indicating rituals to be followed, as confirmed by their association with signs and symbols, and by their place and position in the secondary burial of a Neolithic "priestess." They were possibly worn in rituals as pendants, or kept in the hand, or used for the invocation of energies.

Fig. 1: Tărtăria discoid tablet (photo: Marco Merlini, courtesy of the National Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca).

The discoid Tărtăria tablet (Inventory P. 409) is divided into four quadrants by a large cross line (Fig. 1). The signs from which Gheorghe begins his interpretation of the engraved inscription are detected as the zenith and the horizon (the union of Sky and Earth). Within this frame, the hole in the upper part of the artifact represents the Sun as a divinity, and the signs in the upper register are connected with the Heavenly World, while those under the horizon line are associated with the Earthly World.

On the upper right quadrant of the tablet, which in his opinion is the side that marks the feminine part, there are two signs. He identifies the first one as a double throne pattern: a throne that, being seen from both the Sky and the Earth, is meant for the priestess who represents that particular divinity. However, which divinity is involved? The answer resides in the second sign, which is discerned by Gheorghe as the crescent Moon. In conclusion, the signs on the quadrant might indicate the Moon as a divinity and her throne. The group of signs located on the upper left part of the tablet are interpreted as a very complex cryptogram expressing to initiates the connection of the feminine cycle and related fecundity

[1] Eliade quoted in J. Chevalier and A. Gheebrant, *Dictionnaire des Symbols*. Paris: Laffont, 1969, I: 27.

with the cycle and phases of the Moon. The key information transmitted is the power of the Full Moon in the reproduction process and the importance to synchronize the most fertile period of the menstrual cycle with the apparition of the Full Moon in the sky.

Three signs occur in the right lower quarter of the tablet. One appears to be a bow; the other is an arrow with a double head, and the third is interpreted by Gheorghe as signifying lights. From the way the bow-arrow are rendered, he sees a divine command thrown towards the other lower square of the tablet, where two altars can be noted. Indeed, the two signs on the last section are an altar on which offerings are deposited and burnt (*fumigatio* rituals), and an altar-idol which is both in the Sky (the head, the arms) and on Earth (triangle base, maybe the legs). As it is located on the margin, hidden away from direct sight, Gheorghe believes the double sign symbolizes the divine destination of the burnt offerings, i.e., the Sun and the Moon.

Fig. 2: The Tărtăria tablets (photo: Marco Merlini, courtesy of the National Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca).

The holed, rectangular tablet (inventory P. 410) couples with the discoid tablet, both being worn together perhaps during initiation rituals (Fig. 2). The hole on the artifact may represent the Sun with the lines around it forming seven fields. Under the Sun there are in central position the cryptogram of the Sun, materialized on Earth, and a bucranium so that after the male animal's decapitation, blood offerings could be brought. Above the Sun, there are very small signs that might represent the Moon repeated three times, i.e., the Moon as meter and mistress of time, and three Moon cycles individuating springtime, summertime, and harvesting time. On the left side of the tablet are the cup and the pot used for pouring the sacred liquid from the sacrifice of the consecrated bull.

The right side of the liturgical tool is crowded with signs. Gheorghe interprets them as the Cosmic Tree and the cereals on Earth (suggesting two vegetal cycles, in the Sky and on the Earth); a V-like sign, a Y-like sign; a cup that, related to heavenly water, might have three meanings: the origin of life, a means of purification, and a regeneration center. As a whole, the right side of the tablet refers to rituals related to life and vegetation renewal, attributes of the Great Mother and her priestess, while Neolithic rituals of *taurobolium* are key parts of the "knowledge" engraved on the left side.

According to the response of *Zeus*, the signs on the rectangular tablet (Inventory MNIT P. 411) represent a human figure seated on a throne, with hands extended towards the tree of life (a fir, an evergreen tree) positioned in front of him/her (Fig. 3). A similar character on a throne, probably a woman (due to the scarf around the neck), is rendered on a seal from the Dudeşti – Vădastra culture at *Măgura – Vităneşti* (Teleorman district, Romania). The third image on

Fig. 3: Third Tărtăria tablet (photo: Marco Merlini, courtesy of the National Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca).

the tablet possibly represents a flock of goats. Thus, *Milady Tărtăria* might have been regarded as the priestess of the flock (her affiliates in figurative meaning?) when she held the tablet in her left hand.

In conclusion, archaeological research and semiotic investigation converge in Gheorghe who considers the three Transylvanian artifacts as part of *Milady Tărtăria's* inventory aimed to describe distinct rituals. They are intended to preserve and teach liturgies that have to be performed. The small rectangular tablet which contains only ideographic scenes, is intended to present the priestess' role, her mythological emblem. In particular, it explains to the uninitiated the position of *Milady Tărtăria* as the community "shepherd," guide in the sacred issues, and servant of the cult. The other two tablets contain "secret" notions regarding rituals of the Moon and feminine calendar. They carry also information concerning certain sacrifices connected to the cycle of nature, and rituals related to community events. They were rarely worn around the neck of the practitioner, only on the occasion of initiations and festive moments. As genuine primers, they fixed meanings, periods, and divinities to which they were addressed.

The Moon is the protagonist of the packages of sacral information carried on the tablets. It symbolizes fertility, fecundity, and vegetation renewal, essential attributes related to the power of life incarnated in vegetal and animal prolific divinities melted in the Great Mother imagery and cult.

According to the seriations of *Zeus*, the messages of the Transylvanian tablets are based on a script with a religious character. Over 90 % of the signs on the tablets are present in the Danube script. However, scholars who are expecting the *sic et simpliciter* assessment of the Tărtăria signs within the Danube script are rebutted. In Gheorghe's viewpoint, not only the Transylvanian signs, but also the symbols represent packages of information. Both signs and symbols compose the "Neolithic religious script" aimed to express the mythology of a cult or types of cults.

Let us now read the proceedings from *Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations* that coincide with the occasion of Professor Gheorghe Lazarovici's 73rd birthday, in honor of his pioneering life's work. It is a sincere tribute with gratitude from friends and colleagues (some of them former doctoral students) to a scholar who is incarnating the archaeology of the Balkan-Danube Neolithic. The honoree's retirement from his university duties is mobilizing new energies in him. His friends are waiting for new and innovative contributions on the Danube civilization and the Danube script.

May all readers enjoy this Festschrift, and to you, **Gheorghe: Happy Birthday!**

Introduction

JOAN MARLER

This volume, *Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations,* is dedicated to Professor Gheorghe Corneliu Lazarovici on the occasion of his 73rd birthday. The astonishingly productive career of this dynamic scholar and beloved mentor is typified by his tireless excavations of Neolithic and Copper Age sites throughout Romania; his prolific publications of articles, monographs, and edited anthologies; productive collaborations with colleagues on a wide range of projects; the extensive development and use of his *Zeus* database for the study of Neolithic signs and symbols; his prestigious awards; and his nurturing of several generations of Romanian archaeologists. It is no wonder that Professor Lazarovici is considered a giant in his field, as one of the most distinguished Romanian and Southeast European archaeologists. The breadth of his accomplishments are distilled within the article, in this volume, by his friend and colleague Professor Sabin Adrian Luca.

The articles in this festschrift represent the proceedings of the international symposium, "50 Years of Tărtăria Excavations," that took place along the Danube near the entrance to the Iron Gates, 1-5 September, 2011, in the village of Coronini-Pescari, Romania. This interdisciplinary symposium, organized by Gheorghe and Magda Lazarovici, was sponsored and sustained by Casa Municipală de Cultură "George Suru" in Caransebeş, by its Director, Dr. Ioan Cojocaru, and by Universitatea "Eftimie Murgu" in Reşiţa.

As Marco Merlini points out in his Preface, this anthology emphasizes thematic areas of research reflected in Gheorghe Lazarovici's ongoing work: archaeological research on the Neolithic and Copper Age societies in the Carpathian-Danube area and the Balkans; an inquiry into the beliefs and rituals of these early agrarian communities as indicated by the remains of sanctuaries, ritual ceramics, sculptures, and other paraphernalia; the use of the *Zeus* database of signs and symbols as a tool for interpretation; and a dedicated interest in prehistoric communication, especially by means of the signs and symbols of the Danube script.

As a direct response to the theme of this volume, *Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations,* Florian Dumitrescu-Chioar, Sabin A. Luca, and Cosmin I. Suciu present the findings from their "Excavations from 2010 at Tărtăria – *Gura Luncii*, Alba County." The intention of their systematic campaign was to identify the area of the excavations begun in 1989 by Iuliu Paul, who produced no published plans or research reports, and to determine its relationship with the earlier excavations by Kurt Horedt (1943) and Nicolae Vlassa (1961). Their objective was well accomplished and the stratigraphic profiles they have produced will be extremely useful for future investigations at Tărtăria. We send a heartfelt farewell to Florian Dumitrescu-Chioar, a young and dedicated archaeologist from this team, who departed this life all too soon.

The usefulness of geomagnetic surveys to gather information about the inner structures of buried settlements and their overall sizes are discussed by Carsten Mischka in his article, "The Zau-Culture Settlements Iclod, Ţaga and Fundătura: Geophysical Survey and Test Excavation 2007-2010." While the successful geomagnetic surveys of multilayer- and multi-temporal sites revealed numerous house plots, complex settlement dynamics, and ditch-systems, further in-depth research will be necessary in order to draw conclusive interpretations of the preliminary data. Carsten Mischka wonders, for instance, if the size of the surveyed settlement reflects its actual population size and duration, or whether the settlement simply appears large due to horizontal shifting of the inhabited areas.

The life of every human community depends upon the ecosystem that sustains it. Beatrice Ciută discusses the ideal conditions for long-term human habitation in southwest Transylvania where the Mureş River makes a large meander around a fertile terrace. Her article, "Reconstruction of Vegetation Attempts for the Vinča Culture Period. Habitat of Prehistoric Settlements from Limba – *Oarda de Jos* (Alba County)" discusses evidence of the rich flora and fauna that sustained the Vinča culture inhabitants of this place by means of a vital mixed economy. Due to the special conditions of the site, the author documents an example of the longevity of specific plants by tracing the continued existence of weed species currently found on the site that were also present in Neolithic times.

In his article, "A New Neolithic Tablet Discovered at Cluj-Napoca," Tiberiu Ioan Tecar discusses the unearthing of a clay tablet from the Zau culture found in 2012 during excavations near the right shore of the Someşul Mic river in Cluj-Napoca. After discussing the process of the excavation, the author presents an investigation of the symbolism of the cross-shaped engraving on the tablet using cross-cultural, mythological, and folkloric analogies. In his view, the imagery on the tablet suggests a model of the wholeness of the universe, the intersection of the sky, earth, and underworld, and an expression of the spirituality of the Neolithic Zau population.

From an excavation concluded in 2012, Florin Draşovean and Florentina Marţiş present "A Clay Tablet Discovered in the Late Neolithic Settlement from Sânandrei (Timiş County, South-West of Romania)." The authors introduce the context of the excavation, then present a detailed analysis of the tablet to determine how it was made, with special attention given to the sequence of strokes of the complex engraving. They determine that the marks do not correspond to a system of "pre-writing." They posit, instead, that the strokes represent a form of graphic incantation, an energetic expression in clay of the magical intention of the person engraving the marks.

Several articles in this collection explore various perspectives of the Danube script. In "The Sacred *Cryptograms* from Tărtăria: Unique or Widespread Signs?" Marco Merlini compares specific engravings on the Tărtăria tablets with signs of the Danube script by utilizing evidence from the archaeo-semiotic databank *DatDas* (Databank for the Danube script) that he has systematically developed for more than a decade. He demonstrates in great detail the similarities and differences between the signs found on the famous tablets and those found in the *DatDas* databank. He then analyzes the spatial pattern of sign organization on the amulets and

discusses the choice of signs and their arrangement as representing a logical sequence of conceptual elements encoding sacred information. He makes a cross-cultural comparison between the Tărtăria tablets and other sacred ancient writing systems demonstrating the use of secret signs used in liturgies that can only be read by trained ritual practitioners. Nevertheless, Marco Merlini acknowledges that the boundary between the sacred and secular is not always clear in that many everyday acts can be imbued with religious-mythical significance that incorporate both utilitarian and sacred functions.

In 2011, Adrian Poruciuc discussed several Old European signs in the paper he gave during the symposium in Coronini. His article here, "An Archaeomythological Approach to an Old European Sign (OE 14)," focuses on one sign in terms of its figurative and non-figurative aspects. He informs us that the OE sign in question can be recognized by Romanian specialists as *brăduţul,* 'the little fir' because of its cultural resemblance to the image of a fir tree. This symbol of the fir tree, he adds, has a tradition of being considered a magical, sacred sign within the region of what is now Romania. Adrian Poruciuc discusses this sign as it appears in various cultural contexts, contributing an archaeomythological view of the Old European sign with carefully crafted nuance and insight.

The source of Greek literacy has been considered an ongoing mystery. In his article, "Whence Linear B? The Old European Legacy in Greek Civilization," Harald Haarmann tackles the problem by tracing the ancestry of both Linear A and Linear B. He eloquently describes the continuity and transformations of Old European cultural patterns, including the tradition of sign use into what he calls the Balkanic-Aegean Convergence Zone. After the disintegration of long-lived Old European cultural systems, the millennial use of signs and symbols did not entirely vanish but continued in modified forms on the mainland and on the Cycladic Islands, as well as on Crete and Cyprus. Harald Haarmann deftly untangles the mysterious threads surrounding the genesis and decline of Mycenaean writing and the subsequent development of literacy in the Greek world.

In her paper, "Further Thoughts on the V and the M in the Danube Script: The Danube Script and the Old European Goddess," Miriam Robbins Dexter considers the Danube Script to be essential for understanding the possible ways that language, archaeology, and religion/myth can intersect. Her paper discusses the V and the M as important signs of the female pubic triangle and the open posture of "sacred display." She theorizes that the Danube Script was first used for religious purposes, linked – especially in terms of the V and M – with the sacredness of the female body.

In "Signs and Symbols in Zorlenţu Mare and their Relationship to the Danube Script," Adriana Radu begins by discussing the Vinča settlement of Zorlenţu Mare where its complex stratigraphy contained a large number of artifacts including numerous female figurines. The focus of this article is an analysis of the signs engraved on the bodies of many of the female sculptures in order to compare them to signs of the Danube script. Adriana Radu describes a number of distinguishing signs engraved on specific areas of the anthropomorphic figurines. Some signs are representative of recognizable items such as bracelets, jewelry, belts and gesture

(specifically, the orant posture). Non-figurative signs include the X, V, and W signs, in singular and multiple expressions, as well as triangles, the rhombus shape, and variations. Drawing from Gheorghe Lazarovici's database and system of seriated tables, she presents data of specific sign use over time in various cultural contexts. While many signs and symbols found on artifacts from Zorlenţu Mare are also found in the broader system of the Danube script, other signs have been identified that appear to be associated primarily with this settlement.

In her article, "About the Ritual Pots from Sanctuaries," Adela Kovács discusses the function of specific types of ceramics created for use in ceremonial contexts throughout the European Neolithic and Copper Age. She analyzes the signs on the Tărtăria tablets as expressions of ritual activity, and discusses the temples from Parţa, drawing from the research of Gheorghe Lazarovici, as examples *par excellence* of ritual sanctuaries. The temples of Parţa contained a wealth of symbolic imagery, monumental sculptures, and a full array of cult equipment which can also be recognized in other ceremonial contexts. Adela Kovács examines the presence of female anthropomorphic vessels and female sculptures in various styles, such as the Precucuteni statuettes from Isaiia – *Balta Popii*, and other ensembles. She also discusses other examples of the inventory and material traces found in Southeast European temples, and the great longevity of specific vessel types, such as *askos*, *pythos* and *rhyton* used in ritual activities from the Neolithic into the Bronze Age.

Neolithic and Copper Age societies throughout Southeast Europe produced a continual outpouring of ceremonial items demonstrating the persistent importance of ritual activities within sanctuaries as well as within domestic contexts. Two articles in this collection focus on material evidence of ritual activities. In "Vinčian Aspects Concerning the Spiritual Life from Macedonia," Sote Angeleski discusses models of sanctuaries, portable shrines, offering vessels, and female anthropomorphic house models used in ceremonies which he describes as most likely dedicated to the Great Mother, "Magna Mater." He examines stylistic and functional variations of these items as found in different culture centers. He also discusses examples of female "idols" of clay, carefully catalogued, categorized, and analyzed in terms of their specific attributes, such as their masks, neck, eyes, nose, arms, breasts, posteriors, and legs, in order to determine specific typologies of representation. He concludes that a dynamic spiritual life developed, not only in the territory of present day Macedonia, but in a much larger region, as well.

The first female archaeologist in Eastern Europe was a remarkable Hungarian researcher by the name of Zsófia von Torma. In her article, "Unveiling Zsófia Torma. The Diary of a Woman, an Archaeologist and a Visionary," Laura Coltofean presents an intimate picture of the life, personality, and achievements of this pioneering woman. Living during the second half of the nineteenth century when women had few opportunities to dedicate their lives to science, Zsófia Torma defied conventions and endured ongoing humiliations in order to pursue her archaeological research. It is because of her dedicated work that the artifacts from Turdaş, and other Transylvanian sites, were initially introduced to the archaeological world. By carefully analyzing Torma's unpublished diaries, Laura Coltofean introduces us to this phenomenal

woman who deserves to be remembered and respected for her life-long dedication to archaeology.

A prime example of the presence of Zsófia von Torma within European archaeology is provided in the paper by Nicolae Ursulescu, "Information from the English Archaeologist Francis John Haverfield Concerning the Turdaş Objects with Symbolic Signs." In 1891, Francis John Haverfield visited Transylvania and made a point to visit her in the little town of Orăştie in order to view her archaeological collection. This article is a fascinating glimpse into the development of Haverfield as a widely respected scholar, and his response to the Turdaş material following his meeting with Zsófia von Torma.

With this volume of papers we salute our friend and colleague Gheorghe Lazarovici and wish him many more years of dynamic contributions to the archaeology of Romania and the entire Balkan region.

To Professor Gheorghe Corneliu Lazarovici
ON THE OCCASION OF CELEBRATING 73 YEARS OF LIFE

SABIN ADRIAN LUCA

The Banat region has offered to the Romanian scientific research many spectacular personalities and scholars. Archaeology could not have been represented more in this extensively populated territory. And as Prehistory represents over 95% of human history, this domain of research has given a large variety of great researchers, past and present.

It is time to remember the one who gives us the opportunity to write these lines, Professor Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI. Between 1948 and 1955 he attended elementary school in Reşiţa, and 1955-1959 he took courses at the vocational school of the same city. High school was graduated in 1962 in Reşiţa, and in 1968 he completed his studies at the Faculty of History and Philosophy of "*Babeş-Bolyai*" *University* in Cluj-Napoca. In 1979 he earned a PhD in History, with a specialisation in Prehistory at the same university. Between 1971-1972 he obtained a Herder scholarship in Vienna, with a post-graduate specialisation (the Neolithic of South-East Europe and its connections with Anatolia) at *Institut Für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Wienn*, under the coordination of Professor Richard Pittioni.

Between 1993 and 1994, Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI was Associate Professor at "1 Decembrie" University in Alba Iulia; 1997-2010 Professor at "Eftimie Murgu" University in Reşiţa; and Associate Professor at "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu. Since 2002, Professor LAZAROVICI has been PhD scientific coordinator of the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu.

Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI occupied several positions during a career of more than fifty years. In 1960 he was lab and electrician at PRAM, UCM Reşiţa, and between 1962 and 1963, restorer of the Museum in Reşiţa. In September–October 1968 he worked at the Museum in Turda. From the same year he began a long and prestigious career at the Museum of National History of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, as archaeologist of the Prehistory section: 1968-1970, guide; 1970-1976, Curator; 1976-1985, Principal Curator; 1985-1990, Head of Prehistory Department; 1990-1992, Deputy Director; 1994-1997, General Director; 1997-2004, Head of the Prehistory Department; 2004 Associate Scholar. In parallel with his museum activities, he has fulfilled other responsibilities: 1992-2004, member of the National Archaeological Commission; 1993-1994, Scientific Secretary at the Romanian Institute of Thracology, Bucharest; 1992 to present, member of the Bureau of the European Commission of Neolithic, Bratislava; 1997, founding member of the Association of European Archaeologists, subsidiaries in the Balkans, Reşiţa–Cluj-Napoca; 1997-2004, Vice President of the National Commission for Museums and Collections of the Ministry of Culture. Other commitments include: 1992-1997, Senior Researcher II, Romanian Institute of Thracology, Bucharest; 1993-1994, Associate Professor at

"1 Decembrie 1918" University in Alba Iulia; 1997, Professor at "Eftimie Murgu" University, Reşiţa, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Studies, Department of Theology and History; 2002, PhD Scientific Coordinator of the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu.

Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI's scientific and pedagogical activities are nationally recognised by several prestigious awards. Firstly, we recall the awards of the Romanian Academy: 1995, "Nicolae Bălcescu" for the archaeological monograph *Gura Baciului*; and 2008, "Vasile Pârvan" for the volume C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România. I. Neoliticul*. The Romanian Presidency decorated Professor Lazarovici in 2004 with the *Order of Cultural Merit* (*Ordinul Meritul Cultural)*, officer grade H for scientific research; and in 2007 he was nominated as Honorary Citizen of the city of Timişoara for his contribution to the historical-archaeological research of the Banat Region.

Professor Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI's scientific activities are reflected by his participation in more than fifty international symposiums and congresses organised in Romania and abroad; the development of interdisciplinary researches (two national colloquiums on archaeometry in Cluj-Napoca, and other annual debates on ethno-religion in Caransebeş, continued at the Institute of Archaeology in Iaşi county; and several round tables on the topic of applying informatics studies in archaeology); organising and founding museums and exhibitions (1959-1964, the museum in Reşiţa; 1968, Gornea village museum; 1973, the Iclod school museum, then village museum, and in 1980 the museum of the archaeological excavations from Iclod; 1988, the museum in Miercurea Ciuc; 1994, Museum of Eastern Carpathians, Sfântu Gheorghe; 1999, Ţaga village museum and archaeological park; 2000, Museum of Banat Region, Reşiţa; 2001-2005, collaboration at the exhibition *Magie şi artă cucuteniană* organised in Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Alba Iulia, Caransebeş, Timişoara, Turnu Severin, Slatina, Bistriţa, Baia Mare, Gherla; and 2007, the exhibition *Scrierea Dunăreană – scrierea Turdaş: cea mai veche scriere neolitică din lume şi din Europa*, Cluj-Napoca). On the same note of optimism and labour strength are to be mentioned the systematic, preventive, and rescue excavations conducted by our Professor (1986-1989: Chinteni, Răscruci, Feiurdeni, Cojocna, Apahida, Cluj Deuş, Voivodeni, Vâlcele, Miceşti, Petreşti; 1988-1990: Gura Baciului, Livada, Gherla, Buneşti, Jichiş, Mintiu; 1966-1974, 1990-1992: expeditions to paleo-metalurgy sources, taking samples, analyses and processing; 2000: Vama Cluj, DN road Huedin – Cluj; 2002: Suplacu de Barcău; 2001-2010: Ruginoasa collaborator, continued as systematic digging in 2004; 2004: Ţaga, Valea Mileului, and the fortified system from the Archaeological Base; 2005: Ţaga-*Staţia de Gaz*; and 1992-1995, 2005–2013: Cheile Turzii–Peştera Ungurească. The systematic archaeological diggings are particularly numerous, so that we take the liberty to name only the most important ones, without mentioning the number of archaeological campaigns: Gornea, Ilidia, Zorlenţu Mare, Iclod, Bucovăţ, Parţa, Zăuan, Cluj-Napoca, Zău de Câmpie, Cheile Turzii and many, many others.

Archaeological reports presented to various symposiums: 1968 (Porţile de Fier, Băile Herculane, Ieşelniţa, Dubova); 1969 (Gornea, Ilidia); 1970 (Valea Timişului, Bădeni); 1971 (Gornea, Iclod, Bădeni); 1972 (Gornea, Iclod); 1973 (Balta Sărată, Gornea, Iclod, Zorlenţu Mare); 1974 (Balta Sărată, Gornea, Iclod, Zorlenţu Mare); 1975 (Balta Sărată, Bucovăţ, Gornea,

Iclod, Zorlenţu Mare); 1976 (Gornea, Iclod, Zorlenţu Mare, Dăbâca, Zalha); 1977 (Balta Sărată, Bucovăţ, Cuptoare, Gornea, Iclod, Moldova Veche, Zorlenţu Mare Caransebeş, Reşiţa); 1978 (Balta Sărată, Cuptoare, Gornea, Iclod, Moldova Veche, Parţa, Zorlenţu Mare, Cluj, Herculane, Moldova Nouă, Timişoara); 1979 (Oradea, Zalău, Balta Sărată, Gornea, Iclod, Zorlenţu Mare); 1980 (Cuptoare, Iclod, Bădeni, Gornea, Parţa, Valea Timişului, Zăuan); 1981 (Bădeni, Cluj, Iclod, Parţa, Silagiu); 1982 (Dăbâca, Gornea, Parţa, Iclod); 1983 (Parţa, Iclod, Caransebeş, Jupa, Podul Ilovei); 1984 (Parţa, ethno-archaeology: Banat Mountains); 1985 (Parţa, Cuptoare, Iclod, ethno-archaeology of the High regions of Banat and Transylvania); 1986 (Parţa, Iclod, Cuptoare, Tureni, Silagiu); 1987 (Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, ethno-archaeology of the High regions of Transylvania, Cheile Turenilor); 1988 (Gornea, Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, Cheile Turenilor); 1989 (Gornea, Iclod, Parţa, Petreştii de Jos); 1990 (Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, Cheile Turzii); 1991 (Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, Cheile Turzii, Tureni); 1992 (Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, Cheile Turzii, Tureni, project of industrial archaeology, analyses, archeometry project – programs and databases); 1993 (Gura Baciului, Parţa, Iclod, project-tumuli, archeometry project – programs and databases); 1994 (Gura Baciului, Iclod, Petreşti, ethno-archaeology project, archeometry project – programs and international databases); 1995 (Iclod, Taga); 1996 (Iclod, Taga); 1997 (Iclod, Ţaga, rescue excavations at Cluj, Fundătura, Iclod, Gherla, Buneşti, Jichiş, Dej, Cuzdrioara, Archaeometry project – Ţaga); 1998 (Balta Sărată, Iclod, Ţaga, Mintiu Gherlii; rescue excavations at Turda – Târgu Mureş, Cluj-Napoca-*Grădina Botanică*, Cluj-Napoca; National road Cluj – Zalău; Rădaia sector); 1999 (Balta Sărată, Mintiu Gherlii, Iclod, Ţaga, Păuleni, project on ethno-archaeology; Ţaga); 2000 (Balta Sărată, Iclod, Ţaga, Păuleni); 2001 (Balta Sărată, Iclod, Ţaga, Păuleni, Ruginoasa; 2002 (Balta Sărată, Iclod, Ţaga, Ruginoasa, Suplacu de Barcău); 2003 (Balta Sărată, Iclod, Taga, Ruginoasa, Suplac); 2004 (Balta Sărată, Cheile Turzii, Ţaga, Porţ, Anina, Ruginoasa, Olteni); 2005 (Balta Sărată, Olteni, Ţaga, Ruginoasa).

Professor Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI's editorial activities are as brilliant as his archaeological ones. He has published eighteen books and university courses (others are still in manuscript), he has collaborated in writing five catalogues and atlases, elaborated ninety-two syntheses, seventy analytic articles, eighty-five articles with new archaeological material, fifty research reports in manuscript, six micro-monographs, forty-four interdisciplinary articles, published the presentations from forty-eight international symposiums, etc. The result is the number of 377 papers that are published, to which we can add eighty reports, presentations and studies that are still unpublished, and a great number of press articles.

Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI is also a dedicated professor. If I, and other colleagues, owe our careers and knowledge to the PROFESSOR, many generations after us still owe to Professor Lazarovici their entire evolution. He has coordinated dozens of Bachelor's degrees, but, what is even more important is that he "created" thirteen other PhD specialists in History, others waiting at this moment to defend their theses. He has also been a scientific reviewer for several doctoral theses in Constanţa, Chişinău, Alba Iulia, Iaşi, Sibiu, and Cluj-Napoca.

His love for archaeology has determined him to coordinate even scientific pupil meetings, to create programs and movies on archaeological topics, to write university courses, and to coordinate archaeological expeditions in Romania and abroad.

Here, summarised in just a few pages, is a titanic activity, which transmits deep love for archaeology. The PROFESSOR was a self-teacher all his life; he has gathered stratigraphic observations, ethno-archaeological observations, bibliography, and knowledge, but what is even more important, he has gathered people. He has written, published or not, communicated, loved, and taught us things that for others are untouchable. He has truly believed in his "star"...the human knowledge. Now he knows so much that many of his fellow archaeologists cannot understand his capacities, and react – as expected in a place where culture is resumed by numbers, without consistency. The PROFESSOR cannot learn another way to work and seeks to understand, patiently, what is the place where the HUMANS want him to be. We want him near us; we desire to learn from him and with him, and to be together. This is what the man deserves who taught us an overwhelming and devouring science – ARCHAEOLOGY.

In other words? We wish to our PROFESSOR "Happy Birthday!" and to the ARCHAEOLOGIST Gheorghe Corneliu LAZAROVICI – an eternal life through his work.

SIBIU, 10TH OF AUGUST 2014 PROFESSOR SABIN ADRIAN LUCA

Photos of Gh. Lazarovici with Collaborators

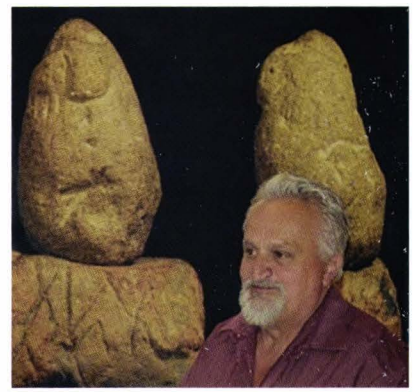
To the session. . .

Photographing at Parţa

Sibiu exhibition

Digging at Iclod

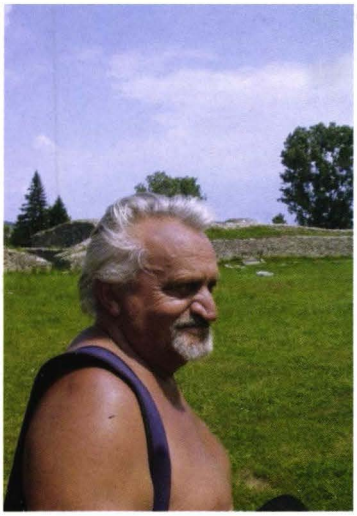
Caransebeş ethnoreligion session



Sibiu exhibition

Iclod exhibition

Iclod exhibition



At Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetuza

With Marco Merlini and Magda Lazarovici

With Carsten Mischka's team

With a young team at Ţaga

With Dorel Micle

With friends at Mircurea Sibiului

GHEORGHE LAZAROVICI - LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Books

1. Gh. Lazarovici, *Gornea-Preistorie*, Reşiţa, 1977, 124 p. 84 pl.
2. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul Banatului*, series Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis III, Cluj, 1979, 273 p., 50 fig., 10 tables,162 pl.
3. Gh. Lazarovici (in collaboration), *Cultura Vinča în România (Origine, evoluţie, legături, sinteze),* eds., Gh. Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, Timişoara, 1991, 250 p.
4. Gh. Lazarovici, *Grupul şi staţiunea Iclod. Die Gruppe und Station Iclod*, Cluj-Napoca, 1991, 42 p.
5. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxin, *Gura Baciului,* in series Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis (BMN), XI, 1995, 452 p, 38 pl., 55 fig.
6. D. Ţeicu, Gh. Lazarovici, Gornea. *Din arheologia unui sat medieval din Clisura Dunării,* in series Caiete Banatica, Reşiţa, 1996, 163 p., 26 pl.
7. Gh. Lazarovici, *Metode şi tehnici moderne de cercetare în arheologie*, Bucureşti, 1998 (WEB).
8. Gh. Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, Z. Maxim, *Parţa. Monografie arheologică*, vol. 1.1 341p.; vol. 1.2, 115 pl, 137 figuri; series Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica (BHAB) 12. Timişoara: Waldpress, 2001.
9. Gh. Lazarovici, D. Micle, *Introducere în arheologia informatizată*, series *BHAUT* III, 2001, 234 p.
10. Gh. Lazarovici et alii, *Cluj-Napoca inima Transilvaniei, coordonator. Voci Neoliticul timpuriu-eneolitic,* Cluj-Napoca 1998, p. 12-15.
11. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România.* I. *Neoliticul*, series Bibliotheca Archaeologica Moldaviae (BAM) IV, eds. V. Spinei, V. Mihailescu-Bîrliba. Iaşi: Trinitas, 2006, 738 p.
12. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România.* II. *Epoca cuprului*, BAM VI, eds. V. Spinei, V. Mihailescu-Bîrliba. Iaşi: Trinitas, 2007, 680 p.
13. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, *Cucuteni. A Great Civilization of the Prehistoric World*, ed. L. Stratulat. Iaşi: Palatul Culturii, 2009, 350 p.
14. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, *Tărtăria and the sacred tablets*, eds. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, J. Marler, M. Merlini, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Mega, 2011, 414 p.
15. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gheorghe Lazarovici, *Ruginoasa – Dealul Drăghici. Monografie arheologică,* series BAM, XX. Suceava: Karl A. Romstorfer, 2012, 415 p.

Contributor to Exhibition Catalogues, Atlases

16. *Atlasul Complex al Porţilor de Fier* (colab.), Bucuresti, 1972.
17. *Comori Arheologice la Porţile de Fier*, Bucureşti,1978, cat. 28 (coordinator for Romanian prehistory).
18. *The Iron Gate Exhibition*, Belgrade, 1979.
19. Chapter VII. *Les Carpates Meridionals et la Transylvanie.* Liège, 45 p., 10 pl. and mapes, in *Atlas du Néolithique européen, vol. I, L'Europe orientale,* eds. J. Kozlowski, P.-L. Van Berg, Etudes et Recherches Archéologiques de l'Université de Liège n. 45, Liège, 1993, p. 243-284.

Manuscript Books

20. Gh. Lazarovici, J. Nandris, Z. Maxim, *Etnoarheologia zonelor înalte*, rezultatele expediţiilor româno-engleze // Ethnoarcheology of uplands, results of the Romanian-English expeditions, ms., 300 p.
21. Gh. Lazarovici, B. Brukner, Fl. Draşovean *Neoliticul*, in *Preistoria Banatului,* ms., 5800 p.
22. Gh. Lazarovici et al. *Monografia săpăturilor de la Balta Sărată,* ms., 110 pl., 200 p.

Studies, Articles, Reviews

2014

1. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Unele elemente ale fortificaţiilor neolitice din vremea culturii Zau*, in Studii de arheologie. Studia in honorem Doina Ignat, Publishing house Muzeului Ţării Crişurilor, Oradea, 2014, p. 21-42.

2013

2. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Sacred house" and Their Importance for the Reconstruction of Architecture, Inner Furnishings and Spiritual Life*, in Prehistoric Studies I, Moments in Time, Papers Presented to Pál Raczky on His 60th Birthday, eds. Al. Andres, G. Kulcs with G. Kalla, V. Kiss and G. Szabó, Publishing house L'Harmattan, Budapest, 2013, p. 503-520.
3. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Etapa veche din atelierul de bijuterii de la Cheile Turzii - Peştera Ungurească*, in Arheoinvest I. Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie şi Istorie. In Memoriam Liviu Măruia, Universitatea de Vest, Timişoara 7 decembrie 2013, eds. A. Stavilă, D. Micle, A. Cîntar, C. Floca and S. Forţiu, JATEPress Kiadó, Szeged, 20013, p. 55-90.

2012

4. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, B. Constantinescu, *Despre analizele pieselor de aur din atelierul de bijuterii de la Cheile Turzii – Peştera Caprelor / Peştera Ungurească*, in Apulum, XLIX/1, 2012, p. 1-21.
5. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, C. Roman, S. Tincu, Gh. Netea, V. Palaghia, Fl. Chioar-Dumitrescu, B. Ciută, S. Colesniuc, S. Angeleski, B. Constantinescu, *Cheile Turzii – Peştera Ungurească, Raport de cercetare arheologică 2011*, in Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România (CCAR). Campania 2011, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2012, p. 98-99.
6. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, M. Ştirbu, A. Huşleag, L. Teodor, *Ruginoasa - Dealul Drăghici, Campania 2011*, in CCAR. Campania 2011, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2012, p. 117-118.
7. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, L. Şt. Solcanu, A. Huşleag, L. Teodor, *Scânteia, Dealul Bodeşti/La nuci, campania 2011*, in CCAR. Campania 2011, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2012, p. 127.

2011

8. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Altarele din munţi în preistorie,* in Studii de arheologie şi istorie. Omagiu Profesorului Nicolae Gudea la 70 de ani, ed. Călin Cosma, Publishing house Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 101-135.
9. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Despre fazele A1 ale grupelor Ariuşd şi Cucuteni*, in Angustia, XIV, Sfântu Gheorghe, 2011, p. 27-108.
10. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Architecture of the Early Neolithic in Transylvania*, in The first Neolithic Sites in the Central/South-east European Transect, volume II, Early Neolithic (Starčevo-Criş) Sites on the territory of Romania, eds. S. A. Luca C. Suciu, BAR, International Series 2188, Krakóv, 2011, p. 19-35.
11. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Some Salt Sources in Transylvania and their Connections with Archaeological Sites in the Area*, in Archaeology and Anthropology of Salt: A Diachronik

Approach, Proceeding of the International Colloqvium, 1-5 october 2008, Al. I. Cuza University (Iaşi, Romania), eds. M. Alexianu, O. Weller, R.-G. Curcă, BAR IS 2198, 2011, p. 89-110.

12. Gh. Lazarovici, I. C. Pop, C.-M. Lazarovici, S. Angeleski, *Megaliţi în Carpaţii Răsăriteni. Căi spre sanctuarele din natură şi urmele unor aşezări. Studiu de etno-arheologie şi etno-religie*, in Arheologia Moldovei, 34/2011, p. 53-76.
13. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, C. Suciu, F. Chioar-Dumitrescu, V. Palaghia, Gh. Netea, C. Roman, S. Tincu, S. M. Colesniuc, S. Angeleski, D. Bindea, B. Ciută, *Cheile Turzii - Peşera Ungurească. Campania 2010*, in CCAR. Campania 2010, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2011, p. 93-96.
14. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, M. Ştirbu, S. Tincu, R. Furnică, I. Leonti, A. Mîrzan, *Ruginoasa - Dealul Drăghici, Campania 2010*, in CCAR. Campania 2010, cIMeC, 2011, Sibiu, p. 111-114.
15. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Sesiunea "Temples and Sanctuaries from PPN to Copper Age. Type, Content and Functionality"*, in Arheologia Moldovei, 34/2011, p. 15-17.

2010

16. Gh. Lazarovici, *Evolution, absolute und relative chronology of the Zau culture*, in Studia Archaeologica et Mediaevalia, XI, MMX, Panta rei. Studies in chronology and cultural development of South-Eeastern and Central Europe in Earlier prehistory presented to Jourai Pavúk on the occasion of his 75 birthday, eds. J. Štukova, P. Pavúk, P. Klapkova, B. Kovár, Publishing house Comenius University in Bratislava and Archaeological center, Olomouc, Bratislava, 2010, p. 115-128.
17. Gh. Lazarovici, *Religious Place. The Sanctuaryes from Parţa. Banat Musseum of Timişoara with the cooperation of Euro Inova Net srl,* in Routes ant Itineraries from Virtual Museum of the European Routs. Web F-MU.S.EU.M.
18. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Neo-eneolithic cult constructions in Southeastern Europe,* in Neolithic and Chalcolithic Archaeology in Eurasia: Building Techniques and Spatial Organisation. A brief overview, ed. D. Gheorghiu, XVth Congress UISPP, Lisbone, 4-9 September 2006, BAR IS, 2097, I, Archaeopress, 2010, p. 117-125.
19. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Some Problems Regarding the „Sacred House",* in *Annals of the Tiberiu Popoviciu Seminar of Functional Equations, Aproximation and Convexity,* eds. L. Lupşa, R. Precup, vol. 8, 2010, p. 145-154.
20. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Session B35. Temples and Sanctuaries from PPN to Copper Age. Type, Content and Functionality*, in Abstracts. 16-th Annual Meeting. The European Association of Archaeologists. 1st - 5th September 2010, The Hague-The Netherlands, 2010, p. 158.
21. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *„Casa sacră" şi importanţa ei pentru reconstituirea arhitecturii, amenajarea interiorului şi vieţii spirituale*, in Memoria Antiquitatis, XXV-XXVI (2008-2009), Piatra-Neamţ, 2010, p. 89-111.
22. D. Micle, L. Măruia, M. Török-Oance, Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, A. Cîntar, *Archaeological geomorphometry and geomorphography. Case study on Cucutenian sites from Ruginoasa and Scânteia, Iaşi County, Romania*, in Annales d'Université Valahia Târgovişte, Section d'Archéologie et d'Histoire, Tome XII, Numéro 2, Târgovişte, 2010, p. 23-37.

2009

23. Gh. Lazarovici, *The Zau Culture,* in Ten years after: The Neolithic of south-east of Balkans, as uncovered by the last decade of Research. Proceedings of the Conference held at the Museum of Banat on November 9th – 10th, eds. Fl. Draşovean, D. L. Ciobotaru and M. Maddison, Publishing house Marineasa, Timişoara, 2009, p. 179-217.

24. Gh. Lazarovici, *Ritualuri de fundare/întemeiere şi abandonare în neolitic,* in In media res praehistoria. Miscellanea in honorem anos LXV per agentis profesoris Dan Monah oblata, series *Honoraria,* VII, ed. George Bodi, Publishing house Universitatea Al. I. Cuza, Iaşi, 2009, p. 245-293.

25. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *The architecture of temples/sanctuaries in Banat and Transylvania during Neolithic and Copper Age periods*, in „Arheologia spiritualităţii preistorice în ţinuturile carpato-ponto-danubiene", Fundaţia „Rădăcinile Europei", Publishing house Arhiepiscopia Tomisului, Constanţa, 2009, p. 65-76.

26. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Cheile Turzii - Peştera ungurească/Peştera caprelor: orizontul toarte pastilate - Bodrogkeresztúr. Campaniile 2003-2004*, in Itinera in Praehistoria. Studia in Honorem Magistri Nicolae Ursulescu quinto et sexagesimo anno, eds. V. Cotiugă, F. A. Tencariu et G. Bodi, Publishing house Univ. "Al. I. Cuza", Iaşi, 2009, p. 211-226.

27. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *„Nicolae Vlassa",* in The Danube script in the light of Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries.Exhibition catalogue, eds. Z. Maxim, J. Marler, V. Crişan, Publishing house Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 3-19.

28. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *The Chronological and Cultural Place of the Vinča and Turdaş Cultures in the Context of European Civilizations*, in The Danube script in the light of Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries. Exhibition catalogue, eds. Z. Maxim, J. Marler, V. Crişan, Publishing house Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 93-108.

29. Z. Maxim, Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, *Catalogue of signs*, in The Danube script in the light of Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries. Exhibition catalogue, eds. Z. Maxim, J. Marler, V. Crişan, Publishing house Mega Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 132-210.

30. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Despre unele reprezentări antropomorfe masculine din cultura Cucuteni*, in Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, XXX, Vaslui, 2009, vol. 1, p. 37-47.

31. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, M. Ştirbu, L. Scarlat, S. Angeleski, A. Vornicu, *Ruginoasa, com. Ruginoasa, Jud. Iaşi, Punct Dealul Drăghici*, in CCAR. Campania 2008, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2009, p. 188-189.

32. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, M. Geba, A. Huşleag, M. Ştirbu, L. Ellis, A. Vornicu, *Scânteia, com. Scânteia, jud. Iaşi. Punct: Dealul Bodeşti/La nuci,* in CCAR. Campania 2008, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2009, p. 193-194.

2008

33. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Fragmentarea rituală a idolilor şi obiectelor de cult în Neolitic şi Epoca cuprului,* in Acta Mvsei Tutovensis, III, Bârlad, 2008, p. 7-15.

34. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *The workshop for gold at Cheile Turzii - Peştera ungurească/Peştera caprelor. Archaeological excavations 2003-2004*, in Annals of the Tiberiu Popovici Seminar of Functional Equations, Approximation and Convexity, vol. 6, 2008, Publishing house Mediamira Science Publisher, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 153-158.

35. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Santuari della civiltà di Precucuteni-Cucuteni*, in Cucuteni. Tesori di una civiltà preistorica dei Carpazi. atti del Convegno italo-romeno, Roma, 18 ottobre 2007 (a cura di N. Ursulescu, R. Kogălniceanu, C. Creţu), Accademia di Romania in Roma & Publishing house Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza" Iaşi, 2008, p. 107-148.

36. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *A Copper Age Workshop for Gold at Cheile Turzii – Peştera Ungurească, Transylvania*, in Circumpontica in Prehistory: Western Eurasian Studies. Global Gratitude to Eugen Comşa for his 85th Birth Anniversary, published by John Hedges; Compiled and edited by L. Nikolova, J. Marler, M. Merlini and Al Comşa, BAR IS, Archaeopress, Oxford, 2008, p. 197-210.

2007

37. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Despre construcţii neo-eneolitice de cult din sud-estul Europei: tehnici de construire, organizare spaţială, scurte interpretări. Partea I-a*, in Dimensiunea europeană a civilizaţiei eneolitice est carpatice, ed. N. Ursulescu, Publishing house Univ. Al. I. Cuza, Iaşi, 2007, p. 63-103.

38. Gh. Lazarovici, D. Ciobotaru, M. Merlini, P. Ucelli Gnesutta, Z. Maxim, C.-M. Lazarovici, D. Micle, S. Petrescu, D. Negrei, Cr. Roman, A. Mateş, M. Ardelean, *Şantierul arheologic Parţa 2006*, in CCAR. Campania 2006, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2007, www.cimec.ro

39. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, E. Gilot, Z. Maxim, *Date radiocarbon pentru cultura Banatului*, in Studia in honorem Dr. Florea Costea, series ***Bibliotheca Cumidavae***, Muzeul de istorie Braşov, 2007, eds. R. Ştefănescu, I. Bauman, L. Savu, p. 20-31.

40. Z. Maxim, V. Crişan, Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *„Scrierea Turdaş" cea mai veche scriere neolitică din lume ?,* in Lucrările Seminarului „Tiberiu Popoviciu" de Ecuaţii Funcţionale, Aproximare şi Convexitate, 26 septembrie – 29 septembrie 2007, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 75-79.

2006

41. Gh. Lazarovici, The Anzabegovo - Gura Baciului Axis and The first stage of the Neolithisation Process in Southern - Central Europe and the Balkans, in Homage to Milutin Garašanin, Belgrade, eds. N. Tasić, C. Grazdanov, Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, Macedonian Academy of Science and Arts, Belgrade, 2006, SASA, Special Editions, p. 111-158.

42. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *A Home Altar at Gura Baciului*, in Analele Banatului, S.N. Arheologie-Istorie, XIV, 1, Timişoara, 2006, p. 103-111.

43. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Un altar casnic la Gura Baciului*, in Lucrările Seminarului Tiberiu Popoviciu de ecuaţii funcţionale, aproximare şi convexitate. Omagiu academicianului Tiberiu Popoviciu la centenarul naşterii sale 1906-2006, Cluj-Napoca 25-29 octombrie 2006, Cercetări interdisciplinare, 2006, p. 111-115.

44. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Neo-eneolithic constructions from South Eastern Europe: Techniques of building and spatial organization,* in XVth Congress UISPP, Lisbone 4-9 septembrie 2006, vol. I, p. 233.

45. Gh. Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, M. Merlini, Z. Maxim, C.-M. Lazarovici, V. Cedică, S. Petrescu, D. Negrei, S. Ioan, D. Gurgu, Cr. Roman, D. Diaconescu, S. Angeleski, O. Chitic, A. Tatar, T. Daroczy, Z. Dobos, A. Fota, D. Bindea, L. Bojin, F. Burlacu, *Şantierul arheologic Parţa. Casa Cerbului. 1- 15 iulie 2005*, in CCAR. Campania 2005, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 252-255.

46. Gh. Lazarovici, P. Biagi, M. Spataro, C.-M. Lazarovici, S. Colesniuc, C. Suciu, C. Roman, O. Chitic, S. Angeleski, A. Tatar, *Petreştii de Jos, com. Petreşti, jud. Cluj. Punct Cheile Turzii. Campania 2004,* in CCAR. Campania 2005, cIMeC, 2006. www.cimec.ro

47. Gh. Lazarovici, I. C. Băltean, E. Trinkaus, A. Cincă, J. Zilhão, S. Petrescu, O. Moldovan, R. Rodrigo, H. Rougier, F. Pendea, S. Constantin, J. Quiles, A. Soficaru, C. Petrea, Şt. Milota, M. Gherase, L. Sarcina, Vl. Codrea, *Steierdorf, oraş Anina, jud. Caraş Severin, Punct: Peştera Hoţilor (La Hoţu'),* in CCAR. Campania 2005, cIMeC, 2006. www.cimec.ro

48. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, L. Scarlat, S. Angeleski, M. Ştirbu, S. Ţurcanu, *Şantierul arheologic Ruginoasa „Dealul Drăghici". Campania 2005*, in CCAR. Campania 2005, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 304-308.

2005

49. Gh. Lazarovici, *Culturile Precriş I, Precriş II şi Postcriş I, post Criş II,* in Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, IV, Sibiu, 2005, p. 23-78.

50. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Contribuţii privind arhitectura eneoliticului din Banat, Crişana şi Transilvania*, in In honorem Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu, Muzeul Dunării de Jos, seria Cultură şi civilizaţie la Dunărea de Jos, XXII, Călăraşi, 2005, p. 399-420.

51. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, *New archaeological data refering to Tărtăria tablets*, in Documenta Praehistorica, XXXII, (Papers of the International Neolithic Seminar-Symbols and Symbolism, 5-10 noiembrie 2004), Ljubljana, 2005, p. 205-219.

52. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, P. Biagi, M. Spataro, *Petreştii de Jos, com. Petreşti, jud. Cluj. Punct Cheile Turzii*, in CCAR. Campania 2004, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2005, p. 259-261.

53. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, E. Gilot, Z. Maxim, *Absolute Chronology of the Banat Culture*, in Scripta praehistorica. Miscellanea in honorem nonagenarii magistri Mircea Petrescu-Dîmboviţa oblata, Eididerunt V. Spinei, C.-M. Lazarovici et D. Monah, Romanian Academy, Institute of Archaeology of Iaşi, Publishing house Trinitas, Iaşi, 2005, p. 179-191.

54. Gh. Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, V. Cedică, A. Fota, M. Merlini, S. Angeleski, P. Ucelli, Z. Maxim, D. Bindea. C.-M. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, D. Negrei, S. Ioan, D. Gurgu, C. Roman, D. Diaconescu, O. Chitic, T. Arpad, T. Daroczy, D. Zenobia, L. Bojincu, F. Burlacu, *Parţa*, in *CCAR. Campania 2004,* cIMeC, 2005. www.cimec.ro

55. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, Z. Maxim, C.-M. Lazarovici, P. Ucelli, S. Petrescu, S. Ioan, D. Negrei, D. Gurgu, C. Roman, D. Diaconescu, S. Angeleski, O. Chitic, *Şantierul arheologic Parţa. Casa Cerbului. 1-15 iulie 2005*, in Patrimonium Banaticum, IV, p. 27 – 72.

56. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, *Ruginoasa „Dealul Drăghici"*, in CCAR. Campania 2004, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2005, p. 316-318, 463.

2004

57. Gh. Lazarovici, *Simboluri sacre pe obiectele de cult. Semnificaţii,* in Festschrift fürFlorin Medeleţ zum 60.Geburstag, Timişoara, 2004, p. 17-59.

58. Gh. Lazarovici, *Database for spiritual life, signs and symbols*, paper for International Symposium on the Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe, May-June 2004, Novi Sad, SAN – Novi Sad and Institute of Archaeomythology.

59. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *Noi săpături arheologice la Ruginoasa - Dealul Drăghici. Partea I: Arhitectura,* in Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, III, Univ. L. Blaga, Sibiu, 2004, p. 9-42.

60. Gh. Lazarovici, P. Biagi, M. Spataru, C.-M. Lazarovici, S. Colesniuc, P. Vrâncean, *Petreştii de Jos, com. Petreşti, jud. Cluj. Punct Cheile Turzii,* in CCAR. Campania 2003, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 228-231.

61. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter, P. Vrâncean, *Ţaga, com. Ţaga, jud. Cluj. Punct:Baza arheologică,* in *CCAR. Campania 2003*, cIMeC, 2004. www.cimec.ro

62. Gh. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, D. Ţârdoiu, D. Negrei, S. Ioan, *Balta Sărată*, in *CCAR. Campania 2003*, cIMeC, 2004. www.cimec.ro

2003

63. Gh. Lazarovici, *Significations Regarding the Sacral „Writing" on the Cult Objects from the Carpathian-Balkan area,* in *Early Symbolic System for Communication in Southeast Europe*, ed. L. Nikolova, BAR International Series 1139, Oxford, 2003, Vol. I, p. 57-64.

64. Gh. Lazarovici, *Pâinea, grâul şi râşnitul sacru în Neolithic,* in Tibiscum, XI, 2003, p. 65-86.

65. Gh. Lazarovici, *New archaeological research about Cucuteni – Ariuşd Culture, Transylvania,* in Tripolian Settlements-Gigants, The International Symposium, eds. O. G. Korvin-Piotrovskij, V. O. Kruc, S. M. Rižov, Kiiv, 2003, p. 217-231.

66. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *The Neo-Eneolithic Architecture in Banat, Transylvania and Moldavia*, in Recent research in the Prehistory of the Balkans, ed. V. Grammenos, Published by the Archaeological Institute of the Northern Greece and the Archaeological Receipts Fund, 3, Thessaloniki, 2003, p. 369 – 486.

67. Gh. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, *Caransebeş, jud. Caraş Severin. Punct. cartier Balta Sărată,* in CCAR. Campania 2002, cIMeC, 2003, p. 74-76.

68. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, M. Frenţiu, *Statistical Analysis of the material (Cucuteni A3 phase) from Ruginoasa settlement, Iaşi district*, in Annals of the Tiberiu Popovici Seminar of Functional Equations, Approximation and Convexity, vol. 1, 2003, Cluj-Napoca, p. 169-186.

69. Gh. Lazarovici, S. M. Petrescu, D. Negrei, S. Ion, D. Gurgu, *Balta Sărată 1999-2003. I. Arhitectura*, in Tibiscum, XI, 2003, p. 143-198.

70. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter, P. Vrâncean, *Ţaga, com. Ţaga, jud. Cluj. Punct: Baza arheologică,* in CCAR. Campania 2002, cIMeC, 2003. www.cimec.ro

71. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Băltean, P. Biagi, M. Spataro, C.-M. Lazarovici, S. Colesniuc, P. Vrâncean, *Petreştii de Jos, com. Petreştii de Jos, jud. Cluj. Punct: Cheile Turzii*, in CCAR. Campania 2002, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2003. www.cimec.ro

72. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Ţurcanu, *Ruginoasa, "Dealul Drăghici",* in CCAR. Campania 2002, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2003, p. 263-265, 452.

73. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, *The New Archaeological Research at Ruginoasa - Dealul Drăgici. Part I, Architecture",* in Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, IX, Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza" Iaşi, 2003, p. 41-74.

2002

74. Gh. Lazarovici, *Pâinea, grâul şi râsnitul sacru în neolitic*, in Lucrările Seminarului Tiberiu Popoviciu, 22-26 mai 2002, Facultatea de Matematică şi informatică, Academia Româna, Secţia de Ştiinte Matematice, Laboratorul de Cercetări I, Publishing house Univ. Babeş-Bolyai, 2002, p. 151-154.

75. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cassiopeea - From Neolithic Symbols to Astronomical Mythology*, in Ancient times, Moderne Methods. Proceedings of the Third Seac Conference Sibiu, Romania, August 31 - September 2, 1995, ed. Fl. Stanescu, Alba Iulia, 2002, p. 173-180.

76. Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, *Consideraţii privind arhitectura neolitică timpurie*, in Patrimonium Banaticum, I, Timişoara, 2002, p. 9-38.

77. Gh. Lazarovici, L. Ghergari, C. Ionescu, *Artefacte ceramice din neoliticul mijlociu în Transilvania: cultura CCTLNI din staţiunea Zau (jud. Mureş)*, in Angustia, 7, 2002, p. 7-17.

78. Gh. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, *Săpături arheologice la Balta Sărată. Campania din 2001,*cIMeC, 2002 p. 48-49.

79. Gh. Lazarovici, V. Cavruc, S. A. Luca, D. Buzea, C. Suciu, *Descoperirile eneolitice de la Păuleni. Campania 2001,* in Angustia, 7, 2002, p. 19-40.

80. C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh. Lazarovici, C. Hriban, C. Ungureanu, *Şantierul arheologic Ruginoasa "Dealul Drăghici". Săpături de salvare*, in CCAR. Campania 2001, cIMeC, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 272-273.

2001

81. Gh. Lazarovici, *Vinča –Lengyel and Transilvania,* in ActaMN, 37.1, 2001, p. 7-20.

82. Gh. Lazarovici, *Despre locul descoperirilor de la Şeuşa în neoliticul timpuriu din sud-estul Europei*, in Studia Archaeologica et Historica Nicolao Gudea Dicata /Omagiu Profesorului Nicolae Gudea la 60 de ani, Zalău, 2001, p. 37-47.

83. Gh. Lazarovici, *The eagle – the bird of death, regeneration resurrection and messenger of Gods. Archaeological and ethnological problems,* in Tibiscum, X, 2001, p. 57-68.

84. Gh. Lazarovici, *The eye – symbol, gesture, expression,* in Tibiscum, X, 2001, p. 115-128.

85. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Meşter, Z. Maxim, indice *Ţaga*, in *CCAR. Campania 2000*, cIMeC, 2001.

2000

86. Gh. Lazarovici, *Links between the Early Neolithic from Romania and Bulgaria,*in Karanovo III, Beiträge zum Neolithikum in Südosteuropa, Wien, Phoibos Verlag, 2000, p. 273-286.

87. Gh. Lazarovici, *Vinča şi Lengyel,* in Seminarul itinerant "Tiberiu Popoviciu" Cluj-Napoca, 23-28 mai, 2000, p. 95-97.

88. Gh. Lazarovici, S. A. Luca, D. Buzea, C. Suciu, *Descoperirile eneolitice de la Păuleni*, in Angustia, 5, Arheologie, 2001, p. 103-130.

89. Gh. Lazarovici, The *main Problems of the Cultural Complex CCTLNI,* in Analele Banatului, S.N., VII-VIII (1999-2000), p. 35-52.

91. Gh. Lazarovici, C. Suciu, *Muzeul virtual cu expoziţia Sanctuarul de la Parţa.* WEB page, 2000.

92. Gh. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, *Balta Sărată,* in Cronica cercetărilor arheologice. Campania din 1999, cIMeC, 2000, p. 48-49.

93. A. Olariu, C. Beşliu, C. Belc, I. V. Popescu, T. Badică, Gh. Lazarovici, *Compositional studies of ancient cooper from Romania territories,* in Journal RadNuclChem, 243, 2000, p. 599-605.

94. M. Gumă, Gh. Lazarovici, S. Petrescu, C. Săcărin, C. Bădescu, A. Lazarovici, *Despre Grupul Balta Sărată. Note analitice,* in Tibiscum, X, 2000, p. 193-212.

1999

95. L. Ghergari, Gh. Lazarovici, C. Ionescu, T. Tămaş, *Studii geoarheologice asupra unor artefacte ceramice din neoliticul timpuriu din România. Staţiunea de la Lunca – Poiana Slatinii, jud. Neamţ,* in Angustia, 4, 1999, p. 1-7.

1998

96. Gh. Lazarovici, *Plastica Monumentală de la Parţa*, in Analele Banatului, VI.1, 1998, p. 83-92.

97. Gh. Lazarovici, *Monumentale Plastik in Parţa,* in ActaMN, 35, 1, 1998, p. 9-15.

98. Gh. Lazarovici, *About the Migration in the late phase of the Early Bonze Age,* Göteborg, 1998.

99. Gh. Lazarovici, *About the neolithisation process of the second migration of the Early Neolithic,* in The Late Neolithic of the Middle Danube Region, International Symposium on the problems of the transition from the Middle to Late Neolithic in the Midle Danube Region, June 1997, Timişoara, Romania, ed. FI. Draşovean, Publishing house Eurobit, Timişoara, 1998, p. 7-37.

100. Gh. Lazarovici, *Despre bronzul timpuriu din Banat şi Transilvania.,* in Angustia, 3, 1988, Sf. Gheorghe, p. 22.

1997

101. Gh. Lazarovici, A. Alicu, *Rezultatele măsurătorilor arheometrice din staţiunea neolitică de la Zau de Câmpie,* in Simpozionul de arheometrie, Iclod, 1977.

102. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter, D. Bindea, T. Piciu, S. Radu, M. Bodea, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania din 1996,* in *ActaMN,* 34.1, 1997, p. 637-667.

103. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Meşter, S. Radu, Z. Maxim, *Şantierul arheologic Ţaga. Campania din 1996,* in *ActaMN,* 34.1, 1997, p. 691-702.

104. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter, S. Radu, *Şantierul arheologic Olteni,* in *ActaMN,* 34.1, 1997, p. 669-687.

1996

105. Gh. Lazarovici, *The Process of the Neolithisation and the Development of the first Neolithic Civilizations in the Balkans,* in The Neolithic in the Near East and Europe, Colloqvium XVII, 9, XIII ICPPS, Forli, Italia, 4-14, september, 1996, Publishin house Abaco, p. 21-38.

106. Gh. Lazarovici, Din istoria străveche a Carpaţilor Răsăriteni, in Angustia, I, 1996, p. 27-49.

107. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Marton Roska's Excavation from Turdaş and their Results,* in The Vinča Culture, Timişoara, 1996, p. 223-267.

108. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter A. Bulbuc, S. Radu, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania din 1995,* in *ActaMN,* 33.1, 1996, p. 269-299, + 4 pl.

109. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, M. Meşter, A. Bulbuc, S. Radu, V. Crişan, *Şantierul arheologic Fundătura-Poderei,* in ActaMN, 33.1, 1996, p.301-321.

110. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Wiettenberger, M. Meşter, S. Radu, I. Ilieş, M. Bodea, *Şantierul arheologic Ţaga,* in ActaMN, 33.1, 1996, p. 323-352.

111. L. Tarcea, Gh. Lazarovici, *Zeus: Sistem pentru gestiunea şi prelucrarea datelor arheologice,* in ActaMN, 33, 1, 1996, p. 683-689.

112. Gh. Topan, Gh. Lazarovici, A. Balint, *Despre analizele metalografice ale unor topoare de aramă şi cupru arsenic,* in ActaMN, 33, 1, 1996, p. 646, 4 pl.

113. N. Vlassa, Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Rivenimenti arheologicii a Bernadea, în Omaggio a Dinu Adameşteanu,* in BEN, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, p. 61-76.

114. M. Ciortea, Gh. Lazarovici, *Corelaţii între metalurgia din Transilvania şi Anatolia. Prelucrări din baze de date cantitative,* in ActaMN, 33,1, 1996, p. 647-664.

115. I. Lăcătuşu, Gh. Lazarovici, *Cuvânt la început de drum,* in *Angustia,* 1, 1996, p. 3-7.

1995

116. Gh. Lazarovici, *Über das Frühneolithikum im Sud-Osten Europas (I. Rumänien),* in *Kulturraum Mittlere und Untere Donau: Traditionen und Perspektiven des Zusammenlebens = Spaţiul cultural al Dunării Mijlocii şi inferioare: tradiţii şi perspective ale convieţuirii,* Reşiţa, 1995, p. 33-55.

117. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cuvânt înainte,* in Metalurgia neferoaselor în Transilvania preistorică. Expoziţie. Catalog, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, p. 5-6.

118. Gh. Lazarovici, C. Beşliu,*Über die Vorgheschichtliche Kupfer- analysen aus Transylvanien,* in Ancient Mining and Metallurgy in Southeast Europe, Bor – Belgrade 1995, p. 111-142.

119. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania din 1994,* in ActaMN, 32/1, 1995, p. 507- 535.

120. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Parţa und die Arhitektur der Banater - Kultur,* Settlements Patterns between the Alps and the Black Sea 5th to 2nd Millenium B. C. Atti del Simposio internazionale, Modelli Insediativi tra Alpi e Mar Nero dal 5° al 2° millennio A.C. Verona Lazise 1992, ed. A. Aspes, Memorie del Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Verona (II –a serie), Sezione Scienze dell'uomo- no. 4, 1995, p. 55-66.

121. Gh. Lazarovici, M Meşter, *Săpături şi prospectări în necropolele tumulare din zona Cheilor Turzii, 1992-1994,* in *Cercetări arheologice în aria nord - thracă,* Bucureşti, 1995, p. 86-105.

122. Gh. Lazarovici, Fl. Draşovean, Z. Maxim, *Săpăturile arheologice de la Parţa. Campania din 1990,* in Analele Banatului, IV.1, 1995, p. 3-44.

123. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Meşter, L. Dascălu, *Cheile Turzii 1994. Raport de cercetare arheologică şi etnoarheologică,* in ActaMN, 32/1, 1995, p. 537-574.

124. Gh. Lazarovici, D. Pop, C. Beşliu, A. Olariu, *Conclusions to the Geochemical Analyses of Some Copper Sources and Objects,* in ActaMN, 32/1, 1995, p. 209-230.

125. Z. Maxim, Gh. Lazarovici, *Base des donnèes internationale pour la culture Starčevo – Criş,* in ActaMN, 32.1, 1995, p. 67-82.

1994

126. Gh. Lazarovici, *Ceramica pictată de la Gura Baciului. Prelucrări matematice şi informatice,* in Al treilea simpozion Ştiinţă şi viaţă, Cluj-Napoca, 1994, p. 7-12.

127. Gh. Lazarovici, *Der Vinča C - Schock im Banat,* in Relations Thrako - Illyro - Helléniques, Bucureşti, 1994, p. 62-100.

128. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Schnurkeramik in der Tureni – Klamm,* in Beiträge zur Problematik der Schnurverzierten Keramik Südosteuropas, III, eds. P. I. Roman, Ann Dodd-Opriţescu – Pal Janos, HAW IIKEVB, III, Ed. Harald Hauptmann, Mainz, 1994, p. 189-199.

129. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul timpuriu în România,* in ActaMP, 8, 1994, p. 49-104.

130. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Necropolele tumulare din Transilvania şi Banat,* in ActaMN, 31/1, 1994, p. 11-35.

131. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania din 1993,* in ActaMN, 31/1, 1994, p. 325-339.

132. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Székély, *Sfârşitul neoliticului timpuriu în sud-estul Transilvaniei,* în *Cumidava,* 15-19, 1994, p. 5-21.

133. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, P. Gyulai, *Descoperiri arheologice în comuna Săvădisla (jud. Cluj) şi câteva probleme privind epocile neolitică şi bronzului,* in *ActaMN,* 26-30/1, 1993, p. 171-186.

134. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, Fl. Draşovean, *Complexul neolitic de la Parţa, III,* in Analele Banatului, Arheologie-Istorie, III, 1994, p. 106-134.

1993

135. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea neolitică de la Zauan II. Migraţie şi difuziune. Chalcoliticul balcano-anatolian. Propuneri pentru un sistem de analiză procesuală,* in ActaMP, 17, 1993, p. 11-47.

136. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar/Maxim, *Săpăturile arheologice de la Iclod (Campania 1988),* in Apulum, XXVII-XXX, 1993, p. 23-57.

137. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, *Parţa. Despre arhitectura culturii Banatului,* in Tibiscum, 8, 1993, p. 41-62.

138. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Dragomir, *O nouă sculptură neolitică descoperită în Clisură,* in Banatica, 12/1, 1993, p. 9-19.

139. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, D. Ţeicu, A. Oprinescu, *Şantierul arheologic Gornea,* in Banatica, 12/1, 1993, p. 295-319.

140. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, V. Crişan, J. Pall, *Ceramica pictată de la Ciucsângiorgiu (jud. Harghita),* in *ActaMN,* 26-30/1 (1989-1993), p. 221-228.

141. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, R. Pintea, *Cercetări arheologice la Livada,* in ActaMN, 26-30/2, 1989-1993, p. 317-331.

142. Gh. Lazarovici, T. Facko, *Un procedeu tehnologic de arderea ceramicii întâlnit din preistorie până în zilele noastre - un studiu etnoarheologic,* in ActaMN, 26-30/1 (1989-1993), p. 553-556.

143. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, V. Crişan, J. Pall, *Ceramica pictată de la Ciucsângiorzu (jud. Harghita),* in *ActaMN,* 26-30, I.1, (1989-1993), p. 221-224.

144. M. Frenţiu - Gh. Lazarovici, *Serierea şi cronologia unor complexe arheologice de la Gornea,* in Arheologia Moldovei, 16, 1993, p. 1-12.

1992

145. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea neolitică timpurie de la Zăuan şi câteva probleme privind neoliticul timpuriu din Balcani,* in ActaMP, 16, 1992, p. 25-59.

146. Gh. Lazarovici, *O piesă de cupru din Sălaj şi câteva probleme teoretice privind analizele de cupru preistoric în Muzeul din Cluj,* in ActaMP, XVI, 1992, p. 97-128.

1991

147. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea şi grupul Bucovăţ*, Timişoara, 1991.

148. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea vinciană de la Gornea*, Reşiţa, 1991, p. 1-12.

149. Gh. Lazarovici, *Variantele şi grupele culturii Vinča şi ale fenomenului vincian,* in Cultura Vinča în România, Timişoara, 1991, p. 17-18.

150. Gh. Lazarovici, *Grupul şi staţiunea Iclod. Die Gruppe und Station Iclod*, Cluj-Napoca 1991, p. 1-16, 17-42.

151. Gh. Lazarovici, *Vinča veche în Banat,* in Cultura Vinča in România, Timişoara, 1991, p. 19-22.

152. Gh. Lazarovici, *Săpăturile neolitice de la Zorlenţu Mare*, Reşita, 1991, p. 1-17.

153. Gh. Lazarovici, T. Piciu, *Analizele pedologice de la Gura Baciului,* in Arheometrie, 4, Cluj, 1991.

154. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Tărtăria, Cluj-Napoca*, 1991, p. 1-28.

155. Gh. Lazarovici, FL. Draşovean, L. Tulbure, *Sanctuarul neolitic de la Parţa*, Timişoara, 1991, p. 1-21.

156. Gh. Lazarovici, M. Nica, *Chalcoliticul Balcano - Antolian,* in Cultura Vinča în România, Timişoara, 1991, p. 5-17.

157. S. A. Luca, Gh. Lazarovici, *Caransebeş - Ţiglărie,* in Cultura Vinča în România, Timişoara, 1991, p. 31.

158. D. Rus, Gh. Lazarovici, *On the Developed Neolithic Architecture în Banat,* in Banatica, 11, 1991, p. 87-118.

1990

159. Gh. Lazarovici, *Über das neo- bis aneolithisch Befestigungen aus Rumänien,* in *JahrMittDeutsch Vorgeschichte*, 73, 1990, S. 93-117.

160. Gh. Lazarovici, *Venus de Zăuan. Despre credinţele şi practicile magico-religioase. Partea a II-a*, in ActaMP, XIV-XV (1990-1991), p. 11-35.

161. Gh. Lazarovici, *Migration et difuzion dans les cultures du Banat et de l'Alföld,* in *Rubané et Cardial*, eds. D. Cahen, M. Otte, ERAUL 39, Liège, 1990, p. 21-37.

162. Gh. Lazarovici, O. Sfetcu, *Aşezarea de la Buziaş - Silagiu,* in Banatica, X, 1990, p. 45-57.

163. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod,* in Apulum, 27, 1990.

164. Gh. Lazarovici, T. Piciu, *Preliminary pedological analyses at some archaeological stations in the provinces of Transylvania and Banat*, in Archaeometry in Romania, 2, Bucharest, 1990, p. 161-180.

165. N. D. Dragomir, Gh. Lazarovici, I. Târnovan, *Resistivity measuremants at Tureni tumulus*, in Archaeometry in Romania, 2, Bucharest, 1990, p. 127-130.

166. D. Dumitrescu, Gh. Lazarovici, *Fuzzy Divisive Clustering in Archaeology,* in Archaeometry in Romania, 2, Bucureşti, 1990, p. 87-91.

167. M. Frenţiu, Gh. Lazarovici, *Seriation and relative chronology of archaeological complexes from Gornea,* in Archaeometry in Romania, 2, Bucharest, 1990, p. 65-85.

1989

168. Gh. Lazarovici, *Das neolithische Heiligtum von Parţa,* in Varia Arheologica, II, Neolithic of Southeastern Europe and its Near Eastern Connections, 1989, p. 149-174.

169. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania din 1987,* in Apulum, 26, 1989, p. 55-6

170. I. Ciarnău, Gh. Lazarovici, *Descoperiri neolitice pe Valea Ierului,* in Crisia, XV, 1989, p. 15-25.

1988

171. Gh. Lazarovici, *Sincronismele Vinča A - Starčevo-Criş,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 17-28.

172. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Vinča A - Starčevo-Criş Synchronismus*, in Tolbuhin, 1988.

173. Gh. Lazarovici, *Venus de Zăuan. Despre credinţele şi practicile magico-religioase în preistorie, I,* in ActaMP, 12, 1988, p. 23-70.

174. Gh. Lazarovici, *Săpăturile arheologice de salvare de la Cluj - Piaţa Baba Novac (1986),* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 1013-1025.

175. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la N. K. Sandars, Prehistoric Art în Europe, Ed. II, în col. The Pelican History of Art, 508 p. 443 fig.,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988).

176. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Prospecţiuni şi cercetări arheologice de salvare pe teritoriul municipiului şi judeţului Cluj, II,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 17-28.

177. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar/Maxim, *Săpături arheologice de salvare şi cercetări etnoarheologice în Munţii Petrindului în anul 1986,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 949-996.

178. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar/Maxim, *Necropolele tumulare din Munţii Petrindului şi Dealul Feleleacului,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 997-1009.

179. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Săpăturile arheologice de la Iclod. Campania 1986*, in Apulum, 25, 1988, p. 9-47.

190. Gh. Lazarovici, T. Piciu, *Analize pedologice preliminare în aşezări neolitice din Transilvania şi Banat,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 925-936.

191. M. Frenţiu,Gh. Lazarovici *Metode de clasificare automată în arheologie,*in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 909-918.

192. N. Dragomir, Gh. Lazarovici, I. Târnovan, *Măsurarea rezistivitatii în tumulul de la Tureni,* in ActaMN, 24-25 (1987-1988), p. 919-924.

193. M. Frenţiu, Gh. Lazarovici 1988 *Methods for Automated Classification use in Archaeology. An Application to the Neolithic graves and ornaments,* in Archeometry, First Romanian Conference, Bucharest, 1988, p. 131-146.

194. V. V. Morariu, Gh. Lazarovici (Lazarovici) 1988 *Magnetic Prospection of Humca Tumulus,* in Archaeometry, First Romanian Conference, Bucharest, 1988.

1987

195. Gh. Lazarovici, *Şocul Vinča C in Transilvania,* in ActaMP, 11, 1987, p. 37-38.

196. Gh. Lazarovici, *Prospecţiuni şi cercetări arheologice de salvare pe teritoriul municipiului şi judeţului Cluj,* in ActaMN, XXII-XXIII, 1987, p. 723-752.

197. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod. Campania 1985,* in Apulum, 24, 1987, p. 9-39.

198. N. Vlassa, M. Takacs, Gh. Lazarovici, *Hugelbestattung in der Karpaten - Donau - Balkan - Zone, Wahrend der Äneolithischen Periode,* in Symposium Hugelbestattung, Beograd, 1987, p. 107-119.

199. Z. Kalmar, C. Bagotski,Gh. Lazarovici, *Cercetări etno- arheologice şi sondaje în Muţii Banatului,* in Banatica, IX, 1987, p. 65-85.

1986

200. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul târziu în nord-vestul României. Sălajul, Clujul, Bihorul, Sătmarul,* in ActaMP, 10, 1986, 15-46.

201. Gh. Lazarovici, *Sanctuarul de la Parţa,* in *Documente recent descoperite şi informaţii arheologice*, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 12-22.

202. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la V. Milojčić, Otzaki Magula III, BAM, 20; H. Hauptmann, Otzaki Magula II, 20; Y. Mottier, Das Mittlere Neolithikum, BAM, 21,* in ActaMP, X, 1986, p. 775-776.

203. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Prospecţiuni şi cercetări arheologice de salvare pe teritoriul municipiului şi judeţului Cluj,* in ActaMN, XXII-XXIII (1985-1986), p. 723-752.

204. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod (1983 - 1984),* in Apulum, 23, 1986, p. 25-41.

205. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Tipuri de locuinţe din aşezarea neolitică de la Parţa,* in Sargetia, XX, 1986-1987, p. 18-34.

206. N. Vlassa, M. Takacs, Gh. Lazarovici, *Mormintele tumulare din Banat şi Transilvania din perioada eneolitică târzie,* in ActaMN, XXI-XXIII (1985-1986), p. 59-78.

1985

207. Gh. Lazarovici, *Complexul neolitic de la Parţa,* in Banatica, 8, 1985, p. 7-71.

208. Gh. Lazarovici, *Noi descoperiri Bodrogkeresztúr în Banat*, in Banatica, 4, 1985, p. 83-90.

209. Gh. Lazarovici, *Sincronisme etno-culturale în neoliticul din Salaj şi din vestul României,* in ActaMP, 9, 1985, p. 69-73.

300. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod (1983-1983),* in Apulum, 23, 1985, p. 25-41.

301. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Maxim, Fl. Draşovean, S. A. Luca, *Complexul neolitic de la Parţa,* in Banatica, 8, 1985, p. 7-71.

302. I. Lupşe, Gh. Lazarovici, *Aplicarea unor metode moderne de clasificare, prelucrare şi interpretarea unor date arheologice,* in Sesiunea de comunicări. Facultatea de Matematică-Informatică, Cluj-Napoca, 1985, p. 109-126.

303. N. Vlassa, M. Takacs, Gh. Lazarovici, *Mormintele tumulare din Banat şi Transilvania din perioada eneolitică târzie,* in ActaMN, XXI-XXIII, 1985-1986, p. 59-78.

1984

304. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul timpuriu în România,* in ActaMP, 8, p. 49-104.

305. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Vinča-Kultur und ihre Beziehungen zur Linianbandkeramik*, în *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte*, Bd. 52, 1983/1984, S. 131-176.

306. Gh. Lazarovici, *Das Frühneolithikum in Rumänien*, Novi Sad, 1984.

307. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, R. Ardevan, *Aşezarea nolitică de la Cluj-Piata Ştefan cel Mare,* in *Marisia*, XIII-XIV, Târgu Mureş, 1984, p. 15-22.

308. H. Dumitrescu, Gh. Lazarovici,*Cercetările arheologice de la Tăualaş-Deva (partea I),* in ActaMN, XXI, 1984 p. 3-44; *(partea a II-a),* in *ActaMN*, XXII-XXIII, 1985-1986, p. 3-40.

1983

309. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Vinča Kultur und Ihre Beziehungen zur Linearbandkeramik,* in *Nachrichten aus Niedersschsens Urgeschichte*, Hildesheim, 52, 1983, S. 131-176.

310. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul timpuriu din zona Porţile de Fier (Clisură),* in Banatica, VII, p. 9-34.

311. Gh. Lazarovici, *Principalele probleme ale culturii -Tiszapolgár în România,* in ActaMN, 20, 1983, 3-21.

312. Gh. Lazarovici, *Şantierul arheologic Iclod (1977-1981),* in Materiale şi Cercetări Arheologice, 15, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 50-61.

313. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Némety, *Neoliticul dezvoltat din nord-vestul României (Sălajul, Sătmarul şi Clujul*), in ActaMP, 7, 1983, p. 17-60.

314. Gh. Lazarovici, F. Resch, C. Germann, *Descoperiri arheologice la Timişoara - Freidorf,* in Banatica, 7, 1983, p. 35-51.

1982

315. Gh. Lazarovici, *Parţa. Un monument preistoric,* in Monumente Istorice, 1, 1982, p. 31-35.

316. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea neolitică de la Arad - Gradişte 2*, in Ziridava XIV, 1982, p. 15-34.

317. Gh. Lazarovici, A. Bulbuc, *Descoperiri arheologice in hotarul comunei Iclod,* in Apulum, XXI, 1982, p. 161-166.

318. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Kalmar, Discuţii pe marginea legăturilor cronologice şi culturale dintre grupul Iclod şi cultura Tisa, in ActaMN, 18, 1982, p. 221-245.

319. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Munteanu, *Aşezarea eneolitică de la Slatina Timiş*, in Studii şi Comunicări de Etnografie şi Istorie, IV, Caransebeş 1982, p. 121-135.

1981

320. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Periodisierung der Vinča Kultur in Rumänien. Gewidmet dem Andenken an Vladimir Milojčić,* in *PZ*, 56, 2, 1981, p. 169-196.

321. Gh. Lazarovici, *Importuri Tiszapolgár în aşezarea sălcuţană de la Cuptoare - Sfogea - Contribuţii la legăturile culturale şi cronologice ale culturilor Sălcuţa şi Tiszapolgár,* in Banatica, 6, 1981, p. 35-41.

322. Gh. Lazarovici, F. Resch, C. Germann, *Aşezarea neolitică de la Unip,* in Analele Banatului, I, 1981, p. 13-20.

323. Gh. Lazarovici, E. Lakó, *Săpăturile de la Zăuan. Campania din 1980,* in ActaMN, XVII, 1981, p. 13-43.

324. Gh. Lazarovici, E. Pădureanu, *Aşezarea neolitică de la Arad - Strada Voievod Moga, 2,* in Ziridava, XIII, 1981, p. 49-73.

1980

325. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Periodisierung der Starčevo-Criş Kultur in Rumänien,* in III. Trachologisches Kongress, Wien, 1980.

326. Gh. Lazarovici, *Câteva probleme privind sfârşitul neoliticului timpuriu din nord-vestul României,* in ActaMN, 17, 1980, p. 13-30.

1979

327. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul Banatului*, PhD, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, 2 vol.

328. Gh. Lazarovici, *Epoca neolitică în Banat,* Cluj-Napoca, PhD summary,1979.

329. Gh. Lazarovici, *Legăturile fazei Vinča A cu zona nord thessalică sud-balcanică. Contribuţii la originea culturii Vinča,* in Tibiscus, 5, 1979, p. 57-66.

330. Gh. Lazarovici, *Neoliticul timpuriu în Clisura Dunării,* in Studii şi Comunicări. Istorie, Caransebeş, 1979, p. 27-31.

331. Gh. Lazarovici, *Raport preliminar de cercetare arheologică la Gornea,* in *Materiale şi Cercetări Arheologice,* Oradea, 1979, p. 391-392.

332. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la N. Kalicz - J. Makkay, Die Linienbandkeramik*, in ActaMN, 16, 1979, p. 841-844.

333. Gh. Lazarovici, *Godišniak,* in Anuarul Inst. de Ist şi Arh. Cluj, p. 473-476.

334. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la H. Todorova, Ovcarovo,* in ActaMN, 16, 1979, p. 844-846.

335. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la J. L. Bintlif, Natural Environment and Human Settlement in Prehistoric Greece, BAR, SS,* in Tibiscus, 1979, p. 437-439.

336. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la P. Pattay, Das kupferzeitliche Graberfeld von Tiszaválk - Kenderföd,* in ActaMN, 16, 1979, p. 437-439.

337. Gh. Lazarovici, *Vestigii arheologice din Bazinul Caraşului,* in ActaMN, 16, 1979, p. 447-464.

338. Gh. Lazarovici, *Recenzie la A.Radunceva: Prehistoric Art in Bulgaria, BAR, SS,* in Studii şi Comunicări. Istorie, III, Caransebeş, 1979, p. 437-439.

339. Gh. Lazarovici, C. Săcărin, *Epoca bronzului în "Clisura Dunării",* in Banatica, 5, 1979, p. 71-105.

340. Gh. Lazarovici, N. Cristea, *Contribuţii arheologice la istoria străveche a comunei Uioara de jos, Ciunga, jud. Alba,* in ActaMN, XVI, 1979, p. 431-446.

341. Gh. Lazarovici, D. Bălănescu, *Consideraţii privind tipologia şi evoluţia vaselor-capac din cultura Vinča (Descoperiri din "Clisura Dunării"),* in Banatica, 5, 1979, p. 17-25.

1978

342. Gh. Lazarovici, 1978b *Civilizatiile preistorice de la Porţile de Fier,* in Comori arheologice, Bucureşti, 1978, p. 29-39, 62-65.

343. Gh. Lazarovici, *N. Vlassa, Neoliticul Transilvaniei. Studii, articole, note,* in ActaMN, XV, 1978, p. 670-671.

344. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aloiz Benac, Obre,* in ActaMN, XV, 1978, p. 673.

345. E. Iaroslavschi, Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezări de secol IV în sudul Banatului,* in ActaMN, XV, 1978, p. 255-261.

1977

346. Gh. Lazarovici, *Die Beziehungen der Vinča A Phase zu Nordthessalien und dem Sudbalkan. Beitrage zum ursprung der Vinča - Kultur,* in Apulum, 15, 1977, p. 19-26.

347. Gh. Lazarovici, *Periodizarea culturii Vinča în România,* in Banatica, 4, 1977, p. 19-44.

348. Gh. Lazarovici, *Inventarul a două morminte neolitice de la Cluj - Napoca,* in ActaMN, 14, 1977, p. 7-35.

349. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cronică* (Libcova, Cuptoare, Ilidia), in Banatica, 4, 1977, p. 433-436.

350. Gh. Lazarovici, *Sfârşitul culturii Vinča - Turdaş în Câmpia Transilvaniei,* in Tibiscus, II, 1977, p. 211-230.

351. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cercetări arheologice de suprafaţă la hotarele judeţelor Cluj-Sălaj,* in ActaMP, 1, 1977, p. 35-40.

352. T. Soroceanu, Gh. Lazarovici, M. Amlacher, M. Mureşan, *Contribuţii la repertoriul arheologic al judeţului Mures,* in *Marisia,* VII, 1977, p. 12-26.

1976

353. Gh. Lazarovici, *Fragen der neolithischen Keramik im Banat,* in Festschrift für R. Pittioni, Wien, 1976, p. 203-234.

354. Gh. Lazarovici, *Das neolithische Friedhof von Iclod,* in UISPP, Nice, (S. VI Neolithique), p. 346.

355. Gh. Lazarovici, *Über das fruhaneolithikum im Banat,* in Istraživania, Novi Sad, 5, 1976, p. 79-90.

356. Gh. Lazarovici, Z. Milea, *Săpături arheologice la Bădeni, Campania 1968,* in *ActaMN,* XIII, 1976, p. 7-35.

1975

357. Gh. Lazarovici, *Despre eneoliticul timpuriu din Banat,* in Tibiscus, 4, 1975, p. 9-31.

358. Gh. Lazarovici, *Despre tipologia şi cronologia aşezării neolitice de la Balta Sărată,* in ActaMN, 12, 1975, p. 13-34.

359. Gh. Lazarovici, *Unele probleme ale ceramicii neoliticului din Banat,* in Banatica, 3, 1975, p. 7-24.

1974

360. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cu privire la neoliticul din Banat,* in Tibiscus, 3, 1974, p. 45-64.

361. Gh. Lazarovici, *Materialul arheologic de la Temes – Kubin (*Kuvin, *Serbia) aflat în Muzeul Banatului din Timişoara,* in Memoriam Constantini Daicoviciu, Cluj, 1974, p. 201-218.

362. I. Uzum, Gh. Lazarovici, *Bordeie prefeudale descoperite la Gornea (jud. Caras-Severin),* in Crisia, 1974, p. 39-46.

363. I. Uzum, Gh. Lazarovici, *Descoperiri arheologice prefeudale şi feudale timpurii în zona superioară a Clisurii,* in Crisia, 1974, p. 47-55.

1973

364. Gh. Lazarovici, *Tipologia şi cronologia culturii Vinča in Banat,* in *Banatica*, 2, 1973, p. 25-54.

365. Gh. Lazarovici, *Über das Neolithikum în Banat, in Actes VIII CISPP,* Belgrade, 1973, p. 461- 466.

366. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Pepelea, *Depozitul de bronzuri de la Cetatea de Baltă,* in ActaMN, X, 1973, p. 455-464.

367. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Stratan, *Aşezarea neolitică de la Homojdia,* in ActaMN, 10, 1973, p. 455-464.

368. I. Uzum, Gh. Lazarovici, I. Dragomir, *Descoperiri arheologice în hotarul satelor Gornea şi Sicheviţa,* in Banatica, 3, 1973, p. 403-416.

1972

369. Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea de la Parţa,* in *Tibiscus*, 2, 1972, p. 3-26.

1971

370. Gh. Lazarovici, *Unele probleme ale neoliticului din Banat*, in Banatica, 1, 1971, p. 17-69.

371. Gh. Lazarovici, I. Uzum, *Aşezarea feudală Ilidia, în lumina izvoarelor scrise şi a cercetărilor arheologice,* in Banatica, 1, 1971, 156-162.

372. Gh. Lazarovici, *Difuziunea unor civilizaţii neolitice în regiunea Dunării de Jos,* in Pontica, 4, 1971, 31-39.

373. Gh. Lazarovici 1971 - *Sondajul arheologic de la Deuş,* in Apulum, IX, p. 71-82.

374. Gh. Lazarovici, *Faza a IV-a a culturii Starčevo-Criş în Banat*, in ActaMN, 8, 1971, p. 409-413.

375. I. Uzum, Gh. Lazarovici, *Aşezarea feudală Ilidia, în lumina izvoarelor scrise şi a cercetărilor arheologice*, in Banatica, 1, 1971, p. 156-162.

1970

376. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cultura Vinča A în Banat*, in ActaMN, VII, 1970, p. 473-488.

1969

377. Gh. Lazarovici, *Cultura Starčevo-Criş în Banat,* in ActaMN, VI, 1969, p. 3-26.

EXCAVATIONS FROM 2010 AT TĂRTĂRIA – GURA LUNCII, ALBA COUNTY

FLORIAN DUMITRESCU-CHIOAR,
SABIN ADRIAN LUCA, COSMIN I. SUCIU*

Abstract: *The 2010 systematic campaign at the well-known site of Tărtăria – Gura Luncii was intended to identify the old excavations in the area of the terrace edge, near N. Vlassa's 1961 and I. Paul's 1989 excavations. Those excavations were identified. A Petreşti level was discovered under the agricultural level with in situ materials in SI/2010 and SIA/2010.*

The settlement from Tărtăria–*Gura Luncii* is located next to the Tărtăria railway station, on a small promontory with a length of 300-350 m and a width of 150 m, on the first unfloodable terrace of the Mureş river. The site was discovered by Endre Orosz in 1906 and belongs to the Sălişte a commune which, until 1965, was known as Cioara.

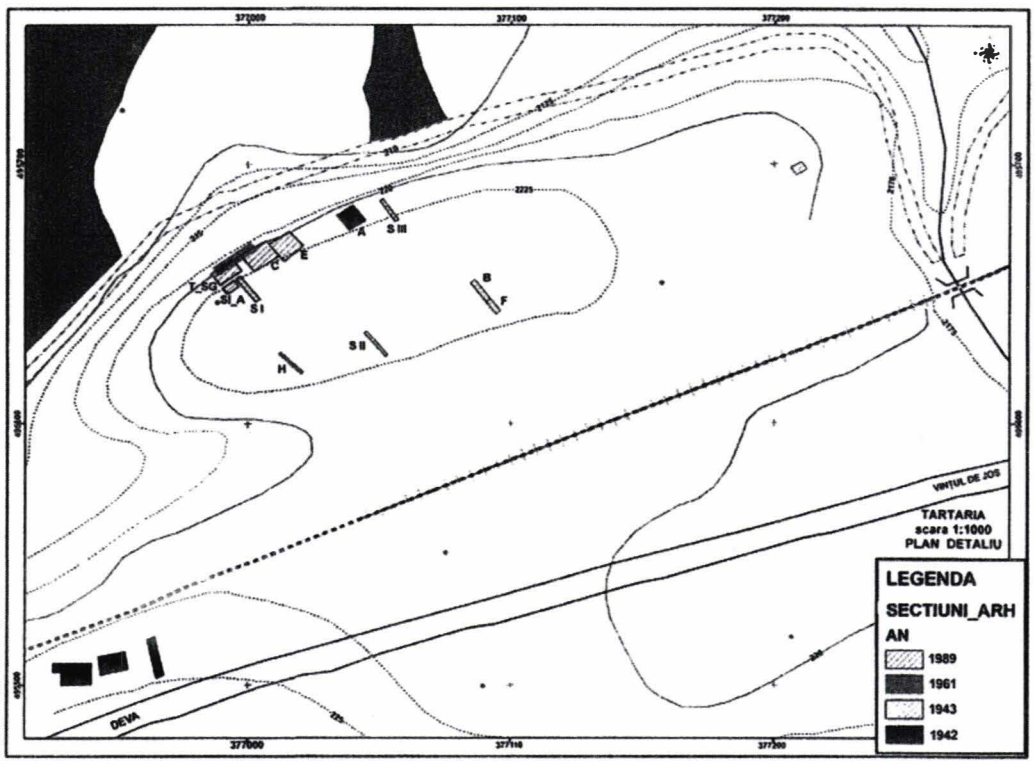


Fig. 1: Topo map with 1942, 1943, 1961, and 1989 excavations (Paul 2007, pl II).

* Sabin Adrian Luca – responsible ("Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu - ULBS), Zeno Karl Pinter, Cosmin Ioan Suciu (ULBS), Gabriel Rustoiu, Cristinel Fântâneanu, Gabriel Bălan (National Museum of the Union – Alba-Iulia), Gheorghe Natea, Florian Dumitrescu-Chioar, Vasile Palaghie, Raluca Maria Teodorescu, Anamaria Tudorie, Florina Nițu (Brukenthal National Museum Sibiu).

The purpose of the 2010 campaign was to identify the direction of the excavations from 1989, conducted by Prof. Iuliu Paul in the northern part of the site and their correlation with the older excavations of Kurt Horedt (1943) and Nicolae Vlassa (1961)[1] (Fig. 1). With this purpose in mind, we traced a surface of 16 x 8 m (which we named SI/2010) with a Leica TC 805 total station. The second surface, SIA/2010 (16 m long), is separated through a 16 x 1,20 m balk from SI/2010 (in its northern part) and attempted to catch the slope of the terrace and the old excavations in the area of the Tărtăria Tablets (Fig. 2).

Concerning the excavations from 1989, conducted by Iuliu Paul, there are no published plans or research reports (Fig.01). The only information we know comes from a presentation of Iuliu Paul, held on the occasion of his Doctor Honoris Causa award ceremony at the West University of Timişoara, on 23 May 2007. On this occasion, Prof. Iuliu Paul presented several stratigraphic profiles and the site's stratigraphy was also discussed (partially). The document which accompanies the presentation contains a topographic plan[2] with the disposition of the trenches from 1989, in correlation with the ones from 1942, 1943 and 1961. Unfortunately, the photograph is black and white and the details are not clearly distinguishable. On this occasion, two plans of trench SG1/1989 (SG1 profile, south-eastern wall – 10 m long, as well as SG1 profile, south-western wall – 4 m long) were also presented. This trench touched G/1961 (excavated by Nicolae Vlassa). On the plan there is another trench (SI/1989, which starts as a continuation of SG1/1989, towards the middle of the terrace), without a profile drawing, as well as a smaller surface (SIA/1989) (Fig. 1, 2).

SI/2010 and SIA/2010 were divided into 2x2 m squares, using metallic stakes. In surface SI/2010, just below the topsoil, a living surface belonging to the Petreşti culture was identified, which confirms the stratigraphy from 1989 (Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9). Judging from the compact areas of gravel in primary position, the living surface might belong to a house with gravel floor (Fig. 4). A hearth (V1) was also found in 13th and 21st squares, with a diameter of about 1 m, and built on a level of gravel covered with beaten clay (Fig. 2, 7). Many potsherds (Fig. 2), grinding stone fragments (Fig. 5), adobe fragments (some massive, with rod traces) (Fig. 3), osteological remains, flint and obsidian tools were found. The distribution of the adobe (burnt wattle and daub, Fig. 3) shows us a rectangular shape of a surface Petreşti building oriented NNE-SSV from the C1943 till the hearth V1, the same pattern could be seen from the grinders distribution (Fig. 5). The painting on ceramics is very well preserved. There are many *in situ* vessels, but also potsherds in secondary position concentrated mostly on the Petreşti building area (Fig. 2). This living surface is at a depth of 0.25-0.35 m. Some potsherds might have been disturbed by the plough, which is why we can find couple of sherds from three different cultures within the same living surface: Coţofeni, Vinča and Lumea Nouă. The living surface is more affected in the south-western part of SI/2010 (Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5). An older section (SI/1989) was found 6.45 m from the western profile of SI/2010 (Fig. 1, 2). The profiles of surface SI/2010 are parallel with the ones of SI/1989. The old trench (SI/1989) was emptied in order to observe the stratigraphic

[1] Horedt 1949; Paul 2007; Lazarovici, Maxim 1991; Vlassa 1963, 1967, 1976; Suciu 2009; Luca 2001, 2002, 2003.
[2] Paul 2007, plan II.

profiles (Fig. 7, 8, 10). The trench was not entirely emptied in 1989, especially in its eastern part (Fig. 8, 10).

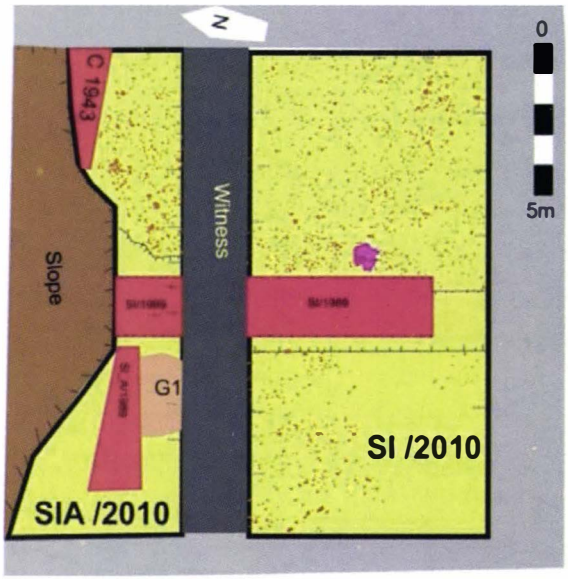


Fig. 2: Petreşti level documented in SI /2010, SIA /2010 – sherds distribution (with red, the old excavations; G1-Petreşti pit; V1- fireplace).

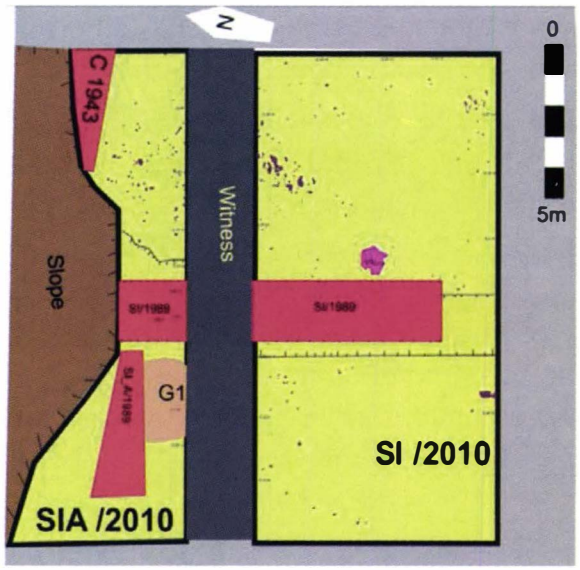


Fig. 3: Petreşti level documented in SI /2010, SIA /2010 – burnt wattle and daub distribution (with red, the old excavations; G1-Petreşti pit; V1- fireplace).

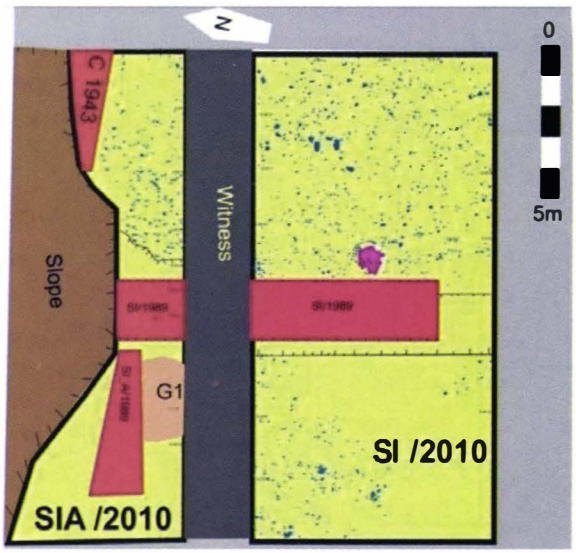


Fig. 4: Petreşti level documented in SI/2010, SIA /2010 – stones distribution (with red, the old excavations; G1-Petreşti pit; V1- fireplace).

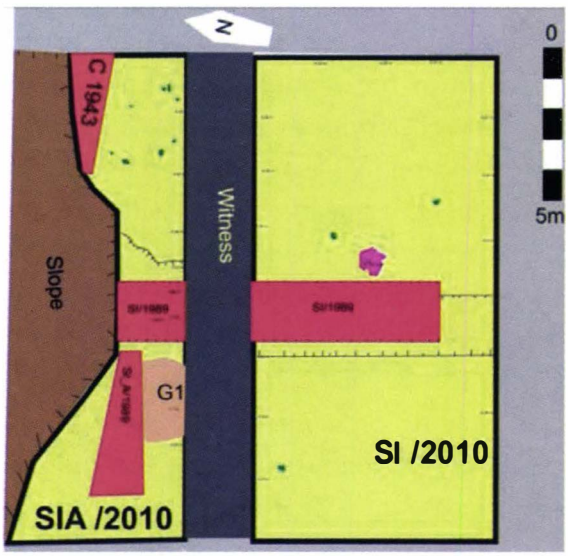


Fig. 5: Petreşti level documented in SI/ 2010, SIA /2010 – grinders distribution (with red, the old excavations; G1-Petreşti pit; V1- fireplace).

In the north-western part of SI/1989, a very compact level of potsherds was found (h = 10-25 cm), which actually consists of the sherds abandoned in 1989 (Fig. 10). Among these,

a particularly interesting anthropomorphic fragment was found (Fig. 11). There are no painted fragments and very few decorated fragments.

Fig. 6: Petreşti level documented in SIA /2010, eastern side, photogrammetry.

Surface SIA/2010 was opened on the current edge of the terrace which is strongly sloped by the former excavations and terrace erosion (Fig. 2, 6, 9, 12). In this area the old trench, SI/1989, was also emptied on an area of 2x2 m. The sterile soil was reached only in the western half; the eastern part (1 m) was not entirely emptied in 1989. In the western part of SIA/2010, at approximately 1.30-1.40 m, another older trench was identified (SIA/ 1989), which distinguishes itself through a grayish-black color and less compact soil (Fig. 2). Between the witness and SIA/1989, we excavated a part of a feature belonging to the Petreşti culture (and named by us G1/2010) (Fig. 2). Feature G1/2010 was emptied and has a depth of 1.06 m (from the level of observation), with two layers of fill. A complete *Spondylus* pendant was recovered from feature G1/2010 (Fig. 12).

In the eastern part of SIA/2010 the same Petreşti living surface as in SI/2010 was identified (Fig. 2, 6, 9).

However, here it is much better preserved than in SI/2010, because it is situated on the current edge of the river terrace and was not disturbed by agricultural works. Several middle-sized *in situ*

vessels were recovered. Moreover, two recent core samples were identified. In the northern part an older trench was observed (most probably surface C/1943), which distinguishes itself through a yellowish color and less compact soil, and cuts the Petreşti level. The direction of this trench is not parallel with the one of trench SI/1989 or of surface S1A/1989.

Fig. 7: Petreşti level documented in SI /2010 (estern side) view from western side. We could see the eastern profile of trench SI /1989.

Fig. 8: SI /1989 – details with the garbage cleaning on a deepening pit excavated in 1989. Seen from the north side of the terrace.

Fig. 9: Petreşti level documented in SIA /2010 (seen from the south-east) with the edge of the terrace.

Fig. 10: SI /1989 – northern profile (inside SI/2010).

In conclusion, our objective of identifying the direction of the older excavations was accomplished. The stratigraphic profiles documented in SI/1989 allow the use of an adequate strategy for the future campaigns. The Petreşti living surface was documented and removed, while the discovered materials are in the process of being studied at National Brukenthal Museum.

Translated by Laura Coltofean

Fig. 11: Head statue from older excavations SI /1989.

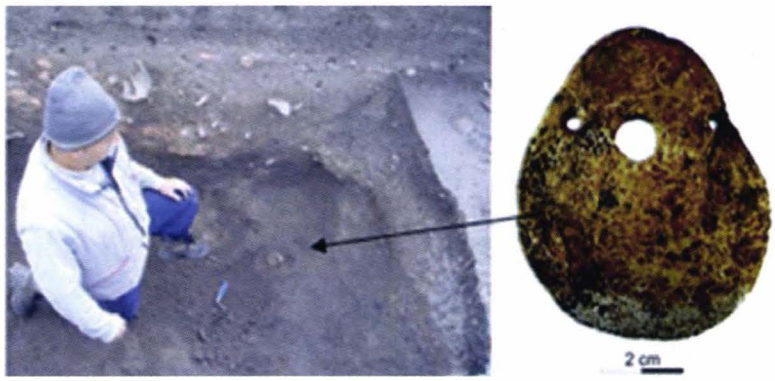
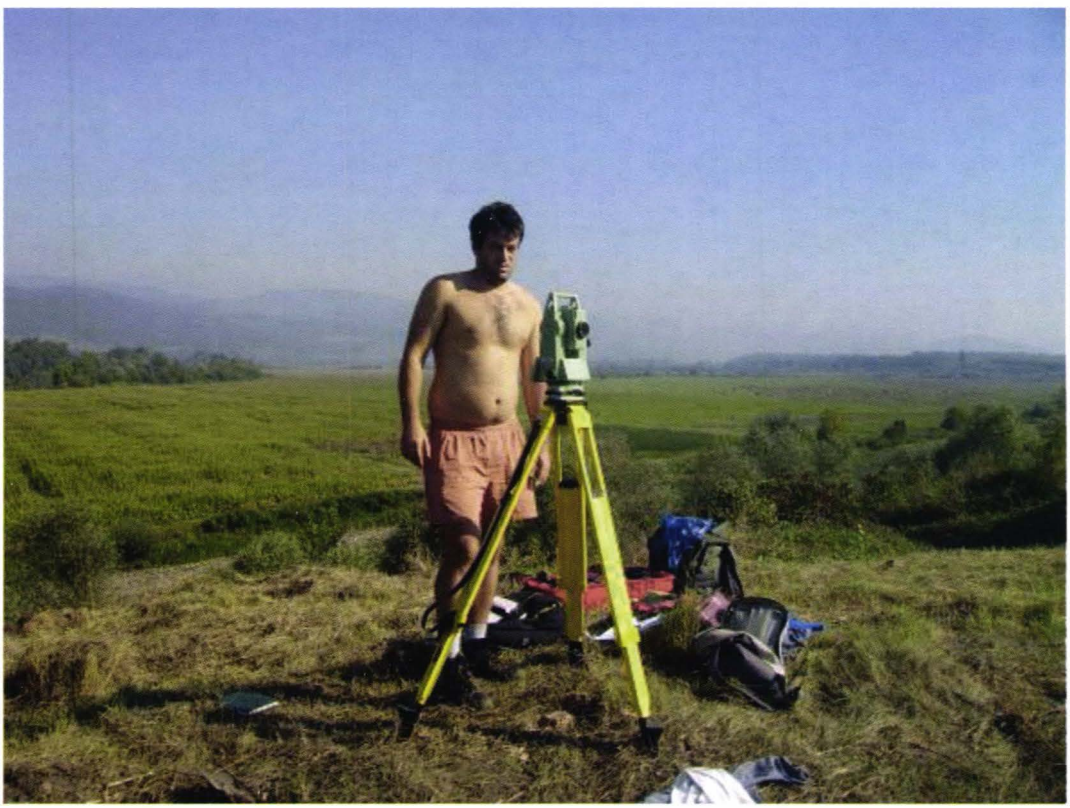


Fig. 12: Anthropomorphic idol from G1 (SIA/2010) with the discoverer Gh. Natea (photo: Corneliu Beldiman).

Acknowledgments: Thanks to all team members for their effort and a special homage to our beloved colleague Florian, RIP! Thanks to Laura Coltofean for the translation. We are grateful to Magda Lazarovici for her invitation.



In Memoriam Dr. Florian Dumitrescu-Chioar (12.03.1984-15.09.2012).

References

K. Horedt. 1949. "Săpături privitoare la epoca neo şi eneolitică" *Apulum* III: 44-69.

Lazarovici, C.-M., and Gh. Lazarovici. 2006. *Arhitectura Neoliticului şi Epocii Cuprului din România. I, Neoliticul.*, Bibliotheca Arcaheologica Moldaviae, IV, Iaşi, Editura Trinitas, Iaşi.

Lazarovici, Gh. and Z. Maxim Kalmar. 1991. *Tărtăria.* Cluj-Napoca.

Luca, S. A. 2001. Aşezări neolitice pe valea Mureşului (II). Noi cercetări arheologice la Turdaş-Luncă. I. Campaniile anilor 1992-1995, in Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis 17, Sibiu-Bucureşti.

_____ 2002. "Noi descoperiri de plastică neolitică şi eneolitică la Tărtăria şi Lumea Nouă. Apulum 39, 31-56.

_____ 2003. "New descoveries of the Neolithic and Aeneolithic fine arts at Tărtăria and Lumea Nouă, Alba County, and matters concerning their typology and chronology", *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* 2 (2003), p. 18-42.

Moga, V., and H. Ciugudean, eds. 1995. Repertoriul arheologic al judeţului Alba. Bibliotheca Mvsei Apvlensis II. Alba Iulia: Muzeul Naţional al Unirii Alba Iulia.

Paul, I. 2007. "Enigma tăbliţelor de la Tărtăria–Schiţă preliminară." Doctor Honoris Causa Award Ceremony at West University of Timişoara, 23 May 2007.

Suciu, C. I. 2009. *Cultura Vinča în Transilvania.* Biblioteca Brukenthal XLIV, Sibiu. Alba Iulia: Editura Altip.

Vlassa, N. 1963. "Chronology of the Neolithic în Transylvania in the light of the Tărtăria Settlement's Stratigraphy." *Dacia Nouvelle Serie* VII: 485-484.

_____ 1967. "Unele probleme ale Neoliticului Transilvaniei." *Acta Mvsei Napocensis* IV: 403-424.

_____ 1976. Neoliticul Transilvaniei–Studii, articole şi note. Cluj-Napoca.

Zanotti, D. G. 1983. "The position of the Tărtăria tablets within the Southeast European Copper Age." *American Journal of Archaeology* 87, 2 (April): 209-213.

THE ZAU-CULTURE SETTLEMENTS: ICLOD, ŢAGA AND FUNDĂTURA GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND TEST EXCAVATION 2007-2010

CARSTEN MISCHKA

From 2007 to 2010 two projects of the Institute of Pre- and Protohistory in Kiel were dealing with the survey and the test excavation of Neolithic settlements in Romania. The first project consisted of two survey campaigns in 2007 and 2008, visiting sites in Transylvania and Moldavia in cooperation with the National Museum of Transylvania in Cluj, the Brukenthal-Museum in Sibiu, the Institute of Archaeology in Iaşi, and the Museum Complex in Piatra-Neamţ (Fig. 1).

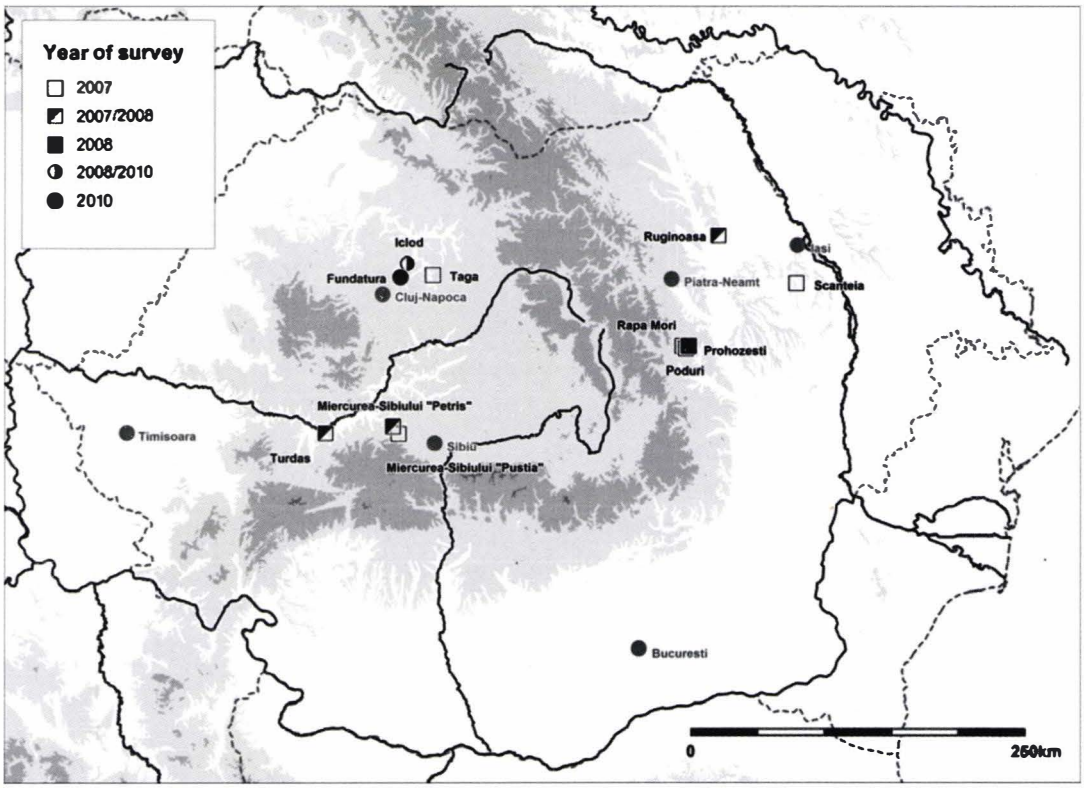


Fig. 1: Neolithic sites in Romania surveyed by the CAU-Projects between 2007 and 2010

The main objective of these campaigns was to conduct geomagnetic surveys of complete multilayer and multitemporal sites and, if possible, of contemporary adjacent sites from the late Neolithic to the early Copper Age in different parts of Romania. Excavations on such sites normally are necessarily small in area, due to the thickness of the stratigraphies. This results in detailed knowledge regarding typochronology and single dwelling structures, but information about the wider context of the excavated structures is rare, e.g., the size of the settlement, the

the number of houses or fortifications (all factors providing information on the social processes).

Vinča-Culture (Schier)	Turdaş-Group	Petreşti-Culture	Iclod-Group	Zau-Culture
		Petreşti B		
		Petreşti A/B	Iclod 3	Zau 4
D1		Petreşti A/B	Iclod 2-3	Zau 4
C3	Turdaş 3	Foeni/Petreşti A	Iclod 2	Zau 4
C3	Turdaş 3	Foeni/Petreşti A	Iclod 1-2	Zau 3c
C2	Turdaş 2	Foeni	Iclod 1b	Zau 3b
C1	Turdaş 1		Iclod 1a	Zau 3a

Fig. 2: Parallelisation *of the Transylvanian Late Neolithic cultures (after Lazarovici 2009).*

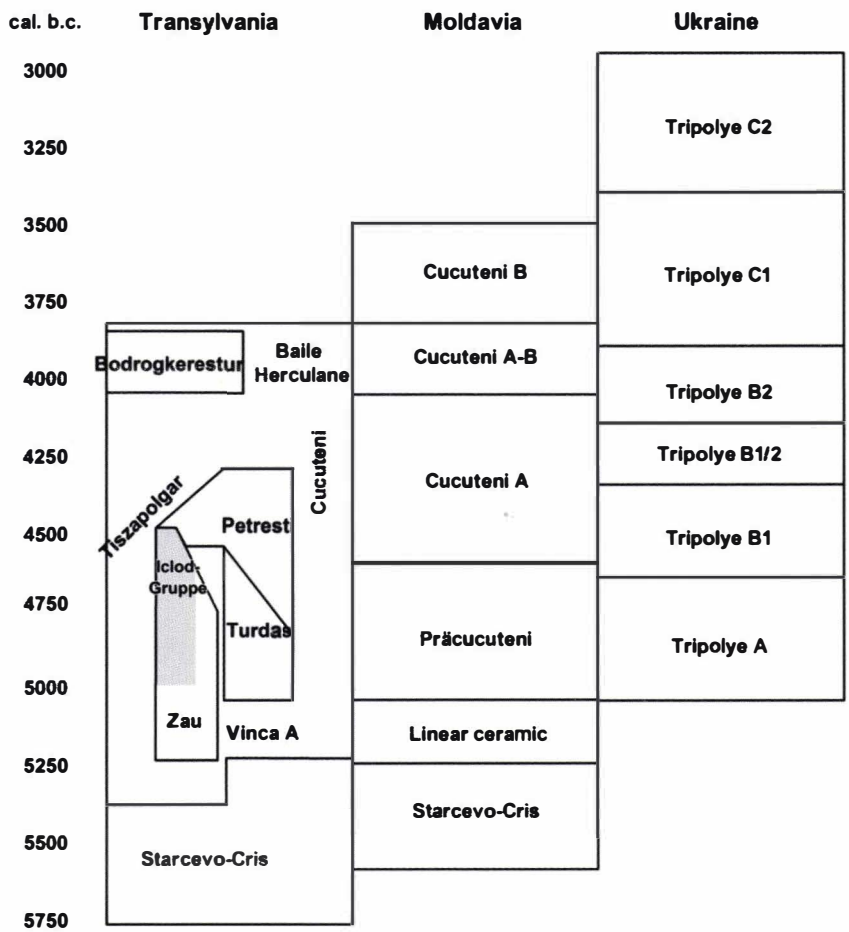


Fig. 3: Simplified chronology scheme for the working area (after Kalicz and Raczky 1990; Mantu 1995; 1997; Menotti and Rassamakin 2011).

The surveys should help to gather information about the settlements' sizes and inner structures as well as to improve the possibility of estimations of population densities and settlement dynamic issues. During the survey campaigns, ten sites were examined: three in the Subcarparthian mountains, two on the Moldavian plain, three in southern and two in central Transylvania, Iclod and Ţaga. The campaigns proved the outstanding suitability of the geomagnetic method for fast, large-area surveys, as nearly all sites revealed numerous house plots, complex ditch-systems, and the interaction of all these structures, which indicate complex settlement dynamics.[1]

The main goal of the campaign in 2010 was more focused on the settlement of Iclod. This eponymous site of the Iclod-group was briefly visited in 2008.

[1] For more details, see Mischka 2008, 2009, 2010.

In 2010, the survey was completed. Furthermore, in cooperation with the National Museum of Transylvania in Cluj, a small test excavation was conducted to check the preservation conditions of the archaeological structures in Iclod and to ensure the interpretation of the geomagnetic results. Additionally, the contemporary neighbouring site at Fundătura was geomagnetically surveyed to gather more information about possible settlement hierarchies.

Chronological timeframe

After G. Lazarovici, the Iclod-group forms a part of the middle and late Zau-Culture. With only a few radiocarbon dates available, the chronology relies mainly upon ceramic imports from areas with better dated Neolithic sequences. For example, the Iclod-group can be parallelized with the Vinča culture and the following Foeni group of the Petreşti culture in the Banat, with an absolute chronology secured by the results of F. Draşovean and W. Schier in Uivar.[2] Furthermore, the early and middle phase of the Iclod-group is also linked to the Turdaş-Group in southern Transylvania, which is contemporary to Vinča C (Fig. 2). In addition, G. Lazarovici uses ceramic-interchange with the north-western adjacent Piscolt Group and the Precucuteni culture in south-eastern Transylvania for the chronological classification of Iclod.[3]

Following this argumentation, this text concentrates on the period from approximately 5000 to 4500 cal. BC (Fig. 3). The last phase of the Iclod-group (of Zau culture) is a period of synthesis with the Petreşti culture, which enters the observation area from southern Transylvania.[4] At the end of this period, the settlement continuity on most of the settlements ceased to exist, leaving the sites undisturbed by intrusions of following cultures. This leads to optimal conditions for working in this period and area.

Iclod

The archaeological site of Iclod is located on the low terrace of the Someşul Mic, some hundred meters northeast of the modern Iclod village (Jud. Cluj), approximately 30 km northeast of Cluj (Fig. 4). It is intersected by a major road and a railroad line. The site contains a large graveyard, stretching from the slope of the Someşul Mic to the north and the settlement itself, which lies further north.[5]

Excavations have been made in Iclod since the 1970s, but they were mainly concentrated on the central part of the settlement and the graveyard. Iclod is dated to the late stage (Iclod-phase) of the Zau culture and its importance for the transition from the older Neolithic stages to the new emerging Petreşti culture was undisputed.[6] It is part of, and most probably the centre of, a late Neolithic settlement group, with at least the two neighbouring sites of Livada and

[2] Schier and Draşovean 2004: 201-204.
[3] Lazarovici 2009: 181-182, 205-208.
[4] Maxim 1999: 237.
[5] Lazarovici 1991; Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006: 626-639; Lichter 2001: 223-231.
[6] Maxim 1999: 237.

Fig. 4: Topographical setting of Iclod and the contemporaneous sites of Fundătura and Livada in the valley of the Someşul Mic (SRTM-Data).

Fundătura nearby. Despite Iclod's importance, until 2008 the size of the settlement could only be estimated roughly on the basis of the excavations and a narrow trench, dug for a pipe, running along the street.

The first survey in 2008 proved the exceptional potential of the site, but unharvested fields prohibited the complete examination of the settlement.[7] The survey was eventually finished in 2010 and the results exceeded the expectations by far.

Geomagnetic survey

The area geomagnetically surveyed covers more than eleven hectares, divided by the road and the railroad tracks. Between linear disturbances caused by water conduits and a lot of modern waste resulting in lots of small dipoles, the magnetogram shows very clearly the components of the Neolithic settlement (Fig. 5). The largest structures belong to a circular threefold ditch system which surrounds the inner part of the settlement. The diameter of the circles is 140 to 240 m, with an enclosed area of 1.7–4.7 hectares. The two outer ditches are linked with each other in the south. This indicates a gate construction, which proves that at least these two ditches existed contemporarily.

The settlement itself is marked at first by a lot of round anomalies, which most likely represent settlement-pits, according to other excavated sites, filled with ceramic fragments, burned clay, and humus material. From these pits, valuable information can be derived about the settlement's extent and intensity of the settlement process. Even more interesting are the rectangular shaped, comparatively strong anomalies in the north-western and north-eastern part of the settlement. They can be interpreted as house structures, based on excavation results from other sites.[8]

[7] Mischka 2009: 5-7.
[8] See, e.g., Hoffmann et al. 2006: 74-94.

Fig. 5: Iclod. Magnetogram.

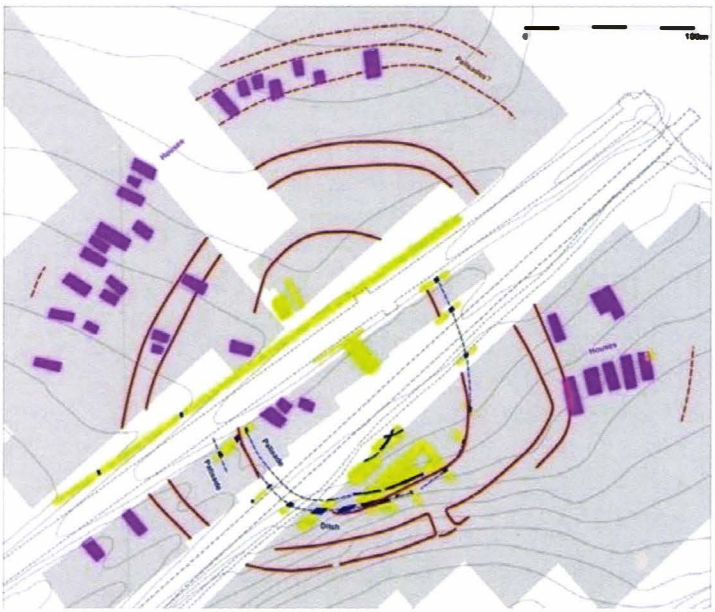


Fig. 6: Iclod. Houses (violet) and ditch- or palisade-systems (red) from the magnetogram and excavated ditches and palisades (blue); (grey: surveyed; yellow: excavated).

A minimum of thirty-three of these presumed houses are visible. In the northwest of the settlement they are arranged in at least three concentric rings, where they partly overlay the ditches, pointing to the settlement's expansion, or shrinking-processes. In contrast to this, the houses in the northeast seem to be arranged in two straight, parallel rows (Fig. 6).

The whole arrangement is surrounded by three rings of smaller, linear anomalies. They can be most probably interpreted as smaller ditches, perhaps for palisades, like those already excavated in the inner part of the settlement.[9] Unfortunately these structures do not appear clearly in the magnetogram, but the results of the excavations in the contemporary site in Ţaga (Jud. Cluj) support this interpretation. Following the palisade hypothesis, their system would have a diameter of 385 m, resulting in an enclosed area of 10.6 hectares, nearly completely filled with settlement structures.

Sondage excavation

To secure the interpretation of the "house anomalies," and to get information about the chronological setting, two small test trenches were

[9] Lazarovici 1991: 22.

opened in 2010 in the area of the south-eastern row of houses, at the expected north-eastern corner of what was called "House 1," a structure which was probably greater than 20 x 8 m.

The soil was formed of several thick layers of clayish colluvium. Approximately 50 cm under the surface, a massive layer with big fragments of burned clay appeared (Fig. 7); the fragments still bore the imprints of the tree branches, which once formed the skeleton of the house wall. This layer, was revealed to be more than 40 cm thick containing a lot of ceramic shards, which could be dated in the Iclod II period (Fig. 8). In contrast to this, stone artefacts were nearly abundant. On the base of the layer of burned clay, a fired hearth plate was found, covered by a deposit of crushed ceramic pots (Fig. 9). This feature strengthened the suspicion, that the excavated structures were the remains of a collapsed, burned down house.

Fig. 7: Iclod, House 1. Excavation of the burned clay layer (photo by Carsten Mischka).

Traces of a floor construction could not be detected, but nearly 90 cm under the modern surface, under the burned layer, the remains of the houses foundation, postholes and wall ditches could be detected. These structures formed a rectangular system with an indicated partition of the northern part of the house. Even though the bottoms of the postholes were not reached during the excavation, it is possible to postulate that the geomagnetic anomaly only represented one single building.

The overlay of the excavated house structures and the magnetogram shows that the positive part of the magnetic anomaly matches the burned clay-layer (Fig. 10). The overlay proves that the size of the house, as estimated from the geomagnetic survey, matches very accurately the real size of the building, marked by the foundation trenches and postholes. The still persistent necessity of at least small excavations confirmed a feature, which was recovered 20 cm under the burned clay layer: a burial, containing the skull and some disarticulated bones from the torso of an approximately 6 year-old child, combined with two nearly complete pottery vessels, still standing upright in the sediment (Fig. 11). One of the vessels could be classified as a Precucuteni-style import to the Iclod I-period (Fig. 12). With the ceramic from the house dating to the Iclod II-period, a gap of nearly two hundred years between the grave and the house emerges. This excludes the interpretation of a planned burial under the house and perhaps points to a bigger extension of the Neolithic graveyard than estimated until now.

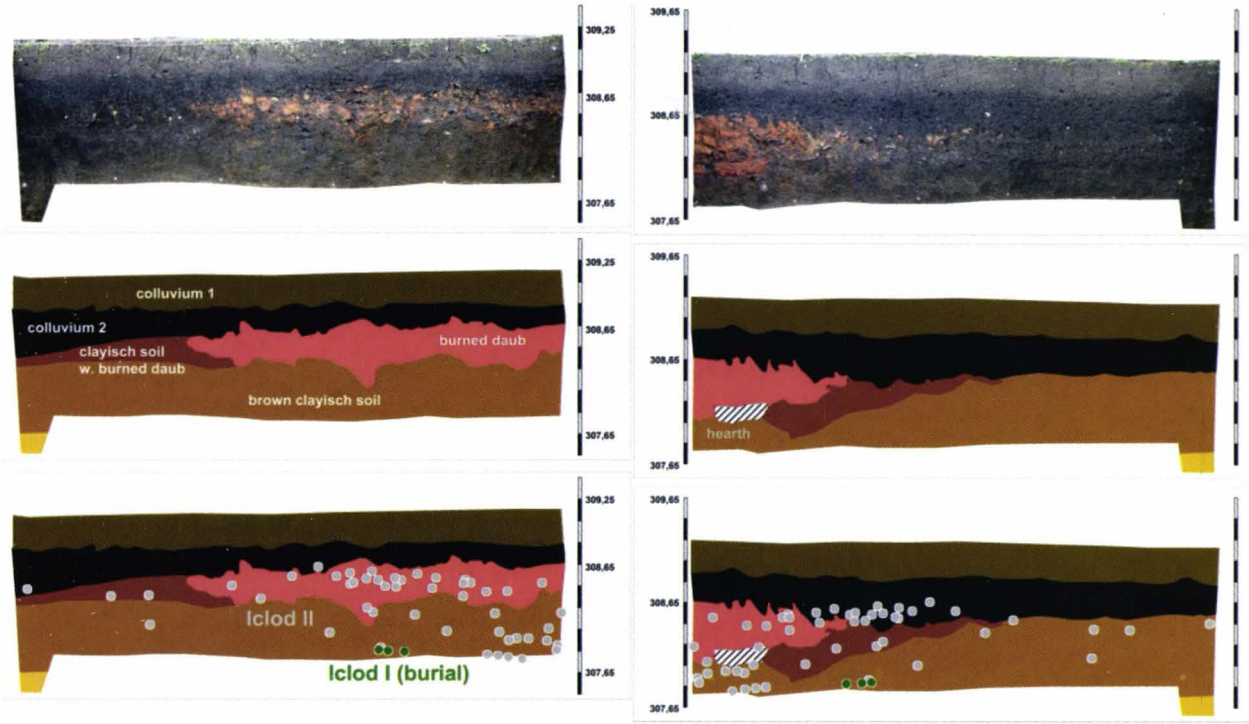


Fig. 8: Iclod, House 1. Southeast- and northwest-profile with measured ceramic-finds.

Fig. 9: Iclod, House 1. Ceramic deposit (photo by Carsten Mischka).

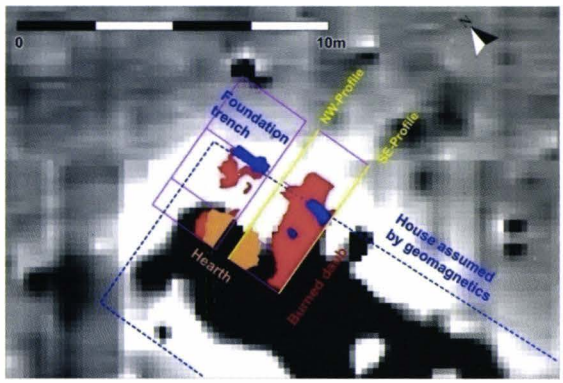


Fig. 10: Iclod, House 1. Magnetogram with excavated features.

Settlement dynamics

The multiple overlay of houses and ditches in the magnetogram points to a very strong settlement dynamic, which is not really understood up to now. The main problem is the lack of stratigraphical research outside the excavated areas. The fact that there are no suitable series of

Fig. 11: Iclod, House 1. Burial with skull, bone , and two ceramic vessels (photo by Carsten Mischka).

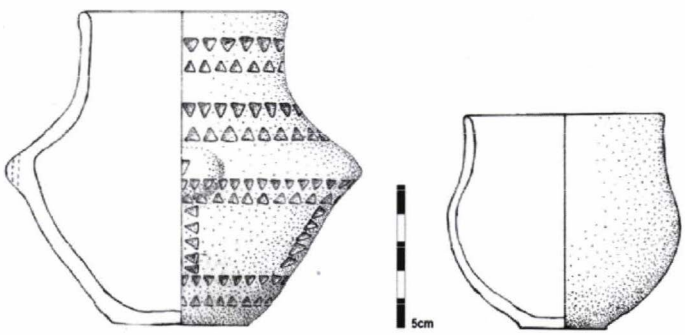


Fig. 12: Ceramic vessels from the grave under House 1. Left: Precucuteni; right: Iclod I.

modern radiocarbon dates enhances this problem even more. Only a rough sketch of the settlement's dynamics can be derived from the connection of the excavations and the geomagnetic features. From the old excavations it is known that the innermost ditch, and most probably also the inner houses, can be dated to the Iclod I-phase. The sondage delivered for one of the houses from the parallel rows in the northeast indicates a date of Iclod II. Therefore a good possibility would be to sort also the neighbouring houses in this phase. The rearrangement of the settlement's order with radial orientated dwellings most probably can be sorted to the latest phases of the settlement, after the refilling and planning of the double-ditch system (Fig. 13). But, however, this interpretation still has to be proven by further investigations.

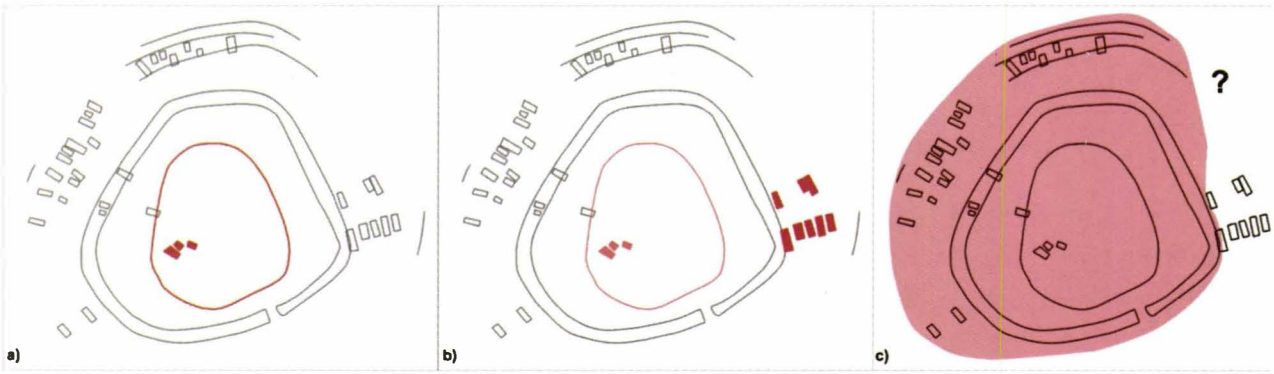


Fig. 13: Iclod. Possible settlement development in the phases Iclod I (a), Iclod II (b), and late Iclod II / Iclod III (c).

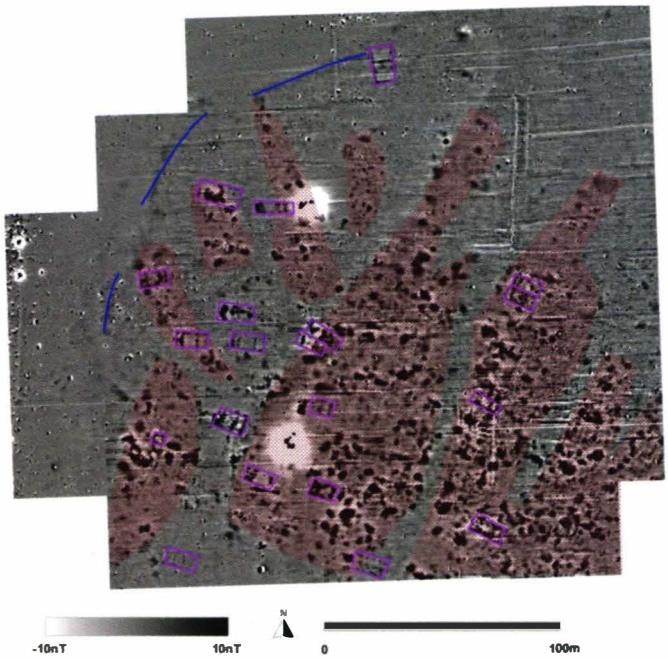


Fig. 14: Fundătura "Poderei." Magnetogram. Red: pit concentrations; blue: possible ditch system; violet: houses.

Fundătura

The results from Iclod led to some questions. The first was, whether this site is a single phenomenon, a centre in a network of smaller satellites, or just the normal case in this time and area. Another problem was that even after the sondage excavation there was still little evidence on the internal structure and construction of the houses in Iclod. To further investigate these questions, one of the neighbouring, contemporary settlements was also surveyed. Because the nearest one, the site of Livada 3 km to the north, was recently destroyed to a large part by a development area, the site of Fundătura "*Poderei*" was chosen.

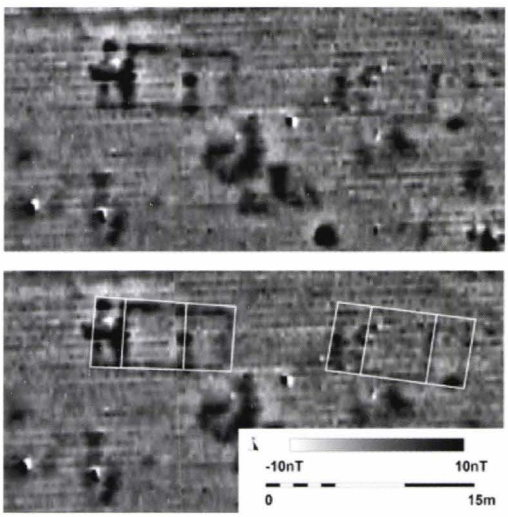


Fig. 15: Fundătura "Poderei." Detail of two houses in the magnetogram.

In contrast to Iclod and Livada, Fundătura is located on a promontory above the valley of the Someşul Mic and not on the river terrace (Fig. 4). From this promontory, Iclod is clearly visible in the north, at a distance of 5 km. Small rescue excavations and surface finds at the edge of the plateau indicate a Zau-Culture/Iclod group (Iclod II) settlement here, but nothing more was known until the 2010 campaign.[10] The geomagnetic survey covers six hectares and revealed a settlement of at least four hectares, studded with pit-anomalies even more densely than Iclod (Fig. 14). The southern boundary of the site has not yet been reached due to high corn fields, but it is very likely that the settlement spans over more than five hectares.

The special features on this site are the houses. In contrast to Iclod, there can be no question about the archaeological interpretation of the geomagnetic anomalies. These are not roughly rectangular areal anomalies, resulting from amorphous layers of burned clay. Instead of this, the magnetogram shows the postholes and foundation ditches for the walls visible as clearly bounded anomalies (Fig. 15). These anomalies

[10] Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006: 639.

form rectangular arrangements; with houses as the only possible interpretation. Nearly all of these, at least 19 houses, have the same size of approximately 15 x 7 m and a division into one big central room, with smaller rooms at both ends. These houses correspond to "House 1" in Iclod, not only in size, but also in the internal division. The Fundătura houses' smaller rooms on both ends match perfectly to the excavated structures of "House 1." The similarity is big enough to support the projection of the other architectural features from Fundătura to Iclod. So, we can assume a construction with a middle row of four strong posts, accompanied by two rows of smaller posts on both sides (Abb. 16). The evidence on the wall-construction is sparse, but looking on the magnetogram, as also on the burned daub and the small foundation-trench in "House 1," it seems justified to think of a wattle and daub structure stretching between smaller posts.

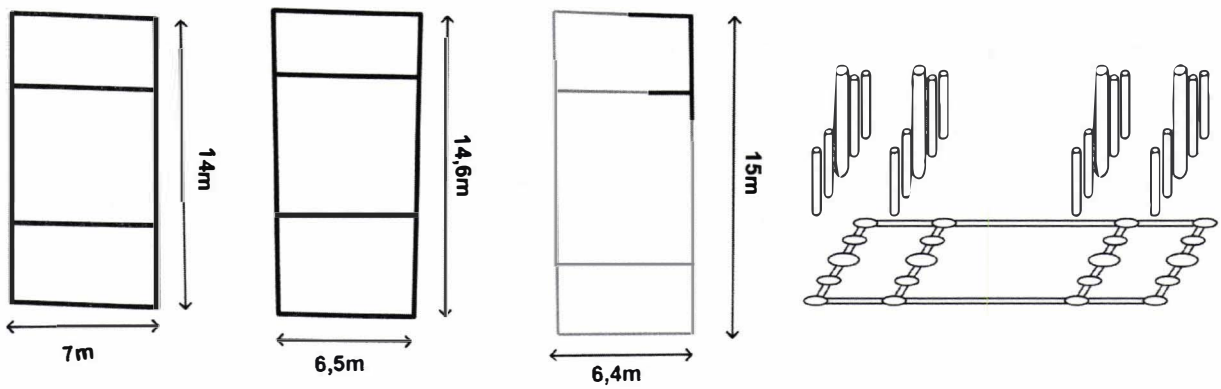


Fig. 16: House plots from Fundătura (left) and Iclod "House 1" (middle) following geomagnetic and excavation results. Right: Construction of the observed Iclod-group houses.

Only one house in Fundătura differs from this uniformity. It is located at the northern entrance of the settlement and is much bigger than the other buildings. This structure is connected with a weak, blurry limited, linear anomaly, which seems to surround the settlement in the north and west and could be interpreted as a ditch (Fig. 14). With the steep cliff in the east, this ditch would delimit the settlement from the rest of the plateau. If this interpretation is true, the big house could also be a fortified entrance to the settlement, an arrangement also known from the third surveyed settlement of the Zau-Culture, Ţaga.

Concerning the question for the settlement network in the valley of the Somşul Mic, we can record Iclod's neighbour, Fundătura, as a comparatively large settlement as well, even if its enclosure is less elaborated, which is probably caused by the different topographical setting. This leads to the conclusion that the differentiation in the settlement hierarchy perhaps is not as big as expected.

Ţaga

Ţaga is located in the next small river valley, twenty kilometres east of Iclod. Today, the site lies on a slope at the artificial lake Ţaga Mare where new houses, an electrical power plant

and a gas pumping station made numerous rescue excavations necessary.[11] Because most of the area was inaccessible or completely disturbed by gas conduits and electrical power lines, only a little more than two hectares were left undisturbed for the geomagnetic survey, which took place during the 2007 campaign. According to these circumstances, only the settlement's enclosure could be detected. The whole inner part, apart from the comparatively small excavated areas, is still unknown. Because of this, the interpretation of the results is more difficult than in Iclod or Fundătura.

The clearest structures are the ditches. At least five of them, marked by linear anomalies, are running through the surveyed area (Fig. 17). All of them are mostly parallel to the slope, with with a change of direction indicated in the northernmost part of the picture. Ditches 2 and 3 seem to be a linked system. It is difficult to connect the ditches from the geomagnetic results with the structures found in the former rescue excavations, but the minimal reconstruction leads at least to a 9.5 hectare large enclosure (Fig. 18).

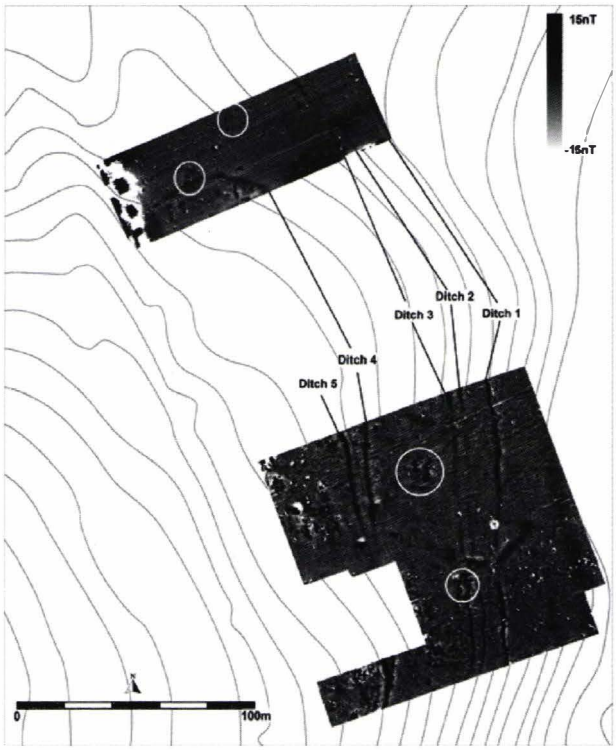


Fig. 17: Ţaga. Magnetogram with ditches and possible house plots (white circles).

After the survey, further rescue excavations by Z. Maxim (MNIT) showed that this installation was even more complex than the magnetogram suggested. For example, ditch 3 from the geomagnetic information was revealed as two smaller, parallel structures, more like palisade foundations. Furthermore, one more small ditch, not geomagnetically detected, was uncovered only one meter to the west of the now doubled ditch 3 (Fig. 19, 20).[12]

In contrast to the multiple ditches, in contrast to Iclod and Fundătura, the magnetogram from Ţaga shows only four possible house structures. They consist of small posthole-anomalies, forming much smaller and simpler house plots than in Iclod or Fundătura. One of the probable buildings was also partly excavated in the new rescue excavations and it revealed as a building with very strong post-foundations,

[11] Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006: 640-662.

[12] The massive soil erosion in this part of the site leads to archaeological structures only some centimetres deep, which are nearly impossible to detect with the used hardware, especially with the direction of survey, forced by the direction of the slope, nearly parallel to the archaeological features.

forming a not yet monumental, but at least pronounced entrance of the ditch-system, comparable to the situation in Fundătura.[13]

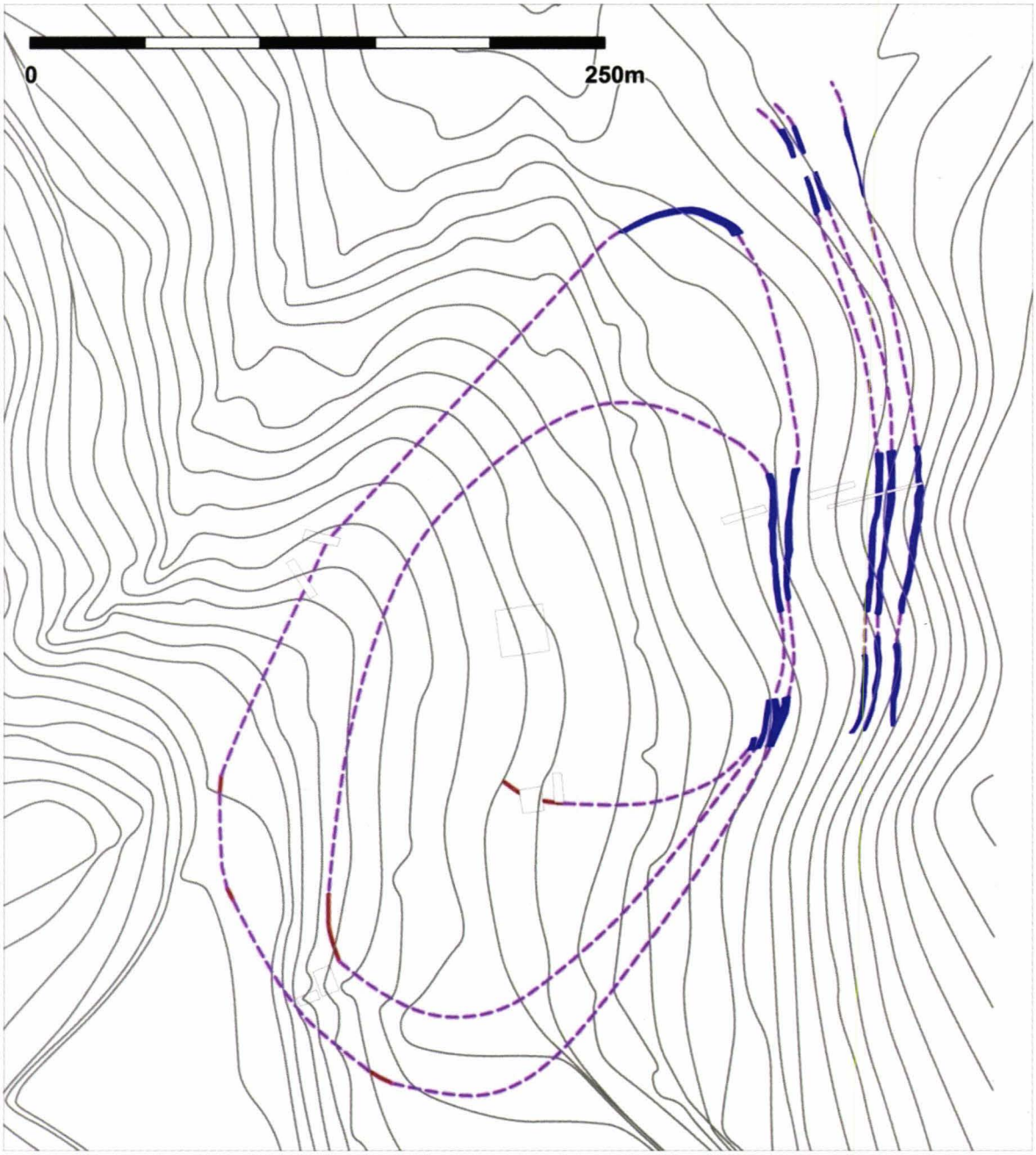


Fig. 18: Ţaga. Ditches as known from excavation (red) and geomagnetic survey (blue) and the smallest possible reconstruction of the enclosure system (violet).

[13] This was a friendly notice from Dr. Zoia Maxim, MNIT Cluj.

Conclusion: Zau-Culture Settlements

Until now it is difficult to make statements on the structure of the Zau culture settlements. Even if the size can be roughly derived from comparatively small excavations, information about exact size and spacial order can only be delivered by large-scale research. The work at Iclod, Fundătura, and Ţaga emphasizes the possibilities of geomagnetic survey for these questions. In combination with common features from small-scale excavations, differences between the Zau settlements have come to light.

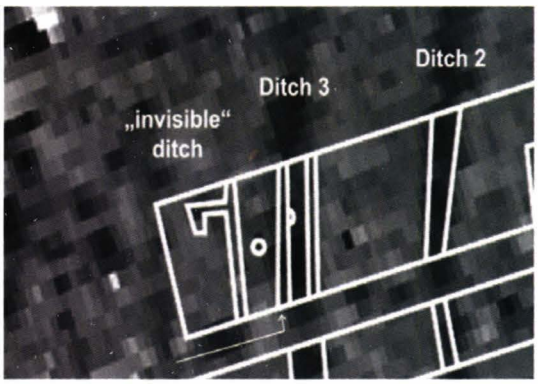


Fig. 19: Ţaga. Ditch 3. Detail of the magnetogram with the excavated features (white outlined). The arrow indicates the south profile from Fig. 20 (plan by Zoia Maxim).

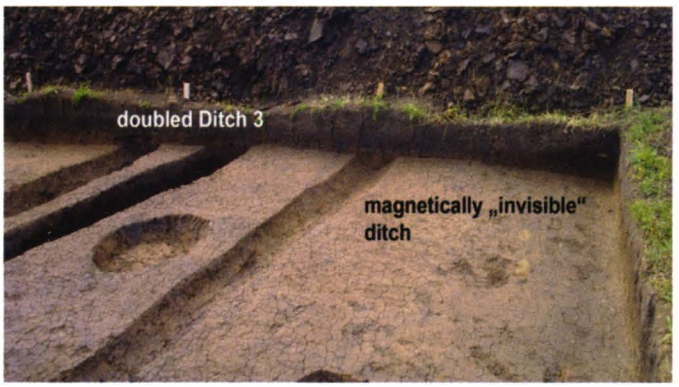


Fig. 20: Ţaga. Ditch 3; south profile with the doubled ditch 3 and the additionally discovered, geomagnetically not detectable ditch (photo by Zoia Maxim).

The most characteristic features are the houses, which seem to be very uniform in construction and size. Compared with late Neolithic and Copper Age houses from sites in southeastern Europe, even the smaller houses, about 15 m long, from Fundătura and Iclod are comparatively big, not to mention the more than 20 m long structures in Iclod. But before one scan derive a special role for Iclod from this, with the small number of comparable finds, more research is clearly necessary.[14]

All surveyed sites, especially Ţaga and Iclod, seem to be representatives of the comparatively large sites, which dominated Transylvania in the horizon ca. 4800-4300 CAL BC. Nevertheless, this element is only connecting on the first sight, because up to now we do not know if the size of a settlement really reflects its importance and number of inhabitants, or is just an indicator for a long duration of the settlement, leading to a big site because of a constant horizontal shifting of the inhabited areas. As long as this question is not answered, we have to be careful with the statements on settlements sizes given in the literature that just relies on surface finds. The settlement dynamics and the development of these sites are most probably very complex and a perfect opportunity to gather information on the transitional phase from the

[14] For example, C. Lichter (1993) lists in his comparison of buildings no secured house-plot for central Transylvania.

Neo- to the Aeneolithic period. But however, these processes remain largely unknown to us until now. At this point, more research is necessary, and not only by geophysics.

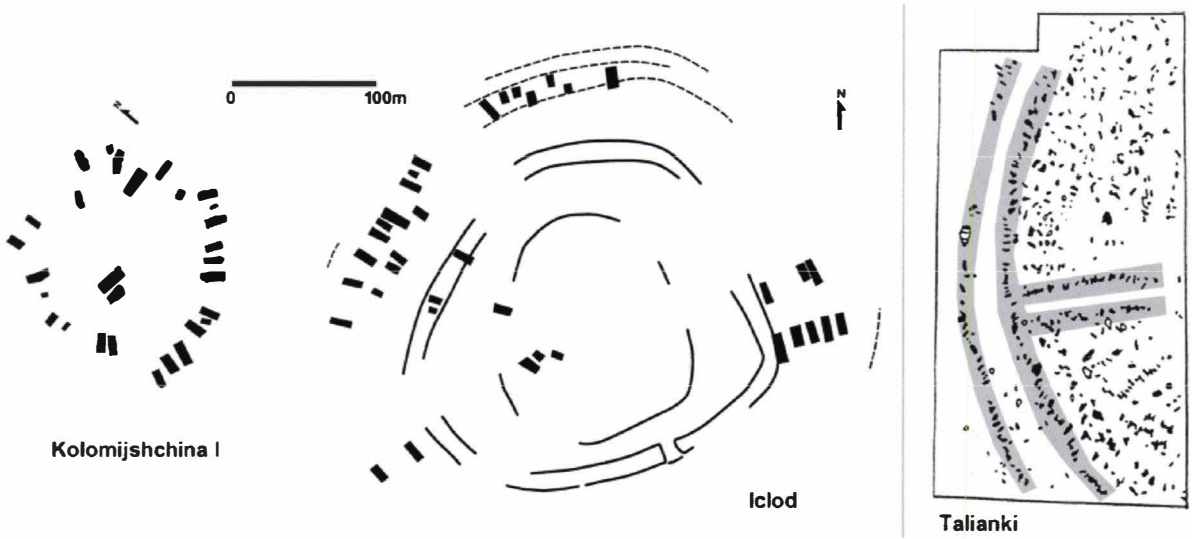


Fig. 21: Left: Comparison between the settlements Kolomijshchina I (UA) and Iclod (RO). Both settlements are printed in the same scale. (Kolomijshchina after Passek 1949); right: Talianki (UA), organisation of the houses in circular and centripetal rows (grey fields; house-plot from Videko 1995).

Significantly less consistent are the observed Zau-Culture settlements in the point of the internal spatial order. A regular arrangement of the houses, showing the strength of social control and a planned settlement development, is the only common feature. Fundătura seems to consist roughly of rows of houses with the same orientation, a pattern which is, like extensive ditch systems, very common also in the neighbouring regions to the south.[15] On the other side, Iclod shows a completely different, concentric order.

For the closest parallel to this, especially the circular arrangement, we have to look not to the rest of Transylvania, but east of the Carpathians, on the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture. From there, circular arranged settlements are well known, not only the often mentioned Tripolye B "megasites" of Majdaneckoie or Talianki, but also comparatively small settlements like Kolomijshchina I.[16] (Fig. 21). Also the combination of circular rows of houses and straight aligned dwellings as "spokes of the wheel," like the north-western and north-eastern part of Iclod, is known from these settlements.

But although the Zau-Culture is linked to the Precucuteni culture, from which the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture arises, the grave-goods from the burial under "House 1," hints that the gap between Iclod and Tripolye spans over at least 300 km. In addition to this, the main settlement type of the Cucuteni culture, which connects Transylvania with the Ukrainian plain,

[15] A good example for a big settlement with ditch system is Turdaş (Jud. Hunedoara) (Mischka 2009).
[16] Videjko 1995: 49-50; Passek 1949: 131ff.

more resembles Fundătura: fortified settlements on promontories, favoured by the undulating landscape between the Carpathians and the Prut.

Regarding this, the current state of research does not allow us to connect Iclod directly to its eastern look-alikes. More research on the social and economic processes, which lead to this kind of settlement arrangement, therefore is needed, in Transylvania as well as in the connecting areas of Moldova and Bessarabia.

References

Hofmann, R., Z. Kujundžić-Vejzagić, J. Müller, N. Müller-Scheeßel, and K. Rassmann. 2006. "Prospektion und Ausgrabungen in Okolište (Bosnien-Herzegowina). Siedlungsarchäologische Studien zum zentralbosnischen Spätneolithikum (5200–4500 v. Chr.)." *Ber.RGK* 87: 41-212.

Kalicz, N., and P. Raczky. 1990. "C-14 Daten und Zeittabelle." In *Alltag und Religion. Jungsteinzeit in Ost-Ungarn*. W. Meier-Arend, ed., 31-34. Frankfurt a.M.: Ausstellungskatalog

Lazarovici, Gh. 1991. *Grupul şi Statiunea Iclod*. Cluj-Napoca.

Lazarovici, C. M., and Gh. Lazarovici. 2006. *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din romania I. Neolithicul*. BAM, IV, Iaşi, Editura Trinitas.

Lazarovici, Gh. 2009. "The Zau-Culture." In *Ten years after: The Neolithic of the Balkans, as uncovered by the last decade of research.* Proceedings of the conference held at the Museum of Banat on November 9th-10th, 2008. F. Draşovean, D. L. Ciobotaru, and M. Maddison, eds. *Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica* 49: 179-217. Timişoara.

Lichter, C. 1993. *Untersuchungen zu den Bauten des südosteuropäischen Neolithikums und Chalkolithikums.* Internationale Archäologie, Band 18. München.

_____ 2001. *Untersuchungen zu den Bestattungssitten des südosteuropäischen Neolithikums und Chalkolithikums.* Mainz.

Mantu, C.-M. 1995. "Câteva consideraţii prinind cronologia absolută a neo-eneoliticului din România." *SCIVA* 46: 215-235.

_____ 1997. "Chronology Table." In *Cucuteni. The Last Great Chalcolithic Civilisation of Europe.* C.-M. Mantu, A. Tsaravopoulos, and G. Dumitroaia, eds. Bucharest.

Maxim, Z. 1999. *Neo-Eneolithicul din Transsilvania.* Cluj-Napoca.

Menotti, F., and Y. Rassamakin. 2011. "Chronological development of the Tripolye Culture giant-settlement of Talianki (Ukraine): 14C dating vs. pottery typology." *Radiocarbon* 53/4: 645-657.
Mischka, C. 2008. "Geomagnetische Prospektion neolithischer und kupferzeitlicher Siedlungen in Rumänien." *Eurasia Antiqua* 14: 101-115.

_____ 2009. "Neue Ergebnisse der geomagnetischen Prospektionen neolithischer und kupferzeitlicher Siedlungen in Rumänien." *Eurasia Antiqua* 15, 1-14.

_____ 2010. "Beispiele für Ähnlichkeit und Diversität neolithischer und kupferzeitlicher regionaler Siedlungsmuster in Rumänien anhand von geomagnetischen Prospektionen." In Leben auf dem Tell als soziale Praxis. Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums in Berlin vom 26.-27. Februar 2007. S. Hansen, ed. *Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 14: 71-84. Bonn.

Passek, T. S. 1949. *Periodizacija tripol'skich poselenij (II-II tysjačeletie do n. é.).* Materialy I issleddovanya po archeologii SSSR Moskva-Leningrad 10.

Schier, W., and F. Draşovean. 2004. "Vorbericht über die rumänisch-deutschen Prospektionen und Ausgrabungen in der befestigten Tellsiedlung von Uivar, jud. Timiş, Rumänien (1998-2002)." *PZ* 79: 145-230.

Videjko, M. 1995. "Großsiedlungen der Tripol'e-Kultur in der Ukraine." *Eurasia Antiqua* 1: 45-80.

RECONSTRUCTION OF VEGETATION ATTEMPTS FOR THE VINČA CULTURE PERIOD. THE HABITAT OF PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENTS FROM LIMBA-OARDA DE JOS (ALBA COUNTY)

BEATRICE CIUTĂ

During Middle Neolithic times, the Vinča culture population played an important role in the development of human society. According to archaeobotanical data derived from archaeological research carried out in the Vinča culture settlements, their inhabitants practiced agriculture as a main mode of sustenance. Their settlements reveal a stable way of life indicated by thick habitation layers created by the prolonged housing of a large population. Settlements were located in areas that present the best conditions for practicing agriculture: floodplains, terraces, not very high plateaus and hills. These areas also offered other possibilities for food acquisition, such as fishing, hunting and gathering.[1]

The climate in which the Vinča culture evolved was a crucial factor in the spread and development of agriculture. It was an ideal climate called the Atlantic phase, suitable for plant cultivating due to a warm and wet climate. Chernoziom and Cambisoils soil types were intensively exploited by Neolithic communities.

An obvious example is the case of LBK communities and their preference for loess soil. If we attempt an overview we will notice that LBK populations evolved in geographic areas where loess soil was the predominant one. A possible explanation could be that in such areas, trees do not grow on loess soil because it does not allow a proper fixation of the root; so for plant cultivation it is the best place.

At the end of the Early Neolithic, local places fragmented into smaller areas, although crops were still cultivated in the old ways. Communities experienced primitive cultivation of plants and gardening with hoe tools. Cultivated lands were located outside of the settlements on meadows, the water courses having a lower level in those times. Later, during the Middle and Late Neolithic, the lands located on terraces were especially worked. That was also due to the repeated flooding that occurred during those periods. Frequent floods have been revealed archaeologically by a thin level of silt in archaeological stratum.[2]

It is presumed that in wooded areas, land was released for cultivation by the use of fire, ash serving as fertilizer for plants.

Geographical location

In a study published in 2011 regarding the evolution of vegetation in the archaeological site of Limba–Oarda de Jos, we tried to reveal that some weed species that are currently found on the site were also present in prehistoric times.[3]

[1] Luca 1998: 94; Lazarovici 1979, 80.
[2] Comşa 1973: 244.
[3] Ciută 2011: 35-47.

Plants may be used as geographic indicators only if a clear connection with their natural habitat is precisely known. Due to modern agricultural practices, the composition of today's flora population is quite different from that of prehistoric times. The use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers, the replacement of the ard with moldboard and disk ploughs, and land drainage, has affected local field flora.[4]

Fig. 1: Overview of area from Limba-Oarda de Jos with the course of the Mureş River in back view.

In a study published in 2011 regarding the evolution of vegetation in the archaeological site of Limba–Oarda de Jos, we tried to reveal that some weed species that are currently found on the site were also present in prehistoric times.[5] Plants may be used as geographic indicators only if a clear connection with their natural habitat is precisely known. Due to modern agricultural practices, the composition of today's flora population is quite different from that of prehistoric times. The use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers, the replacement of the ard with moldboard and disk ploughs, and land drainage, has affected local field flora.[6]

The complex of the prehistoric site from Limba has offered a series of elements consisting of vegetal remains and/or imprints of plants in different contexts. They have helped to advance identification proposals regarding plants and tree species used by human communities that lived on the first terrace of Mureş during prehistoric times.

[4] Weiss and Kislev 2004: 1–13.
[5] Ciută 2011: 35-47.
[6] Weiss and Kislev 2004: 1–13.

Fig. 2: Morphology of settlements area from Limba-Bordane (left) and Limba-Vărăria (right).

The station known generically as the archaeological site of Limba, is situated in south-west Transylvania on the middle course of the Mureş River in the area delimitated by the river's thalweg. The area of the previous archaeological investigations lies on the left bank of the Mureş river, between the localities of Limba Ciugud (commune) and Oarda de Jos (suburb village of the town of Alba Iulia), on both sides of the county road (D. J. 107C) that links the two localities, at about 3.5 km south-south-east from the administrative centre of Alba Iulia. The sites occupy a vast area. We are speaking of several distinct sectors (points) of the archaeological ensemble, individualized by toponymy, but also by distinct characteristics of the successive archaeological deposits, conferring them, therefore, the status of proper sites. This area occupies the entire surface of the first terrace of the Mureş River, in the place where the river changes its general flowing direction from south to the west in an ample meander (Fig. 1).

Its excellent position, as well as the advantages given by the above mentioned characteristics, and by the abundance of fertile soils and useful mineral resources (gravels, sand, wood, clay, etc.), turned this wide, fragmented terrace since the earliest times into an extremely favorable ecosystem for human habitat. In pre- and protohistory, the terrace proved to be a true area of concentration of human inhabitance, which is proved by the systematic archaeological investigations done here in the last years and by discoveries, accidental or following surface investigations, done in the last fifty years.[7]

From a morphological point of view, our target area includes the lower terrace of the Mureş in the immediate vicinity of a meadow area. In these regions, the leachates and Chernoziom strong pseudogleizate soils are highly prevalent on the Mureş terraces, creating

[7] RepArh Alba 1995: 23.

very fertile soils.[8] Hydromorphic soils represented by lacovisti and humico-gleic soils are encountered in the meadow and the lower terraces of Mureş (Fig. 2). They are soils with excess moisture whose evolution is strongly influenced by the stagnant water and high ground water which, in turn, influences the soil pH in the area.[9]

Habitat area analyses

In the next lines, according to our subject, we will try to characterize the habitation from Limba–Oarda de Jos. The habitat is considered the center of a territory in which the lesser or greater proximity of other sites are evaluated in order to establish lines of connection between them. The territory constitutes the major part of useful space in which the communities procured the essential resources for subsistence. The environment is seen as the space that allows a group of people to live as well as possible in a self-contained area through the exploitation of resources.[10] This practice requires a detailed knowledge of the area for maximum exploitation in order to best serve the needs of the community. Consecutively, to make a realistic reconstruction of human habitat, it is necessary to make an analysis of the natural environment, i.e., the opportunities offered by a region and the needs of prehistoric populations that inhabited that area.[11]

The "needs" are all the material elements necessary for prehistoric life. They are represented by the remains of activities that are supposed to be found in a given area; thus they must be identified and located. It is necessary to distinguish between permanent needs— needs or activities that are features of all prehistoric periods— and particular needs that vary depending on the period.

The first process is to group the habitat into primary and secondary categories, as pathways, water resources, hunting, fishing, and wood and plant exploitation. These particular aspects relate to agriculture, livestock, certain cultural elements, and the procurement of raw material resources.[12]

The habitat area from Limba–Oarda de Jos might have supported and provided daily basic needs to a community of approximately 200-300 people, but also more.

The area was populated by fauna such as rabbits, pheasants, deer, wild pig and other hunted species that we find in the present also. Moreover, the Mureş River offered the possibility of fishing several species including carp, crucian, catfish, shellfish, and other species which populated the water of the river.

A very important source of food was wild fruit species such as *Cornus mas*, *Prunus institia*, *Sambucus nigra* and *Rosa canina*. On the other, the hand wooded area offered an important supplement of food to the communities from where they could pick specific forest

[8] Morariu et al. 1980, 76.
[9] Ibid.: 77.
[10] Fazecaş and Attila 2003: 177.
[11] Ibid.: 177-178.
[12] Ibid.: 178.

fruits such as blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, cranberries, currants, wild strawberries, hazelnuts, crab apples and pears. They may also have gathered mushrooms and sponges.[13]

Archaeobotanical analyses performed on macro remains revealed the cultivation of species such as *Triticum monococcum*, *T. dicoccum*, *Panicum miliaceum*, *Lens culinaris* and *Pisum sativum*. From the fruit category was revealed the *Cornus mas* specie and *Sambucus nigra*. Also it is worth mentioning the discovery of *Anthemis tinctoria* specie which belongs to the *Compositae* family.[14]

From the botanical spectrum of species commonly discovered are missing species such as *Hordeum vulgare* and *Linum usitatisimum*. This is a very similar feature for LBK culture sites found in Germany and Austria.[15] According to dendrological analyses between the trees, species found in our habitat area were six species of trees and shrubs such as *Cornus mas*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Acer platanoides*, *Quercus robur* and *Ulmus minor*.[16] Besides the wood provided by the tree species of *Quercus robur* and *Facus silvatica*, their fruits were also collected, such as acorns and beech nuts.[17]

From archaeobotanical analysis, it can be deduced that the presence of high percentages of herbaceous species might indicate the existence of an open, unwooded land. This fact is illustrated also by the high percentages of herbaceous species like *Poaceae*, and other heliophile herbaceous *Caryophyllaceae, Rosaceae, Anthemideae* and *Cichorioideae*.[18]

In attempting a comparative study between focused periods, respectively Neolithic and the current time, it can been observed that many of the species that now inhabit the area of the site of Limba–Oarda de Jos are found, according to archaeobotanical results, in the time specified. Therefore, we can say that climate and geomorphologic changes that occurred over time were not so drastic as to lead to a change in vegetation type in the subject area of our attention.

References

Ciută, B. 2007. "*Câteva consideraţii de ordin paleoetnobotanic privind utilizarea fructelor de Quercus sp. în cadrul dietei umane în perioada preistoriei.*" *Apulum* XLIV/1: 53-57.

_____ 2009. *Cultivarea plantelor în pre- şi protoistoria bazinului intracarpatic din România.* Alba Iulia: Ed. Altip.

_____ 2011. "Comparative study regarding evolution of vegetation in the archaeological site from Limba-Oarda De Jos (Alba County)." *Brukenthal Acta Musei* VI, 1: 35-48.

Comşa, E. 1973. "Cultivarea plantelor în cursul epocii neolitice pe teritoriul României." *Terra Nostra* III: 243-253. Bucureşti.

[13] Zohary and Hopf 1988: 128; Renfrew 1973, 139-153.
[14] Ciută 2009: 87.
[15] Ibid.: 88.
[16] Ibid.: 92; 2011, 37.
[17] Ciută 2007: 53-57; Renfrew 1973, 155.
[18] Ciută 2011: 37-38.

Fazecaş, G., and L. Attila. 2003. *Arheologia mediului înconjurător. Studiu de caz: Suplacu de Barcău.* In Memoriam Nicolae Chidioşan, 177-187. Oradea: Muzeul Ţării Crişurilor.

Ciugudean, H. and V Moga, 1995. *Repertoriul Arheologic al Judetului Alba.* Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis. Alba Iulia.

Lazarovici, Gh. 1979. *Neoliticul Banatului.* Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis II. Cluj-Napoca.

Luca, S. A. 1998. *Liubcova-Orniţa.* Monografie arheologică. Târgovişte.

Morariu, T., O. Bogdan, and A. Maier. 1980. *Judeţul Alba.* Bucuresti: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania.

Weiss, E., and M. E. Kislev. 2004. "Plant remains as indicators for economic activity: A case study from Iron Age Ashkelon." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 31:1–13.

Zohary, D., and M. Hopf. 1988. *Domestication of Plants in the Old World.* Oxford.

A NEW NEOLITHIC TABLET DISCOVERED AT CLUJ-NAPOCA

TIBERIU IOAN TECAR

In the course of the year 2012, the archeological research that started a year before in Cluj-Napoca (Map 1) was continued on the field at Argeş Street, number 24. The mentioned research investigates a portion of an archeological site of large proportions, situated near the Canalul Morii (water mill channel), more precisely, south from it, on the right shore of the Someşul Mic, a river which crosses Cluj-Napoca city from west to east. Canalul Morii is an affluent of Someşul Mic River, used even by the Romans as a northern frontier of Napoca city (Map 2).

Map 1: The location of the Cluj-Napoca city (after Google Earth).

The tablet to which we refer was discovered during a preventive research for the clearance of the field from the mentioned address, for the historical-archeological charge. The complex in which the piece was identified is Cx 205 (Fig. 1), outlined like a ceramic pile of irregular shape of 2 x 2 m. The whole depth of the complex at the time of emergence was 87 - 335,77 cm, and when it was emptied, it was 20 cm deep. The tablet was discovered in the north-west half of the mentioned complex.

The tablet, and the archeological material it was discovered with, belongs to the Zau culture. The characteristic ceramic is shaped from a soft paste blended with sand, pounded shards and fine clay, most probably leached (also sandy mud). The decorations of the ceramic fragments found in the complex consists of incised bands, hatched with cuts (Fig. 2a), pressed with a blunt instrument in the interior of the bands, under the lip, or at the bottom; some pots conserve traces of red engobe or brown painting. Concerning the shapes, we found some cylindrical receptacles, amphorae with handle, and a fragment of a lip from a shovel (Fig. 2-3). For these there are analogies in Iclod, in the Ib. I-II levels, and more,[1] but also in other sites, such as:

- Cluj – *Memorandişti* - 5 m and in other points of the city.[2]
- Pericei, C 68, and others.
- Suplacul de Barcău, level II? and Porţ = Corău III.
- Zau de Câmpie -2,65 m, in the III level.[3]
- And others.[4]

Map 2: The location of the place where the two tablets were found (after Google Earth).

Some motifs appear also in the Turdaş culture and in the site from Tăulaş; all are related to the movements of the communities which destroyed the palisades from Zau. These

[1] Colesniuc 2008: 25; Lazarovici 2009: 198–199.
[2] Lazarovici 1987a: 723–752.
[3] Lazarovici et al. 2002: 7-8; Lazarovici 2010a: 121, fig. 13/9 is an analogy with the fragment from fig. 2b/1.
[4] Colesniuc 2008: 1 –37; Lazarovici 2010: 64-66; 2010a: 121-125.

movements also determine the technological and decorative modifications of the second phase of this culture.[5]

a

b

Fig. 1, a-b: Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, the whole view of Cx 205 (photo T. Tecar).

The emergence of these tablets must be accredited to the ethno-cultural movements determined by the beginning of the degradation of some settlements on a wide living space, defined by Gh. Lazarovici as "the Vinča C shock,"[6] the maximum development moment of the "Danube Script" (Serbia, Banat, Transylvania, Oltenia, NW Bulgaria–the Gradešnica group).[7]

The absence of fine black ceramic shows that it does not belong to Turdaş I phase. Also we mention that a big part of the material from Argeş Street, number 24, is still in the laboratory. We point out as well that the lack of very fine black and red ceramic demonstrates that there are not (late) Foeni elements like in the other sites from Cluj-Napoca or level IIIB from Zau. It is actually the expansion moment of the Turdaş culture towards the center and north of Transylvania, slowly modifying the characteristics of the Zau culture (the reduction of paintings, the rarity of the white engobe background, and other aspects defined by Gh. Lazarovici.[8] The Turdaş "migration" took place at the Ib–II upper level of Turdaş phase.[9] Based on these descriptions and analogies, the complex researched by us is situated in the III Zau phase, most likely in IIIA.

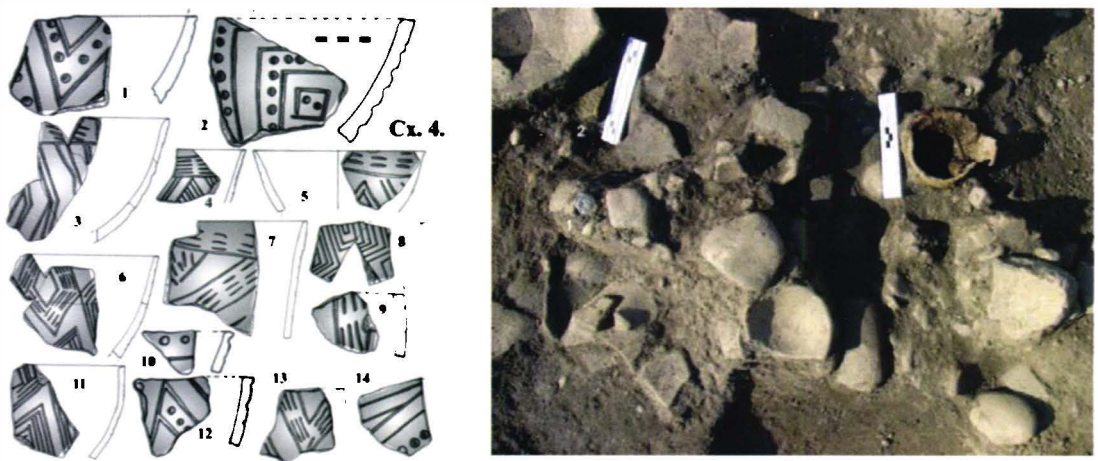
The tablet is conserved in a fragmentary state, in proportion of 95%. The rupture and the crack are a result of the subsidence of the soil and not from how it was laid down in the complex. The piece was placed upside down, in the north-west side of the complex. It has a discoid shape, the decorated surface is a little cambered, and the opposite surface is flat. The edge of the tablet was brushed up. The color at the exterior (the decorated part) is dark brown, and in the interior is

[5] Dumitrescu and Lazarovici 1984–1986; Lazarovici 2010: 64.
[6] Lazarovici 1987: 37–38; 1991, 17–18; 1994: 62–100; 1995: 33–55.
[7] Merlini 2005: 57-76, 2009: 21-40.
[8] Lazarovici 2010: 64–66; 2010a: 121–125.
[9] Lazarovici 2010: 65.

coffee like. It was modeled from a fine paste, which had mud as a degreaser, fine chaff and very small spangles. The oxidant burning is pretty good. The diameter of the preserved piece is 67,81 mm, it has a maximum thickness of 10,07 mm, and in the gap it has 9, 32 mm. The decoration has the following dimensions: the exterior cross has 58,36 mm in length; the width varies between 22,71 mm, 21,31 mm and 20,07 mm at the end of the cross's arms; the thickness of the incision is between 1,81 and 2,53 mm. The interior cross has the dimensions of 45,2 mm and 45,07 mm. The perforations have the diameter of 2,92 mm (Fig. 4 a-b).

a *b*

Fig. 2, a-b: Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, Cx 205 (photo T. Tecar).



a *b*

Fig. 3, a-b: a) Halmeu–Vamă, after Gh. Lazarovici; b) Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, Cx 205 (photo T. Tecar).

The decorative motif is made from an incised cross with four arms, two of them are just a little smaller: the inferior one and the one from the right of the piece (the fragmentary part). In the interior it is filled with a central floral motif, another cross made as it follows: first the vertical arm was incised, then the horizontal one. The tablet has two perforations made

Fig. 4, a-b: The tablet from Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street no. 24, from Cx 205: a) front side; b) back side.

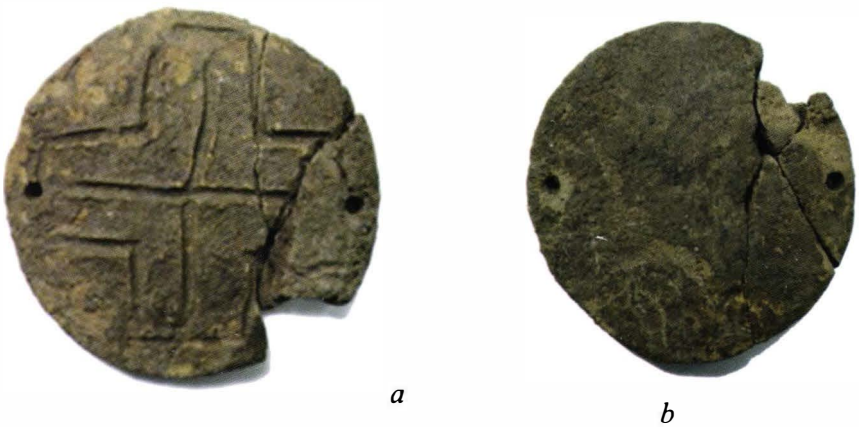


Fig. 5, a-b: The tablet from Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, number 24 from Cx 205: a) front side; b) back side.

approximately at the half of the exterior arms' width, on the incised line, also following up the incised line of the interior cross. The perforation was made in an oblique angle on the surface of the object, from the decorated part to the undecorated part. The insides of the arms are painted with a dark brown color. On the other side, the back side of the tablet is painted with a decor-ative rectangular motif with a dark brown substance, which is displayed in a skewed angle; the big diagonal of the rectangular motif overlaps the line of the perforations: one corner of the rectangular touches one perforation, the other is turned towards the other perforation, and the other two corners reach the circular edge of the tablet. The piece was modeled in the palm, just like the tablet form Tărtăria.[10] Tablets with similar shapes, circular or discoid, were found in Cluj-Napoca and Tărtăria.[11] At Parţa were discovered four objects similar in shape: 1) a disc tablet with symbols;[12] 2) the discoid tablet;[13] 3) the decorated disc which also can be hung from

[10] Lazarovici et al 2011: 167–168, fig. VIIC. 6a-b.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.: 193–195, fig. VIIC. 43 a-b.
[13] Ibid.: 194, fig. VIIC. 45.

the neck;[14] 4) another circular piece similar to the one from Parţa is the seal decorated with a human figure.[15]

A circular tablet with two pairs of perforations was discovered at Orăştie, it is decorated with stylized figures and astronomical signs.[16] At Turdaş were also discovered similar objects: one with a human figure in an invocation position.[17] The second with zigzag lines, or representing a fortification plan.[18] A décor resembling the one from Turdaş, with circular incised lines, is known on a piece from Slatino and one from Sitagroi III, and on a third, there is a stylized human figure.[19] At Suplacul de Barcău a similar tablet was uncovered with a decoration realized from points in the same way like the idols from this group,[20] composed from human stylized figures.[21]

At Karanovo a similar circular piece exists – a seal, with the decor split by the symbol of the cross in four quadrants.[22] Other objects with similar forms we find at Nova Zagora, Dolnoslav,[23] also at Grivac, a decor with semicircular symbols,[24] and at Zorlenţu Mare.[25]

Regarding the perforations, we have to bring to mind the fact that many clay discs are perforated; the most appropriate analogy we find is with the tablet from Cluj-Napoca – St. Mihail, which has a pair of perforations, and probably another one on the opposite part.[26]

We also find analogies with two or three tablets from Tărtăria which have perforations for suspension,[27] like in the third disc from Parţa which has two perforations.[28] The table from Orăştie has two perforations, as well;[29] the disc from Gradešnica has a central perforation,[30] just like the clay disc from Zorlenţu Mare which has perforations.[31]

From a geographical point of view, the tablet found at Cluj-Napoca–St. Mihail (marked with red on map 2) is just at 750 m west from the site from Argeş Street (marked with yellow on Map 2). The discoid pendant from St. Mihail (Fig. 6), according to the author of the discovery,

[14] Ibid.: 195, fig. VIIC. 46 a-b.
[15] Ibid.: 195, fig. VIIC.47.
[16] Ibid.: 197–198, fig. VIIC. 52a –b.
[17] Ibid.: 195-196, fig. VIIC. 48a-b.
[18] Ibid.: 196, fig. VIIC.49a-b.
[19] Ibid.: 196–197, fig. VIIC.50-51.
[20] Ignat 1998: 54–56, fig. 40-43.
[21] Lazarovici et al 2011: 199, fig. VIIC. 55.
[22] Merlini 2009: 31, fig. 17; Lazarovici et al 2011: 199–200, fig. VIIC. 56a.
[23] Lazarovici et al 2011: 200–201, fig. VIIC. 58–59.
[24] Ibid.: 204–205, fig. VIIC. 67.
[25] Ibid.: 208, fig. VIIC. 72 b.
[26] Maxim 1999: 72–73, pl. VIII/4; Lazarovici et al 2011: 204, fig. VIIC. 65.
[27] Lazarovici et al 2011: 167–186, fig. VIIC. 6a-b; VIIC.24.
[28] Ibid.: 195, fig. VIIC.46a–b.
[29] Ibid.: 197–198, fig. VIIC.52a–b.
[30] Ibid.: 202, fig. VIIC. 60.
[31] Ibid.: 208, fig. VIIC. 72 b.

has good analogies with the pendant-seals.[32] Among the discovered materials there is a ceramic fragment decorated with a cross.[33]

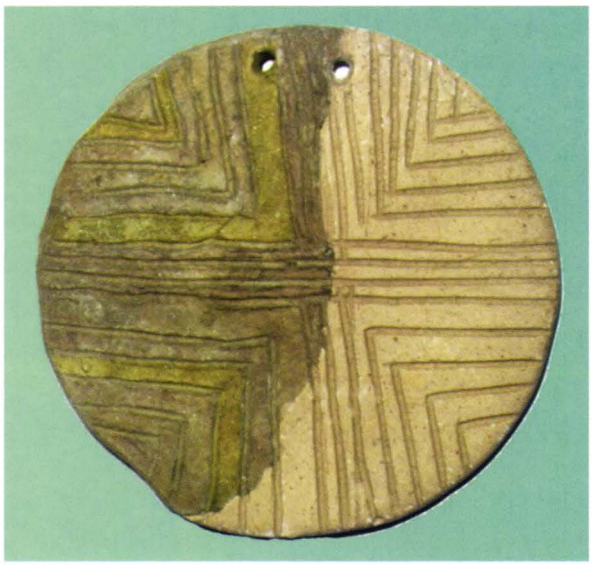


Fig. 6: The tablet from Cluj-Napoca–St. Mihail Church (after Vlassa 1976).

The tablet was broken in the ancient time approximately in half along the axis of the two holes, as a result, it cannot be said if there existed other hole in the low part. If the holes existed on the upper side, then it could be hung like a medallion. If there were holes on the lower part as well, it could have been used as a medallion, or it could have been stitched on a piece of cloth.[34] The tablet is similar in shape and decorative motifs – the cross and the way of attainment of the decor – the incisions and the red painting of the incisions, painting with red and yellow in the spaces between the incisions.

On this tablet, as well, we have the presentation of the same iconographic phenomenon like on the tablet from Cluj-Napoca on the Argeş Street (Fig. 6a): the installment of the four horizontal lines (the horizon, the Earth, the line of the people) cuts the installment by four vertical lines (*axis mundi*, the cosmic tree or shamanic, the sacred pylon). Also, the same idea is present: the intersection of the spiritual world of the Gods with the one of the humans, which appears also in the use of the color yellow – the color of the sun, of light, of the world of Gods or of the spirits[35]: Huitzilopochtli is the God of the midday Sun and he is painted like a victorious warrior in the colors of blue and yellow, and red is the color of the blood, the life, the mortal world.[36] The idea of sky-earth-hell is strengthened by the presence above the four lines of the horizon of two bands painted with yellow; in the inferior part there is just one band, which takes us to a possible interpretation: the superior level with more light – more yellow bands is the world of Gods, and the inferior level the world of the after life; these two are separated by the world of the humans, and the bearer of the pendant-table is special, is the connection between the worlds, or the tablet had the role of a talisman.

The symbol of the cross is very frequently found on different artifacts and has many meanings in prehistory. In the database made by Gh. Lazarovici, the signs on pottery and objects from the Neolithic have the code 127; there is a representation of man; the best analogy is the

[32] Maxim 1999: 72–75, pl. VIII/4; Vlassa 1976: 167, fig. 5/8.
[33] Vlassa 1976: 167, fig. 6; Maxim 1999: 73, pl. IX/2.
[34] Lazarovici et al 2011: 202, fig. VIIC. 65.
[35] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1995, vol. 2: 81-84.
[36] Ibid.: vol. 3: 171–174.

symbol 127g,[37] or the symbol 127a.[38] The cross is also found on the circular tablet described by Lazarovici et al.[39] In the classification of Shan M. M. Winn, the cross is marked with DS 220 and is considered a "symbol quasi-sign"[40]

The symbol of the cross is found on the tablets from Tărtăria, Cluj-Napoca, Karanovo, and Zorlenţu Mare. The mark in the form of a cross appears also on the bottoms of vessels, on idols, or on whorls, but cannot be interpreted because the reading position is unknown.[41] On the bottom of a vessel found at Turdaş appears a cross inscribed in a flower, or a clover with four leaves? Or maybe it can be interpreted as a cross with the sides rounded.[42] It can also be found on different parts of pots in the Orăştie settlement–*Dealul Pemilor point X2*.[43] and on a fragmentary whorl decorated with brands which can be interpreted as a tablet with a central perforation.[44] The cross can also be interpreted as an image of a human.[45]

Regarding the symbol of the cross as a decorative motif on the tablet from Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, number 24 (Fig. 6a), we can assume that the vertical line represents an axis mundi,[46] the cosmic tree stylized, even the shamanic tree or the sacred pylon, with the help of which the shaman realized the journey, the pylon placed in the center of the Universe. Axis mundi, the vertical line, makes the connection between the sky–world of the Gods, and the Earth–world of the mortals, represented by the horizontal line where the Sun rises and sets (the two perforations) and the world beyond – inferno. The horizontal line can be considered a representation of man, or of the shaman who climbs on the axis mundi, on the cosmic tree, the shamanic tree towards the Gods, or descends to hell; or it is the cosmic tree with its roots in the after world. The one who wears it has the attributes offered by the tablet to make the connection between the Sky, Earth and the after world.

Regarding the belief of the Kwakiutl people, a copper pylon crosses through the after world, Earth and the Sky; where the pylon enters in the sky there is *the Gate of the World Above.* The Milky Way is just the image, visible on the sky, of the sacred pylon. This axis of the world which is visible during the night through the Milky Way, is represented in the house of worship under the form of a sacred pylon.[47] The houses of the tribes from the arctic place, north–America and north –Asia have a pylon in the center considered to be the axis mundi, sacred pylon or the tree of the world.[48]

---

[37] Lazarovici 2009a: 65, 69/ Table B1.
[38] Lazarovici et al 2011: 168, fig. VIIC. 7.
[39] Ibid.: 167-168, fig. VIIC. 6a-b.
[40] Winn 2009: 58,
[41] Maxim et al 2009: 143.
[42] Ibid.: 151, Cat. 91.
[43] Luca 1997: 61, pl. X/4; XIII/13: 17; XVII/12; XXXII/8; XXXVIII/4.
[44] Ibid.: 37, pl. XXXII/5; the author is not excluding its utilization as an amulet.
[45] Maxim et al 2009: 151.
[46] Eliade 1992: 237–238.
[47] Eliade 2005: 29–32.
[48] ibid.: 43–44.

The cross is a symbol of the Centre of the World, situated at the intersection of the axis, but also of the lines of energy which start from this Centre. It is a model of the wholeness of the universe but also of the man with his arm opened up towards an anthropomorphic divinity.[49] It can be associated with the Sun as well, having the same idea as radiation of energy from a centre. Indicating the four cardinal points it symbolizes the Sun and its way on the sky. The cross is an intersection of the road of life and the road of death. In the cross, Sky and Earth mingle, but also the time and space; it is the symbol of the mediator, of the one who, through its very permanent nature, brings the universe in one place, the communication between the Sky and Earth, from above, below, and vice versa.[50] The cross in Christianity in made out of *the tree of good and evil*, so the Cosmic Tree is described as an undying tree which stands in the centre of the Universe, in the middle of the Sky and Earth, supporting the universe; the cross ensures the communication with the sky, and salvation.[51]

The cross on the tablet from Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, may also be considered a symbolic representation of the clover with four leaves, which it is said that Eve took with her from the Garden of Eden after the banishment.[52] A superstition encountered almost in every present population is that the clover with four leaves brings good-luck. This thing is due to its rarity, also to the fact that, statistically, the chances to find one is 1 in 10000, so the one who finds a clover with four leaves can consider himself lucky.

The symbolism of the cross is encountered also in the folk custom of Caloian, in which the doll of *Caloian,* considered to be a representation of an archaic God of vegetation: St. Sun, the Mother or the Father of the Sun, the Mother of Drought, the Mother of Rain,[53] is buried at the crossroads or at the road junction. The burial here is considered a strengthening of the rain spell, the cadaver of the drought being bound through a terrestrial knot;[54] it can also be buried at the bottom of a cross.[55] People sing: "...Căloianule *open the doors for the rain to pour...* " or "...*Get up, get up mother of rain and open the wells/ for the rivers to flow on every fields...* "[56] After three or four days or six weeks, the doll was dug up and before it is broken and thrown away it was said: *"the father of the sun is dead and the mother of the rain is revived."*[57] Anyway, the cross is how they the bound and strengthened the magic of rain.

The tablet from Cluj-Napoca, Argeş Street, represents an important piece in deciphering beliefs of the Zau population, even though some aspects we can only assume. This tablet represents only a small part of the complexity of the Neolithic spirituality. We can say that the tablet is a symbol of the connection sky-earth-inferno and of the connection between the humans with the world of Gods and the After World.

---

[49] Evseev 1998: 100.
[50] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1995, vol. 1: 395-405.
[51] Eliade 1986, vol. II: 388–389.
[52] Gibson 1993: 146.
[53] Pop 1989: 145-170.
[54] Ciubotariu and Ciubotariu 1985: 118-120
[55] Ibid.: 119; Pop 1989: 155.
[56] Ciubotariu and Ciubotariu 1985: 129-131.
[57] Pop 1989: 165.

References

Ciubotariu, H., and S. Ciubotariu. 1985. *Obiceiuri agrare – O dominantă a culturii populare din Moldova*, Anuar de lingvistică şi istorie literară. Tomul XXIX, B. Iaşi.

Chevalier, J., and A. Gheerbrant. 1995. *Dicţionar de simboluri. Mituri, Vise, Obiceiuri, Gesturi, Forme, Figuri, Culori, Numere*, vols. 1–3. Bucureşti.

Colesniuc, S. M. 2008. *Cultura Zau.* Rezumatul tezei de doctorat. Sibiu.

Dumitrescu, H, and Gh. Lazarovici. 1984–1986. "Cercetările arheologice de la Tăualaş-Deva (partea I)." *ActaMN* XXI, 1984: 3–44; *(partea a II-a), ActaMN*, XXII-XXIII, 1985–1986: 3–40.

Eliade, M. 1986. *Istoria credinţelor şi ideilor religioase.* Bucureşti.

_____1992. *Tratat de Istorie a Religiilor*. Bucureşti.

_____2005. *Sacru şi profane.* Bucureşti.

Evseev. I. 1998. *Dicţionar de magie, demonologie şi mitologie românească*, Timişoara.

Gibson, C. 1993. *Semne şi simboluri.* Bucureşti.

Ignat, D. F. 1998. *Grupul cultural neolitic Suplacu de Barcău*. Timişoara.

Lazarovici, Gh. 1987. "'Şocul" Vinča C în Transilvania." *ActaMP* 11: 37–38.

_____1987a. "Prospecţiuni şi cercetări arheologice de salvare pe teritoriul municipiului şi judeţului Cluj." *ActaMN* XXII-XXIII: 723–752.

_____1991. *Cultura Vinča în România.* Timişoara.

_____1994. "Der Vinča C-Schock im Banat. Relations Thraco-Illyro-Helleniques." *Actes du XIVe Symposium International de Thracologie.* M. Alexianu and P. Roman, eds., 62–100.Bucharest.

_____1995. "Über das Frühneolithikum im sud-Osten Europas (I. Rumänien." In *Kulturraum Mittlere und Untere Donau. Traditionen und Perspektiven des Zusammenlebens (Spaţiul cultural al Dunării Mijlocii şi inferioare. Tradiţii şi perspective ale convieţuirii),* 33-55. Reşiţa.

_____2009. "Cultura Zau." In *Ten years after: The Neolithic of south-east of Balkans, as uncovered by the last decade of Research.* Proceedings of the Conference held at the Museum of Banat on November 9th–10th. Fl. Draşovean, D. L. Ciobotaru, and M. Maddison, eds., 179-217. Timişoara.

_____2009a. "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life." In *Signs of Civilizations. Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Proceedings from the International Symposium Signs of Civilization. Novi Sad, Serbia, May 25-29 2004. J. Marler, and M. R. Dexter, eds., 63–86. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

_____2010. "Cronologia absolută, relativă şi evoluţia culturii Zau." In *Identităţi culturale locale şi regionale în context european. Studii de arheologie şi antropologie istorică; In memoriam Alexandri V. Matei.* H. Pop, I. Bejinariu, S. Băcueţ-Crişan, and D. Băcueţ-Crişan, eds., 55–73. Cluj–Napoca.

_____2010a. "Evolution, absolute and relative chronology of the Zau Culture." In *Studies on the Chronology and Cultural Development of South-Eastern and Central Europe in Earlier Prehistory. Presented to Juraj Pavúk on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday. Studia Archaeologica et Mediaevalia* XI, MMX, PANTA RHEI. J. Šuteková, P. Pavúk, P. Kalábková, and B. Kovár,eds., 115–129. Bratislava.

Lazarovici, Gh., L. Ghergari, and C. Ionescu, eds. 2002. "Artefacte ceramice din neoliticul mijlociu în Transilvania: cultura CCTLNI din staţiunea Zau (jud. Mureş)." *Angustia* 7: 7–18.

Lazarovici, Gh., C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 2011. *Tărtăria and the sacred tablets.* Cluj-Napoca.

Luca, S. A. 1997. *Aşezări neolitice pe valea Mureşului (I). Habitatul turdăşean de la Orăştie – Dealul Pemilor (punct X2).* Alba Iulia.

Maxim, Z. 1999. *Neo-eneoliticul din Transilvania.* BMN XIX. Cluj-Napoca.

Maxim, Z., Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, M. Merlini. 2009. "Catalogue of Signs."*The Danube Script in light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries.* Z. Maxim, J. Marler, and V. Crişan, eds., 133-165. Cluj-Napoca.

Merlini, M. 2005. "The 'Danube Script' and the Gradešnica Platter. A Semiotic Study based on most recent autopsy of the Bulgarian item." In *Prehistoric Archaeology and Anthropological Theory and Education. RPRP* 6–7. L. Nikolova and J. Higgins, eds., 57–76. Salt Lake City – Karlovo: International Institute of Anthropology.

_____2009. "The Danube Script and Turdaş. The Script-like Signs found by Baroness Zsófia von Torma." In *The Danube Script in light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria discoveries.* Z. Maxim, J. Marler, and V. Crişan, eds., 21–44. Cluj-Napoca.

Pop, D. 1989. *Obiceiuri agrare în tradiţia populară românească.* Cluj-Napoca.

Vlassa, N. 1976. *Neoliticul Transilvaniei.* Cluj.

Winn, Shan M. M. 2009. "The Danube (Old European) Script. Ritual use of signs in the Balkan-Danube Region c. 5200-3500 BC." In *Signs of Civilizations. The Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Proceedings from the International Symposium Signs of Civilizations-Novi Sad, Serbia, May 25-29 2004. J. Marler, and M. R. Dexter, eds., 49–62. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

A CLAY TABLET DISCOVERED IN THE LATE NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT FROM SÂNANDREI (TIMIŞ COUNTY, SOUTH-WEST OF ROMANIA).

FLORIN DRAŞOVEAN, FLORENTINA MARŢIŞ

The Neolithic settlement from Sânandrei came to the attention of experts after field surveys were performed between 1987 and 1991 by Marius Munteanu and Florin Draşovean. In 1987 they discovered archaeological material dating from the neolithic period and belonging to the Vinča, Tisa and Cultura Banatului cultures.[1] The aforementioned material was located in the south side of the village on a mound that is to this day surrounded by Bega Veche (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Location of Sânandrei site.

The importance of these materials in knowing the neolithic from northern Banat greatly influenced the start of systematical archaeological diggings in that specific tell in 1992. These diggings were finalized in 2012 after researching surface number 4 of 20 x 14 meters, unveiling a 2 meter thick culture layer that was divided in 5 levels. Levels 3 to 5 belong to middle and late neolithic, more specifically to the cultures Cultura Banatului II and Vinča C. From the point of

[1] Draşovean 1994: 413, 1996: 33

view of absolute chronology, the tell began to be inhabited somewhere between the 6th and 5th millenniums, level 5d being dated between 5209/5016-4932/4798 calBC.

In parallel with the systematical archaeological excavations, the tell surface was constantly verified for artifacts that might have resurfaced due to agricultural work. During this process, on the 12th of June 2005, at approximately 20 meters south of surface number 4, a burnt clay tablet[2] of circular shape was discovered in the plow zone.

Unfortunately, because of the location of the artifact, we can not precisely pinpoint to which layer it belonged, nor assign it to a culture. However, after studying the materials discovered in that area, we found that, along with the tablet, there were ceramic materials belonging to the Vinča C2 culture, also burnt daub that came from a surface dwelling damaged by a fire.

By analyzing the entire sequence of layers from the Sânandrei tell, we know that the only level with such burnt dwellings belongs to the Vinča C2 culture and the fact that the tablet was burned twice is another clue that it might belong to this level, maybe even from the dwelling itself. Based on this evidence, although indirect, we suggest the hypothesis that the tablet indeed belongs to the Vinča C2 culture.

The irregular oval shaped tablet, measuring 6.1 x 5.4 centimeters and 1.2 centimeters thick, is made of well kneaded homogeneous clay that has been mixed with fine sand and small crushed potsherds. The facets are smoothed out with care with traces of polishing still present on certain areas. We can not deduct the color given by the initial burn of the tablet, but the secondary one gave it a brick-red hue.

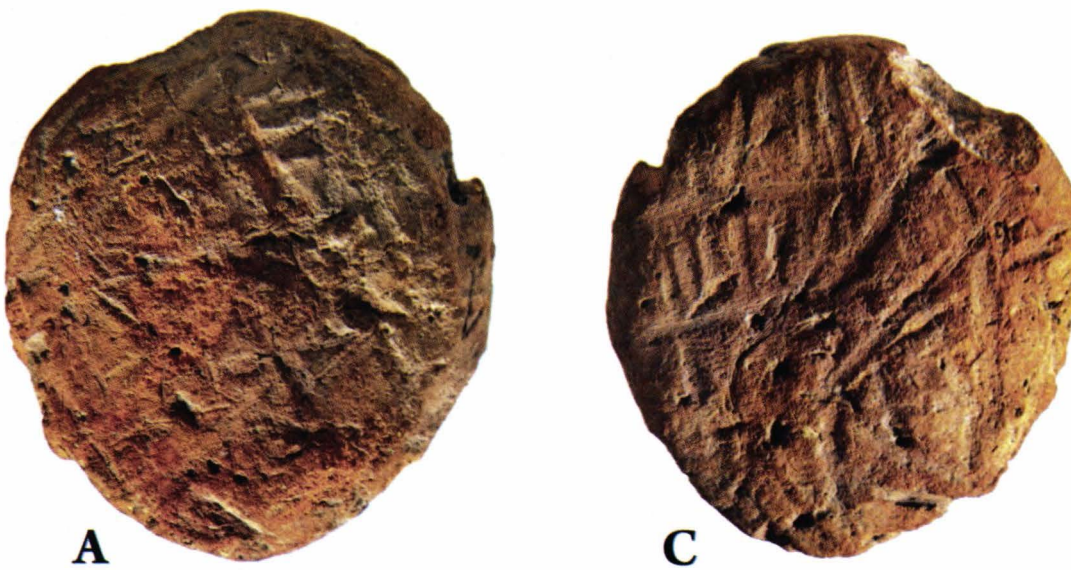


Fig. 2 A-C: Burnt clay tablet from the Sânandrei tell, Vinča C2 culture.

[2] The tablet was discovered by Florentina Marţiş, member of the research team, that is also responsible for the graphic illustration of this study, while Milan Şepeţan, from the Timişoara Banat Museum, took the photographs.

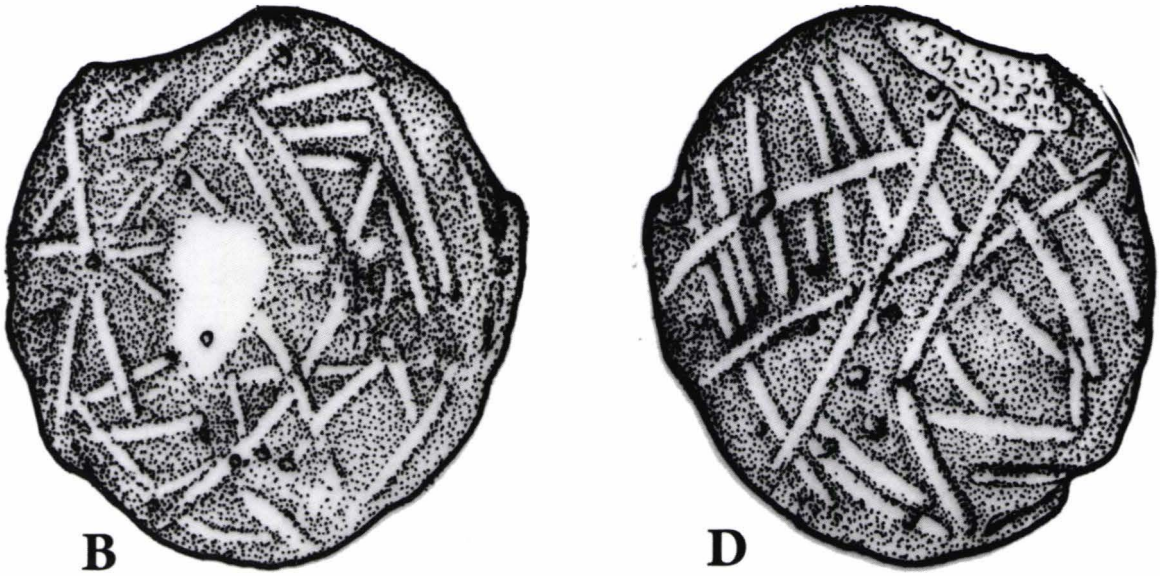


Fig. 2 B-D: Burnt clay tablet from the Sânandrei tell (drawing showing engraved features).

On the two facets, shallow incisions can be noticed, 2mm broad. Forming a network of parallel overlapping lines facing more than one direction. On the edge of the tablet there are notches and pricks. By studying the positioning of these lines we can specify with a high degree of accuracy the stages, the manner and the succession in which they were made.

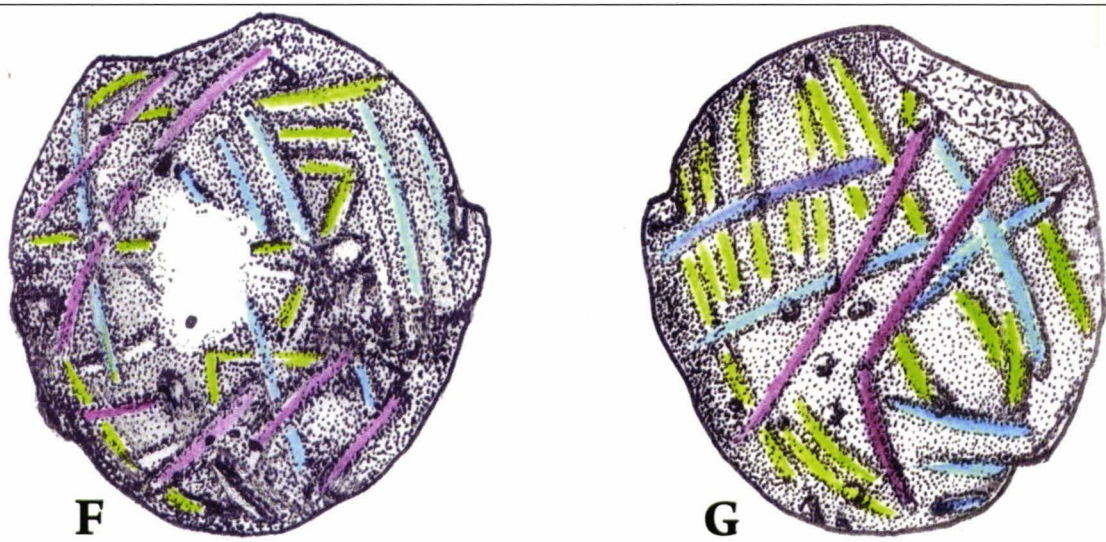
The macroscoic details point to the fact that special care and attention were given to preparing the materials starting from the choosing of the clay, its kneading and the blending with fine sand and crushed fragments. The same special care was given to smoothing and polishing the surfaces without any preferential treatment noticeable. The next stage of the process dealt with making the incisions on the two facets by using a blunt instrument.

Judging by the depth of the lines and the paths that they take, we notice that the incising procedure started on one facet, that we shall call obverse (Fig. 2A, C). Here, on a slightly domed central area the lines don't go as deep with visible signs of deterioration due to the fact that, after making the incisions, notches and pricks, the tablet was turned over for similar operations on the opposite facet (the reverse: Fig. 2B, D). Because of the tablet's contact with the palm of the hand during its crafting and the pressure it was subjected to, parts of the central area of the surface are blurred and unclear. Further damage was made by the effects of the secondary burning that the tablet suffered which lead to the exfoliation of a part in the central area of the obverse.

After studying the overlapping of incisions we noticed the stages in which the signs were executed. In the first stage, on the obverse (Fig. 2F), short parallel lines were made that seem to have an angular incision at the center (Fig. 2F, colored in brown).These were done with the caution imposed by the altering of the paths of the incisions and by the damaging of the central area. Over these short lines, long parallel obliquely arranged lines were incised (Fig. 2F, colored in blue) that are themselves overlapped by more oblique lines (Fig. 2, colored in green) that seem

more present on the margins of the surface. In the last stage, the obverse was pricked with a sharp instrument, different from the one used for incising.

E



F G

Fig. 2 E, F, G: Clay tablet's engraved features.

On this facet of the tablet we ascertain a modification in the pressure applied on the incising instrument, a fact that triggered fluctuations of depth in the incisions' duct, not only during the same stage of crafting but also in the case of the same incision.

On the reverse of the tablet (Fig. 2G), in spite of a few less visible lines that intersect, the stages of execution are much more clear. In the first stage, groups of long parallel lines were incised, all in the same direction, that alternate with short lines (Fig. 2G, colored in brown). Over these aforementioned incisions, transverse non-parallel ones were executed (Fig. 2G, colored in blue), all being overlapped by long slant incisions (Fig. 2G, colored in brown). Near the end of the process the reverse was also pricked with a sharp object, different from the one used for the incisions. By making a comparative analysis on the placement of pricks on both facets of the tablet we can conclude that they are mainly present only on one half of the surface of the piece. If we turn it over, the surface with pricks is situated on the opposite side of the hand that held the tablet.

By looking at the certain signs on the edge of the tablet that overlap lines placed on the reverse, we can say that pricking the reverse was followed by pricking the edge, the last process in the crafting of the tablet (Fig. 2E). By analyzing the shape of the lines, their placement and the pricks on the tablet from Sânandrei, we establish that these do not belong in the category of

signs that could be considered as part of a system of pre-writing, as such system was shaped by certain discoveries in south-eastern Europe.[3]

However if we observe the stages in which the signs and pricks were made more carefully we can deduce the gestures that led to their making. We know that the shaping of the tablet and the finishing of its surfaces were concluded before applying the signs. After the shaping and finishing, while holding the tablet in the palm of the hand, signs were applied on the obverse in the stages mentioned above, lines and pricks, without detecting the intention of combining or purposefully associating them. We also find it of great importance that the depth of incisions on the obverse is uneven, not only during the same stage of execution but in the case of the same incision. We think this was not caused by the hesitation of the one that crafted it but by a movement of the body that generated an oscillating pressure of the instrument on the clay.

After finalizing the process on the obverse, the tablet was turned over and the process resumed with only slight differences, ending it with the pricking of the edge and the burning. All these details lead us to the idea that the tablet had another use, being directly connected to the practice of magic.

In magic, be it white or black, there are agents (magicians) involved, acts (rites) and representations.[4] The representations are the objects through which, by the power of incantations of the word, energy is transmitted towards a person – beneficial in case of white magic, or harmful in case of black magic. The representations can be personal objects belonging to someone but also amulets or statuettes specifically crafted for the magical act itself.[5] We believe that this tablet, which is the focus of this study, is one of these representations, shaped by the magician and, through pronounced magical formulas—assumed by the movements performed by the body during the incantations —combined with the incising and pricking of the tablet, had the purpose of directing occult forces towards the desired person.

We conclude with a reminder that almost two decades ago, also at Sânandrei, there was another such representation discovered, more specifically the head of a statuette used, this time, in a ritual of black magic.[6] The head was found in the same area as the tablet, a fact that may not be pure coincidence.

Translated by Sorin Baias

[3] Chohadziev 2006, обр. 158; Haarmann 2008; Lazarovici 2008; Merlini 2008; 2011; Todorović 1969; Winn 1981; Бонев 1982, обр. 2; Николов 1974, обр. 68, 69; Миков, Георгиев, Георгиев 1969, обр. 2; Станев1995, обр. 2; Стоянов 1994, обр. 1,2; Тодорова 1986, обр. 116; Тодорова и кол. 1983, Табло 89, 1-3.
[4] Mauss and Hubert 1996: 33-108.
[5] Draşovean 1997.
[6] Draşovean 2005.

References

Chohadzhiev, St. 2006: *Slatino – Prehistoric Settlements.* Veliko Tîrnovo.

Draşovean, F. 1994: "Die Stufe Vinča C im Banat." *Germania* 72, 2: 409-425.

_____1996: *Cultura Vinča târzie în Banat. Relaţiile cu vecinii.* Timişoara.

_____1997: "Art and Black Magic in the Vinča Culture." In *The Neolithic of the Middle Danube Region.* F. Draşovean, ed., 205-212. Timişoara.

_____2005: "Despre unele practici de magie neagră din neoliticul bănăţean. O abordare etno-arheologică." *Analele Banatului, Seria Etnografie* VI: 5-12.

Haarmann, H. 2008: "A Comparative View of the Danube Script." In *The Danube Script. Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* J. Marler, ed.,11-22. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Lazarovici, G. 2008: "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life. *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 94-125.

Mauss, M., and H. Hubert. 1996: *Teoria generală a magiei.* Iaşi: Ed. Polirom.

Merlini, M. 2008. "Evidence of the Danube Script in Neighboring Areas." In *The Danube Script. Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* J. Marler, ed., 53-60. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

_____2011: "A comparison between the signs from Tărtăria, Danube Script and other early writings. In *Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets.* G. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, eds., 263-335. Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Mega.

Todorović, J. 1969: "Written signs in the Neolithic cultures of Southeastern Europe." *Archlug* X, 77-84.

Winn, S. M. M. 1981. *Pre-writting in Southeastern Europe. The Sign System of the Vinča Culture ca. 4000 B.C.* Calgary.

Бонев, Ал. 1982: "Глинена чашка със знаци от селищната могила да с Овчарово, Търговищки окръг." *Археология* 3-4: 32-34.

Миков, В., Г. И. Георгиев, Вл. И. Георгиев. 1969: "Надписът върху кръглия печат от Караново - най-древната писменост в Европа." *Археология* 1: 4-12.

Николов, Б. 1974. *Градешница.* С.

Станев, П. 1995: "Най-ранната знакова система в неолита на Югоизточна Европа." - В: *Палеобалканистика и старобългаристика* (Първи есенни национални четения "проф. Ив. Гълъбов"). С, 103-111.

_____2002: *Самоводене. Неолитна селищна могила.* Велико Търново.

Стоянов, Г. 1994: "Глинена плочка с писмени знаци от халколита." *Анали,* 2-3: 12-24.

Тодорова и кол., Х. 1983: "Овчарово." *РП* 9.

_____1986: *Каменно-медната епоха в България (пето хилядолетие преди новата ера).* С, 1986.

THE SACRED *CRYPTOGRAMS* FROM TĂRTĂRIA: UNIQUE OR WIDESPREAD SIGNS? PUTTING THE ASSERTED LITERATE CONTENT OF THE TABLETS UNDER SCRUTINY

MARCO MERLINI

Three inscribed tablets[1] from the tell settlement of Tărtăria – *Groapa Luncii* (near Turdaş, in Romania, Alba county)[2] have been a focal point, since the time of their discovery in 1961, in a fierce debate concerning location and chronology of the cradle regions where writing technology originated.[3] Although evidence of the same and similar signs had been already known and investigated thanks to the excavations carried out in late IX and early XX century at the chief prehistoric sites of Turdaş, Vinča, and others, the Tărtăria inscribed finds became the icons of the Danube script, i.e., the mainly non-linguistically based system of writing that developed throughout the Neolithic and Copper Age time-frame in Southeastern–Central Europe.

Sometimes events do not change the course of history through direct and immediate actions, but as a result of collateral effects. In the last few years the possibility that the Transylvanian tablets could hold the *most ancient European library* has stimulated the re-examination of the archaeological material found in the last century and a half in the Danube basin. In a number of locations, the investigations still in progress have allowed the re-evaluation of hundreds of inscribed artifacts that predate the Sumerian Proto-cuneiform (pictography and ideography) and Egyptian hieroglyphics by more than one millennium according to the carbon 14 method. Therefore, in the last few years a very fast accumulation of archaeological evidence has occurred, supporting the thesis that literacy existed in Neolithic and Copper Age times in the Balkan-Danube region. European *ars scribendi* sprang mainly from Starčevo-Criş (Körös) communities and subsequently from the early Vinča culture carriers.

According to evidence from the archaeo-semiotic databank *DatDas* (Databank for the Danube script) that the author has been developing for the last eleven years, the earliest experiments with writing technology started in present-day Romania and Serbia around 6000-5900 BCE at Starčevo-Criş (Körös) IB, IC horizon—some two thousand years earlier than any other known writing. The Danube script flourished until around 3500 BC when a social upheaval took place: according to some, there was an invasion of new populations, whilst others have hypothesized the emergence of new elite. The Karanovo VI–Gumelniţa–Kodžadermen (mainly

---

[1] Unless otherwise specified, all the photos of the tablets have been shot by Marco Merlini in the years 2002-2012. Since the tablets, as sacred objects, were originally shown to the believers at Tărtăria, the horizontal coordinates (left-right) are described from the observation point of the viewer and not from the artifacts themselves (mirror effect). The Tărtăria signs are incised, not impressed, as claimed by some authors (see, e.g.,Tringham 1971: 114).

[2] Viz Moga and Ciugudean 1995.

[3] For an archaeo-semiotic investigation of the sign system employed at Tărtăria, where archaeological context provides insights for examining the sign analysis, and this, in turn, is utilized as a filter for archaeological data, see Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, eds. 2011, and in particular Merlini 2011d, 2011e.

in Bulgaria but also in Romania), and the Cucuteni A3–A4–Trypillya B (in Ukraine) were the last important Middle Copper Age cultural complexes that employed the Danube script.[4]

Archaeo-semiotic evidence of early European experiment with literacy collides with widespread historical clichés based on the diffusionistic paradigm *Ex Oriente Lux*. Indeed, chronological and graphic motives exclude outside influences on the formation of the Danube sign system, either from the drift from east to west of the concept of writing, or in terms of any significant contribution to inventory and space organization of the signs.[5] Writing technology was a cultural innovation that Southeastern Europe achieved from the foundation of its own cultural identity. It was a component of a wide range of civilizational innovations natively generated or, when imported (as metallurgy and pottery), locally metabolized and developed. Close examination of the sign types and organization of the reading space employed by the Danube script demolishes traditional statements that writing technology, or at least the idea of writing, were spread by the plough of the earliest farmers from the Near East to the Danube Basin and beyond, or were culturally transmitted from the Orient. Consistently, the Neolithic and Copper Age cultures of the Danube Basin should be placed within the cradle of early civilization.[6]

However, even if the Tărtăria tablets are considered a main symbol of the Danube script, are there enough semiotic elements to maintain that they express a form of writing? The Transylvanian signs are believed to be a very early form of literacy by a growing number of scholars, but too often the recognition of these marks as script or similar to script is spontaneous and maintained uncritically.

In previous works,[7] I have evidenced significant script-like elements from Tărtăria as inferable by the technical analysis of the signs, which established that they are not spontaneously created marks but produced according to precise semiotic rules. Indeed, the signs appear to be intentional, distinctive, elementary, highly stylized and, represented with a conventional shape conformed to a precise and systematic inventory. They are outlined with a similar type of style and size within the same inscription, but are incised with a non-homogeneous grade of pressure.

The high value (magic-religious potency?) of the signs incised on the Tărtăria tablets is evidenced by their unchangeable shape, which is even underlined. First, the imperative to preserve the integrity of their shape induced the "scribe" to deviate the central horizontal register-line around the edge of the left side of the rounded tablet in order to avoid running into the bow+arrow sign due to a fragment of ceramic. Second, the contour of several signs has been further marked by a white substance to well identify and emphasize their outline.[8]

In the present article, further semiotic criteria and statistical filters are applied to put under scrutiny the hypothesis that the Transylvanian engravings actually record texts of the

[4] Merlini 2009a.
[5] Haarmann 2002; Merlini 2004a, 2010b.
[6] Merlini 2003. For a survey, see Merlini 2003, 2004a, 2009c.
[7] Merlini 2006b, 2007a, 2008a, 2009a, 2009d, 2011d, 2011d; Lazarovici, Lazarovici, and Merlini 2011.
[8] Lazarovici, Lazarovici, and Merlini 2011.

Danube script. In particular, the possible graphic convergence (shape of the signs and their organization in space) is investigated, between the marks on the Tărtăria tablets with signs and inscriptions of the Danube script. The intriguing questions to be faced are two: Is there graphic parallelism between the Transylvanian engravings[9] and the sign-types registered in the inventory of the Danube script? Does the spatial pattern of sign organization utilized at Tărtăria match the scheme occurring in the inscriptions of the Danube script in a consistent way, in terms of structure and order of information?

Clues of indigenous literacy at Tărtăria?

Every system of writing employs a catalogue of signs, and each list is distinct, defined, and limited. An inventory constitutes a precise and predetermined corpus of signs and not an account of marks drawn according to the writer's individual expression or improvisation. The presence of an inventory of signs is one of the five essential elements of any system of writing which distinguishes *ars scribendi* from other communicational channels, such as calendars, symbols, accounting systems, heraldic markings, emblematic decorations, astro-marks, divinity identifiers, etc.[10] The author has extracted the inventory of the Danube script from his archaeo-semiotic databank *DatDas*.[11] *DatDas* is at the present a catalogue of 5,836 actual signs recorded from the corpus of 1,294 inscriptions composed of two-or-more signs[12] and 1,108 inscribed artifacts (some objects bear more than one inscription) of the Danube civilization. Registering ca. 313,000 significant statistical data, it is the largest collection of inscribed artifacts belonging to the Danube civilization, and the most numerous corpus of inscriptions of the Danube script thus far assembled. *DatDas* restrictedly registers signs of the Danube script (numeric system

[9] The international discussion aimed at giving or denying the value of written documents to the marks engraved on the Tărtăria tablets has an original sin: an incorrect identification of the shape of a number of signs under consideration. The author has recently established the proper sign outlines by direct examination, even through microscope magnification. The corpus of the recognized signs has been published in the chapter "The identification of the actual signs," in Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets (ibid.).

[10] The other four essential benchmarks that define ars scribendi are: the principle of one-to-one equivalence (a sign stands for a single idea or a sound; an idea or a sound is indicated by a single sign); the mandatory expression of concepts and the optional utterance of the sounds of a language (this property implies the possibility of reading a text in a visual way, leaving aside its oral transposition); the utilization of a minimum number of signs (a single or few graphic elements are not enough to substantiate a system of writing); the close character of the system of signs (writing is characterized by a forced systematicity, i.e., signs are associated with different single meanings and are interconnected, and by absence of compositional freedom in the organization of signs to compose packages of information) (Merlini 2004a, 2009d: 13).

[11] The system consists of a database structure related to an interface software that makes it possible to view and query archaeological and semiotic information in an integrated fashion including photographs and drawings.

[12] The single marks that occur on artifacts of the Danube civilization have been excluded by the DatDas list because when a mark appears in isolation it is in general not obvious to establish if it is a sign of writing (with a linguistic label or not), a symbol, an artistic motif, or a divinity identifier. Semiotic tools are sufficient to make a definitive distinction only in some instances (Merlini 2009d: 199 ff., 389). The choice to include in the archaeo-semiotic databank only the inscriptions with two or more signs is broadly explained in the introduction of the chapter "Matrix of semiotic rules and markers for inspecting the internal structuring of the sign system employed by the Danube civilization," in my book An Inquiry into the Danube Script (Merlini 2009d: 170 ff.).

included), and not other kinds of communicative marks of the Danube civilization such as the above-mentioned symbols, emblematic decorations, heraldic markings, and so on.

The markings from Tărtăria[13] are compared below with signs of the Danube script and the mono-signs from the correlated Danube civilization.[14]

Detected signs at Tărtăria	*Sign convergence with the Danube script*	*Sign convergence with mono-signs Danube civilization*
	*YES - DS 013.7*	*YES*
	*PARTIAL – DS 052.0*	*YES*
	*YES - DS 052.0*	*YES*
	*YES - DS 007.0*	*YES*
	*YES - DS 064.0*	*YES*
	*NO*	*NO*
	*NO*	*YES*
	*PARTIAL - DS 107.1 plus DS 018.2*	*NO*
	NO	*YES*
	*YES - DS 004.1*	*YES*
	*YES - DS 020.1a*	*YES*
	*NO*	*YES*
	*NO*	*NO*
	*NO*	*NO*
	*NO*	*NO*
	*YES - DS 032.1*	*YES*
	PARTIAL - DS 033.0	*PARTIAL*
	*PARTIAL - DS 020.3*	*YES*
	NO	*NO*
D	*YES - DS 033.0*	*YES*
O	*YES - DS 071.0*	*YES*
	NO	*NO*

Table 1: List of the signs from Tărtăria compared to the inventories of the Danube script and mono-signs of the Danube civilization.

[13] When avoiding duplications and elements of compound signs, they are twenty.
[14] Merlini 2011e: 326 ff.

Here are some elements that provide evidence of a significant sign convergence of the marks engraved on the Tărtăria tablets with sign types from the inventory of the Danube script:

A) ***High sign resemblance.*** Inspecting the graphic parallels between Tărtăria and the Danube script, the correlation value is high, because 65% of the signs from the former are fully or partially present in the inventory of the latter (nine complete concordances and four imperfect convergences over twenty sign types). The rate of convergences in sign shape arises to 75% if the occurrences of Tărtăria signs as mono-signs on artifacts are counted (fourteen complete concordances and one partial parallelism).

B) ***Presence at Tărtăria of key signs of the Danube script.*** A number of Transylvanian signs such as *y*, ⩾, and))) are very frequently found within inscriptions at numerous literate settlements of the Danube civilization and are pillars of the related script. The *y* is the abstract root-sign registered DS 007.0 in the inventory of the Danube script.[15] It records 118 occurrences within the databank *DatDas*, spread within 113 inscriptions engraved over 108 objects. About 10.5% of the inscribed artifacts bears a text containing one or more *y*s and 8.8% of the inscriptions. It is a long lasting sign of the Danube script, being present along its entire sequence, from the *Formative stage* until the *Eclipse stage*, although it concentrates 81.4% of the occurrences in the Neolithic period and, within it, 44.1% in the Late Neolithic. The Developed–Middle Neolithic culture that most employed the *y*-sign was the Vinča culture: 48.3% of the frequencies within this period. Vinča A (the earliest phase of the Vinča culture, to which the inscribed finds from Tărtăria belong) rated 42.9% within the Vinča culture. In the Danube civilization, the *y* was employed in the whole range of channels for communication: not only in the system of writing, but also in symbolism and emblematic decorations. The fate of the *y* in the Danube civilization evidences temporal movements across landscape and cultures / cultural groups, as well as the way signs disappear in one region only to reappear in others. It indicates solid socio-cultural linkages and effectiveness of a large-scale literacy network.

The Danube script developed along a five-range hierarchical and decentralized communication web.[16] Semiotic resources participated in extended networks, both at regional and inter-regional levels. They travelled broad distances with raw materials, goods, peoples, transmitting symbolic knowledge in both time and space. The script had continued usage in regular aggregation nodes that allowed the socio-cultural networks of literacy to extend beyond the spatial and temporal limitations of individual physical bodies and micro-instances of interaction. Information on writing technology and sign types was transmitted among socio-cultural groups living in close proximity as elements of wider socio-cultural patterns. The *y* finds strict correspondences even at Çatal Höyük.[17]

---

[15] The y is listed as sign 2 in S. Winn's inventory of 1981. Due to a geometrical and not a semiotic approach, the scholar assesses it among the signs derived from a straight line modified by one accessory sign (Winn 1981: 60-61). It is sign DS 125 in S. Winn's 2004 inventory that includes it among the signs observed in various scripts. The y is registered as OE 213a in H. Haarmann's 1995 repertory, and code 49a in Gh. Lazarovici's catalogue of signs and symbols.

[16] Merlini 2009d: 479.

[17] Mellaart 1967, S. VI. A. 50, S. VI. B. 1. and S. E. IV. 1 (this is in an up-down position).

The abstract angle-like sign (V, Λ, >, and <) deserves special attention for scholarship mainly for three unique features. Firstly, its historical importance is linked with religious signification, generally with a feminine reference, often representing a vulva, or an incomplete vulva.[18] Secondly, it originated deep in time from the geometrical revolution occurring during the Upper Paleolithic. Since 26,000-24,000 BCE, this extremely simple geometry, which is very effective in shape variation possibilities, was exploited for communicational needs. Thirdly, the open-angle dominated the graphic expression of Neolithic liturgical objects from 5500 to 3500 BCE[19] due to its frequent occurrence and distinctive position on figurines, cultic vases, and miniature altars--offering tables.

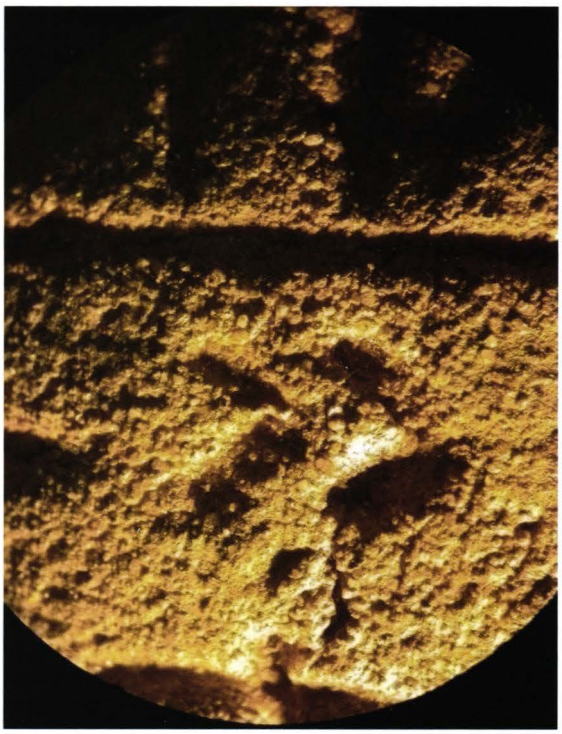


Fig. 1: *The ⩾ sign on the round Tărtăria tablet (photo by Marco Merlini).*

At Tărtăria, the angle-shape is present in the multiplied variation as ⩾ (DS 004.1)[20] on the lower left quadrant of the roundish tablet. It is a variant through duplication of the root-sign > in a horizontal linear sequence[21] (Fig. 1). The 'scribe' created the bi-arrow sign making a pressure with a rounded point held obliquely, and then moving it while going a little deeper. As noticeable in the photo, unfortunately a huge quantity of hydrochloric acid destroyed the contour. There was a lot of calcium in the tablet and the acid descended very deeply.

Even though the engraving comprised of two angles pointing right is quite evident on the tablet,[22] E. Masson rendered it in a curvilinear style as though it was a decorative element.[23] Inexplicably, N. Vlassa depicted the sign as composed of two vertical zigzags in the sketch he made on the page of the museum inventory just after the discovery of the ritual pit-grave of Milady Tărtăria.[24] The Cluj archaeologist recognized incorrectly the ⩾ as a Z> in his last unpublished sketch.[25]

The ⩾ registers twenty occurrences in the database of the Danube script. It is distributed over nineteen inscriptions and eighteen objects. This kind of chevron is a typical sign of the

[18] Bahn and Vertut 1997: 187.
[19] Vasilescu 1992; Merlini 2004a.
[20] This sign is listed neither in Winn 1981 and 2004, nor in Haarmann 1995, nor in Gh. Lazarovici's catalogue of signs and symbols. They all record only the main sign ⩔.
[21] For an examination of this sign at Tărtăria, see Merlini 2011f: 302 ff.
[22] Merlini 2011e: 256.
[23] Masson 1984: 113, fig. 11.
[24] See the draft published for the first time in Merlini 2011e: 241, fig. IX.6.
[25] See the drawing published for the first time in Merlini 2011e: 243, fig. IX.9.

Vinča culture to which the Tărtăria tablets belong.[26] The ≫ sign has a strong association with mignon altars—offering tables and female figurines—which indicates its clustering in the magic-religious sphere. It is also a sign firmly established in the inventory of the Danube script as evidenced by the comparison with the sign lists of the other ancient systems of writing. On the circular tablet from Tărtăria, the sign ≫ represents two flying arrows in abstract style pursuing the target that might be indicated by the sign incised below (≠) with a meaning that unfortunately is obscure.

Three mini) signs occur at the top of the drilled rectangular tablet. They are aligned on the upper edge of the artifact, running over it as three exactly alike signs repeated in a horizontal row.[27] The sequence of closing brackets has been incised with a punctiform technique as corroborated by the related image (Fig. 2). Even if the three small crescents are quite evident, they do not occur in the rough drawing produced by Vlassa on the page of the museum inventory.[28] They have been more correctly rendered in the drawings he published subsequently. However, if the first) on the left is properly represented as curved, the other two are depicted as linear segments with diagonal development.[29] The signs are all arched in publications by S. Winn[30] and E. Masson.[31] From the image I present, one can verify that they are not linear signs, as in Vlassa (unpublished),[32] nor three arrows, as maintained by K. Friedrich.[33] Instead, they depict three slightly curviform crescents.

Fig. 2: *Three))) signs on the oblong Tărtăria tablet show the technique used by the scribe (photo by Marco Merlini).*

DatDas registers the))) as DS 013.7,[34] a variant obtained by the multiplication of the), that is the root-sign DS 013.0 of the Danube script.[35] On a comparative basis with other artifacts

[26] Merlini 2011g: 51.
[27] Merlini 2011e: 247-8.
[28] See the draft published for the first time in Merlini 2011e: 241, fig. IX.6.
[29] Vlassa 1963: 490, fig. 8. This is also Marija Gimbutas' rendering in 1974/1982: 88, fig. 43a.
[30] Winn 1981: 370, fig. 2.
[31] Masson 1984: 113, fig. 11.
[32] The draft was published for the first time in Merlini 2011e: 243, fig. IX.8.
[33] Friedrich online. http://www.magtudin.org/Mystery%20of%20Tatarlaka%20%20Part.%201.htm.
[34] This sign is not listed in Winn's 1981 inventory that registers the specular variant of it, (((. It is sign 133, included in the class of curved lines (Winn 1981: 63). The proper sign is recorded as DS 115 in Winn's inventory of 2004, where it is placed in the category of record-keeping (measurement/quantity?). Haarmann's 1995 repertory accounts the (((as OE 173. It is listed as a complex variant of an abstract basic sign. The (((is code 120 in Gh. Lazarovici's catalogue of signs and symbols.

of the Danube civilization,[36] at Tărtăria, the triple closing bracket might represent a number[37] or, more appropriately, a time marker as in the Indus culture.[38] In particular, the three) may indicate three (crescent) moons or three special months. The 'three *moonths*' sign seems to be a record keeping of a distinct period of time.

C) ***Utilization at Tărtăria of the sophisticated rule to vary abstract root-signs.*** A significant indicator of the close links of the marks on the Tărtăria tablets with the Danube script is the utilization of the technique to vary abstract root-signs. It can either engage a multiplicative procedure of them, as for the above-mentioned ⩾, and)))), or apply diacritical marks to them, as in the case of the *y* varied by a stroke.[39] The sophisticated rule to vary abstract root-signs to enlarge their repertory occurs only in *ars scribendi.*

According to the technique of diacritical marks, an abstract root-sign can be modified by applying to it miniature strokes, crosses, dots and arches to create derivative signs.[40] Signs such as ⩒, ⩔, ⩖, ⩓, ⩕, ⩑, ⩗, ⩘ are examples of diacritical variations of the V. The variations can be simple (when applying only one diacritical mark to the root-sign), or complex (when applying simultaneously two or more diacritical marks to the root-sign).

The sophisticated technique of systematic variations of basic signs using diacritical marks aimed to extend their inventory is characterized by several archaic systems of writing such as the Indus script. This technique was used for the first time in the Danube script.[41] Clues of literacy at Tărtăria are arguable by the significant presence of the above-mentioned sign *y*' (the abstract root-sign *y* modified in shape by a mignon stroke utilized as a diacritic) on the lower left compartment of the pierced oblong tablet, below a tree-bough sign. If the *y* is a pillar abstract root-sign of the Danube script, the stroke is not a proper sign of literacy, but an auxiliary mark aimed to modify the root-sign of reference.

The inclusion of a *y* plus stroke within the same metope highlights their connection in order to express a concept (a word? a phrase?) (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, both the sign and the diacritical mark were strongly affected by the acid treatment at the museum just after the

---

[35] Merlini 2011f: 280-281.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Masson 1984: 118.

[38] Merlini 2011f: 280. The Transylvanian triple) finds a partial graphic similarity with the sign 156 of the Indus script (Parpola 1996: 167, tab. 11.1), where its numerical system used base 10 with the signs 𒐐, 𒐑, 𒐒, representing 10, 20, 30, etc. (Robinson 2002: 285). See also Farmer 2003: 9, 10.

[39] See the approach in Winn 1981: 60 ff.; Gimbutas 1991: 309; Haarmann 1995: 38 ff., 2008a: 31; 2001 online, 2002, 2003, 2009d.Merlini

[40] Diacritical marks are auxiliary marks added to a basic sign. The word derives from the Greek διακρητικός (distinguishing). The diacritical mark can be added over the letter (ō, ŏ, ő), below it (ę, ç), through it (Ø, ø), inside it (Θ), before it (ʻI, ʻO) or after it (lˑ, uˑ). A diacritical mark can be added before or after the consonant that it belongs to (in the case, for example, of vowels in the Bengali alphabet). Some diacritical marks are considered an integral part of the letter they modify, e.g., the stroke over è. The main function of a diacritical mark is to change the phonetic meaning of the related letter. However, the term is also used in the more general sense of modifying the meaning of a letter or even a whole word or concept (see Merlini 2009d: 443).

[41] Haarmann 1998b.

unearthing of the tablets. For this reason they have been incorrectly rendered in literature. They were interpreted as a nearly vertical stroke by N. Vlassa in 1963[42] and by S. Winn in 1981,[43] and were depicted as an opening bracket by N. Vlassa (unpublished). According to E. Masson, the signs are actually a mere abrasion of the sandy clay. The difficulty in identifying the sign *y'* is evidenced by the rough drawing made by Vlassa on the page of the museum inventory that reproduces only an implausible zigzag.

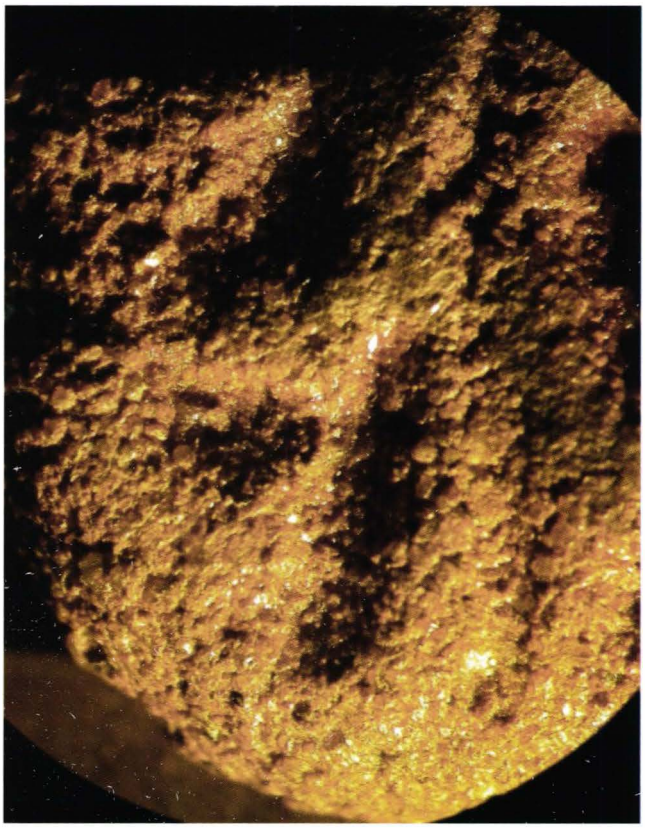


Fig. 3: *The y-like sign plus stroke photographed under a microscope (photo by Marco Merlini).*

Expanding upon the subject of the sign *y'*, this diacritical variation of the *y* is present in several inscriptions of the Danube script. In the core area of the Danube civilization, it occurs since the Developed Neolithic. In the Starčevo–Criş (Körös) IIIB culture, around ca. 5500-5400 CAL BCE,[44] it appears on a potshard from Gornea (Romania) in combination with other signs of the script[45] (Fig. 4).

Significant is the occurrence on a wall of an Anzabegovo–Vršnik IV miniature altar (probably an incense burner or a lamp) from the multi-strata site of Anzabegovo (F.Y.R.O.M.),[46] because the text is framed in horizontally aligned metopes by an upper horizontal line and vertical lines as on the Transylvanian oblong pierced tablet (Fig. 5). Within any cell the reading sequence of the signs is vertical. The *y'* is associated with an E in the only cell that is complete.

The Anzabegovo–Vršnik group evolved on an autochthonous basis, spreading gradually into the entire upper Vadar region throughout the time span ca. 5400-5100 CAL BCE, [47] coeval with the Tărtăria tablets, but culturally synchronizable with the subsequent Vinča B phase.[48] During the IV phase, the group reached the end of its existence, abandoning some settlements due to a lack of natural resources.

[42] Vlassa 1963: 490, fig. 8.
[43] Winn 1981: 370, fig. 3.
[44] Merlini 2009a: 466.
[45] Lazarovici Gh. 1977: XXVI.1, 1979, fig. VIIF, 35, 36.
[46] Korošec and Korošec 1973, tab. XIII.5, section 6/1, 0.3-0.6; Gimbutas 1976: 154, fig. 109b.
[47] Merlini 2009a: 465.
[48] Merlini 2009d: 556, 2011f: 289.

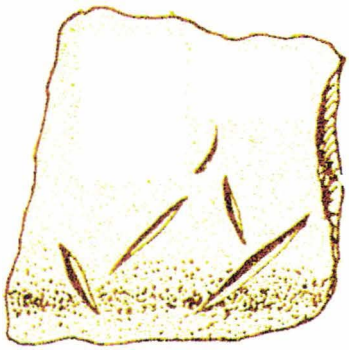


Fig. 4: Signs on a Gornea potsherd, Bulgaria, (after Merlini 2009: 510).

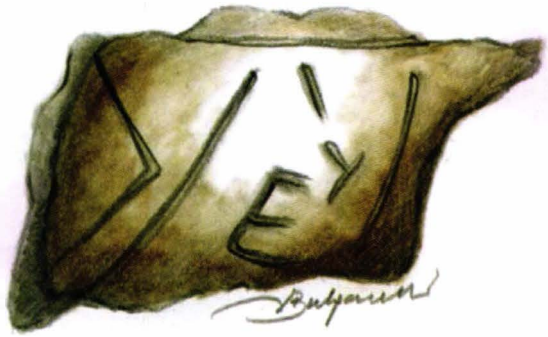


Fig. 5: Signs on a Anzabegovo-Vršnik IV fragment from Anzabegovo site, F.Y.R.O.M. (after D. Bulgarelli @ Prehistory Knowledge Project).

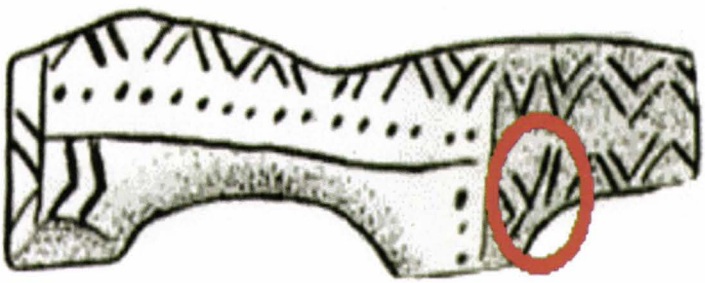


Fig. 6: y sign on a miniature altar from Lukanovo darvo, Bulgaria (after Bulgarelli @ Prehistory Knowledge Project).

Fig. 6a: Detail of signs on miniature altar from Lukanovo darvo.

In the Bulgarian Middle Neolithic, the *y*' occurs on walls of a miniature altar from Lukanovo darvo (near the village of Gradeshnitsa, Bulgaria)[49] (Fig. 6). In the Vinča C culture, the *y*' is preeminently positioned on a potshard from Vršac–*At* (Republic of Serbia).[50] The *y*' is present on several Tisza–Herpály–Csöszhalom potshards from the rim area discovered at Čoka–*Kremenyák* (southeastern Hungary).[51] It also occurs on a Butmir I potshard from the eponymous settlement.[52]

The *y*' is a central element positioned on the breasts of a Varna I upright female statuette. The breasts are small, fixed to the torso, and the sequence of signs is shallow, incised at their left, right, and between them (Fig. 7). The statuette was discovered in an empty grave (*kenotaph*) at the prehistoric necropolis of Durankulak (Dobrich region, Bulgaria). It is 24.3 cm high and is dated to 4550–4450 CAL BCE.[53] The head is modeled in triangular-cubic proportions. The nose

[49] Nikolov 1992, fig. 10.3.
[50] Jovanović 1981: 144, 171.
[51] Banner 1960, pl. VI.11; Merlini 2009d: 263, fig. 5.181, 597.
[52] Perić 1995, tav. XV/7.
[53] Vajsov 2002: 257-266, pl. 251; Todorova et al. 2002, tab. 71, 17-18.

protrudes in relief with an oval tip. On the left arm, she wears a copper bracelet in a rectangular shape. The pubic triangle is marked with incised lines.

Below, a geometrical incised decoration occurs, most probably showing clothing on the preserved part of the right thigh of the figurine. Even though the tomb had no human corpse, the anthropomorphic stylized figure was buried in it, and it was filled with funerary goods, including offering vessels with lids, a blade of silex, and six pearls made of malachite.[54]

The comparison of the Transylvanian *y'* with the same mark as a sign of the Danube script on artifacts of the Danube civilization indicates that this diacritical variant of the root-sign *y* is typical of the literacy that developed throughout Neolithic and Copper Age in the Danube Basin. If the *y* is part of the set of key marks appearing in the whole range of channels for communication (through ornamental design, symbolic meaning and, finally, texts from the system of writing), the *y'* occurs restrictedly within the script framework. It is a permanent variation of the *y*, occurring throughout the whole sequence of the Danube script from the Formative to the Eclipse stage. The diacritical dash adds a qualification/attribute to one of the more frequent root-signs of the Danube script. Unfortunately, its meaning completely escapes us.

Fig. 7: The sign on a female figurine with copper armlet and pictogram from Durankulak, Bulgaria (courtesy F-MUSEUM project 2009).

D) *Sign repetition in a single inscription.* The sign (DS 064.0)[55] is addressed by *DatDas* among the pictographic/ideographic signs depicting items of material culture (e.g., tools, utensils, implements with different functions, vehicles). It appears twice on the drilled rectangular Transylvanian tablet. Skeptics who reject the occurrence of an archaic script in Southeastern Europe throughout the Neolithic and Copper Age time-frame hold up a supposed low incidence of sign reiteration in single inscriptions as a smoking gun to disprove its

[54] Todorova et al. 2002.

[55] It is listed as sign 184 in S. Winn's 1981 inventory, and is located among the pictograms. It is sign DS 172 in Winn's inventory of 2004, where it is inserted inside the category of the ideographs/pictographs. However, the DS 198 is a sign that fits more precisely the evidence in the outline from Tărtăria. The clepsydra shape is OE 58 in H. Haarmann's 1995 repertory, which records it among the highly stylized ideographic signs with a possible naturalistic origin. It is code 50j1 in Gh. Lazarovici's catalogue of signs and symbols.

existence.[56] However, it is a claim without any statistical support. Sign repetition in a single inscription, turned off from any symmetrical intention to compose a frieze, as on the tablet under investigation, strongly indicates the occurrence of writing technology.

The presence of sign recurrence in the same text is not an isolated wonder that appears only at Tărtăria, but occurs in many other inscriptions belonging to the Danube script. For example, a multiple repetition of five signs occurs on a mignon globe from Lepenski Vir: the X recurs seven times (five times as an isolated sign, one time in duplicate form, and one time in a compound sign), the + reappears six times, the ↓, the II, and the ⥣ three times, and finally the ↑ two times. The hourglass-like sign recurs six times in the databank *DatDas*. In the Developed–Middle Neolithic, it clusters in the Vinča A1 and Vinča A2, to which the tablets from Tărtăria belong.

E) ***Magic-religious quintessence of the signs.*** The social function of the Tărtăria signs, as far as it can be reconstructed from the archaeological record and the semiotic investigation, points to a predominantly magic-religious context. The presence on the Tărtăria tablets of features of the Danube script does not collide with the nature of paraphernalia of these artifacts. The Danube civilization developed literacy mainly in the form of a sacred system of writing to express magic-religious beliefs and to be employed in liturgies. It was not primarily utilized for commercial transactions or for recording administrative documents, but for communicating with super-human forces, as well as within the human sphere with reference to magic-religious affairs (among practitioners, believers, village or tribal leaders, neighboring settlements, etc.). Graphic transcriptions show a spectacular mental advance, but not yet an urgent commercial administration. Inscriptions have often been found on objects connected with a spiritual context: tablets–plates (as those recovered at Tărtăria), clay female figurines, miniature altars–offering tables, votive donations (sometimes *ex-votos*), libation vases, miniature vessels, spindle whorls, seals, temple models, and loom weights. In most of the cases they convey magic-religious formulas.[57]

Features of the Transylvanian signs that make them unlike most of the inscriptions of the Danube script

If a significant sign convergence between the corpus of the signs employed on the Tărtăria tablets and the inventory of the Danube script has to be noticed, some deficiencies in matching have also to be underlined. First, some signs are found only at Tărtăria but not elsewhere in the Danube civilization: seven signs over twenty (35%). How is this uniqueness to be explained?

Second, a graphic divide operates between the signs from Tărtăria and the signs of literacy from Southeastern-Central Europe. In the first case, they are rendered in a style that is

[56] Farmer 2003a: 28.

[57] Gimbutas 1991; Haarmann 1995, 2005, 2008; Merlini 2001, 2004a, 2005, 2007a, 2008d, 2009b, 2010; Merlini and Lazarovici 2008; Marler 2008; Winn 2008; Luca 2009; Marler and Dexter 2009; Maxim, Marler, and Crişan 2009.

pictographic and iconic, whereas in the second they are depicted according to a design that is mainly abstract and schematized. Since the Paleolithic assemblage, there is evidence of the human capacity to produce figurative images (depicting sun, moon, mountains, rivers, animals, people, artifacts, etc. in representational style) as well as abstract signs and geometrical motifs such as rows of dots, chevrons, and grids. *DatDas* categorizes as abstract signs of the Danube script the basic geometric forms that lack any recognizable visual association with natural phenomena or artificial objects and structures: V, X, Y, lozenge, triangle, and so on. It identifies as pictograms/ideograms signs depicting occurrences resulting from natural forces, living creatures, structures or artifacts that can be recognized in association with the figurative sense of that time, regardless of the high degree of stylization that characterized the Danube civilization. If the establishment of a semiotic border between abstractness and iconography in sign shape is always in progress and in part presumptive, a firm point – comparing the Danube script with the other ancient scripts – is its high degree of abstractness: the proportions of abstract signs that serve to render information outnumber iconic signs. About 69.5% of the inventoried signs follow an abstract code; around 12.5% functioned as numerals, although the detection is still quite putative; pictograms/ideograms are only 18.0%. The characterization of ancient Neolithic literacy by an abstract code united to schematization in sign shape is in tune with a marked propensity of the Danube civilization toward abstraction and stylization in symbolism and decoration.

The Transylvanian tablets represent an exception: 55.0% of the employed signs are pictographic and in several cases their rendering is naturalistic. This fact poses questions concerning the high number of abstract and arbitrary signs recorded by *DatDas* that is apparently incongruent with the iconic code massively utilized at Tărtăria. The author does not exclude that refining the analysis according to a recognized association of the Danube script signs with the figurative sense of that time might make it possible to translate some signs from the abstract field to the pictographic/ideographic arena, accepting a possible naturalistic origin through visual connection with natural forces, living creatures, structures, or objects. The author might have confused abstractness in code with stylization in sign shape. In this case, the analysis of the Tărtăria tablets can be a start-up for such a revision.

However, one has to note additional features of the Tărtăria signs that make them unlike most of the inscriptions of the Danube script: carefulness in execution, very clear-cut silhouettes (although their present state is suffering from the hydrochloric acid bath at the museum), deep engravings, prominent positions, emphatic rendering, and oversized shapes. In short, the outlines are shaped according to a precise visual standard that sometimes lies outside the Danube script. The semiotic code of the tablets is similar to one employed in 'special' artifacts such as a black doughnut-shaped cultic disc from Turdaş; the famous Gradešnica shallow vase,[58] and some ritual female figurines. On the contrary, in most situations, the signs of the Danube script are scratched

[58] Merlini 2005, 2006a, 2009d: 371.

roughly and superficially, inaccurately made, incised carelessly, small sized, and inaccurate in outline, although following the standard of an inventory.

In conclusion, the investigation of the signs incised on the Tărtăria tablets suggests evidence of their utilization in magic-religious practices. There is a significant, but not complete, convergence in shape with the inventory of the Danube script due to deficiencies in matching, a radically distinctive utilization of pictography rendered naturalistically, and technical realization of the outlines that in part deviates from the procedures normally applied for the texts of the Danube script. If the communicative aim of the Tărtăria tablets is evident, do they convey literacy? If the response is negative, which kind of communicational channel do they utilize? If the answer is positive, which writing system is there at work? A local variant of the Danube script?[59] A cognate script of the Danube script?[60] Further indications can be obtained by inquiring into the sign organization utilized by the tablets.

Spatial pattern of sign organization on amulet-archives utilized in liturgies for initiates

The investigation of the spatial arrangement of the text engraved on the Tărtăria tablets has to start from the observation the author has already formulated in previous publications concerning an exoteric message and an esoteric formula coexisting on the compound composed by the two tablets both bearing a round puncture and divided into cells.[61] It is noteworthy to consider the possibility of overlapping them. The hole on the rectangular tablet fits precisely the hole on the circular tablet, and the former artifact perfectly covers the upper register of the latter with their cells in perfect alignment. The lower edge of the oblong tablet exactly superimposes the horizontal line running on the round tablet, and the vertical line incised on the first artifact from the edge of the hole downwards meets exactly the vertical line incised on the lower register of the larger artifact thus forming a continuous line (Fig. 8).

This superimposability could mean that the rectangular and circular drilled tablets have been worn one over the other as pendants of a necklace, the small rectangular tablet placed over the larger disc-shaped one. More significantly, the possibility to overlap the two artifacts could also mean that overt (seen) sign chains and esoteric (hidden) sign chains both occur in the resulting assemblage between the objects (i.e., the signs on the upper register of the circular tablet would have been covered).

---

[59] See, for comparison, the archaeo-semiotic research of the author on the Turdaş script (Merlini 2009b, 2009d, 2009b).

[60] See, for comparison, the archaeo-semiotic research of the author on the evidence of literacy in the Precucuteni–Trypillia A culture whose script is cognate with the Danube script and originated from it. Through time and according to a drift from west to east, two active centers with strong connections developed similar and related sign systems in the Danube basin and in the Moldavian–Ukrainian region (Merlini 2004c, 2007b, 2007c, 2008b, 2008c, 2009d, 2010a).

[61] Merlini 2004a, 2004b, 2009d: 541; Lazarovici 2005, 2008.

Fig. 8: Two tablets may have been constructed amulets to lay one over the other (photo by Marco Merlini).

The dynamic between exoteric and esoteric wisdom at Tărtăria can be better understood illustrating the portrait of "Alchemy" on a bas-relief from the trumeau of the central porch of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. According to Fulcanelli,[62] Alchemy is represented as a woman seated on a throne located on the Earth but with her head touching the clouds. She holds in her left hand a scepter, while her right hand supports two books positioned one overlapping the other. The book placed on top is open, representing public texts/doctrines. The book placed under it is closed, indicating secret, hidden texts/doctrine. This alchemical combination of a double spiritual approach and registers of knowledge leads the novice to wisdom. If we translate this symbolism into the Christian frame, the exoteric knowledge is gained from books, and the esoteric wisdom is acquired from interior prayer or meditation (Fig. 9).

Coming back to the Transylvanian small rectangular tablet placed over the larger disc-shaped one, such kind of inscribed artifacts aggregate the attributes of ritual tools, charm-tablets, and amulet-archives (Fig. 10). They were possibly worn by Milady Tărtăria,[63] the "terrific and revered holy woman"[64] buried in a secondary ritual grave with the tablets as well as with other personal belongings (liturgical tool-kit with a third inscribed tablet, "jewelry," and funerary anthropomorphic identifiers) to accompany her re-birth into an ancestral condition and to mark the new descendant's lineage.[65]

The package of information to be conveyed by the tablets under investigation is likely based on a relationship between the exoteric and esoteric string of signs and meanings. The plausible arrangement of the two punctured tablets as superimposed exoteric and esoteric amulets composes a semiotic system, and indicates that if we are in the presence of a literate content, it has strong magical associations, was employed restrictedly in liturgies, and reveals a

[62] Fulcanelli 1926: 59. The design of Alchemy is by Viollet-le-Duc (1858).
[63] See, for comparison, the remarkable case of the Middle Neolithic seal from Yannitsa (Merlini 2011e: 306).
[64] Merlini 2006a, 2011b.
[65] Oestigaard 2000; Oestigaard and Goldhahn 2006; Merlini 2011a, 2011c, 2011d.

sacral nature connected with initiation processes.[66] The upper esoteric register of the disk-shaped tablet was hidden to uninitiated persons. In order to see the secret message incised on it, it was necessary to lift up the oblong tablet. Was the sacred inscribed compound particularly in use during initiation ceremonies?[67] The discoid drilled tablet with the esoteric message was much less utilized than the oblong one. This may mean that it was produced at a later date or that it was more rarely worn. The second hypothesis is consistent with an artifact that bears an arcane text engaged in special and not frequent rituals involving only initiates.

As evidenced in the image presented above, the Tărtăria tablets were planned with shape dimensions, and surface layout according to a sacral and functional geometry. The outline of the signs and scheme of their spatial organization were carefully designed within this framework by the 'scribe' despite some indecisions about their realization, impediments from the raw material, constrains from the engraving tool, and limitations from the method of incision that was mostly applied. The person who made the amulet-archives was not free to choose either form, proportions and surface organization of the tablets, or their arrangement. The achievement of the task reveals high expertise in applying a definite and complex set of norms.

Fig. 9: The figure of "Alchemy" on the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral holds two books, one overlapping the other. The book on top is open to represent public doctrines. The book book underneath is closed, indicating secret, hidden doctrine (photo by Marco Merlini).

The most astonishing tablet has a circular shape, representing basically a completeness that encompasses space and time because it is an unbroken line without beginning, direction and end. Therefore, its geometrical essence manifests the perfection, completeness, and consistent unity of the divinity. The puncture is exactly in the middle of a circle with the diameter located between the upper edge and the midpoint of the big central cross. Having the hole and the central cross as points of reference, two equilateral triangles of the exact same size can be inscribed one opposite to the other inside the circle.[68] The figure anticipates Goethe's description of the

[66] See Makkay 1968: 286; Hood 1967: 111; Reiner 1960: 148 ff.
[67] Merlini 2004a; Lazarovici and Merlini 2005; Merlini 2009d: 362.
[68] The geometrical figure from Tărtăria is not to be confused with the 6 point star formed by the overlapping of two opposing equilateral triangles that is known as the David Star or Salomon Stamp. It is geometrically comparable,

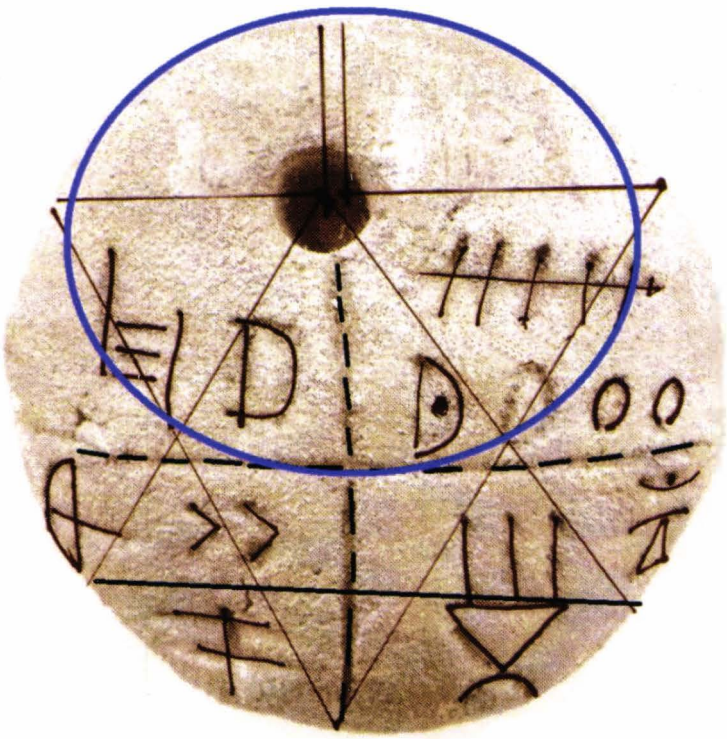


Fig. 10. The geometrical grid of the circular tablet with the signs schematically rendered *(photo by Marco Merlini)*.

circle as a rounding out of two opposing equilateral triangles[69] (Fig. 10). This archetype of the triad (geometric manifestation of the three) expresses a correlation between opposites that unites them—the two equilateral triangles that are balancing (being both in opposition and in the resolution of opposition)—and brings them to other levels of manifestation (the three powers?). The triangle with the broad base up might stand for the female principle. The triangle with the broad base down might signify the male principle. The symbolic representation of them is sexual union. Consistently from the viewpoint of sacral geometry, the union of the two equilateral triangles creates a shape completely new: a diamond shape, a lozenge. Since Palaeolithic times, the lozenge is one of the most utilized geometric shapes in which the triangle with the vertex downward expresses the feminine body as a receptacle of fertility. The reason is obvious: rhombus and triangle—both the geometric shapes occurring on the Transylvanian discoid tablet—allude to the vulva, the pubic triangle, and the womb; therefore, they are connected to the life-source. In Mesopotamia, as well, the lozenge was closely associated with Inanna/Ishtar.[70]

In the Danube Civilization, a lozenge is frequently depicted on the conspicuous abdomen of pregnant figurines that, in their turn, show a body in the shape of a lozenge. Coupling iconic representation with geometric symbolism, the seminal potentiality of a woman, a female forebear, mythical progenitor, or divinity is doubly emphasized.[71]

A lozenge defines the torso of a human-like being composed from a combination of angles inscribed within a round artifact from Parţa (Romania). The geometrical compound comprises also a > and a < as the arms, a double V as the head, and a double Λ as the legs. The

---

but in a reverse horizontal axis, to most of the Masonic Lodge symbols that contain the compass and square as a disguised form of two interlaced triangles.

[69] For a discussion, see Kuehni 2003: 60.

[70] Farmer 2003a: 20.

[71] Merlini 2004: 89.

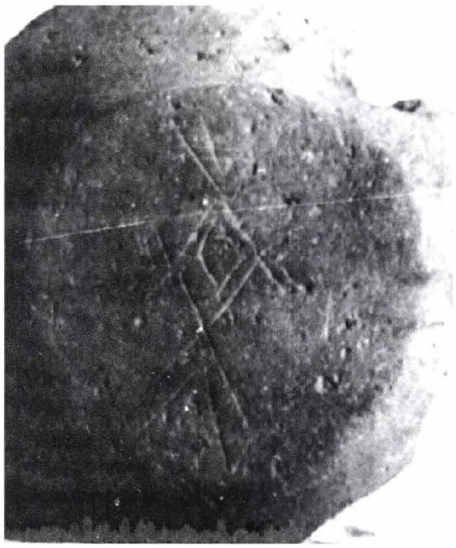


Fig. 11: A lozenge defines the torso of a human-like being composed from a combination of angles inscribed within an amulet (?) from Parţa, Romania (photo by Marco Merlini).

multifaceted symbolism realizes a concentration of forces pointing towards the inside, the trunk (Fig. 11).

If the diamond encloses a point, it evidently marks the uterus containing the fetus because impregnation is implied. On the outside of the Gradešnica shallow receptacle, one can recognize at one look a human-like stylized figure fixed in a ritual posture with raised arms, surrounded by numbers of triangular, V-shaped and meandering motifs. This makes one concentrate instinctively. In fact, the starting sign for decoding the message is the focal point of the anthropomorph: i.e., the deep dot placed inside the central lozenge, which stands for the torso.[72] The author has interpreted the female figure as a pregnant, oranting, and dancing Moon surrounded by the constellations of an archaic sky[73] (Fig. 12).

A Trypillia A clay figurine with prominent breasts and tremendous posterior presents two sequences of signs positioned in rows on the front (five signs) and on the back (three signs).[74] On the front, one can see in sequence a zigzag line under the breasts, a snake-like spiral on the belly, a dotted lozenge on the womb, a sketched bi-dotted quadrilateral on the hips, and a sprouting vegetal sign upon the vulva.[75] On the back occur a plain lozenge without a dot, a V, and a concentric open circle. No one sign has been used twice, as to denote a specific meaning. The signs have also been aligned on strategic parts of the anatomy, as if the "shaman" who created it wanted to underline and name the energetic points of the human body and the flow of the energy. The chain of marks evidences bio-energetic points, although in an original and different way than Chinese acupuncture and Hindu yoga. Each symbol may indicate one of these points and suggest its quality[76] (Fig. 13).

The two equilateral triangles that are in a state of balance on the roundiform tablet from Tărtăria can be further subdivided into smaller equilateral triangles. The triangle is the only polygon structure that is rigid by virtue of its geometry.[77] As Plato explains, all the elements can be reduced to triangles. Triangles are the ultimate "simples," units of physics.[78]

At Tărtăria, the sacred geometry of the equilateral triangles enclosed within a circle composes the backbone of the grid utilized to identify the coordinates for allocating the signs

[72] Merlini 2004a: 87.
[73] Merlini 2009: 358.
[74] Pogoževa 1983, tab. 7-12.
[75] Videiko 2003.
[76] Merlini 2009: 633.
[77] For a discussion of this concept, see Hemenway 2008: 54.
[78] Plato 2006, 53c-55c.

Fig. 12: A montage of signs on the outside of the Gradešnica receptacle, showing the sides flattened out (after Merlini 2009:337, fig. 5.313).

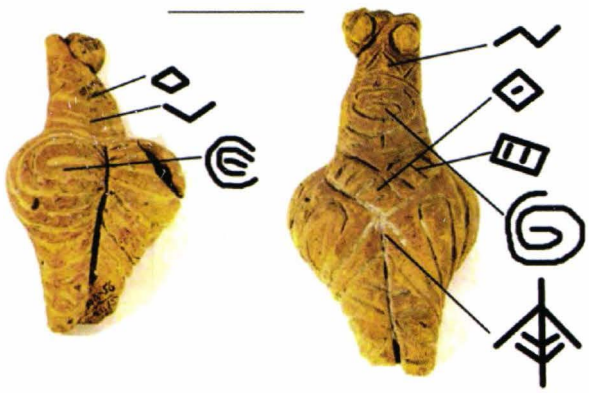


Fig. 13: A clay Trypillia A figurine presents two sequences of signs positioned in a row on the front and on the back (after Videiko 2004).

into the space and engraving their outline in a standardized form and size. In conclusion, the geometry used in the planning and construction of a religious device is at the same time a functional geometry aimed to arrange the script within the space.

Expanding upon the sacred geometry embedded into the oblong pierced tablet from Tărtăria, its height is 3.15 cm, exactly half of the length, which corresponds also with the diameter of the circular tablet. It is the magic number 3.14159... symbolized by π (the Greek letter for *pi*) to denote the ratio of the circumference (round) of a circle to its diameter (linear). The *pi* is constant for all circles.

Every circle, regardless of size, always produces the magic number *pi* when one divides the circumference by its diameter. Neolithic geometricians and mathematicians who discovered this feature realized that it is as if the *pi* was a constant relationship 'hidden' in every circle. *Pi* is the secret code that relates the discoid tablet and the super-imposed oblong tablet, as the signs incised on them.

At Tărtăria, it identifies a sacred way of knowing the circle and its essence. The Transylvanian 'scribe' confirmed her/his high geometrical sapience in the arrangement of signs, employing on the oblong pierced tablet the grid method that divides the space to be incised with signs into smaller 'bite sized' square areas, where each quadrangle can be worked one-at-a-time. Centering on the hole, the length of the right and left sides are exactly the same to give the possibility of wearing the object as a pendant-amulet.

The amulet was easily subdivided into three horizontal rows and five vertical lines that compose fifteen squared or rectangular boxes that were utilized both as metopes, in which to allocate the signs, and as a guide for the engraving of their outlines. Nine boxes are on the left

side of the tablet; six on the right side. Five individual signs[79] and three sign groups[80] are framed within these distinct cells. The use of a layout in metopes evidences that the person in charge had the task to trace a defined number of signs of a standard outline for shape and size (Fig. 14).The utilization of reserved spaces as quadrilateral metopes to frame texts of the Danube script is not a once-off case of the Transylvanian early Vinča culture. The database accounts for twenty-eight objects that allocate script signs within metopes.[81] The alignment of signs into rows and their insertion into blocks made of horizontal and vertical lines recalls similar inscriptions on several other objects of the Danube civilization that are associable with magic-religious practices.[82]

Fig. 14: The geometrical grid of the oblong drilled tablet with the signs schematically rendered (photo by Marco Merlini).

Fig. 15: Metope layout on an inscribed Neolithic spherical stone from Lepenski Vir, Republic of Serbia (photo by Marco Merlini).

This alignment appears on an Early Neolithic mignon oracular globe from the necropolis–sanctuary of Lepenski Vir (Iron Gates region, Republic of Serbia)[83] (Fig. 15). Incised texts within a reserved space as a metope characterize also miniature altars—offering tables such as Banat II mignon cones from Parţa,[84] Anzabegovo–Vršnik IV miniature altars,[85] Karanovo III mignon altars—offering receptacles from Samovodene (Bulgaria),[86] the aforementioned Gradešnica shallow vase,[87] a zoomorphic Vinča offering vessel from Priština (Kosovo),[88] mini altars from Slatino,[89] and containers for the maintenance and offering of food discovered at Brénitza (Bulgaria) that belong to the Brénitza-Gradešnica culture.[90]

---

[79] I consider the y plus stroke incised on the pierced oblong tablet from Tărtăria to be a single sign.
[80] The three sign groups include the mignon bucrania or bull horns on the two sides of the hole on the pierced oblong tablet.
[81] Merlini 2009d: 674.
[82] Merlini 2006a.
[83] Merlini 2009d: 259.
[84] Ibid., 550.
[85] Korošec and Korošec 1973, tab. XIII.5, section 6/1, 0.3-0.6; Gimbutas 1976: 154, fig. 109 b.
[86] Merlini 2009d: 250.
[87] Merlini 2005; 2006a; 2009d: 371.
[88] Merlini 2009d: 226.
[89] Ibid.: 623.
[90] Ibid.: 620, 621.

According to B. Nikolov, the external surface of these shallow containers from Brénitza presents rectangular spaces designed as if they were metopes surrounding sign groups. Nikolov specifies the signs recovered at Brenica as symbols and ideograms.[91] Inscriptions aligned in rows and framed inside a metope are also distinctive of several Late Neolithic and Copper Age female figurines occurring in the Vinča culture at the eponymous settlement[92] at Kormandin (Republic of Serbia)[93] (Fig. 16), at the eponymous settlement of Turdaş,[94] in the Gumelniţa B1 assemblage at Vităneşti (Romania),[95] and in the Karanovo V–Marica culture at Azmashka Mogila (Bulgaria).[96]

The layout based on quadrilateral cells positioned in sequence makes it easy to isolate, read, and emphasize the content of the message, because each box encloses, processes and highlights the information expressed by a single sign or sign group. Each metope possibly represents a single idea, in case of an individual sign, and a more articulated concept for a sign group.[97] Having been utilized in the context of cult practices and worship, this Tărtăria tablet, such as the other two ones, can infer that its texts convey magic-religious expressions. For example, they might articulate a history involving supernatural beings or events and/or illustrate magic-religious formula and/or schedule a cult calendar. The Danube script shares, with other archaic writing systems, the possibility to employ the metope layout in order to frame texts.[98]

The sacred and practical geometrical approach exploited by the magic-religious adept planning and making the Tărtăria tablets is further indicated by her/his knowledge of tiling as revealed by the attributes of the grids utilized on the two artifacts under examination. Tessellation is the process of creating a two-dimensional plane using the repetition of a geometric shape with no overlaps and no gaps. In nature, tile-like phenomena are evident everywhere, from the scales of fish, to cells of human skin, from hexagonal columns of lava, to the surface of turtles' shells. A two-dimensional space, such as flat tablets, can be completely filled, or tiled, arranging only three kinds of regular shapes.[99] These are the equilateral triangle, the square, and the regular hexagon. The 'scribe' tessellated the Tărtăria artifacts utilizing the first two types of polygons, the most elementary ones. The equilateral triangle was utilized on the roundiform tablet, and the square on the oblong tablet.

Within the dedicated spaces on the tablets, signs show an asymmetric co-ordination and a linear alignment along different registers/quadrants producing visually random compositions,

---

[91] Nikolov 1986: 167.
[92] Merlini 2009d: 646.
[93] Tasić 1973: 63; Merlini 2009d, 562, 573; 2001 1f, 305. From the drawing, one can detect at least six signs aligned along a horizontal row and inserted within a metope to make the reading easy and to emphasize the content of the message.
[94] Merlini 2009d: 573.
[95] Ibid.: 291.
[96] Ibid.: 296, 656.
[97] Merlini 2004a: 89.
[98] Merlini 2009d: 674.
[99] The eight types of symmetrical tiling on a plane—if the combination of more regular shapes is allowed (triangles, squares, hexagons, octagons, and dodecagons)—were discovered by Kepler in Harmonices Mundi (1952). The restriction is that the patterns must be similarly arranged around each vertex (Hemenway 2008).

Fig. 16: A long inscription incised a Vinča C figurine from Kormandin, Republic of Serbia (after Daniela Bulgarelli @ Prehistory Knowledge Project).

which are prerequisites of either the Danube script and other ancient systems of writing. Opposing these attributes, ornamental elements are in general arranged in groupings in order to capture the symmetrical rhythm and balance able to exalt the aesthetic value of the object. The rhythmic and symmetrical repetition of a geometrical motif in picture friezes is the principal feature of the Danube decorative system.

Another feature in the layout of the Tărtăria tablets that is typical of a script is the absence of *horror vacui*. Signs of writing never saturate the entire available space, because they carry a specific message. Contrariwise, it is not infrequent that a decoration utilizes the available space in its totality. Ornamental intent of marks on the Danube artifacts is often revealed by their rhythmically and repetitively horizontal alignment within a geometric pattern affected from the tendency to saturate the entire available space. As mentioned above, these features are both absent on the Transylvanian tablets—being based on a preferential linear alignment and asymmetric coordination of the script—as well as the wide occurrence of empty spaces.

In short, the 'scribe' was very familiar with the utilization of cult clay artifacts functioning as tablet–amulet–archive, and was skilled in incising precise and meaningful signs that were intentional, distinctive, highly stylized, and framed within planned spaces. Completion and effectiveness of the message were based on a design in sign shape and script spaces that had to be precise and carefully planned.

The meticulous and precise arrangement in advance of location, shape, and size of the signs is further evidenced by the very short time the person had to engrave their outlines into the tablets. The material by which the objects are made became hard quickly. The 'orante-dancer' like silhouette on the lower right quadrant of the rounded tablet is imprecise also because it was the last sign to be carved when the fabric was already stiffening.

This impressive series of skills of the magic-religious practitioner who made the tablets and engraved the signs was not inherited within the household sphere. It is assumable that the

required cult competences and technical ability did not belong to 'normal' people of the village. The person was submitted to a specific long training that was possibly part of her/his spiritual preparation and initiation. Perhaps there was the necessity to hand down the sacred wisdom and the technical knowhow about the storage and transmission of packages of information by means of a system of signs through special instruction from generation to generation. It included the understanding of the meaning of the signs connected with the religious-mythological system, the knowledge of the encoded sacred symbolism, their visual reproduction according to a highly standardized inventory and organizational norms, the technique of their execution to be put into practice on tablets made of clay, and the handling of their magical power.

The Tărtăria tablets served as a means of conveying and handing down an accumulated ideological tradition regarded as a functioning information system in the magic-religious sphere. The communities of the Danube civilization paid special attention to ancestral memory and, in this regard, sacred semiotic knowledge was extremely important.

Summarizing the examination of the spatial pattern of sign organization on the Tărtăria tablets, the signs are not arranged according to an aesthetic design but are assembled in a functional way in order to express a package of information according to a logical sequence of conceptual elements. This feature recalls comparable artifacts with texts assimilable to an ancient system of writing, in particular to the Danube script. The need to deliver messages is confirmed by the utilization of tablets as a medium. In addition, at Tărtăria, signs were engraved to function both as an open text and a secret text on tablets that were utilized as a compound amulet-necklace by Milady Tărtăria. They were buried as complete objects with her fragmented osseous remains and belongings. Most of the researchers have examined only the circular tablet and related signs, being the most script-like, as a self-sufficient object which they try to decode independently from the other two tablets and the cultural environment. However, the pit-grave, the bone relics of the holy individual, and her paraphernalia/adornments/identifiers (in particular the engraved tablets) form a *consecrated unity*. They are substantial elements of a Vinča A secondary burial for a special ritual practitioner who was glorified as a novel ancestor. The tablets were ritual tools possibly worn by her on special occasions while she was alive, as attested by the modest amount of wear to the hole due to a string. When the inscribed objects were not employed in ceremonies, they might have been suspended on a wall of the dwelling-sanctuary of Milady Tărtăria, as supposed by Harmatta.[100] All the clues converge to consider the Tărtăria tablets as carriers of an exclusive sacred script for a special group of people.

Confronting the Metaphysics of secret texts from ancient sacred writings

The Transylvanian tablets appear to have functioned as initiatory ritual tools engraved with magical signs that represent *cryptograms* related to the Danube script: signs of literacy as well as symbols with initiatory significance and esoteric meaning. The combination of these cryptograms composes *mythograms*: chains of written signs and magic-religious symbols aimed

[100] Harmatta 1966.

to record (fix), preserve, and transmit portions of spiritual initiatory knowledge. It can be assumed that the tablets are encoded with a magic-sacral script that resonates with an archaic magic-religious language of divinities, spirits, and otherworld forces. This arcane language was possibly composed of artificial, spiritual-slang and partly incomprehensible terms. Its aim was both to conceal and reveal.

According to the semiotic investigation of the author, the mythograms incised on the tablets have a double purpose.[101] The first is to express principles through mythical dramas. The *mythograms* engraved on the tablets of Tărtăria may have induced the adepts to recall and orally convey a story or *épopée* where personages were mythic beings believed to possess supernatural powers with influence over the living. Secondly, the *mythograms* may have functioned as a ritual canvas used to pilot the performance of the related liturgical practices, i.e., animating mimetic representations and mythological scenes with an identification between initiated persons and divinity.

The Tărtăria tablets conveyed an exclusive script for a distinctive group of people, those who had mastered this particular communicational code that has the Danube script as a point of reference, but is not restricted to it. It was necessarily a small group comprised of initiates meticulously trained in sacred literacy, symbolism and rituals. It configured magic-religious exclusiveness inbuilt in the very process of writing, with deep roots in sacred symbolism. An enigmatic and secret script was in play with its own mode of information storage.

There are plenty of similar instances in the history of writing. Some historic, ethnographic, and epigraphic comparisons might be productive for the solution to the 'enigma Tărtăria' which include the runic script, the Ogham script, the Moso script (*Mósuō*; also spelled Musuo), a Naxi pictographic and syllabographic script), and the Batak script.

The runes were invented by 200-150 CE among Germanic peoples within, or close to, the Roman Empire on the general basis of the Latin alphabet.[102] Sometimes the runes are written vertically, with the letters rotated by 90°, and the texts are read from top to bottom and right to left.[103] This unsophisticated script was connected either with sacred writing utilized in rituals,[104] or with non-practical day-to-day purposes[105] expressing prestige, group membership, and the making of alliances.[106] Early epigraphists and the popular culture[107] have restricted the horizon to the esoteric side of the runes due to the semantic connotation of the term:[108] *rūna* in Old Saxon, *rūn* in Old Irish, and *rūne* in Middle High German means 'secret', 'mystery'. If the earliest runes appear to be equivalent to nametapes, with no inherently magic overtones,[109] clearly cut runes

[101] Merlini 2009d: 23.
[102] Williams 2004: 264.
[103] Merlini 2009d: 367.
[104] Elliott 1989: 2.
[105] According to A. Baeksted (1952: 134, 137), runes did not have any practical function.
[106] Williams 2004: 273.
[107] Green 1994: 35.
[108] Page 1987: 12.
[109] Williams 2004.

sometimes had no obvious meaning, but acted as a magical charm to protect or bring good luck to the owner of valuable artifacts. Runes were engraved on gems or carved onto objects for protection, empowerment, fertility, prosperity, and healing.

The runes kept records for social purposes, but also encrypted secret codes believed to posses power—to be managed through magical practice—to release forces/energies, to attract good will or to limit bad influences, and to reveal future events.[110] Runes are bearers of potential powers due to their nature of 'letters' to be 'read'. The shape of a rune is of primary importance, revealing the heart of its meaning. In a Norse myth, the god Odin captured the runes through shamanic initiation. He was hung suspended head down on the World Tree for nine days and nights, pining and fasting. When he was almost dead, he received a flash of inspiration being capable to 'take up' the twenty-four runic signs in the shape of branches fallen in a peculiar way.[111] The runes gave Odin power over all things, according to the myth. Therefore, when Germanic peoples wanted to produce a religious, ritual text with charm potency, they utilized runes, having confidence their set of characters encrypted a secret code with magic significance capable converting the artifacts they adorn into amulets. The inscriptions on brooches were always incised in places hidden from everyone when the ornament was worn.

Only the person handling the enchanted item could read the text incised on it. In other cases such as on spearheads, the magic runic inscriptions were not intentionally concealed[112] (Fig. 17). Early rune-inscribed objects in the Gothic language were discovered in Eastern Europe at Pietroassa, in north-western Romania (e.g., a ca. 400 CE gold ring bearing a votive inscription), at Dahmsdorf in central Germany, and at Kowel in Russia. In both the last cases, archaeologists have recovered a spearhead inscribed with what is probably the warrior's or weapon's name.[113] Later, significant Balkan–Danube examples of runes are found on a medieval calendar from Bulgaria,[114] on the bottom of ceramics with stamps in relief from the same region,[115] and on amphorae and pots dated IX-X CE (the first Bulgarian kingdom) from Trastenik (central northern Bulgaria)[116] (Fig. 18). Runic incisions occur also on stone blocks recovered at Gherla (Romania),[117] and on petroglyphs at Kamyana Mohyla (southern Ukraine).

The Ogham script is mostly connected with secret writing and occult cryptology.[118] It is an ancient alphabet, dated to between the III and VI centuries CE, that was utilized in areas of the British Isles unoccupied by the Roman army.[119] The script was based on the Latin alphabet,

---

[110] Meadows 1996: 12.
[111] Buchholz 1984; Meadows 1996: 38.
[112] Williams 2004: 268.
[113] Nedoma 2004: 155-58. According to Nedoma (2006), only nine runic inscriptions can be considered as East Germanic with certainty, or with reasonable possibility.
[114] Todorova 1989: 256, figs. 7a, 7b.
[115] Ibid.: 178, pl. IV.
[116] They are held at the Regional Museum of History in Rousse (Bulgaria).
[117] Ursulescu 1991-1992.
[118] The early scholars believed Ogham was invented in the Tower of Babel, the tower of many colliding languages made famous in the Bible.
[119] Gaur 1984: 128.

Fig. 17: *The back of a silver relief brooch found at Gotland, Etelhem, c. 400-550 CE. The brooch reads "Smith Irmila made me." Courtesy of the National Historical Museum, Stockholm.*

Fig. 18: *Runic signs on amphorae and pots from the IX-X CE discovered at Trastenik, central northern Bulgaria.*

but the language was Old Irish. The Ogham script consists of twenty-six characters formed by groups of parallel strokes and notches on either side of, or across, a continuous stem line. It can be read either vertically (in inscriptions) or horizontally (in manuscripts).[120] Similarly to the Danube script, the Ogham script was mainly used for simple inscriptions recording names, kin-groups, and stereotyped formulas.[121] It was originally "a peculiar form of cryptic speech, in which, for instance, the names of letters replaced in certain syllables the letters themselves," representing the entire spoken composition.[122] A significant example of an Ogham magical formula is the Celtic magic word ATUCMLU inscribed on an oval bead made of fossilized amber which was found at Ennis (Co. Clare, Ireland).[123] ATUCMLU has no meaning in Irish, being an Ogham magical cipher. It worked in synergy with the magical properties that amber was believed to possess and the egg-shape of the artifact. The bead is dated V-VII century CE and was preserved through generations as an amulet by the hereditary owners of the O'Connor family at Ennis. Even in the XIX century it was asked to help with childbirth and to cure sore eyes.[124] This esoteric object is now held by the British museum[125] (Fig. 19).

Magical invocations and prayers written in Moso script by the Naxi people, a tribe settled in the Lichiang District (north-western Yunnan in south-western China), can only be read with the help of a trained priest because they utilize a large range of iconographic drawings (pictographs) south-western China), can only be read with the help of a trained priest because they utilize a large range of iconographic pictographs

[120] Merlini 2009d: 367.
[121] Mytum 1992: 54 ff.
[122] Diringer 1948: 525.
[123] The inscription has been tentatively transliterated as ATUCMLU by E. Thorsson (1992: 19).
[124] Macalister 1945, no. 53.
[125] Registration number, p. 1888,0719.119.

Fig. 19: An oval amber bead found at Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, c. V-VII century CE bears the magic word ATUCMLU inscribed in Ogham. Courtesy of the British Museum, (photo by Marco Merlini).

supported by a relatively small number of syllabic signs.[126] Only the words (in a Tibeto-Burman language) considered absolutely necessary are written down; the rest are supplied by recognizable drawings/hieroglyphs of objects, animals, birds, etc., and the 'reading' is performed by the Naxi priests.[127] It is a hereditary role, because a priest trains his first born from childhood to memorize the ancient tales, the sacred beliefs, the historical events, the ritual texts, and how to interpret the written symbols that record this complex package of information.[128] The Moso-Naxi script has never greatly changed its form for one thousand years. With reference to its hieroglyphs, iconography is part of the script, and is indeed the script itself. This is the same for the Tărtăria mythograms. The text acts partly as a memory aid to only be read (better, deciphered) by a trained ritual practitioner who retained (orally remembered) ownership of it[129] (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20: A Naxi text from the Harvard–Yenching library; http://unicodeorg/~rs/Naxi/IMG_2078.jpg (graphic elaboration by Marco Merlini).

[126] Jensen 1969: 193 ff.
[127] Hosking and Meredith-Owens 1966.
[128] Diringer 1948: 143-5; Maoji 1956; Gaur 1984: 87, 186.
[129] Sassoon and Gaur 1997: 49.

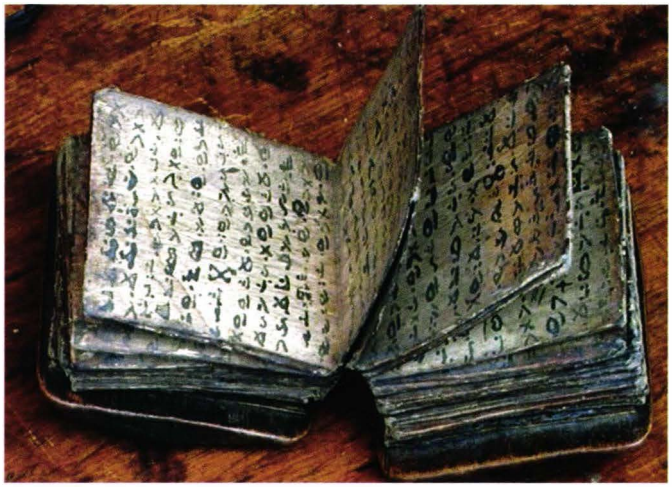


Fig. 21: *Batak manuscript on tree-bark, Indonesia 19th century. (http://www.bouwmanbooks.com/man_images /msbatak1_ad2.jpg).*

The Batak script gives us further significant hints concerning the possible profile of the Neolithic Transylvanian script-mistress who was active at Tărtăria. Developed in central Sumatra, this semi-syllabic script of Indian type[130] is employed mainly for religious and magical purposes, attempting to obtain 'divine' power.[131] It is mainly utilized for writing down the *pustaha*, the private and secret notebook that condensates personal knowledge about magic, divination, disease treatments, astrology, and favorable calendar acquired by an animistic medicine man/ priest or female/priestess[132] throughout a long and demanding period of training.[133] Sometimes the pages of script store the wisdom of generations of magician-priests. Consistently, the process of acquiring the knowledge to become a literate magician and healer involves a series of initiatory ceremonies supported by ancestor worship (Fig. 21).[134]

The Batak personal memo pad is written in the form of short personal notes on appropriate invocations, remedies, rituals, procedures, interpretation of omens, and auspicious dates. It does not contain coherent texts (for example, they are without punctuation and separation of words), but only key schemes. However, the written form is mandatory because the magic content is considered a 'science' demanding precision. But the texts are redacted in a special language related to rituals—*hata noda*—that is inapprehensible for anyone not initiated into the mystery of priests' art. Indeed, the Batak script has no significance for everyday life because the language is a spiritual, esoteric form of expression, far from daily life. The script is very personal (in its style of writing, terms, codes, types of punctuation, and the way of writing, and the conveyed content frightens normal people who prefer to avoid dealing directly with it.[135] In the *pustaha*, the magician and healer records notes differently from any 'colleague' in order to guard the secrecy of his/her wisdom.[136] These sacred and secret texts are furnished with explicative illustrations that sometime have the role of pictograms/ideograms to support their

[130] Coulmas 1996: 40.
[131] Kozok 2000: 44.
[132] Ibid.: 43.
[133] Teygeler 1993.
[134] The bark of the Batak manuscript consists of two pieces, stretching together three meters. The bark folios are protected and attached to two wooden covers.
[135] Sinaga 1981: 19.
[136] Aritonang 1993: 60.

meaning and details. The act of silent reading, now commonplace in post-industrial societies, is unusual for *pustaha*. They would be read aloud.[137]

Due to the technical difficulties and esoteric inaccessibility of the signs and the script for encoding and reading animistic-religious, medicinal and occult contents, they can be understand only by an initiate. Therefore, the process of their learning is a key part of the training in the magic arts. According to Winkler, the *pustaha* are reference works for information about three main categories of magic: protective magic (diagnosis, therapy, medicinal mixes with magical properties, amulets, love charms, etc.); destructive magic (making poison, exploiting the power of evil spirits, and conceiving magical formulas for causing a person to fall in love); and divination (oracles explaining the wishes of the summoned spirit, commands from gods and spirits of the ancestors, an almanac based on astrology to determine auspicious days and months to accomplish certain actions or goals).[138]

The *pustaha* is intelligible only to the person who had originally composed it or who belongs to a chain of generations of magician-priests, interpreting the minutes he/she has taken or the stratification of notes by the additions from different masters.[139] The exclusiveness of the knowledge encoded in the private instruction guide increases his/her power. Therefore the *pustaha* has also the aim to proclaim the prestige enjoyed by the animistic magician and healer. In times of tribal warfare, the little personal register and the secret knowledge and techniques encoded within it could ensure safe passage to him/her through hostile territory.[140]

As a religious elite, the personal lives of the Batak medicine men/priests are connected with the disciplines of "holy personhood." In their religious activities and personal life, they form an exemplary 'caste', being spiritual and moral leaders for the believers.[141] Exploiting the code of rules and instructions included in their very personal *pustaha* books, they magically protect the community, families and individuals. They provide for the community's and individuals' well-being, call rain, protect from troubles, harm enemies, destroy other villages, eliminate opponents, inspire love, etc. With the help of all kinds of prescriptions, spells and incantations from their books, the Batak animistic magician-priests determine the favorable time for the momentous events of the villages under their charge, such as when to get married. In particular, they have responsibility for ensuring agricultural success, determining the most propitious time for crucial tasks such as when to sow and to harvest crops. Supernatural powers support them in predicting the future by a sacrificial rooster or buffalo. The *pustaha* books contain even mythical stories about the creation of the world. Finally, it has to be noted that even if these figures are pre-eminent within the community, they are not very popular because their magical 'science' includes 'destructive magic' or 'black magic'.

---

[137] Kozok 2000: 50.
[138] Winkler 1925. The same tripartition was productively utilized by Bartlett (1930 and 1931).
[139] Sassoon and Gaur 1997: 49; Gaur 2003: 26.
[140] Gaur 1997.
[141] Rodgers 1988: 68. However, it does not mean that the art of writing was restricted to this small group of magician-healers and that magic-religious knowledge itself was exclusively their domain (Kozok 2000, 51).

The sacred letters as a guide to religious deed and reflection hinge Kabbalistic literacy, which is strictly related to religious thought and magic. According to this approach, the Torah has not to be read simply as a text written in Hebrew script, because another reading, a mystical reading, is able to perceive the sacred book as composed of the secret names of God. Belief in the special significance of Hebrew letters is central to Kabbalistic speculation, because every letter has body, spirit, and soul.[142] Esoteric knowledge can be expressed and communicated by seemingly unintelligible combinations of letters of the alphabet (only consonants) and the use of their numerical value, because Hebrew letters serve as numerals, and Kabbalistic scholars place values on the numerical properties of words in the Bible. Letters become icons that have meaning only to a relatively small group of initiates that share and develop a chain of arcane understanding.[143] In several cases, the Bible has been placed against parts of a patient's body in the hope of effecting a cure, or verses from the Bible have been given to a patient to eat. More often such verses have been worn in amulets or charms to avert misfortune.[144]

In southeastern Nigeria, by the Cross river region, members of various secret Leopard societies use a special set of signs, the Nsibidi script (also known as nsibiri, nchibiddi or nchibiddy), for communication and for conveying magic. The Nsibidi script is one of Africa's indigenous writing systems. It was invented by leaders of the traditional Ekpe Leopard society. The oldest Nsibidi signs were recently discovered on IV century CE pottery from the Calabar region, providing historical depth to this traditional form of communication.

Nsibidi is a fluid system made up by hundreds of signs that are relatively conventional, consisting mainly of pictograms and ideograms connected to bent or straight lines in a number of combinations. Some signs are naturalistic pictographs (leopard, manilla, mirror), while other signs are abstract, geometric and discrete (arcs, crosses, circles, grids, arrows, lozenges, chevrons, con-centric circles, spirals, and stars). Nsibidi texts are placed on objects including textiles, canoes, cala-bashes, brassware, masquerade paraphernalia, and wood sculpture.

They are allocated also on the walls of buildings. The Nsibidi signs found on the anthropomorphic figurines suggest that ancient people embellished their own bodies and faces in a manner similar to the use of modern Nsibidi on skin as meaningful decoration[145] (Fig. 22). The "multimedia" quality of the Nsibidi script requires formal training and initiation in reading and writing it.[146] "Literacy" varies according to age, gender, locality, membership, and in the particular level of initiation in the association that uses it.[147] Each grade of Ekpe has unique signs and written symbols that are known only by initiates.[148] O. R. Daryell underlined the

[142] Munk 1986.
[143] Sassoon and Gaur 1997: 50.
[144] Blake 2008: 4.
[145] Slogar 2007.
[146] Dathorne 1974: 14.
[147] Carlson 2003.
[148] Carretta and Gould 2001: 97.

Fig. 22: The Nsibidi script as meaningful decoration on a woman's face. http://www.naijablog.co.uk/2010/09/5th-century-nsibidi.html.

employment in the transmission of short stories and folktales aimed to transmit the values of the secret organization.[149] J. K. McGregor indicated the utilization of this writing even to record and circulate within the secret group information concerning events such as court cases.[150] The Director of Library Studies at Abia State University, Nigeria, Basil Amaeshi, gave an account of Nsibidi writing as "a widely-used vehicle of commun-ication, for record keeping, and warning against immediate danger."[151] Historian Ogbu Kalu described the functions of the Nsibidi literature more broadly to comprise "identity label, public notice, private warning, declaration of taboos [and] amorous messages, reckoning of goods and money, and method of keeping of records and decorations."[152]

Nsibidi texts play an important role also in the internal transmission of resolutions and orders reinforcing the judicial authority of the pan-regional Leopard Society. The Nsibidi script was in principle used restrictedly by members of the secret society, though some signs were also understood by outsiders.[153] Nowadays it is not able to keep many secrets. It has both private and public components. For example, the sign of two intertwined arcs is well-known and widely used to identify conjunction, love, or marriage. Members of the Leopard Society are proscribed from indicating to outsiders the full meanings of particular Nsibidi signs. Both are a genuine Nsibidi script.[154]

I present here a significant example of Nsibidi writing as contemporary art. It is an epitaph of the Ekpe Leopard secret society, because the text recites: "Although the king searched, the chief of the Leopard civilization was gone" (Fig. 23). However, still now, the Efik

[149] Daryell 1910: 113, 1911: 523.
[150] McGregor 1909: 212.
[151] Amaeshi 1977: 5.
[152] Kalu 1980: 83.
[153] Nwosu 2010.
[154] Thompson 1978: 30.

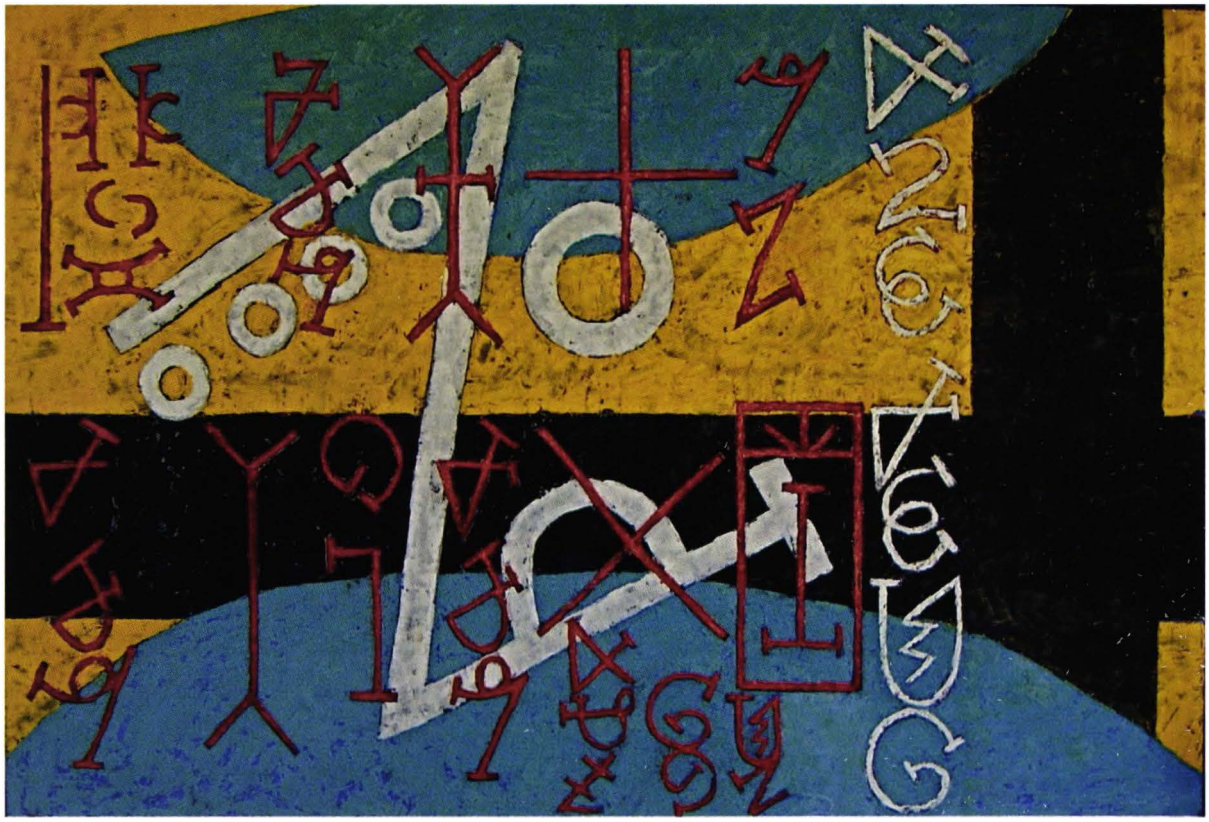


Fig. 23: Nsibidi script as contemporary art by Timothy Norr: "Although the king searched, the chief of the leopard civilization was gone." From the Nsibidi Series by Kingdom (Caven + Tomi). http://www.timothynorr.com/_Media/hpim7067-2.jpeg.

people of South West Nigeria use the *ukara*, a dyed fabric covered with Nsibidi script signs and decorative motives, to create a barrier between the normal people and the initiates of the Ekpe secret society, to stimulate the collective Efik identity, and to ritualize authority.[155]

Very significant for comparison with the symbolic reservoir constituted by the Tărtăria tablets and its utilization is the magic of contact with artifacts imbued with religious texts, as already annotated regarding Kabbalistic beliefs. The practice reflects esoteric custom, but differs totally from sorcery that involves corporeal matter, bodily effluvia, or footprints. In both Jewish and Christian circles written amulets were in very high demand. The subject of textual magic is complex, sensitive and compelling. Hebrew or Christian 'miracles through Biblical texts' are not very different from the pagan 'magic through magic formulae'. Even within Christendom, self-proclaimed Catholic orthodox Christians censure as magic, conveyed by writing, what religious competitors they call 'heretics' claim to be miracles. Meanwhile, later reformers condemned as papist superstition some Catholic practices based on textual protection.[156]

[155] Battestini 1991.
[156] Kieckhefer 1994: 815.

There was a long Christian tradition to consider the fourteen verses of incipit in the St. John's Gospel as a preferred text in protective or healing amulets because they identify Christ with the Logos, the 'Word', and its potency.[157] D. C. Skemer describes miniaturized versions of St. John's Gospel that are still now well preserved ancient artefacts because they have been employed as lucky charms worn round the neck or applied to the sick for healing.[158] Textual amulets that encapsulate a manuscript slip of paper with the opening words of St. John's Gospel were believed to be effective counter-magic particularly against witchcraft.[159] Scapulars in which were stitched certain verses from St. John's Gospel written on paper, or parchment, guarded ancient pilgrims against perils by flood or field. Thomas Julian Brown attests an early medieval practice of placing a complete St. John's Gospel in a shrine as a protective charm.[160] The opening words of St. John's Gospel were believed to possess such a great magical potency, when worn, even to turn away bullets.[161]

Amulets with the names of angels were believed to be efficaciously worn by babies in the night.[162] Lucky charms with the initials of the three kings, or with their names as part of a spell were very common to ward off epilepsy, fever, rabies and sudden death.[163] A similar practice was to make verses from the Bible in edible form to be administered to patients achieving penetration of the remedial words into the injured body.[164] Passages of Scripture were even placed upon horses.[165] Specially powerful amulets combined different texts with special virtues. A sixth/seventh CE Byzantine oval gem was engraved as an amulet since it shows a standing figure of Christ. His monogram appears behind the nimbus. In His left hand, He holds a scroll with the opening words of St John's Gospel. To the left of the figure, there is a list of seven angels: Raphael, Remiel [?], Uriel, Ichthys, Michael, Gabriel, Azael.[166] A V century Christian amulet crudely cut from very soft gray stone depicts the raising of Lazarus by Jesus who is performing it with a magic wand. However, much more interesting for us is the reverse. Here, three lines of Greek occur that the not very literate craftsman operating in Palestine and the Christian client reputed to be magic words. The magic artifact is held at the Bible Lands Museum (Jerusalem) (Fig. 24).

---

[157] Blake 2008: 155.
[158] Skemer 2006: 87.
[159] Thomas 1971: 187; Skemer 2006: 88.
[160] Brown et al 1969: 33.
[161] Godelmann 1676: 92. According to Godelmann, such a textual talisman became a "sacrament of the devil" that could only work by demonic pact.
[162] For the Jewish evidence, see Trachtenberg 1982 [1939]: 139-143; Davidson 1971: 242-3, 346; and Veenstra 1997: 303, n. 268. Schrire (1966: 97) discussed an amulet where the writer alternated phrases of the biblical text with their amuletic equivalent, the twenty-two letter name of God. For Christian book-talismans of magic replete with names of angels and spells, see d'Alverny 1994: 158-160.
[163] Veenstra 1997: 304, n. 269.
[164] Clark 2002: 100.
[165] Balfour 1885: 661.
[166] This amulet is on loan to the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. See Ross 1962: 97; Kitzinger 1967: 98.

Fig. 24: *Two-sided amulet. On the front, the Raising of Lazarus. On the reverse are three lines of magic words in Greek. Jerusalem, Bible Lands Museum. http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/gems/styles/EarlyChristian/Image/20.jpg (graphic elaboration Marco Merlini).*

Even if widespread among the vast public of believers, the use of biblical texts and names of divine champions as a cure or preventative did enjoy a seesawing assent from the Christian Church. In 360, the Council of Laodicea prohibited clergy from making these amulet books.[167] Augustin of Hippo (354–430) was hesitant, but at the end positive on the matter.[168] Disapproving references to such uses can be found in the writings of Saints Jerome (c. 347–420) and Eligius (c. 588–660). On the contrary, John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) supported the women's habit in the Antiochian congregation to wear the Gospel around their necks.[169] Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540– 604) sent a mini St. John's Gospel to Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards, to aid her son in pain.[170] According to John of Salisbury (c. 1120–1180), St. Cuthbert (c. 635–687) used to cure the sick by laying St. John's Gospel on their body.[171] The bishop of Chartres agreed by

[167] Gamble 1995: 239; Hosang 2010: 102-103.

[168] Sometimes Augustin of Hippo seemed to condemn the medicinal use of St. John's Gospel (Blake 2008, 156). However, in the Homilies on the Gospel of John he wrote "When thy head aches, we praise thee if thou placest the gospel at thy head, instead of having recourse to an amulet" (Augustin 2004: 52). He also believed that sleeping with the Gospel of John under the pillow at night would be a effective remedy for headache (Gamble 1995: 238; Maxwell 2006: 165).

[169] Maxwell 2006: 164.

[170] Brown et al 1969: 30.

[171] The Stonyhurst Gospel is a mignon VII century gospel book which belonged to Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. The pocket book was recovered in 1104, four centuries after his death, when Cuthbert's coffin was opened. It was then kept with other relics in the cathedral of Durham, although the bishops and distinguished visitors were able to wear the book in a leather bag around their necks. It is on loan to the British Library (Skemer 2006: 51).

recommending the practice of placing not only St. John's Gospel, but an entire library comprised of the *Credo*, the *Lord's Prayer* and different *New Testament* verses on stricken parts of people suffering from headaches, feverishness, and other diseases.[172]

Consistent practices are constituted by Islamic protective talismanic objects bearing Koranic *surah* and *ayah* as well as religious narratives, words and feats of the Prophets (*hadiths*), the ninety-nine names of Allah, the names of His Prophet, the names of his daughter and grandchildren, numerology, and astrological signs. Most of the Muslims are convinced that these words, full of auspicious potency when inscribed on an object, protect efficaciously from hardship and danger the person who sees, reads, or touches them and have the power to ward off the forces of evil. Passages in devotional manuals by religious leaders (*shaikhs*) assure that whoever reads them is protected from demons and supernatural beings (*jinn*). A royal person such as the Ottoman sultan often wore a talismanic shirt decorated by the Divine Message under armor or ceremonial court robes. The garment was adorned with calligraphic text (mainly verses of the *Koran*, the names of God as well as holy sayings) and lucky numbers to shield him from injury or death during battle or hunting.[173]

The earliest dated talismanic shirts are from the late XV century (Fig. 25). However, the majority of them date to the XVI-XVII centuries. They were of Turkish origin and were produced for the Ottoman sultans.[174] Through time, Muslim talismanic shirts were widespread in the whole range of social categories from Turkey to Iran, India, to the Philippines.[175] Letters and numbers are considered as magic formulas and numerological charms designed to protect and give guidance to the wearer, i.e., they are thought to possess both meaning and apotropaic potency.

Neolithic cryptograms and mythograms

Coming back to the Tărtăria tablets after comparison with other sacred ancient writings for initiates, one can maintain that they bear secret signs utilized in liturgies associable to a complex ritual structure. The Transylvanian artifacts are a sort of private and covert *pustaha* of Milady Tărtăria who incised them or even inherited them through a formal training and initiatory process. They were created for fixing/transmitting a sacred personal knowledge hinged to the early Vinča magic-religious credo, but also for guarding it. Besides, they include schedule and procedures for carrying out liturgies related to a specific topic, i.e., her ritual specialization.

[172] John of Salisbury Policraticus 1, 1991: 66.
[173] Piotrovsky and Rogers 2004: 48-49.
[174] Maddison et al. 1997: 117.
[175] For the Turkish talismanic shirts, see Rogers and Ward 1988: 18; Gokyay 2004: 46–61. In Persia: Alexander 1992, nos. 33–34. In India: Ashraf 1962, cat. 15-16. In the Philippines: Maxwell 2003: 365.

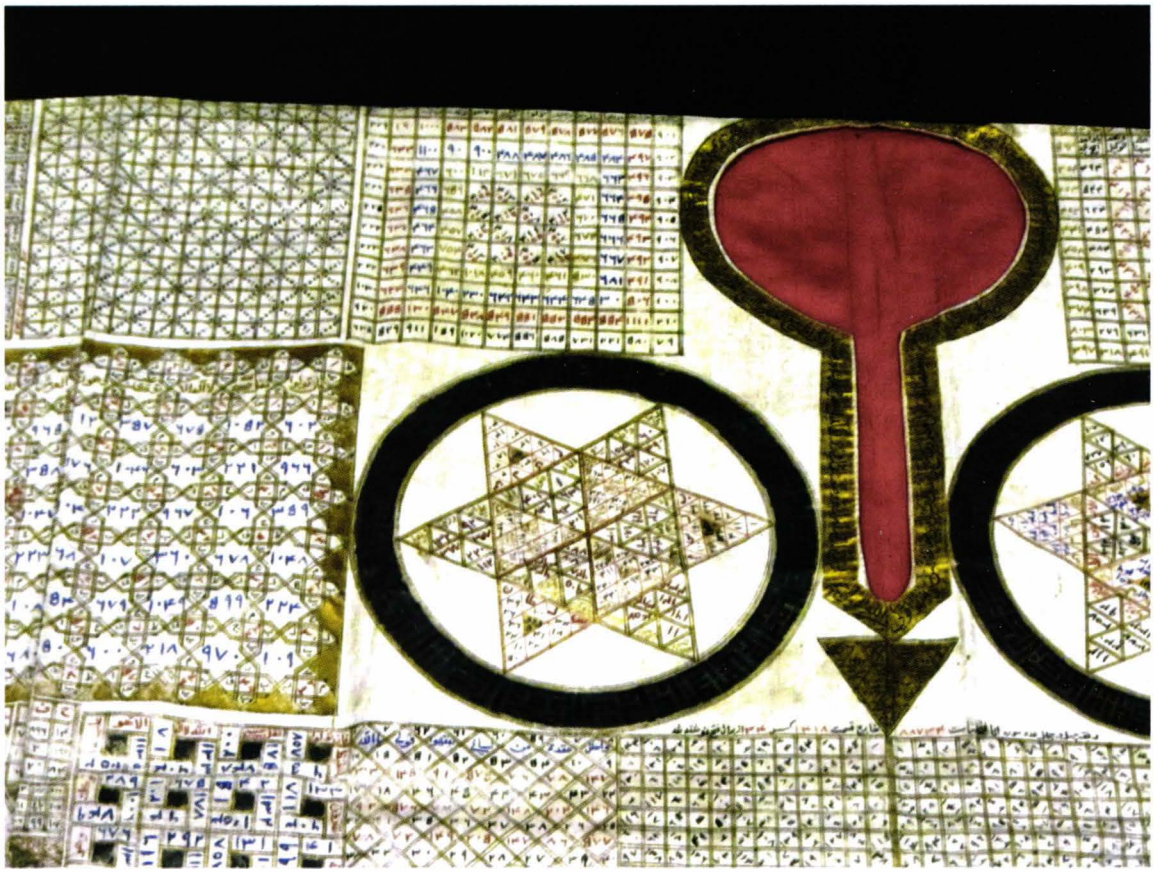


Fig. 25: Detail of the Talismanic Shirt of Sultan Selim II (1524–1574). Courtesy of Topkapi Palace Museum, Inventory n. 13/1133 (photo by Marco Merlini).

The singular features of some fragmented figurines buried with Milady Tărtăria's osseous remains pose stimulating questions concerning her spiritual specialism. The masks of three statuettes are asymmetrical towards the left. Was their disfigured shape a conscious representation of unusual mythical personages or different forms of the same mythical figure? In the ethnographic record, masked and deformed figurines occur that, employed in ceremonial rituals, depict mythological beings, the spirits of dead ancestors, as well as other creatures believed to possess supernatural powers. They might represent as in a mirror the elevation of Milady Tărtăria to ancestorship. As we know, she was very ill and in pain for a degenerative–arthritic process causing malformation. She had a severely curved posture forming a > (an arrow) due to a decalcified and fragile vertebral column. She limped on her right leg because of her thicker, anchylosed, and shorter right femur and leg. The tendency to angle towards the right was accentuated by scoliosis that deformed the right side of the torso and the right shoulder.[176] The mortuary program applied to Milady Tărtăria's corpse expresses high respect and veneration. Therefore, an alternative interpretation of the deformation of the Transylvanian figurines as the

[176] Merlini 2011a: 211.

result of malevolent actions made during archaic rituals that nowadays are considered "sorcery" and "black magic"[177] is unsatisfying.

Two statuettes show a naturalistically phallus-like shape with accentuation of a masked face that is plastically modeled over the glans. One of these figurines shows a single protruding breast and emphatic buttocks divided by a deep vertical split. This female figurine in phallic shape expresses clearly the encounter of the male-female duality in the same body as female attributes over a masked phallic-shaped figure. It is neither a clay hermaphrodite with male and female genitals (breasts and phallus),[178] nor a Neolithic transsexual with exaggerate curves co-occurring with the 'hidden extra' of breasts and penis. It neither illustrates the "disruptive potential of sexuality; the body as spectacle of inversion," nor indicates "the sexual ambiguity and ambivalence" to be "neither male nor female" as maintained by D. W. Bailey for similar Neolithic statuettes.[179] Adhering to a hyper-sexualized viewpoint, the figurine found with Milady Tărtăria's osseous remains is both female and male. It expresses the communion between the two sexes and the synergy between the specific potency possessed by their attributes of reproduction. Milady Tărtăria was a magic-religious adept and her ritual specialization included gender as a structuring principle with the mystique of virility, fertility and fecundity as a point of reference. She possibly determined the most auspicious time and appropriate rituals for agriculture and breeding, crucial tasks of the Tărtăria community (such as plowing, sowing and harvesting crops) as well as for the important social events (such as marriages, youth initiations, etc.). The selection and handling of her grave equipment by kin and disciples recognize her imbuement with social responsibilities while alive as well as post-mortem. In particular, the amulet-archive tablets encoded with her arcane knowledge were buried with her as complete items because their signs charge her with the same obligations and responsibilities and confer her the same leadership, now at a higher level having become a novel ancestor, relating to the living community.

To summarize, the tablets seem to be a manual of secret mastery acquired by Milady Tărtăria as a literate ritual specialist after formal training, performed successfully for a long time. They are a mark of the prestige enjoyed by her both pre- and post-mortem. The exclusiveness of the esoteric knowledge encoded in the amulets increased her venerability, since the signs were only read and understood with the aid of orally supplied information from Milady Tărtăria. The Tărtăria case study sheds light on the cultural statute that religious beliefs and liturgies shape individual actions, while individual actions also serve to reproduce religious beliefs and liturgies.[180]

Within this interpretative framework of the tablets as a written notepad with strong elements of exclusiveness, they cannot be considered as a mere device for memory support or

[177] F. Draşovean collected a series of twisted and mutilated Vinča artifacts, mainly figurines, that he interpreted as representing "black magic" rituals (Draşovean 2005).

[178] See for example the Late Neolithic (Karanovo III-IV) hermaphrodite from Kapitan Dimitrievo (Bulgaria). It is held at the Historical Museum of Pestera, Bulgaria.

[179] Bailey 2005: 194.

[180] Merlini 2011d: 223, 2011g: 71.

organizer providing a link between oral tradition and writing. The tablets are not mere external portable sketchpads for retention and communication of a large amount of data exceeding personal memory as, for example, the staffs recording the genealogical history of the Ngati-rangi-toke tribe or the carved totem poles of North America that arrange symbols in sequence to register family, clan and tribe history, legends and central events. Milady Tărtăria knew perfectly the credence and rituals of her early Vinča community, and her tablets bear a small amount of signs. Similar to the Batak *pustaha,* the written form was prescribed because the content (magic-religious beliefs and liturgical passages) was considered a 'science', even if a science of the occult, demanding precision.

The inscriptions on the tablets were icons with meaning only to a relatively small group of initiates connected to Milady Tărtăria. They encode a private instruction guide of secret knowledge preserved and understood only by her affiliates and partly also by members of other holy women's circles belonging to the same cultural milieu. The tablets and signs show use, but not long and/or heavy. It means that Milady Tărtăria and her restricted group of associates utilized the inscribed tablets mainly in special and not frequent rituals. This finalization affected literacy as a medium, not facilitating our attempts to decipher the engraved signs since they redact texts that challenge the unexpressible. They not only reveal but also conceal and sidetrack, and finally indicate something to mean something else. Even if secret and initiatory, inscriptions appear as belonging to a notational system with the synchronicity of writing. According to some scholars, very limited writing technology occurs at Tărtăria, because the final aim of the signs is to keep information known only within a restricted and selected religious group. However, neither a public and widespread diffusion, nor an unspecialized character, nor a profane nature are mandatory features of *ars scribendi.*[181] Runes, Ogham characters, the Batak *pustaha,* Kabbalistic literacy, and Nsibidi signs are mostly connected with secret writing. They individuate specialized scripts and keep records related to the spiritual, magic and religious sphere.

Consistently, at Tărtăria the script was connected with sacred writing utilized in rituals and with non-practical day-to-day purposes of the restricted group of initiates, being their means of expression, stimulating their collective identity, and fixing the ritualized authority of their elderly female literate leader. It encodes their magic-religious credo and liturgical practices that founded their perception of Milady Tărtăria in life as an esteemed religious practitioner who provided sacramental support for her early agricultural community. It also condensates her obligations and responsibilities as a terrific and venerated novel ancestor in front of her circle of initiates as well as the descendants and the whole living community within the context of intergenerational transmissions.[182]

Throughout the period of their utilization, the tablets and signs were protected by any kind of damage. Any cracks and injury are due to their laying for millennia within the ritual pit-grave and the circumstances of their discovery by the archaeologists. As already noticed, the

[181] Merlini 2009d.
[182] Kozok 2000: 43.

tablets do not show long or massive usage. Their ritual employment for more than an individual human lifespan has been excluded. The tablets were carefully modeled and incised by the actual messenger. The 'scribe', possibly Milady Tărtăria herself, had the cryptograms previously explained and exercised throughout an extended and demanding period of apprenticeship in magic and religion, as well as in sacred symbolism and secret ritual literacy. This formidable series of skills was not inherited within the household sphere. The required skills did not belong to 'ordinary' people of the village. The process of learning the special signs for writing/reading and the sacred codes that only the initiate can understand was a key part of her formal training in the magic-religious and ritual knowledge. It included the visual reproduction of the signs according to a highly standardized inventory and organizational norms: the way their reproduction had to be put into practice on clay, the understanding of their meaning connected with the religious-mythological system, the knowledge of the encoded sacred symbolism, and the handling of their magical power. It is inferable that there was the necessity to hand down the wisdom of the signs from generation to generation through special instruction that involved a series of initiatory ceremonies supported by ancestor worship. Oligoliteracy was at work in the Neolithic Vinča A village settled at Tărtăria–*Groapa Luncii*.

If the inscribed crypto-signs are meant to serve the special need to encode mystic secrets to be transmitted from individual to individual and from generation to generation, they require several layers of meanings. However, the significations are aligned according to stratified and concentric layers of knowledge, and the explanation of every single sign as well as their combination as a system is definite according to the depth of secret knowledge (level of initiation) possessed by any follower / interlocutor of the magical benefactor (Milady Tărtăria). There are not many possible readings of the signs and the texts they compose. Not all of the reading options are in the end correct. Only one is appropriate and acceptable at any stratum of 'knowledge of the hidden'. The signs have to be read in a proper sequence (that we do not know at the present) and each of them has a precise sense within a stratigraphy of different meanings due to the gradient of arcane knowledge.

Even if the tablets were primarily in use by just one person (Milady Tărtăria), or extended to her esoteric religious group on special occasions, they might have been employed in larger liturgies involving mere believers too. Simply devotees were not able to read the signs due to absence of an appropriate training. Their meaning was transmitted to them by the professional religious adept, but above all they trusted in the tablets' magic potency. As for the runic inscriptions, the formulae incised on the Tărtăria tablets were believed to transmit an arcane communication winded by magical proprieties such as to release forces/energies and to attract good will. The tablets were respected as bearers of potential powers by virtue of their textual medium to be read. Therefore, the talisman-tablets and the ritual pit-grave of Milady Tărtăria served not only to commemorate the individual identity of the dead ritual specialist and consecrate her as a novel ancestor, but also to facilitate intergenerational links among past, present, and future conduits for collective memory, and the reaffirmation of community identity

and membership. Although the deceased was no longer physically present, she did not belong in the past: rather, *she resided among the living, but in another place.*[183]

Not only do the signs carry sacred content, but the physical outlines were believed to be consecrated themselves. Their intimate holiness is evidenced by their careful and precise shape. The importance of the signs was so high and the taboo on the integrity of their shape so restricted that the person deviated the long horizontal register-line around the edge of the left side of the rounded tablet to avoid a impeding fragment of ceramic and the consequent running into the bow+arrow sign that had to be left intact. Finally, the taboo on the integrity of the sign shape is confirmed by the deposition of the tablets into the ritual pit-grave as unique complete items. They were not deliberately fragmented, as Milady Tărtăria's osseous remains and belongings were, because the sequence and combination of signs represented a complete system that was not allowed to be broken. The Tărtăria signs are both notational (to be read as an informational system) and containers of magic potency. There was the necessity to preserve the tablets as intact items in order to transmit the complete textual and symbolic information through the full set of systematized signs, and to not affect the sanctified semiotic matter and consequently its enchantment-enchainment power. Fragmented signs would have lost their magical effectiveness. It would be not retrieved even if there was the ability to rejoin two fragments to remake a single sign. In short, the absence of fragmentation of the three amulet-archive tablets is related to the signs and not to the artifacts. Possessing the Tărtăria tablets' apotropaic potency, might they be examples of what Frazer called *contagious magic, magic by contact*?[184] Was their force directed to a target by acting as conduits between super-human powers and anyone seeing, touching, reading, or carrying them, similar to the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim written talismans we have investigated before?

This observation offers a parallel between the Tărtăria tablets and other inscribed special paraphernalia from the Danube civilization that archaeologists usually find as complete items. According to *DatDas* results, they are ritual media (cult tablets-plaques, offering altars, amulets, magic medallions) bearing signs that are sacred themselves and are incised, not isolated, but in complex groups. The situation is different for inscribed ritual vessels (bowls, pots, jugs, pitchers, and lids) which have been deliberately fragmented often without any care for the integrity of signs. This might be because, in these instances, signs carry religious information but are not sacred themselves. However, at a closer look one can detect that engraved liturgical containers were often broken deliberately in particular places because the signs were present at those places. At Turdaş, one-third of all the incised signs were deposited with the shards fragmented through the signs. At Banjica, the rate increases up to three-quarter.[185] Figurines and spindle-whorls follow an intermediate fragmentation pattern concerning the signs.[186]

[183] Kuijt 2008: 176.
[184] Frazer 1911: 174–219.
[185] Chapman 2001: 228.
[186] Merlini 2011d: 334.

At Tărtăria, the devotees had confidence that the set of signs encrypted a secret code with magic significance capable of converting into amulets the tablets Milady Tărtăria adorned. Trained to use the sacred and encrypted corpus of signs, she managed the tablets through magical practice and wore them. Consistently, she was believed to possess supernatural powers or to be able to control and direct such powers by her use of the script. It was a practice that might convey fear of arcane forces by normal people. If the personal life of Milady Tărtăria was connected with the exemplary disciplines of holy personhood, her pre-eminence was also based on the common conviction that her magical 'science' included potentially destructive forces.

Some features of the script employed at Tărtăria are inferable by the agenda sketched above. The tablets were intelligible only to the person who had originally created them because the sign system was engaged to express concepts and/or language related items (if they are encoded by the signs) that followed non-standard codes. The style of writing, terms, and punctuation marks record personal notes in a short form that are different from those created by another colleague. Only the concepts or words considered absolutely necessary were written down. More important, the signs concealed their esoteric meaning in order to guard the secrecy of Milady Tărtăria's wisdom. With reference to the Moso hieroglyphs, the Tărtăria iconograms are part of the script, indeed representing the script itself. However, if the shape of the signs is of primary importance, it reveals the surface of their meaning and not their heart.

If the text was only to be read by the trained ritual practitioner who retained ownership of it and revealed its arcane meaning, utilizing the tablets for special ceremonies, the consistent act may have been aloud-reading, possibly as recital and declamation.

According to the aforementioned function and features of the sign system at Tărtăria, it is significant that all the signs are inserted into a peculiar spatial organization: within eight separated cells on the oblong drilled tablet and within four quadrants originated by a cross-shaped division on the circular tablet. Any sign associated with stratified meanings is an element of a conceptual sequence, and their reading should work as a system.

One has to search into the inscriptions of the Tărtăria tablets for packages of information related to a religion with magical significance generated in the early Vinča spiritual substratum. It utilized a mythical code to store and to convey beliefs concerning natural cycles, activators of fertility and fecundity, stages and productivity in cultivation, motions of heavenly bodies, how to protect divinities and peoples, memory and the shielding intercession of ancestors, the eternal collectivity of the ancestral dead, totemic lineage, animal spirits, and processes of healing. The religion was a system of beliefs characterized by common models of ritual actions that embedded symbols and texts[187] by which human beings communicated with their culturally defined universe constituted by super-human powers and inter-human arena, mediating also between the individual's conflicting needs for self-expression and self-containment. For ritual action, I mean not only formal rituals performed by consecrated professionals such as Milady Tărtăria, but also

[187] Victor Turner considered rituals to be aggregations of symbols (Turner 1975: 59).

many acts of everyday household life that were imbued by religious-mythical significance that incorporated both utilitarian and sacred functions.

References

Alexander, D. 1992. "Arms and Armour of the 7th to 19th centuries." In *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* XXI. London: Kha.

Amaeshi, B. 1977. "Sources for West African Studies: Some Non-Alphabetic Writings of West Africa." *International Library Review* 27, 1: 1-8.

Aritonang, J. S. 1993. *Mission Schools in Batakland (Indonesia), 1861-1940. Studies in Christian Mission.* Leiden: Brill.

Ashraf, M. 1962. *A Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Salang Jing Museum and Library. Glorious Quran, its Parts and Fragments.* Hyderabad.

Augustin. 2004. *St. Augustin on Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John and Soliloquies: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian.* Kessinger Publishing, LLC.

Baeksted, A. 1952. Malruner og Troldruner: Runemagiske Studier, Nationalmuseets Skrifter. *Arkæologisk-Historisk Raekke* 4. Kobenhavn: Nordisk Forlag.

Bahn, P. G., and J. Vertut. 1997. *Journey Through the Ice Age.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bailey, D. W. 2005. *Prehistoric Figurines.* London: Routledge.

Balfour, E. 1885. *The Cyclopaedia of India and Eastern and Southern Asia,* vol. 1. London: Bernard Quaritch.

Banner, J. 1960. "The Neolithik Settlement on the Kremenyak Hil at Csoka." *Acta archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 12: 1–56. Budapest.

Bartlett, H. H. 1930. *The Labours of Datoe,* Part I. [1973 republished as "The Labours of the Datoe and other Essays on the Bataks of Asahan (North Sumatra)." *Michigan Papers on South and South East Asia* 5. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press].

_____1931. *The Labours of Datoe,* Part II. [1973 republished as "The Labours of the Datoe and other Essays on the Bataks of Asahan (North Sumatra)." *Michigan Papers on South and South East Asia* 5. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press].

Battestini, S. 1991. "Reading signs of identity and alterity. History, semiotics and a Nigerian case." *African Studies Review* 34 (1 April): 99–116.

Blake, B. J. 2008. *All About Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, T. J. et al. 1969. *The Stonyhurst Gospel of Saint John.* Oxford: Roxburghe Club.

Buchholz, H. G. 1984. "Odin. Celtic and Siberian Affinities of a Germanic Deity." *Mankind Quarterly* 24: 427–437.

Carlson, A. 2003. *Nsibiri, Gender, and Literacy: The Art of the Bakor-Ejagham.* PhD diss. Indiana University, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Carretta, V., and P. Gould. 2001. *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic.* Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Chapman, J. C. 2001. "Intentional Fragmentation in the Neolithic and Copper Age of South East Europe: Incised Signs and Pintaderas." In *Festschrift für Gheorghe Lazarovici.* Fl. Draşovean, ed., 217–243. Timişoara: Ed. Mirton.

Clark, S. 2002. "Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture." In *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe,* vol. 4. *The Period of the Witch Trials.* B. Ankarloo, S. Clark, and W. Monter, eds., 97–169. London: Athlone.

Coulmas, F. 1996. *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing Systems.* Oxford: Blackwell.

D'Alverny, M.-T. 1994. *La transmission des textes philosophiques et scientifiques au Moyen Age.* Aldershot: Variorum.
Daryell, E. 1910. "Some 'Nsibidi' Signs." *Man, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 10: 113–114.
_____1911. Further Notes on 'Nsibidi' Signs With Their Meanings From Ikom District, Southern Nigeria." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 41: 521–43.
Dathorne, O. R. 1974. *The Black Mind: A History of African Literature.* Minneapolis: Minnesota UP.
Davidson, G. 1971. *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels.* New York: The Free Press.
Diringer, D. 1948. *The Alphabet: A Key to the History of Mankind.* New York: Philosophical Library.
Elliott, R. 1989. *Runes. An Introduction.* New York: St. Martin's Press [second edition].
Draşovean, F. 2005. "Despre unele practici de magie neagră din neoliticul bănăţean. O abordare etnoarheologică." *Analele Banatului, Etnografie* VI: 5–11. Timişoara: Muzeul Banatului.
Farmer, S. 2003a. "Five Cases of 'Dubious Writing' in Indus Inscriptions." In *Fifth Harvard Indology Roundtable* (10 May).
_____2003b. "Writing or Non-Linguistic Symbols? The Myth of the Literate Indus Valley." Presentation delivered at the International Indus Valley Conference, Long Beach, October 18, 2003. http://www.safarmer.com/indus/longbeach.pdf
Frazer, J. G. 1911. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion.* London-New York: Macmillan.
Friedrich, K. n.d. "The Mystery of Tatárlaka." online. http://www.magtudin.org/Mystery%20%20Part.%201.htm.
Fulcanelli. 1926. *Le Mystère des Cathédrales.* Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert.
Gamble, H. 1995. *Books and Readers in the Early Church.* New Haven: Yale University Press.
Gaur, A. 1984. *A History of Writing.* London: British Library.
_____1997. *A History of Writing.* New York: Abbeville Press.
_____2003. *Literacy and the Politics of Writing.* Exeter: Intellect Books.
Gimbutas, M. 1974. *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 6500–3500 B.C.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
_____1976. *Neolithic Macedonia. As Reflected by Excavation at Anza, Southeast Yugoslavia.* Monumenta Archaeologica. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California.
_____1991. *The Civilisation of the Goddess. The World of Old Europe.* San Francisco: Harper.
Godelmann, J. G. 1676. *Tractatus de magis, veneficis et lamiis recte cognoscendis et puniendis.* Sumptibus Johannis Danielis Tauberi, Norimbergae.
Gokyay, O. S. 2004. "Talismanic Shirts." *Art and Culture Magazine* XII: 46-61.
Green, D. H. 1994. *Medieval Listening and Reading. The Primary Reception of German Literature 800-1300.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Haarmann, H. 1995. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe. An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World.* Berlin–New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
Haarmann, H. 1998b. "On the Nature of Old European Civilization and its Script." *Studia Indogermanica Lodziensia* II. Lódź.
_____2002. "On the Formation Process of Old World Civilizations and the Catastrophe that Triggered it." *European Journal for Semiotic Studies* 14, 3–4: 519–593.
_____2005. "The Challenge of the Abstract Mind: Symbols, Signs and Notational Systems in European Prehistory." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 221–232. Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.
_____2008. "The Danube Script and Other Ancient Writing Systems: A Typology of Distinctive Features." *The Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 12–46.
Harmatta, J. 1966. "Neolitkori írásbeliség Közép-Európában?" *Antik tanulmányok* 13, 3: 235–236. Budapest.
Hemenway, P. 2008. *Der geheime Code.* Köln: Taschen.
Hood, M. S. F. 1967. "The Tărtărian Tablets." *Antiquity* 41: 99-113.

Hosang, B. 2010. *Establishing Boundaries: Christian–Jewish Relations in Early Council Texts and the Writings of Church Fathers*. Leiden–Boston: Brill Academic Publishers.
Hosking R. F., and G. M. Meredith–Owens, eds. 1966: *A Handbook of Asian Scripts*. London: British Museum.
John of Salisbury. 1991. *Policraticus* I. C. Nederman, ed. and trans. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
Jovanović, S. 1981. "Urezane oznake na keramici vinčan ske grupe u zbirci Narodnog muzeja u Vršcu." *Rad vojvođanskih muzeja* 27:129–148. Novi Sad.
Jensen, H. 1969. *Sign, Symbol and Script: An Account of Efforts to Write*. New York: Putnam.
Kalu, O. 1980. "Writing in Pre-Colonial Africa: A Case Study of Nsibidi." In *African Cultural Development*. O. Kalu, ed., 76-83. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
Kepler, J. 1952. *Harmonice Mundi*. C. G. Wallis, trans. Great Books of the Western World. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.
Kieckhefer, R. 1994. "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic." *American Historical Review* 99, 3: 813-836.
Kitzinger, E. 1967. *Handbook of the Byzantine Collection*. Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine studies.
Korošec, P., and J. Korošec. 1973. *Predistoriska naselba Barutnica kaj Amzibegovo vo Makedonija. Izvestaj za iskopuvanjeto vo 1960*. Belgrade and Prilep.
Kozok, U. 2000. "On Writing the Not-to-be-Read. Literature and Literacy in a Pre-Colonial 'Tribal' Society." *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde* 156: 33-55. Leiden.
Kuehni, R. G. 2003. *Color Space and Its Divisions: Color Order from Antiquity to the Present*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.
Kuijt, I. 2008. "The Regeneration of Life – Neolithic Structures of Symbolic Remembering and Forgetting." *Current Anthropology* vol. 49, 2: 171–197.
Lazarovici, Gh. 1977. *Gornea Preistorie*. Caiete Banatica – seria arheologie. Reşiţa.
_____1979. *Neoliticul Banatului*. Cluj-Napoca: Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis.
_____2005. "Culturile Precriş I, Precriş II şi Post Criş I, Post Criş II." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* IV: 23–78. "Lucian Blaga" University–IPCTE, Sibiu.
_____2008. "Database for Spiritual Life: Signs and Symbols." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 94-125.
Lazarovici, Gh., C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini. 2011. *Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega.
Lazarovici, Gh., and M. Merlini. 2005. "New Archaeological Data Referring to the Tărtăria Tablets." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 205–219.
Luca S. A., ed. 2009. *Signs and Symbols from the Danube Neolithic and Eneolithic*. Sibiu: Brukenthal National Museum.
Macalister, R. A. S. 1945. *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum,* vol. I. Dublin: Stationery Office.
Maddison, F., E. Savage-Smith, R. H. Pinder-Wilson, and T. Stanley, eds. 1997. *Science, Tools and Magic*. London: Nour Foundation, Azimuth Editions; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Makkay, J. 1968. "The Tărtăria Tablets." *Orientalia* 37: 272-289.
Maoji, F. 1956. "Naxizu Gu Wenzi de Chuangshi the Gouzao" [The creation and composition of the classical Naxi (Moso) script]. In *Zhongyang Minzu Xueyuan Xuebao* (*ZyMXX*): 1: 57–68.
Marler, J., and M. R. Dexter, eds. 2009. *Signs of Civilization. Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe*. Symposium proceedings, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Novi Sad. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.
Marler, J., ed. 2008: *The Danube Script: Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe*. Catalogue of the Exhibition, National Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.
Masson, E. 1984. "L'écriture dans les civilisations danubiennes néolithiques." *Kadmos* XXIII, 2: 89–123.
Maxim, Z., J. Marler, and V. Crişan, eds. 2009. *The Danube Script in Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries*. The National History Museum of Transylvania and the Institute of Archaeomythology. Cluj–Napoca: Ed. Mega.

Maxwell, J. L. 2006. *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and His Congregation in Antioch.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Maxwell, R. J. 2003. *Sari to Sarong: Five Hundred Years of Indian and Indonesian Textile Exchange.* Canberra: National Gallery of Australia.
McGregor, J. K. 1909. "Some Notes on Nsibidi." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 39 (January–June): 209–219.
Meadows, K. 1996. *Rune Power: The Secret Knowledge of the Wise Ones.* Boston: Element Books.
Mellaart, J. 1967. *Çatal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia.* London: Thames and Hudson.
Merlini, M. 2001. *Signs, Inscriptions, Organizing Principles and Messages of the Balkan-Danube Script.* Prehistory Knowledge Project, Rome. Online: http://www.prehistory.it/scritturaprotoeuropai.htm.
_____2002. "A Neolithic Writing System in Southeastern Europe." Skopje: World IFRAO Congress.
_____2003. "Quando la Grande Dea ci insegnò a scrivere." *Hera* 39: 80-85.
_____2004a. *La scrittura e nata in Europa?* Rome: Avverbi Editore.
_____2004b. "Challenging Some Myths on the Tărtăria Tablets, Icons of the Danube Script." In J. Marler and M. Robbins Dexter, eds., 113–128.
_____2004c. "Did Trypillya, Precucuteni and Cucuteni Cultures Develop a Script?" World Congress of the Trypillian Civilization (October 7-11), Kyiv.
_____2005. "Semiotic Approach to the Features of the 'Danube Script.'" *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 233–251.
_____2006a. "The Gradešnica Script Revisited." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* V: 25-78. Sibiu.
_____2006b. *Milady Tărtăria and the Riddle of Dating Tărtăria tablets.* Prehistory Knowledge Project, Rome. On line: http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/tartaria_tablets/merlinitartaria.htm.
_____2007a. "A Semiotic Matrix to Distinguish between Decorations and Signs of Writing in the Danube Civilization." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* VI: 73–30. "Lucian Blaga" University – IPCTE, Sibiu.
_____2007b. "Segni e simboli su oggetti della ceramica Precucuteni e Cucuteni." Cucuteni. Tesori di una civiltà preistorica dei Carpazi. Accademia di Romania in Rome, 18 October 2007.
_____2007c. "Did Trypillya, Precucuteni and Cucuteni Cultures Develop a Script? Did a Form of Literacy Develop in Neo-Eneolithic Times in Southeastern Europe?" In *Tripils'ka Cultura. Poshyki, Vidkryttia, Svitovyi, Kontekst, Spadschyna.* M. Videiko, and S. Kot, eds. Kyiv.
_____2008a. "Challenging Some Myths about the Tărtăria Tablets Icons of the Danube Script." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4 (Winter): 47–64.
_____2008b. "Segni di scrittura su oggetti della ceramica Precucuteni e Cucuteni?" In *Cucuteni. Tesori di una civiltà preistorica dei Carpazi.* N. Ursulescu, ed. Rome–Iaşi.
_____2008c. "Evidence of the Danube Script in Neighboring Areas: Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic." In J. Marler, ed., 53–60.
_____2008d. *Neo-Eneolithic Literacy in Southeastern Europe: An Inquiry into the Danube Script*, PhD Dissertation, "Lucian Blaga" University, Faculty of Istorie Şi Patrimoniu "Nicolae Lupu," Sibiu.
_____2009a. "Challenging Some Myths on the Tărtăria Tablets: Icons of the Danube Script." In Marler and M. R. Dexter, eds., 113–128.
_____2009b. "The Danube Script and Turdaş." In Z. Maxim, J. Marler, and V. Crişan, eds., 21–43.
_____2009c. "The Danube Script as a Tool of Ancestry Ideology in a Kinship-Based Society." In Z. Maxim, J. Marler, and V. Crişan, eds., 69–91.
_____2009d. *An Inquiry into the Danube Script.* Biblioteca Brukenthal XXXIII. Ministery of Culture of Romania and Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu. Alba Iulia: Ed. Altip.
_____2010a. "Religious Calendar Systems from the Prehistoric Southeastern Europe." Sixteenth Annual meeting of EAA (1–5 September 2010), The Haag.
_____2010b. "Some Key Features of the Danube *Homo Scribens* based on the Databank *DatDas.*" *Journal of Archaeomythology* 6: 39-61.
_____2011a. "The Enigma of the Charred Human Being, the Cultic Sacrifice and the Cannibalistic Ritual." In Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 126–128.

_____2011b. "The Other Evocative Objects from the Pit-Grave." In Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 135-162.
_____2011c. "Mortuary Practices and Ritual Grave to Consecrate a Novel Ancestor." In Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 209–37.
_____2011d. "The Identification of the Actual Signs." In Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 239–261.
_____2011e: *A Comparison Between the Signs from Tărtăria, the Danube Script and Other Early Writing*. In Gh. Lazarovici, C.-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini, 263–278.
_____2011f. "Tărtăria: A Ritual–Grave to Consecrate a Novel Ancestor in a Neolithic Medium-Scale Community." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* 10. University of Sibiu.
Merlini, M., and Gh. Lazarovici. 2008. Settling Discovery Circumstances, Dating and Utilization of the Tărtăria Tablets." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* VII: 111–196. *"Lucian Blaga" University – IPCTE, Sibiu.*
Munk, M. L. 1986. *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet: The Sacred Letters as a Guide Tto Jewish Deed and Thought*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications.
Mytum, H. 1992. *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*. London: Routledge.
Moga, V., and H. Ciugudean, eds. 1995. *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Alba*. Muzeul National al Unirii Alba Iulia, Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis II, Alba Iulia.
Nedoma, R. 2004. *Personennamen in südgermanischen Runeninschriften*. Heidelberg: Winter.
_____2006. *Schrift und Sprache in den südgermanischen Runeninschriften*. In *Das fuþark und seine einzelsprachlichen Weiterentwicklungen*. Akten der Tagung in Eichstätt vom 20 bis 24, Juli 2003. A. Bammesberger and G. Waxenberger, eds., 347-355. Berlin–New York: de Gruyter.
Nikolov, B. 1986. *The Rogozen Thracian Treasure, Bulgaria*. Sofia: Sofia Press.
_____1992. "Periodizaciia na neolitnite kulturi v Severna Bylgariia – ot Iantra do Timok." *Izvestija na Muzeite v Severozapadna Balgarija* 18: 11-23.
Nwosu, M. 2010. "In the Name of the Sign: The Nsibidi Script as the Language and Literature of the Crossroads." *Semiotica* 2010, 182. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
Oestigaard, T. 2000. *The Deceased's Life Cycle Rituals in Nepal: Present Cremation Burials for the Interpretations of the Past*. British Archaeological Reports, no. 853. Oxford: Archaeopress.
Oestigaard, T., and J. Goldhahn. 2006. "From the Dead to the Living. Death as Transactions and Renegotiations." *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 39, 1: 27–48.
Page R. I. 1987. *Runes* (*Reading the Past*). London: British Museum.
Parpola, A. 1996. *The Indus Script*. In *The World's Writing Systems*. P. T. Daniels and W. Bright, eds., 165–171. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Perić, S. 1995. *Butmirska Kultura: Geneza I Razvoj*. Belgrade: Arheološki Institut.
Piotrovsky, M., and J. M. Rogers. 2004: *Heaven on Earth. Art from Islamic Lands: Works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection*. Munich: Prestel Publishing.
Plato. 2006. *Timaeus*. Benjamin Jowett, trans. London: Echo Library.
Pogoževa, A. P. 1983. *Antropomorfnaja plastika Tripol'ja*. Akademija Nauk SSSR. Novosibirsk: Nauka.
Reiner, E. 1960. "Plague Amulets and House Blessings." *Journal of Near Easter Studies* 17, 1: 148–155.
Robinson, A. 2002. *The Man who Deciphered Linear B: The Story of Michael Ventris*. London: Thames and Hudson.
Rogers, J. M., and R. M. Ward. 1988: *Suleyman the Magnificent*. London: British Museum Publications.
Ross, M. C. 1962. *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, I*. Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies.
Sassoon, R., and A. Gaur. 1997. *Signs, Symbols and Icons: Pre-History to the Computer Age*. Exeter: Intellect Books.
Schrire, T. 1966. *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*. London: Routledge.
Sinaga, A. B. 1981. *The Toba-Batak High God. Transcendance and Immanence*. St. Augustin, Germany: Anthropos Institute.

Skemer, D. C. 2006. *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Slogar, C. 2007. "Early Ceramics from Calabar, Nigeria: Towards a History of Nsibidi." *African Arts.*
Tasić, N. 1973. *Neolitska Plastika.* Belgrade: Gradskij Muzei.
Thompson, R. F. 1978. *Black Ideographic Writing: Calabar to Cuba. Yale Alumni Mag.* 42, 2: 29-33.
Teygeler, R. 1993. Pustaha. A Study into the Production Process of the Batak Book. In *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde, Manuscripts of Indonesia* 149, 3, 593–611. Leiden.
Thomas, K. 1971. *Religion and the Decline of Magic.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Thorsson, E. 1992. *The Book of Ogham.* St. Paul: Llwellyn.
Todorova, H., ed. 1989. *Durankulak,* vol. I. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Science.
Todorova, H. et al., eds. 2002. *Durankulak, Band II: Die Prähistorischen Gräberfelder von Durankulak.* Deutsches Archaologisches Institut, Berlin, vol. II, Part 1. Sofia.
Trachtenberg, J. 1982. *Jewish Magic and Superstition.* New York: Atheneum [1939 First edition Behrman's Jewish Book House, New York].
Tringham, R. 1971. *Hunters, Fishers and Framers of Eastern Europe 6.000–3000 B.C.* London: Hutchinson University Library.
Turner, V. 1975. *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual.* New York: Cornell University Press.
Ursulescu, N. 1991. "La civilisation de la céramique rubanée dans les régions orientales de la Roumanie." In *Le Paléolithique et le Néolithique de la Roumanie en contexte européen.* V. Chirica, and D. Monah, eds., 188–224. Bibliotheca Archaeologica Moldaviae IV. Iaşi: Institutul de Arheologie.
Vajsov, I. 2002. "Die Idole aus den Gräberfeldern von Durankulak." In *Durankulak, Band II: Die Prähistorischen Gräberfelder von Durankulak.* H. Todorova et al., eds., 257–266. Deutsches Archaologisches Institut, Berlin, vol. II, part 1. Sofia.
Vasilescu, V. 1992. *Semnele cerului.* Chişinău: Editura Arhetip.
Veenstra, J. R. 1997. *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's Contre les Devineurs (1411).* Leiden: Brill.
Videiko, M. 2004. *Encyclopedia of Trypillian Civilization.* Kyiv: Ukrpoligraphmedia.
Vlassa, N. 1963. "*Chronology of the Neolithic in Transylvania in the Light of the Tărtăria settlements stratigraphy.*" In *Dacia, N. S.* VII: 485–494.
Williams, H. 2004. "Reasons for Runes." In *The First Writing.* S. D. Houston, ed. Cambridge UP.
Winkler, J. 1925. *Die Toba-Batak auf Sumatra in gesunden und kranken Tagen.* Stuttgart: Chr. Belser.
Winn, S. M. M. 1981. *Pre-writing in Southeastern Europe: The Sign System of the Vinča Culture ca.4000 BC.* Calgary, Alberta: Western Publishers.
_____1990. "A Neolithic Sign System in Southeastern Europe." In *The Life of Symbols.* M. Le Cron Foster and L. Botscharow, eds. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
_____2004a. "The Old European Script. Further Evidence, Economic and Religious Stimuli." Prehistory Knowledge Project, Rome, on line: http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/winn.htm.
_____2004b. "The Inventory of the Danube Script (DS)." Prehistory Knowledge Project, Rome, on line: http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/inventory/danube_script/danube_script_01.htm.
_____2008. "The Danube (Old European) Script." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4:126–141.

AN ARCHAEOMYTHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO AN OLD EUROPEAN SIGN (OE 14)

ADRIAN PORUCIUC

At the International Symposium "50 Years of Tărtăria Excavations," which took place at Coronini (Romania) in September 2011, I gave a talk on several signs specific to the prehistoric Danube civilization. For this article, however, I decided to focus on a single Old European sign (OE 14), rather than on the several signs taken into consideration in my 2011 presentation.

More and more meaningful things have been published on the Old European (OE) script, also designated as Danube script (DS). In that respect, a real turning point was marked at the international symposium in Novi Sad 2004, an occasion on which the creation of several databases was announced (notably by Gheorghe Lazarovici and by Marco Merlini). In regard to theoretical approaches, noteworthy were the ones that marked Shan Winn's comeback, after about four decades,[1] and Harald Haarmann's series of volumes and articles on the Danube civilization.[2] Haarmann and other representatives of what may be regarded as "the Novi Sad direction" have contributed much to a radical detachment from the traditional ("Mesopotamian") views on the beginnings of script.

For a theoretical background, in this article I will take into account the now generalized views on the three basic types of script (for which there are many examples of intermingling), namely pictographic, ideographic (logographic) and phonographic (alphabetic). Also, I will resort to the simpler division of signs into two categories, namely figurative and non-figurative (or abstract), that is, the categories marked by Haarmann, in German,[3] as *bildhaft* and *nicht-bildhaft*, respectively. Since in this article I chose to discuss a particular Old European sign, namely the one that Romanian specialists will rather automatically regard as *brăduțul,* 'the little fir', I will have to point out some problems of designation and classification, such problems being already detectable in the articles included in the Novi Sad volume of proceedings, *Signs of Civilization.*[4]

Among the DS signs discussed by Winn in his Novi-Sad article, the one marked as DS 137 – which obviously corresponds to what Haarmann presented as OE 14 – is included in a table of "abstract signs."[5] Nevertheless, the same sign (that is, a stylized representation of what looks like a young fir with three upward-growing pairs of branches that gradually decrease in length from bottom to top) appears among *figurative* signs in Haarmann.[6] More precisely, OE 14 appears among signs that Haarmann considered to be stylized representations of animals (or parts of animal bodies), humans (or parts of the human body), plants, tools, edifices, natural phenomena, etc. At this point I will also mention that the signs presented in the numerous figures of Haarmann's volume of 1996

[1] See Winn 2009.
[2] See, e.g., Haarmann 2009, 2009a, 2011.
[3] Haarmann 2011: 205-207.
[4] Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009.
[5] Winn 2009: 56.
[6] Haarmann 2011: 205, fig. 75.

also include fir-like ones (all with upward-growing branches), coming from early scripts of various regions and times: Vinča (figs. 28, 29, 30, ff.), Indus (fig. 44), Linear A and B (figs. 103 and 105), and Cretan hieroglyphic (fig. 119).

Both Winn and Haarmann paid special attention to a remarkable find, namely "the spherical stone of Lepenski Vir," as representative of the cultural complex (8^{th}-6^{th} millennia BCE) that may be considered as "the immediate predecessor of the Neolithic Vinča tradition."[7] It so happens that the second row of signs on the stone under discussion – which appears to represent the pre-ceramic stage of the Danube civilization – includes three successive OE-14 signs (the only bigger series of that kind being the one of the four successive cross-signs in the fourth row). Further, in the same volume, possible representations of firs (with equally long branches, growing either upwards or downwards) appear in G. Lazarovici's "Table B4: Plants,"[8] as well as in C.-M. Lazarovici's table of "vegetable elements as symbols" from Cucuteni;[9] the latter obviously correspond to signs 85 and 86 in Tkachuk's catalogue of the "Trypillia–Cucuteni sign system on painted pottery."[10] Worth mentioning also are corresponding Aegean signs (from Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece), such as the ones in fig. 8 of Sampson[11] and fig. 2 of Owens,[12] respectively. Last but not least, the Novi Sad volume includes an article of obvious ethno-archaeological orientation, namely the one on "the connection between Old European signs and Lithuanian sash ornamentation" by Vytautas Tumėnas. In his illustrative series, Tumėnas includes Lithuanian ornaments that obviously correspond to OE chevron patterns:

> The chevron – the multiple V sign and herring bone (comparable to OE 14, 85, 98) – is called [in Lithuanian] *šluotelė* 'hand broom, small broom', *eglutė* 'pine tree', *skujiņa* 'pine needle', also *vištakojėlė* 'chicken feet'.[13]

It is not surprising that in what a Romanian eye is inclined to see a fir-tree pattern, a Baltic eye sees rather a herring-bone pattern (which was as common in prehistory as in modern times). However, as visible in the quotation above, Lithuanians also referred chevron patterns to shapes of coniferous trees.

From an archaeomythological standpoint, the turning of fir tree representations into magic–sacred signs among inhabitants of what is now Romania should not be surprising at all, in any period. Such a statement can be sustained by ethnographic arguments such as the ones I presented in Poruciuc (2010):

> In certain parts of Romania the fir is as important for funerals as for weddings. A dictionary of contemporary Romanian [...] includes an article on *bradul* 'the fir' [...], that term designating a ceremonial round dance of the *hora* type, "which is danced at

[7] Haarmann 2009: 19.
[8] G. Lazarovici 2009: 70.
[9] C.-M. Lazarovici 2009: 107.
[10] Tkachuk 2009: 175.
[11] Sampson 2009: 189.
[12] Owens 2009: 196.
[13] Tumėnas 2009: 206.

the house of the bride on the eve of the wedding. Also, as Marian [14] observed more than a century ago [...]: "The funerary fir is used only for unmarried young men and for maidens, and only seldom, in some places, for married young men [...]." Such ambivalent, nuptial-funerary symbolism is in itself important for any discussion on perpetuation of Dionysiac-Orphic features.[15]

In regard to pre-Romanian traditions, it was in the same context[16] where I quoted from a 1994 article by Maria Comşa, who pointed out that the Dacian forefathers of the Romanians decorated much of their pottery with the "little fir" motif and that there must be a direct connection between that motif and the emblematic firs of today's Romanians. I made use of such arguments in order to demonstrate that fir symbolism represents a side of "popular Orphism" in today's Romanian folklore, since the Romanian fir (*brad*) that stands as a central symbol in funeral songs specific (especially) to south-western Romania quite obviously corresponds to the sacred cypress mentioned on ancient Orphic plates. See, for instance, the following inscription (found in an Orphic grave):

> In the house of Hades there is a spring to the right; by it stands a white cypress; here the souls, descending, are cooled. Do not approach this spring! Further you will find cool water flowing from the lake of recollection ... And then the subjects of the Chthonian King will have pity and will give you to drink from the lake of recollection.[17]

There is abundant ethnographic proof of fir symbolism in Romanian ritual (especially funeral) folklore. Here is my fragmentary translation of a Transylvanian funeral song recorded in 1915:

You, thick-twigged fir tree,
you've been badly cursed
by whoever moved you
down from the high mountain,
along the dark path,
with your top downhill [...]
The seven brave lads
and many young maids
felled you fairly
with your branches downwards [...][18]

[14] Marian 2000: 74.
[15] Poruciuc 2010: 110.
[16] Poruciuc 2010: 116.
[17] Burkert 1985: 293.
[18] Papahagi 1967: 244-245.

Of the quite many versions of the "fir song" (*cântecul bradului*) recorded in Romania, mainly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I chose the one above because it expressly refers to particular positions of firs and fir-branches when used in funeral rituals. Whereas no Romanian could imagine a ceremonial fir used top-down in wedding celebrations, downward or backward positions of the funeral fir were repeatedly mentioned in answers by Romanian villagers to the ethnographic questionnaires published in Ghinoiu et al. (2002). From page 149 of that volume I selected two such answers (recorded in two villages of the same Romanian county, Caraş-Severin), which specifically refer to the position of the funeral fir: (1) "The fir is brought with its top backwards, just the way a dead person is carried, feet forwards" – (2) "Nine young men, of uneven number, would bring it on their shoulders, its top backwards." I had several reasons to select statements of villagers from Caraş-Severin: the county under discussion is closest to the Iron Gates of the Danube (and, implicitly, to Lepenski Vir, which is placed just across the river); Caraş-Severin, as part of the Banat province, also belongs, ethnographically, to a most conservative part of Romania, especially in regard to funeral folklore;[19] last but not least, it is also in Caraş-Severin, on the steep bank of the Danube, where a special cave, Gaura Chindiei, has attracted the attention of archaeologists, especially due to the multitude of painted signs and images that it contains.

Gaura Chindiei is quite close to the venue of our symposium of 2004, that is, to the village of Coronini (which also bore the name of Pescari, between 1965 and 1996). Three color pictures of the (reddish) signs on the walls of the cave under discussion (plus one picture of the cliffs outside) were included in the archaeological album *Preistoria Daciei* by Miclea and Florescu (1980); it is obvious that some of the signs painted in that cave are recent enough, but many of them may be dated even to the "final Palaeolithic," as Florescu observes.[20] And it so happens that among the signs visible on one wall of Gaura Chindiei (Plate 14 in Miclea and Florescu's album) there are at least seven fir-like signs, all with upward-growing branches, but not all in vertical positions.

If we assume that there was some connection between the quite numerous fir-like signs of prehistory and the ceremonial firs (or cypresses) still used in historical times, then we may also assume that various positions of such signs (as painted on cave walls, or on pots) must have had various cultual meanings. For instance, a top-down fir could symbolize death (or the netherworld) and a top-up fir could symbolize life (just as a Romanian wedding-fir does, implicitly). However, there are certain facts which, as visible in my statements above, made me use the cautious formula "fir-like" in discussing certain signs that may be included in the OE-14 category.

First of all, what looks like the earliest example of OE 14, the one represented three times on the stone sphere of Lepenski Vir, has the same shape (that is, three upward-growing pairs of branches, with shorter ones on top) as the earliest – pre-cuneiform – version of the Sumerian

[19] See Poruciuc 2009: 217.
[20] Florescu 1980: 55.

logogram *še*, which meant 'barley'.[21] So, some of the pre- and proto-historic signs that we (or some of us) may rather automatically regard as representations of (symbolic) coniferous trees may actually have been meant to represent the great ear-of-corn symbol, that is, the emblem of the prehistoric predecessor of classical Demeter; and it was also the ear-of-corn that was considered to be a "princely sign" in medieval Romania.[22] For the moment, I can hypothesize either that, at present, we cannot interpret all subtle details and differences manifest in prehistoric signs, or that – in certain areas of prehistoric Europe – there may have occurred some kind of "conflation" that brought together symbolic signs of similar shapes, such as the ear-of-corn, the fir and the herring-bone.

As regards the ear-of-corn sign, Sumer may look quite far from the Iron Gates of the Danube, but we should not overlook the fact that close to Lepenski Vir, on the Romanian bank of the Danube there lies the pre- and proto-Neolithic site of Schela Cladovei, which appears to have belonged to the "Lower-Danube area of wild cereal plants."[23] Moreover, as a linguist I cannot help observing that Sumerian *še* 'barley' (that is, the word that is said to represent the meaning of the Sumerian counterpart of the much earlier OE 14) rather obviously corresponds to what the Appendix of AHDEL presents as a Proto-Indo-European root *sē-[1]* 'to sow' (as the base of such words as Latin *serere* 'to sow' and *semen* 'seed', as well as of English *sow* and *seed*). Moreover, nostratically speaking, the same Sumerian word may also correspond to Egyptian terms such as *sa* 'a kind of seed or fruit', *sàa* 'a seed or fruit used in medicine', and *su-t* 'wheat, corn, grain'.[24] Here is food for further thought – on signs, words and things.

References

AHDEL - *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 1973. W. Morris, ed. New York: American Heritage Publishing.

Burkert, W. 1985. *Greek Religion*. J. Raffan, trans. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Comşa, Maria. 1994. "Brăduţul (arborele vieţii) pe ceramica geto-dacică şi semnificaţia sa simbolică." In *Relations thraco-illyro-helléniques*. P. Roman and M. Alexianu, eds., 315–334. Bucarest: Institut Roumain de Thracologie.

Ghinoiu, I. et al. 2002. *Sărbători şi obiceiuri – Răspunsuri la chestionarele Atlasului Etnografic Român, vol. II, Banat, Crişana, Maramureş*. Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică.

Haarmann, Harald. 1996. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe – An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World*. Berlin/ New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

_____2009. "The Danube Script and Other Ancient Writing Systems: A Typology of Distinctive Features." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 17-48.

[21] See Haarmann 2009a: 64, fig. 9.
[22] See Poruciuc 2009: 216.
[23] According to Florescu in Miclea and Florescu 1980: 55.
[24] These terms are in the transcriptions of Wallis-Budge's dictionary, vol. II, ed. 1978.

_____ 2009a "Writing Technology in the Context of the Danube Civilization." In Maxim, Marler, and Crişan, eds., 45-67.

_____ 2011. *Das Rätsel der Donauzivilisation.* München: Beck.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe. 2009. "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 63-86.

Marian, S. F. 2000 [1892]. *Înmormântarea la români.* I. Datcu, ed. Bucureşti: Saeculum I. O.

Miclea, I., and R. R. N. Florescu. 1980. *Preistoria Daciei.* Bucureşti: Meridiane.

Marler, Joan, and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds. 2009. *Signs of Civilization – Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Owens, Gareth. 2009. "Was there a Script in Final Neolithic Greece?" In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 193-199.

Maxim, Zoia, Joan Marler, and Viorica Crişan, eds. 2009. *The Danube Script in the Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Mega.

Papahagi, T. 1967. *Poezia lirică populară*. Bucureşti: Editura pentru Literatură.

Poruciuc, Adrian. 2009. "The Old Fairy Waiting, Pen in Hand, in the Netherworld." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 213-2019.

_____ 2010. *Prehistoric Roots of Romanian and Southeast European Traditions.* Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Sampson, Adamantios. 2009. "Incised Symbols in Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece and Their Relation to the Old European Script." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 187-192.

Sorel, R. 1998. *Orfeu şi orfismul*. F. Bechet, trans. Bucureşti: Teora.

Tkachuk, Taras. 2009. "The Trypillia-Cucuteni Sign System on Painted Pottery." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 161-177.

Tumėnas, Vytautas. 2009. "The Connections between Old European Signs and Lithuanian Sash Ornamentation." In Marler and Robbins-Dexter 2009: 201-207.

Wallis-Budge, E. A. 1978. *An Egyptian Heiroglyphic Dictionary*, I-II. New York: Dover.

Winn, Shan M. M. 2009. "The Danube (Old European) Script: Ritual Use of Signs in the Balkan-Danube Region c. 5200-3500 BC." In Marler and Robbins Dexter 2009: 49-62.

WHENCE LINEAR B?
THE OLD EUROPEAN LEGACY IN GREEK CIVILIZATION

HARALD HAARMANN

The decipherment of Linear B, in the 1950s, brought clarity to its identification as the oldest system for writing Greek. The story of the decipherment of this script by Alice Kober and Michael Ventris (with work starting in the 1940s and continuing into the 1950s) is indeed fascinating, and has attracted ample attention among scholars and lay people alike. Initial attempts to achieve a decipherment and to discover the compositional order of the sign repertory were not overall successful, and it took much intuitional input to arrive at a satisfactory result.

> Ventris has assigned wrong values to 25 percent of the signs. But he was nonetheless able to crack the code – an even more extraordinary achievement in light of the imperfect road maps he had constructed.[1]

Even after the texts in Linear B had been collected and edited,[2] it still took years before the insight that the language of Linear B is Mycenaean Greek was reconciled with studies on cultural history.[3] Over the past decades there has been extensive research activity on the clay tablets that have been retrieved from various sites – from the palace archives of Knossos in Crete, and of Pylos in the western Peloponnese, in particular.[4] Despite much effort in the domain of comparative writing research, there are still many mysteries to be resolved surrounding the emergence of Linear B and its decline.

It was easy to establish a historical relationship between Linear A (for writing Minoan in ancient Crete) and Linear B. Both are linear scripts, and their sign repertories show a high degree of graphic convergences (Fig. 1).

The chronological dependency of Linear B (as the secondary system) on Linear A (as the primary script) points to a unilateral direction of influence, from Minoan onto Mycenaean culture. Traditional scholarship goes as far as the recognition of this relationship. But traditional scholars have not looked into the ancestry of Linear A itself. This, however, is necessary in order to understand the origin of certain Linear B signs that did not originate from Linear A. Although the majority of signs in the Linear B inventory find their parallels in Linear A, there is some other source that inspired the composition of Linear B (independent of Linear A). This other source is the Old European / Danube script which is ancestral both to Linear A and Linear B.

---

[1] Fox 2013: 229.
[2] See Chadwick 1967, 1976; and Ventris and Chadwick 1973 for this pioneering achievement.
[3] See Ilievski 2000 for a lucid analysis of Mycenaean society on the basis of Linear B texts.
[4] See Dickinson 1994: 195 for a map of the locations with finds of the Linear B script.

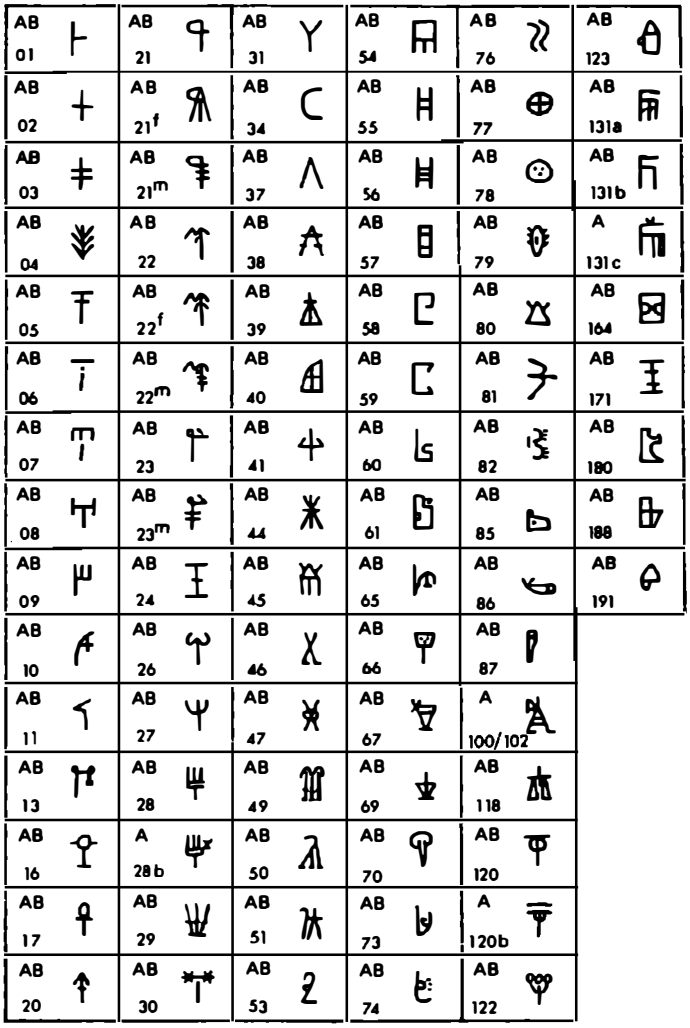


Fig. 1: Convergences in the sign repertories of Linear A and B. AB marks a convergent sign (after Haarmann 1995, fig. 104 with alterations; numeration after Godart and Olivier 1985: xxi).

Since the domain of canonical antiquity research ("classical studies" as an established discipline of the humanities) is separated from non-canonical research on the Danube civilization (or Old Europe, respectively, in the terminology established by Marija Gimbutas),[5] it is those scholars doing research work on an interdisciplinary scale who have been engaged in the study of the Old European legacy and its impact on ancient Aegean writing systems. The path for comparative research opens into pre-Minoan and pre-Mycenaean cultural layers to identify the ancestry of the closely related "sibling scripts," Linear A and B.

Tracing the Ancestry of Linear A – Continuity and Transformations in the Balkanic Aegean Convergence Zone

The search for the ancestry of Linear A takes us to the cultural horizon of the Danube script and its legacy, that is, to literacy as a cultural identifier in the Balkanic-Aegean convergence zone. The identification of the Old European signs and symbols as an early system of writing has been secured by extensive research, especially during the past two decades;[6] by the insights presented by participants in three conferences: in Novi Sad, 2004,[7] in Sibiu, 2008,[8] and in Cluj, 2009;[9] and thanks to the establishment of databanks and to a successful absolute dating of some of the pertinent inscribed objects, e.g., the tablets from Tărtăria.[10]

[5] "Old Europe," as coined by Marija Gimbutas, refers to the civilization of Neolithic and Copper Age societies that reached its florescence before the appearance of Indo-European speakers.
[6] Haarmann 1995, 2010; Merlini 2008, 2009; Haarmann and Marler 2014.
[7] Collective papers edited by Marler and Dexter 2009.
[8] Collective papers edited by Marler 2008.
[9] Collective papers edited by Maxim et al. 2009.
[10] Lazarovici and Merlini 2005, 2008; Lazarovici 2008, 2009.

The Old European script (also called "Danube script" since 2004) is the oldest writing system in the world – at least some 1500 years older than the traditions of Egyptian or Sumerian writing. The insights from its investigation are gradually recognized by the mainstream of writing research.[11]

As a result of the third wave of out-migrations of Indo-European pastoralists, directed from the Eurasian steppe to the south and west (Marija Gimbutas's Kurgan wave III, c. 3000-2800 BCE), the Indo-Europeans infiltrated into most of southeastern Europe and came to dominate the major areas where Old European civilization once flourished.[12] The changes of customs and religious life did not arise all of a sudden, and it cannot be assumed that the new social order would have completely replaced the older one. The pre-Indo-European civilization did not completely disintegrate under the Indo-European overlay, but patterns of a *selective continuity* are successively derived from the ancient foundations. This continuity is anchored in a kaleidoscope of domains, of material culture as well as in spiritual conceptualizations. Key technologies of crafts such as pottery, metallurgy, architecture, ship-building and others were adopted by the Greeks together with pertinent elements of their terminologies.[13]

This is true also for religious and spiritual concepts that persisted – via various transformations – into classical antiquity. In fact, "the Old European sacred images and symbols were never totally uprooted; these most persistent features in human history were too deeply implanted in the psyche."[14] This statement made by Gimbutas is crucial because it points at the heart of the problem of cultural continuity in the horizon of time. It is noteworthy that, for the key term *psyche* ("life, vitality, soul") in ancient Greek, no cognate parallels can be found in other Indo-European languages. In addition to being isolated among cognate languages, the phonetic structure of this expression points to pre-Greek origin.[15] This means that the idea of *psyche* had been conceptualized by the pre-Greek population, and that the Indo-European immigrants to the region showed themselves impressed, and adopted the idea together with the word for it from their predecessors.

The selective transformation of Old European traditions into insular (i.e., Aegean) and continental (i.e., Pelasgian) patterns was a process of a *repetitive continuity* of pertinent features of the pre-Indo-European culture, rather than a complete fragmentization of the original entity. The continuity was repetitive in the sense that, after a time of political unrest (caused by the Indo-European out-migrations from the steppe), and after a period of cultural instability, the pre-Indo-European canon repeated itself in the Aegean civilizations and on the mainland, and its major characteristics continued to be significant as constitutive elements of Cycladic, Pelasgian, ancient Cretan (i.e., Minoan) and Mycenaean–Greek culture.[16]

---

[11] See Röhr 1994; Haarmann 2011; Dürscheid 2012; Milev 2014 for this development.
[12] Gimbutas 1991: 351 ff.; Anthony 2007: 225 ff; Haarmann 2012: 87 ff.
[13] See Haarmann 2014 for a survey.
[14] Gimbutas 1989: 318.
[15] Beekes 2010: 1671 f.
[16] Haarmann 1995: 57 ff., 2014.

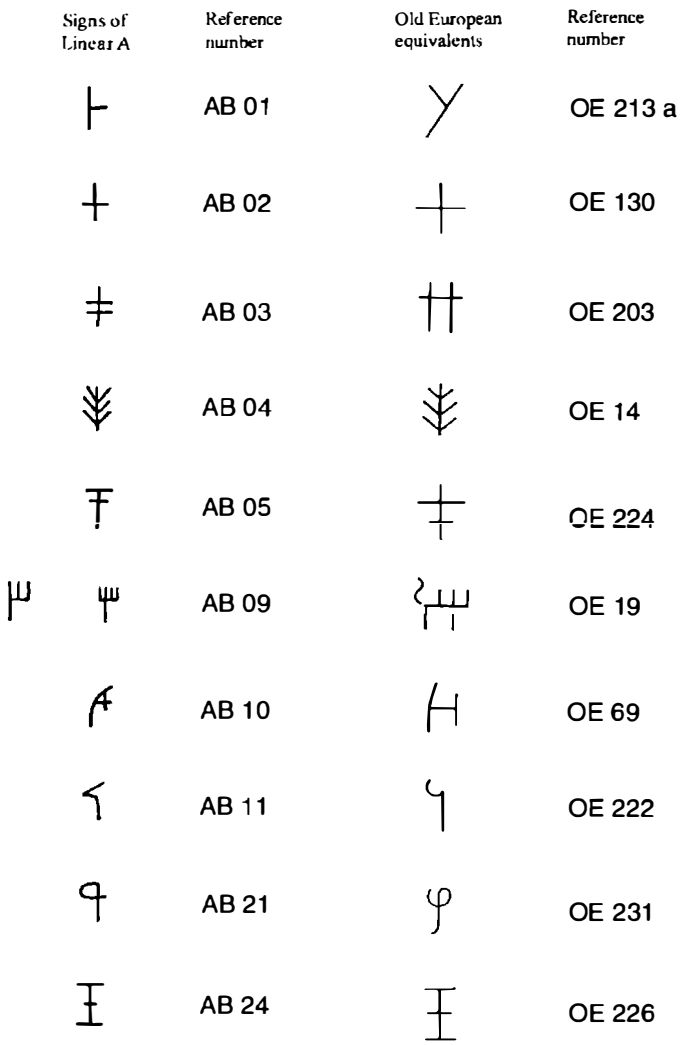


Fig. 2a: Parallelisms in the sign inventories of the Danube script and Cretan Linear A. OE = Old European (after Haarmann 2010: 121 f.).

Although the tradition of Old European literacy declined toward the end of the Copper Age, the "visible" imprint of this tradition nevertheless inspired the cultures of the ancient Aegean where writing emerged as a result of idea diffusion in the Balkanic-Aegean cultural drift. Among the remarkable peculiarities of cultural continuity in southeastern Europe from the Copper Age into the Bronze Age is the transmission of individual graphic symbols through time and space. Within the mosaic of pre-Indo-European cultural items which survived as fragments of originally intact patterns on the Aegean islands, components of the ancient writing system were also preserved.

The structuring of the system of Linear A relies, to a substantial degree, on the reservoir of signs which had been in use in the Danube civilization. More than sixty symbols of the Danube script persisted throughout the various periods of change from the pre-Indo-European to the Indo-European age, ultimately to be integrated into the inventory of signs of the Cretan Linear A (Fig. 2a-b).

As regards the signs of the Cretan script, the parallelisms are comprised of phonograms, ideograms, and signs for writing numbers. However, it is hazardous to draw conclusions regarding the values of Old European signs based on observations about the values of signs in Linear A.

It would be a misconception to say that the Cretan Linear A is a direct derivation from the Old European script. And yet, almost one third of the sign inventory of the Old European script has been revived in the Linear A sign list where these elements make up about half of the total inventory. *Cultural continuity* in this regard is equivalent to the *selective maintenance of original symbols (as items of visual memory), retaining their original function as the signs of a*

Signs of Linear A	Reference number	Old European equivalents	Reference number
	AB 27		OE 206
	AB 31		OE 205
	AB 34		OE 168
	AB 37		OE 103
	AB 38		OE 104a
	AB 39		OE 161
	AB 40		OE 94
	AB 41		OE 134
	AB 51		OE 9
	AB 53		OE 189
	AB 55		OE 200

Fig. 2b: Parallelisms in the sign inventories of the Danube script and Cretan Linear A. OE = Old European (after Haarmann 2010: 121 f.).

writing system serving a culture whose members adopted them, rather than to the wholesale transfer of a writing system from one cultural complex to another.

Minoan cultural goods and influence spread throughout the northern and western parts of the Aegean archipelago, and specimens of Minoan writing (i.e., in the Linear A script) were also obtained by the early Greeks. From contact with the Minoan civilization of ancient Crete emerged the Minoan–Mycenaean blend of culture that flourished between c. 1700 and 1150 BCE.[17]

Tracing Sources of Linear B (other than Linear A) – The Legacy of the Danube Script in the Cycladic Islands and on the Mainland

The observation of the close relationship between Linear A and Linear B, with the former as the older and the latter as the younger version of the type of linear syllabaries, does not provide answers to all questions of ancestry. It is true that the repertory of Linear B signs leans predominantly on Linear A. And yet, there are certain signs that defy direct relation with Linear A. There must have been additional sources of inspiration, other than Linear A, for composing Linear B. If we want to understand the conditions of how the overall fabric of Linear B was shaped, it is not enough to look at Minoan culture of ancient Crete and its impact on Mycenaean culture. Minoan influence was undeniably strong, and yet another stream of influential impulses can be identified, and this cultural current was geographically closer to the Mycenaean heartland than Minoan Crete. The additional source for Linear B signs is found on the Greek mainland itself.

[17] See Demakopoulou 1988: 22, 27 for the chronology.

Marija Gimbutas believed that the Old European legacy in southeastern Europe had been strongly fragmented as a consequence of the Indo-European movements to the region. While, in the northern part of the Balkans, the disrupture of the formerly vital Old European culture might have been decisive for its decline, in the south, conditions were more favorable for survival. The Indo-European migrants – ancestors of the proto-Greeks – who started infiltrating mainland Greece during the third millennium BCE encountered the late descendants of the native Europeans (i.e., Palaeo-Europeans) who had preserved their Old European traditions.

In the coastal areas, in the mountainous inland (northern Peloponnese), and in the Aegean archipelago, the descendants of the native Europeans were still living. The Greeks were aware that the natives were different, in terms of their culture and language. In ancient sources they were called Pelasgians (e.g., in Herodotus, *Histories* 1.56). These people were not simple farmers but heirs of the technologically advanced civilization of Old Europe. Even at those places on the mainland which had already been occupied by Indo-Europeans, the pre-Indo-European heritage was deeply rooted, not only in relics of the material and spiritual culture, but also in their names. Pre-classical Greek records, including Mycenaean texts and Homeric poems, abound in pre-Greek names for localities, rivers, mountains, and historical landscapes.[18] These names fit with the patterns of pre-Greek word formation.[19]

Although the phase of decline of Old European literacy has been studied from the standpoint of the decrease in textual documents[20] it is as yet unknown for how long the awareness of the early literary tradition and the knowledge of linear signs survived into the Bronze Age. When comparing the available factual evidence (i.e., documentation of sign use) there is a considerable gap in the chronology of literacy between the disappearance of the Danube script in the third millennium BCE and the advent of linear writing (i.e., Mycenaean Linear B) in southern Greece in the seventeenth century BCE. The earliest record of a Linear B inscription comes from the holy precinct of Olympia in the western Peloponnese.[21]

The early recording of a Linear B inscription at Olympia is contemporaneous with the occupation of northern Crete by the Mycenaean Greeks or it may even predate this event. The beginnings of the Mycenaean presence on Crete are dated to the period soon after the eruption of the volcano of Thera, which occurred in 1625 BCE.

The Old European Legacy in the Cycladic Islands

Even after the decline of the Danube script there must have remained a fragmented knowledge of Old European signs and symbols in the cultural memory of local people. There is an abundance Bronze Age pottery from sites in the Cycladic Islands, and many pieces bear signs and symbols. As A. Sampson notes, "Numerous signs on pottery from the Early, Middle, and

[18] Katičić 1976: 41 ff., Haarmann 2014.
[19] Beekes 2010: xxxiii.
[20] See Merlini 2008: 58 f.
[21] Godart 1995.

Late Bronze Age (3000–1500 BC) have been studied at Ayia Irini in Keos [...], many of which are similar to the Old European script of Serbia and Romania."[22]

Among the Cycladic islands, Melos in the south had already played an important role since the Neolithic period. Its main product was obsidian, which is known to have been traded with the Greek mainland (i.e., the eastern coast of the Peloponnese) as early as the tenth millennium BCE. During the third millennium BCE, the range of the obsidian trade expanded to also include Crete and the coastal areas of Asia Minor. The distribution of the finds of obsidian from Melos may be seen as indicating the expansion of interaction within the Aegean complex and on the European mainland.

Perhaps due to its geographical position in the inter-Aegean trade the island of Melos was favored to develop one of the main economic and cultural centers in the Cyclades: the town of Phylakopi which emerged about 2300 BCE. Phylakopi I was excavated more than a hundred years ago (i.e., from 1896 to 1899), and successive Bronze Age settlements were investigated in the 1970s. It has been confirmed that there was a sanctuary already in the early phase of the Phylakopi settlement, although it became much more important as a religious center in the latter half of the second millennium BCE. The many artifacts that have been unearthed during the early digging at the site include a great amount of pottery, the forms of which show inter-Aegean parallels as well as traces of contact with the mainland.

The pottery is rich in ornamentation, painted and incised, and it shows a great variety of abstract motifs.[23] What additionally makes the pottery of Phylakopi I intriguing for the question of cultural continuity in the Aegean complex is the abundance of linear signs which were incised on the vessels before they were fired. These signs aroused the attention of the early excavators and paleographic experts. Mackenzie, writing in 1904,[24] assumed that the signs were probably meant to express meaning. He presented the keen idea that those signs found at Phylakopi I may be traced back into prehistory, suggesting that they eventually became known throughout the Aegean world.

Strikingly enough, Mackenzie's idea was right, but he was not in a position to prove it. The paleographic finds from the Danube cultural complex were too infrequent then, and their dating was completely unsure. Insofar as the prehistoric sources in the Vinča complex were little known and undated, this important linkage could not be established.

Signs on Cycladic pottery appear single, but there are also sequences of two or more. Crouwel, commenting on the problem of sign groups, reaches the conclusion that "it seems clear that certain Cycladic marks, especially those appearing in groups of two or more on the same vase, are sufficiently complex in form for their correspondence with Linear A (the only contemporary Aegean writing system) to be of significance."[25] Apparently, concluding from the characteristics of sign groups and their purpose, sign usage of this type points in the direction of

[22] Sampson 2009: 190.
[23] See Haarmann 2013: 372.
[24] Mackenzie 1904: 253 f.
[25] Crouwel 1973: 106 f.

writing. This observation would permit the assumption that, at certain places in the Cyclades where incised pottery with sign groups was found (i.e., on the islands of Melos, Thera and Keos), circumstantial evidence is indicative of Cycladic literacy, although in a very basic form, in the third millennium BCE. Sampson and Photiadi categorize the Cycladic signs of the Bronze Age as "proto-script."[26]

The Old European Legacy on the Mainland

On the mainland, the resemblance of some of the signs on Helladic pottery with those in the Old European inventory speaks in favor of a continuity in the knowledge and use of the older linear sign repertory among the local communities in Greece. At least at Lerna on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese, the tradition of incising marks on pottery goes back to the third millennium BCE. Although of more recent origin than the oldest finds from Lerna, incised pottery from pre-Mycenaean times was found at other sites, for example, Early Helladic pottery from Zygouries and Lithares.

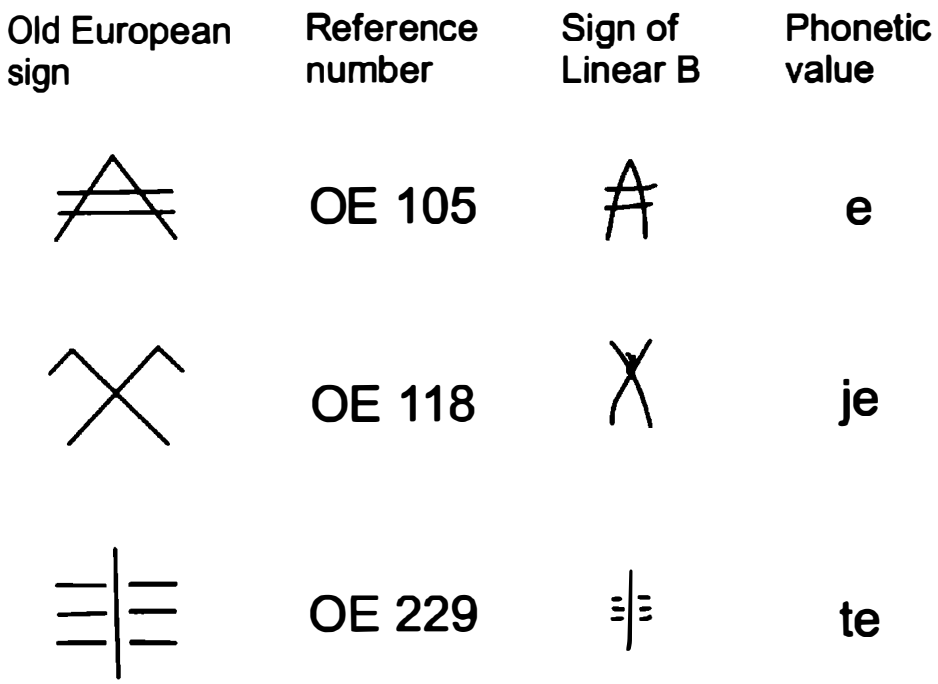


Fig. 3: Sign convergences in the Danube script and Linear B – excluding parallelisms in Linear A. OE = Old European (after Haarmann 1995, fig. 154).

The signs from Lithares have been interpreted as conveying meaning: "Marks incised on pottery, not as decoration but to convey an arbitrary meaning, occur on the Greek mainland as early as the Neolithic period, as is shown by finds from Lerna and Orchomenos" (Crouwel 1973:

[26] Sampson and Photiadi 2008.

104). The Early Helladic tradition is continued into the Middle Helladic period (2000-1550 BCE), and this is attested by finds of linear signs on pottery from sites including Lerna, Asine, Mycenae, Malthi, Eleusis and Athens.

Evidence for the adoption of older signs (as items of the legacy of the Danube script) into the repertory of Linear B is also available on the mainland. The assumption that there was a knowledge of linear signs outside the range of the Linear A system can be supported by finds, on the mainland, of sign usage, the origin of which is neither Linear A nor Linear B. The oldest stratum at Tiryns (i.e., Tiryns I) contains linear signs and sign groups forming short inscriptions found on various kinds of pottery, loom weights, and other objects. The linear signs from Tiryns show "general resemblance to remnants of a decaying writing system."[27]

The idea of an experimenting phase with linear writing on the mainland before the middle of the second millennium BCE is supported by the fact that several signs of the Linear B system which have no equivalent in Linear A find their parallels in the Old European repertory. This is true for the signs which render the phonetic values [*e*], [*je*] and [*te*] (Fig. 3).

Those signs are unknown in Linear A, and the only plausible explanation for their appearance in Linear B is their continuity in the cultural complex on the mainland where the Mycenaean Greeks adopted them from a reservoir of linear signs which might have survived as lingering traces of the once vital Old European literacy (e.g., as magical symbols or markings) and as fragmented items of cultural memory.

Such patterns of survival of motifs of an earlier script are known from India where signs of the ancient Indus script have been perpetuated among the Dravidian population of southern India in their magical symbolism. According to Parpola,

> One medium through which traditional motifs have passed from generation to generation all over India is the folk custom of drawing auspicious designs in courtyards and on house walls with dry or wet flour, possibly mixed with colour [...].[28]

Given the multifaceted range of potential sources (i.e., signs of Linear A, and visual items of the Old European heritage from the Cyclades and the mainland) in the formation of the Linear B writing system, it seems appropriate "to think of Linear B as a relation of Linear A, but not a direct descendant of it."[29]

The Legacy of Linear B: Safeguarding Continuity for Literacy in the Greek World

The ancestry of Linear B is not the only mystery that surrounds this script. Much uncertainty has remained concerning the conditions of the decline of the writing system and of

[27] Uhlenbrock 1982: 29
[28] Parpola 1994: 55.
[29] Hooker 1980: 20.

Mycenaean literacy. According to the traditional view, the history of writing Greek is divided into two phases, an early phase with the use of Linear B, and a second phase with the use of an alphabet, the Greek adoption of the Phoenician script. And yet, the picture of the history of writing Greek is flawed if one assumes a complete disrupture of the literate tradition after the decline of Mycenaean civilization, an allegedly illiterate period by which the earlier tradition of Linear B would be separated from the time of creation of the Greek alphabet in the archaic era, in the eighth century BCE. This period used to be called "dark ages" (from c. 1050 until c. 750 BCE). This notion, though, is awkward since it distorts rather than clarifies the picture of Greek cultural development.

The general opinion among students of classical studies is that the Greeks during the period of the "dark ages" were illiterate; quotations can be made from various sources: "Before 750 B.C., Greek society was not literate in any significant sense of the word …";[30] or "no-one disputes that 'history' leaves us, with the extinction of literacy for four centuries."[31]

The discussion about the (re)emergence of literacy is associated with the historical event of the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet and the first instances of the Greek alphabet in the eighth century BCE. Whether in scholarly literature or in popular accounts about early Greek civilization, the close association of the "dark age" with the notion of illiteracy is common.

> So ended the first flush of Greek civilization, and from then till the coming of the Greek alphabet centuries later, the art of writing was at best a dimly remembered dream. Before long the Mycenaean archives – describing a world of monarchs and slaves, gods and goddesses, spinners and weavers, men who made art and men who made war – had passed from readability into darkness, where they would languish for three thousand years.[32]

This is a myth. If Greek literacy is defined as the use of a script by Greeks to write Greek, then the story of writing Greek is indeed a different one. Writing Greek is not only a matter of using Linear B and, later, a version of the alphabet. Another medium for writing was as important, and this was Cypriot-Syllabic, the youngest of the ancient Cyprian scripts. When being asked what Linear B has to do with this Cyprian script then the answer is easy to give: Linear B significantly shaped the fabric of the Cypriot syllabary, and those who used the one and the other script were Greeks. According to Reyes,

> Within Cyprus, some people, at least, were speaking Greek from a very early time. A bronze spit, inscribed with the Greek name Opheltas in the Cypriot syllabary and assigned to a context dating to the eleventh century BC […], has demonstrated the use of Greek from around that time in Paphos. In addition, linguistic analyses of the Greek

[30] Robb 1994: 21.
[31] Bintliff 2012: 210.
[32] Fox 2013: 285.

vocabulary used in Cyprus during the Classical periods have shown that archaisms were typical of it. Cypriot Greek shows particular affinities with the Arcadian dialect of the Greek mainland. Accordingly, it has been supposed that, after the arrival of settlers from Greece at the end of the Late Bronze Age, the 'Hellenization' of the island had already 'progressed considerably' by the eleventh century.[33]

In the aftermath of the collapse of Mycenaean power, many Greeks – especially from areas in the Peloponnese – fled to Cyprus where they established new communities.[34] The Greek migrants transferred their local dialect to Cyprus, and this dialect continued to be spoken on the Greek mainland and in Cyprus: "... in two remote and separate enclaves, the mountains of Arcadia and the distant island of Cyprus, an archaic form of Greek survived, known as Arcado-Cypriot."[35]

The choice of Cyprus as a destination for migration was conclusive since trade relations with the island had been established during the Minoan-Mycenaean era. Cyprus had a monopoly in the trade of a precious raw material, copper, and ceramic ware travelled to and fro. The migration from the Greek mainland to Cyprus was considerable since the Greek newcomers to the island soon outnumbered the local population. In Cyprus, the Greeks continued to write their language (i.e., the Arcado-Cypriot dialect) in one of the local scripts.

The story of Greek literacy is the story of continuity over time, of writing Greek, albeit in variation, on the mainland, in Crete and in Cyprus, and in the choice of means of visual communication in three different scripts: Linear B, Cypriot–Syllabic, and Greek–alphabetic. This is also the story of interconnections between the three scripts that have been used for rendering Greek in writing. The story of Linear B has been told, but there is still another story to tell: of the Cyprian connection and its role for the development of Greek literacy.[36]

References

Anthony, David W. 2007. *The Horse, the Wheel and Language. How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Beekes, Robert. 2010. Etymological Dictionary of Greek, 2 vols. Leiden: Brill.

Bintliff, John. 2012. *The Complete Archaeology of Greece. From Hunter-Gatherers to the Twentieth Century A.D.* Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Brodie, Nei, Jenny Doole, Giorgos Gavalas, and Colin Renfrew, eds. 2008. *Horizon. A Colloquium on the Prehistory of the Cyclades*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Chadwick, John. 1967. The Decipherment of Linear B. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2nd ed.).

[33] Reyes 1994: 11 f.
[34] Voskos and Knapp 2008.
[35] Murray 1993: 11.
[36] See Haarmann 1995: 109 ff., and Haarmann 2014, for an assessment.

_____1976. *The Mycenaean World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crouwel, J. H. 1973. "Pot-Marks on Grey Minyan Ware." *Kadmos* 12: 101-108.

Demakopoulou, Katie, ed. 1988. The Mycenaean World: Five Centuries of Early Greek Culture 1600–1100 BC. Athens: Ministry of Culture.

Dickinson, Oliver. 1994. *The Aegean Bronze Age.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dürscheid, Christa. 2012. *Einführung in die Schriftlinguistik.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht (4th ed.)

Fox, Margalit. 2013. *The Riddle of the Labyrinth. The Quest to Crack an Ancient Code.* New York: Harper Collins.

Gimbutas, Marija. 1989. *The Language of the Goddess.* San Francisco: Harper and Row.

_____1991. *The Civilization of the Goddess. The World of Old Europe.* San Francisco: Harper.

Godart Louis (1995). "Una iscrizione in Lineare B del XVII secolo A.C. ad Olimpia." *Rendiconti dell'Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 9: 445-447.

Godart, Louis, and Jean-Pierre Olivier. 1985. *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A*, vol. 5. *Addenda, corrigenda, concordances, index et planches des signes.* Paris: Geuthner.

Haarmann, Harald. 1995. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe. An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

_____2010. *Einführung in die Donauschrift.* Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

_____2011. *Writing as Technology and Cultural Ecology. Explorations of the Human Mind at the Dawn of History.* Frankfurt, Berlin, Brussels and New York: Peter Lang.

_____2012. *Indo-Europeanization – Day One. Elite Recruitment and the Beginnings of Language Politics.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

_____2013. *Ancient Knowledge, Ancient Know-How, Ancient Reasoning. Cultural Memory in Transition from Prehistory to Classical Antiquity and Beyond.* Amherst: Cambria Press.

_____2014. *Roots of Ancient Greek Civilization: The Influence of Old Europe.* Jefferson: McFarland.

Haarmann, Harald, and Joan Marler. 2014. "The Old European/Danube script: Ancient literacy in Neolithic and Copper Age Europe." In Milev 2014: 30-48.

Hooker, J. T. 1980. *Linear B. An Introduction.* Bristol: Classical Press.

Ilievski, Petar. 2000. *Zhivotot na mikencite vo nivnite pismeni svedoshtva, so poseben osvrt kon onomastickite i prosopografski izvodi* (The life of the Mycenaeans from their own records, with special regard to the onomastic and prosopographic deductions). Skopje: Makedonska Akademija na Naukite i Umetnostite.

Katičic, Radoslav. 1976. *Ancient Languages of the Balkans*, vol.1. The Hague and Paris: Mouton.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe. 2008. "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 94-125.

_____2009. "Database for signs and symbols of spiritual life." In Marler and Dexter 2009: 63-86.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe, and Marco Merlini. 2005. "New Archaeological Data referring to Tărtăria Tablets." In *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 205-219.

_____2008. "New Information and the Role of the Tărtăria Discoveries." In Marler 2008: 39-51.

Mackenzie, Duncan. 1904. "The Successive Settlements at Phylakopi in their Aegeo-Cretan Relations. Excavations at Phylakopi in Melos." *British School at Athens, Supplementary Paper*, no. 4: 238-272.

Marler, Joan, ed. 2008. *The Danube script. Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Marler, Joan, and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds. 2009. *Signs of Civilization. Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Maxim, Zoia, Joan Marler, and Viorica Crişan, eds. 2009. *The Danube Script in Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries.* Cluj-Napoca: National History Museum of Transylvania; Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Merlini, Marco. 2008. "Evidence of the Danube Script in Neighboring Areas: Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, and the Czech Republic." In Marler 2008: 53-60.

_____2009. *An Inquiry into the Danube Script*. Sibiu and Alba Iulia: Editura Altip.

Milev, Rossen, ed. 2014. *Scriptura Mundi – Writings of the World.* Sofia: Balkanmedia and Wulfila House.

Murray, Oswyn. 1993. *Early Greece.* London: Fontana Press (2nd ed.).

Parpola, Asko. 1994. *Deciphering the Indus Script*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Reyes, A. T. 1994. *Archaic Cyprus. A Study of the Textual and Archaeological Evidence.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Robb, Kevin. 1994. *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Röhr, Heinz Markus. 1994. *Writing: Its Evolution and Relation to Speech.* Bochum: Brockmeyer.

Sampson, Adamantios. 2009. "Incised Symbols in Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece and their Relation to the Old European Script." In Marler and Dexter 2009: 187-192.

Sampson, Adamantios, and P. Photiadi. 2008. "Early Cycladic II and III Finds from Rivari, Melos." In Brodie et al. 2008: 217-224.

Uhlenbrock, J. P. 1982. "A Dipinto from Tiryns." *Kadmos* 21: 26-29.

Ventris, Michael, and John Chadwick. 1973. *Documents in Mycenaean Greek.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2nd ed.).

Voskos, I., and A. B. Knapp. 2008. "Cyprus at the End of the Late Bronze Age: Crisis and Colonization or Continuity and Hybridization?" *American Journal of Archaeology* 112: 659-684.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE V AND THE M IN THE DANUBE SCRIPT: THE DANUBE SCRIPT AND THE OLD EUROPEAN GODDESS[1]

MIRIAM ROBBINS DEXTER

Introduction

This paper builds upon one I gave in Sibiu, Romania, a few years ago.[1] In that paper I discussed the fact that the Danube Script is essential in understanding the possible intersections of language, archaeology, and religion/myth. The paper theorizes that one of the most important symbols of the Script, the V, which was amplified with diacritics,[2] doubling (VV), and doubling/reversal (M), had at its core a religious symbolism, that of the female pubic triangle. As well, the M figured in a sacred dance. In this paper, I discuss ancient female figurines and the proliferation of the sacred V, as well as a particular correlate of this form, the female in "sacred display," where the female figure, in both ritual dance and stance, displays her sacred genitals.

I theorize (along with many others, such as Gheorghe and Magda Lazarovici and Marco Merlini, Marija Gimbutas and Harald Haarmann),[3] that the Danube Script was first used for religious purposes, rather than economic purposes as it was, for example, in Mesopotamia.[4]

The V and the M

In this paper, as in the earlier one, I focus upon the V and the M of the Danube script, and their relationship to ancient religion – especially that denoted by female figures found throughout Central and Southeastern Europe, the Near East, and elsewhere. This paper is meant to be

[1] I wish to thank Gheorghe and Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici for hosting a most wonderful conference, which enabled me to write this paper. I also wish to thank the Center for the Study of Women, UCLA, for supporting my research.

[2] See Lazarovici et al. 2011: 285.

[3] See, e.g., Lazarovici et al. 2011: 219, 328; Haarmann 1995: 28 ff, 77 ff, 2008: 38; Gimbutas 1974: 85 ff, 1999: 50.

[4] Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini (2011: 210) date the ritual complex of Tărtăria to 5370–5140 BCE, on the basis of calibrated C14 analysis. Others – who have not much evidence – disagree. For example, John Newberry – I believe incorrectly – relates the Tărtăria Tablets, as well as much of the Danube Script, to economics coeval with Mesopotamia. He believes that the writing/symbols were employed for economic purposes – especially on the first two Tablets (Newberry 1988, no. 1: 17, "Earliest known signs of the Vinča Culture"). "In this function [that of economics], they [inscribed tablets] are similar to certain Proto-Elamite and Sumerian tablets showing the yields of products from areas of fields." Regarding the Tartaria Tablets, he says, "Not much information can be had from all three tablets other than a noticeable preoccupation with farm animals and crops of marketable value" (ibid.: 18). But, if the purpose of the Tablets was economic, it is unlikely that they would have been buried with a priestess. Newberry does think that the markings on figurines have religious purpose ("The Figurine Markings of the Vinča Culture," Newberry1989: 14). Likewise, I believe that Zanotti (1983) is incorrect in his dating; He does not believe that the Tărtăria Tablets are contemporary with Vinča, but that they date to ca. 3300 BCE. He thinks that the culture can be explained by Marija Gimbutas' Kurgan Wave 2.

supplementary to that which I published subsequent to the conference in Sibiu, Romania, in May, 2008.

I believe that the V and the M are interrelated both in their physical form and in their meaning, since the M can be composed of two reversed V's (called by some a "W"). They provide the basis for many signs of the Old European – Danubian – Script.

The Double V or W and the M

Gheorghe Lazarovici and his colleagues connect these signs to the constellation Cassiopeia: "Cassopeia appears in the form of an M; it appears in the night sky in the course of six months (from December to June), and it ends up in the form of a W in the morning from July to December."[5] Further: "What is important to remark is the oblique position of the sign W, which corresponds to the 22nd hour of the night or to one of the months of the year [...]"[6]

According to Professor Lazarovici, this corresponds to the dates between 21 March and 23 September; the position of the constellation changes in time, beginning as a W (which I would designate as a VV) and slowly becoming an M.[7]

The V

The V was used as a base for many symbols of the Danube Script.[8] It is an important symbol in the art and language of many cultures,[9] since it is expanded by means of many diacritics.[10] The V, which takes the shape of a triangle open at the top, may well have as its base

---

[5] Lazarovici et al. 2001: 271: "Cassiopeea apare în forma lui M noaptea sau în decursul a 6 luni (din decembrie în iunie), prin rotire ajunge în formă de W dimineaţa şi din iulie în decenbrie [...]" All translations in this paper are by the author.

[6] Lazarovici et al. 2001: 274: "Ce este demn de remarcat este poziţia înclinată a semnului W, ceea ce corespunde orei 22 din noapte sau a uneia din lunile anului [...]"

[7] Personal Communication, Gheorghe and Magda Lazarovici, October 23, 2011. Figures with M's are found throughout Southeast and Central Europe in the early and middle Neolithic. Gheorghe Lazarovici, Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini report on a bottle-shaped vessel discovered in a Transdanubian Linear Pottery dwelling from Biatorbágy-Tyúkberek (Pest County, Hungary). The vessel formed a human figure representing the embryo within the womb; its face is framed by an "M"-shaped line (Lazarovici et al. 2011: 225). See also Merlini 2009: 174 on the M found near the base of a vessel from Battonya-Gödrösök (Hungary) (Tisza-Herpály-Csöszhalom complex.); also Merlini 2009: 181, 293, 360, 446, 594, 603, 620, 668. For several examples of the M and the W (double V) on sacred vessels, see Lazarovici 1995.

[8] On the "V" as a sacred sign of the Danube Script, see Lazarovici et al. (2011: 114) on incisions in the shape of V's marked on the forehead of an anthropomorphic protome from Tărtăria, and similar incisions on the base of the head of a monumental idol from the Zau culture. Linear motifs such as V's decorate a vessel found in the Middle Neolithic Starčevo settlement of Porodin as well as a mask of a ram from Balatonszárszó-Kis-erdei-dűlő. According to the authors, "The linear sequential organization of the frieze and the selected geometric elements indicate that the decoration did not function as a pure aesthetic ornament, but carries a symbolic meaning and message" (ibid.: 153). The V is discussed throughout the book with relation to many artifacts dating from the Upper Palaeolithic through the Neolithic (ibid.: 183-208, 222, et passim).

[9] Jayakar (1990), who writes of rural art in India, comparing it to the art and symbols of the Indus Valley, says that "the goddess was the seed of the universe in the form of a triangle."

[10] See Lazarovici et al. 2011: 285.

the magical and enlarged vulva of the female figures who were excavated by the thousands from Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites throughout prehistoric Anatolia and Europe,[11] and which continued to be depicted in iconography and text into the early historic period – again throughout Europe, the Near East, and even into the Far East.[12] Even though the V must have been an abstract symbol, given the multiplicity of diacritical markers, yet I believe that the core of spiritual meaning would have remained within each symbol.

By the time the Danube Script was being formulated, female figurines, with large pubic triangles, were being crafted throughout Southeast Europe and elsewhere. I shall list just a few examples of these figures from several areas of Europe.

In the Bucharest Museum in Romania is a copy of the large Gumelniţa figure with exaggerated pubic triangle; the Palatul Culturii in Iaşi has on display female figures which are elongated and deeply incised.[13] In Lepenski Vir, Serbia, in the Lepenski Vir museum there are copies of several 'fish'-sculptures; one is crouching and displaying her deeply incised pubic triangle. She has small, knobby breasts – the breasts of a young girl. Another is a fish-figure with elaborate vesica piscis design – piscine imagery which we will discuss further below. Both date to ca. 6800 BCE.

Bulgaria has given us many examples of this type of female figure as well. In the Stara Zagora, Bulgaria museum is a marble female figure with huge vulva and no other predominant features. The breasts are not even indicated; her arms are stumpy and her face is undifferentiated. The center of focus is the vulva. The archaeological site of Karanovo III has given us a Middle Neolithic figure with deeply incised pubic triangle (4600-4400 BCE).

Again from the site of Stara Zagora is a Late Chalcolithic figure with huge pubic triangle, stumpy arms, no indication of breasts, but with markings on the face and body. There is continuity of these figures through several millennia.

There are many such figures from Neolithic Greece. One from Sparta,[14] dating to the 6th millennium BCE, is in a "stiff white nude" position. Cycladic Greek figures with knobby breasts and large pubic triangles are common through several millennia of the Neolithic. Although these are "stiff white nude" figures – demarked by Marija Gimbutas as death figures and found in a burial context – yet there is a pregnant Cycladic figure (ca. 2800-2300 BCE) now in the British Museum; she denotes life out of death (Fig. 1).

From Central Europe we find the Carpathos figure, dating to ca. 3500 BCE. She is made of coarse limestone and she is now found in the British Museum. Her deeply incised and enlarged pubic triangle is similar to that from the Karanovo III site.

---

[11] See Gimbutas 1989, 1991, 1999.

[12] See Dexter and Mair 2010.

[13] See also C-M Lazarovici et al. 2009, catalogue nos. 94, 96, 128, 129, 130, 185, 188, 197, 227.

[14] She has a marked plasticity (3-dimensional form) and a polos on her head (National Archaeological Museum, Greece. N. M. 3928).

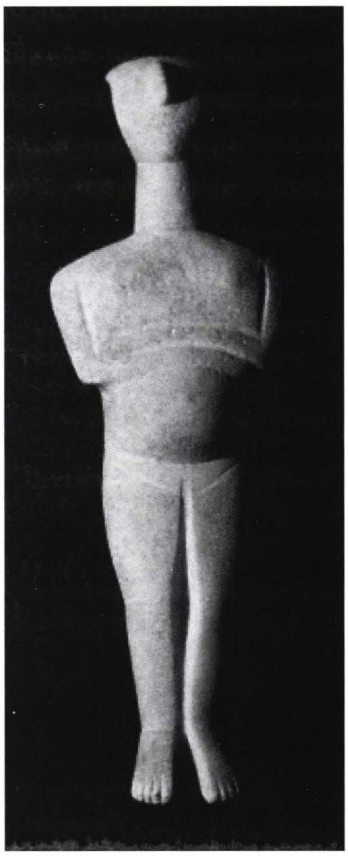


Fig. 1. Marble pregnant Cycladic figure, 2800-2300 BCE, British Museum no. GR 1932-10-18.1 (courtesy of the British Museum; photo by Gregory L. Dexter).

Finally, from Tarxien, Malta one finds a female display figure which is very similar to the figure from Lepenski Vir.[15] I believe that the V of the Danube Script represents the large, sacred, pubic triangle which connects one with the birth mother and mother of creation.

The M

The M of the Danube Script is the position taken by the legs in a ritual dance. The M was very important in the Danubian civilization, as may be seen in the M-shapes which formed part of house models from Opričari and Stenče.[16] The frontal and back openings of the house models are both stylized pubic triangles and the entrances of the shelter; the lateral openings can be the windows.[17]

The M of the Danube Script is the underpinning of a particular type of female figure, the "Display Figure," which has been represented from the pre-ceramic Neolithic up to the modern era. These figures either crouch to display prominent genitals or engage in ritual dance or "stance." Marija Gimbutas associated the M with birthing and "the frog goddess as life regenerator."[18]

The M and the Dance

At Kangjiashimenzi, near Qutubi, in East Central Asia, there are petroglyphs incised into a mountain; they depict triangular dancing figures.[19] These figures, which date to ca. 1000 BCE, very strongly resemble earlier triangular-shaped dancing female figures depicted on Romanian and other Eastern European pots dating to ca. 4000 BCE.[20] Male figures too are depicted in this dance. On a clay representation from Tărtăria, a male figure (with genital indication) dances with arms outspread, suggesting "dance, rotation."[21]

In the dance position, one or both arms are raised or they hang from the elbows; the legs either mirror the arms in an M-position, or the legs are spread wide or bent at the knees, often with one leg up and one leg down. These positions may represent a religious dance. On a pot

[15] See Lazarovici 2003, table 16.8.
[16] See Angeleski 2008, figs. 7 and 8.
[17] Sote Angeleski, personal communication, September 9, 2011.
[18] Gimbutas 1999: 46.
[19] See Wang Binghua 1990, fig. 7.
[20] C-M Lazarovici 2009: 93-96, figs. 9-13. There are similar figures which have been found throughout the Middle Neolithic of Southeastern Europe and elsewhere. See Gimbutas 1989: 239-243, 1991: 170 et passim.
[21] Lazarovici et al. 2011: 114-115, fig. VI.6a.

from Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, there is a figure with arms extended and then hanging at the elbows; the legs are spread.[22] The dance represented may be a ritual – that is, religious – dance. The bent-knee or "Knielaufen" position is characteristic of many female figures, from the Neolithic era through the Classical age.

Two potsherds, also from Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, again demonstrate this position; clearly the figures depicted a magical dance[23] (Fig. 2-3).

Fig. 2-3: Potsherds showing dancing poses, Early Neolithic. Stara Zagora (courtesy of Nova Zagora Museum, Bulgaria; photos by Miriam R. Dexter).

Similar figures have been found in Romania. Two figures, excavated and published by Magda and Gheorghe Lazarovici, demonstrate this magical dance. The first, excavated by C-M Lazarovici, dates to Cucuteni A-3 (4300-4050 BCE); it is from Scânteia, Romania.[24] The arms are raised and the legs form a crouching position in mirror image to the arms. The second, excavated by Gheorghe Lazarovici, dates to Vinča B (4300-4200 BCE); it is from Zorlenţu Mare, Romania.[25] From the Palatul Culturii Museum in Iaşi, Romania, one finds decoration in the form of a human figure with arms raised. Further, there are Romanian pots which suggest

[22] Potsherd showing dancing pose. Early Neolithic (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Nova Zagora Museum, Bulgaria). See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 1.

[23] Potsherds showing dancing poses. Early Neolithic (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. Nova Zagora Museum, Bulgaria). See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 2.

[24] Dancing Figure. Scânteia, Romania. C-M Lazarovici, excavator. Cucuteni A-3 (4300-4050 BCE). From Mantu (Lazarovici)1992.

[25] Female silhouette. Zorlenţu Mare, Romania. Vinča B, 4300-4200 BCE. Excavated by Gheorghe Lazarovici. G. Lazarovici 2009: 68, annex I, table 4c.

the *Hora*, or round dance, which are again related to the ritual life of the communities which make them.[26]

Display Figures and the Dance

These magical female dancing and display figures have a long history, and they are found throughout Eurasia. Cave paintings dating to the Upper Palaeolithic (ca. 35,000 BCE–10,000 BCE) depict figures doing what looks like a magical dance. These dancers are depicted in Neolithic rock art,[27] as well; Yosef Garfinkel, reporting on dancing scenes from Nevalı Çori, in Southeast Anatolia, discussed prehistoric dancing scenes from Egypt to Southern Europe. He thinks that the dance was a means of depicting an ideology of equality – dancers were depicted as being of an equal size – in cultures which were becoming increasingly hierarchical.[28]

These dancing scenes are depicted through the prehistoric and historic ages – up through the present. This magical dance was combined with a display of the female genitals in the earliest Neolithic: in this "display," the female figure is often depicted as nude, displaying a large, magical vulva. Very similar female figures were depicted throughout Eurasia in a broad chronological sweep, beginning with figures depicted in the aceramic (pre-pottery), pre-agricultural Neolithic, dating to at least 8000 BCE in Southeast Anatolia, and early and middle Neolithic Southeast Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia) continuing through the late Neolithic in Western China, and working their way into early historic Greece, Asia, India, and Ireland, and elsewhere.

These female figures are found in two iconographic forms: 1) a bent-knee dance (for example, the Corfu Medusa, Indic Kālī, and Indic Dākinīs such as Vajrayoginī, 2) and crouching and strongly displaying the genitals (the 'fish' figure from Lepenski Vir, figures from Western China, Irish Sheela na gigs, Indic Lajjā Gaurīs). The Kiltinan Sheela does both: she does a magical dance while opening and displaying her vulva. In prehistory as well as in the modern era piscine imagery is frequently connected with these figures; we will discuss this imagery shortly.

Göbekli Tepe

Probably the earliest (uncontested) female display figure, dating to the aceramic, pre-agricultural Neolithic no later than 8000 BCE, has been found in level II of the Southeast Anatolian site of Göbekli Tepe; she is crouching, and her arms and legs are bent, in an M-position, probably in a magical dance. She was carved on a stone slab on a shelf or bench, in the Lion Pillar building (probably a shrine) between pillars containing depictions of felines, foreshadowing female figures associated with felines throughout Anatolia, the Indus Valley, and

[26] See C-M Lazarovici et al. 2009:75; see also C-M Lazarovici 2009: 76, on figures which may represent the magic dance, as well as catalogue nos. 135, 242, 263.

[27] See Haarmann and Marler 2008, fig. 16: female shaman in magical dance, with bow; in a rock painting from Astuvansalmi (Ristiina, Finland).

[28] Garfinkel 2003.

historic India.[29] She was very likely apotropaic,[30] as were most female figures in a posture of sacred display.

That is, she was the goddess who protected the worshipers in the temple. Apotropaia has been a function of female display figures for millennia; the early historic Greco-Roman Medusa and the medieval era Irish Sheela na gigs are examples of historic female figures whose functions included the apotropaic.

Fig. 4: Crouching stone 'fish' figure from the Mesolithic site of Lepenski Vir, Lepenski Vir Museum (photo Gregory L. Dexter).

Lepenski Vir

In Lepenski Vir, in the Iron Gates region of the Danube River, there are several female 'fish'-sculptures; one, dating to ca. 6800 BCE, crouches and displays her deeply incised pubic triangle; her breasts are small knobs[31] (Fig. 4). Another is a fish-figure with elaborate vesica piscis design – piscine imagery which often marks female display figures.[32]

Neolithic China

A pot from the Machang culture of Liuwan, Western China (ca. 2300-2000 BCE), in the far northwestern province of Qinghai, depicts a female figure in a display position.[33] At the sides of the woman on the Machang pot, there are large circles filled with webs/nets. The pot was found in the Hexi corridor, part of the Northern Silk Road, a route from North China to the Tarim Basin/East Central Asia. The figure has breasts at the top and perhaps a swollen abdomen, with a distended navel in the center. The woman's hands are clearly positioned in such a way that they are meant to expose her genitalia – which are depicted quite graphically,

[29] See Dexter 2009.

[30] I thank Joan Marler for this information. Personal Communication, September 2, 2011.

[31] See Dexter and Mair 2010: 13, fig. 7. Lepenski Vir Ic-II. Iron Gates Region, Northern Serbia. Lepenski Vir Museum.

[32] See Dexter and Mair 2010, Frontispiece; Lepenski Vir Ic-II. Iron Gates Region, Serbia. Lepenski Vir Museum.

[33] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 8: pot with sculpted human figure. Ledu, Liuwan, Western China, Machang Phase of Majiayao Culture, ca. 2300 BCE (National Museum of China).

similarly to the position taken by the Lepenski Vir figure. There is another pot from Western China representing the body of a human who has spread-out arms and legs with finny appendages;[34] the fins link this figure to the piscine imagery of the Lepenski Vir fish figures.[35] The figure has a netting design in place of a head. The position taken by this figure is very similar to that of frogs, which represent fertility throughout Eurasia. The net design may be compared to that on a Cucuteni-Tripolye pot dating to 4200-4100 BCE.[36]

Other pots, also from Western China, depict more abstract figures. They have finny protuberances extending from what would be the elbows and knees.[37]

Anasyrma

Another form of Sacred Display is *Anasyrma.* This is a Greek word which refers to the lifting up of the skirts to expose the genitals, and I use it here to express that phenomenon in several ancient cultures. The word is found neither in the Oxford English Dictionary (unabridged) nor Webster's unabridged dictionary, but it is an acceptable use of the Greek, from the Greek verb, ἀνασύρω – σύρω, 'draw, drag' + ἀνα, 'up' – usually of one's clothes. In the middle voice, it means 'to pull up one's clothes, expose one's person'. Anasyrma can be an apotropaic device; in circumstances of war, it can evoke fear in the enemy.[38]

This use of Anasyrma is also illustrated in the stories of the Irish Cú Chulainn and the Greek Bellerophon, who were both diverted from their warrior rage by a plethora of women who lifted up their skirts. In the Irish story, the young Irish hero Cú Chulainn, when he was a child, became inflated with his warrior energies and went berserk. He was about to turn his tremendous energies against his own countrymen when his maternal uncle, King Conchobor, devised a plan to tame him:

> *... to send a company of women out toward the boy, that is, three times fifty women, that is, ten women and seven times twenty, utterly naked, all at the same time, and the leader of the women before them, Scandlach, to expose their nakedness and their boldness to him.*

---

[34] See Lazarovici et al. 2009: 11, fig. 2C, illustrating a very similar pot from the Chinese Yangshao culture (ca. 5000 BC–3000 BCE), and see ibid.: 11-13 for discussion of the great similarities between pottery from southeast European cultures and those from the Yangshao culture, as well as samples of writing from the two cultures.

[35] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 10: Vessel with two perforated knobs and small, rimmed mouth. China, Neolithic Period, Machang Type, late third millennium BCE. Earthenware with design of a figure having a schematic head in black and red pigment (E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and Edwin F. Jack Fund. 1988.31. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

[36] See Gimbutas 1989: plate 2.

[37] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 11: Pot depicting figure with fin-like arms and shoulders. Western China, Machang Phase of Majiayao Culture, ca. 2300 BCE (Charlotte and John Weber Collection, 1992.165.8.-12; Metropolitan Museum of Art). See also, ibid.: fig. 12: Deep bowl with four perforated knobs. China. Neolithic Period, Machang type, late third millennium BCE. Earthenware with stylized hands and arm design in brown pigment (E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and Edwin F. Jack Fund. 1988.47; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

[38] Liddell and Scott 1856 [1961]. See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 22: Women execute anasyrma toward warriors; Netherlands, late sixteenth century. After Helmut Birkhan, Kelten/Celts, fig. 513.

The whole company of women came out, and they all exposed their nakedness and their boldness to him.
The boy lowered his gaze away from them and laid his face against the chariot, so that he might not see the nakedness nor the boldness of the women.[39]

The Greek hero Bellerophon too suffered the warrior rage, when he performed feats of courage to aid the Lycians. The latter did not give him due respect, and so, in anger, Bellerophon

... waded into the sea and prayed to Poseidon that, in revenge for this [injustice] the land might become barren and useless. And then, having made this prayer, he left, and a wave surged and inundated the land; it was a terrible sight, when the sea, following him, rose on high, and completely concealed the plain. Then, when the men begged Bellerophon to hold it back, and could not persuade him, the women, lifting up their undergarments [anasuramenai], came to meet him. And when he, out of shame, went back again [towards the sea], the wave too, it is said, withdrew along with him.[40]

Thus the act of anasyrma protected the societies from the overweening violence of the Indo-European warrior hero.[41]

Anasyrma can also be an act which evokes surprise and subsequent laughter and a letting go of sadness. What is significant about anasyrma is that it reflects the numinous quality of the female genitals.

In some cultures, there is a myth of anasyrma used for emotional healing. Probably the most well-known myth of that type is that of the Greek Baubo and Iambe and Demeter.

Homeric Hymn to Demeter

In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess of grain, Demeter, is grieving for her daughter Persephone, who has been carried off by the underworld god, the Lord of Hades. No

---

[39] Taín Bó Cúalnge 1186-1192 (LL 67b). The Old Irish text is in O'Rahilly 1967:
In bantrocht da lécud immach do s·aigid in meic .i. trí coícait ban .i. deich mnáa 7 secht fichit díscir derglomnocht I n-óenfécht uili 7 a mbantóesech rempo, Scandlach, do thócbáil a nnochta 7 a nnáre dó. Táncatar immach in banmaccrad uile 7 túargbatar a nnochta 7 a nnáre uile dó. Foilgid in mac a gnúis forru 7 dobretha a dreich frisin carpat arná acced nochta nó náre na mban.

[40] Plutarch, Moralia 248 A-B. The Greek text is in Hubert et al. (eds.) 1925–1935:
εἰς τὴν θάλατταν ἐμβὰς εὔξατο κατ' αὐτοῦ τῷ Ποσειδῶνι
τὴν χώραν ἄκαρπον γενέσθαι καὶ ἀνόνητον.
εἶθ' ὁ μὲν ἀπῄει κατευξάμενος, κῦμα δὲ διαρθὲν, ἐπέκλυζε τὴν γῆν·
καὶ θέαμα δεινὸν ἦν, ἑπομένες μετεώρου τῆς θαλάττης
καὶ ἀποκρυπτούσης τὸ πεδίον. ἐπεὶ δὲ , τῶν ἀνδρῶν δεομένων,
τὸν Βελλεροφόντην ἐπισχεῖν, οὐδὲν ἔπειθον,
αἱ γυναῖκες ἀνασυράμεναι τοὺς χιτωνίσκους
ἀπήντησαν αὐτῷ· πάλιν οὖν ὑπ' αἰσχύνης
ἀναχωροῦντος ὀπίσω καὶ τὸ κῦμα λέγεται συνυποχωρῆσαι.

[41] See also Dexter 1990: 160-161.

one can coax Demeter out of her sadness as she sits downcast in the home of Celeus and Metaneira, king and queen of Eleusis. Demeter refuses to eat or drink:

> *... until knowing Iambe, making many jests [and] jokes,*
> *diverted the sacred lady, [causing her] to smile and laugh*
> *and to have a gracious heart.*[42]

The old woman, Iambe, is vocally erotic (or 'obscene'), telling jokes to make the grieving Demeter laugh. She has been compared by many scholars to the physically 'obscene' Baubo, who makes the goddess laugh by lifting up her skirt. Greek texts referring to Baubo (rather than Iambe) are relatively late; the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria tells us in the *Protrepticus*:

> *Thus speaking, she [Baubo] pulled up her dress [anesurato – from anasuromai], and she displayed her whole body, an unseemly part [of her body]...and when the goddess saw [this], she laughed in her heart.*[43]

Demeter has the people of Eleusis build a temple to her and she and her daughter (Kore, Persephone) teach the mysteries of agriculture to the Eleusinian, Triptolemus, whom some sources say was a son of Celeus and Metaneira.

Several female display figures dating from the fifth to the third centuries BCE, in the form of terracotta statuettes, were excavated from the Ionian city of Priene (near the island of Samos, in modern Turkey) from a temple of Demeter and Kore (taking us back to the "Homeric Hymn to Demeter"). Below the mouth of each figure is the representation of the vulva. There is much scholarly debate about whether these figures represent Baubo.[44]

There is considerably earlier evidence for a female display figure similar to Baubo. The Greek historian Herodotus refers to a ritual women performed while boating to the Egyptian town of Bubastis, a ritual which included the lifting up of their skirts:

> *Whenever they travel to Bubastis, they do this....*
> *Some of the women do that which I have said, some mock the women in the town, shouting at them, some dance, and some stand up and lift up their skirts [anasurontai].*
> *They do this at every city along the river.*[45]

---

[42] Homeric Hymn to Demeter 202-204. Eighth to Sixth Centuries BCE. The text is in Richardson 1974:
πρίν γ' ὅτε δὴ χλεύῃς μιν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδυῖα
πολλά παρασκώπτουσ' ἐτρέψατο πότνιαν ἀγνήν
μειδῆσαι γελάσαι τε καὶ ἵλαον σχεῖν θυμόν·

[43] Clement of Alexandria, "Protrepticus" 2.21.4-7. 150-211/216 CE. The Greek text is in Marcovich 1996:
ὡς εἰποῦσα πέπλους ἀνεσύρατο, δεῖξε δὲ πάντα (5)
σώματος οὐδὲ πρέποντα τόπον...
ἡ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐνόησε θεά, μείδησ· ἐνὶ θυμῷ

[44] See Dexter and Mair 2010, 35 ff; endnote 58.

[45] Herodotus, Histories 2.60. The Greek text is from Hude 1908:
Ἐς μέν νυν Βούβαστιν πόλιν ἐπεὰν κομίζωνται, ποιεῦσι τοιάδε...αἳ μὲν τινὲς τῶν
γυναικῶν ποιεῦσι τά περ εἴρηκα, αἳ δὲ τωθάζουσι βοῶσαι τάς ἐν τῇ πόλι ταύτῃ γυναῖκας,
αἳ δὲ ὀρχέονται, αἳ δὲ ἀνασύρονται ἀνιστάμεναι· ταῦτα παρὰ πᾶσαν πόλιν παραποταμίην ποιεῦσι·

Herodotus' passage may provide a clue about the earlier forms of the "Baubo"story. The origin of the ritual described by Herodotus may lie in an Egyptian myth which dates to the Late Kingdom, ca. 1160 BCE. In this myth, the love-goddess Hathor lifts up her skirts, in order to allay the sadness of her father, the sun-god Rā (here called Prē'-Harakhti). In the story, the gods Horus and Seth were contending for the kingship of the murdered Osiris. The god Babai taunted Prē-Harakhti,[46] telling him that his shrine was empty: that is, that no one was worshiping him in his shrine. Prē-Harakhti lay on his back in his garden, heartsick.

> *Thereupon, Hathor, Mistress [lit. "lord"] of the Southern Sycamore tree, went [and] stood before [lit. "in the foreskin of, in the phallus of"] her father, Master of the Universe [lit. "Master to the end"], [and] she uncovered her nether parts before his face, and the great god laughed at her.*[47]

The god is not laughing to make fun of her; he is laughing in joy. Thus, Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of love, love spells, Fate, and war, as well as cow goddess, enacts *anasyrma* for the sun god and evokes his laughter and joy.

When one puts into context the myths of Demeter and Iambe and Baubo, and Hathor and "obscene" Egyptian women, one finds a powerful deity who is unhappy and who is healed by laughter. The deity may be the sun which aids the growth of plant life, or it may be a deity who is directly connected to the growth of plants. *Anasyrma* in antiquity thus served to magnify the fertile – and fertility-restoring – power of the female through the reminder of a woman's numinous sexual organs.

The ritual of *anasyrma* and reference to a sun deity are also found in Japanese myth. The Japanese sun-goddess Amaterasu, after withdrawing to a cave in anger, was coaxed out by the dance and display of the goddess Ame-no-Uzume no Mikoto, "the Terrible Female of Heaven."[48] Amaterasu withdrew from the world, whereupon Ame-no-Uzume took off her clothing and displayed herself to all of the gods, dancing an erotic and comic dance on an overturned tub. The gods began to laugh. Amaterasu came to the door of the cave to see what was causing all of the commotion – and why the gods were laughing even though Amaterasu had withdrawn the light. Through the use of a mirror, Amaterasu was tricked into coming out of the cave and bringing back the light.

A rain-making ritual enacted in modern Africa may reflect this ancient gesture of fertility. Among the Ihanzu, a people in north-central Tanzania, rain is scarce; if the male chief and his assistants are unsuccessful with their customary annual rain-making rites, then extraordinary measures are called for. At such a time of extreme drought, women who have given birth (except

---

[46] Prē-Harakhti and Atum were variant designations of the sun-god (Gardiner 1931: 11).

[47] The Egyptian hieroglyphic text is in Gardiner: 1931. Determinatives have not been included in the following transliteration by the author. Papyrus Chester Beatty I, Recto, 4.2–4.3:

Ḥet.Ḥer.r.t neb n.h.a res ḥer i.a.ii i.w.s.t. ḥer āha.ā m met i t.f.s.t neb.r ḏr i.w.s.t kef.a.w.t.ph.t. ka.t.s.t.r ḥer.f aḥa.ā.n neter āa seb.i.a.i.m.s.t.

[48] Chapter Seventeen of the Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters 81–85; ca. 712 CE).

currently menstruating women) will participate in a rain dance, organized by the sister of the male chief. Sometimes, certain very fertile men may participate. The dance may proceed over more than a day, until clouds gather. The women sing and dance, and at several times during the dance they remove their clothes and dance naked. As they dance, they sing sexual and even obscene songs. According to one elderly Ihanzu man,

> *During the women's rain dances they dance naked, even in the middle of the afternoon! This is because they are displaying themselves...the ancestral spirits rejoice and the rains come.*[49]

Thus, not only is there not shock that the women are naked; the people of the Ihanzi understand this nakedness to be propitious.

Fig. 5: Black stone frog, Thessaly. Achilleion, Sesklo culture, ca. 6300 BCE (after Gimbutas 1989, fig. 388).

Frog Figures

The Frog and the M

The frog has been a symbol of fertility for thousands of years. The prolificacy of tadpoles offers an excellent metaphor for fertile abundance, while frogs in many cultures seem to call the rain – which falls from the fertile sky – with their croaking. Also a symbol of birth-giving, they can take the "display"-shape, an "M," illustrated by a frog figure from Neolithic Achilleion,[50] dating to ca. 6300 BCE. (Fig. 5) To this we may compare the "frog"–women excavated by James Mellaart from the Neolithic site of Hacılar in southwestern Turkey, ancient Anatolia.[51] Just as the frog figures were symbols of both birth–giving and the sexual act, these figures sometimes recline, with legs spread wide. Frog-figures are depicted on a potsherd and a pot from Prague, Czech Republic, dating to the Neolithic.[52] Again, the frog takes the shape of an "M," the arms and legs mirroring each other. That this position has religious significance is underscored by the Bulgarian

[49] Sanders 2000: 481. Sanders was able to observe this ritual two years in a row. Generally, men do not observe the ritual, but Sanders provided the women with a gift which apparently would "please the ancestral spirits," and thus he was able to watch most of the ritual (ibid.:469). Sanders believes that the women are displaying both male and female qualities in the dance (rather than rituals of female rebellion against patriarchy); since Ihanzu belief is that men are dry and women are wet, the wet women themselves embody fertility, and their nudity magnifies this fertility. On the other hand, he believes that the sexual and obscene songs reflect masculine aggression and sexuality (ibid.:469-471). However, if one considers ancient anasyrma, one sees that these ritual songs have long been in the realm of the female.

[50] Gimbutas 1989: 252, fig. 388. Black stone frog. Thessaly, Greece, Achilleion culture, cca. 6300 BCE; Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 23.

[51] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 24. Ankara, Anatolian Civilizations Museum.

[52] National Museum, Prague, Czech Republic.

archaeologist Vassil Nikolov, who discovered the grave of a young woman, buried in Slatina-Sophia, Bulgaria, buried in a pit in a "frog" position, on her stomach, with her head up. Nikolov believes that Neolithic clay altars in this "frog" or "M" position were used in ritual prayers for rain and for fertility in general.[53] Burials are a religious phenomenon, because if one buries a body with care they are readying it for a spiritual afterlife.

The Egyptian frog-goddess Heqet [Heqat, Heket] was responsible for childbirth, regeneration, and fertility in general.The Indus Valley cultures also recognized the significance of the frog. A carved ivory pendant from the early Kot Diji phase at Rehman Dheri was decorated on one side with two scorpions and a frog.[54] Finally, the frog was recognized in early historic India as a harbinger of the rain, and the frog-gods, the Maṇḍukās, were worshiped for their rain-making abilities – as in the famous Ṛgvedic hymn, 7.103.[55]

The Frog in Folklore

In modern folklore and ritual, the symbolism of the frog persists. In Bulgaria and Serbia and elsewhere, ritual dance preserves an ancient layer of inherited tradition. The dance of the Serbian Dodola/Bulgarian Peperuda was a ritual prayer for rain at the time of the ripening of the grain. In the oldest version of the Bulgarian dance, the *Peperouda* (Butterfly) dance was performed by a young woman (called Peperouda) who was naked and barefoot. Frogs were fastened to her belt, she held green twigs in her hands, and she was covered in greenery. The Peperouda, accompanied by other barefoot young women, danced in every yard of the village. The other young women sang while the Peperouda began to dance. At this point a woman would pour water over the Peperouda and the other young women, and in some places the women would dance in the spilled water. In this ritual dance, the Peperouda was enacting the myth of the drought caused by the disappearance of a young male deity; she was the only one who could mediate the drought and bring the rain.[56] Similar rituals were observed in Serbia, Romania, the Caucasus, Russia, and India. Women of the Kochh tribe in northeastern and eastern Bengal would dance nude before a plantain stem representing a naked male deity; the women would sing obscene songs, and the deity would then send the rain.[57]

We note the fact that obscene language and nudity are connected here, as they are in the ancient Egyptian and Greek myths of propitiation of the deity. Just as with frogs, which copulate and reproduce abundantly, women are emblematic of fertility, by nature of the power of their genitalia—especially their uncovered genitalia. Thus both frogs, croaking, and nude women, dancing and singing erotic songs, have the power to bring forth the rain in time of drought.

---

[53] Nikolov 2009.
[54] McIntosh 2008: 71.
[55] For the author's translation of this hymn, see Dexter and Mair 2010: 46-48.
[56] See Ilieva and Shturbanova 1997: 310.
[57] Crooke 1919: 247.

Erotic and Ferocious Female Figures of South and East Asia
The Indus Valley

The Indus Valley (or Indus/Sarasvatī Valley)[58] cultures had many features similar to those of the Danube cultures. These civilizations produced few weapons and do not give evidence of hierarchy. Each produced a script – still undeciphered – as well as beautiful pottery and other evidence of high culture.[59] There are several characters in the Danube Script which find correlates in the Indus Script.[60] Further, there is evidence of similar ornamentation in both cultures.

Very well-made armlets are evidenced for the Indus Valley peoples[61] (and for both the early historic and recent cultures of India as well) and they have been found in excavations of Danube cultures as well. A *Spondylus gaederopus* armlet was found in the ritual pit of the Lady of Tărtăria – the priestess of Tărtăria;[62] it showed signs of having been deeply worn – that is, worn throughout a lifetime. Figurines with armlets have been found in several excavations: an armlet encircles the left arm of a figurine from Durankulak, Bulgaria 4550-4450 BCE); one encircles the right arm of a pregnant figurine from the Pavlovac site (F.Y.R.O.M.); and a Vinča terracotta figurine from the Stublive site in Serbia bears three armlets on the right arm.[63]

Early historic Indic female figures have correlates in the earlier Bronze Age Indus Valley culture and the Bactria-Margiana Complex; these cultures have produced seals depicting both Durgā-like and Lajjā-Gaurī-like figures. A large wood sculpture (28 inches high) of a nude female, from the Harappan culture, dated to ca. 2400 BCE, squats and displays her genitals.[64] This figure and a few Indus Valley seals[65] of female figures in a display position, (Fig. 6) relate Indus Valley iconography to later Hindu and Buddhist Lajjā Gaurī figures – nude figures which hold their legs in positions resulting in a bold display of their genitals. In fact, the Indus Script itself has a crouching figure which seems to be in a sacred stance or dance.[66]

---

[58] The Indus Valley culture flourished in the ancient river valley between the ancient Indus river and the now dried-up Sarasvatī/Ghaggar Hakra River (McIntosh 2008: 3, 19ff, 116). There were many more settlements along the Sarasvatī than along the Indus: around fifty sites along the Indus compared with around a thousand along the Sarasvatī (ibid.: 20). Thus a better designation for the culture would be the Sarasvatī Valley (or at least Indus/Sarasvatī) culture, but to avoid confusion I use Indus here.

[59] See Dexter 2012.

[60] See Lazarovici et al. 2011: 315, 317, 318, 319, 326, table 329.

[61] See Kenoyer (1998: 122): bangles were traditionally worn on the left arm of adult women of the Indus Valley.

[62] The ritual pit shows signs of a great honoring of the priestess of Tărtăria, whose armlet may have been one sign of her office, rather than customary ware of other women of the culture. This may have been one of the first uses of bangles/armlets. It was suggested by Nicolae Vlassa, who excavated Tărtăria approximately fifty years ago, that there was evidence of ritual cannibalism in the Lady's burial pit (Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini 2011: 125ff); the evidence for this is thin. Vlassa also believed that there was evidence for ritual cannibalism of children in the Greek pre-ceramic era (Vlassa 1972: 176).

[63] See Lazarovici et al. 2011: 221-222.

[64] http://www.tantraworks.com/Ancient_Tantra.html#indus. March 14, 2006. I thank Vicki Noble for this reference.

[65] Indus Valley Cylinder seal – Mature Harappa Period, 2700-2300 BCE - Private Collection of Max Le Martin - Black marble; Bactria-Margiana Complex (BMAC) - Lajjā Gaurī and Lion - 3rd - early 2nd Millennium BCE (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). "Lajjā-Gaurī-like" in Le Martin 2010.

[66] See Dexter 2012.

East Indian Female Figures – Southern Asia – Kālī

Similar female figures are found in historic South Asia. The Indic goddess *Kālī* brings death but also *protects* the worshiper from death – that is, she is apotropaic, similarly to figures as early as the Göbekli Tepe woman and as late as the Sheela na gigs. *Kālī* has been represented in the bent-knee or 'dancing' pose taken by several of the prehistoric figures we have seen[67] (Fig. 7). Many other Indic female figures are portrayed in the dancing position as well.[68] Kālī, as well as other Indic goddesses, can appear in the cremation grounds, the place of death, 'dancing' on the corpse, similarly to how she dances upon her consort Śiva [Shiva] in order to awaken him.[69]

Fig. 6: Indus Valley cylinder seas. Mature Harappa Period, 2700-2300 BCE (after Le Martin 2010, "Lajjā-Gaurīlike...").

Fig. 7: Cosmic form of the Goddess Kālī (Recto). Folio from a book of iconography, Nepal, Himalayas (courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

[67] Cosmic Form of the Goddess Kālī (Recto). Folio from a book of iconography. Nepal, Himalayas (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

[68] Dancing Vajravārāhī - Dorje Pagmo. Red figure. Nepal. Himalayas; Vajravārāhī. Central Tibet. Himalayas 1.LACMAM74_106_1. Dancing Vajravārāhī - Vajrayoginī. Central Tibet. Himalayas (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

[69] Kālī dancing on Shiva in order to awaken him. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Fig. 8: "Durgā Dancing."Central India, Gurjara-Pratihara, 10th century CE (British Museum, Oriental Antiquities, 1872.7-1.82).

Kālī is one of the forms of the Indic "great-goddess" *Devī*; in one of *Devī's* ferocious forms, as *Durgā*[70] (Fig. 8), she appears as a rather bloodthirsty savior of the Indic gods in her battles against the *asuras* (that is, the demons).

Kālī becomes a major figure in the *Devīmāhātmyam* (from the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa),* one of the earliest and most significant Tantric hymns to the Great Goddess *Devī* in her many manifestations, written in the fourth to fifth centuries CE. In Chapter Seven of the *Devīmāhātmyam*, the asuras *Chaṇḍa*, "the fierce one, the violent one" and *Muṇḍa,* "the shaved one, the bald one" are threatening *Devī,* trying to capture her. Devī becomes furious, and her countenance becomes dark.

> *Then, [as Durgā] contracted her brows, out of the flat surface of her forehead came Kālī, the gaping-mouthed one, having a sword and noose.*[71]

Thus, in this version of the myth, *Kālī* is born from *Durgā's* forehead. She wears a tiger's skin and a necklace of skulls. She is emaciated, and her eyes are sunken and reddish. She kills *Chaṇḍa* and *Muṇḍa* and after that she receives the epithet Chāmuṇḍā.[72] In iconography, she holds their decapitated heads.[73] She appears,

> *Her mouth becoming huge, her tongue lolling, terrifying.*[74]

Devī is described as the "red-toothed" one, her teeth bloody from devouring her enemies:

> *After I shall consume the great and mighty Asuras...My teeth shall become reddened [like] the uppermost blossoms of the pomegranate tree.*
> *After that, the gods in heaven and mortals on earth, extolling me,*
> *shall forever speak of [me as] the red-toothed.*[75]

---

[70] "Durgā Dancing." Central India, Gurjara-Pratihara, 10th Century CE (British Museum, Oriental Antiquities, 1872.7-1.82).

[71] Devīmāhātmyam 7.6. Ca. 500 CE. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953:
Bhrukuṭīkuṭilāttasyā lalāṭaphalakāddatam
Kālī karālavadanā viniṣkrāntāsipāśinī.

[72] Devīmāhātmyam 7.27.

[73] See Mookerjee 1988: 76.

[74] Devīmāhātmyam 7.8. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953: ativi stāravadanā jihvālalanabhīṣaṇā

Fig. 9: Lajjā Gaurī, silver seal. Kashmir Smat, 2nd century CE. 1.9 cm × 1.9 cm (from the private collection of Max Le Martin, purchased at an auction in British Columbia; courtesy of Max Le Martin).

This has Indo-European connections with regard to the red of the warrior class.

There is a story from Orissa, in which the Great Goddess as Durgā became angry when she found out that she could defeat the Buffalo Demon (described in the *Devīmāhātmyam*) only if she displayed her vulva in front of him. She did so, and then, furious, she went on a rampage. According to this story, at this point Durgā becomes Kālī; black, naked, her tongue lolling out and dripping blood, she kills everyone around her. The gods become worried and they beg her husband, Shiva, for help; he then lies down on the path along which Kālī advances. Blind with anger, Kālī does not see Shiva, and she steps on his chest. Shiva becomes aroused, and he enters her. She then recognizes her husband and her rage disappears.[76] So in this story, Kālī engages in Sacred Display.

Indic Lajjā Gaurī Figures

At times an erotic display is related to good fortune. This is the case with the Indic Lajjā Gaurī figures, who bring good luck to the temples in which they reside. They date from the first through at least the sixteenth centuries of this era. In some figures, their heads are represented as lotuses, and in others their heads are snakes. In one silver seal from Kashmir Smat, the mirrored legs are in an 'M'-position[77] (Fig. 9). Most of the few human-headed Lajjā Gaurīs have elongated ears – that is, they are the Buddhist representations of Lajjā Gaurīs.

---

[75] Devīmāhātmyam 11.44-45. The Sanskrit text is in Jagadiswarananda, ed. 1953:

Bhakṣayantyāśca tānugrān ... mahāsurān
raktā dantā bhaviṣyanti dāḍimīkusumopamāḥ
Tato mām devatāḥ svarge martyaloke ca mānavāḥ
stuvanto vyāhariṣyanti satatam raktadantikām.

[76] Kinsley 1997: 82.

[77] From the private collection of Max Le Martin, purchased in an auction gallery in British Columbia. 2nd century CE. 1,9 cm x 1,9 cm.

The most basic meaning of the Lajjā Gaurī figure is that of a "brimming pot [of fortune]" (a *kumbha; kumbha* means both "pot" and "womb"*)*.[78] Thus, the Lajjā Gaurīs are propitious, both for the temple and for the devotee.

Female figures of Greece and Rome – Medusa[79]

We move now to ancient Greece. In Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Medusa was a monstrous head, associated with the Underworld. Over time, Medusa accrued a lolling tongue, similar to that of the Indic Kālī. The apotropaic Medusa head was placed on soldiers' shields, over doorways, as antefixes on roofs, on doors of ovens and kilns, and on Athena's aegis.[80] Just as the prehistoric figures, Medusa has a "bent-knee" pose; the Medusa portrayed on the pediment of the Artemis temple in Kekyra is in the bent-knee posture[81] (Fig. 10). In an Etruscan artifact, she is in full 'display' pose.[82]

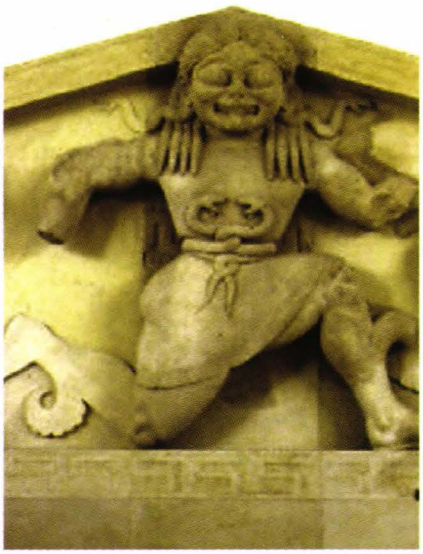


Fig. 10: Gorgon on the pediment of Artemis Temple, Corfu, 590-580 BCE (courtesy of the Kekyra Archaeological Museum; photo by Gregory L. Dexter).

Fig. 11: Kiltinan Sheela na gig, Fethard, Co. Tipperary (photo by Joe Kenny, www.fethard.com).

Irish and British Sheela na gigs

[78] Bolon 1992: 13-14.

[79] For a detailed discussion of Medusa see Dexter 2010.

[80] Cf. the Gorgon Antefix in the Kekyra Archaeological Museum, Corfu, 620-600 BCE.

[81] See Dexter and Mair 2010: Figure 38. Gorgon, pediment, Artemis Temple, Corfu. 590–580 BCE. The Medusa on this pediment is nine feet tall; her waist is cinched with serpents, and there are snakes in her hair. She appears with a lion and with her children, Pegasus and Chrysaor. Kekyra Archaeological Museum. This bent-knee posture may be a ritual pose. Indic sky-dancers take this dance/stance (see Shaw 1994; Noble 2003), as does the goddess Kālī. Further, the Irish Kiltinan Sheela na gig does as well. In Bulgaria, there is a 'crooked dance', danced by women in women's initiation rituals: this may be the dancing version of the bent-knee position, which was probably active dance rather than static stance. Anna Shtarbanova and Anna Ilieva, Bulgarian folklorists, personal communication (June, 2004).

[82] See Devereux 1983. Etruscan Gorgon with animals. Miletus, Asia Minor, 540-530 BCE. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. Medusa is flanked by lions; she has four wings and two snakes sit on top of her head.

In the Medieval era in Western Europe, Sheela na gigs were sculpted and placed in often prominent places on the walls of churches and castles.[83] The magical stance or dance and the erotic display which we have found in other female figures are shared by the Irish Sheela na gig from Kiltinan, where the Sheela stands on one foot with her left hand lifted to her face, while her right hand displays her vulva.[84] Her knees are bent, in a dance (Fig. 11).

The Sheelas take magical postures; the Moate Sheela na gig[85] takes a crouching position exceptionally similar to that of the Lepenski Vir fish figure. Both the Moate and the Cavan Sheela have huge mouths, similar to the fishy mouth of the Lepenski Vir fish figure. The Cavan Sheela has a magically large vulva which hangs down below her knees. She is emaciated as well, with well-defined ribs; we can compare her to the Indic goddess Kālī, who is frequently portrayed as emaciated.

Sheela na gigs also served an apotropaic function; Sheelas such as the Killinaboy Sheela na gig were placed above the doors to churches and castles; the Sheela na gig of Ballinderry Castle occupies the keystone of the arch over the door. The Sheelas protect these powerful and sacred places. The most powerful and sacred place of all, as depicted by the Sheela, is the vulva of the goddess, which leads to the womb. In the huge vulva of the Cavan Sheela na gig we can see the vesica piscis, the double-pointed oval, which is represented particularly in medieval art;[86] we can see the same in the Kilpeck Sheela na gig.[87] Vesica piscis literally means 'fish bladder', and this takes us back to the Lepenski Vir fish-figure and to the finny-kneed and finny-elbowed figures on Neolithic Chinese pots. The connection between fish and vulvas is demonstrably of thousands of years' duration.

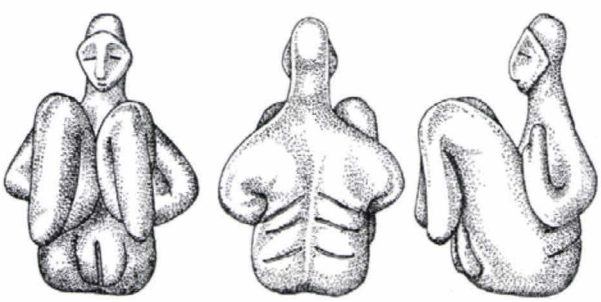


Fig. 12: Female figure from Achilleion, Thessaly, in normal birth-giving position, ca. 6300-6200 BCE (after Gimbutas 1991, fig. 7.1).

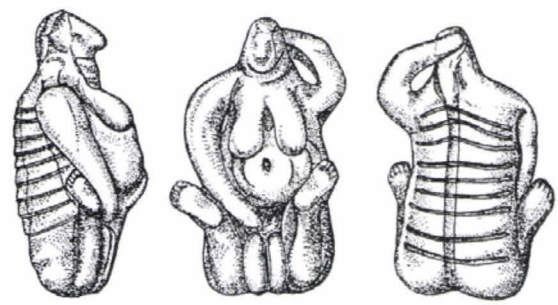


Fig. 13: Birth-giving woman from Malta, in magical stance, end of 4th millennium BCE (after Gimbutas 1991, fig. 7.2).

[83] On Sheela na gigs, see Goode and Dexter 2000; Dexter and Goode 2002.
[84] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 40: Kiltinan Sheela na gig. Fethard, Co. Tipperary. Photo courtesy Joe Kenny, www.fethard.com.
[85] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 41. Moate Sheela na gig: Sheela above a door, behind the Moate castle, County Westmeath, Ireland. Photo courtesy Starr Goode.
[86] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 42: Cavan Sheela na gig (Cavan County Museum, Cavan, Ireland).
[87] For an illustration of the Kilpeck Sheela na gig, see Cunliffe 1979: 72.

One would touch the vulva of a Sheela in order to obtain fertility – the ability to have a child. Birth was considered to be magical, miraculous, and sacred, especially in antiquity, when the rate of infant and mother-mortality was very high. But these Sheelas represent more than a human woman giving birth: there is the addition of magical postures and the juxtaposition of the aged woman and the young, fertile woman. Two Neolithic figures may illustrate this concept. The first, a figure from the Neolithic site of Achilleion, Thessaly, Northern Greece, is depicted in a normal birth-giving position[88] (Fig. 12). The second, from the island of Malta in south of Sicily, in Southern Europe, is also depicted in a birthing position, but to that is added magical gestures[89] (Fig. 13).

Conclusions

These female figures, nude and dancing a magical dance, or nude and crouching to display their prominent pubic triangles, are magical and religious figures dating back to the earliest Neolithic in Anatolia and Europe, the late Neolithic in Central Asia, the Bronze Age in the Indus Valley, and appearing in early historic Europe, East Asia, Southern Asia and later cultures throughout the world. The genital display of these female figures reflects the huge numinosity of the prehistoric divine feminine.

Thus the V and the M of the Danube Script carry an embedded mythic meaning, referring to the sacrality of the ancient feminine. The possible trajectory of these figures is as follows: the earliest Neolithic figures performing the ritual display and dance were probably Anatolian. From there the phenomenon spread to Southeast Europe, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, South Asia, Central Asia, and then East Asia and beyond. The sacred dancing figures and figures with large pubic triangles probably reached Southeast Europe before the Danube Script was encoded. Thus the sacred feminine would have been in the minds of those who first composed the Danube Script.

References

Angeleski, Sote. 2008. "Ritualuri de întemeiere ale sanctuarelor neolitice din Macedonia." *Corviniana* XII: 11-27. Hunedoara.

Birkhan, Helmut. 1999. *Kelten: Bilder Ihrer Kultur* [Celts: Images of their Culture]. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Bolon, Carol R. 1992. *Forms of the Goddess Lajjā Gaurī in Indian Art.* Monographs on the Fine Arts, v. 49. Pennsylvania: State College Art Association.

[88] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 43: Female figure from Achilleion in normal birth-giving position, ca. 6300-6200 BCE. Gimbutas 1991, fig. 7.1.

[89] See Dexter and Mair 2010, fig. 44: Birth-giving woman from Malta, in magical stance, end of fourth millennium BCE. Gimbutas 1991, fig. 7.2.

Brown, Robert L. 1990. "A Lajjā Gaurī in a Buddhist Context at Aurangabad." *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 13, 2: 1-18.

Crooke, William. 1919. "Nudity in India in Custom and Ritual." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 49 (July–December): 237–251.

Cunliffe, Barry W. 1979. *The Celtic World*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Devereux, Georges. 1983. *Baubo: La Vulve Mythique*. Paris: Jean-Cyrille Godefroy.

Devī-māhātmyam. Jagadiswarananda, Swami, ed. 1953. *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa: Devī-māhātmyam*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Dexter, Miriam Robbins. 1990. *Whence the Goddesses: A Source Book*. Pergamon Press. Athene Series.

_____ 2009. "Ancient Felines and the Great-Goddess in Anatolia: Kubaba and Cybele." In *Proceedings of the 20th Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference*. S. W. Jamison, H. C. Melchert and B. Vine, eds., 53–67. Bremen: Hempen.

_____ 2010. "The Ferocious and the Erotic: 'Beautiful' Medusa and the Neolithic Bird and Snake." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26, 1: 25–41.

_____ 2012. "Substrate Continuity in Indo-European Religion and Iconography: Seals and Figurines of the Indus Valley Culture and Historic Indic Female Figures." In *Archaeology and Language: Indo-European Studies Presented to James P. Mallory,* Martin E. Huld, Karlene Jones-Bley, and Dean Miller, eds., 197–219. Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series 60. Washington, D. C.: Institute for the Study of Man.

Dexter, Miriam Robbins, and Starr Goode. 2002. "The Sheela na gigs, Sexuality, and the Goddess in Ancient Ireland." Mary Condren, ed. *Irish Journal of Feminist Studies* 4, 2: 50-75.

Dexter, Miriam Robbins and Victor H. Mair. 2010. *Sacred Display: Divine and Magical Female Figures of Eurasia.* Amherst: Cambria Press.

Donaldson, Thomas. 1975. "Propitious-Apotropaic Eroticism in the Art of Orissa." *Artibus Asiae* 37: 75-100.

Gardiner, Sir Alan H. 1931. *The Library of A. Chester Beatty: The Chester Beatty Papyri* I. London: Walker / Oxford University Press.

Garfinkel, Yosef. 2003. "The Earliest Dancing Scenes in the Near East." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, 3: 84-95.

Gimbutas, Marija. 1974. *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 6500-3500 BC: Myths and Cult Images*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

_____ 1989. *The Language of the Goddess.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

_____ 1991. *The Goddess Civilization. The World of Old Europe.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

_____ 1999. *The Living Goddesses*, by Marija Gimbutas, edited and supplemented by Miriam Robbins Dexter. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Goode, Starr and Miriam Robbins Dexter. 2000. "Sexuality, the Sheela na gigs, and the Goddess in Ancient Ireland." *ReVision* 23, 1: 38-48.

Haarmann, Harald. 1995. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe: An Inquiry into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World.* Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

_____ 2008. "The Danube script and other ancient writing systems: A typology of distinctive features." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4, 1: 12-46.

Haarmann, Harald, and Joan Marler. 2008. *Introducing the Mythological Crescent: Ancient Beliefs and Imagery Connecting Eurasia with Anatolia.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Homer. 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter.* N. J. Richardson, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hubert, C. et al., eds. 1925-35. *Plutarch, Moralia.* Leipzig: Teubner.

Hude, Carl, ed. 1908. *Herodotus, Histories.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Ilieva, Anna, and Anna Shturbanova. 1997. "Some Zoomorphic Images in Bulgarian Women's Ritual Dances in the Context of Old European Symbolism." Translated by Albena Manafska. In *From the Realm of the Ancestors: Essays in Honor of Marija Gimbutas.* Joan Marler, ed., 237-246. Manchester: Knowledge Ideas and Trends.

Jagadiswarananda, Swami, ed. 1953. *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa: Devī-māhātmyam.* Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Jayakar, Pupul. 1990. *The Earth Mother: Legends, Goddesses, and Ritual Arts of India.* San Francisco / New York: Harper and Row.

Kenoyer, Jonathan Mark. 1998. *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization.* American Institute of Pakistan Studies. Oxford: University Press.

Kinsley, David. 1997. *Tantric Visions of the Feminine Divine: The Ten Mahāvidyās.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Kojiki. Philippi, D. L., trans. 1968. *Kojiki.* Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Mantu. 1992. "Representări antropomorfe pe ceramica aşezării Cucuteni A3 de la Scînteia (jud. Iaşi)." *Studii şi Cercetări de istorie veche şi arheologie* 43, 3: 307-315.

_____ 2009. "Symbols and Signs of the Cucuteni-Tripolye Culture." In *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Proceedings from "International Symposium on Neolithic Signs and Symbols." Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Novi Sad, May, 2004. Joan Marler and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds., 87-112. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda, Gheorghe Lazarovici, and Senica Ţurcanu. 2009 *Cucuteni: A Great Civilization of the Prehistoric World.* Iaşi: Palatul Culturii.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe. 1995. "Casiopea: From Neolithic Symbols to Astronomical Mythology." Proceedings of the third SEAC conference, "In Ancient Times, modern methods," Sibiu, Romania, August 31-September 2, 1995. Alba Iulia: Ulise Press.

_____ 2003. "Pâinea, Grâul şi Râşnitul Sacru în Neolitic." *Tibiscum* XI: 65-86. Caransebeş. With English summary.

_____ 2009. "Data Base for Spiritual Life, Signs, and Symbols." In *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Proceedings from "International Symposium on Neolithic Signs and Symbols." Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Novi Sad, May, 2004. Joan Marler and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds., 63-86. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe, Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim. 2001. *Parţa. Monografie arheologică.* Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica XIII. Timişoara: Waldpress.

Lazarovici, Gheorghe, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, and Marco Merlini. 2011. *Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets.* Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega.

Le Martin, Max. 2010. "'Durga-like' and the Indus Valley Civilization." http://www.scribd.com/doc/28503959/Durga-Like-the-Nude-goddess-of-the-Indus-Valley

_____ 2010. "Footnotes on Lajja Gauri-like in the Indus Valley." http://www.scribd.com/doc/33687735/Foot-Notes-on-Lajja-Gauri-like-the-erotic-goddess-of-the-Indus

_____ 2010. "Lajja Gauri-like in the Indus Valley." http://www.scribd.com/doc/33492538/30970713-Lajja-Gauri-like-the-erotic-goddess-of-the-Indus-valley-Completed

Liddell, Henry G., and Robert Scott. 1856 [1961]. *Greek-English Lexicon.* New York: Harper.

Marcovich, Miroslav. 1996. "From Ishtar to Aphrodite." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30, 2: 43-59.

Marler, Joan, ed. 1997. *From the Realm of the Ancestors: Essays in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*: Manchester: Knowledge Ideas and Trends.

Marler, Joan and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds. 2009. *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Joan Marler and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds. Proceedings from the International Symposium Signs of Civilization, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 25-29, 2004. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

McIntosh, Jane R. 2008. *The Ancient Indus Valley: New Perspectives.* Santa Barbara: ABC Clio.

Merlini, Marco. 2009. *An Inquiry into the Danube Script.* Biblioteca Brukenthal XXXIII. Ministery of Culture of Romania and Brukenthal National Museum. Sibiu: Editura Altip.

Mookerjee, Ajit. 1988. *Kali: The Feminine Force.* New York: Destiny Books.

Newberry, John. 1988. "Earliest known signs of the Vinča Culture"; "Fauna in the Indus Script and The Tartaria Tablets Adjacent to the Vinča Culture"; "Seasonal Signs in the Indus Script and the Figurine Markings of the Vinča Culture." *Indus Script Monographs.* Victoria, B.C.: J. Newberry.

Nikolov, Vassil. 2009. "On the Semantics of Neolithic Altars." In *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Joan Marler and Miriam Robbins Dexter, eds., 141-144. Proceedings from the International Symposium Signs of Civilization, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 25-29, 2004. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Noble, Vicki. 2003. *The Double Goddess.* Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions.

O'Rahilly, Cecile, ed. 1967. *Táin Bó Cúalnge.* Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Richardson, N. J., ed. 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sanders, Todd. 2000. "Rains Gone Bad, Women Gone Mad: Rethinking Gender Rituals of Rebellion and Patriarchy." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6, 3 (September): 469-486.

Shaw, Miranda. 1994. *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sonawane, V. H. 1988. "Some Remarkable Sculptures of Lajjā Gaurī from Gujarat." *Lalit Kalā* 23:27-34.

Tantraworks: http://www.tantraworks.com/Ancient_Tantra.html#indus

Vlassa, Nicolae. 1972. "Eine frühneolitischen Kultur mit bemalter Keramik der Vor Starčevo-Körös-Zeit in Cluj-Gura Baciului, Siebenbürgen." *Praehistorische Zeitschrift* 47, 2: 174–197.

Wang Binghua. 1990. *Xinjiang Tianshan shengzhi chongbai yanhua* [Tianshan Petroglyphs: A Testimony of Fertility Worship]. Edited by The Historical Relics and Archaeology Institute of the Xinxiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.

Zanotti, David G. 1983. "The Position of the Tărtăria Tablets within the Southeast European Copper Age." *American Journal of Archaeology* 87, 2 (April): 209-213.

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS IN ZORLENŢU MARE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE DANUBE SCRIPT

ADRIANA RADU

Abstract: *The settlement of Zorlenţu Mare, having a complex stratigraphy and a large number of discovered objects, offered numerous statuettes as well, some of them decorated. The analysis of the signs from the bodies of the statues enabled us to record these signs in a catalogue and to compare them to those of the Danube script. New signs have also been identified, specific to this settlement, at least up to the present.*

General Notions

Writing,[1] Vinča writing,[2] Turdaş writing,[3] Old European writing, writing in South-Eastern Europe, and many other terms,[4] and since 1994 the Danube writing,[5] are mainly sacred writing—considering most of the objects on which these signs and symbols occur—related to cult, which uses equally signs and symbols.[6] Since writing is defined as the representation of sounds or words of a language by conventional signs,[7] we are left to analyze only some of the objects found in Zorlenţu Mare, either published or unpublished, which, in our opinion, contain not only decoration but also signs and symbols, and to define their relationship with the Danube writing.

Symbol – definition: The symbol is a sign, an object, or an image which represents indirectly (in a conventional manner or by an analogical correspondence) an object, a being, a notion, an idea, an attribute, a feeling, etc.[8] Through the symbol we can penetrate the world of outlook. Today there are some dictionaries for symbols.[9]

Sign – definition: A sign is everything showing something, pointing to something.[10] The sign is only an arbitrary convention within which the significant and the significate do not

---

* Adriana Radu and Flavius Bozu presented the work "Signs and Symbols at Zorlenţu" at the International Symposium "50 years after Tărtăria Excavations," held on 1-5 September, 2011 in Coronini (Pescari).

[1] About writing generally, see Neumann 2002: 13-17; Ittu 2008; Robinson 2009.

[2] Vlassa 1962, 1963, 1976, Winn 1973, 1981.

[3] Especially Torma 1894; Gyulai 1972, and others. See Makkay 1969, 1990. Here is an extensive bibliography of the problem.

[4] Winn 1990, 2004, 2004a; Merlini 2009, and bibliography.

[5] At the Novi Sad Symposium, 2004, the participants agreed on such a name, the Danube script. Under the coordination of the Institute of Archaeomythology, other meetings have been organised in Romania which aimed at the definition, creating a catalogue, with analysis and description. There are tens of articles, notes and studies, and doctoral theses about these problems. See detailed analyses by M. Merlini (2009), and others: Neumann 2002; Seipel 2003; Nikolova 2003; Marler and Dexter 2009; Lazarovici 2009; Lazarovici and Merlini 2008; Marler 2009.

[6] Lazarovici 2008, 2009.

[7] DEX 1975: 841.

[8] DEX 1975: 850

[9] See, e.g., Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1983.

[10] Ibid.

interfere. The symbol implies the homogeneity of the significate and the significant within an organizing dynamic process.[11] The symbol is more than a simple sign; it takes us beyond the significance, deriving from the interpretation conditioned at its turn by certain predispositions. It is charged with affection and dynamism.[12]

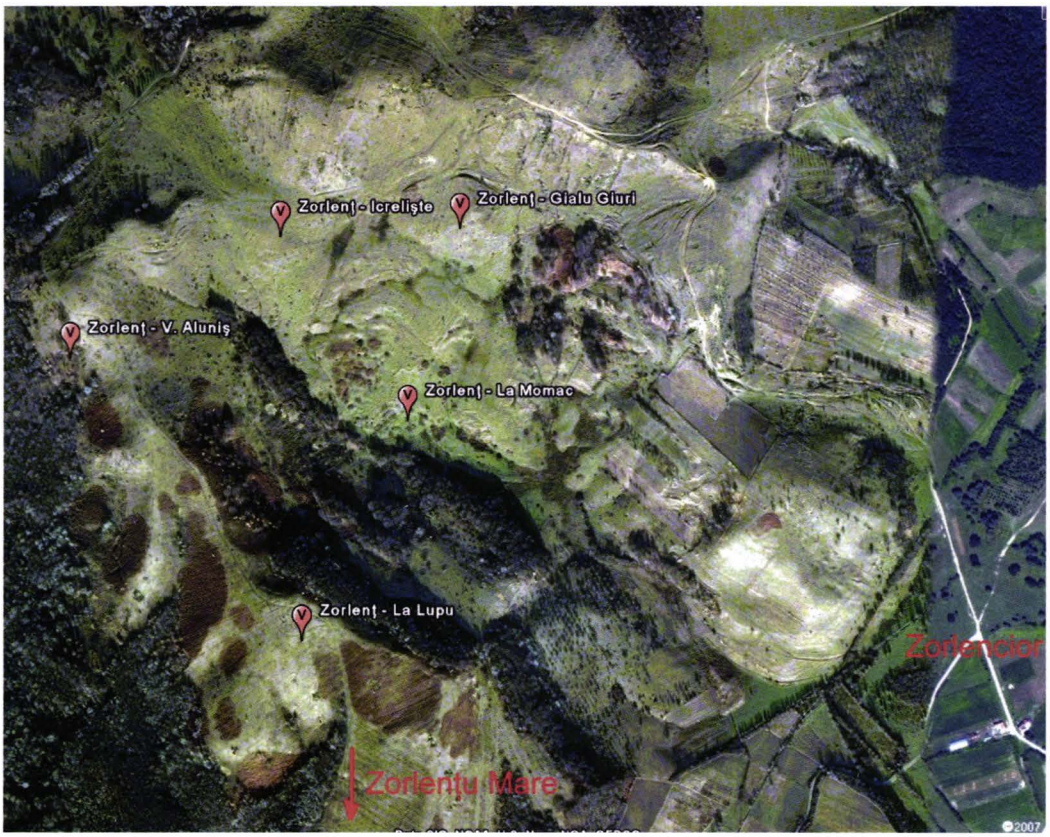


Fig. 1: The stations in the area Codru – Zorlenţu Mare.

Data about Zorlenţu Mare

The Vinča site at Zorlenţu Mare,[13] which lies in a hilly landscape, consists of a large territory with a central settlement and several secondary ones, which are relocations to the immediate neighborhood of the main centre situated in the place named *Codru*. The settlements in *Gialu Gurii*, *Negruşa*, *Valea Alunului* are later settlements belonging to the retardation process (the slowing of cultural development)[14] (Fig. 1).

The dwelling starts in the stage B1 and continues to the stage C2, with delays that can be tracked in a large stratigraphy consisting of seven levels, belonging to different cultural stages. It

[11] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, I: 23.
[12] Ibid.: 25.
[13] Lazarovici C.-M. and Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 126, 152-160; Lazarovici 1991; Lazarovici 1979: 78, 209, no. 95.
[14] Lazarovici C.-M. and Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 142.

is represented by surface dwellings which have been long inhabited, shelters dug out in the earth, as well as a monumental altar in the inferior levels.

The rich archaeological material originating here offer objects which differ completely from the others in the way they have been produced and the way the surfaces are treated, even if, from a typological point of view, they belong to the same categorical type. Being identically produced, they are decorated with ornaments and signs which could reflect either moments of everyday life, or of spiritual life. These signs and ornaments can also be found in the series of the Danube writing catalogue, which they complete.

All these objects belong to the usual archaeological inventory of the Neolithic settlement, generally referring to the cult: male and female anthropomorphic figurines, zoomorphic figurines, vessels and lids, circular tablets, spindles and loom weights. Due to their characters they belong to the magical religious practices, to the forces and symbols imposed by them.

Signs and symbols on the anthropomorpic figurines

These objects will be presented without insisting on their belonging to the pantheon of the Neolithic deities and implicitly to the spiritual life of the agricultural shepherd populations. They are most of all female figurines, the Mother Goddess and other deities, but also priestesses of the divinities if we consider the presence of some monumental pieces in sanctuaries (especially the throne) on which the "priestess" is seated, or the place designed for the divinity – as in the case of the Sabatinovka sanctuary.[15]

Agriculture makes people settle down and connects them to the land, and in every stable community the position of the woman becomes more important.[16] The small statuettes (idols) have signs on their bodies and heads, which may be assimilated to masks, tattoos,[17] amulets, or the sacred signs accompanying ritual practices. Sometimes they may be related to the shaman's clothing.[18]

Distinguishing Signs – Bracelets and Jewelry

Some statuettes, less frequent actually, might represent real characters of everyday life, sometimes having an important role in the life of the community. This is the case of a small female statue, without body and arms, a finely modeled Venus, presenting clothing details represented by horizontal foldings in the lower part (Fig. 2).[19] Others represent jewelry. On a small fragment representing the upper part of a body, a necklace is represented by deep, long

[15] Ursulescu et alii 2001-2002: 66, fig. 1; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2008: 11, fig. 3.
[16] Eliade 2006: 303.
[17] Boghian 2010, 2011 and bibliography.
[18] The most frequent representations can be found on female figurines. They can also be found on male figurines, but they are very scarce. The male sex is marked rarely in the Banat Neolithic (Gornea).
[19] Lazarovici 1979, XXI, B, 8.

incisions, from the bust to the lower part of the neck (Fig. 4).[20] Massive bracelets on both arms (Fig. 5)[21] above the elbow, and pendants (Fig. 3),[22] are other accessories defining the personality and the function of the cultic character (a priestess?).[23] All these objects can be related both to magical practices and to everyday life.

Fig. 2: Zorlenţu Mare figure with clothing details.

Fig. 3. Zorlenţu Mare figure with pendant.

Fig. 4: Zorlenţu Mare upper torso wearing a necklace.

Fig. 5: Figurine fragment with bracelets.

Because of the signs they show, of the accordance that may be established between the pendant and the talisman, or even on account of the over natural beauty of some of them, due to modeling, they can be attributed to the first category.

---

[20] Lazarovici 1979: 4, pl. XX, D.
[21] Ibid.: 2, pl. XXII, I.
[22] Ibid.: 3, pl. XX, E.
[23] Divinities or characters having bracelets are found in Hungary (Gimbutas 1991: 71, fig. 3-23/3); and at Tărtăria (Vlassa 1976: 211, fig. 14/11), and others.

The Belt

Fig. 6: Zorlenţu Mare figure with a belt of raised buttons (two views).

On the statuette symbolizing birth (Fig. 6),[24] there is a belt made of raised buttons resembling shells. The symbolism of the shell is connected to birth, if we remember the Greek and Roman legends connected to Aphrodite/ Venus (Eros's mother) who is born out of a shell. The shell, and shell bracelets, are symbols of divine protection and, connected to that, of prosperity and good luck.[25] This appears in the inventory of the priestess the Lady of Tărtăria, and in other discoveries.[26]

The Crossband (Kreuzband), the X Sign (Saint Andrew's Cross)

On many of the figurines from Zorlenţu Mare[27] appears the distinct sign for divinity – the crossband (*Kreuzband*) or multiple 'V's. It is also present on other pieces of this kind from the South-East of Europe and from other areas at different times (Fig. 7-9).[28] It is associated with doubled or tripled 'V's, placed on their front or back. These V signs sometimes represent a part of "crossed bands" (Kreuzband).

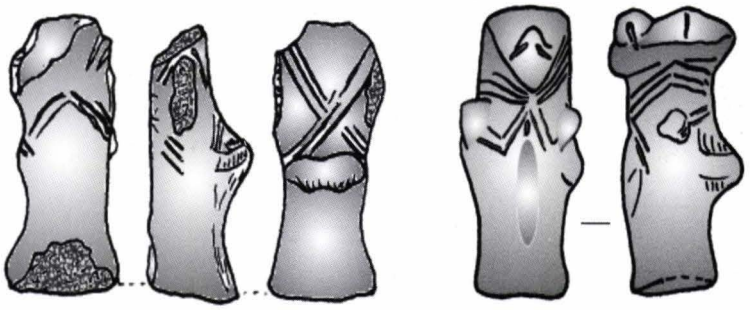


Fig. 7 (three views) and Fig. 8 (two views): Zorlenţu Mare figures with crossbands.

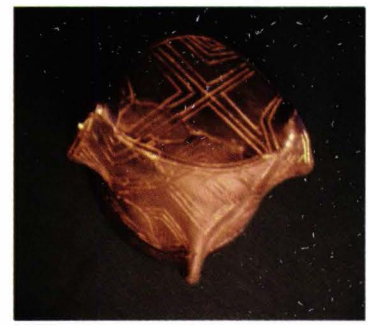


Fig. 9: Liubcova engraved figure (after S. A. Luca).[29]

[24] Lazarovici 1979: 6, pl. XX, G.
[25] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, I: 343[c]
[26] Vlassa 1976: 31; Schier 2002: 25; Lazarovici et alii 2011: 147-149, with bibliography a. s. o.
[27] Lazarovici 1979, pl. XX, D, 6, 9, E,15, G, 4; XXI, A, 7.
[28] Hansen 2007, II, 8/8, 82/4, 250/10, 22, 255/1, 271/1, 321/3, 325/5-7, 328-329, 377; 407, 4 61-469, 472, 493, 494/3, 495/2, 4, 6, 8.
[29] Luca 1990: 15, fig. 11; Luca 1998: 56, 212.

Fig. 10: Zorlenţu Mare stylized figure with V sign following the line of the neck (two views).

Fig. 11: Zorlenţu Mare figure (three views).

These bands stand for a symbol, a certain "rank," a social and religious position within the community.[30]

On the back, the V sign is generally executed differently, and the incised signs on the chest do not continue on the opposite side. There are only two cases when they follow the line of the neck (Fig. 8, 10). A simple presentation consists of two V signs having their tops in the central back area without touching each other, while the opening angle clasps the arms (Fig. 11 – the chest has no ornaments).[31] An "X" arranged in such a way is obtained by joining the two signs vertically by their tops. The sides of the lower one are made of four parallel lines (Fig. 12).[32]

An intricate motif results from placing the three incisioned signs in a more complex ornament. This consists of a V, a V intersected at the inner part by a parallel line to one of the sides, and a V consisting of two parallel lines. They clasp in their opening angle the neck, the arms, and the bottom, the superior part being frequently stressed upon (Fig. 14,[33] and Fig. 13, without ornaments on the chest). The incisions that make the upper part of the X sign on the shoulders either end here or sometimes go across the shoulder, ending on the upper chest. On one object there are two lines continuing from the right shoulder to the upper part of the chest (Fig. 16). On another object there are two parallel lines descending from the two shoulders and placed in the same areas as above, which end by a vertical incision (Fig. 15).

A thorough analysis of the way the components of the motif on the back fit together leads to the conclusion that there is a deliberate arrangement of these components, at least concerning the objects in Zorlenţu Mare. A central zone, a centre, has been built up here, where the lines do not cross (that Kreuzband).

---

[30] Lazarovici 1979, pl. XX/D. 6, 9, G, 4, XXI/ G, 5; Banffy 2002:218, fig. 4-5; Hansen 2007, II, 233/1, 2, 255/1; 314, 325/5-7, 328/4, 480/1.
[31] Lazarovici 1979, XX, D, 1.
[32] Ibid., XX, D, 6.
[33] Lazarovici 1979, XX, G, 4.


Fig. 12: Zorlenţu Mare inscribed figure front and back.


Fig. 13: ZM figure front and side.

The incisions on the back seem to build an X (Saint Andrew's cross) without having its centre marked. This empty space allows the paths or the energies originating in this centre to cross those gathering there. In symbol theory, the centre is not viewed only as a static position. It is the focal point where the one tends to multiply, the inner to the outer, the non-manifest to the manifest, where all the returning and converging processes meet, as in an original point in search of unity.[34]


Fig. 14: Zorlenţu Mare figure front and back.

Fig. 15: Zorlenţu Mare figure front, side, back.

It is less frequent that the signs covering the back of the statue should be accompanied by other signs in the lower half of the body, under the breasts and on the abdomen. At a quick look, one may think that this engraving might be a continuation of the one on the back. In fact, one or both side lines of the drawing incised on the back and on the sides of the body, without crossing or continuing the decoration on the back, may also reach these areas. In the same way, on a small flat breastless figurine (Fig. 16),[35] the sign V, upside down, built of double lines, originates in the middle of the chest, its sides continuing on both left and right side down to the hips. On another figurine (Fig. 17) the motif begins in the same area and opens sidewards, a little bit under the armpits. One of its exterior sides goes upwards to the bottom of the breast.

[34] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, I: 280.
[35] Lazarovici 1979, XX, H, 10.

These ornaments placed between the chest and the waist may be associated with pieces of clothing, such as scarfs or girdles. As signs they are already recorded in the catalogue of the Danube script.

The 'V' signs, doubled, tripled associated with the crossband

Fig. 16: Zorlenţu Mare figure - front, side, back.

Fig. 17: Zorlenţu Mare figure inscribed with crossband – front, side, back.

Geometrical representations accompanied by signs resembling the letters V, Y, I, as well as combinations between them are frequent in the Danube script, in a variable percentage, on different cult objects, such as idols, cult vessels, small altars, tablets. Between them are frequent in the Danube script, in a variable percentage, on different cult objects, such as idols, cult vessels, small altars, tablets. The triangular mask with eyes rendered by two incisions shows sometimes on the forehead, above the short nose, an incised motif made of a "V" with its bottom upside. Each side of the V is flanked by one (Fig. 38) or three (Fig. 37a) parallel lines that do not cross each other.

One of the considered objects is the only one among those from Zorlenţu Mare that presents incisions on its long neck (Fig. 19).[36] The incisions cover the neck and its right half to

[36] Lazarovici 1979, XX, D, 3.

the chin. On one side, in the upper part of the neck, there is an upside down V. Underneath, almost reaching the bottom of the neck, there is a group of four arched parallel lines.

Fig. 18: Zorlenţu Mare inscribed figure (three views).

Fig. 19: Zorlenţu Mare inscribed figure (three views).

Beneath the nape, from the middle of the neck downwards, there is an inverted V, accompanied by parallel and angular incisions. All these signs could suggest the hair or a tattoo. The upside down V is a very frequent ornament on the thorax and the back area, either on both of them or only on the back (Fig. 11, 13, 30).

The ornaments on the chest are generally less intricate. The ornaments on the chest consist mostly of a short, doubled V, placed just at the bottom of the neck (Fig. 8, 10, 12, 14), accompanied by a parallel line on the right side (Fig. 12), or on the left side (Fig. 14). Some other times, a double V reaches the area between the breasts (Fig. 18), and on some objects it is completed by lines which do not intersect each other (Fig. 22).

A broken-armed idol of the Thessalian type (Fig. 20)[37] is decorated on one of its sides with a *V*, with its top emerging from the very bottom of the body, embracing between its sides

[37] Lazarovici 1979, XXI. A, 8.

the whole surface of the body. The end of the right side is a meander-like motif formed by two interlaced elements which is placed in the upper central area. The direction followed by the left side, in order to join the motif in the central area, is harder to define because of the damaged surface of the object. On its right side, the figurine presents two short non-parallel lines, close to each other, emerging from the very area of the arms. On the left side, there are two long lines, almost parallel, which mark the figurine from the armpit to its base. These are accompanied by another parallel vertical line, situated on the opposite side. Due to the degradation of the surface of the figurine, it is no longer possible to track the ornamental motif.

Fig. 20: Zorlenţu Mare broken-armed figure (four views).

Fig. 21: Zorlenţu Mare figure in a sitting position.

Another fragmentary anthropomorphic figurine in a sitting position of the Thessalian type (Fig. 21),[38] its arms forming a V, are ornamented in a distinctive way only on the front side. On the upper chest, there is a deep V emerging from the shoulders, formed by two incised parallel lines. In the inner space between the lines there is a row of deeply incised points. The right side of the V is further extended to the base area zone, while the left side, after crossing the right one, goes only a little further beyond the crossing point. Just next to this joining, a line emerges from an incised point, going aslant downwards to the legs, moving off from the main sign to the right. Inside this space there are two incised points.

[38] Ibid., XXI. A, 7.

From the left shoulder, at some distance from the central V, a line emerges which goes to the base of the statue. It is only partially defined because the exterior glaze has fallen off in some places. On the left side of the figurine, from the area between the origin of the arm and the waist, a V emerges with its top directed towards the middle of the object. Its crossing sides form an X with a very short upper part. The sitting position and the signs X and V seem to show the image of a leader. The inferior line, starting from the incised point and going down to the statue's base, might suggest a male character.

Fig. 22: Zorlenţu Mare figure – front, side, and back.

The sign V, made of double incisions, without any other representation, is also to be seen in this area (Fig. 19). Another modality is when the upper side cuts the lower one, being completed by close parallel lines (Fig. 22),[39] which reach the middle area.

The 'W' Sign

The neck of the statue (Fig. 23)[40] is surrounded by three incised parallel lines, going under the chin and the lower neck. On the chest, this bunch of lines takes the shape of a short V. From its top, two groups of two parallel lines emerge, forming the W motif. Its outer sides form an obtuse angle, each limiting a certain part of the chest.

Under this sign, in the central part of the piece, an oblong bulge marks the sex. On the upper part this is cut by an incised line that ends on the left side of the W. The presence of the vulva attributes the female sex to the piece.

The same W ornament, whose sides form a right angle, occurs also on the back, emerging from the central area of the neck. The sign W, traced by a single incision, is recorded in the catalogue of the Danube script. Being looked upon as a magical sign, it has been related to the astronomical variations of the constellation Cassiopeia.[41] The adornment of the piece may indicate both a representation of the mask and of some elements belonging to the ritual costume.

On a small headless statuette (Fig. 24), the W motif can be found again, laid on the back in a similar way. On the flat chest, a W, whose arms end in volutes, starts from the top of the incision having the form of a slightly elongated V. Under this one, at a small distance, there is another short-sided V with the tip pointing upwards.

[39] Lazarovici 1979, XXII, B, 17.
[40] Ibid., XX, H, 1.
[41] Lazarovici 2002.

Fig. 23: Zorlenţu Mare figure – front, side, and back.

Fig. 24: Zorlenţu Mare headless statuette (two views).

This type of ornament can be interpreted as a pendant or talisman. The presence of the volutes at the ends can connect it to the representation of the consecrational horns meant to suggest the male divinity and, implicitly, the power of regeneration, virility and fertility.[42] At Zorlenţu Mare there is a small piece representing exclusively the consecrational horns,[43] which argues for the important role these played in the magical practices of the settlement.

Rhombus and variants

In some cases on the idols there are decorative elements such as the crossband and rhombic motifs.[44] The rhombic decoration is also present on the ornaments of a large-sized statue (Fig. 25), having the lower part of the body broken. The statue presents on its back a motif consisting of the V sign displayed in several directions. It is made of double lines, having in its

[42] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, I: 367-368.
[43] Lazarovici 1979, XX, G, 8.
[44] Lazarovici 2008, anexa II, tab. 3d, b, from Turdaş, with a rhombic decoration.

Fig. 25: Zorlenţu Mare large-sized statue (two views).

inner part a parallel to one of the sides. In this way, the image of an unfinished X appears, with an unmarked centre, made up by three incised lines. The incisions, on both shoulders, descend to the upper part of the chest, stopping at some distance from the breasts. The entire abdomen, from the area under the chest to the pubis, is limited by a big rhombus, built of three incised parallels. The sides of the acute angle under the chest are not connected, while the shape of the opposite angle cannot be defined because the statue is broken. The opening of the angle is large towards the thighs and the tops are rounded.

The rhombus has been used as an ornament and a symbol since the Upper Paleolithic,[45] to render the human body and its parts (the chest, the abdomen or both). It can be seen both on the bodies of the statues, on the altars, on several categories of clay objects, and on the decorations of monumental altars like the one at Parţa.[46] The rhombus is a female symbol[47] representing the matrix of life. On the figurine described above, the placing of the rhombus on the abdomen is doubtless related to fertility. When the rhombus has a very elongated shape, it may refer to a symbolic approach which includes the contacts and exchanges between the sky and the earth, between the upper and the lower worlds.[48]

In Zorlenţu Mare, the rhombus is also present inside a more extended motif present on a decorated cup (Fig. 26),[49] which is considered to have been imported (from Bükk, Szakalhát or Tisa). The whole body of the vessel is decorated with big incised rhombi outlined by two parallel lines having the space between them filled with two parallel rows of pointed impressions. In the inner part of each rhombus there is another one incised, having all its sides doubled by two close parallel lines. The surface of each inner rhombus is cut by a cross. The idea that this vessel might be a cult vessel has already been issued, its magic function being supported by the presence of the two signs.

---

[45] Chirica 2004, fig. 4/1, 3, 7, 7/2.
[46] Lazarovici et alii 2001: 276, fig. 2, 277, figs. 8, 16.
[47] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, III: 170.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Lazarovici 1971, Pl. VI/3, 1973, fig. 16/6, 1979: 166, note 28; Lichardus 1974: 97, figs. 22/3, 48/4, 49/1.

Fig. 26: Zorlenţu Mare decorated cup.

As a symbol, and having different forms, the cross can be found in all prehistoric periods, yet not exclusively. The cross is the basic principle of all orientation symbols, at several levels of human existence.[50] Among the numerous symbolic meanings it has, the cross holds a function of synthesis and measure, the sky and the earth meet here, time and space are mixed.[51] The sign stands equally for man and divinity. The fact that this sign is present within a rhombus connects this symbol to the matrix of life and possibly indicates the initiating transition to the world's womb.[52] In the Danube script, the rhombus occurs in many combinations, being associated with Cassiopeia and with other signs.[53]

The Triangle

In the lower part of the body of the idols, by certain signs, the sex of the characters is, sometimes, marked. The male ones present a short bulge or an incised line. A triangle in the pubic area, either simple or completed with incisions, stands for the female sex. Such a triangle is partially preserved on a fragmentary statue (Fig. 27) in the form of a triangle with a broken base. Consequently, it looks like a V, marked in the inner area by groups of parallel incisions arranged perpendicularly. It is a complex sign, with no analogy to the Danube script so far.

Vertical, horizontal, oblique lines

Vertical lines were recorded on the bodies of several statuettes. A fragmentary idol is divided by an incision into two unequal areas, the left area being smaller at the front, respectively

[50] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, I: 395.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., III:170.
[53] Lazarovici 2008, tab. B12 body: cod. 238, tab. B9, sex, vulva, different codes at 151, and others.

Fig. 27: Statue fragment with partially preserved triangle.

the right side on the back. The vertical line is present on the back of another fragmentary statue as well (Fig. 29),[54] which has no ornament on the chest and breasts area. The vertical line, in this case, is a broad deep line, dug with the finger, which emerges under the neck, marking the middle of the back.

Fig. 28: Zorlenţu Mare figurine (in three views) with vertical incisions.

Fig. 29: Zorlenţu Mare figure – front, side, and back.

Next to the lower part of the neck, from the right edge, two short parallel incisions emerge which run aslant upwards. Besides these signs there are also two groups formed by two finely incised lines each, barely visible to the naked eye. One of them, parallel to the first one, starts from the top of the head and ends close to the same edge. The other one is situated on the left side of the groove and goes almost horizontally to the shoulder. This groove marking the spine might also indicate one of the energy lines of the body. The vertical line, which also represents the axis of a cross, bears the same complex symbolic value as the cross itself.

One of the simplest ornaments, consisting of three parallel lines with some distance between them, going aslant on the left side of the back, emerging from the shoulder and ending above the bottom, occurs on an undamaged small statue with no decoration on the front side (Fig. 30).[55] This sign appears, as well, in the Danube script catalogue.

[54] Lazarovici 1979, XX, H, 13.
[55] Ibid., XX, H, 2.

Fig. 30: Zorlenţu Mare figure – front, side, and back.

Invocation Signs – the Orant

Another very interesting object (Fig. 31-36)[56] is one of the perforated idols which, by their very position, with the arms forming a V, suggest an invocation, a position specific to an orant. In order to make the scene clearer and more evident, the sign of the orant has been incised on both sides of the statue (Code M7).

Between the raised arms, two eyes have been rendered by two incised points. Being situated in the upper zone, the one related to the sky, the eyes seem to suggest *divine eyes* (cod 171a, 172a). They look upon the rituals or the invocation gestures. The incisions were made on a partially dry surface, which can be noticed as the 'eyes' on Fig. 35, having been symmetrically incised, were corrected later.

One of the two figurines has an angular sign (an inverted 'V' or a variant of 'L') joining the upper part to the lower one which, in many occasions, has been associated with a hand.[57] In this case, divine help might be requested and even granted by means of this sign. Because of its position on the left side of the idol, we assume it might be related to health, life, soul, heart or blood.

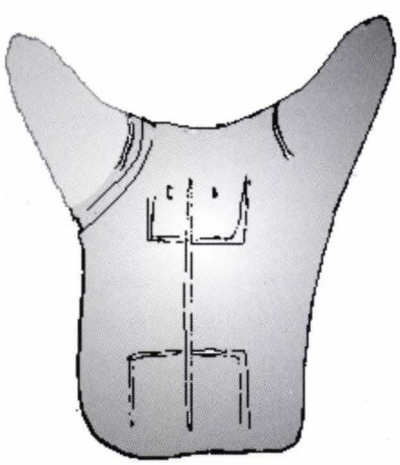
Tattoos on the Mask and the Face

There are three idol heads showing signs on the ritual mask covering the face. The most important of them is a monumental clay head, stuck on a wall or on a stele belonging to the communal, or home sanctuary, in level 7 (Fig. 37b), the earliest one in the site of Zorlenţu Mare, which operated until destroyed by a fire from level 6. It was found among the debris,[58] in the middle of the dwelling, situated in the central part of the settlement, near the ritual pit with a bull's head. It shows numerous resemblances to other monumental idols, having a similar position, probably belonging to buildings having a similar form and function.

On the triangular mask with eyes represented by two incisions there is another incised motif in the shape of an inverted V, situated on the forehead, above the short nose. This V is

[56] Lazarovici 1979, XXI, C, 7.
[57] Lazarovici 2008, Tab. B14, especially 229 and 229h; Makkay 1990, 18/7; Lazarovici Gh. et alli 2009, fig. 6.
[58] Lazarovici C.-M. and Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 153, fig. IIIa. 35-36.

bordered on each side by three parallel incised lines, forming a bunch, which tend to meet somewhere outside the figurine (Fig. 37a).



31

32

33

34

35

36

Fig. 31-36: Zorlenţu Mare figure in orant pose (front and back).

The traces of painting in red on its face (sometimes red is used for ornaments on the idols, which suggest tattoos, like at Gornea, or on altars and cult vessels), show a symbolism similar to that for ochre: fire, light, heat, blood, life.[59]

An almost identical motif is to be found on the broken head of a statue (Fig. 38), which is made of a rough brownish-yellow paste. Above the nose there is an upside down V, bordered on each side by a parallel line. These lines do not meet on the figure.

The third piece (Fig. 39),[60] also a fragment (made of a fine yellowish paste), well polished, has another type of fine incised decoration at the same place. There is no V there, but

[59] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, III, 171.
[60] Lazarovici 1979, XX, D, 3.

Fig. 37a: Monumental clay head with mask, from a sanctuary (two views).

but only bunches of parallel lines, slightly bent towards each other.

Two of them, very closely placed, are on the left side of the nose, while the other two are placed at some distance on the right, being bordered by a parallel on each side. In the area between them there is a V lying with its top on the right.

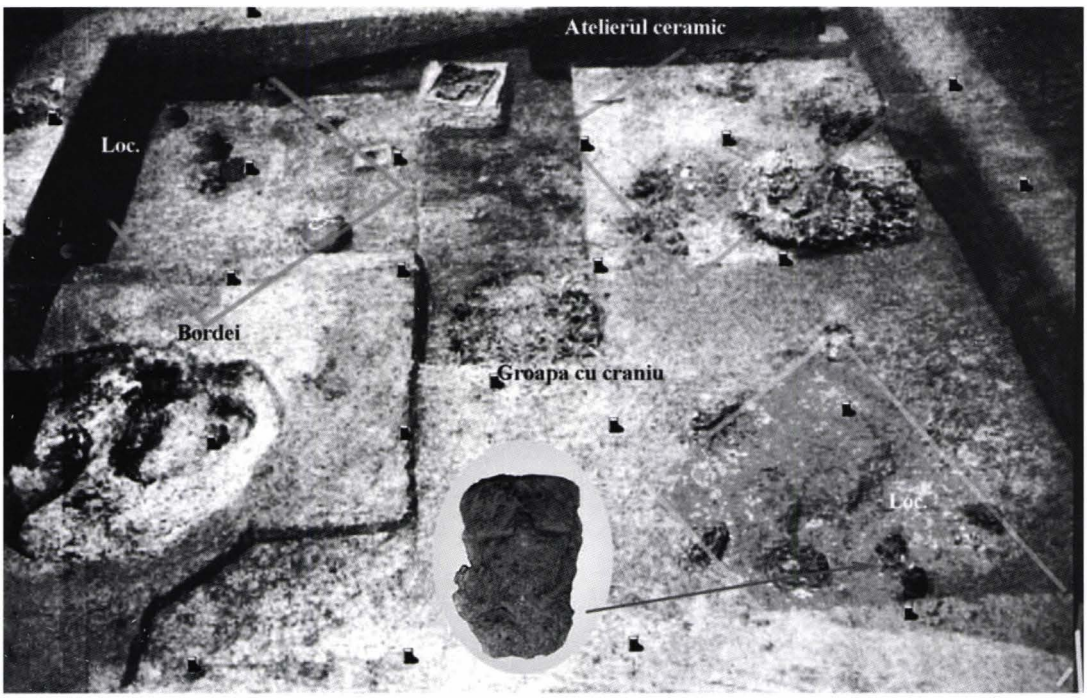


Fig. 37b: Zorlenţu Mare, level 6, location and level of the sanctuary.

Statuettes Representing the Divine Couple - Hieros Gamos

Of great importance because of their symbolic position are the two small double statues representing the divine couple. They bear incised motifs on both sides (Fig. 41), or only on the back side (Fig. 40). They are fragmentary and only one of them has a single head. The one that

Fig. 38: Zorlenţu Mare head of a statue.

Fig. 39: Zorlenţu Mare head of a statue with parallel lines.

keeps the head with a triangular mask (Fig. 41)[61] has a *V* built of double lines on the chest, having one longer side, while on the back there are three parallel incised lines, with some distance between them, which emerge from the right shoulder and go down to the middle of the back. The motif is completed by three parallel lines descending from the left shoulder to the middle of the back, out of which only one crosses the area of the first group. The sign which stresses the union of the two characters in a single body is represented again by two horizontal parallels. The other double statue, which is decorated only on the back side (Fig. 40)[1] has a decoration consisting of a V, doubled on the inside by three or four parallel lines.

Fig. 40: Zorlenţu Mare double figurine.

The V*s* are displayed in different positions on the upper half of the body, from the shoulders to the area above the bottom. The motif as a whole shows the image of crossed stripes that form an X, having the central space unmarked.

We have noticed that, in both statues, the partner's head is broken by someone, suggesting the ritual breaking or cracking of

61 Lazarovici Gh. 1979, XX, D, 9.

the objects under different cultic and ritual circumstances, which is often ignored. In this respect we can cite as examples:

- The inventory of the Lady of Tărtăria[62] where the figurines and the bracelets have been broken;
- At the statue in Dona Branjevina the legs have been broken and put under the shoulders as a sign of invocation; [63]
- At the statue in Liubcova the head has been broken, but the mask has been put on the shoulder.[64]

Fig. 41: Zorlenţu Mare double figurine (front and back).

Fig. 42: Zorlenţu Mare pregnant figure.

It is possible that the display of these kinds of signs on the bodies of the statues may define the social status of the two characters. The sign in the form of a cross on the last statue could assign the two characters to a high position in the divine hierarchy.

The Adam-Eve ensemble can be considered as forming the primary androgyne all traditions tell about. Within a being, the complementary parts must really keep a perfect balance, with no part prevailing over the other one.[65]

Mother and Child, Pregnancy, Birth

An aspect of a woman's life, related to pregnancy, is shown by a well proportioned and finely processed small statue (Fig. 42).

[62] Lazarovici et allii 2011: 224-228.
[63] Karmnski 1989, fig. 5.
[64] Luca 2002: 15-28, fig. 1, photos 1-2.
[65] Guénon 2012, 55.

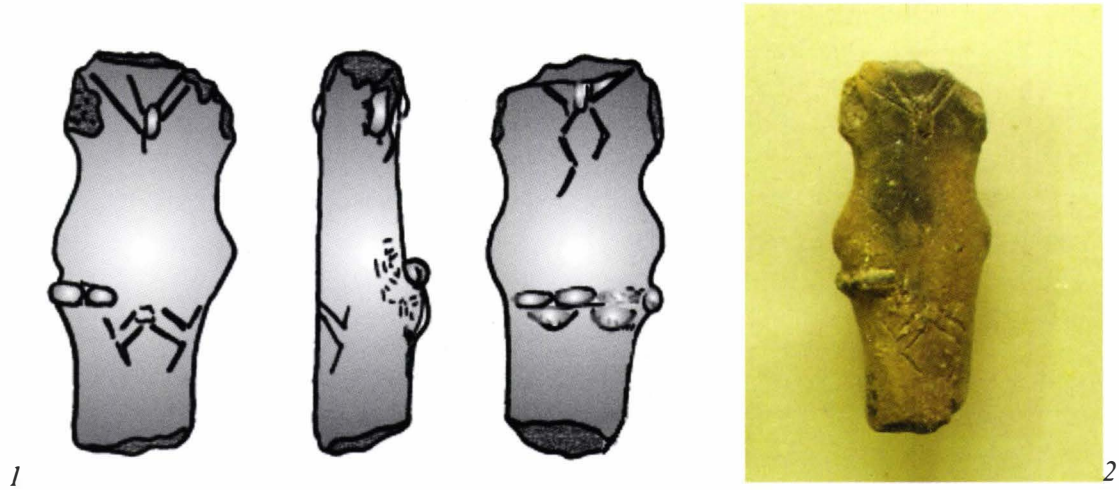


Fig. 43: Zorlenţu Mare, level II: (1) drawing; (2) front view.

The evident symbol is fertility. The statue could have served practices related to transition rituals, which follow each other and determine the entire life of the archaic communities.

Another finely elaborated but fragmentary object (Fig. 43) is noticeable for the particular subject which seems to be suggested by the signs incised on it, namely the scene of birth-giving.[66] On the inferior part of the body, somewhat under its pubis, there is the sign for a human, as recorded in the Danube script (human 9b). Gheorghe Lazarovici has completed the incised motif by connecting this sign to the one at the bottom of the neck (a sort of pendant) obtaining in this way a very expressive drawing showing a child. As a matter of fact, the sign at the neck itself can be found among the signs in the Danube script, within the category referring to the child (249b).[67] The rearrangement of the drawing created a significant image suggesting the birth-giving scene.

Fig. 43: Zorlenţu Mare, level II: (3) reconstruction of the child's head; (4) back; (5) front detail.

[66] Lazarovici 1979, XX, G, 6, 2008, Annex 1, tab. 4 a-d and the codes: om 9b, 215, 23, 152a, 238 d; tab. B 6-7.
[67] Lazarovici 2008, Annex A, tab. B6-7.

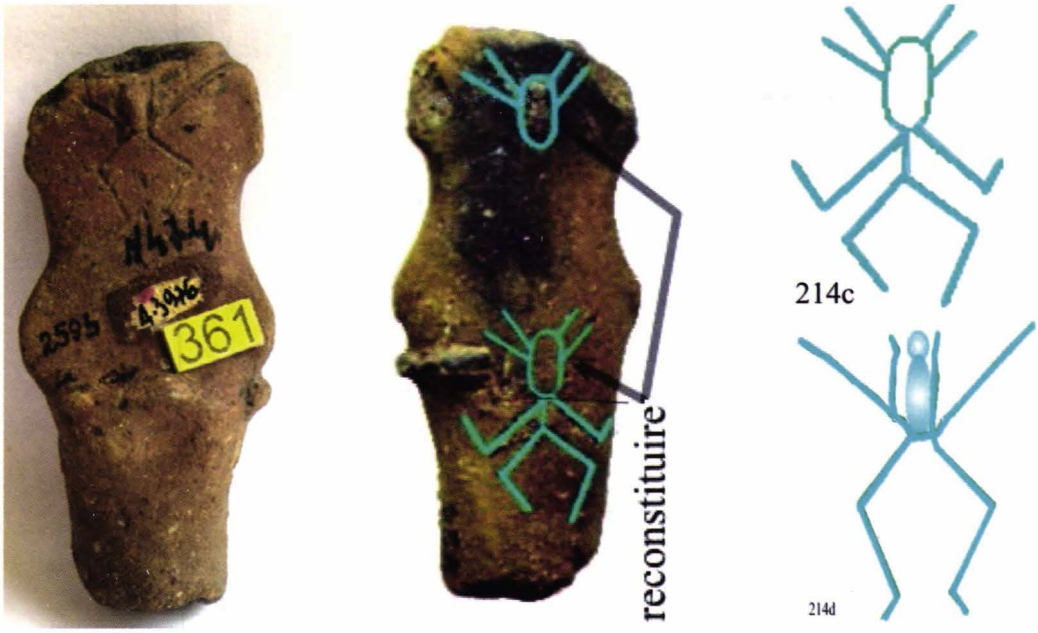


Fig. 44: Zorlenţu Mare. Danubian signs after Lazarovici (214c front, 214d back, hair or pendant).

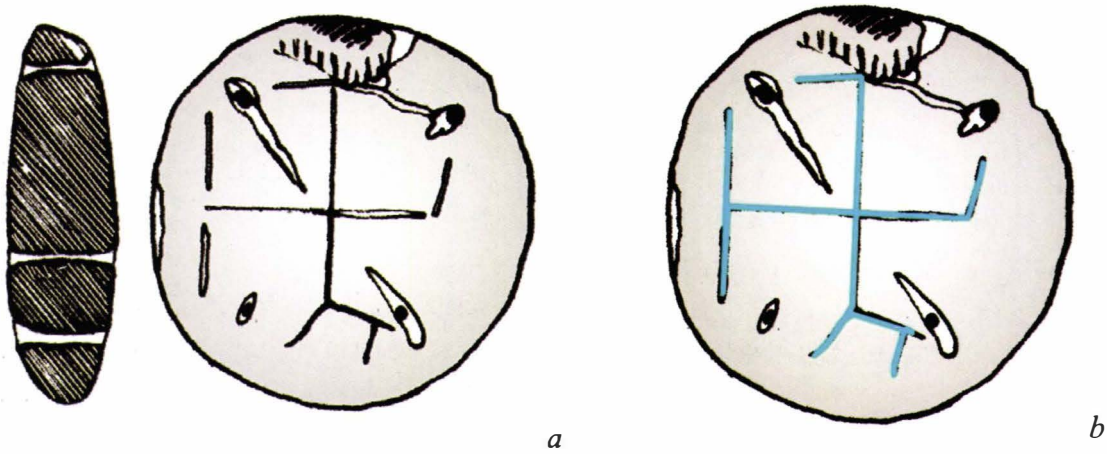
On the back of the figurine (Fig. 44) there is the same pendant from which emerge two fine angular incisions. This image could suggest the hair bound in two plaits or it might be as well an outlined image of the child, present on the front side of the statue. The symbol representing a child is present here as well.

Because the two angular incisions create the image of a rhombus whose inferior angle is not completed, as the sides do not touch each other, the sign might suggest a normal birth-giving. Above this motif, on the left side of the statue and partly above the buttocks, there are flattened hemispherical protrusions (suggesting a belt of shells). It might express a certain position of the character in the community or it might have an apotropaic function. The presence of the shell completes the symbolism of the object, whose significance is related to fertility, creation and birth-giving.[68]

Association Human – Animal

Another interesting piece is a disk presenting four holes used for fixing or sewing it on a leather vest or on a thick cloth (Fig. 45a-b). It had to be strong, due to the big size of the piece.[69] Two holes, elongated and broadened (probably by friction), indicate the position in which the object was sewn and from which the signs should be seen. We can recognize a combination of figures, more or less stylized, from the Danube script.

[68] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, III, 342.
[69] Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M., Merlini M. 2011, 208, fig. VIIC, 72b.



a b

Fig. 45, a-b: Zorlenţu Mare, level III, disk – pendant with signs.

Fig. 45c: Zorlenţu Mare tablet.

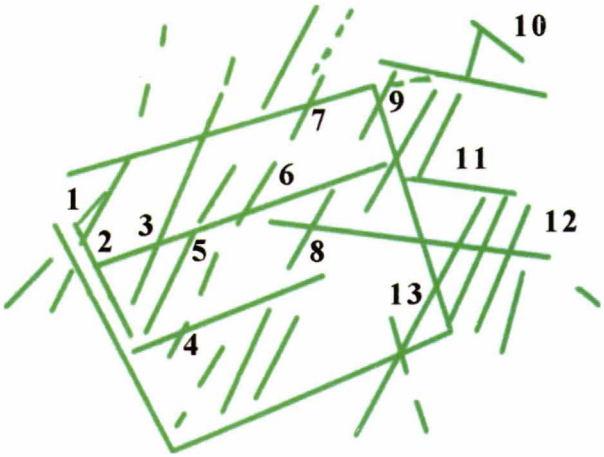
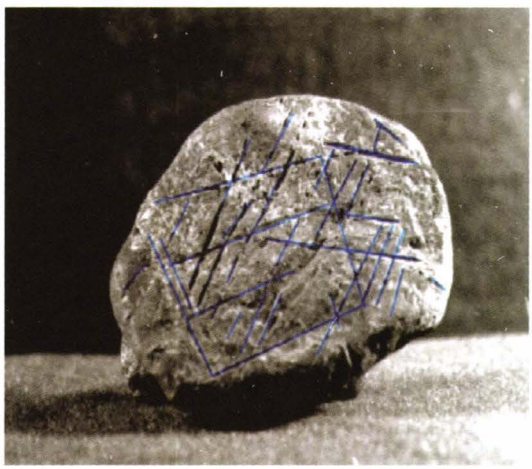


Fig. 46, a▲ b-c▼: Zorlenţu Mare head of an idol.

b



c

Abstract signs and symbols

From their study we find that most of them are combinations of signs and ligatures of the Danube script. Their disposition on top of the head and cheek makes us suppose that they were addressed, most likely, to the divinity the statuette represented, that is to the Great Mother. Typical of this period are the statuettes-idols with their face or head pointing upward, towards the divinity.[70]

On the oval top of the idol (Fig. 46) there is a series of signs, groups of two or three lines, arranged in a simple way or organized in crosses, X's, squares, rhombus. Their significance certainly eludes us, but even the signaling seems important.[71]

Sacred Numerology

Several pieces from Zorlenţu Mare are connected to numerology. Such a piece (Fig. 47) is an idol that represents a more special and very rare type of Bicske[72] amulets or perforated idols. Sometimes they are called Zorlenţ-type idols, owing to their great variability[73] and to the impressive amount found in this station. A hypothesis has been released that they were worn attached to the neck, strung on a thread just like the "sacred poles."[74] In Gh. Lazarovici's database there are over 127 anthropomorphic ones recorded, not to mention the amulets, the zoomorphic, ornithomorphic, or unspecified ones.[75]

On the preserved right half, on the front side, two parallel spaced rows can be seen, finely incised with the nail (Fig. 47). They emerge from the upper chest, being spaced at the base of the arm, and run for awhile in a parallel direction with the neck. When they reach the breast, they change direction, descending on the body almost vertically (one of them over the breast, the other one at the side), dividing the surface of the body into two vertical plans. On the back, a row made up of the same kind of impressions emerges aslant from the shoulder, descending towards the central part of the figurine and ending immediately on the upper part of the back.

A column-shaped fragmentary idol bearing a triangular mask and raising its face upwards (Fig. 48)[76] is very interesting. Almost at the centre of the body, to the right, there is a breast rendered by a hemispheric protuberance, decorated with six incisions displayed in groups of two. Apart from the central incisions, which are parallel, the other ones, situated on the sides, continue each other. As a symbol of motherhood, the breast is connected to fertility and milk

---

[70] Lazarovici 1979, pl. XX/ D, 1-3, 5, E, 3, K, 11; XXI/ A, 1-3, 5, B, 2, 5, 6; C, 1-3, 5, 8; XXII/A 1, 4, 8-9, 15, B, 12, 14, 17.

[71] We thank Gheorghe Lazarovici for the photography in this piece.

[72] Peters 1954, 22-25; Makkay 1968.

[73] Idols of the Zorlenţ type, Thessalian idols, idols with a mobile head: Vlassa N. 1966; Lazarovici 1979 : 94-101 with the typology, bibliography and analogies from over 200 items; Lazarovici et alii 2001, I.1, 210.

[74] Lazarovici et alii 2001, I. 1, 210.

[75] Information kindly offered by Gh. Lazarovici.

[76] Lazarovici 1979, XX, H, 4.

Fig. 47: Zorlenţu Mare figure (front and back).

Fig. 48: A column-shaped figure with a triangular mask, front and side.

which stands for the first food. It is associated to the images of the offering, of the gift. In the form of a reversed cup, life comes out of it, just like it comes from the sky.[77] The six signs, by the numerological symbol they imply, can represent the potential perfection;[78] the number 2 was attributed to the mother in antiquity.[79]

At the base of the neck there is an impressed triangle, followed at a small distance by a horizontal incision. Just underneath the incision there are two deep parallel lines, placed aslant on the surface of the body, whose sides end near the right arm. The decoration of the statue suggests clothing elements. The signs may equally be related to numerology and correspond to signs in the Danube script catalogue. On the same statuette, next to the mask, just under the face line, on the side parts and under the chin, one can see circular or deliberately made oblong impressions. Similar deep holes occur on another small object (Fig. 49). Sometimes their appearance can be attributed to their shape; other times they just might suggest some imperfections of the body. They might point at the area where certain diseases or pains occur or they may be signs connected to a

[77] Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1993, III, 231.
[78] Ibid., III, 313.
[78] Ibid., I, 452.
[79] Ibid., I, 452.

symbolism of the numbers. Concerning numerology, there is a series of codes having many analogies included in the database.[80]

Before ending, we would like to comment on another object which could not be identified yet, but is frequently mentioned in the specialized literature. It is a vessel fragment, presenting on its outside bottom several very finely incised signs of which one was mentioned by S. Winn and taken over by others afterwards. Gheorghe Lazarovici has thoroughly insisted on the problem of the seven thrones identified there.[81]

Fig. 49: Zorlenţu Mare (four views).

The Frequency of Signs, Analogies, Situations

The signs on the idols in Zorlenţu Mare are mostly related to cultic signs. The most frequent groups of signs are connected to the crossband (Kreuzband). These are continued by other combinations, which are notably derivations from, or associations of, the band or of groups of V signs, other combinations of versions of V signs in different positions. Some of them build up a decoration while others constitute jewelry and clothing elements.

The signs have been recorded in the database *The Writing*, which consists of 4200 recordings.[82] Those coming from Zorlenţ consist of about 75 variables, sometimes several signs existing on the same object. We have described and reproduced most of the signs above. Out of these there are about 270 registered signs which are more or less associated to those in Zorlenţu Mare. There are 84 signs with 64 variables (the table consists of about twelve pages which cannot be reproduced, so we shall analyze the most frequent ones). For the most frequent ones we have analogies in the seriated table below. The V type is common.

[80] Lazarovici 2008, 2009, annex 1, table 9.
[81] Information kindly offered by Gh. Lazarovici. See Winn 1981: 61, 69, 104, 190, no. 60.
[82] We thank our colleague Gh. Lazarovici with whom we have coded the signs and symbols included in his database; he extracted the tables and gave us some useful advice.

The graphic representation below (Fig. 51) of the table (Fig. 50) is important in respect to the frequency of the objects in the seriated table above. We can notice some big clusters. The upper left one represents the signs related to sex and to the idols with a diagonal. In the middle, there are the signs on the vessels, and in the second half downwards there are the signs displayed on the panels, spindles and on the small altars.

Observing the spatial and temporal development of the most frequent ornaments occurring in Zorlenţu Mare, we can notice that they are not correlated to those of the Early Neolithic. The latter ones are related only to some ornaments in the Banat culture, although there are variables of several signs as the V signs 1c, 1, 1a.

Concerning the frequency of signs in different Neolithic cultures in the seriated table below, we can notice that there are correlations with the Vinča ones by means of different models of V signs, or of their different positioning. Their integration both in a cultural and chronological series points to an evolution of the signs and symbols in Banat similar to those in the contiguous areas. Those from the second part of the table belong to the Late Neolithic. The changes following the stages Vinča A-B, respectively the Banat culture I, are caused by what Gheorghe Lazarovici has defined as "the Vinča C shock," a phenomenon of dynamic evolutions in the Carpathian-Balkan area. This is the moment of the utmost development of the 'Danube script.' These processes have been recently attested by S. Winn,[83] M. Merlini,[84] Gh. Lazarovici,[85] but had also been analyzed by others before: J. Makkay,[86] and even, at the end of the 19th century by Zs. Torma,[87] and others.[88]

The tables are significant and do not need larger explanations, but they represent the most essential correlations since several isolated situations, two or three, have been left out of the table for lack of space. There are only the general correlations left. The later placing of the Turdaş discoveries in the chronological series below is due either to the omitting of many other representations or to the fact that they have not been extracted, as they were not present in Zorlenţu Mare. Only the signs and symbols on the idols have been analysed.

We may conclude that both the symbols and the signs of the 'Danube script' originate in the Early Neolithic and continue to the Copper Age. Gheorghe Lazarovici often refers to their meaning, connecting them to the symbols of the Great Mother, to light, sex, birth-giving, to religious rituals which we do not understand. As we mentioned above, due to the weak connections between the group of signs, we have to stop our considerations here.

---

[83] Winn S. M. 1981, 1990, 2004, 2004a.

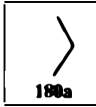
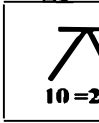
[84] Merlini M. 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, a.s.o.; Merlini and Lazarovici 2008, and others.

[85] Lazarovici 2004, 2008, 2009, 2009a; Lazarovici and Merlini 2005, 2008; Maxim Z. et alii 2009; Lazarovici et alii 2011.

[86] Makkay 1990, and older bibliography.

[87] Torma 1894, reanalysed and published by Roska 1941; see also Maxim Z. et alli 2009, with a bibliography of the more than 200 items.

[88] Roska 1941; Makkay 1990; see here his older bibliography, and others, for these problems. See also the above notes of S. M. Winn, M. Merlini, and Gh. Lazarovici.

Table 50	The sex	with decoration	Idol with diagonal	V	Sacred vessel with signs	Vessel bottom, with signs	Idol with sacred signs	Small vessel with sacred signs	Fragment with signs	Prismatic panel	Small altar	spindle	Panel tablet panel	Pintadera	Panel tablet	Rock art
 1 =d	2	1				1										
 1a	2	2		1		1										
 180a		1	1		1											
 152			1								1					
 1a =a			1	4	2	3	3		2	1	5		1		1	
 90h						2		1								
 180b						2			1							
 163						4		1			1	2	1	1		
 163a						5	1	1	1	1	4	1			3	
 1 =d					1	3				1	6	2	4		1	
 179									1		2					
 10 =28											3					
 2  1 =d											3			1		
 1c =h									1		3	1	3		1	
 126a															1	1

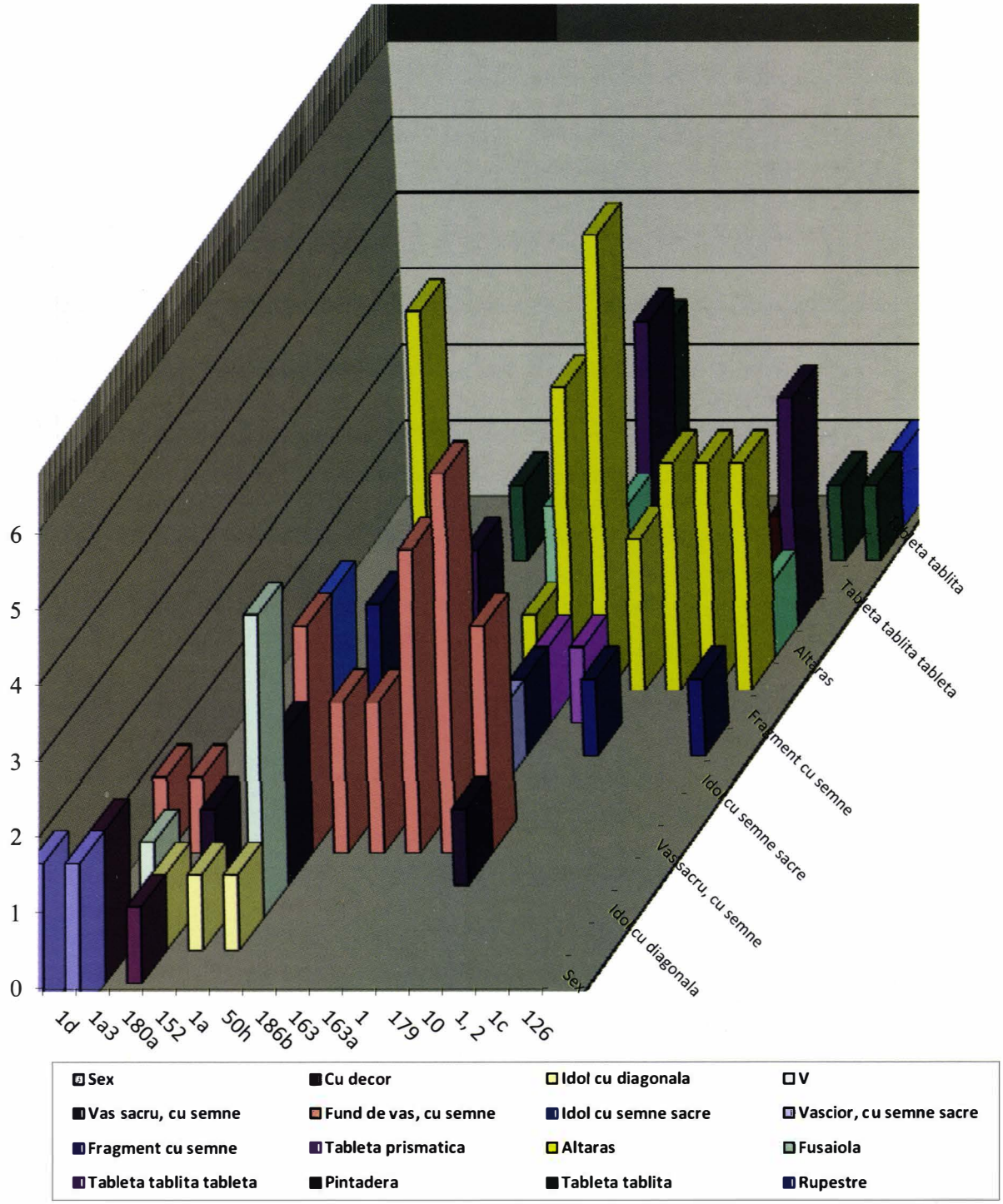


Fig. 51. Graphic representation of Table 50.

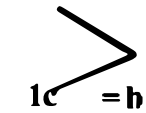
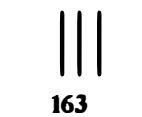
Table 52	*Starčevo-Criş IIIb*	*Starčevo-Criş II-IIIB*	*Starčevo-Criş*	*Starčevo-Criş II- III*	*Neolithic*	*Banat culture Ic*
 1c =h	*2*				*1*	
 1 =d 2 10=28	*2*	*2*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*2*
 163					*1*	
 1a =a					*2*	*3*

Table 53	**1a3**	**1a2**	**180a**	**186b**	**43d**	**126**	**50h**	**179**	**1, 2, 10**	**163a**	**1a**	**163**	**1c**
Vinča A2 - B1	2	1	2	I	2	I	1	I	2	I	2	1	
C. Banatului				2					1	2			
Gradešnica						1	1		2	3	1		1
Eneolithic						1			1	1	1	1	
Vinča C - D								1	4	3	3	2	1
C. Banatului II							1		1	3	5	2	
C. Turdaş					1			1	2	3	4	5	4

Table 54	Vinča A2 - B1	C. Banatului I	C. Vinča C1	Gradešnica	Eneolithic	C. Banatului II	Vinča C - D	C. Turdaş
 1a3	2							
 1a2	1							
 180a	2							
	1	2						
 43d	2							1
 126a	1			1	1			
 9a 179	1		1					1
	1,			1		1		
 0 2 10-28	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	2
 163a	1	2		3	1	3	3	3
 1a = a	2		1	1	1	5	2	4
 163	1				1	2	2	5
 1c = b				1			1	4

References

Banffy, E. 2002. "Eine Tierfigur aus der Entstehungsphase der Bandkeramik." In *Prehistoric Studies.* In Memoriam Ida Bognár-Kutzián. *Antaeus* 25: 205–219.

Boghian, D. 2010. "Les marquages corporels chez les communautés néolithiques et énéolithiques Carpato-Danubiennes, I." *Codrul Cosminului* XVI: 5-20.

_____2011. "Les marquages corporels chez les communautés néolithiques et énéolithiques Carpato-Danubiennes, II." *Codrul Cosminului* XVII: 5-35.

Chevalier J., and A. Gheerbrant. 1993. *Dicţionar de simboluri,* vol I-III. Bucureşti.

Chirica, V. 2004. "Teme ale reprezentării Marii Zeiţe în arta paleolitică şi neolitică." *Memoria Antiquitatis* XXIII: 103-127. Piatra Neamţ.

DEX 1975. *Dicţionarul Explicativ al Limbii Române.* Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică "Iorgu Iordan." Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.

Eliade, M. 2006. *Arta de a muri. Antologie.* Cluj-Napoca.

Gimbutas, M. 1991. *The Civilization of Goddess. The World of Old Europe.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Guénon, R. 2012. *Simbolismul Crucii.* Bucureşti.

Gyulai P. 1972. *Torma Zsófia levelesládájából.* Bucureşti.

Hansen, S. 2007. *Bilder von Menschen der Steinzeit. Untersuchungen zur antropomorphen Plastik der Jüngsteinzeit und Kupferzeit in Südosteuropa*, I-II. Mainz.

Ittu, C. 2008. *Vademecum bibliografic.* Istoria scrisului şi a cărţii 6-43. Bibliotheca Brukenthal XXX. Sibiu.

Karmanski, S. 1989. *Donja Branjevina 1989. Vorläufige Grabungsbericht.* Odžaci.

Lazarovici, C.-M., and Gh. Lazarovici. 2006. *Arhitectura Neoliticului şi Epocii Cuprului din România, I. Neoliticul.* Iaşi: Trinitas.

Lazarovici, Gh. 1971. "Unele probleme ale neoliticului în Banat." *Banatica* 1: 17-69.

_____1973. "Tipologia şi cronologia culturii Vinča în Banat." *Banatica* 2: 25-55.

_____1979. *Neoliticul Banatului. BMN* IV. Cluj-Napoca.

_____1991. *Săpăturile neolitice de la Zorlenţu Mare.* Reşiţa.

_____2002. "Cassiopeea – From Neolithic Symbols to Astronomical Mythology." In *Ancient times, Moderne Methods.* Proceedings of the Third Seac Conference, Sibiu, Romania, August 3–September 2, 1995. Alba Iulia.

_____2004. "Simboluri sacre pe obiectele de cult. Semnificaţii." In *Festschrift für Florin Medeleţ zom 60. Geburtstag.* Timişoara.

_____2008. "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 94-125.

_____2009. "Database for Signs and Symbols of Spiritual Life. In *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* J. Marler and M. R. Dexter, eds., 63–86. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

_____2009a. "Are the Tărtăria Tablets an ‚enigma'? Sunt tăbliţele de la Tărtăria o 'eingmă'?" In *Signs and Symbols from Danube Neolithic and Eneolithic,* 41-56. Sibiu.

Lazarovici, Gh., Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim. 2001. *Parţa.* Monografie Arheologică I- II. BHAB XIII. Timişoara: Waldpress.

Lazarovici, Gh., and C.-M. Lazarovici. 2007. "Despre construcţiile de cult neo-eneolitice din sud-estul Europei: Tehnici de construire, organizare spaţială, scurte interpretări, I-a," 65-102. In *Dimensiunea europeană a civilizaţiei eneolitice est-carpatice.* Iaşi.

Lazarovici, Gh., and C.-M. Lazarovici. 2008. "Sanctuarele culturii Precucuteni-Cucuteni." Arheologie. *Angustia* 12: 9-40.

Lazarovici Gh., C.-M. Lazarovici, and Z. Maxim. 2009. "The Chronological and Cultural Place of the Vinča and Turdaş Cultures in the Context of European Civilization." In *The Danube Script in light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries,* 93-108. Cluj-Napoca.

Lazarovici, Gh., C.-M. Lazarovici, M. Merlini, D. Bindea, and C. Suciu, 2011. *Tărtăria and the Sacred Tablets*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega.

Lazarovici, Gh., and M. Merlini. 2005. "New Archaeological Data refering to Tărtăria Tablets." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 205-219.

_____2008. *New Information and the Role of the Tărtăria Discoveries*. In *The Danube Script: Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* Joan Marler, ed., 39-51. Exhibition catalogue, Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Lichardus, J. 1974. *Studien zur Bükker Kultur*. Bonn.

Luca, S. A. 1990. "Contribuţii la istoria artei neolitice. Plastica aşezării de la Liubcova-Orniţa (jud. Caraş-Severin)." In *Banatica* 10: 6-44.

_____1998. *Liubcova-Orniţa, monografie arheologică*. Târgovişte: Editura Macarie.

_____2002. "Date despre 'Statueta de la Liubcova II' jud. Caraş–Severin." In *ActaSC* I: 15-28.

Makkay, J. 1968. "A Peculiar Clay Object in the Vinča Culture." *Alba Regia* VIII-IX (1967-1968): 9-22.

_____1969. "The Late Neolithic Tordos Group of Signs." *Alba Regia* X: 9-50. Székesfehérvár.

_____1990. *Tartariai leletek* Budapest.

Marler, Joan. 2009. *The Danube Script: Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* Exhibition catalogue. Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Marler, Joan, and Miriam R. Dexter, eds. 2009. *Signs of Civilization: Neolithic Symbol System of Southeast Europe.* Proceedings from the International Symposium Signs of Civilization, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Novi Sad, Serbia, May 25-29, 2004. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Maxim, Z., Gh. Lazarovici, C-M. Lazarovici, and M. Merlini. 2009. The Catalogue of Signs. In *The Danube Script in Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries.* Z. Maxim, J. Marler and V. Crişan, eds., 133-167. Exhibition Catalogue. Cluj-Napoca: National History Museum of Transylvania and Institute of Archaeomythology / Editura Mega.

Maxim, Zoia, Joan Marler, and Viorica Crişan, eds. 2009. *The Danube Script in the Light of the Turdaş and Tărtăria Discoveries.* Exhibition Catalogue. Cluj-Napoca: National History Museum of Transylvania / Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology.

Merlini, M. 2004. *La scrittura é nata in Europa?* Prehistory Knowledge Project. Roma: Avverbi.

_____2005. "The 'Danube Script' and the Gradešnica Platter. A Semiotic Study based on most recent Autopsy of the Bulgarian Item." In *Prehistoric Archaeology and Anthropological Theory and Education.* RPRP 6-7: 57-76. Salt Lake City – Karlovo: International Institute of Anthropology.

_____2006. "The Gradešnica script revisited." *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* V: 25-76. Sibiu.

_____2007. "Did Southeastern Europe develop a rudimentary system of writing in Neo- Eneolithic times?" Paper delivered at the in EAA's 13th annual meeting in Zadar, Croatia.

_____ 2008. "Challenging some myths about the Tărtăria Tablets' icons of the Danube Script." *Journal of Archaeomythology* 4: 47–64. Sebastopol.

_____2009. *An Inquiry into the Danube Script*. Bibliotheca Brukenthal XXXIII. Sibiu.

Merlini, M., and Gh. Lazarovici. 2008. "Settling discovery circumstances, dating and utilization of the Tărtăria Tablets." In *Acta Tere Septemcastrensis* VII: 111-195. Sibiu.

Neumann, G. 2002. "Einfrung." In *Schrift, Sprache, Bild und Klang, Entwicklung der Schrift von der Antike bis die Neuezeit.* Katalog zur Sonderausstellung de Facultät für Altertums- und Kulturwissenschaften der Universität Würzburg, p. 13-19. Würzburg.

Nikolova, Lolita, ed. 2003. *Early Symbolic Systems for Communication in Southeasteurope*, vol. I. BAR 1139. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Peters, E. 1954. "Ujabb kőkori sírok Bicském." *Folia Archaeologica* VI: 22-25.

Robinson, A. 2009. *Istoria Scrisului. Alfabete, hieroglife şi pictograme*. Bucureşti.

Roska, M., 1941. *Die Sammlung Zsofia von Torma.* Cluj.

Schier, 2002. "Vorschriftliche Zeichensysteme im Neolithikum Südosteuropas (6.-5. Jt. v. Chr.)." In *Schrift, Sprache, Bild und Klang. Entwicklungsstufen, der Schrift von der Antike bis in die Neuezeit.* Katalog zur Sonderausstellung der Facultät für Altertums- und Kulturwissenschaften der Universität Würzburg, p. 24-30. Würzburg.

Seipel, Wilfried. 2003. *Der Turmbau zum Babel. Ursprung und Vielfalt von Sprache und Schrift,* Band III A*: Schrift.* Die Austellung des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien für die Europäischen Kulturhauptstadt. Graz: Skira.

Torma, Zsófia 1894. *Etnographische Analogien. Ein Beitrag zur Gesltaltung- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Religion.* Jena.

Ursulescu, N., D. Boghian, V. Cotiugă, and V. Merlan. 2001-2002. "Noi date privind complexele de cult din cultura Precucuteni." *Sargeţia* XXX: 61-78.

Vlassa, N. 1962. "Probleme ale cronologiei neoliticului Transilvaniei în lumina stratigrafiei aşezării de la Tărtăria." *StudiaUBB*, SH, 2: 23-30.

_____1963. "Chronology of the Neolithic in Transilvania in the Light of the Tărtăria Settlement's Stratigraphy." *Dacia* VII, 1963: 485-494.

_____1966. "Douăsprăzece figurine cu cap mobil de la Turdaş.' *Sargetia* IV: 9-16.

_____1970. "Kulturelle Beziehungen des Neolithikums Siebenbürgens zum Vorderen Orient." *Acta MN,* VII: 3-39.

_____1971. "Contribuţii la problema racordării cronologiei relative a neoliticului Transilvaniei la Cronologia absolută a Orientului Apropiat (Partea I-a).' *Apulum* IX: 21-61.

_____1972. "Cea mai veche fază a complexului cultural Starčevo-Criş în România." *ActaMN* IX: 7-38.

_____1976. *Neoliticul Transilvaniei. Studii, articole, note.* BMN III. Cluj-Napoca.

Wehgartner, Irma, and Johanna Wich. 2002. *Schrift, Sprache, Bild und Klang. Entwicklungsstufen, der Schrift von der Antike bis in die Neuezeit. Katalog zur Sonderausstellung de Facultät für Altertums- und Kulturwissenschaften der Universität Würzburg,* p. 24-30. Würzburg: Ergon.

Winn, S. M. 1973. *The Signs of the Vinča Culture, an Internal Analysis: Their Role, Chronology and Independence from Mesopotamia.* Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.

_____1981. *Pre-writing in Southeastern Europe: The Sign System of the Vinča Culture ca. 4000 BC*, Western Publishers, Calgary, Alberta, 1981.

_____1990. "A Neolithic Sign System in Southeastern Europe." In *The Life of Symbols.* Boulder: Westview Press.

_____2004. "The Old European Script. Further evidence, Economic and religious stimuli." *Prehistory Knowledge Project*, Rome, online, http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/winn.htm

_____2004a. *The Inventory of the Danube Script (DS*). Prehistory Knowledge Project, Rome (online), http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/inventory/danube_script/danube_script_01.htm.

RITUAL POTS FROM EUROPEAN NEOLITHIC AND COPPER AGE SANCTUARIES

ADELA KOVÁCS

On the ritual objects

A ceremonial object is any artifact associated with a ritual or ceremony, or that functions only in a symbolic sense, as opposed to a tool or other practical device.[1] The functionality of the pots from a ritual place is very important since these can provide much information related to rites and the reconstruction of cultic life. In the present paper we will try a synthetic approach on the ritual vessels, especially those found in the temples and sanctuaries from the European Neolithic and Copper Age. Our analysis is not intended at this time to be an exhaustive one, but takes into account inventory from sanctuaries and cult places, as well as their inner arrangements.

The temple is a monumental structure reserved for ceremonial and spiritual activities such as praying, rituals, or sacrifices, where religious rites, in general, took place.[2] As a sacred space, usually the temple has special furniture, special dishes, as well as a cult coordinator, nowadays a priest.[3] Considering the importance of temples in society, their architecture shows the highest level of architectural craftsmanship reached by a certain community.[4] In general, sanctuaries could be distinguished by special objects which attract attention by their shape or decoration: special hearths (cross-like shaped or painted), bowls, lamps, ladles, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic vessels, bucrania, stelae, sculptures, statues.[5]

The key moments from any human life – rites of passage, like birth, age grades, marriage, and death – are universal in anthropology, but it is difficult to identify them in prehistory.[6] Also, it is very difficult to define the ritual pottery. In the same time a specific pot could have two functions: one sacred and one profane. Only the discovery context could tell us, over time, the purpose of a vessel or its ritual function, if it ever had one. The ritual vessel is actually any object made and consecrated for the worship of ancestors or gods. Many of these were used especially to commemorate important events in the lives of their possessors. Although ritual vessels are found in many areas of the ancient world (e.g., rhytons or libation vessels of the Greek Bronze Age), they were particularly important in China where they were used for food and wine offerings for ancestors. For the historical ages most of the ritual vessels were used for offerings of wine and foods connected with an ancestral cult. The practice of providing imposing vessels

1 Kipfer 2000: 61.
2 Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006: 103.
3 Kovács 2010: 75.
4 Dudley 1846: 190.
5 Gimbutas 1999: 72; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2011: 15-17.
6 Bogucki, Crabtree 2004: 92.

as mortuary gifts, and perhaps even the ancestral cult itself, originated in the eastern European Neolithic tradition.[7]

Tărtăria tablets as representations of ritual activity

The importance of pottery for the Neolithic society and the following ages is an aspect which needs no discussion. But one of the most striking examples for the ritual use of pots is on the third tablet discovered at Tărtăria (Fig. 1). We will not insist on the description of the objects, or their context, considering the large bibliography on the topic.[8] A comprehensive monograph on the Tărtăria site with all the known data on the discovery context of the tablets was published in 2011.[9] So we will mention some data related to the third tablet, inventory no. P 410 in the National History Museum of Transylvania from Cluj-Napoca.[10] The third tablet is a rectangular, pierced tablet, which probably was worn on top of the round one. Its dimensions are 62×30×9 mm. Only one surface is inscribed. Two major lines are separating the panel into three different fields.[11]

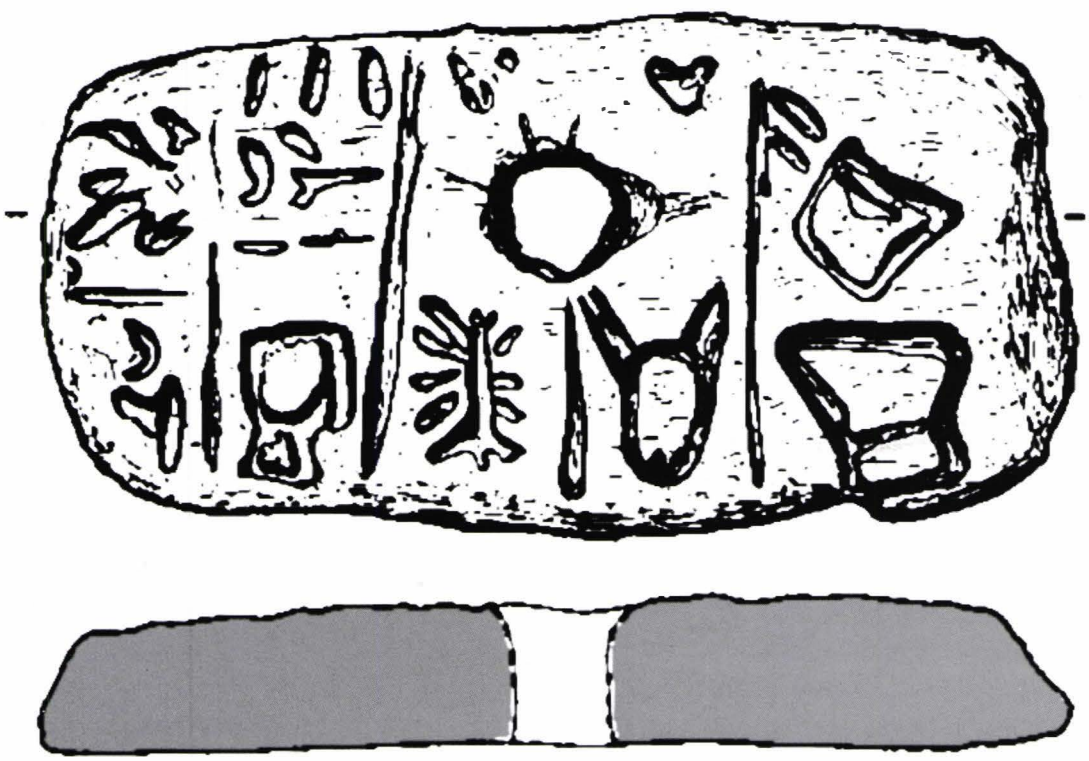


Fig. 1: The 3rd tablet discovered at Tărtăria; drawing made by its discoverer, N. Vlassa (after Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M., Merlini 2011, fig. VIIC. 24b).

[7] Kipfer 2000: 272.
[8] Lazarovici Gh. 2009; Lazarovici Gh., Merlini 2008; Makkay 1990; Milojčić 1965; Lazarovici Gh., Merlini 2005.
[9] Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M., Merlini 2011.
[10] Ibid.:161.
[11] Ibid.: 180.

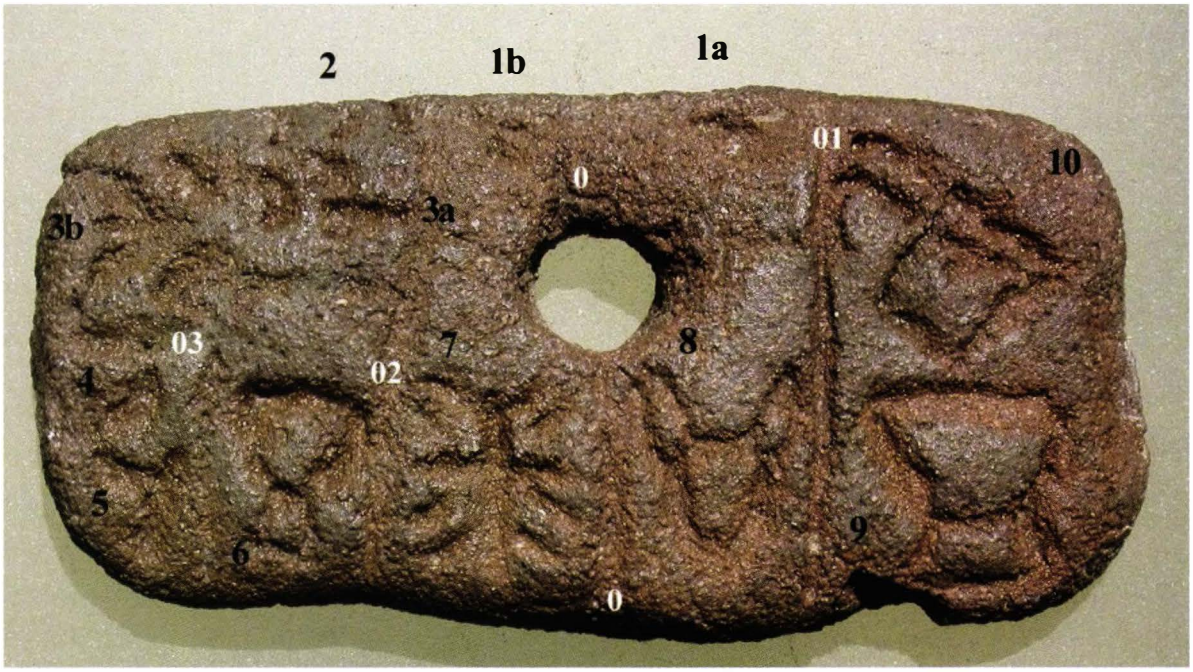


Fig. 2: Photograph of the 3rd tablet, with the signs marked (after Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M., Merlini M. 2011, fig. VIIC. 24a).

We are much interested in the signs representing the vessels (Fig. 2). These are placed, somehow opposed, in the side panels of the tablet. We will discuss only a few drawings, numbered 6, 9 and 10 (Fig. 3).

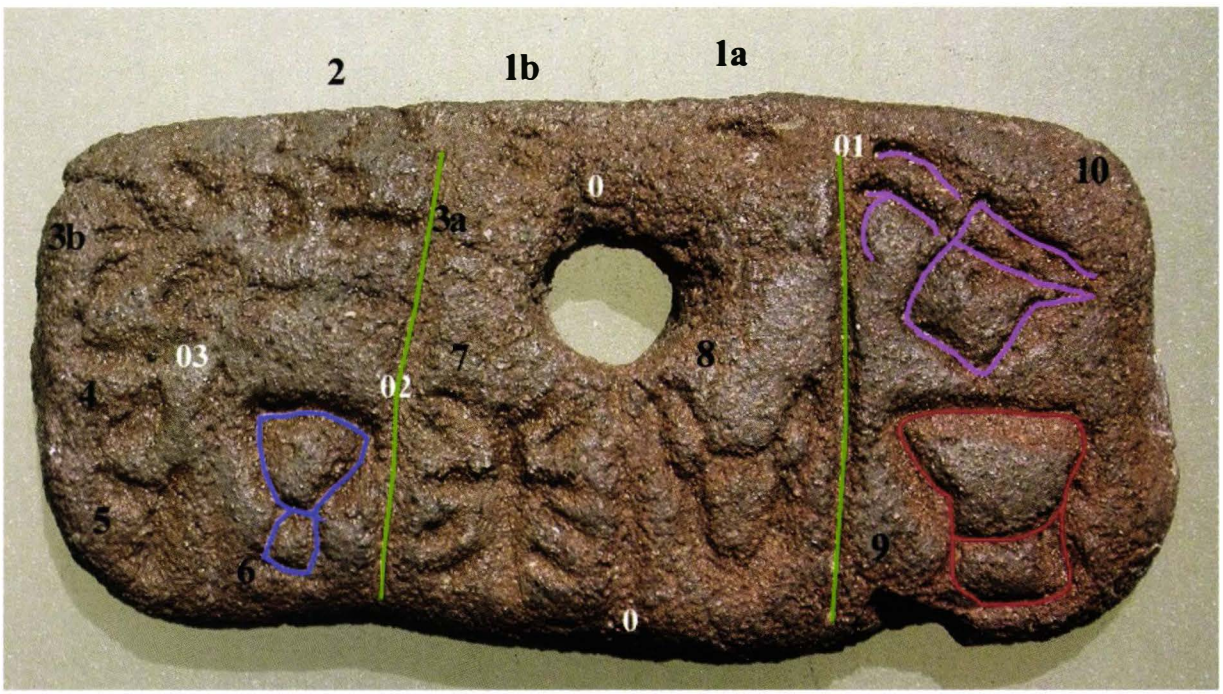


Fig. 3: The markings of the vessel shaped signs on the 3rd tablet.

The middle of the tablet, just under the perforation, depicts a vegetal symbol (no. 7) and an animal head (no. 8). The vegetal symbol is separated with a straight line from the cup, and with a short line from the animal head. The left panel represents a goblet, related with the vegetation symbols, so it was interpreted as connected to the sacred, heavenly water and thus with the origins of life.[12] Signs 9 and 10 were perceived as being a cup and a jug, associated with blood offering[13] suggested by the immediate presence of a bucranium. The position of the upper cup is very clear, pouring a liquid. The lower drawing (no. 9) is mysterious by the fact that it is under a pouring receptacle. There are more opinions on its meaning.[14] We will consider the idea of a vessel placed to receive the liquid which flows from the upper vessel.

These tablets were interpreted as devices to store magic, religious or mythical knowledge and rituals through the association of signs and symbols.[15] The signs on the tablet, with the cup and the pouring gesture, could represent several scenes, all related with some type of liquid.

How can we define a sacred liquid? All sorts of liquids could be sacred, if these suffered religious or ritual transformations. In Christianity even simple water becomes holy, considered to have healing properties, after the consecration. Wine is used in churches as a symbol of the blood. It is very possible that the signs were transmitting instructions for some libations, or as a representation of libation gesture. Libation as ritual activity is well known in the historical ages and was performed according to specific tenets. In the Neolithic, blood, sperm, possibly milk would represent life.[16]

Inventory, context and material traces in several temples from South–East Europe: A few case studies.

One of the early proofs of using vessels in cult buildings was found at Lepenski Vir, where a relief spiral pot from L 54 (Fig. 4) (a shrine) was placed near a newborn child's funerary pit,[17] along with stone sculptures, a possible sceptre, and a grinding stone.[18] Another special pot, which has drawn our attention, was the one with four-fingered human hands modelled on the outside (Fig. 5).[19] The spiral is very well known in symbolism, as a very strong sign associated with the regenerative forces of the female abdomen.[20] Lepenski Vir is a special site and its funerary or household practices offer an image of the everyday life of the social and spiritual area. It is possible that the spiral vessel in a cult building actually represents an intentional deposit inserted during a ritual or in the festivities developed at the site.[21]

---

[12] Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M., Merlini M. 2011: 184.
[13] Ibid: 186.
[14] Ibid: 292.
[15] Ibid: 126.
[16] Ibid: 187.
[17] Gimbutas 1989: 80; Budja 2006: 191.
[18] Antonović 2006: 70, fig. 50.
[19] Srejović 1969: fig. 90.
[20] Gimbutas 1989; Lazarovici C.- M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006:45.
[21] Budja 2006: 190.

A neighbouring site, Padina (Serbia), provided some interesting features by the presence of pottery in its buildings. Here we notice a stone boulder sculpted with several symbols such as a meander, point, and a "V." Inside building 17 a small, four-legged vessel was found.[22] In level B were found sherds belonging to the Starčevo type.[23] One of the most interesting discoveries is a group of vessels with small cups and bowls, a rectangular pot, a low support vessel and a rhyton. The shape and reduced dimensions could be explained by the fact that they did not have a functional purpose, but rather were prestige goods.[24]

Fig. 4: Building 54 inner arrangement (after Budja 2006).

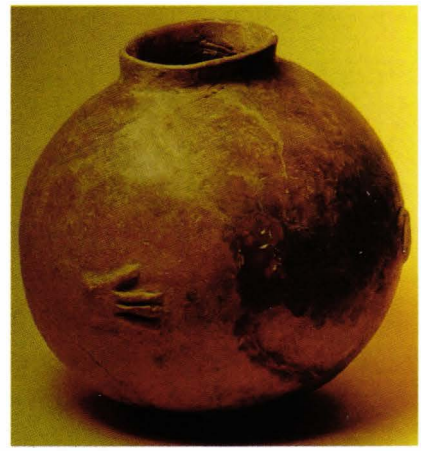


Fig. 5: *Human hands modeled on the globular vessel (after Srejović 1981: 46).*

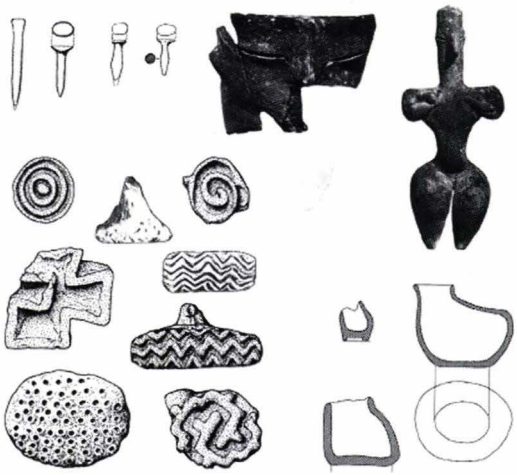


Fig. 6: Figurines, stamp seals, and vessels discovered in Nea Nikomedea cult building (after Budja 2006).

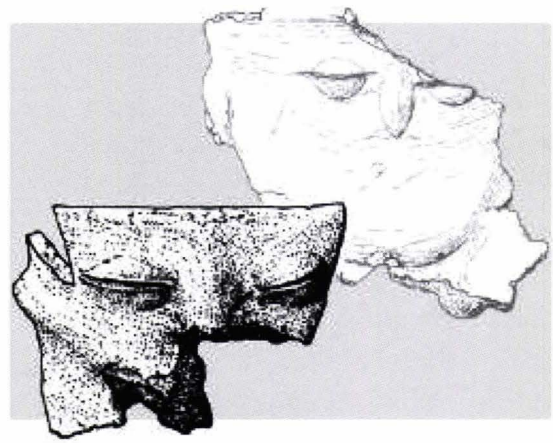


Fig. 7: Anthropomorphic vessels from Nea Nikomedea cult building (after Perlès 2004).

[22] Ibid: 192.
[23] Whittle 1996: 85.
[24] Hayden 2003: 175.

Nea Nikomedeia is the richest Proto-Sesklo culture settlement. It is about 60 km south-west of Thessaloniki, in the southwestern part of Macedonia. The settlement has four construction phases.[25] The cult building is placed in the center of the settlement, so it could have had a communitarian destination.[26] The inner space of the sanctuary is divided into three rooms, separated by two rows of poles. The central room was quite large.[27] The inventory (Fig. 6, 7) is one which could have been used in profane activities, but also in cultic ones.[28] We mention five figurines on a table (altar table) in a corner of the building and a bucranium.[29]

There are some peculiar objects, a few hundred roundels, and rounded objects with unknown purpose.[30] Other elements include two stone axes, more than 20 cm in length, two clay cassettes with more than 400 flint blades and splinters, two askoi, and many stamp seals. The stamp seals were associated with the ceramic painted white and red, anthropomorphic vessels, and a storage pot used to deposit long term food, and stone needles (pierces).[31]

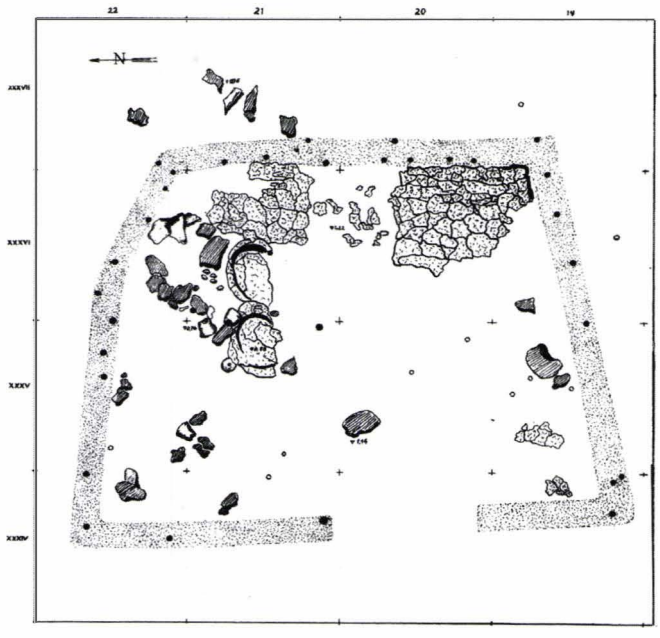


Fig. 8: Shrine plan from Tumba Madžari site (after Naumov 2011: 13, pl. 1.a).

Fig. 9: Head from a statuette from Tumba Madžari shrine (after Šemrov, Turk 2009: 161, fig. 49).

Tumba Madžari is a site near Skopje, in Macedonia, and its habitation is framed in Proto-Sesklo culture, Veluška-Porodin cultural group. The settlement was large, with 220 m in

[25] Çilingiroğlu 2005: 9.
[26] Milisauskas 2002:186.
[27] Bánffy 1990-1991: 206; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 292.
[28] Milisauskas 2002: 186.
[29] Rodden 1962, Abb. 11, SF 1-4; Kalicz 2000, fig. 7-8.
[30] Budja 2004, 122.
[31] Ibid.

diameter. During the Neolithic, the site was an important economic and social center.[32] Within the building several cult elements were found, especially cylindrical anthropomorphic objects, which previously were attached to some buildings' models (Fig. 9, 13). What surprises about the female representations are their hairstyles, which are a sign of fashion or feminine ideal representation.[33] The cult building is very interesting (Fig. 8), but unfortunately it is the only one published so far. The walls were decorated with spirals on the outside.[34]

For the moment we are interested in the inner inventory, where cups (Fig. 10), goblets (Fig. 12), a large number of vessels of *askos* type (Fig. 11), *pythos* type vessels, a bench, and an oven were found. Also there were found a number of cup-shaped dishes located near one of the walls, which were probably used for collecting and preserving blood sacrifice of animals slaughtered and then put as an offering on the bench in the sanctuary, behind the oven.[35] There is a high possibility that this sanctuary's walls were covered with different designs.[36] Inside the sanctuary, forty-five entirely preserved pots were found, as well as many fragments. Among the most important discoveries we mention the clay figurines and models with cylindrical building models placed beneath.[37]

Fig. 10: Cultic pot from Tumba Madžari shrine (after Šemrov, Turk 2009: 88, fig. 15).

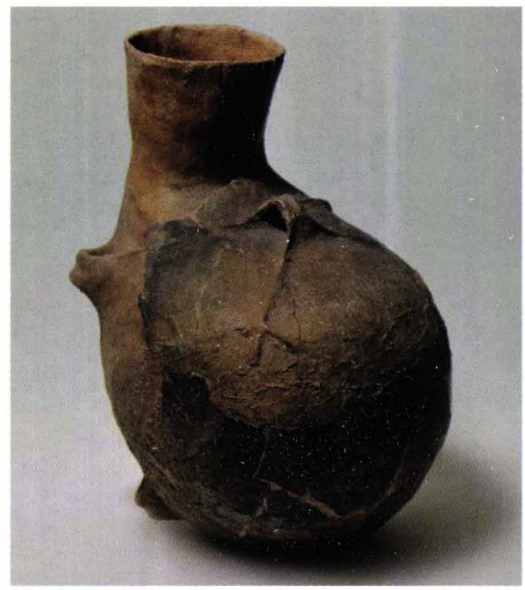


Fig. 11: Askos vessel from Tumba Madžari shrine (after Šemrov, Turk 2009: 89, fig. 16).

[32] Sanev 2006: 173.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Mitrevski 2006: 22.
[35] Sanev 2006: 173.
[36] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 112.
[37] Nanoglou 2008: 8.

Fig. 12: Goblet found in the Tumba Madžari shrine (after Šemrov, Turk 2009: 113, fig. 27).

Fig. 13: Monumental anthropomorphic representation from the shrine (after Šemrov, Turk 2009: 145, fig. 41).

Achilleion is a settlement near Farsala, in southern Thessaly, Greece, where a ritual building with two compartments was found, from the Sesklo culture. The larger room was the sanctuary, equipped with an altar in the shape of a bench. The smaller room was probably a ritual preparation workshop.[38] Preparation of a ritual requires special ceramic decoration and manufacture. The workshop room had a hearth inside. About thirty figurines were found on and around the bench. On the bench, along with the figurines, fragmented plates were discovered.[39]

The sanctuary's yard was equipped with a range of proofs for some specific rituals performed in open air.[40] The remains of a bread oven were observed, possibly used to cook the ritual food (Fig. 14). The altar table made of stone is large enough to fit several statues, vessels and other items necessary to perform worship. The clay platform is inclined and had four holes in its corners, perhaps for lodging offerings. On the platform were found traces of charcoal, which may be an indication for holding fire burning sacrifice – *fumigatio* like those observed in Temples 1 and 2 from Parţa.41 A large hearth was placed in front of the platform.[42]

Besides the four basic elements found here, including oven, bench, hearth and stone altar, in the same area some remarkable objects were discovered: large pots with vertical handles, a series of figures or parts of figures, some of them wearing masks.[43] For our topic of interest it is very important that M. Gimbutas made observations on the pots found in the sanctuary. She

[38] Gimbutas 1997:52.
[39] Gimbutas et alii 1989: 62.
[40] Bánffy 1990-1991: 207.
[41] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1: figs. 176, 191, 192, figs. 165-168; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.I: 242, 244, 308, 329 ş.a..
[42] Gimbutas et alii 1989: 48.
[43] Gimbutas 1999: 77.

states that most of them were used in cultic activities, relating the painted motifs with a source of imagery and symbolism.[44]

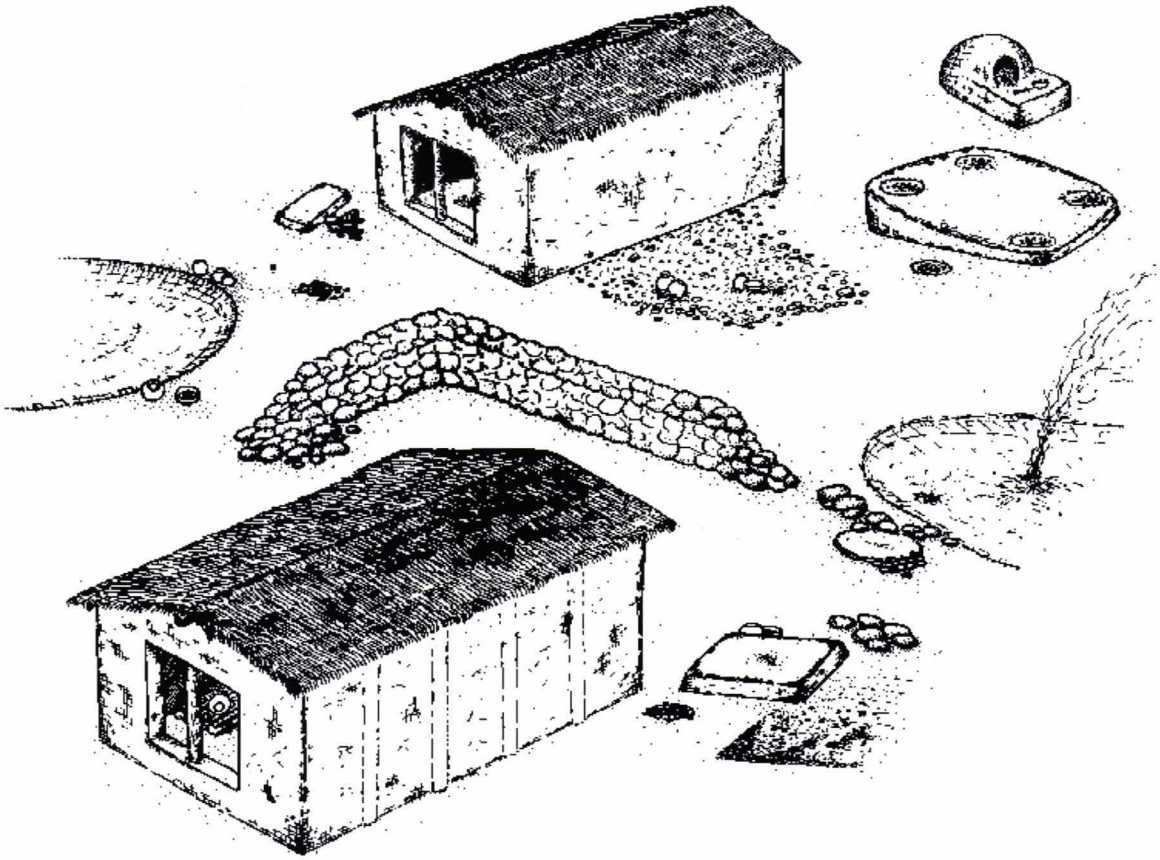


Fig. 14: The courtyard of the Achilleion sanctuary – drawing reconstruction (after Gimbutas et alii 1989: 48, fig. 4.20).

Rakitovo settlement is located in the Western Rhodopes Mountains. For the Karanovo I habitation layer several buildings were excavated. Two of them are important in our focus of interest: House 8 and House 10. House 8, considering the inventory, had a cultic purpose, while House 10 had a social character.

The inventory of House 8 consisted of zoomorphic amulets, stamp seals, a table altar, many pots and anthropomorphic/zoomorphic vessels (Fig. 15). The largest amount of sherds with painted decoration was found along with two anthropomorphic vessels, a clay table, twelve idols and a stamp seal.[45]

One of the oldest structures built at Topolnica Promachon was found during the 2002 campaign. It had a circular shape and had a communal purpose (Fig. 16). A rich inventory

[44] Gimbutas et alii 1989: 221.
[45] Matsanova 2003: 68.

(Fig. 17), formed by grinding stones, animal bones, and bull skulls with horns, was deposited on the floor.[46]

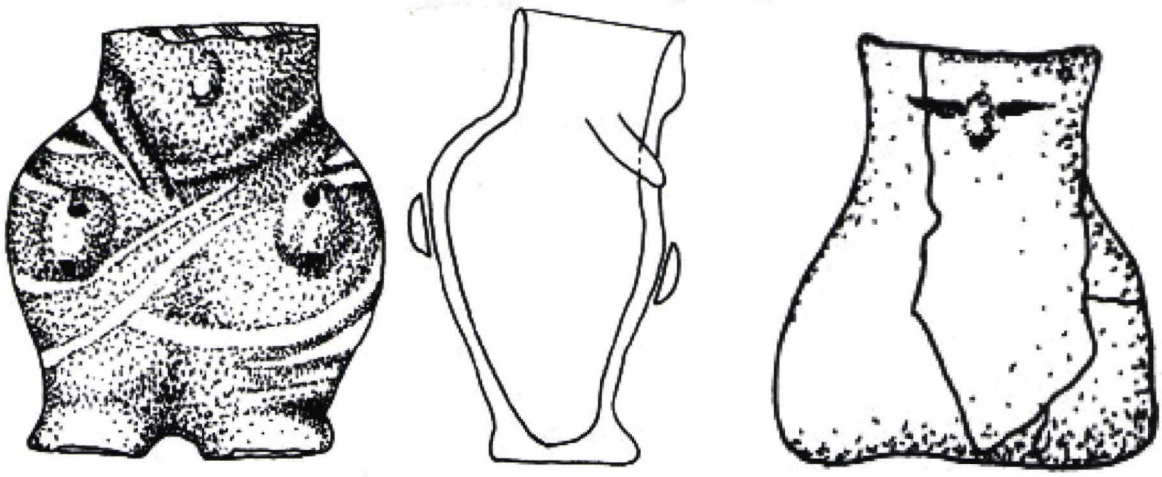


Fig. 15: Anthropomorphic vessels, Rakitovo, Bulgaria (after Budja 2003: 123, fig. 7.1).

Fig. 16: The communal building from Topolnica (after Vajsov 2012).

Fig. 17: Deposit on the floor of the circular building (after Vajsov 2012).

One of the most interesting sanctuaries in Macedonia is the one near the city Vrbjanska Čuka, currently reconstructed in the Prilep Museum. It could be defined as a temple, considering its inventory and architectural features.[47] The sanctuary building from Vrbjanska Č uka is extremely important for reconstructing rituals, considering the inventory, position and

[46] Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2006: 473.
[47] Kitanovski et alii 1990: 108; Lazarovici et alii 2001.

dimensions. The inner space was not divided, but considering the other buildings from the same site, its dimensions were quite impressive.[48]

The room was mainly occupied by monumental religious objects. The inner arrangement is quite unique so far. Cultic objects were discovered among the remains of the building's debris. Vessels were found especially around altar cassettes (Fig. 18). In the southwestern part of the room was a pile of clam shells. The pots were arranged in the center and along the building's walls.[49]

The altar located on the northwest wall of the building, in a specific area of 2 x 2 m, shows a complex construction. The sanctuary walls were not entirely preserved. The attention is focused on a massive image embossed on the north-eastern wall, which extends diagonally from the bottom up on the wall (Fig. 19), having triangular corners.[50]

On the south-western wall of the sanctuary were rectangular recipients on a common base with a total length of 2 m (Fig. 18, 20). The pedestal foundation was 0.5 x 0.5 m, and it gives the appearance of a series of irregular squares. All these give the impression of a rectangular sacrificial altar divided into 4 square flat containers.[51]

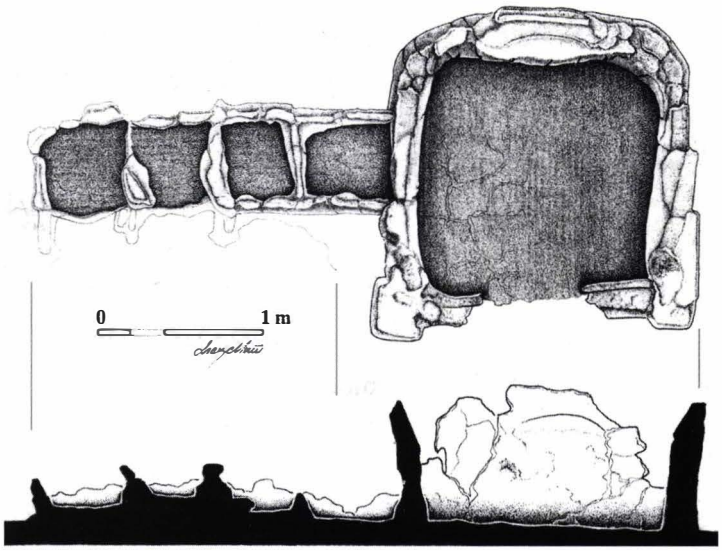


Fig. 18: The temple plan (after Naumov 2011: 16, pl. 2).

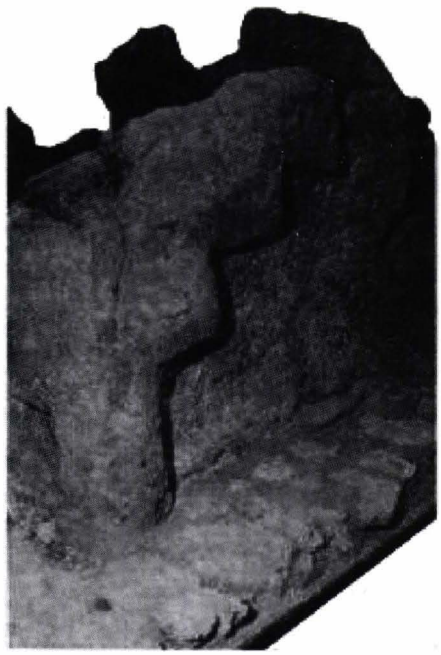


Fig. 19: Photography of exterior side of altar table (after Kitanovski et alii 1990: 109, fig. 6).

[48] Kitanovski et alii 1990: 107.
[49] Kitanovski et alii 1990.
[50] Kitanovski et alii 1990: 109.
[51] Kitanovski et alii 1990: 110.

Fig. 20: *Photography with the reconstruction of the monumental altar from Vrbjanska Čuka (after Mitrevski 2003: 34, fig. 4).*

Some very special vessels were found in the Vinča settlement. The style used for making pots and figurines is unique and very distinctive. From the large amount of special features used most probably for cult, we will describe some items found in cult building (Fig. 21). One of the pots is a zoomorphic one, a conical bowl with eight bull protomes. There could be seen two types of heads, one type with horns, and one without (Fig. 22). The heads were organised in pairs and placed symmetrically on the rim. The interior part of the vessel was decorated with burnished straight lines starting from the rim towards the base.[52] The context from which the vessel originates is a cultic one and there were also an amphora, a jug and a bowl.[53]

The Vinča site is also famous for the richness of anthropomorphic representations, like figurines, some of them enthroned. These were already analysed by the archaeologists who worked in the field or by other researchers. There also appeared masked feminine representations, lids with owl faces, and many face pots, anthropomorphic vessels, and anthropomorphic features on vessels.[54]

There is a good analysis of two special vessels, one of them being unique, named "Hyde-vase."[55] The vessel was modelled so that it has the shape of a bird with folded wings (H 20,8 cm; L 36 cm). It was provided by the artist with a human face and some features, like a conical nose, almond-shaped eyes, and ears. It could represent a fantastic creature.[56] The painting is spectacular, representing the line of the wings (Fig. 23). There is a hole at the back of the vessel

[52] Tasić 2007: 204.
[53] Ibid: 206.
[54] Gimbutas 1999; Gimbutas 1989a; Vitezović 2009.
[55] Nikolić, Vuković 2008.
[56] Ibid.: 52.

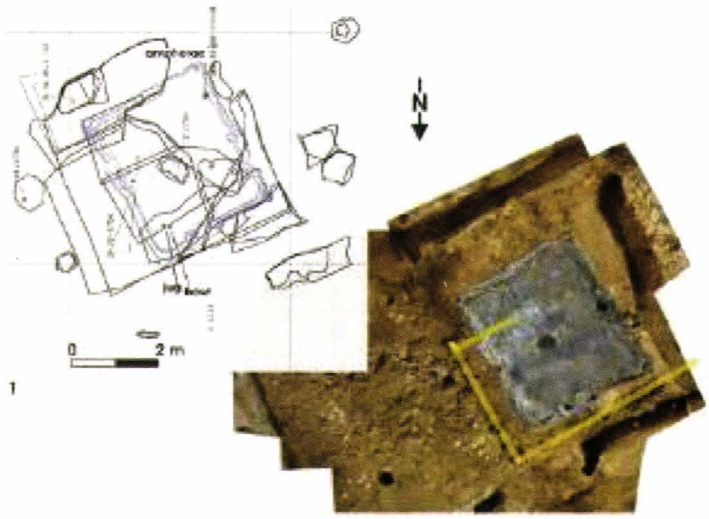


Fig. 21: Plan of the special building from Vinča (after Tasić 2007, pl. I).

Fig. 22: Zoomorphic bowl discovered at Vinča (after Tasić 2007, pl. II).

and it was considered, even from its discovery in 1930, as a cult vessel, associated with liquid offerings. The discovery context is a very interesting one, being grouped with ten other complete vessels.[57]

The anthropomorphic pot from Vinča has a female shape (H 23 cm) and was provided with breasts, emphasized lower section of the belly and knees (Fig. 24). The face could represent the features of a mask, the eyes being well marked. It has a nose and a small mouth. The flutings are distinctive for the exterior of this vessel. It was found in 1911, and the inventory from this building is mentioned in the excavation journal. In the journal along with the anthropomorphic vessel appears the following inventory: one amphora with two representtations of human faces placed opposite each other on the neck of the vessel (H 24 cm); four smaller amphorae (H 12,1–17,03 m); one fragmented large amphora; three conical bowls (H 7–7,8 cm); four biconical bowls with cylindrical neck (H 11,9–12,5 cm); one small pot (H 17,5 cm); one goblet; fourteen miniature vessels (H 2,3–7,2 cm); two prosopomorphic lids; one plate; a fragmented sacrifice altar; one ground stone axe.[58] Both of these vessels come from special contexts. The anthropomorphic pot comes from a special cult building, related to rituals, if we take a look at the inventory described by Vasič in 1911, during excavation.

[57] Ibid.: 56, fig. 5.
[58] Ibid. 2008: 60.

Fig. 23: "Hyde-vase" from Vinča (after Nikolić, Vuković 2008: 56, fig. 1).

Fig. 24: Anthropomorphic vase from Vinča (Nikolić, Vuković 2008: 58, fig. 6).

Parţa is a special case, with the two sanctuaries overlaying, with interesting contexts, embedding special cups and jars for sacrifices and offerings. Most of the ceramic material found in the cult buildings was published, along with other special architectural features from temples.[59] We will not insist on all the details relating to the features of temples.[60] Instead we will focus on the ritual pots published so far.

Temple 1 (Fig. 25) was oriented on E-W and was 12,6 m in length, and 7 m in width.[61] The Temple's entrance was on the southern side and was flanked by two massive pillars near which a large human face vessel was placed (Fig. 26).[62] Just in front of the entrance, inside, the remains of a column made of unburned clay was stuck in the ground.[63] Distinctive for this sanctuary are the three altars. The altar table A was partially reused, maintaining its purpose later on. It had the same function during Temple 2.[64] Key elements of this altar are: hearth for burning offerings, pedestal supporting an idol-bust, a pedestal behind it with deposits of ash from burning offerings, a cassette for depositing offerings, a portable hearth broken in two, only half preserved (Fig. 27).

Altar B (western altar) (Fig. 28) is located in the western side of the sanctuary. The altar table was used for blood sacrifices (*mactatio*). Several layers of gravel and clay, as well as the discovery of sharp flint chips, most probably ritually broken, and several animal skulls highlight

[59]Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1985; Lazarovici Gh. 1986; Lazarovici Gh. 1989; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001; Lazarovici C. M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006a.
[60]Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1985; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1991; Rus, Lazarovici Gh. 1991; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1994.
[61]Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, figs.165-166; I.2, pl. 82-85, 90/1-3.
[62]Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 211, 213.
[63]Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 309.
[64]Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, pl. 82, 89/1, 91.

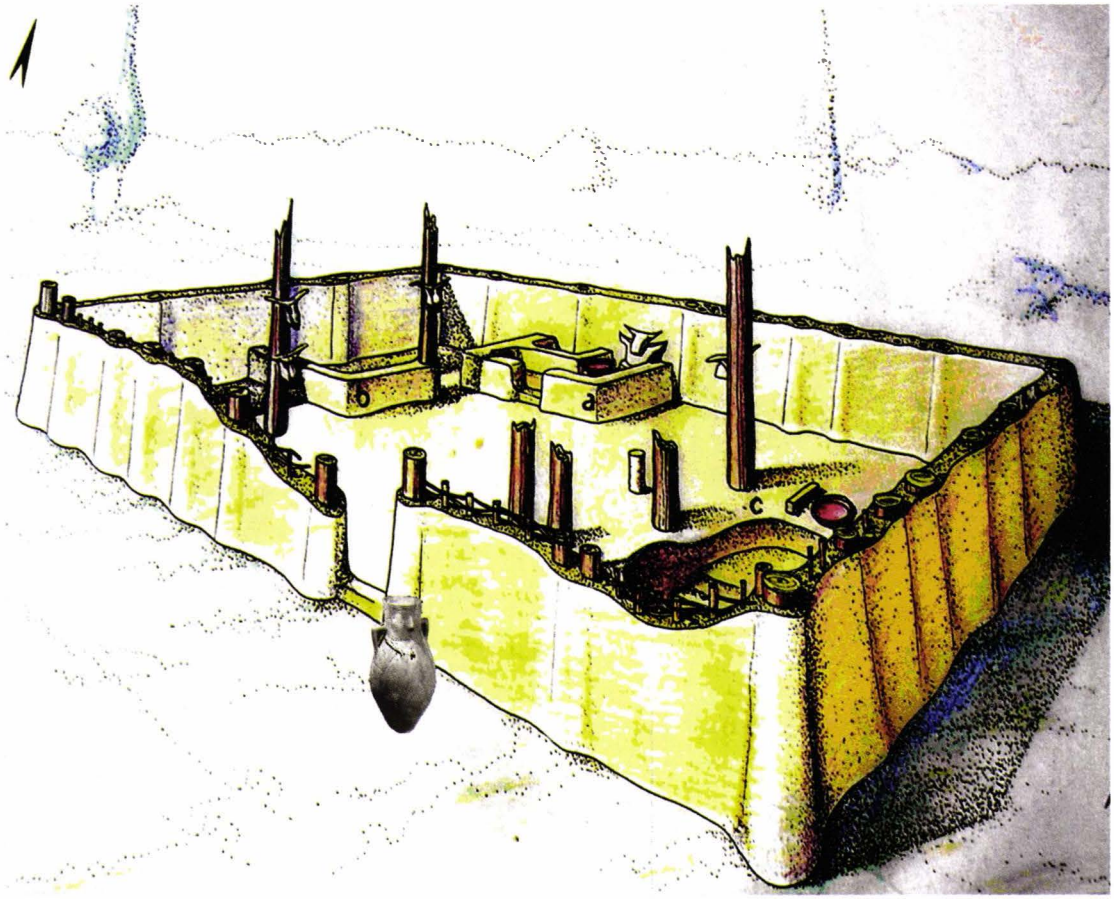


Fig. 25: Temple 1, graphic reconstruction (after Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001:205, fig. 166).

the blood sacrifice area.[65] The altar was related to the head veneration, or column with bucrania, since around the altar cassette skulls of bulls, originally placed on columns were discovered.[66]

Altar C (Fig. 29) is located on the eastern side of the sanctuary. The altar actually represents a hearth and a pit on which offerings were burned. It is highly probable that the offerings were consumed in fire during *fumigatio* rituals, since in the pit were found layers of ash and coal, possibly from burning cereal straw.[67]

Temple 2 presents spectacular elements, which are distinguished by their cultic function and monumental size. These two features individualize Temple 2 from Parţa (Fig. 30). This temple offers great information regarding rituals performed in worshiping areas. This building was located in the middle of the settlement and it is built over Temple 1, which was destroyed by it. It has rectangular shape, with the long sides oriented E-W. Its dimensions are relatively large: 11,5 x 6 m.[68] The sanctuary had two main compartments, eastern and western, separated by a wall built of poles and wattle, fixed directly on the central altar table. The building kept its

[65] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 305.
[66] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 209.
[67] Lazarovici Gh. 2003: 68; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, fig. 170; I.2, pl. 40/3-4, pl. 41/3.
[68] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 207.

dimensions and function over several stages, although there are some differences in the inner arrangements.[69]

Fig. 26: A human face pot deposited at the entrance of Temple 1 (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 306, fig. IIIb.120).

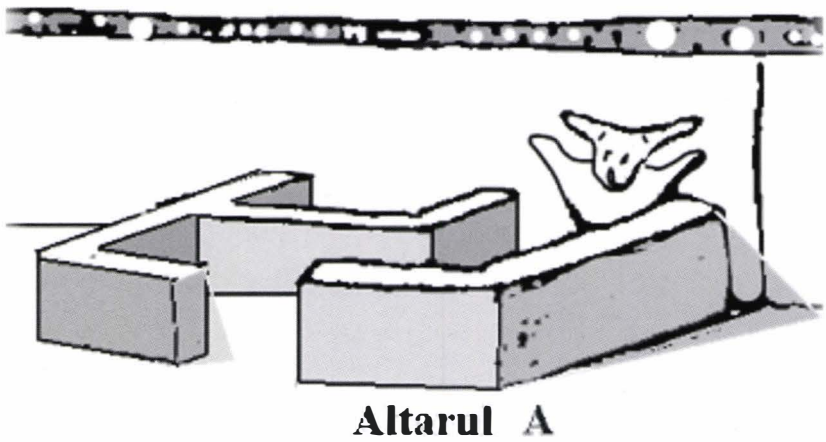


Fig. 27: Altar A from Temple 1, graphic reconstruction (after Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 207, fig. 168a).

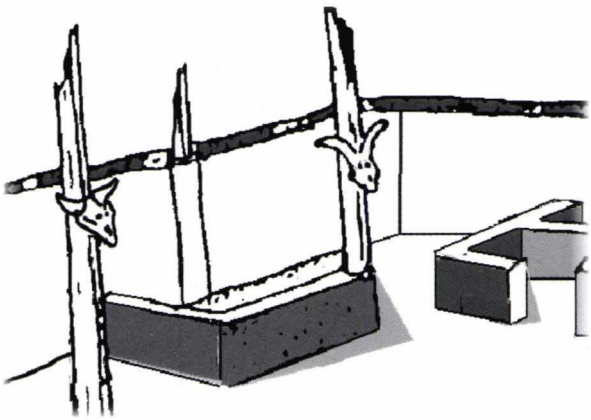


Fig. 28: Altar B from Temple 1, graphic reconstruction (after Lazarovici Gh. et al. 2001: 208, fig. 168b).

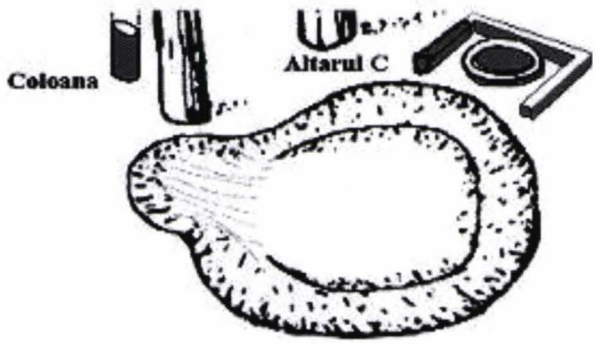


Fig. 29: Altar C from Temple 1, graphic reconstruction (after Lazarovici Gh. et al. 2001: 211, fig. 170).

[69] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 210.

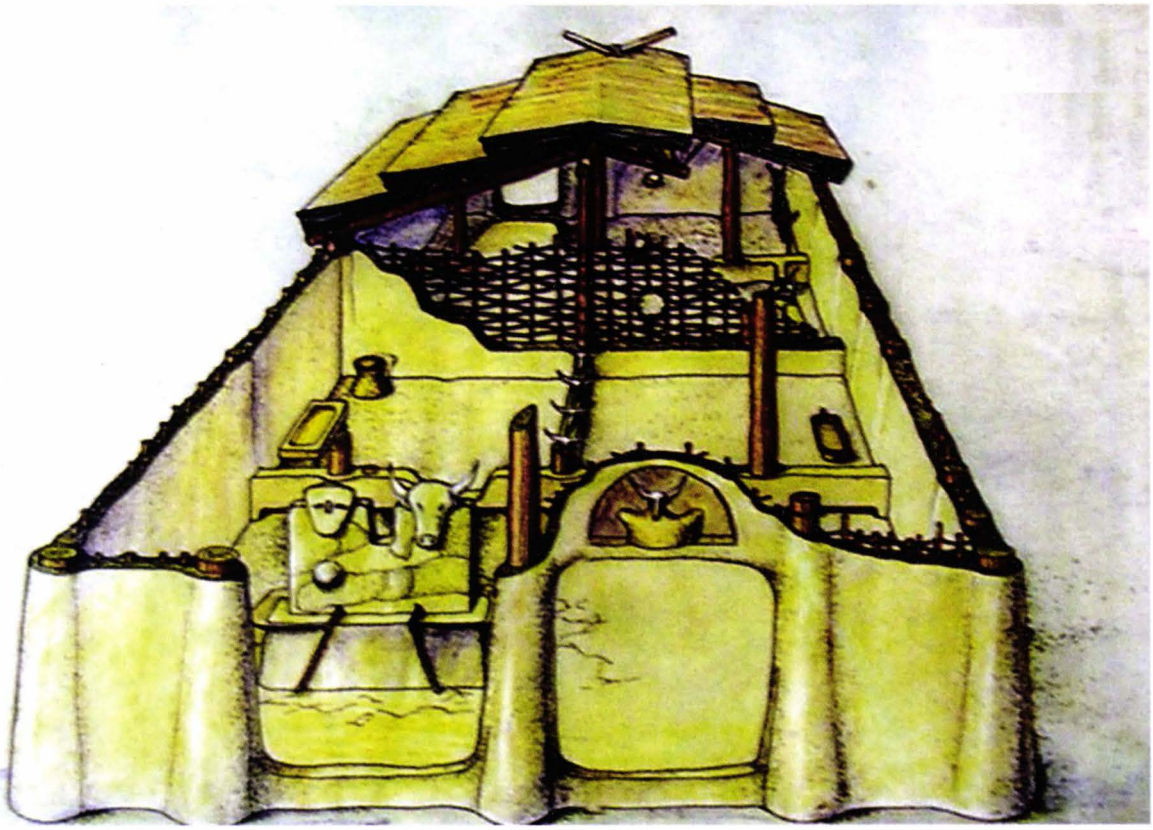


Fig. 30: Monumental entrance in Temple 2, eastern view (after Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 1st cover).

The entrance into room A is located on the eastern side, and in the upper part it had a niche. Inside the niche a bull's head with horns was fixed. Another opening was probably used on special occasions, having a window shape, just in front of the monumental statue (Fig. 31).[70] The most impressive object found in Temple 2, without any doubt, is the double monumental statue placed on a pedestal. For the moment it is a unique discovery from the Neolithic in Romania, and the earliest discovery of this type on European territory.[71] This impressive statue was built in the eastern room, and was flanked by two columns. The double monumental statue represents a divine couple consisting of two characters particularly important for European Neolithic religion in general: the Great Mother and the Taurus God.[72]

The eastern room also includes a series of proofs for ritual activity: an altar table on which a large cup of unburnt clay was placed (Fig. 32), a large tray-hearth fixed on two legs and a smaller altar near the entrance, on the north wall.[73] The blood cup (Fig. 33) is one of the biggest objects, destroyed during the building fire.[74]

[70] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 313.
[71] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 316.
[72] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, pl. 1.2 pl. 8/1-6, 9/6, 11/3, 47/1-3, 48/1-3, 49/3-4, 50/3-4, 52/1-4, 53/1-4, ff.
[73] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 324.
[74] Ibid: 326.

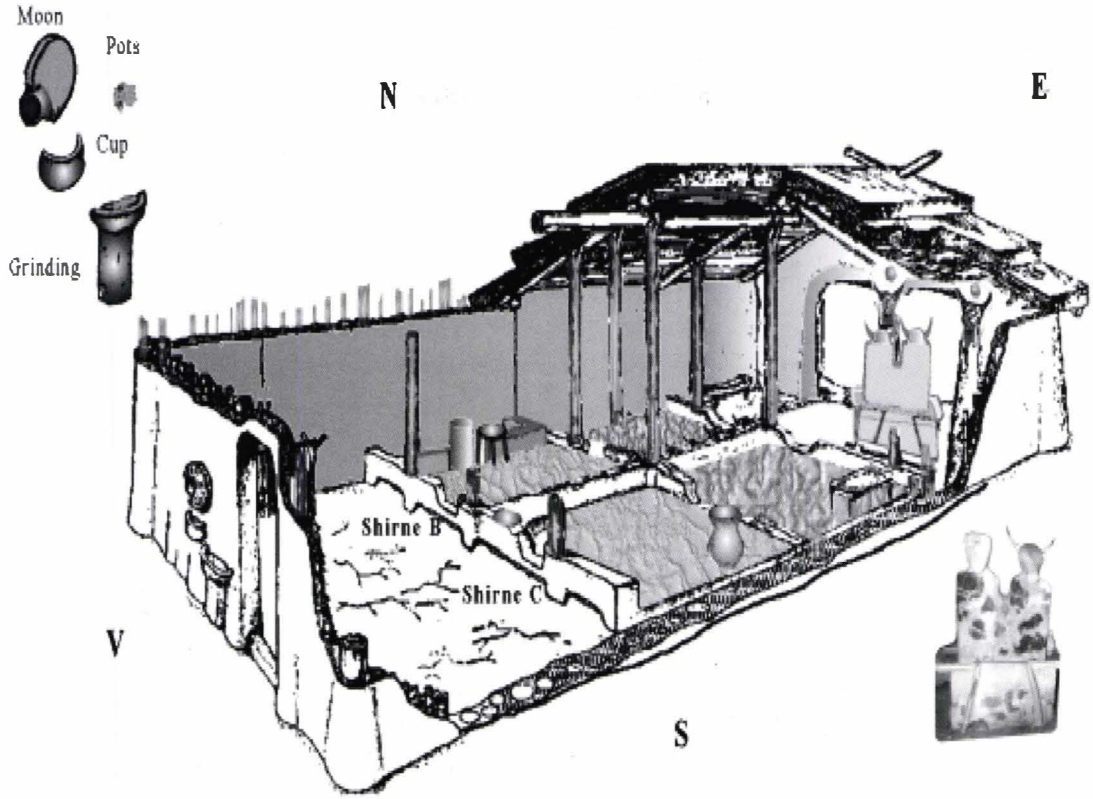


Fig. 31: Temple 2, western view, early stage, graphic reconstruction (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 228, fig. IIIb.157).

The altar table A starting from Temple 1 layer, had an identical function.[75] A wide range of vessels was found on it (Fig. 35) among which we notice an anthropomorphic amphora (Fig. 34). Inside sheep falangas were found.[76]

A cultic assembly meant for rituals was in the western wall, next to the entrance from this side (Fig. 32). Here a clay Moon was modeled next to a hole in the wall, a possible representation of the Sun, allowing light to enter the temple chamber.[77] Under the Moon a grinder was set in a wall socket (Fig. 32). Also, inside the wall were two small vessels intentionally inserted.[78]

An interesting inventory was placed inside the wall: pedestaled grinder, vessels, representations in clay of planets (Sun and Moon); all these could be connected with a vast mythology about Mother Earth, about seed germination power, light and heat of the Sun, phases of the moon.[79] It is clear, moreover, that the Neolithic people were watching the sky and the movement of the stars like Cassiopeia[80] and Orion.[81]

---

[75] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 227, I.2, pl. 57/1.
[76] Ibid.: 229.
[77] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 336, fig. IIIb, 163-164.
[78] Ibid.: 337, fig. IIIb.165a.
[79] Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 339.
[80] Lazarovici Gh. 2001.

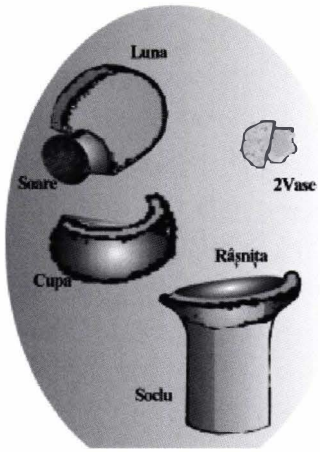


Fig. 32: Cultic assembly on the western wall of Temple 2 (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici G. 2006: 338, fig. IIIb.166).

Fig. 33: Blood goblet on altar table D from Temple 2, restoration in Banat Museum, Timişoara (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 326, fig. IIIb.150).

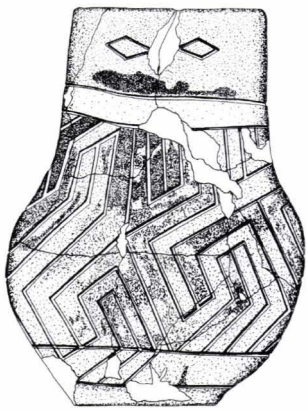


Fig. 34: Human face amphora (after Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 229, fig. 193).

Fig. 35: Several vessel in altar B area, reconstruction in Muzeul Banatului, Timişoara (http://surprising-romania.blogspot.ro/2010/04/neolithic-sanctuary-from-parta.html).

The Precucuteni culture has various elements which could complete our image of religious life in prehistory. In L36, researched at Poduri – *Dealu Ghindaru* (Bacău County, Romania), a cultic context was found near one of the hearths.[82] The cultic context consisted of a miniature vessel, a clay chair and seven feminine idols (Fig. 36).[83] Just near the second hearth a broken vessel was found, protected by another one, which contained twenty-one feminine statuettes, thirteen clay chairs, and two small objects of unknown use (Fig. 37).[84] Another special building is L2 from Cassette C, a relatively recent discovery, which had seven hearths, among

[81] Durman 1999–2000.
[82] Mantu et alii 1997: 109, cat. 14a-d; Lazarovici C.- M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 562.
[83] Monah 1982: 11-13; Monah et alii 1983: 8; Monah 1997: 35; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 289.
[84] Monah 1982: 11-13; Monah 1997: 35.

which one is cross-shaped,[85] two stylised bucrania, and an amphora vessel with a highly elaborated painted decor.[86]

Fig. 36: "Holy Family" assembly from L36, Poduri – Dealu Ghindaru (after Monah et alii 2003: 111).

Fig. 37: The Council of the Goddesses ("Soborul Zeiţelor") assembly from Poduri (after Monah et al. 2003, cover 1).

Vessels dedicated for libations

Besides the cult building discoveries, there are several vessels with special cultic purposes found all over Neolithic and Copper Age settlements. The artistic activity is mainly connected with the shape of the clay objects, which are emphasized by the intense use of ornaments. Although art precedes the Neolithic Age, in this specific time, artistic displays gain cultural and stylistic valences.[87] Some very interesting pots, especially made for cultic worship during rituals, preserved their shape even in historical times, like the *rhyton* and *askos*. This division is only a minimal one. There are many types of vessels which do not have specified function, but the religious meaning could be real, like the crowned vessels (in the Cucuteni culture area), binocular vessels, cassettes with legs, symbolic painted large vessels in the shape of *amphorae*, and many others. So our study is just a first stage of research on this topic of special cultic pot inventory, which is a very large problem to discuss.

The presence of *askos* and the *rhyton* in a building, associated, of course, with other features, could be a marker for a religious space. There are many studies on these special types, but one is important for the Neolithic Age,[88] being actually a synthesis on the southeast European space. We wish just to point to some discoveries on this topic, starting from the very well known published data.

Askos in Greek is the name for "bag." It represents an asymmetric vessel, often squat and duck-shaped, with an off-center mouth, convex top, and single arching handle. It was shaped like

[85] Kovács 2010: 25, fig. V/1.
[86] Preoteasa et alii 2007.
[87] Kalicz 1970: 13.
[88] Marinescu-Bîlcu 1990.

a leather bottle for holding water, oil or wine. Some pots have two mouths, one for filling and one for emptying, and others are quite unbalanced and have strange mouths. It later assumed the form of an earthenware pitcher. *Askoi* were popular in the Aegean from the Early Helladic to the Classical period.[89]

At Nea Nikomedea two askoi were found near two stone hammers, two cassettes with more than 400 flint blades and many stamp seals.[90] In the Macedonian area are many discoveries of this kind, such as an example from Anza,[91] and a cultic pit found at Promachon –Topolnica II, which had inside a grinding stone, several vessels, the front part of a bull skull, many animal bones and an askos (Fig. 38).[92]

One important vessel from a cultic building is found at Isaia – *Balta Popii*, Iaşi (consisting of 119 items: an askos, twenty-one feminine statuettes, thirteen thrones, twenty-one cones, twenty-one small balls, and forty-two beads) framed in the Precucuteni II culture (Fig. 40).[93] We mention the fact that near the hearth a circular altar table with four legs, an askos pot and a clay tablet with signs and symbols were found (Fig. 41).[94] A hoard was found at Brad – *La Stâncă*, Bacău County, framed in the A3 phase of the Cucuteni culture. The hoard consists of 480 items, like a copper axe, two bracelets, two rings, three ornamental disks, all made in copper, two gold disks, and 287 deer teeth pierced as for necklace beads (Fig. 39). The special items were all deposited in an askos type vessel.[95]

At Mălăieştii de Jos, Dumbrăveşti commune, Prahova County (Romania), was found a spectacular building with interesting features: over fifty restorable vessels near the walls and around the oven. Along the southern wall were about thirty-five vessels complete or restorable. Among these was an askos type vessel. An anthropomorphic bone statuette and a mammal bone were placed inside it. Three other vessels contained inventory inside: one had eighty-nine flint blades and splinters, in another were elder seeds, and in the third sheep bones were placed, some with polishing marks. Other items found inside the building are: a stamp seal with spiral pattern, a bench on the western wall with vessels broken at the site. Near it were some flat stones.[96] One example from the sanctuary was found at Căscioarele sanctuary from the Gumelniţa culture.[97]

The cultic purpose of askos is sometimes emphasised by figurines or other inventory. We will mention the "Liubcova statuette II" which has an askos type vessel modeled in front of its

[89] http://archaeologywordsmith.com.
[90] Rodden 1962; Bánffy 1990–1991: 206; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 292; Budja 2004: 122.
[91] Gimbutas 1974: 59.
[92] Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2006: 473, fig. 2-2a.
[93] Ursulescu 2001: 54, fig. 3; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006: 81, figs. 5-8, 11-13; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, fig. IVd. 24; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2009: 91, Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh., Ţurcanu 2009: 170.
[94] Ursulescu, Tencariu 2004; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006, figs. 5-8, 11-13; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007, fig. IVd.24.
[95] Ursachi 2010: 300.
[96] Lichiardopol et alii 2008: 146.
[97] Ibid.

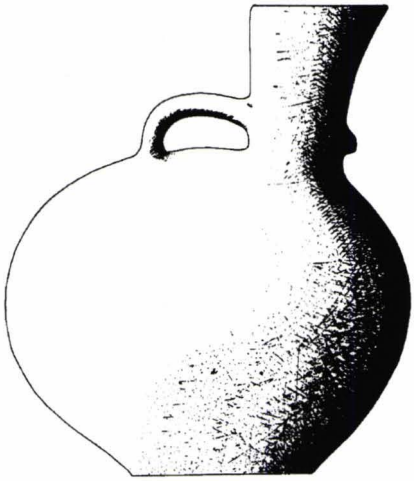


Fig. 38: Askos from Anza IVb (after Gimbutas 1974: 59, fig. 32).

Fig. 39: The Cucutenian hoard found at Brad, Bacău County, deposited in an askos (http://www.calarasi.djc.ro).

abdomen, interpreted by its discoverer as a "libation jar."[98] The Vounas altar presents the character receiving the sacred liquid from an askos in the famous scene presenting a sacrifice.[99] Considering their association in many circumstances with cultic inventory, *askoi* could be an important marker for rite in the context where these are found. The other type of vessel, the *rhyton (pl. rhyta),* is a takeover of a specific Greek term (*rhytos* in Greek means flowing, coming from the verb "rhein" = to flow).[100]

Fig. 40: Isaiia – Balta Popii. Cult complex with figurines deposit (after Ursulescu, Tencariu 2009: 92, fig. 5).

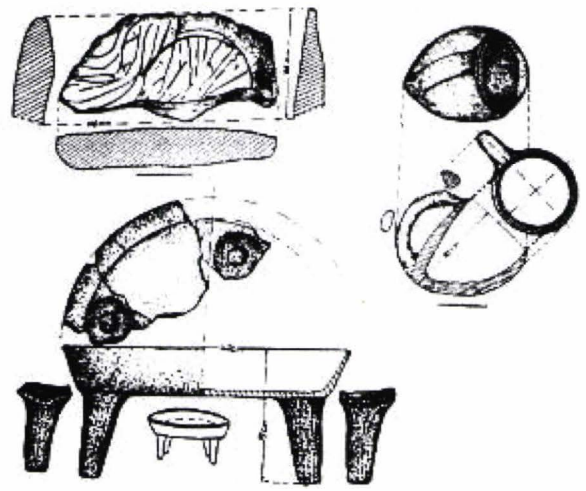


Fig. 41: Isaiia – Balta Popii. Elements from ritual context: altar table, clay tablet and an askos (after Ursulescu, Tencariu 2004: 136, fig. 7).

[98] Luca 2002: 15-28, fig. 1, photo 1-2.
[99] Müller-Karpe 1974: cat. 115, pl. 343/4-5; Karageorghis 1977: 34, 41-42, fig. 13a.
[100] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rhyton.

The special feature of this vessel type is its shape, modelled as an animal head. It is a deep vessel with a single handle intended for the pouring of libations or liquid offerings to gods, spirits of the dead, etc. It is presumed that the covering of the aperture by the celebrant would control the pouring of the liquid until the right moment in the ceremony. *Rhyta* were often made of precious materials and made in very elaborate forms. They are typical for Minoans, Mycenaeans, classical Greeks, and Achaemenid Persians. It is technically a ritual vessel, found very often from the Bronze Age onward.[101]

A special care for the libations in ancient Greece is seen from the vessels used in the entrance of the temples. From written sources we know that the altar table on which sacrifices were offered in ancient Greece was in the portico of the temple. Beneath the altar table is a vase with water, used to sprinkle believers before entering the temple to make offerings in *Secos*.[102] In ancient Rome there is a special vessel named *piscina,* actually a bowl for the ritual washing of hands.[103] N. Platon pointed towards the exclusively cultic purpose of many rhyta from Crete, most of them having religious representations.[104] Large repositories of rhyta are typical of LMI palaces and towns. The Neo-Palatial period saw an increase in cult vessels, especially rhyta stored this way. The use of precious metals for such vessels was common and some were elaborately carved in stone.[105] In the Gumelniţa culture there are not many discoveries, but it is important that they appeared at Căscioarele, Vidra, Sultana (Romanian sites), Stara Zagora (in Bulgaria).[106] For this type of vessel there is an important study covering the Balkan Peninsula, where the main shapes and functions are discussed.107 Still there are several questions to clear, like the origin and the spreading of these vessels.

One of the most famous Vučedol artefacts is a decorated dove-shaped ritual vessel recovered from the site.[108] The discoverer, R. R. Schmidt, considered the object a cult vessel, in which some ritual liquid had to be held. The object is related to a buried sacrificial deer, the grave of a married couple, and the megaron, so the researcher stressed a connection between features of shamanic techniques, like ecstatic journey to the afterlife and a return there from.[109]

Pots associated with the human body

It cannot be omitted the fact that there is a deep connection between anthropomorphic vessels and statuettes, especially on what concerns the general aspect. The anthropomorphic

[101] Kipfer 2000: 270; Albarella et alii 2007: 392.
[102] Dudley 1846: 388.
[103] Kipfer 2000: 243.
[104] Platon 1971.
[105] Huebner 2003.
[106] Frînculeasa, Negrea 2010.
[107] Biagi 2003.
[108] Shaw, Jameson 1999: 607.
[109] Težak-Gregl 2006: 114.

vessel is like a link between the clay container and the sculptural representation of the human body.[110]

Fig. 42: Anthropomorphic vessel found at Tell Hassuna (after Müller-Karpe 1974, taf. 60, Abb. 13).

Fig. 43: Face pot found at Çatalhöyük (after Yalman 2006: 198, fig. 141).

There are some very interesting ritual contexts from which anthropomorphic vessels are coming. Besides figurines, there are many pots representing the female body, by some individualised elements. The feminine features on pots prevail over the masculine ones, of which very few were found so far.[111] Many variations on the pot modelling, like faces applied on the pots, body representation, by buttocks or/and breasts could be identified. Sometimes the pubic area is very well represented.[112] Another type of cult pots is the one with relief decoration, sometimes making real bas-relief or alt-relief compositions. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels are associated with religious functions, starting in Early Neolithic cultures, in a manner which it is not known so far.[113]

There are great variations on the cultic pot inventory. Vessels of coarse fabric, but with precious hoards inside, are interesting not because of the garment, but because the inventory made a difference. Due to their aspect, the archaeological literature provides a large description of these vessels. They appeared starting in the earliest Neolithic cultures and integrated several categories. Some researchers tried to classify them, distinguishing between anthropomorphic vessels and anthropomorphised supports,[114] each of them with several variants. Anthropomorphic pots are respecting usually the human body line. Most of them are emphasizing the lower half of

[110] Dumitrescu 1974: 173.
[111] Makkay 2005: 88.
[112] Naumov 2007, 2010.
[113] Makkay 2005: 86.
[114] Monah 1997: 145-147.

the body, expressing the feminine features. Their symbolism is related with the life-giving women.[115] A classification of the anthropomorphic representations was made by researcher R. R. Andreescu.[116] He established several categories: I. vessels in the shape of human body; II. prosopomorphic lids; III. vessels with anthropomorphic features with three sub-categories (III.A. vessels with a human figure modelled under the rim; III.B. vessels with tube arms; III.C: lids with anthropomorphic handle); IV: vessels with anthropomorphic decoration; V. anthropo-zoomorphic vessels. The present classification was made for the Gumelniţa culture, but it could easily be applied to several cultures. There is also a very resemblant classification, but much simplified, that could be applied in general for all cultures and ages: 1) vessels which are representing the human body entirely; 2) vessels which are suggesting the human body, with just some features; 3) some anthropomorphic characteristics are represented, but not the entire human body.[117]

Most archaeologists agree on the Near Eastern origin. One of the oldest examples is coming from the Hassuna culture (Fig. 42).[118] One relatively recent discovery was made at Çatalhöyük, in Turkey and shows the female face, with a possible garment deeply incised on the temporal area of the head (Fig. 43).[119] During recent researches the site also revealed shards with this kind of anthropomorphic features. A shard with a human face in relief was found in the fill of Building 94.[120]

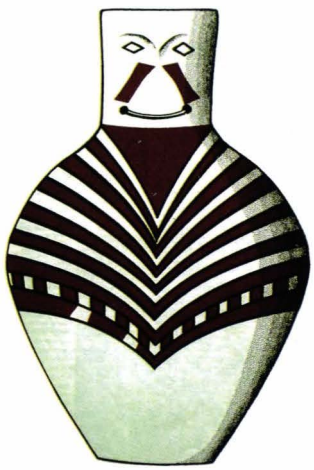


Fig. 44: Anthropomorphic vessel found at Anza (after Gimbutas 1989a: 7, fig. 8).

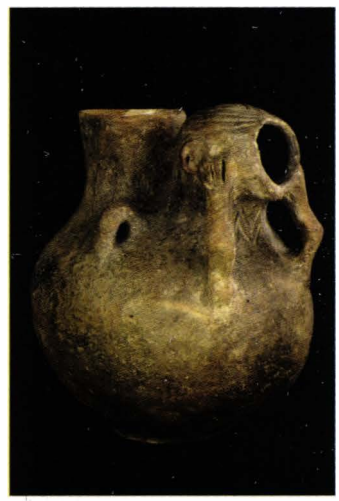


Fig. 45: Anthropomorphic vessel from Parţa, Banat Culture II (after www.prehistory.it).[121]

[115] Bánffy, Goldman 2003.
[116] Andreescu 2002: 72.
[117] Sobaru, Andrei 2004: 14.
[118] Müller-Karpe 1974, taf. 60, fig. 13.
[119] Yalman 2006: 198, fig. 141.
[120] Erdoğu 2010: 49, fig. 46.
[121] This vessel is wrongly ascribed to the Tisza culture in this website. For the correct cultural assignment, see Lazarovici Gh. 2001.

As we already mentioned, some anthropomorphic vessels have appeared in Early Neolithic sites from the eastern European area, like Nea Nikomedeia, Rakitovo sanctuaries.[122] The number of such pots considerably increased during the Middle and Late Neolithic cultures (Fig. 44). Still, comparing them with other types of pots, we can notice that these are not very popular, although they exist in a considerably large variation of shape and garment (Fig. 45).[123]

During the Cucuteni–Ariuşd–Tripolye culture, the variety is large, but most of the researchers published this special type. Anthropomorphic vessels are not very numerous, but there are a few types that reoccur in several sites, but also some unique forms. There are some very special types of vessels specific to the Precucuteni–Cucuteni settlements, like crowned vessels, binocular vessels, support and column vessels, and hora ("round dance") type pots.[124] The care for modelling the special pots should be noticed, considering maybe the needs during the ritual. We wish to stress a few examples: A very nice pot was found at Ariuşd, Covasna County, Romania,[125] modelled with four breasts on the vessel's body (Fig. 47). The pot was classified into the first stage of the Cucuteni culture.[126] This is related with the life-giving representation of women during the Neolithic, and has a Balkan origin (Fig. 46).[127]

Fig. 46: Breasts vessel from Gradešnica (after Gimbutas 1989a: 39, fig. 64).

Fig. 47: Breasts vessel from Ariuşd (after http://www.sznm.ro/patrimoniu_arheologie.php).

At Hăbăşeşti settlement several fragments of anthropomorphic vessels were found. One was complete, some restorable. Some of these vessels had breasts modeled on the exterior surface. In the middle and lower part of the pots the hips and buttocks were represented in a

[122] Todorova, Vajsov 1993: 104, fig. 92; Matsanova 2003: 68; Perlès 2004.
[123] Gimbutas 1989a: 19.
[124] Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009: 75, fig. 8.
[125] Sztáncsuj 2009: 205, pl. 8/1; http://www.sznm.ro/patrimoniu_arheologie.php.
[126] Sztáncsuj 2009: 205, pl. 8/1.
[127] Gimbutas 1989a: 39.

realistic manner. Vl. Dumitrescu considered that these types of pots were painted on the outside surface but only very few preserved traces of paint.

Among the special types of vessels, we could mention pots with hands modeled on them or attached to the body of the vessel, as well as those representing the human leg. For the Cucuteni area there are descriptions,[128] but we will approach this subject in another paper, covering a larger area.

What can be noticed about the anthropomorphic pots is the fact that these are very resemblant of the statuettes and idols, considering their manner of representation. We do not consider their presence inside sanctuaries an accident, or along the entrance into the temples. These were set there with a specific purpose, possibly for protection, or for depositing some substances. Most of the researchers are concluding that these were used as a special inventory in cult activities, possibly for stimulating fertility, or possibly for libation.[129]

Some final observations

Reconstructing the religious life of prehistoric people can be a difficult task, since the archaeological remains do not specify the thoughts and feelings of the humans from that age. It is difficult also to "see" beyond the artefact. For sure, most vessels were used to cook or keep food, having a direct purpose. The shape was adapted considering the function. It is hard to assert that prehistoric people were making pottery primarily for its decorative value, but certainly some of these very highly decorated vessels are found in special cult areas and their use was not a common one.[130]

The presence of the cup and goblet on the Tărtăria tablet is not random, as none of the signs are drawn there by accident. The cup was meant to keep a sacred liquid. Near them we observe the consecration horn, as a symbol of power;[131] the bracelet in the grave was with protective purpose; the idols were used in rituals.[132]

Most of the cult places have a mixed content, like common use pottery, or several tools, and implements. Libation vessels are easily recognizable from their impractical shapes, with round or pointed bottoms, and with holes in their bases for the outflow. They are also recognizable from the peculiar decoration. Some of them certainly were used to pour milk, or offerings of milk. Rhytons seem to be the receptacle for libation of blood from sacrificed bulls, at least from the Bronze Age onwards.[133]

What is important to observe, from our perspective, is the fact that rituals needed a dedicated inventory. Observing the pottery, one can relate the rite with the ritual, and the cult with religious behaviour. In Temple 1 from Parţa there is a special place where animals were

[128] Boghian 2004: 125-126.
[129] Monah 1997: 149-155.
[130] Shepard 1985: 248.
[131] Eliade 1995.
[132] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 187-188.
[133] Castleden 1990: 169.

sacrificed (possibly at some specific time). Blood offering was made in special cups, in Temple 2 from Parţa, and was placed on an altar table.[134] The sanctuary found at Tumba Madžari site (Macedonia) is important by its integral approach. In this manner an image on the religious behaviour for the Macedonian Neolithic was provided.[135]

Summing up, there are some historical data worth mentioning, since there is a great deal of information related to rituals during ancient times. All rituals in ancient Greece involve cups and goblets. For example, special vessels filled with pure spring water were placed at the entrance to a sanctuary to mark the transition between open space and sacred space. At Temple 1 from Parţa an anthropomorphic vessel was placed at the entrance. In Greece worshipers had to sprinkle themselves to purify the body and spirit. The act of purification was necessary in order to take part in the communitarian ritual.[136] Nowadays we find in Catholic churches the stone vessel with holy water, just near the entrance. The believer must put his hand inside and then symbolically make the cross sign. It is considered that the gesture helps to renew the faith, clean the sins and remove bad spirits.

References

Albarella, U., K. Dobney, A. Ervynck, and P. Rowley-Conwy. 2007. *Pigs and Humans. 10,000 Years of Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Andreescu, R.-R. 2002. *Plastica Antropomorfă Gumeniţeană. Analiză primară*. Bucureşti: Muzeul Naţional de Istorie a României.

Antonović, D. 2006. *Stone tools from Lepenski Vir*, Beograd.

Bánffy, E. 1990–1991. "Cult and Archaeological Context in Middle and South-East Europe in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic." *Antaeus* 19-20: 183-250. Budapest.

Bánffy, E., and G. Goldman. 2003. "Neolithic Beliefs." In *Hungarian Archaeology at the Turn of the Millenium*. Visy Zsolt, ed., 112-117. Budapest.

Biagi, P. 2003. "The Rhyton of the Balkan Peninsula: Chronology, Origin, Dispersion and Function of a Neolithic 'Cult' Vessel." *Journal of Prehistoric Religion* 16/17: 16-26.

Boghian, D. 2004. *Comunităţile cucuteniene din bazinul Bahluiului*. Suceava.

Bogucki, P., and P. J. Crabtree. 2004. *Ancient Europe 8000 B.C. – A.D. 1000: Encyclopedia of the Barbarian World*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Budja, M. 2003. "Seals, Contacts and Tokens in the Balkans Early Neolithic: Where in the Puzzle." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXX: 115-130. Ljubliana.

_____2004. "The Transition to Farming and the „Revolution" of Symbols in the Balkans. From Ornament to Entopic and External Symbolic Storage." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXI: 59-81. Ljubliana.

[134] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 187.
[135] Mitrevski 2006: 21.
[136] Cole 2007: 282.

_____2006. "The Transition to Farming and the Ceramic Trajectories in Western Eurasia: From Ceramic Figures to Vessels." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXIII: 183-201. Ljublijana.

Castleden, R. 1990. *Minoans. Life in Bronze Age Crete.* London and New York: Routledge.

Çilingiroğlu, Ç. 2005. "The concept of 'Neolithic Package' considering its meaning and applicability." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII. Ljubliana.

Cole, S. G. 2007. "Greek religion." In *A Handbook of Ancient Religions.* John R. Hinnells, ed., 266-317. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dudley, J. 1846. *Naology: or, A Treatise on the Origin, Progress, and Symbolical Import of The Sacred Structures of the Most Eminent Nations and Ages of the World.* London: F. And J. Rivington.

Dumitrescu, VI. 1974. *Arta preistorică în România.* Bucureşti.

Durman, A. 1999-2000. "Vučedolska terina i Orion." *Opuscula Archaeologica* 23-24: 1-9. Zagreb.

Eliade, M. 1995. *Sacrul şi profanul.* Bucureşti: Humanitas.

Erdoğu, B. 2010. "West Mound Trench 8 in Çatalhöyük 2010 Archive Report," 50-51. Çatalhöyük Research Project.

Frînculeasa, A., and O. Negrea. 2010. "Un sit din epoca neo-eneolitică în zona colinară a Munteniei - Seciu, jud. Prahova." *Buletinul Muzeului Judeţean Teleorman. Seria Arheologie* 2: 45-67.

Gimbutas, M. 1974. "Anza, ca. 6500-5000 B. C.: A Cultural Yardstick for the Study of Neolithic Southeast Europe." Journal of Field Archaeology 1, nos, 1-2: 26-66. Boston University.

_____1989. *Civilizaţie şi cultură. Vestigii preistorice în sud-estul European.* Bucureşti: Meridiane.

_____1989a. *The Language of the Goddess.* San Francisco: Harper and Row.

_____1997. *Civilizaţia Marii Zeiţe şi sosirea cavalerilor războinici.* Bucureşti: Ed. Lucretius.

_____1999. *The Living Goddess.* Edited and supplemented by M. R. Dexter. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gimbutas, M., S. Winn, and D. Shimabuku. 1989. *Achilleion: A Neolithic Settlement in Thessaly, Greece, 6400–5600 B.C.* Monumenta Archaeologica 14. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles,

Hayden, B. 2003. *A Prehistory of Religion. Shamans, Sorcerers and Saints.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books.

Huebner, K. 2003. "A Minoan Vase from Zakros, Crete. The Sanctuary Rhyton." *ANISTORITON,* Issue P032 (7 June) http://www.anistor.gr/english/enback/p032.htm

Kalicz, N. 1970. *Clay Gods. The Neolithic Period and Copper Age in Hungary.* Budapest: Corvina.

Kalicz, N. 2000. "Unterscheidungsmerkmale zwischen der Körös- und der Starčevo-Kultur in Ungarn." In *Karanovo III. Beiträge zum Neolithikum in Südosteuropa.* S. Hiller, and V. Nikolov, eds., 295–310. Wien.

Karageorghis, V. 1977. "The Art of Cyprus, Eighth-Seventh Centuries B. C." *American Journal of Archaeology* 81, 1 (Winter): 67.

Kipfer, Barbara A. K. 2000. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Archaeology.* New York: Kluwer/Plenum.

Kitanovski, B., B. Jovanović, and D. Simoska. 1990. "Der Kultplatz auf der Fundstätte Vrbjanska Čuka bei Prilep." *Vinča and its World, International Symposium. The Danubian Region from 6000 to 3000 B.C.* N. Tasić and D. Srejović, eds. Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Koukouli-Chrysanthaki, Ch. 2006. "The Neolithic and Bronze Age of Eastern Macedonia: A Review of the Recent Archaeological Research." In *Homage to Milutin Garasanin.* N. Tasić, ed., 469-479. Belgrade: Grozdanov Cv.

Kovács, A. 2010. "Statistic Analysis on the Neolithic and Eneolithic Shrine Hearths from South-Eastern Europe." *ANGVSTIA* 14, 2010: 11-26.

Lazarovici, C. M., and Lazarovici, Gh. 2006. *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din Romania I. Neolithicul.* V. Spinei and V. Mihailescu-Bîrliba, eds. BAM IV, Iaşi: Ed. Trinitas.

_____2006a. "Un altar casnic la Gura Baciului." In *Lucrările Seminarului Tiberiu Popoviciu* (25-26 October, 2006): 111-115. Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Laboratorul de Cercetări Interdisciplinare.

_____2007. *Arhitectura Neoliticului şi Epocii Cuprului din România II. Epoca Cuprului.* V. Spinei and V. Mihailescu-Bîrliba, eds. BAM VI. Iaşi: Ed. Trinitas.

_____2011. "Sesiunea Temples and Sanctuaries from PPN to Copper Age. Type, Content and Functionality." *Arheologia Moldovei* XXXIV: 15-17.

Lazarovici, C.-M., Gh. Lazarovici, and S. Ţurcanu. 2009. *Cucuteni: A Great Civilisation of the Prehistoric World.* Iaşi: Palatul culturii Publishing House.

Lazarovici, Gh. 1986. "Sanctuarul Neolitic de la Parţa." In *Documente recent descoperite şi informaţii arheologice* (1984): 12-22. Bucureşti: Editura Academia RSR.

_____1989. "Das neolitische Heiligtum von Parţa." In *Neolithic of Southeastern Europe and its Near Eastern Connections.* Varia Archaeologica Hungarica II: 149-174. Budapest: Balassi.

_____2001. "Casiopeea-de la simbolurile neolitice la mitologia astronomică." *Dava International, Carpath-Danubian Studies* 4.

_____2003. "Pâinea, grâul şi râşnitul sacru în Neolitic." *Tibiscum* XI: 65-86. Caransebeş.

_____2009. "Are the Tărtăria Tablets a „Enigma?" In *Signs and Symbols from Danube Neolithic and Eneolithic.* Bibliotheca Brukenthal XXXV. Luca S. A., ed., 41-57. Alba Iulia: Editura Altip.

Lazarovici, Gh., Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim. 2001. *Parţa. Monografie arheologică*, vols. 1.1 & 1.2. BHAB XIII. Timişoara: Waldpress.

Lazarovici, Gh., Fl. Draşovean, and V. Tulbure. 1991. *Sanctuarul neolitic de la Parţa,* Timişoara.

Lazarovici, Gh., Z. Kalmar, Fl. Draşovean, and A. S. Luca. 1985. "Complexul Neolitic de la Parţa." *Banatica* 38: 7-71.

Lazarovici, Gh., and C.-M. Lazarovici. 2006. "A Home Altar at Gura Baciului." *Ananalele Banatului SN* I: 103-111. Timişoara.

Lazarovici, Gh., C.-M Lazarovici, and M. Merlini. 2011. *Tărtăria and The Sacred Tablets.* Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega.

Lazarovici, Gh., Z. Maxim, and Fl. Draşovean. 1994. "Complexul neolitic de la Parţa, III." *Analele Banatului, SN, Arheologie-Istorie* III: 106-134. Timişoara.

Lazarovici Gh., and M. Merlini. 2005. "New Archaeological Data referring to Tărtăria Tablets." *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXII: 205-219.

_____2008. "New Information and the Role of the Tărtăria Discoveries." In *The Danube Script: Neo-Eneolithic Writing in Southeastern Europe.* Exhibition Catalogue. J. Marler, ed., 39-51. Sebastopol: Institute of Archaeomythology / Sibiu: Brukenthal National Museum.

Lichiardopol, D., A. Frînculeasa, and R. R. Andreescu. 2008. "Mălăieştii de Jos, com. Dumbrăveşti, jud. Prahova, Punct: La Mornel." *CCAR* 2008:146.

Luca S. A. 2002. "Date despre „Statueta de la Liubcova II", jud. Caraş-Severin." In *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis* I: 15-28. Sibiu: Editura Altip.

Makkay, J. 1990. *A Tărtăriai Leletek.* Budapest.

Makkay, J. 2005. "Ujkőkoriteogónia. Agyagból Mintázni istent és embert/Neolithic Theogony. Clay Images of Gods and Men." In *Hétköznapok Vénuszai*, 85-121. Hódmezővásárhely.

Mantu, C.- M., Gh. Dumitroaia, and A. Tsaravopoulos, eds. 1997. *Cucuteni, the Last Great Chalcolithic Civilisation of Europe.* Bucharest: Athena.

Marinescu-Bîlcu, S. 1990. "Askoï et rhytons énéolithiques des régions balkano-danubiens et leurs relations avec le sud à la lumière des quelques pièces de Căscioarele." *Dacia, N. S.* XLII:113-119.

Matsanova, V. 2003. "Cult Practices in the Early Neolithic Village of Rakitovo." In *Early Symbolic Systems for Communication in Southeast Europe,* vol. 1: 65-70. L. Nikolva, ed., 65-70. British Archaeological Reports International Series 1139. Oxford: BAR.

Milisauskas, S. 2002. *European Prehistory: A Survey*. New York: Springer.

Milojčić, Vl. 1965. "Die Tontafeln von Tărtăria und die Absolute Chronologie de Mitteleuropaschen Neolithikums." *Germania* 43: 261-264.

Mitrevski, D. 2003: "Prehistory in Republic of Macedonia – F.Y.R.O.M" In *Recent Research in the Prehistory of the Balkans*. D.V. Grammenos, ed., 13-72. Thessaloniki.

Mitrevski, D. 2006. Some problems regarding Macedonian prehistory 30 years later. In *Homage to Milutin Garasanin*, 17-26. Belgrade.

Monah, D. 1982. "O importantă descoperire arheologică." *Arta* 7-8.

_____1997. *Plastica antropomorfă a culturii Cucuteni-Tripolie.* Piatra Neamţ: Bibliotheca Memoriae Antiquitatis.

Monah, D., Şt. Cucoş, D. Popovici, S. Antonescu, and Gh. Dumitroaia. 1983. "Cercetările arheologice de la Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru." *Cercetări Arheologice* VI: 3-22.

Monah D., Gh. Dumitroaia, F, Monah, C. Preoteasa, R. Munteanu, and D. Nicola. 2003. *Poduri Dealul Ghindaru. O Troie în Subcarpaţii Moldovei*. Piatra Neamţ.

Müller-Karpe, H. 1974. *Handbuch de Vorgeschichte* II, "Jungsteinzeit." München.

Nanoglou, S. 2008. "Representations of Humans and Animals in Greece and the Balkans during the Earlier Neolithic." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* XVIII, 1.

Naumov 2007: Naumov, G. 2007. "Housing the Dead: Burials inside Houses and Vessels in the Neolithic Balkans." In *Cult in Context*. C. Malone and D. Barowclough, eds., 255-265. Oxford: Oxbow.

Naumov, G. 2010. "Neolithic anthropocentrism: the principles of imagery and symbolic manifestation of corporeality in the Balkans." In *Documenta Praehistorica* XXXVII: 227-238.

Naumov, G. 2011. "Отелотворени куќи: социјалните и симболичките аспекти на неолитската архитектура во Македонија." In *Macedoniae Acta archaeol*ogica 20 (2011) 1-574. Skopje. http://www.academia.edu/1487077/_

Nikolić, D., and J. Vuković. 2008. "Vinča Ritual Vessels: Archaeological Context and Possible Meaning." *Starinar* LVIII, 2008: 51-69.

Perlès, C. 2004. *The Early Neolithic in Greece. The First Farming Communities in Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Platon, N. 1971. *Zakros: The Discovery of a Lost Palace of Ancient Crete.* New York: Charles Scribner and Sons.

Preoteasa, C., D. Garvăn, R. Munteanu, L. Uţă, D. Nicola, Gh. Dumitroaia, and D. Monah. 2007. "O locuinţă (sanctuar?) cu etaj din etapa Cucuteni B1 de la Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru, jud. Bacău." Unpublished presentation at symposium, "Aşezări şi locuinţe preistorice. Structură, organizare, simbol," 2007. Institutul de Arheologie, Iaşi.

Rodden, R. J. 1962. "Excavations at the Early Neolithic Site at Nea Nikomedeia, Greek Macedonia." *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 28.

Rus, D., and Gh. Lazarovici. 1991. "On the developed Neolithic Architecture in Banat." *Banatica* 11: 87-118.

Sanev, V. 2006. "Antropomorphic Cult plastic of Anzabegovo-Vršnik Cultural Group of the Republic of Macedonia." In *Homage to Milutin Garasanin.* N. Tasić, ed., 71-191. Belgrade: Grozdanov Cv.

Šemrov, A., and P. Turk. 2009. *Neolithic Art in the Region of the Republic of Macedonia.* Ljubliana: Narodni Muzej Slovenije.

Shaw, I., and R. Jameson. 1999. *A Dictionary of Archaeology.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Shepard, A. O. 1985. *Ceramics for the Archaeologist.* Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution.

Sobaru, A.-L., and R. M. Andrei. 2004. "Vasele antropomorfe în culturile neolitice şi eneolitice de pe teritoriul României." *BCSS* 10: 9-16.

Srejović, D. 1969. *Lepenski Vir.* Beograd.

_____1981. "Lepenski Vir, Menschenbilder einer frühen europäischen Kultur." In *RGM.* Köln.

Sztáncsuj, S. J. 2009. "Az Erősd-kultúra emberábrázolásai." *Acta Siculica,* 185-206. Sfantu Gheorghe.

Tasić, N. N. 2007. "Ritual Pottery Set from Vinča." *Journal of Serbian Archaeology Society* 23: 203-210.

Težak-Gregl, T. 2006. "Study of the Neolithic and Eneolithic as reflected in articles published over the 50 years of the journal Opuscula archaeological." *Opuscula Archaeological* 30: 93-122.

Todorova, H., and I. Vajsov. 1993. *Nova kamennatat epocha v Bîlgarija,* Sofia.

Ursachi, V. 2010. "Cetatea dacică de la Brad în contextul culturii materiale şi spirituale ale dacilor estcarpatici." In Arheologie, *ANGVSTIA* 14: 299-318.

Ursulescu, N. 2001. "Dovezi ale unei simbolistici a numerelor în cultura Precucuteni." *Memoria Antiquitatis* XXII: 51-69.

Ursulescu, N., and A. F. Tencariu. 2004. "Aménagements de culte dans la zone des foyers et des fours de la culture Precucuteni." *Memoria Antiquitatis* XXIII: 129-144. Piatra Neamţ.

_____2006. *Religie şi magie la est de Carpaţi acum 7000 de ani. Tezaurul cu obiecte de cult de la Isaiia.* Iaşi: Demiurg.

_____2009. "Symbolic Signs on the Ceramics of the Chalolithic Settlement at Isaiia (Iaşi County, Romania)." In *Signs and Symbols from Danube Neolithic and Eneolithic.* Bibliotheca Brukenthal XXXV. S. A. Luca., ed., 87-102. Alba Iulia: Editura Altip.

Vajsov, I. 2012. "Geophysical Investigation and Archaeological Reality in the Neolithic Site Promachon-Topolnica (Presentation), 1912–2012." A Century of Research in Prehistoric Macedonia - International Conference, Nov 24, 2012.

Vitezović, S. 2009. "Pots with Faces: Prosopomorphic Lids in Vinča Culture." Presentation at the 15th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists, Riva del Garda, Italy, 2009.

Whittle, A. W. R. 1996. *Europe in the Neolithic: The Creation of New Worlds.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yalman, N. 2006. "Pottery Report." In *Çatalhöyük 2006 Archive Report.* Çatalhöyük Research Project.

VINČIAN ASPECTS CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE FROM MACEDONIA

SOTE ANGELESKI

From the earliest times, humans have been frightened by the unknown, by the mystery of the events that succeeded with regularity, either good or bad. In order not to arouse the wrath of gods, they worshiped them and brought them oblations accompanied by different rites and rituals. These rites, rituals and processions had the purpose of bringing welfare and protection to the community or to the family. This also determined the need to create a special space, dedicated to the worshiped god, from where he could watch over their houses, health and spiritual peace.

Sanctuary Models

Although there are few sanctuaries in Macedonia when compared to other regions, there is a great number of models of sanctuaries, shrines, and houses. That is why we consider it important to discuss the models first, as they offer data about the arrangements of the interiors and also about the main theme that is suggested by these arrangements.[1]

Fig. 1: Madžari, type MM 1a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

The idea of linking the human body with the house is very complex and the pattern can be found in several prehistoric communities from Anatolia to South Eastern Europe. In Macedonia there is an abundance of anthropomorphic house models produced from the Early to Late Neolithic which encompass various components of corporeality and architecture.[2]

[1] Angeleski 2008: 11-27; Angeleski 2012: 140-149.
[2] Naumov 2010: 4.

These objects, probably dedicated to the Great Mother "Magna Mater" (Figures 1–3) are shaped as models, either models of large sanctuaries, or replicas of the sacred house. These models have been discovered on numerous archaeological sites from Macedonia in the Neolithic settlements from Madžari[3] (Figure 1), Govrlevo[4] (Figure 2), and Mrševci[5] (Figure 3). The regional distribution of these artifacts follows these patterns: in the southwestern areas (Pelagonija), a concentration of architectonic elements are mixed with anthropomorphism, and in the north, anthropomorphic exaggerations.[6] They may be, as we have already mentioned, replicas in miniature of the great sanctuaries, dedicated to the Mother Goddess, almighty, the Great Mother (*Magna Mater*) also known under the name of "Ghea" or Mother Gea, Mother Earth.[7]

These sanctuary models are anthropomorphically shaped from the waist up, and shaped as a human shelter from the waist down, suggesting both the protection of the house and the Great Mother. These artifacts are manifestations of the symbolism used by the Neolithic communities, in our case from the Balkans, in order to accomplish communication and to express their mental imagery.

Fig. 2: Govrlevo, type MM 1b (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 3: Mrševci, type MM 1c (after Zdravkovski 2004).

The human body, in the case of anthropomorphism, incorporates functions associated with objects functional in the religious life.[8] The anthropomorphic figures that appear on the top side of these models (Fig. 1–3) have the head, hair, eyes, breasts and arms portrayed in a realistic fashion, mainly representing a female figure.

[3] Sanev 1981, 1988; Zdravkovski 2004; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 58/42; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 177, nr. 57.

[4] Georgiev and Bilbija 1984; Bilbija 1986; Čausidis et. alii 1995; Sanev 1995; Zdravkovski 2004; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 62/46; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 179, nr. 58.

[5] Sanev 1989, 1995; Zdravkovski 2004; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 64/48; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 171, nr. 54.

[6] Naumov 2010: 5.

[7] Mellaart 1975.

[8] Naumov 2010: 2.

Each figure has two pairs of bracelets on its arms, and one of the figures also possesses a necklace from which a round plate, a disc or a medallion, hangs. The bracelets are distinctive signs of royalty, thus, their presence emphasizes the idea of power and sacredness.[9] The body has a longitudinal perforation alluding to the transfer of the oblations to the heavens, especially by means of smoke with its scents, heat, or by ritual burning, or *fumigation*.[10]

The above models of sanctuaries (Fig. 1–3), were encoded with the code MM, because they represent the Great Mother. These are differently illustrated from those found in the archaeological sites from Porodin[11] (Fig. 4, 10, 11, 12), Vrbjanska Čuka[12] (Fig. 5), Dobromiri[13] (Fig. 6), Optičari[14] (Fig. 7), Stenče[15] (Fig. 8, 10), and Suvodol[16] (Fig. 9).

The other sanctuary models (Fig. 4–12) were encoded with the code MS, because they do not represent the Great Mother, but were used to burn the oblations that were dedicated to the Great Mother. The MD type sanctuaries (Fig. 4–2) have an anthropomorphic head, from the shoulders up, while at the bottom, the model appears to be a true replica of Neolithic architecture. These are copies in miniature of the architectonical elements, be they the orifice through which the light illuminated the construction, or where the smoke was evacuated, the entrance to the house, the walls, or the roof of the house (Fig. 4–7). They were probably used during the processions that occurred while performing the rituals (Fig. 4–12). The cylindrical heads with traces of smoke or ashes that can be found in the models of sanctuaries constitute proof of the ritual burning of the oblations.[17]

Fig. 4: Porodin, type MS 1 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 5: Vrbjanska Čuka, type MS Ia (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 6: Dobromiri, type MS 2 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

[9] Angeleski 2008: 11-12, figs. 1-3; 2012: 140-141, fig. 6/1-3.
[10] Lazarovici Gh. et alii. 2001; Lazarovici Gh. 2003, 2004.
[11] Grbić et alii 1960; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, 59/43; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 181, 231, nr. 59, 80.
[12] Zdravkovski 2004; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 213, nr. 71.
[13] Zdravkovski 2004; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 215, nr. 72.
[14] Zdravkovski 2004; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 217, nr. 73.
[15] Zdravkovski 2004; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 209, nr. 69.
[16] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 61/45; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009, 175, nr. 56.
17 Angeleski 2008, 12, 13, 20, 21, fig. 4-12; Angeleski 2012, 141, 142, fig. 6/4-12.

Fig. 7: Opričari, type MS 2a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 8: Stenče, type MS 3 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

The so-called social hierarchy is another criterion for this division into two groups of the Neolithic models of sanctuaries from Macedonia. As the number of temples and sanctuaries becomes larger in the PPN, Mesolithic and Neolithic, can one raise the issue of the representation of various priesthood groups.[18]

Fig. 9: Suvodol, type MS 3a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

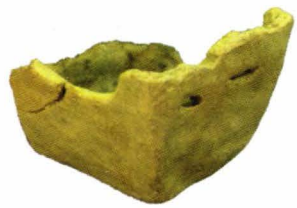


Fig. 10: Stenče, type MS 1a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 11: Porodin, type MS 1a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

The characteristics denoting the rank of the priestess were attributed on the basis of age. The type MS of sanctuaries refers to a young woman illustrated by the hair with loops (Fig. 13–21), only from the shoulders up (with ageing she will pass into the class of the great priestesses, which were older). This theory is sustained also by the model from the archaeological site from Čair (Fig. 19), where the head is attached over the roof, which starts immediately above the legs of the sanctuary models. A sanctuary of the Great Mother was built at the old priestess' headquarters in order to serve the cult with more complex rituals, as illustrated by the sanctuary models of type MM (Fig. 1–3).[19]

The idea of the division of sacerdotal classes is sustained by the cylindrical heads on the models of sanctuaries of type MS (Fig. 13–21), discovered in the archaeological sites from Madžari[20] (Fig. 13, 16, 17, 20), Porodin[21] (Fig. 14), Velušina[22] (Fig. 15), Dolno

[18] Angeleski 2008:12; Angeleski 2012: 142.
[19] Lazarovici Gh. 2003.
[20] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, figs. 54/38, 55/39, 56/40, 57/41 65/49; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 161-169, nr. 49-53.
[21] Grbić et alii. 1960; Simoska and Sanev 1977; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 70/54; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 155, nr. 46.

Palčište[23] (Fig. 18), Čair [24] (Fig. 19), and Mrševci[25] (Fig. 21). These heads (Fig. 13–21) clearly show a distinction and a sacerdotal hierarchy. The female representation having the hair styled in different ways, may refer to young priestesses who were perhaps already initiated and were part of the sacerdotal body, but did not yet have all the necessary attributes to be full priestesses. We speculate that they were probably distinguished from the "old and wise," being recruited in order to be initiated in the sacerdotal mysteries and to serve in the ceremonies dedicated to the Great Mother (*Magna Mater*), to continue the tradition and to pass it on to the next generation.[26]

Fig. 12: Porodin, type MS 1a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Other two cases that emphasize the idea that these models of sanctuaries were dedicated to the Great Mother are those from the sites from Optičari (Fig. 7) and Stenče (Fig. 8) where orifices of the sanctuary models in the shape of the letter "M" can be observed. It was also speculated that this could be associated with the constellation "Cassiopeia,"[27] the great mother of Andromeda in Greek mythology who participated in a competition with the daughters of Poseidon.[28] What probably happened was, as in Greek mythology, a local tradition was passed on from grandmother to granddaughter.[29]

We propose the theory that at Madžari, Mrševci, and Govrlevo there were periodically regional religious centers, functioning maybe on the system of rotation of the tenure of a great priestess. The Great Mother must have been served by a responsible person who was supposed to correctly calculate the periods and times of processions. Related to these celebrations, processions related to the fertility of the earth probably took place, making the earth holy before sowing it. The fact that there are only three types of MM models of sanctuaries (Fig. 1–3), the rest being of MS type (Fig. 13–21), strengthens our opinion.[30]

[22] Sanev 1975; Simoska and Sanev 1977; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 67/51.
[23] Zdravkovski 1989; Saržoski and Zdravkovski 1991; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 68/52; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009:157, nr. 47.
[24] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 69/53; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 159, nr. 48.
[25] Sanev 1989; Zdravkovski 2004.
[26] Angeleski 2008: 12, 13, figs. 13–21; Angeleski 2012: 142, 143, fig. 6/13-21.
[27] The constellation of Cassiopeia is under the shape of the letter „M" or in a certain season under the shape of the letter "W."
[28] Lazarovici Gh. 2003.
[29] Angeleski 2008: 13; Angeleski 2012: 143.
[30] Angeleski 2008: 13, fig. 13–21; Angeleski 2012: 143, 6/13-21.

Fig. 13: Madžari, type MC 1 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 14: Porodin, type MC 2 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 15: Velušina, type MC 3 (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 16: Madžari, type MC 1a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 17: Madžari, type MC 1b 2a (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 18: Dolno Palčište, type MC (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 19: Čair, type MC 1c (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 20: Madžari (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 21: Mrševci (after Zdravkovski 2004).

The models of sanctuaries of MM and MS types (Fig. 1–21) could have correspondence with the type of closed sanctuaries, type A, from the cucutenian catalog of Gusev.[31] These types have had an active role in the spiritual life of the Macedonian Neolithic. In our situation we are not dealing with sanctuaries built on a platform elevated on wooden pillars like those of Precucuteni and Cucuteni.[32]

We would like to mention the case of the sanctuary from Vrbjanska Čuka,[33] now sheltered in the museum of Prilep, which is of the same category as the one from Parţa.[34] This sanctuary has been re-shaped in actual size. Inside, an impressive quantity of cups without leg has been found, all placed in the center of the sanctuary, along the walls, and outside. The

[31] Gusev 1995.
[32] Mantu Lazarovici 2002; Lazarovici C. M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006; Lazarovici C. M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007.
[33] Mitkoski 2005.
[34] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001.

walls have been painted in dark red or light brown. Unfortunately, this sanctuary has been very poorly published, thus we did not have access to a lot of documentation on the subject.

Another sanctuary has been discovered in the Neolithic site from Madžari.[35] Inside, a large number of pots of *askos* type, pots of *pythos* type, a bench, and an oven were found. The cups were found near one of the walls and were probably used to keep or offer the sacred liquid. The dimensions of the benches and altars do not exclude the possibility of animal sacrifices. The oblation bench from the sanctuary has been tied to the oven. The walls of this sanctuary were probably been covered with different drawings because several colored architectonical pieces were found. The bench has incisions in a "zig-zag" pattern, used to dispose of the oblations or the sacrifices.[36]

The sanctuary from Madžari is significant because it offers the possibility of a clearer image of the spiritual life of the Neolithic in Macedonia but also about the rituals of foundations of the Neolithic sanctuaries from Macedonia.[37] This sanctuary has been excavated and published by V. Sanev[38] and today it offers the possibility for further and closer study of the Neolithic sanctuaries from Macedonia.

From the initial plan published in 1988, a pit of approximately 30 m depth was discovered beside the model of the sanctuary (Fig. 1), which led to the conclusion that a pedestal for the sanctuary model might have existed.[39] A possible explanation could be that, before anything else, a pedestal was placed on the chosen spot, on which the model of the sanctuary, which was to be built, was placed. A "fumigatio" ritual was performed there, necessary to sacralize the spot with the help of the Great Mother. Then the sanctuary would have been elevated, considering the signs given by the divinity.

At Madžari this sign was interpreted in such a way that resulted in the construction of the sacred shelter with a north-south orientation.[40] This orientation was kind of natural, from the point of view of the placement of the entrance orifice in the sanctuary, because the air circulation in that area follows exactly on the north-south direction, caring the smoke towards the interior and, after the models pattern, towards a possible chimney. We assume that during the processions that occurred before the elevation of the sanctuary, the direction taken by the smoke indicates the axis on which the construction was placed.[41]

In order to produce a clearer image upon the synchronisms of the models of sanctuaries, we have made different analyses, classifications and seriations of the stylistical and typological elements of the models of sanctuaries from Macedonia with elements characteristic of the idols from Macedonia and the neighboring areas.[42]

[35] Sanev 1988.
[36] Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001.
[37] Angeleski 2008: 13, 14, 2012: 143.
[38] Sanev 1988.
[39] Ibidem.
[40] Ibidem.
[41] Angeleski 2008: 14, 2012: 143.
[42] Angeleski 2005, 2008: 14, 2011a, 2011b, 2012.

SHAPE TYPE																																TABLE 1	
II2	Ibc1	Ibc3	II	II2a	III3	III3 a	A3	Ibb	Ic3	Ifa	Ib2b	III3 b	II	III	Ib4	Ib5	Ib2	Id	I	Ib	Iba	Ic	Ia	Io	Ih	IIIb	If	Ie	Ic3a	A2	A1	PHASE	STATION
																					1								1	1	1	Anza-Vršnik:Ic/II	Anzabegovo
																		1	2	8		3	3	2	2	2	3	3				Turdaş;	Turdaş
																						1										Anza-Vršnik:III	Madžari
																				1												Vinča;	Vinča
																	1															;Anza-Vršnik:Ic/II	Rug Bair
					1				1				1		1	2	1		2	4	1		1									Vinča;A	Vinča
												1																				Velušina-Porodin;II/III	Vrbjanska Čuka
								1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1		1				1										Vinča;B1	Vinča
				1		1	1	1	1																							Anza-Vršnik;	Anzabegovo
1			1		1																											Vinča;A3	Gornea;
	2	1	1	1																												Velušina-Porodin:II/III	Porodin
	1																															Anza-Vršnik;III	Mačevo
	1																															Velušina-Porodin:II/III	Velušina
1																																;Anza-Vršnik:IV	Angelci
2																																Vinča;A	Gornea

Anthropomorphic idols

Anthropomorphic idols had an important role in the spiritual life of the Macedonian Neolithic. Being of different categories and shapes, we have cataloged and encoded them in order to accomplish a more minute analysis (Tables 1–10).[43]

In Table 1 we have presented the situation of the synchronisms of the types of idols with those from the Balkan Neolithic for which we have data concerning the settlements from Madžari,[44] Turdaș,[45] Rug Bair,[46] Vinča,[47] Vrbjanska Čuka,[48] Anzabegovo,[49] Porodin,[50] Gornea,[51] Angelci,[52] Velušina.[53] This table shows clear connections between the early phases of the BAC on the territory of Macedonia and those of vinčian type from Serbia and Romania.

Cultural synchronisms between Anzabegovo–Vršnik Ic/II-IV, Velušina–Porodin II/III and Vinča A-B can be noticed from the seriation in Table 1. The table shows, from right to left, the evolution of the types of idols and their association. Here we speak about cultural rather than chronological series knowing that the spiritual life deals with another kind of dynamism and evolution than the material culture.

The typology of the idols generally includes variants of different representations of the Great Mother. They were part of a larger group and were used in altars, maybe as house or family totems. This also explains the great number of sanctuaries with anthropomorphic themes, knowing that the sanctuaries for the community reflect the mythology of the community and that the ones that are associated with the house reflect the psychology of the family. Therefore, the anthropomorphic idols were used by Neolithic people for the rites and rituals meant for the divinity, in the family frame.[54]

In the following lines we have accomplished an analysis upon the descriptive characteristics or attributes of the idols (Fig. 32–37) in order to draw an image of the typology of the idols and their representation.

Masks of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 2)

Table 2 presents the seriation of the types of masks and the stations were they have been discovered. It can be noticed that the most frequent type of mask was M1. The

[43] Angeleski 2008: 14, 23-27, tab. 1-8, 2012: 145, tab. 147-157.
[44] Zdravkovski 2004; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 26/10; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009, 141-145, 151-153, nr. 37, 39-41, 44, 45.
[45] Roska 1936, fig. 87/14, 88/2, 9.
[46] Gimbutas 1976, fig. 208/141.
[47] Vasić 1932, I/95; 1936, pl. III/70, 83, 113, 161, 160, 297.
[48] Temelkoski and Mitkoski 2001; 2005; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 36/20.
[49] Korošec and Korošec 1973, pl. XI/3, 5, Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009, 147, nr. 24.
[50] Grbić et alii 1960; Simoska and Sanev 1977; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 27/11.
[51] Lazarovici Gh. 1969; 1977, pl. X/24, XX/7, 13.
[52] Sanev and Stamenova 1989; Koliштrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 25/9.
[53] Simoska and Sanev 1975, 1976.
[54] Angeleski 2008: 14, tab. 1, 2012: 146, 195-200, pl. 18-23, tab. 147.

discoveries from Liubcova[55] have clearly demonstrated what has already been affirmed, that the idols are portrayed with masks.

TABLE 2			*MASK TYPE*								
STATION	*PHASE*	*Pent*	*M1*	*M6*	*M4*	*M4a*	*M5*	*M7*	*M2*	*M3*	*Fal*
Velušina	*Velušina-Porodin*	*2*									
Vinča	*Vinča*	*3*	*1*	*1*							
Angelci	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*		*1*								
Porodin	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*		*1*								
Suvodol	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*		*1*								
Madžari	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III*		*4*	*1*							
Gornea	*Vinča;A3*		*1*								
Gornea	*Vinča;A3/B1*			*1*							
Vinča	*Vinča;A1*			*1*							
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II*		*1*							*1*	
Vinča	*Vinča;B1*		*6*	*8*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*3*	*6*	*1*	*1*
Vinča	*Vinča;A*		*4*	*11*	*5*	*3*	*2*		*8*	*4*	
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*			*1*						*1*	
Gornea	*Vinča;A*							*1*	*2*	*2*	
Gornea	*Vinča;A1*								*1*		
Gornea	*Vinča;A2*								*1*	*1*	
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik*										*1*

The most numerous and powerful connections can be observed between Velušina,[56] Vinča,[57] Angelci,[58] Porodin,[59] Suvodol,[60] Madžari,[61] Gornea,[62] Anzabegovo.[63] Here the synchronisms between the vinčian stations from Serbia and the Romanian Banat are also traceable. M1 is a type of mask with pointed chin and flat crown. The idols have masks probably worn by the great priestesses because the idols were found in a context of ritual deposition.

[55] Lazarovici Gh. 1977.
[56] Simoska and Sanev 1977.
[57] Vasić 1936, T. III/101, 109, 111, 138.
[58] Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 25/9.
[59] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 59/43.
[60] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 61/45.
[61] Sanev 1981, 1988; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 26/10, 54/38, 55/39, 57/41.
[62] Lazarovici Gh. 1977, pl. X-XX.
[63] Gimbutas 1976, fig. 11/145, 219/163.

In Macedonia, such a tradition has been noticed among the inventory of the discoveries from the Bronze Age (e.g., the golden masks from the area of Lake Ohrid) that are part of the inventory of many graves of the so-called kings of Pelasgi (a population that lived in the Pelegonija valley from south-western Macedonia). Again we are probably dealing with some local traditions passed on from grandmother to granddaughter, from one generation to the other.[64]

Table 3		*BACK-NECK TYPE*																			
STATION	*PHASE*	*C3*	*C5*	*C9*	*C4a*	*C7*	*C15*	*C7d1*	*C2a*	*C7a*	*C2*	*C7c*	*C4*	*C1*	*C7b*	*C7d*	*C*	*C7e*	*C8*	*C6*	*C6a*
Porodin	*Velušina - Porodin; II*	*2*																			
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II*	*1*			*1*																
Gornea	*Vinča;A*	*2*	*1*	*1*		*1*															
Madžari	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III*				*1*																
Gornea	*Vinča;A1*					*1*															
Vinča	*Vinča;B1*		*1*	*1*	*1*	*6*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*2*	*1*	*1*		
Gornea	*Vinča;A2*					*1*					*1*										
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*					*1*				*1*										*1*	
Madžari	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV*										*1*										
Vinča	*Vinča;A*				*1*				*1*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*1*	*3*	*3*	*3*	*5*	*6*	*2*	*1*	*2*
Vinča	*Vinča;A1*																*1*				
Vinča	*Vinča;*												*1*						*1*		
Gornea	*Vinča;A3*																		*1*		
Gornea	*Vinča;A3/B1*																			*1*	
Stobi	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV*																				*1*

[64] Angeleski 2008: 14, 15, 24, tab. 2, 2012: 146, 201, pl. 24, tab. 148.

Back-neck of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 3)

Table 3 contains the seriation concerning the types of back-neck, resulting in a variety of their typology. The representation of the back-neck is important because sometimes the mask is highlighted in profile. Also here, we could speak of a common tradition for making the idols in BAC. The table shows a natural evolution in the upper right side, next appearing some deviations marking local evolutions. In the bottom left side, an almost natural evolution is presented.[65]

Eyes of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 4)

The eyes of the idols are illustrated in such a way that they can transmit the spiritual state in which the carrier of the mask is in. There is a semantic interference between the verbs "to know" and "to see," reflecting the significance of the eye as a characteristic of supreme knowledge.[66]

Below is the typology of the idols' eyes, the eyes always having a particular significance. Table 4 presents associations between the material from Turdaş,[67] Vinča,[68] Anzabegovo,[69] Čair,[70] Madžari,[71] Stobi,[72] Suvodol,[73] Liubcova,[74] Balta Sărată,[75] and Zorlenţ.[76]

The almost closed eyes of the idols might suggest death, or that the idol is a representation of a dead person, with the exception of those who are destined to watch over, or to guard, illustrated by the fact that the face is tilted upward or oblique.

The most common type of eye is O1, representing the incision-shaped closed eye. Some of the idols have the head broken off their shoulders, a fact which would normally suggest that the person that was represented or to whom the idol belonged was no longer living and that the idol lost its functionality.[77]

More recent researches have shown that breaking the statuettes was a deliberate ritual procedure not an accidental one. This is particularly true for the statuettes representing females, which were rarely found intact.[78]

---

[65] Angeleski 2008: 15, 24, tab. 3, 2012: 144, 164, 202, 203, pl. 25, 26, tab. 149.
[66] Evseev 1994: 64.
[67] Lazarovici Gh. 1977, fig. 99/49, 135/10, 15, 16, 137/14, 138/2, 5, 139/12, 13, 20, 21.
[68] Vasić 1932, T. I/100, I/26, I/92; 1936, III/112, III/132, III/134, III/137.
[69] Korošec and Korošec 1973, T. XI/11; Gimbutas 1976, fig. 210/144, 211/145; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005..
[70] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 69/53.
[71] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 57/41, 54/38.
[72] Sanev 1992; Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 31/15.
[73] Zdravkovski 2004; Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 61/45.
[74] Lazarovici Gh. 1977, 22/1.
[75] Idem, III/2a.
[76] Ibidem
[77] Angeleski 2008: 15, 24, 2012: 145, 146, 204, 205, pl. 27, 28, tab. 150.
[78] Naumov 2010: 3.

TABLE 4		EYES TYPE														
STATION	PHASE	O1	O11	O12	O13	O17a	O1a	O4	O10	O17	O3	O5	O8	O2	O7	O6
Turdaş	Turdaş;A	11									1					
Vinča	Vinča;B1	4	3	2	4		1	2			3	3				
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;	1														
Čair	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III	1														
Dolno Palčište	Anzabegovo-Vršnik; III					1										
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III	4				2			2							
Mogila	Velušina-Porodin;III					1										
Optičari	Velušina-Porodin;II/III					1										
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II/III					1										
Stobi	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV	1														
Suvodol	Velušina-Porodin;II/III	1														
Vinča	Vinča;				1		1									
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II	1				1			1							
Vinča	Vinča;A	3	3	1	4	2	1	2		1	19	12	1	1	1	
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II	1												1		
Gornea	Vinča;A2											1		1		
Gornea	Vinča;A3								1					1		
Liubcova	Vinča;A										1			1		
Balta Sarata	Vinča;A													1		
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV													1		
Zorlenţ	Vinča;A													1		
Gornea	Vinča;A1														1	
Gornea	Vinča;A													1	1	1
Gornea	Vinča;A3/B1															1

Noses of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 5)

Table 5, which deals with the representation of the way the nose is portrayed, shows that on the upper side from right to left towards the bottom, there is an almost natural

evolution and happening in the same time between the Neolithic sites from Macedonia, Serbia and Romania.[79] This is actually the great areal of the Vinča culture spread over vast regions, with a great number of idols.[80]

TABLE 5		*NOSE TYPE*										
STATION	*PHASE*	*N7*	*N3*	*N4*	*N4a*	*N5b*	*N3a*	*N5a*	*N2*	*N5*	*N1*	*N6*
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;*	*1*										
Optičari	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*	*1*										
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*			*1*	*1*		*1*					
Čair	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III*		*1*									
Dolno Palčište	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III*		*1*									
Optičari	*Velušina-Porodin;II*		*1*	*1*								
Velušina	*Velušina-Porodin;II*		*1*									
Anzabegovo	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II*		*1*		*1*							
Angelci	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*			*1*								
Caska	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV*			*1*								
Madžari	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV*			*1*								
Madžari	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III*	*1*	*2*		*1*		*1*	*1*	*1*		*1*	
Porodin	*Velušina-Porodin;II*		*1*			*1*	*1*					
Vinča	*Vinča;B1*	*1*	*4*	*2*		*3*	*1*	*6*	*2*	*2*	*4*	*1*
Velisina	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*							*1*				
Vinča	*Vinča;A*		*4*	*3*			*1*	*6*	*6*	*5*	*8*	*1*
Gurgur Tumba	*Velušina-Porodin;II*									*1*		
Suvodol	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*										*1*	
Vinča	*Vinča;*									*1*	*1*	
Mogila	*Velušina-Porodin;III*											*1*
Porodin	*Velušina-Porodin;II/III*											*1*
Stobi	*Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV*											*1*

Necks of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 6)

The same situation can be seen in the typology of the necks from Table 6, where it can be observed that most of the connections are of type G1, G2 and G5. The links are mainly between the vinčian type and those from Anzabegovo–Vršnik from Macedonia,[81] probably indicating a local mythology.[82]

[79] Lazarovici Gh. 1977, 22/1.
[80] Angeleski 2008: 15, 25, tab. 4; Angeleski 2012: 145, 148, 206, 207, pl. 29, 30, tab. 151.
[81] Lazarovici Gh. 1977, 22/1.
[82] Angeleski 2008: 15, 26, tab. 6, 2012, 145, 148, 208, pl. 31, tab. 152.

TABLE 6		NECK TYPE						
STATION	PHASE	G2	G1	G5	G5a	G3	G4	G6
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;	1						
Caska	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV	1						
Gornea	Vinča;A1	1						
Gornea	Vinča;A3	2						
Gornea	Vinča;A	3	2					
Gornea	Vinča;A2		1					
Gornea	Vinča;A3/B1		1					
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III	1		2		1		
Vinča	Vinča;A	5	7	11		1	2	1
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II		1	2				
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV	1		1	2			
Grgur Tumba	Velušina-Porodin;II			1				
Vinča	Vinča;A1			1				
Optičari	Velušina-Porodin;II		1		1			
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II			1	1			
Vinča	Vinča;B1	4	3	5	3	3	6	3
Vinča	Vinča;		1					1
Suvodol	Velušina-Porodin;II/III					1		
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II/III						1	
Stobi	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV						1	
Velušina	Velušina-Porodin;II							1

Arms of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 7)

The arms (Tab.of the idols follow a natural evolution, presented in Table 7, proving that the most powerful connections are those marked by the type of arms B1b, B2, B1 and Ba1.[83] The table shows synchronisms between the settlements from Vinča,[84] Anzabegovo,[85] Gornea,[86] Čaška,[87] Rug Bair,[88] Porodin,[89] and Velušina.[90]

[83] Lazarovici Gh. 1977.
[84] Vasić 1936, T. II/183, III/160, 182.
[85] Gimbutas 1976, fig. 211/146, 225/178.
[86] Lazarovici 1977, pl. XX/6.
[87] Kolištrkoska-Nasteva 2005, pl. 24/8.
[88] Gimbutas 1976, fig. 208/141.

TABLE 7		ARMS TYPE														
STATION	PHASE	B1c1	B1b	B4a	B4c	B6	B5	B5a	B4b	B4b1	B2	B4	B1a	B1	B3	Ba1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;	1	1													
Gornea	Vinča;A2		1													
Optičari	Velušina-Porodin;II		2													
Stobi	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV		1													
Suvodol	Velušina-Porodin;II/III						1									
Vinča	Vinča;A	4	1	3	3	2	3	4	1	1	2			1	1	1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV	1	1			1	1	2			1			1		
Vinča	Vinča;B1		2	1	1		4	4	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	
Gornea	Vinča;A		1									1			1	
Gornea	Vinča;A3										1		1	1		
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II										1			1		
Caska	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV													1		
Rug Bair	Anzabegovo-VršnikIc/II													1		
Velušina	Velušina-Porodin;II													1		
Dzuniver	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV													1		
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III														1	1
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II													1		4
Govrlevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II/III															1
Mačevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III															1
Mrševci	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III															1

The deviations from the main diagonal are caused by some types from the phases Vinča A, B from Serbia, Banat and Transylvania which preserved old shapes. The idols have

[89] Grbić et alii 1960; Simoska and Sanev 1977; Temelkoski and Mitkoski 2001, 2005; Koništrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 27/11, 28/13.
[90] Koništrkoska-Nasteva 2005, fig. 21/5.

sometimes been perforated in order to be hung on the walls of the sanctuaries during the religious processions.

There are some hypotheses, based on ethnographical analyses, not proven though, that they have been sacralized while the gods were "feasting" from the oblations offered in the sanctuaries.[91]

Breasts of the anthropomorphic idols (Table 8)

The breasts of the idols have sometimes been rendered very schematically. These represented the symbol of maternity or the primordial springs of nourishment of humankind.[92]

In Table 8 the analysis on the typology of the breasts is presented, although this is of no great significance since the great majority is of type S1. This is also due to the small number of pieces that were published or charged in the database.[93]

TABLE 8		*BREAST TYPE*				
STATION	PHASE	S1c	S1	S1a	S1b	S2
Dzuniver	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV	1				
Vinča	Vinča;A	1	3			
Angelci	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV		I			
Mačevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III		I			
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III		2			
Mršević	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III		1			
Suvodol	Velušina-Porodin;II/III		1			
Vinča	Vinča;A1		1			
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV		3			
Gornea	Vinča;A3		3	1		
Gornea	Vinča;A		6			1
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II		3		2	
Vinča	Vinča;B1		1		1	
Velušina	Velušina-Porodin;II				1	
Govrlevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II/III					1

The posteriors (Table 9) and legs (Table 10) of the anthropomorphic idols

[91] Angeleski 2008: 15, 16, tab. 7. 2012: 147, 148, 209, pl. 32, tab153.
[92] Gimbutas et alii 1989, 33.
[93] Angeleski 2008: 16, tab. 8, 2012, 147, 148, 210, pl.33, tab. 154.

TABLE 9		POSTERIOR TYPE											
STATION	PHASE	F1a2	F1a1	F4	F1b	F1	F3	F5a	F4a	F5	F2	F1a	F6
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II	1	1										
Velušina	Velušina-Porodin;II		1										
Dzuniver	;Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV		2										
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV	1	2	1	1	1							
Vrbjanska Čuka	Velušina-Porodin;II			1									
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II			2	1								
Angelci	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV			1	1								
Mačevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III			1	1								
Gurgur Tumba	Velušina-Porodin;II				1								
Mogila	Velušina-Porodin;II				1								
Lopate	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV					1							
Gornea	Vinča;A3			1		2	1				1		
Vinča	Vinča;A		2	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	1	2	1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III							1					
Vinča	Vinča;B1			1	1		1		2	1		1	1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;						1	1	1				
Gornea	Vinča;A					1	1			2	3	1	
Gornea	Vinča;A1									1			
Vinča	Vinča;										1		
Gornea	Vinča;A1/A2											1	
Gornea	Vinča;A2											1	
Gornea	Vinča;A2?											1	
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;Ib												1
Optičari	Velušina-Porodin;II												2

TABLE 10		LEG TYPE										
STATION	PHASE	P1c	P1d	P4	P2c	P1b	P3	P2	P2B	P1	P5	P2a
Gurgur Tumba	Velušina-Porodin;II	1										
Mogila	Velušina-Porodin;II	1										
Velušina	Velušina-Porodin;II	1										
Vinča	Vinča;	1										
Porodin	Velušina-Porodin;II	2		1								
Mačevo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III	1	1									
Ali Čair	Velušina-Porodin;II		1									
Lopate	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV		1									
Vrbjanska Čuka	Velušina-Porodin;II		1									
Vinča	Vinča;B1		1		1			4		1		
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV			2		1	1	3		1		
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;II			1		1		3				
Vinča	Vinča;A		1	1	2		5	6		4		1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;			1				1		2	2	
Gornea	Vinča;A3			1			1	1	1	3		1
Anzabegovo	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;Ib					1						
Angelci	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV							1				
Gornea	Vinča;A2							1				
Gornea	Vinča;A2?							1				
Madžari	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV							1				
Rug Bair	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;Ic/II							1				
Gornea	Vinča;A1/A2									1		
Rug Bair	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;IV									1		
Stobi	Anzabegovo-Vršnik;III/IV										1	
Gornea	Vinča;A							3		2		1

Tables 9 and 10 present the seriation of the posteriors and legs of the anthropomorphic idols. In these tables, a natural evolution concerning the type of posteriors as well as the type of leg can be observed. Here, as well as in the preceding cases, there is a similarity that we would

call "of vinčian type" between the stations from the Danubian region and those from Anzabegovo–Vršnik in Macedonia.[94] The most powerful links, from the results of Table 155, are associated with the types of posteriors with the codes F1a1, F4, F1b, F1 and F3. For the legs of the anthropomorphic idols we observe, from Table 156, that the most powerful connections are those with the P1c, P1d, P4 and P2.

Little Shrines

The little shrines (Fig. 22–28),[95] which had an important role in the spiritual Neolithic life, were used for burning sacred liquid, but also to make light or to keep the fire in the house. A possible typology of the little shrines could be established based on the type of receptacle, the number of legs, but also specific features like dividing them into zoomorphic and anthropomorphic types (the case of this study).

Fig. 22-23: Madžari (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 24: Velušina (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 25: Vršnik (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 26-27: Cerje (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Another typology could be established by taking in account the shapes: (in general) triangular (Karanovo, Parţa, Gornea, Ovčarovo, Gradešnica, Elešnica, Hotnica, Liubcova, Kazanlâk), rectangular (Zerelia, Vinča, Strelice, Kumasa, Gradešnica), and little altar table pieces (Ocna Sibiului, Zorlenţ, Vinča, Karanovo III).[96]

[94] Angeleski 2012: 147, 148, 213,214, pl 36, 37, tab. 155, 156.
[95] Zdravkovski 2004; Stojanova Kanzurova and Zdravkovski 2009: 219-221, 229, nr. 74, 75, 79.
[96] Lazarovici C. M. 2003: 85.

Fig. 28: Velušina (after Zdravkovski 2004).

A possible typology of the little shrines could be established based on the receptacle, the number of legs, but also specific features like dividing them into zoomorphic and anthropomorphic types (the case of this study). Another typology could be established by taking in account the shapes: (in general) triangular (Karanovo, Parţa, Gornea, Ovčarovo, Gradešnica, Elešnica, Hotnica, Liubcova, Kazanlâk), rectangular (Zerelia, Vinča, Strelice, Kumasa, Gradešnica), and little altar table pieces (Ocna Sibiului, Zorlenţ, Vinča, Karanovo III).[97]

A circle, which might represent the universe was sometimes placed on three or four legs, maybe suggesting the holy trinity (grandmother, mother, daughter, or couple and child, etc.) which has continued into the Christian period.[98]

The seriation in Table 11 of the Neolithic little shrines shows the analogies between the phases based on the shapes of little shrines. Because of insufficient materials, the correlations are not very tight or more elaborate, so the last three stations remain uncorrelated. Still, a certain Macedonian specific/characteristic can be outlined. Unfortunately the database that we have used comprises data from the Danube region only where Magda and Gheorghe Lazarovici have elaborated a typology, but the issue is still not entirely covered. Recent monographs in Bulgaria have also been published but we have not yet had the time to encode and charge them into the database.[99]

Fig. 29: Madžari (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 30: Madžari (after Zdravkovski 2004).

Fig. 31: Porodin (after Zdravkovski 2004).

[97] Lazarovici C. M. 2003: 85.
[98] Angeleski 2008: 16, 22, figs. 22-31, 2012: 148, 149, figs. 6/22-31.
[99] Lazarovici Gh. 1971, fig. 4; 1979, pl. X, XXIII; Mantu Lazarovici C. M. 2002; Lazarovici C. M. 2003.

TABLE 11	*LITTLE SHRINE TYPE*						
STATION	1b	1ae	1a	1d	1ab	2b	2a
Anzabegovo	2	2	1				
Podromos			1	1	1		
Pavlovic				1			
Kara Bujuk-Dupnica					1		
Karanovo I					1		
Pavlovoc					1		
Mogila						1	
Gura Baciului						2	
Cronokalačka Bara							1
Servia							1
Zelenikovo							1

As can be seen from Table 11, the most elaborate connections are between the little shrines from Mogila,[100] Gura Baciului,[101] Crnokalačka Bara,[102] Servia,[103] and Zelenikovo.[104] Similar pieces are found at Cârcea, Donja Branjevina, and other sites. Some of them suggest elements from Neolithic architecture (Fig. 24, 25, 28);[105] others suggest means of transportation of the liquid on long distances on a terrain with irregularities, or different materials with commercial purposes, or sacerdotal purposes (oil, salt, incense, etc.) (Fig. 29–31).[106] We wish to mention that the Fig. 24, 25 and 28 suggest constructions suspended on legs, as met in the literature;[107] these correspond to the discoveries from Zlastrana on the shore of Lake Ohrid where traces of pillars for suspended houses have been discovered.[108]

In conclusion, we could underline a natural evolution of the early Balkano-Anatolian Chalcolitic from Macedonia, but in parallel with the neighboring areas, especially from Serbia and Banat. A fascinating fact is that, for over 8000 years, a well developed society, with an organized spiritual life existed, not only on today's territory of Macedonia, but also in the immediate vicinity, in areas like Serbia and Romania.

First of all, the existence of community sanctuaries, different from the rest of the sanctuary models (Fig. 1–3), clearly shows an internal organization of this community, which is also proven by the existence of the MS types of shrines, which served at processions. Also, the idea is sustained by the existence of the third class, the family of little shrines, idols and amulets for different processions supposedly for the purification of the house and chasing evil spirits, for good luck and so on.[109]

[100] Sanev and Simoska 1975, pl. 26/70.
[101] Vlassa 1968, pl. 374, 3/17; 1976, 3/7.
[102] Tasić and Tomić. 1969, pl. 2/6.
[103] Heurthly 1939, pl. 6/9.
[104] Galović 1967, T. VII, pl. 2/3.
[105] Angeleski 2008: 16, 22, 2012: 149, figs. 6/24, 25, 28.
[106] Ibidem: 149, figs 6/22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31.
[107] Mantu Lazarovici C. M. 2002; Lazarovici C. M.-Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 2007.
[108] Kuzman 1990.
[109] Angeleski 2008: 11-27, 2012: 140-149, 195-214, pl. 18-37.

Fig. 32: Anthropomorphic idols typology (Angeleski 2012: 195-199, pl. 18-22).

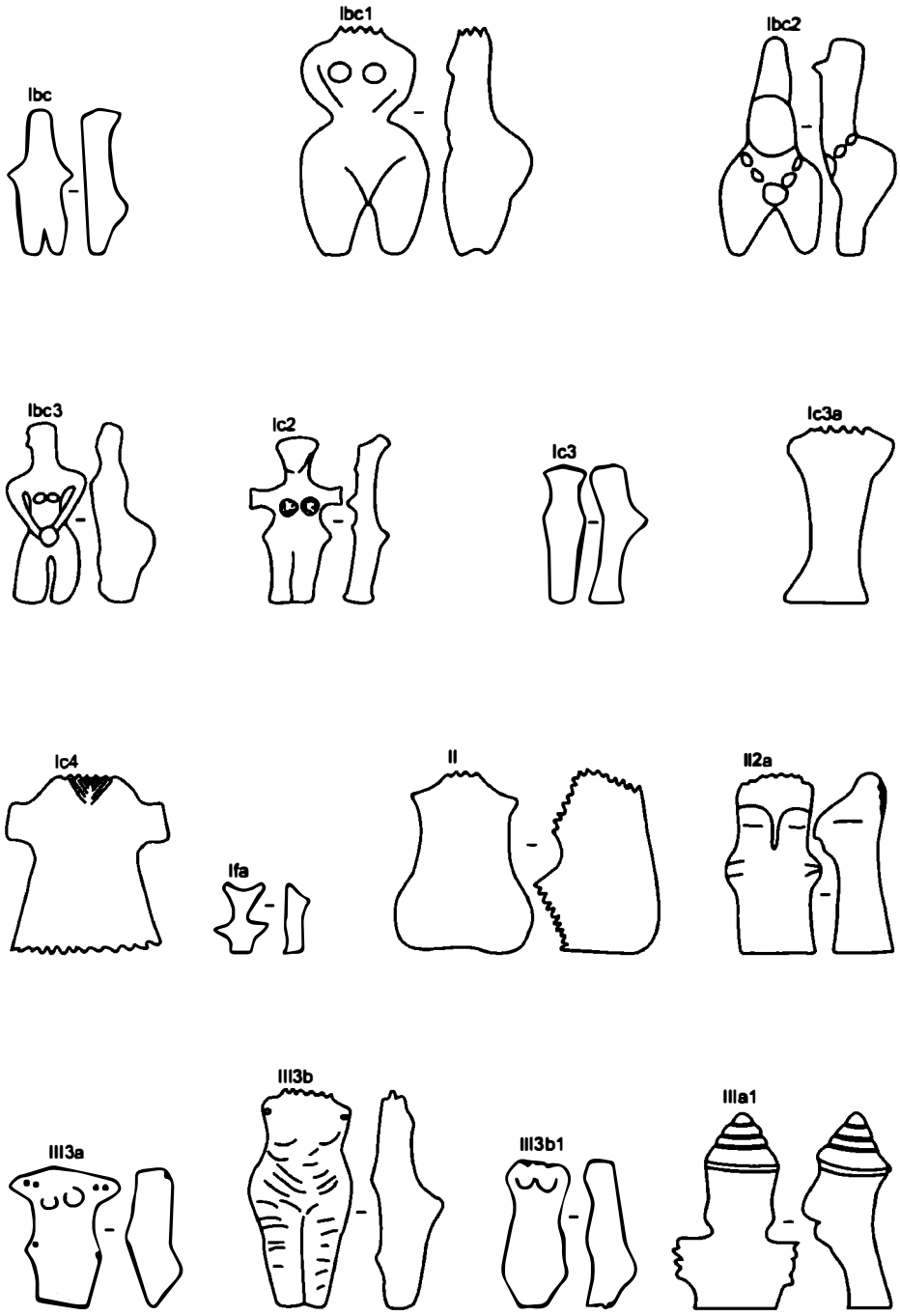


Fig. 33: Anthropomorphic idols typology (Angeleski 2012: 195-199, pl. 18-22).

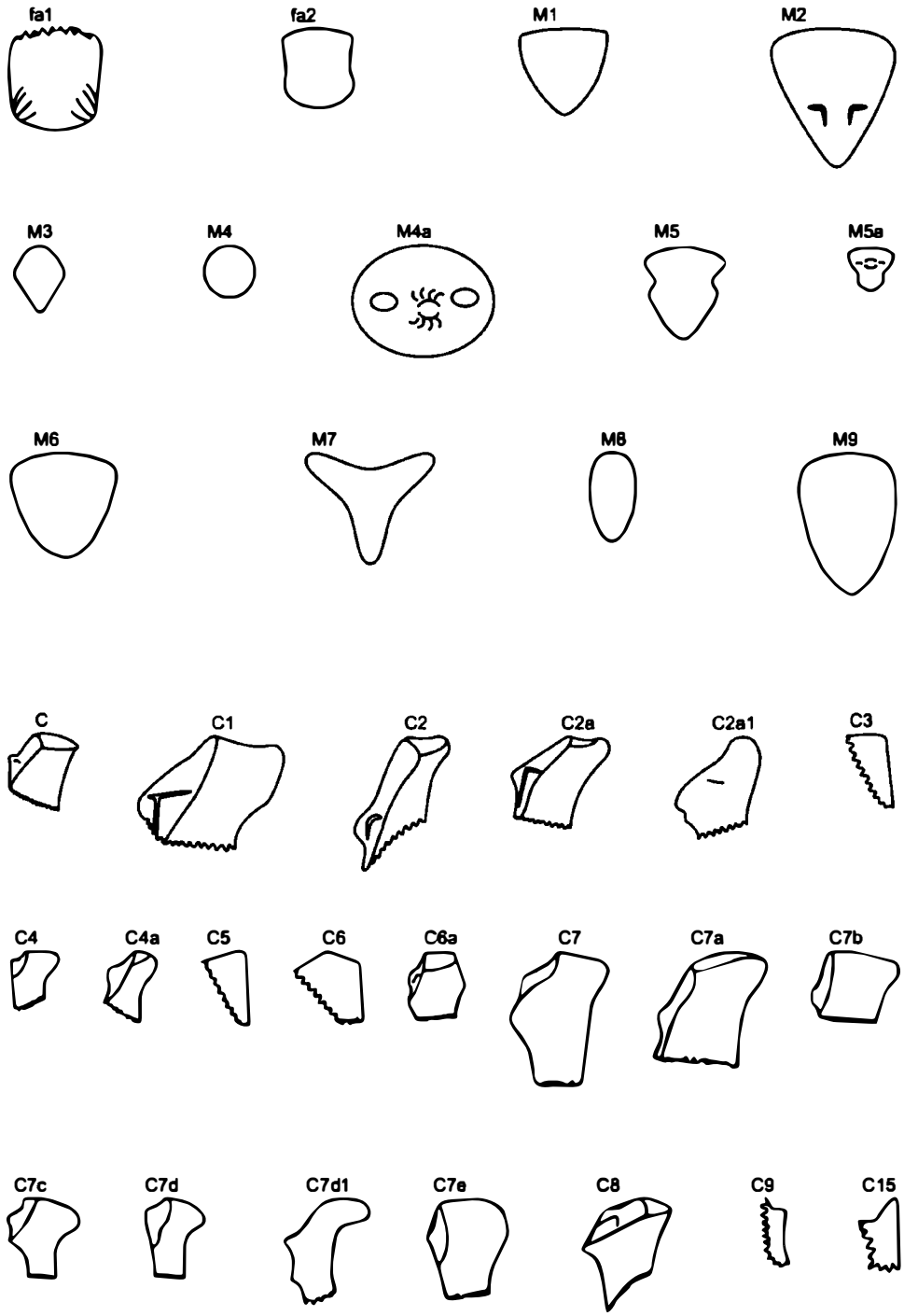


Fig. 34: Anthropomorphic typology of f and M=Masks; C=Back-necks (Angeleski 2012: 201-203, pl. 24-26).

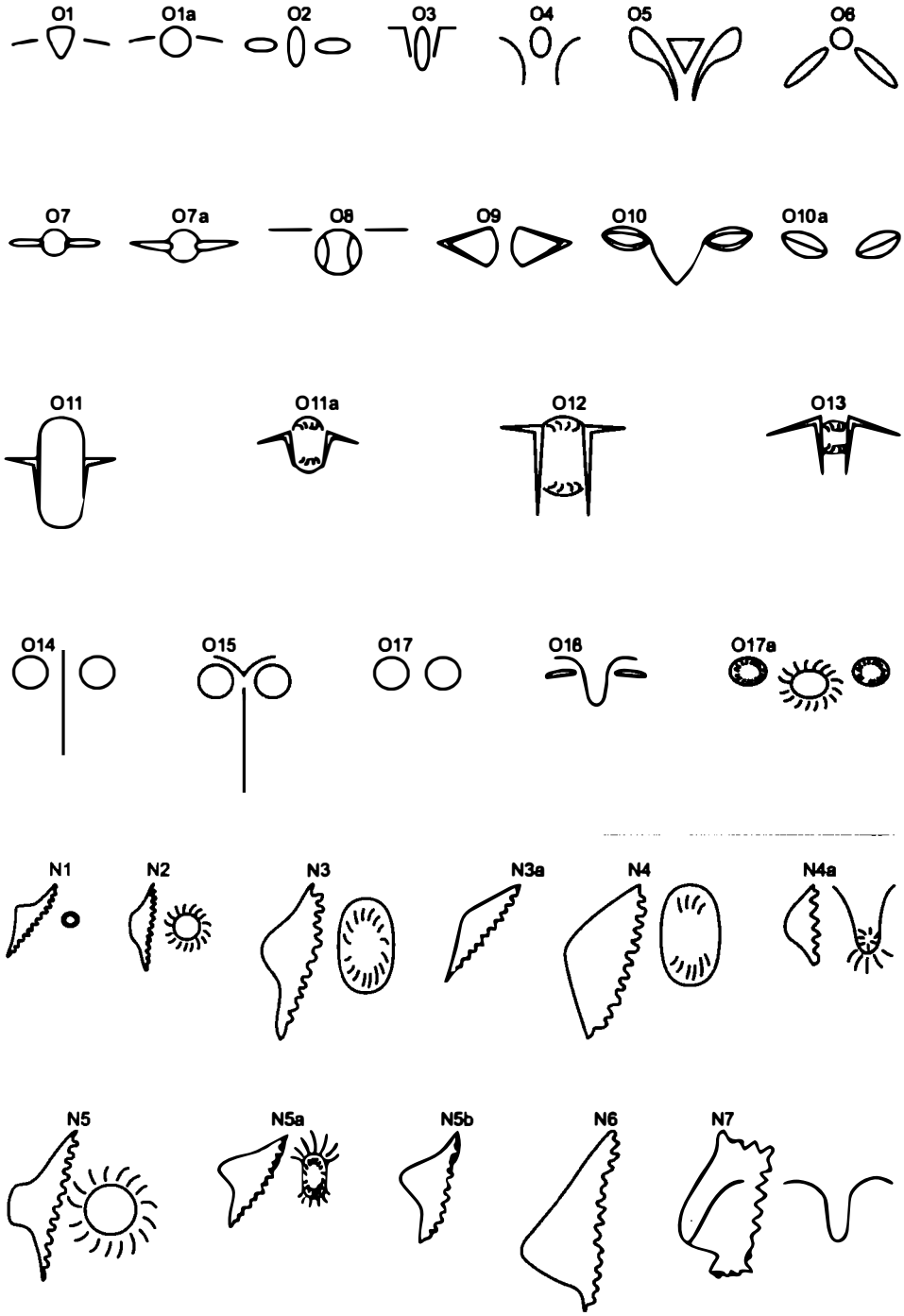


Fig. 35: Anthropomorphic idols typology of: O=Eyes; N=Noses (Angeleski 2012: 204-207, pl. 27-30).

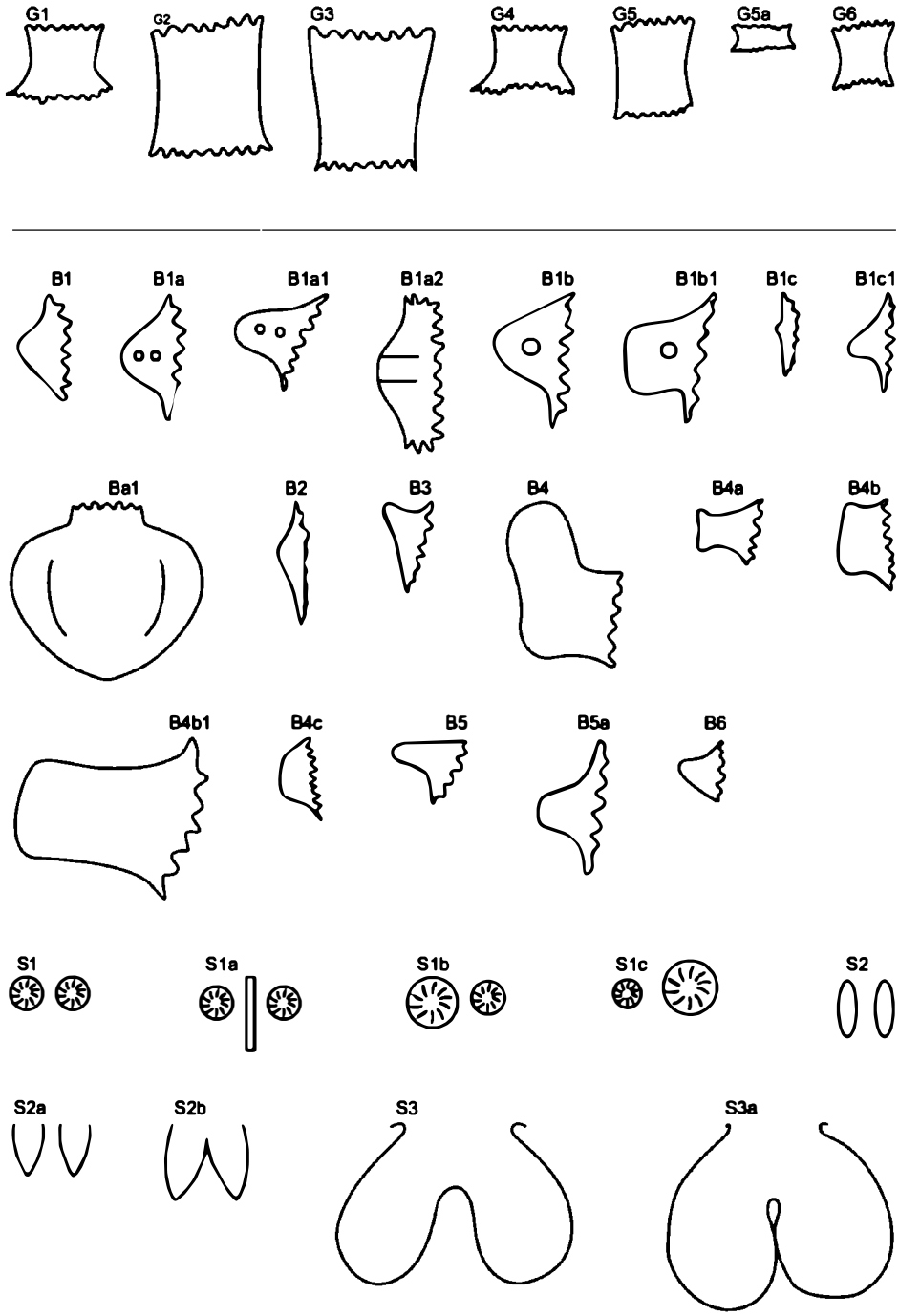


Fig. 36: Anthropomorphic typology of: G=Necks; B=Arms; S=Breasts (Angeleski 2012: 208-210, pl. 31-33).

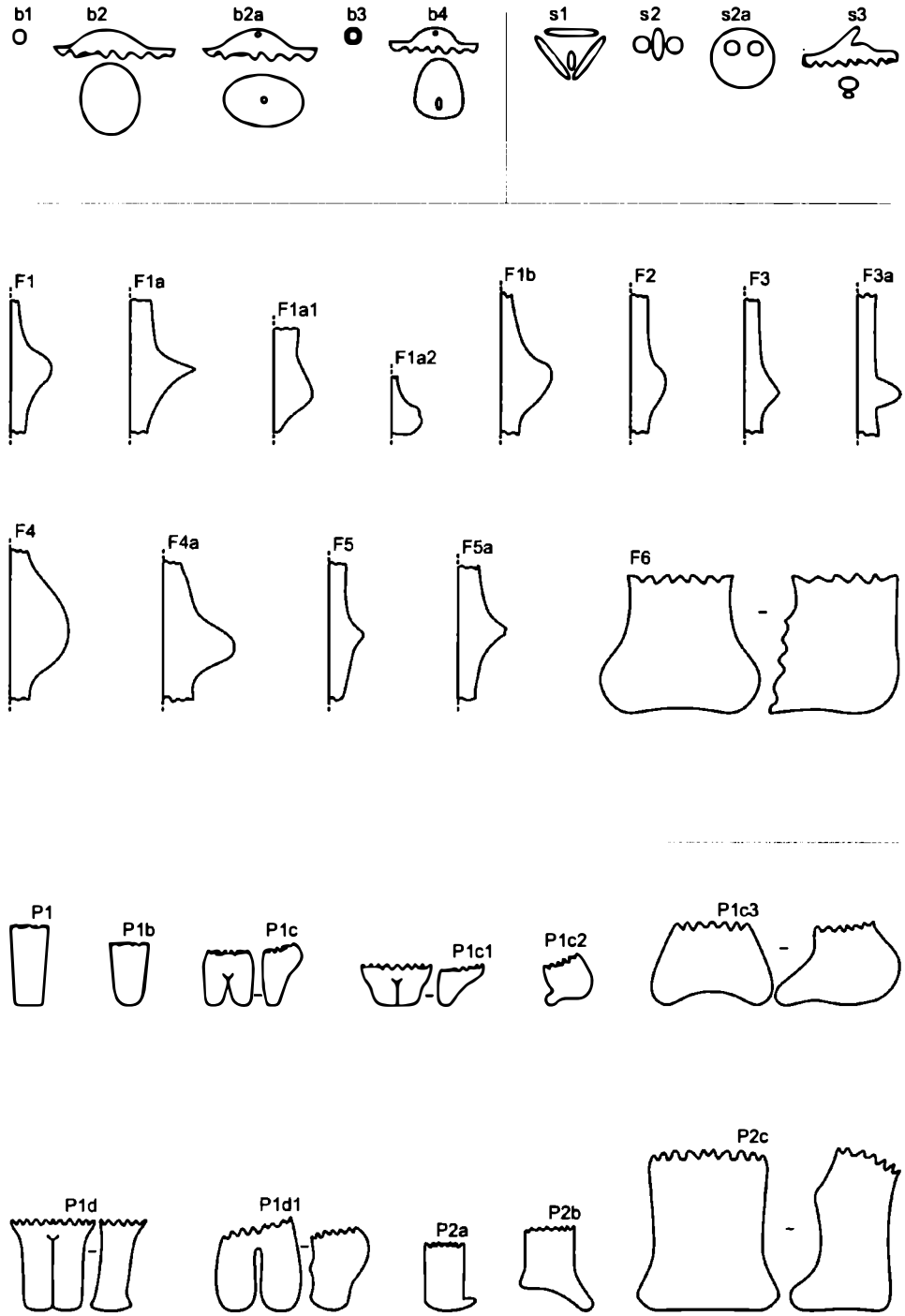


Fig. 37: Anthropomorphic idols typology of: b=Umbilicus; s=Sexes; F=Posteriors; P=Legs (Angeleski 2012, 211-214, pl. 34-37).

References

Angeleski, S. 2005. *Noi contributii la datarea neoliticului din Macedonia.* Tibiscum XII. Caransebeş.

_____2008. *Ritualuri de întemeiere ale sanctuarelor neolitice din Macedonia.* Corviniana XII. Hunedoara.

_____2011a. *Analythical Review of the Macedonian Neolithic.* MAA 20. Skopje.

_____2011b. *Pottery based chronological and cultural connections between the Neolithic settlements from Macedonia and Transylvania.* AMP 31. Zalău.

_____2012. *Early and Middle Neolithic in Macedonia (links with the neighboring areas).* BAR. International Series. 2332. Oxford

Bilbija, M. 1986. *Cerje, Neolitsko naselje.* AP 26. Ljubljana.

Čausidis, N. et. alii. 1995. *Makedonija.* Cultural Heritage. Skopje.

Evseev, I. 1994. *Dicţionar de simboluri şi arhetipuri culturale.* Timişoara.

Galović, R. 1967. *Zelenikovo-Neolitsko naselje kod Skoplja.* ZNM VI. Beograd.

Georgiev, Z., and M., Bilbija. 1984. *Neolitska naselba kaj Govrlevo.* Kulturno nasledstvo lX. Skopje.

Gimbutas, M. 1974. *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe.* London: Thames and Hudson.

_____1976. *Neolithic Macedonia.* Monumenta Archaeologica, vol. 1. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology UCLA.

_____1984. *The Goddesses of the Old Europe.* London: Thames and Hudson.

_____1991. *The Civilization of Goddess.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Gimbutas, M. et alii. 1989. *Achilleion. A Neolithic Settlement in the Thessaly, Greece, 6400-5600 BC.* Monumenta Archaeologica 14. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, UCLA.

Grbić, M. et alii. 1960. *Porodin.* Bitolj (Bitola).

Gusev, S. A. 1995. *Hausmodelle der Trupolje-Kultur.* PZ 70. Berlin-Leipzig.

Heurtley, W. A. 1939. *Prehistoric Macedonia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kolištrkoska-Nasteva, I. 2005. *Praistoriskite Dami vo Makedonija.* Katalog. Skopje.

Korošec, P., and J. Korošec. 1973. *Predistoriska naselba Barutnica kaj Amzibegovo vo Makedonija.* Prilep.

Kuzman, P. 1990. *Zlastrana-neolitska naselba vo Ohrid.* MAA 11. Skopje.

Lazarovici C. M., 2003. *Pre-Writing Signs on Neo-Eneolithic Altars.* In *Early Symbolic System for Communication in Southeasth Europe.* L. Nikolova, ed. BAR International Series 1139, v. I, Oxford.

Lazarovici, C. M., and Lazarovici, Gh. 2006. *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România I. Neolithicul.* BAM IV. Iaşi: Editura Trinitas.

_____2007. *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România,* vol. II, *Epoca cuprului.* BAM IV. Iaşi: Editura Trinitas.

Lazarovici, C. M. et alii. 2004. *Ruginoasa, com. Ruginoasa, jud. Iasi, punct Dealu Draghici.* CCAR. Bucureşti.

Lazarovici, Gh. 1969. *Cultura Starcevo-Criş în Banat.* AMN VI. Cluj-Napoca.

_____1971. *Neoliticul timpuriu în România.* AMP. 8. Zalău.

_____1977. *Gornea - preistorie.* Reşiţa.

_____2003. *Pâinea, grâul şi râşnitul sacru în Neolitic.* Tibiscum XI. Caransebeş.

_____2004. *Simboluri sacre pe obiecte de cult. Semnificaţii.* Festschrift für Florin Medeleţ. Timişoara.

Lazarovici, Gh., Fl. Draşovean, and Z. Maxim. 2001. *Parţa,* vols. I & II. Timişoara: Waldpress.

Mantu Lazarovici, C. M. 2002. *Sanctuarele Precucuteni-Cucuteni.* ArhMold 25. Iaşi.

Mellaart, J. 1975. *The Neolithic of the Near East.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Mitkoski, A. 2005. *Vrbjanska Ćuka kaj seloto Slavej, Prilepsko.* Zbornik Arheologija 2. Skopje.

Naumov, G. 2010. *Neolithic anthropocentrism: Principles of imagery and the symbolic manifestation of corporeality in the Balkans.* Documenta Praehistorica XXXVII. Ljubljana.

Roska, M. 1936. *La stratigraphie du Neolithique en Transilvanie.* Dolgszeged.

Sanev, V. 1981. *Neolitsko svetilište od Tumba vo s. Madžari.* Katalog. Skopje.

_____ 1975. *Neolitskata naselba Rug Bair kaj s. Gorubinci.* Zbornik IV-V. Štip.

_____1976. *Mlado kameno doba na Makedonija vo dosegašnite arheološki istražuvanja.* Materijali XIV. Prilep.
_____1988. *Neolitsko svetilište od Tumba vo Madžari, Skopsko.* MAA 9. Skopje.
_____1989. *Sredselo/Mrševci.* AP 27. Ljubljana
_____1995. *Neolitskite kulturi vo Makedonija.* CPM 2. Skopje.
Sanev, V. and M. Stamenova. 1989. *Neolitsaka naslba 'Stranata' vo selo Angelci.* Strumica: Zbornik na trudovi.
Saržoski, S., and D. Zdravkovski. 1991. *Tumba vo Dolno Palčište-Tetovo.* MAA 12. Skopje.
Simoska, D., and V. Sanev. 1975. *Neolitska naselba Veluška Tumba kaj Bitola.* MAA 1. Prilep.
_____1976. *Praisorijata vo centralna Pelagonija.* (katalog). Bitola
_____1977. *Neolitska naselba na Mala Tumba kaj selo Trn, Bitola.* MAA 3. Prilep.
Stojanova Kanzurova, E., and D. Zdravkovski. 2009. *Neolithic Art in the Region of the Republic of Macedonia.* A. Šemrov and P. Turk, ed. Ljubljana: Narodni Muzej Slovenije.
Tasić, N., and E. Tomić. 1969. *Crnokalačka Bara, naselje starčevačke i vinčanske kulture.* AI 8. Belgrad.
Temelkoski, D., and A. Mitkoski. 2001. *Neolitski antropomorfni statuetki vo predistoriskata zbirka na Zavod i Muzei Prilep.* Macedonian Heritage 17. Skopje.
_____2005. *Tipovi neolitski žrtvenici vo praistoriskata zbirka na Zavod i muzej – Prilep.* Zbornik Arheologija 2. Skopje.
Vasić, M. 1932. *Praistorijska Vinča,* vol. I. Belgrad.
_____1936. *Praistorijska Vinča,* vols. II-IV. Belgrad.
Vlassa, N. 1968. *Sondajul de salvare de la 'Gura Baciului', com. Baciu, or. Cluj.* AMN V. Cluj.
Zdravkovski, D. 1989. *Arheološki istražuvanja na lokalitetot 'Atici' vo selo Crničani, Gevgelisko.* MAA 10. Skopje.
_____2004. *Sreden neolit vo Gorno Vardarskiot region.* MA. thesis. Skopje.

UNVEILING ZSÓFIA TORMA. THE DIARY OF A WOMAN, AN ARCHAEOLOGIST AND A VISIONARY[1]

LAURA COLTOFEAN

Abstract: *This article reconstructs the personality and life of a remarkable woman, Zsófia Torma, a pioneering Transylvanian archaeologist, who broke the conventions of her time and, with the risk of being ridiculed, ignored and humiliated, dedicated herself to archaeological research, making groundbreaking discoveries that challenged and still challenge the scientific world. The aspects presented in this paper are based on the translation, analysis and interpretation of one of Zsófia Torma's unpublished diaries, which offers us valuable information about her life, thoughts, feelings, frustrations, problems, and scientific imagery, allowing us to discover the woman behind the artifacts, theories, controversies and myths.*

Introduction

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the scene of Hungarian archaeology is troubled by the presence of a very different and special actor: Zsófia Torma, a woman who is not intimidated by the prejudices of her time and contemporaries concerning women, and has the courage to give up family life, dedicating herself to science and struggling for the recognition of her theories and discoveries.

Zsófia Torma (1832-1899)[2] (Fig. 1, Fig. 2), the first female archaeologist of Eastern Europe, is mostly known today among archaeologists, especially for her researches started in 1875 at the well-known Neolithic and Eneolithic site of Turdaş which gives the name of the Turdaş culture, the subject of many heated debates among specialists.

Zsófia Torma's scientific activity was very prolific, consisting in archaeological researches undertaken in Hunedoara County at sites such as Turdaş, Peşterile Nandrului (Nandru Caves), Peşterile Geoagiului (Geoagiu Caves) etc., the richness of which allowed her to create an amazing and unique archaeological collection and museum in her house in the town of Orăştie. The largest part of her collection can be found today at the National History Museum of Transylvania [Muzeul Naţional de Istorie a Transilvaniei] in Cluj-Napoca, as well as in other Romanian (in Deva, Aiud, Sibiu and Sfântu Gheorghe) and European museums (in Budapest,

[1] Since the International Symposium *50 Years of Tărtăria Excavations*, organized in September 2011, some aspects of this paper have been published in the following article: Coltofean, Laura: "When Passion is Stronger than Death... Zsófia Torma's Reflections," in *Brukenthalia. Romanian Cultural History Review* 2, Editura Muzeului Naţional Brukenthal, Sibiu, 2012: 67-77. However, the mentioned article is an analysis of Zsófia Torma's personal notes, revealing her inner world and especially her attitude in front of Death, while the present article is a general presentation of one of Zsófia Torma's diaries, with a focus on the archaeological notes.

[2] In the article that I published in 2012, I mentioned 1840 as Zsófia Torma's year of birth. However, recently found documents prove that she was born in 1832. Therefore, I include the correct year of birth in this article.

Mainz, Munich, Berlin).[3] Zsófia Torma's researches, discoveries and interpretations were considered to be quite controversial by her contemporary archaeologists. Based on the signs and symbols found on the artifacts of her collection, which she considered to belong to an early system of writing, Zsófia Torma proposed a new approach to the interpretation of the Southeast European Neolithic.

The analogies found between the artifacts of her collection and the Near Eastern artifacts led her to the conclusion that the elements of Mesopotamian art and culture were transmitted to the Thracian inhabitants of Troy and Turdaş and survived in the folklore of the Hungarian, German and Romanian peasants.

Fig. 1-2: The only known photograph of Zsófia Torma (after Tulok 1999: 21). Newspaper portrait of Zsófia Torma, published in Vasárnapi Újság 49 (1899): 813. Budapest.

Another important aspect of Zsófia Torma's scientific activity is the use of ethnography and ethnographic analogies in understanding and interpreting both past and present, as well as in establishing a direct connection between them. All these ideas place Zsófia Torma ahead of her contemporaries, transforming her into a visionary.

Despite the fact that Zsófia Torma was ignored and ridiculed by her fellow Hungarian archaeologists, her activity was valued and appreciated by well known European specialists, such

[3] See Anders 1999: 57-80.

as Arthur John Evans, Archibald Henry Sayce, Rudolf Virchow, Heinrich Schliemann, Ludwig Lindenschmit, John Lubbock, Moriz Hoernes, and others. This fact is proven by the content of her vast correspondence.

This study is the result of the translation, analysis, and interpretation of one of Zsófia Torma's unpublished notebooks which can be found at the *National Archives of Hunedoara County* [Direcţia Judeţeană Hunedoara a Arhivelor Naţionale] and belongs to the *Hunedoara County's Society of Historical and Archaeological Sciences – Dr. Zsófia von Torma Fonds* [Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma]. Besides these four notebooks, the five folders of the *Dr. Zsófia von Torma Fonds* also contain some of Zsófia Torma's correspondence with family members and famous researchers of her time, photographs, personal documents, newspaper excerpts, notes, comments and observations on subjects from various domains (archaeology, geology, geography, history, literature, linguistics etc). Initially considered to be archaeological or dig diaries,[4] a closer analysis revealed the fact that at least two of these notebooks are actually Zsófia Torma's personal diaries, containing notes regarding personal aspects and ideas from a great variety of domains.

The diary which is the subject of this paper can be found in *Folder No. 3 (1880-1899)*, between *files 212-275* [Dosarul nr. 3/1880-1899, filele 212-275] of the *Dr. Zsófia von Torma Fonds* and, what is more important, dates from Zsófia Torma's last years of life, offering us interesting information and details about her inner world, more precisely regarding her attitude in front of Death, her regrets and frustrations, her conflicts with her fellow Hungarian archaeologists, her financial, family, and personal problems, as well as about the way she was reading the scientific literature, the type of information she was interested in selecting and extracting from these works.

Zsófia Torma's notebooks offer us the opportunity of getting an insight into the life of this courageous and outstanding pioneer of archaeology, her intimacy, mind, deepest thoughts and feelings. Her notebooks actually allow us to discover the woman, the person behind the artifacts, theories, scientific articles and, of course, the controversies and myths created over time around her.

General considerations

Based on the very few dates of some of her notes and the publication year of the scientific works she mentions, Zsófia Torma's diary can be dated to a general period between 1889 and 1899. However, the majority of the notes seem to date from 1894-1899, from Zsófia Torma's last years of life.

The diary is mostly written in Hungarian, in an elevated style, but it also contains notes in German, French and English, the last two languages being used only in the case of some archaeological notes.

[4] See Luca 2001: 169, 172.

Zsófia Torma's handwriting is extremely untidy and rushed (Fig. 3, Fig. 4). Her phrases are long and tortuous, sometimes without punctuation marks or coherence, with numerous orthographical, morphological and syntactic mistakes, which makes the deciphering, reading and understanding of the ideas quite difficult. Knowing that Zsófia Torma was a highly educated, perfectionist and meticulous woman, these features of her diary and handwriting are quite surprising, but, as I will later prove, the explanation can be found in her extremely nervous, tense, distracted, stressed and depressed state, caused by her family, professional, and financial problems.

Zsófia Torma writes about a great variety of subjects which can be classified into three categories:

1. Personal notes, which include ideas, thoughts about death, life, health, religion, spirituality both on a general and personal level, about family, professional and financial problems;
2. Notes concerning the sociocultural aspects of nineteenth century society;
3. Archaeological and historical notes.

Personal notes

Regarding the personal notes, the diary shows us that Zsófia Torma's last years of life were marked by the imminence and fear of Death (*"The moment which bears my name will soon end"*[5)] which, in her eyes, has antithetic features. In some cases, Death is soothing and seen as a rescuer, for it brings the awaited peace and calm after the battle of life: *"My time has ended, I am leaving. I am leaving without looking back to the battlefield I leave behind and without feeling the excruciating pain under the heaviness of despair [...]"*;[6] *"It is better to die fast and in pain, than live long and in pain."*[7] However, in other cases, Death is terrifying, and life is seen as a treasure which is difficult to separate from: *"My soul was seized with the horrible presentiment of death, and life – this inestimable treasure which eternity offers us only once and which chains us to the breast of nature so tightly that is terrible to separate from it - unwounded before me."*[8]

On the verge of death, Zsófia Torma raises questions about afterlife and reflects on life. For her, life is the *"concatenation of errors, sufferings, deceptions and desperations,"*[9] a constant battle which tires her and finally compels her to surrender, leaving life to fate:

> *My life should be a lesson for everyone: no one should fight for others, no one should waste his/her energy, each should find a home which could offer a secure shelter. The*

[5] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 251.
[6] Ibid., f. 236-237.
[7] Ibid., f. 255.
[8] Ibid., f. 233.
[9] Ibid., f. 252.

worthless battle of life changed the thinking of a woman emancipator towards this vision. From now on, I will leave everything to fate and future.[10]

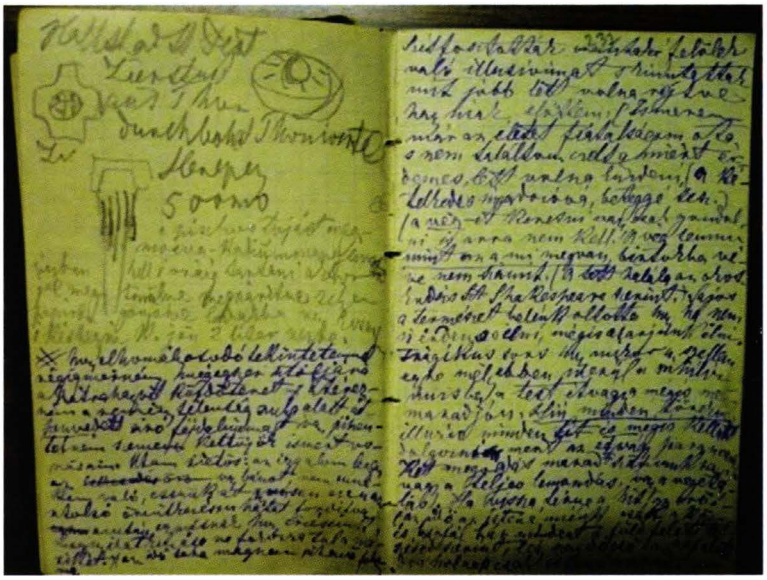


Fig. 3: Pages from Zsófia Torma's diary (f. 237).

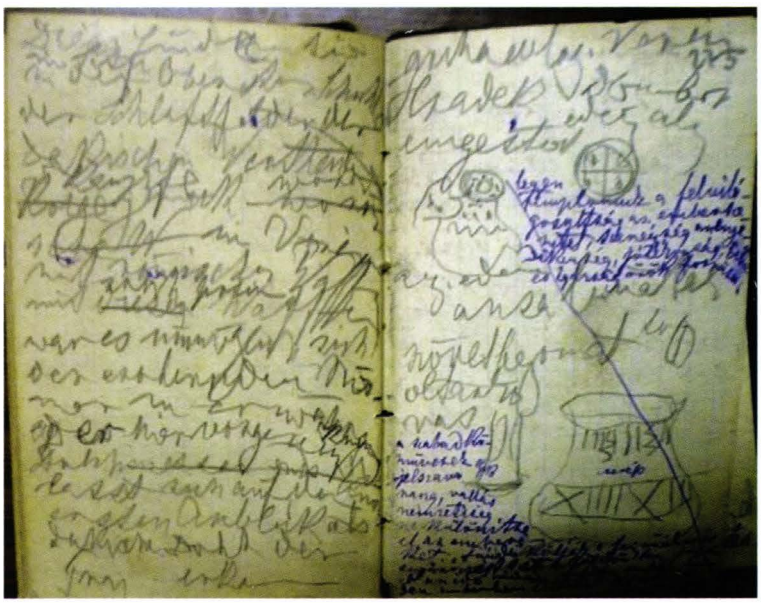


Fig. 4: Pages from Zsófia Torma's diary (f. 275).

Therefore, Zsófia Torma finds her shelter and consolation in science and literature: "*I have searched for relief in the eternal truths of science and literature, because I am tired of analyzing life and the truth of people!*"[11]

Sociologist A. Kellehear states in his work, *A Social History of Dying,* that the desire of anticipating, predicting death motivates people to make close observations on their own illness, disease and to "store" this information by oral or written means. In case these observations are made frequently enough, they can become the basis of a pattern of symptoms with the help of which one can recognize the "danger" signs.[12]

Following this idea, I believe that this diary contains a series of notes which suggest that Zsófia Torma was observing and analyzing her own states, as if she wanted to keep their evidence in order to recognize the signs of Death. Such notes are the following examples: *"violent convulsions,*[13]... *"muscle tiredness"*...

[10] Ibid., f. 248.
[11] Ibid. f. 257.
[12] Kellehear 2007: 48.
[13] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 249.

"atavism"... "psychical exhaustion"[14]*... "dim self-conscience"*[15]*... "more and more tense agitation,"*[16] etc. All these notes indicate that during her last years, Zsófia Torma's organism was extremely weak, that she was anxious, restless, tense, nervous, depressed, disappointed, even desperate, apathetic, lacking any desire of living and working, things being even more complicated by the rheumatic pains she was suffering from.[17] Zsófia Torma's symptoms suggest that her pain is not just physical, but mostly an inner, psychical and spiritual pain. This fact is very well reflected in one of her notes in which she mentions the symptoms of her illness and a recommendation of her doctor:

> *In order to take care of my tense nerves and strengthen my health, my doctor from Pest prescribed me total abstinence from work; the features of my mental disease are unmotivated fear, constant anxiety and the tendency towards horrifying hallucinations.*[18]

Therefore, the reasons for this disease are not caused by the process of aging, which probably had a certain influence especially on her physical state, but more likely by her family, professional and financial problems which are repeatedly mentioned throughout the diary.

The professional conflicts are actually the cause of Zsófia Torma's life drama. The tensions between her and Hungarian archaeologists, especially József Hampel and Ferenc Pulszky, compelled her to dedicate herself to science, with the purpose of proving the truth of her theories and of gaining the recognition of Hungarian specialists, who – unlike foreign archaeologists, prehistorians, anthropologists, linguists – ridiculed and ignored her, as a woman and amateur in the field of archaeology, as well as her groundbreaking ideas and efforts. Zsófia Torma's notes very often suggest this conflict which deeply affected and disappointed her:

> *I worry much about the wickedness of my enemies*;[19]*... My soul bears wounds that I gained on the battlefield of my researches. They* [her fellow Hungarian researchers] *caused wounds in my soul, wounds that daily receive new stings which hinder their healing.*[20]

Regarding the family problems, the diary suggests that after a life which she dedicated to helping, supporting and caring about her family and friends, educating her sister's children, Zsófia Torma realizes that her concerns, worries and efforts were worthless, because her relatives and friends are ungrateful, avoiding, betraying and abandoning her at senescence:

---

[14] Ibid., f. 246.
[15] Ibid., f. 250.
[16] Ibid., f. 245.
[17] Gyulai 1972, 30; Tulok 1999, 32.
[18] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 262.
[19] Ibid., f. 244.
[20] Ibid., f. 255.

I have lived my life as an annex of another house, I have worked for the good of another family. (My reward was the lack of appreciation from every side.)[21]*... Loneliness in youth, loneliness in senescence. They rewarded my enormous, sincere and deep love by turning their back.*[22] *... Family displeasures have made me gloomy, uncertain, suspicious, melancholic, exerting a deep pressure on my soul. Whose spiritual integrity wouldn't be affected by such events? Nothing can soar my tormented senescence and my weakened life energy; my spiritual and physical energy have been crushed under the financial disagreements and problems of my family. (Weakness and decomposition are ruling over me, when in the desperate hazard of our vital necessities family misunderstandings devastate us.)*[23]

Zsófia Torma was also confronted with severe financial problems, caused by the large amounts of money that she spent for being allowed to excavate at Turdaş and for purchasing all kinds of artifacts (which, in many cases, were forgeries) brought to her by peasants from different sites. Moreover, the financial problems compelled Zsófia Torma to sell her amazing and unique archaeological collection to the *Transylvanian Museum Society* (*Societatea Muzeului Ardelean – Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület*) in 1891.[24] Some notes are very suggestive for the constant concerns and displeasures caused by lack of money:

Between the severe perturbations of my financial situation, my mood is also tormented by terrible worries. My mood is constantly benumbed by the possibility of financial problems and the fear of other displeasures. They not only maintain this dark uncertainty with their savage unconsciousness and continuous perfidiousness, but also amplify it.[25]

Another idea which dominates Zsófia Torma's last years of life and is also reflected in the notes of her diary is represented by the emergency of finishing and publishing her greatest work, *Dacia Before the Roman Conquest* [*Dácia a római foglalás előtt*] before death.[26] Her concerns and fears regarding the imminence of Death compel her to work and write continuously, making considerable physical and psychical efforts which affect her health:

Writing did not only affect me, but has brought me in a state of invalidism;[27] *... My work capacity is languishing, I'm struggling with illness and a dying life energy. I do not want to live for myself, but for the publishing of my monumental work.*[28]

---

[21] Ibid., f. 259.
[22] Ibid., f. 231.
[23] Ibid., f. 249.
[24] Erdélyi Múzeum 1899: 664.
[25] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 248.
[26] Gyulai 1972: 39-42.
[27] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 250.
[28] Ibid., f. 232.

All these problems slowly destroy Zsófia Torma who gets to the point in which she considers herself spiritually dead: *"Dead is not only the buried one. One who has no desire for living, wishes, hopes, is dead without decomposing."*[29]

Notes concerning the sociocultural aspects of nineteenth century society

Zsófia Torma's diary offers us an interesting glimpse into the society of the nineteenth century which, in several cases, surprises us through the similarities with our contemporary world. In one of her notes, Zsófia Torma makes a deep and meaningful analysis of an essential feature of the nineteenth century – *progress*. She observes and underlines its devastating consequences on individuals and humanity in general, as well as on the soul and human relationships which – due to the savage competition, indifference, ignorance and selfishness caused by progress – gradually degrades, and transforms life into a battle for survival. Actually, Zsófia Torma's notes regarding nineteenth century society reveal to us, today's readers, the fact that contemporary humanity has not changed much since then and flows into the same direction – mad, unconscious progress, without noticing and paying attention to the drawbacks:

> *The term 'progress' used today for describing the level of civilization is not enough. We do not progress, we run, chase without any stop. The 19th century humanity runs, throngs, lives in a permanent competition on the road of life, it attracts you in the competition where the weakest is crushed, where happiness does not exist anymore, only the tormenting, stimulating longing for the searched idol. This rush, this lack of time, are the main causes of the wandering souls, of the fever which conquers humanity [...].*[30]

Zsófia Torma's notes also offer us information regarding the emancipation of women and the role and position of women in nineteenth century society. In her contemporaries' view, due to *"the laws of nature, the woman is not allowed to search for her own purpose elsewhere than within family."*[31] In one of her notes, Zsófia Torma cites a suggestive statement of the Austrian minister Paul Gautsch, who stated that *"women's aspirations involve social dangers and distracts them from the ideal of family. The woman's scientific preoccupations cannot be harmonized with family life, only in the cases when the woman is neither a wife, nor a mother."*[32]

These two notes clearly show us that at that time women's possibilities and options were extremely limited due to social constraints and, in many cases, those who had the courage to pursue a career, sacrificed family life. This is exactly the case of Zsófia Torma, who in her youth decided to sacrifice her personal life, the idea of her own family and children in order to dedicate herself to the noble ideal of science. Zsófia Torma considers that *"many times, the life of women*

[29] Ibid., f. 246.
[30] Ibid., f. 255.
[31] Ibid., f. 252.
[32] Ibid., f. 230.

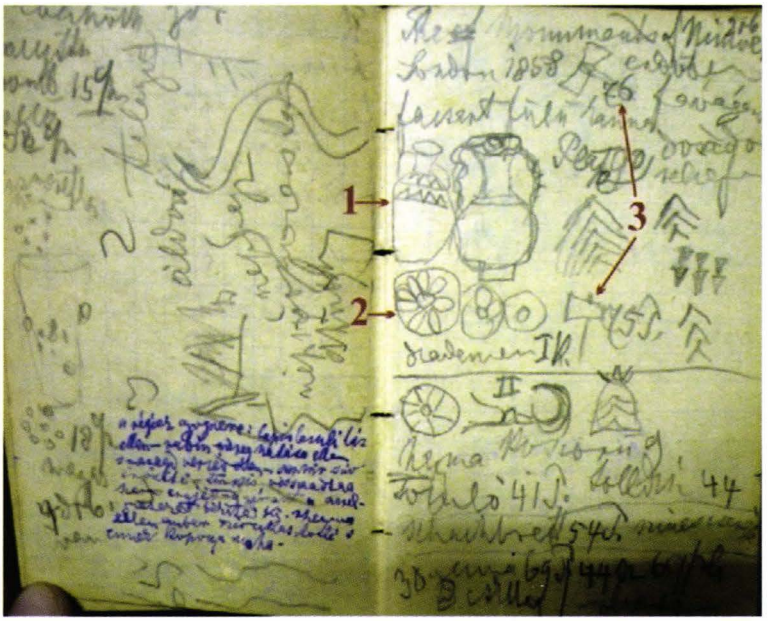


Fig. 5: Pages from Zsófia Torma's diary (f. 216) with drawings after the plates of The Monuments of Nineveh, v. 1 (Layard 1849). (1)Glazed pottery from Kalhu (Calah, Nimrud) (compare with Fig. 6.1, 6.2); (2) Incomplete decorative rosettes "on the diadem" (compare with Fig. 7); (3) Axes (compare with Fig. 8).

Fig. 6: Glazed pottery from the tombs above the central edifice at Kalhu (Calah, Nimrund)(after Lazard 1849, pl. 85); pots nos. (1) and (2) are drawn in Z. Torma's diary (see fig 5.2).

is only renunciation, suffering and abnegation,"[33] and has interesting opinions about equality between men and women, stating that *"there are no equal rights, but only equal responsibilities" which bring major changes in the life of women:"the woman who possesses equal rights cannot be caressed anymore, cannot be the spoiled life partner or the more beautiful half of life anymore, but only a battle partner."*[34]

Archaeological and historical notes

Zsófia Torma's archaeological and historical notes do not refer to her researches from Turdaş or Hunedoara County. These notes generally consist in observations, comments on different ideas from various scientific works and especially in drawings made after the objects, discoveries presented in these works. For example, in the first pages of her diary, Zsófia Torma mentions the title of important and famous scientific works of the nineteenth century, 90% of which are dedicated to the research of the Near East: *The Monuments of Nineveh* (1849), and *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh* (1853) by Austen Henry

[33] Ibid., f. 261.
[34] Ibid.

Layard; *Mission de Phénicie* (1864) by Ernest Renan; *Description de l'Asie Mineure* (1839) by Charles Texier; *Expedition scientifique en Mesopotamie* (1858-1863) by Jules Oppert; *Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der assyrischen und akkadischen Wörter der "Cuneiform inscriptions of western Asia, vol. II"* (1882-1886) by J. N. Strassmeier; *Les pierres graves de la Haute-Asie: Recherches sur la glyptique orientale* (1883) by Joachim Menant; *Catologue des figurines antiques de terre cuit du Musée de Louvre* (1891) by Léon Heuzey, and other works. The list and quality of the works consulted by Zsófia Torma are impressive and proves the fact that she was an extremely well documented researcher who, without the technology we possess today, was up-to-date with the latest discoveries around the world.

In most of the cases, these titles are followed by strange, schematic and chaotic drawings of objects, which, at first sight, are difficult to identify and are barely understandable. However, a closer analysis reveals that these drawings are made after the objects presented in the plates of the above enumerated scientific works. Therefore, when possible, I tried to search Zsófia Torma's drawings in the original works with the purpose of making comparisons and of identifying the criteria on the basis of which she selected those specific objects for drawing in her diary.

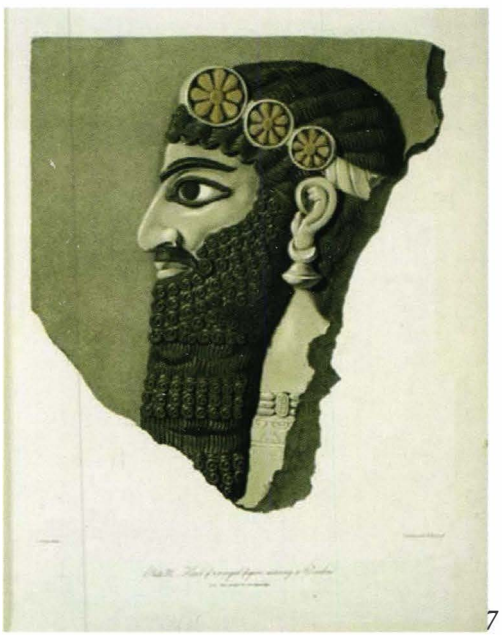


Fig. 7: Head of a winged figure wearing a diadem (after Layard 1849, pl. 92.).

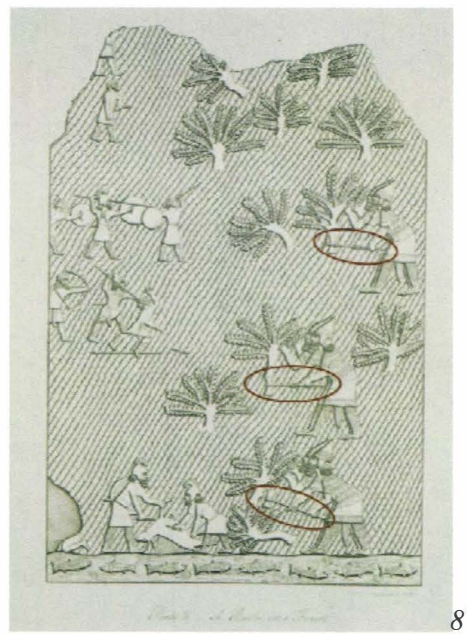


Fig. 8: Battle in a forest (Kuyunjik) (after Layard 1849, pl. 76).[35]

For example, at a certain moment, Zsófia Torma mentions the title of Austin Henry Layard's work, *The Monuments of Nineveh* (1849), followed by the drawing of two pots above which she writes *"pot with spiral ears"* (Fig. 5.1).[36] Searching for these objects in *The*

[35] In Fig. 3 there are three groups of men cutting trees with axes (encircled with red) which look exactly like the one drawn by Zs. Torma (compare with fig. 5.3).
[36] Ibid., f. 216.

Monuments of Nineveh, I discovered that they are pictured on *Plate 85* which, according to its description, contains the drawings of glazed pottery from the tombs above the central Edifice from the ancient Assyrian city of Kalhu (Calah, Nimrud) (Fig. 6.1, 6.2).

Another interesting example refers to three, incomplete rosettes (Fig. 5.2) drawn by Zsófia Torma, under which she makes an observation - *"on the diadem,"*[37] which helped me to identify the rosettes on *Plate 92* of *The Monuments of Nineveh*, which portrays the head of a winged figure wearing a diadem decorated with three rosettes which resemble the ones drawn in the diary (Fig. 7). On the same page with the rosettes, Zsófia Torma also draws two axes (Fig. 5.3), next to which she writes *"76, tree cutting in forest"* and *"75P,"*[38] meaning *Plate 75*. I managed to identify only one of these axes, the one belonging to *Plate 76* (Fig. 8), which represents the scene of a battle in a forest, which also pictures three groups of men cutting trees with axes which look like the one drawn by Zsófia Torma.

The three rosettes are also drawn in Zsófia Torma's diary, but incompletely (see fig. 5.2); 8: Battle in a forest (Kuyunjik) (after Layard 1849, pl. 76). In the image there are three groups of men cutting trees with axes (encircled with red) which look exactly like the one drawn by Zs. Torma (compare with fig. 5.3); 9: Page from Zs. Torma's diary (f. 217) with drawings after the plates of *A second series of the Monuments of Nineveh* (Layard 1853). 1. Altar.

Fig. 9: Page from Zs. Torma's diary (f. 217) with drawings after the plates of a second series of the Monuments of Nineveh (Layard 1853). (1) Altar.

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

Another interesting object drawn by Zsófia Torma is an altar (Fig. 9.1), next to which she mentions a larger composition from Kuyunjik, which depicts the Assyrian king Sennacherib in a chariot and his attendants leaving a castle on a mountain (Fig. 10). The altar, which is difficult to observe due to its much reduced size, is placed in the castle and in front of it there are indeed two praying priests.

In her diary, Zsófia Torma mentions the work of Joachim Menant (1883), in which the author presents, among other, a series of signs and symbols engraved on Oriental cylinders. The diary shows us that Zsófia Torma was very interested in these cylinders and especially in their inscriptions. However, it is very interesting that Zsófia Torma does not draw in her diary the entire inscriptions, but only certain signs (Fig. 11.1, 11.2), many of which appear on the pottery and plastic art from the site of Turdaş. Such examples are a lapis lazuli cylinder (Fig. 12) and a cylinder from the British Museum, which, according to Joachim Menant, contains an invocation (Fig. 13).[39]

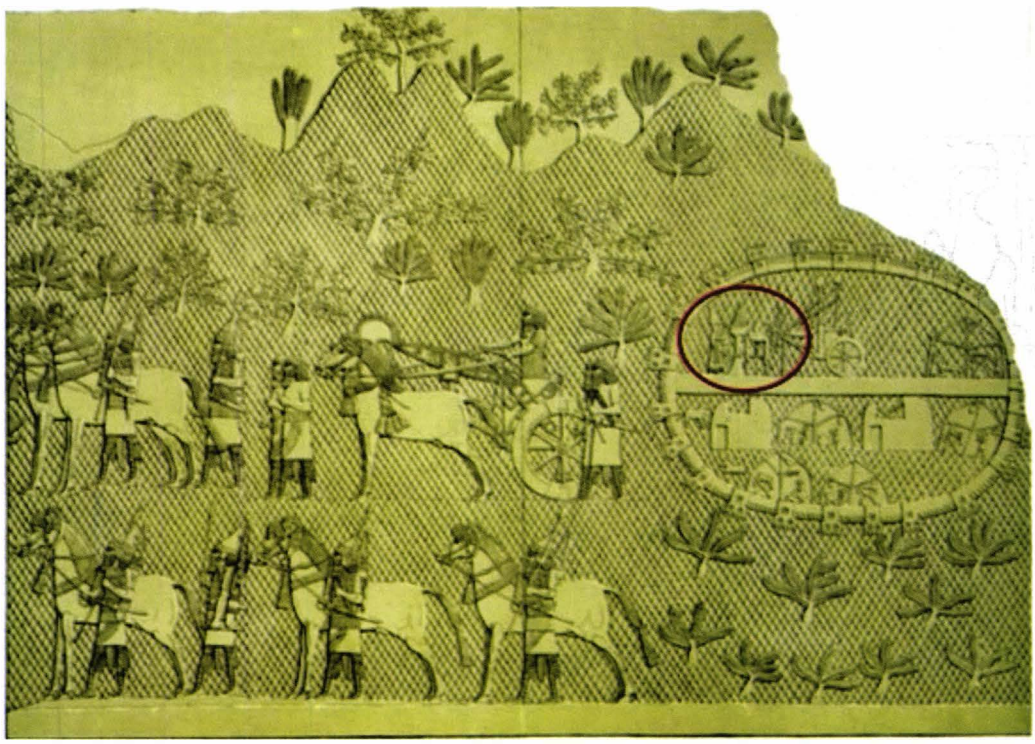


Fig. 10: Relief depicting king Sennacherib and his attendants, leaving a castle on a mountain (Kuyunjik) (after Layard 1853, pl. 24). The altar (encircled with red) also appears in Zsófia Torma's diary (see fig. 9.1).

Zsófia Torma was also interested in the cuneiform writing, studying important works by Jules Oppert (1858-1863) and J. N. Strassmeier (1882-1886). She notes in her diary a series of

[39] Menant 1883: 187.

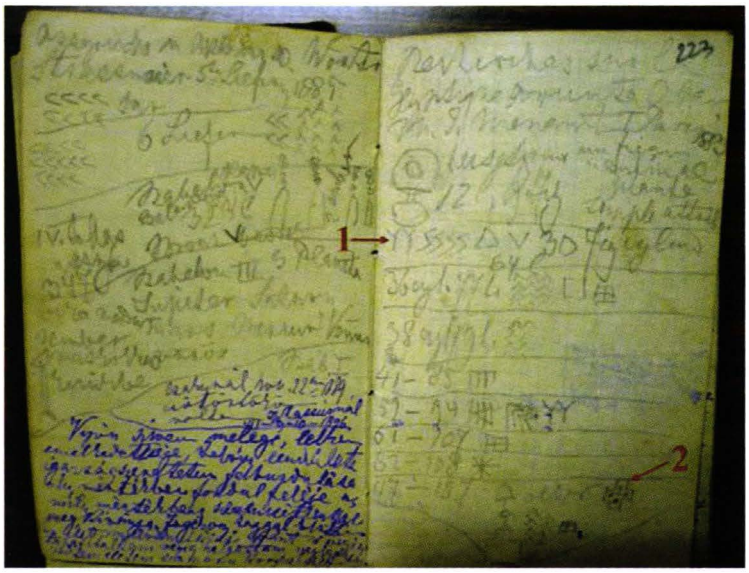


Fig. 11: Page from Zsófia Torma's diary (f. 223) with (1) signs from a lapis lazuli cylinder; (2) signs from a cylinder bearing an invocation (in Les pierres graves de la Haute Asie: Recherches sur la glyptique orientale *(Menant 1883).*

Fig. 12: Scene from an Oriental lapis lazuli cylinder (after Menant 1883, 64. fig. 30). The encircled signs are also drawn in Zsófia Torma's diary (see fig. 11.1).

cuneiform characters, and their meanings.[40] What is interesting is that the characters she chooses resemble the signs and symbols which can be found on the Turdaş pottery. Knowing that Zsófia Torma considered that the incised signs on her discoveries belonged to an early system of writing, I believe that she was trying to decipher their meaning with the help of the cuneiform signs.

All these examples offer us valuable information about the way Zsófia Torma was reading the scientific works, studies and articles, and about the type of information she was searching for, selecting and extracting from these. The drawings from Zsófia Torma's diary are actually interesting, sometimes containing even hidden or surprising details of large compositions – such as the Assyrian bas-reliefs or the engravings of the Oriental cylinders, and generally consisting of objects with special function, such as altars, scepters, all kinds of head coverings, gems, objects bearing signs, symbols, and inscriptions. In many cases, these can have symbolic and/or ritualistic values, such as cult objects, or symbols of a certain status or affiliation.

Moreover, the articles and plates published by Zsófia Torma starting with the 1880s, are dominated by the presence of objects with special function and symbolism, which, typologically, belong to the same category as the objects drawn in the diary. In order to illustrate this idea, we can take as an example the article entitled *A tordosi őstelep és hazánk népe ősmythosának maradványai* [*The Prehistoric Site of Turdaş and the Remains of Ancient Myths in Our People's Culture*] (1897). The plates of this article contain images representing different altars and life

[40] ANDJ Hunedoara, Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma, dos.3/1880-1899, f. 221-225.

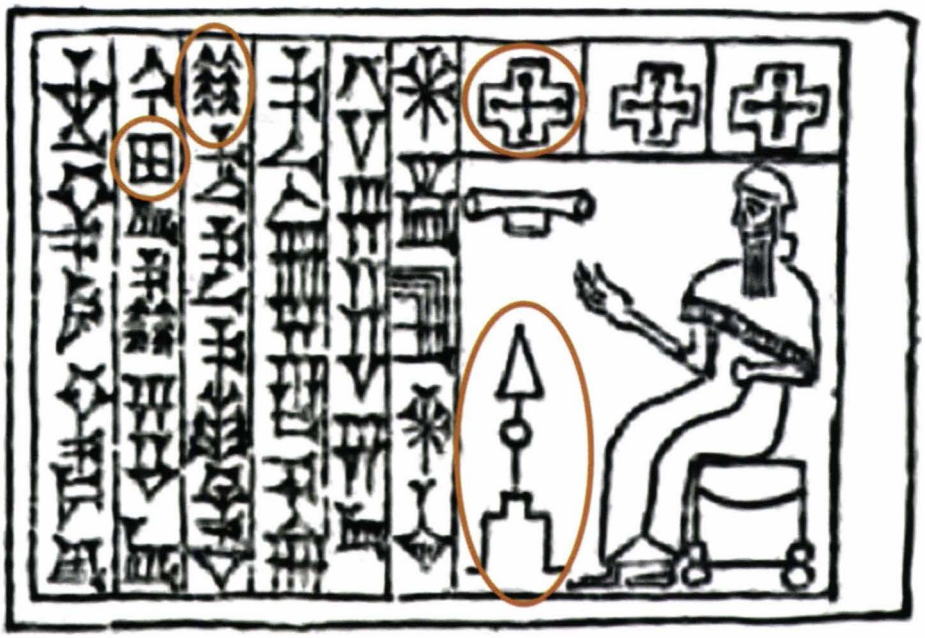


Fig. 13: Scene from a cylinder bearing an invocation (after Menant 1883, 187, fig. 117). The encircled signs and objects are also drawn in Zsófia Torma's diary (see Figure 11, 2.)

trees from the Mesopotamian art. She considers that the elements of the Mesopotamian art were transmitted to the Thracian inhabitants of Troy and Turdaş and survived in the art and customs of the contemporary Hungarian, German and Romanian peasants.[41] Also, Zsófia Torma's articles, studies and correspondence show that this period of her scientific activity is dominated by the search for analogies which would demonstrate the connection between her discoveries from Turdaş and Troy, respectively the Near East.

The scientific works mentioned by Zsófia Torma in her diary, and the elements and objects she selected to be drawn can be placed in the context of the ideas and theories which dominated her scientific imagery in the 1880s. We can observe that these objects and details were chosen because she considers them potential, if not even true analogies, of the discoveries belong-ing to her collection, especially of the ones from Turdaş, and of the symbols and elements which can be found in the folklore, art and customs of the Romanian, Hungarian, and German peasants contemporary with her. Also, her articles show that through these analogies, she was trying to find and explain the meaning of the signs and symbols found on the artifacts of her collection. It is very possible that Zsófia Torma started studying the mentioned scientific works with the well determined purpose of searching and finding analogies, connections which could demonstrate the validity of her theories regarding the Turdaş-Troy-Babylon connection.

[41] Torma 1897: 34-35.

Conclusion

The diary, which is the subject of this paper, is a valuable source of information which offers us the opportunity of rediscovering a pioneer of Transylvanian archaeology, Zsófia Torma, a controversial character who continues to raise questions and debates especially among Hungarian and Romanian archaeologists. Some praise and appreciate her achievements, theories and discoveries, while others still consider her an amateur and criticize her research methods and theories. However, when making any kind of judgments, one should not forget to analyze Zsófia Torma's life and scientific activity in the sociocultural context of the nineteenth century, taking into consideration two important aspects: that archaeology was a young discipline with debatable and not clearly defined established research techniques, and women's access to public life and a career was quite restricted.

Zsófia Torma's diary reveals to us the woman and the scientist behind the myths and controversies, as well as what it meant to be a female archaeologist during those times. The interesting and varied notes offer us information about the way she was reading and studying the scientific liter-ature, the types of elements she was searching for and selecting in order to find arguments to support her theories. At the same time, the diary offers us the unique opportunity to gain an insight into her last years of life, her intimacy, mind, and way of thinking, her deepest thoughts and feelings.

The analysis and interpretation of the diary which is the subject of this article is only the start of a research which has the purpose of reconstructing Zsófia Torma's personality and scientific activity, of analyzing and clarifying her monumental legacy (which consists of archaeological materials, notebooks, diaries, and correspondence) and of finally offering her the recognition and appreciation that she deserves for her achievements.

References

Anders, Alexandra. 1999. "A tordosi lelőhely és az ásatások története." In *Holt lóra patkó. Tanulmányok Torma Zsófia (1840-1899) emlékezetére.* János Makkay, ed., 41-80. Budapest.

ANDJ Hunedoara. 1880-1899. Fondul *Societatea de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr. Zsófia von Torma* [Hunedoara County's Society of Historical and Archaeological Sciences – Dr. Zsófia von Torma Fonds], dos.3/1880-1899, f. 212-275. Direcţia Judeţeană Hunedoara a Arhivelor Naţionale (National Archives of Hunedoara County) - [Unpublished archive documents].

Coltofean, Laura. 2012. "When Passion is Stronger than Death. Zsófia Torma's Reflections." In *Brukenthalia. Romanian Cultural History Review* 2: 67-77. Sibiu: Editura Muzeului Naţional Brukenthal.

Erdélyi Múzeum 10, vol. XVI (1899), 664-666. Cluj.

Gyulai, Pál. 1972. *Torma Zsófia levelesládájából.* Bucharest: Editura Kriterion.

Heuzey, Léon. 1891. *Catalogue des figurines antiques de terre cuit du Musée de Louvre.* Paris: Librairies-Imprimeries réunies, Éditeurs des Musées Nationaux.

Kellehear, Allan. 2007. *A Social History of Dying.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Layard, Austen Henry. 1849. *The Monuments of Nineveh. From drawings made on the spot.* London: John Murray.

_____1853. *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh, including bas-reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib and bronzes from the ruins of Nimroud. From drawings made on the spot, during a second expedition to Assyria.* London: John Murray.

Luca, Sabin Adrian. 2001. *Aşezări neolitice pe Valea Mureşului (II). Noi cercetări arheologice la Turdaş-Luncă. I. Campaniile anilor 1992-1995.* Bucharest: Editura Economică.

Menant, Joachim. 1883. *Les pierres graves de la Haute-Asie: Recherches sur la glyptique orientale*, vol. I. Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, Libraries – Éditeurs.

Oppert, Jules. 1858-1863. *Expédition scientifique en Mésopotamie exécutée par ordre du gouvernement de 1851 a 1854*, vols. 1-2. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale.

Renan, Ernest. 1864. *Mission de Phénicie.* Paris: Imprimerie Impériale.

Strassmeier, Johann Nepomuk. 1882-1886. *Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der assyrischen und akkadischen Wörter der "Cuneiform inscriptions of western Asia Vol. II", sowie anderer meist unveröffentlicher Inschriften, mit zahlreichen Ergänzungen und Verbesserungen,"* vol. 1-6. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

Texier, Charles. 1839. *Description de l'Asie Mineure faite par ordre du gouvernement français de 1883 a 1837*, vol. I. Paris: Typographie de Firmin Didot Fréres.

Torma, Zsófia. 1897. "A tordosi őstelep és hazánk népe ősmythosának maradványai." In Hunyadmegye Monographiája, 3-16. Budapest.

Tulok, Magda. 1999. "100 éve hunyt el Torma Zsófia." In *Holt lóra patkó. Tanulmányok Torma Zsófia (1840-1899) emlékezetére.* János Makkay, ed., 17-40. Budapest.

Vasárnapi Újság, no. 49 (1899): 813-814. Budapest.

INFORMATION FROM THE ENGLISH ARCHAEOLOGIST FRANCIS JOHN HAVERFIELD CONCERNING THE TURDAŞ OBJECTS WITH SYMBOLIC SIGNS

NICOLAE URSULESCU

Amongst the many published works that touch upon the problem of symbolic signs from the period of the Neolithic Turdaş culture, one relatively ample account from an English archaeologist who visited Transylvania (and the collection of Zsófia von Torma d'Orăştie in Hunedoara county) at the end of the nineteenth century has gone almost unnoticed, at least in specialized Romanian literature.[1]

This was the result of a documentation trip[2] undertaken in 1889 by a future professor of archaeology at Oxford, Francis John Haverfield, to Galice (Krackow and Lemberg/Lviv), to Bucovine (Cernăuţi/Chernivitsi),[3] and through Transylvania (Braşov, Sighişoara, Sibiu, Alba Iulia, Orăştie, Deva and Cluj).

Even if the work does not reveal any spectacular new information, it remains quite interesting as it contains the commentary and the point of view of one of the greatest specialists of archaeology and classical antiquity from before the First World War,[4] as well as being one of the first (or perhaps the very first) apparitions of the Turdaş discoveries in specialized English literature.

This documentation concerning the Turdaş culture becomes important for the theme of our symposium when one takes into account that Nicolae Vlassa, in an effort to strengthen eastern links to the Tărtăria discoveries, has referenced several pieces found by Zsófia von Torma in the eponymic locality of the Turdaş culture, which are now conserved in the collections of the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca.[5]

Francis John Haverfield (1860–1919) was, between 1907 and 1919, the 17th Camden Professor of Ancient History,[6] a unique title in the university hierarchy, given only to the professor in ordinary at the Chair of Ancient History in Oxford, located since 1877 in Brasenose College.[7]

---

[1] Shortly after being published, this narrative was cited (only the title, without commentary) along with other recently published works in the Sibiu revue, *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 1891:72. The title is later cited (with errors and omissions) in E. Comşa, *Bibliografia neoliticului de pe teritoriul României* [Bibliography of the Neolithic on Romanian Territory], vol. 1, Bibl. Muzeologică 2, Muzeul de Istorie al R.S.R., Bucureşti (1976), no. 629: 56.

[2] Haverfield 1891.

[3] Ursulescu 2010.

[4] Buren 1919; Craster 1920a; 1920b; Freeman 2007; voices from: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 2008.

[5] Vlassa 1976, *passim*.

[6] This title was established in 1622 by William Camden who held the function of Clarencieux King of Arms (guard of the armories). See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarencieux_King_of_Arms or "Clarencieux King of Arms."

[7] One of the colleges of the University of Oxford, founded in 1509, originally named Brazen Nose College, now carries the official name The King's Hall and College of Brasenose (usual abbreviation: BNC).

In 1889, when he undertook the documentation voyage, he was twenty-nine years old, held a doctorate of letters, and was a member of the Society of Antiquaries in London. He had studied at Oxford and was at that time a researcher at the College of Christ Church. He had worked under Theodor Mommsen, having specialized in epigraphy and ancient Roman history. In 1905 he published the book *The Romanization of Roman Britain* which brought its author the recognition of the scientific community, as well as the title of *Camden Professor* (1907). Through subsequent books,[8] Haverfield established himself as one of the great theorists on the problem of romanisation, and was considered the "founder" of Romano-Britannic archaeology. It was he who wisely popularized the concept of romanisation beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire, a theory applied with success also in the case of Roman Dacia.

The young Haverfield made several documentary trips, visiting museums and monuments. Of course he was most interested in seeing Roman vestiges, but was not indifferent to the discoveries of other periods, including prehistoric finds, especially when they offered entirely new information. Thus, in his published narrative he reserved an ample space for the Turdaş discoveries (including the two illustrations in the article). One should mention that on such a voyage the route was not chosen by chance; the young English scholar had prepared his journey in minute detail, gathering information concerning existing museums, history and the current situation of sites to be visited. He could thus observe discriminately the new material offered in museums, discern whether the exposed objects were in accordance with written sources and, principally, compare the available materials between them with his own observations. Haverfield was therefore a refined and erudite observer of the reality of his travels.

The voyage of 1889 came after another trip accomplished two years previously in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, for which he had also written a narrative in which one can find interesting information on the Banat discoveries.[9]

Haverfield selected the most important findings from his voyage, trying to avoid what had already been published, in which case he preferred to reference books and articles from periodicals accessible even in England. His notes were first presented in the form of a lecture at the monthly assembly of Royal Institute of Archaeology in London on June 5th, 1890. The text of this conference was printed the following year in the revue edited by the Institute.[10]

Of the thirteen pages of his paper, more than six (beside the two final plates) are dedicated to Transylvania,[11] and references to the subject are also found in the preceding pages, especially concerning the administrative organization of the Roman Dacia. His observations were made in the cities visited, either in museums (in Sibiu, Sighişoara, Alba Iulia, Deva and Cluj), or in collections of archaeological material (in Braşov and Orăştie), or in visiting the vestiges of Roman architecture. He was particularly impressed by the universal generosity of the conservators of these collections, some of which have an established place

[8] Haverfield 1913, 1924, and others.
[9] Haverfield 1888.
[10] Haverfield 1891.
[11] Haverfield 1891: 6-13.

in the history of Transylvanian archeology: Julius Gross at Braşov, Gabriel Teglás at Deva, Zsófia von Torma at Orăştie, Gabriel Finály at Cluj, and others.

The young researcher was welcomed to Orăştie "with the greatest kindness" by the Baroness Zsófia von Torma (probably forty-seven years old at the time)[12] who showed him her rich and precious archaeological collection, enlightening him as to the locations of the finds.[13]

Obviously the renown of this collection had already reached the ears of the erudite Englishman, since he had included the little town of Orăştie in his itinerary. The fame of the collection of Transylvania's first female archaeologist can be explained by her presentations at international congresses[14] since 1876 as well as by studies published in German and Hungarian15 and by an ample account by Carl Goos on a report by Torma concerning the Turdaş discoveries, held in Sibiu, August 1877.[16] It is possible that Haverfield's attention was drawn to the rapprochement (made in those times) between the discoveries of Turdaş and Troja (specifically as regards similar signs incised on the objects found in both locations), especially after the English assyriologist Archibald H. Sayce had published the Trojan inscriptions.[17]

The English archaeologist observed that the objects in the collection did not have a unitary character, as they belonged to several periods, including the Roman one[18] with which he was totally familiar. This mixture is due to the way in which the collection was formed: either through Zs. Torma's personal research on digs (only partially based on rigorous stratigraphic observation), or by the acquisition of pieces found by local inhabitants of the surrounding area.[19] The author agrees that most of the objects belonged to the pre-Roman period, which was considered to be Dacian, as the owner of the collection herself proposed, due to the limited knowledge of the time regarding the very ancient history of the Carpathian area. However, while Zs. Torma attributed Turdaş to the Neolithic, the English archaeologist makes no mention of this term, although he is struck by the similarities between the Transylvanian artifacts and those found by Heinrich Schliemann at Hissarlik (especially in the case of the idols and whorls). He considers that it may be possible that this similarity could be the product of ancient relations between the Trojans and Dacians by the intermediary of Thrace, but declines to make a verdict on Near-East liaisons as he is not an specialist in that regard.

Haverfield understood that the Turdaş discoveries were only part of a vaster civilization, as he had seen similar artifacts in the museums of Deva, Cluj and Peste, but he also realized that the urns with facial representations of Turdaş were of another, older type than those found in Etruria (later called *Villanovian*), or on the Vistule (later attributed to the

[12] As for the date of birth of Zs. Torma, there are contradictory dates (1832, 1840, 1841); we opted for 1840, as it seems in concordance with other dates of her biography (and especially with the dates in which she was being raised in a boarding school in Satu Mare: 1853-1858).
[13] Haverfield 1891: 9.
[14] Roska 1941: 3-6; László 1991: 37-51; Luca 2001: 18-26.
[15] Torma 1879, 1882, 1889, etc.
[16] Goos 1878.
[17] Sayce 1881: 766-781.
[18] Haverfield 1891: 10.
[19] László 1991: 37-51; Luca 2001: 26-27.

Hallstatt period). Probably influenced by the chronological diversity of the material in the Zsófia Torma's collection, Haverfield finally arrived at the erroneous conclusion that Turdaş had been a funeral area used during several time periods.

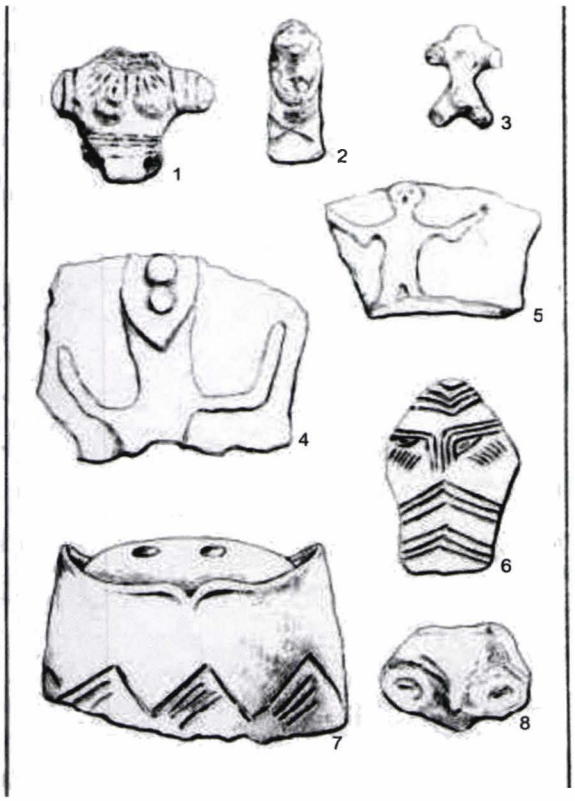


Plate I: Orăştie Collection. 1-3: "Idols" in terracotta; 4-5: terracotta fragments with "idols"in relief; 6: facial ornament scratched on rough black ceramic; 7-8: ceramic with facial ornament (after Haverfield 1891).

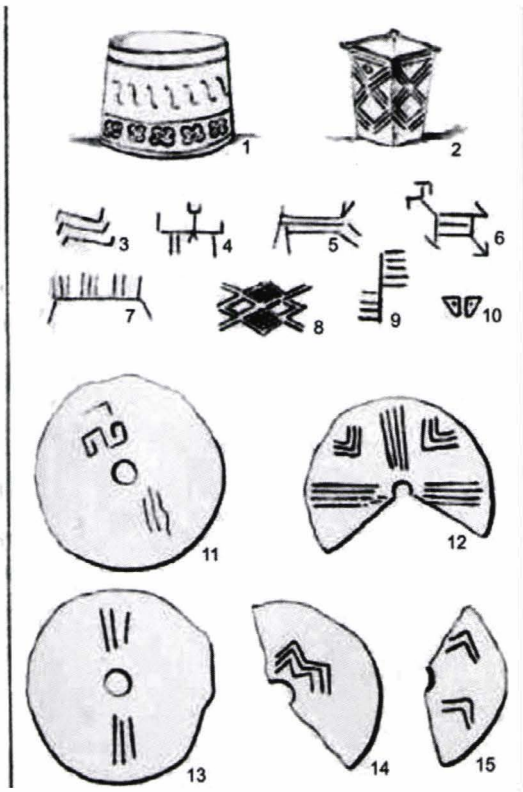


Plate II: Orăştie Collection. 1-2: Small terracotta vases; 3-10: ornaments on ceramic; 11-15: drawings done on whorls (after Haverfield 1891).

So as to contribute to general knowledge of the enigmatic Turdaş discoveries, Haverfield attached two plates to his text (reproduced here), which include selected artifacts from Zsófia Torma's collection. In the first plate eight artifacts appear (Plate I). In the second, seven, as well as eight symbolic signs reproduced from ceramic objects (Plate II).[20]

Back in England, Haverfield kept up a correspondence with Zsófia Torma as proved by two letters published in a selective collection of correspondence received by the Transylvanian researcher.[21] The first letter is dated the 4th of May 1889 and is already a

[20] Illustrations of the two plates are important, because some of them had not been reproduced in subsequent publications on the Torma collection. In the catalogue of M. Roska (1941) I have found only the following images, illustrated also by Haverfield: pl. I/1 = pl. CXL/12; I/2 = CXXXVIII/1; I/5 = CXLI/16; pl. II/3 = CXXXIV/7; II/8 = XCV/17; II/9 = CXXXIV/5; II/10 = CXIV/6; II/11 = CXXVIII/7; II/12 = CXXVIII/4; II/13 = CXXVII/15; II/14 = CXXVII/16 (?). In the work of P. Reinecke (1900), fig. E/1, p. 13 is identical with pl. I/6 of Haverfield.

[21] Gyulai 1972: 71-74.

response to a letter sent by Zs. Torma, which helps us date Haverfield's visit to Transylvania as anterior to this date, probably in March or even earlier.

The English historian affirms that he presented the Turdaş discoveries to several specialists who also recognized a resemblance with Trojan findings. He also wrote to the orientalist A. Sayce to inform him about the Turdaş news, seeing as the latter already had an exchange of letters with Zs. Torma on the subject.[22] In his letter, Haverfield speaks of his intention to present the Turdaş material to the Anthropological Society of London, as well as to the Institute of Archaeology, as he, indeed, did the following year. However the principal object of the letter was to communicate that the British Museum had declined an offer to acquire Zs. Torma's collection.[23]

In the second letter (dated more vaguely as 1890), Haverfield (now conservator of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford) informed Zs. Torma about the presentation made by him of Turdaş artifacts in Bath during a meeting of the *British Association* where the famous Archibald Sayce and Arthur John Evans, amongst others, proved extremely interested and accepted their identity along with Schliemann's discoveries. He was to present the same artifacts in London before the Society of Anthropology and hoped that Zs. Torma could lend him several authentic and representative objects by way of a mail parcel. It is from this letter that we learn that the Englishman already possessed several Turdaş objects in his personal collection,[24] though he does not state whether they were given to him by Torma or whether he collected them personally from the archeological site on the banks of the Muresh river which he had probably visited.

As for the eventual presence of several Turdaş objects at the British Museum, opinions diverge between those who have traced the dispersion of the Orăştie collection; there is no concrete proof for such a presence.[25]

The relationship of Francis Haverfield with the Turdaş finds, as well as his exchange of letters with Zs. Torma, increases the information on the vast echo that these discoveries had in the scientific community at the end of the nineteenth century because they contributed strongly to a new vision of the Neolithic.[26]

The name of the Oxford professor Francis John Haverfield can be placed next to other great intellectuals who visited Zs. Torma's collection in Orăştie, such as Albert Voss (director of the prehistoric section of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin), Paul Reinecke (conservator of the Munich Museum), Rudolf Virchow (professor at the University of Berlin), József Hampel (professor at the University of Budapest), among others.

Translation by Sorrel Mocchia di Coggiola.

[22] Gyulai 1972: 128-130; László 1991: 44. Unfortunately the letters in question were not published in the language in which they were written, but only in a Hungarian translation done by the editor. We would like to thank professor Dr. Attila László who translated passages of Haverfield's two letters for us.

[23] The financial difficulties encountered by Zs. Torma in the last part of her life were resolved at last by the acquisition of her collection by the Cluj Museum (Roska 1941: 4).

[24] Gyulai 1972: 72-74.

[25] Anders 1999:79.

[26] Makkay 1999.

References

Anders, Alexandra. 1999. "Tordosi leleteket őrző gyűjtemények." In *Holt lóra patkó. Tanulmányok Torma Zsófia (1840-1899) emlékezetére.* J. Makkay, ed. Budapest.

Buren, Albert William van. 1919. "In memoriam. Francis John Haverfield." *The Classical Journal* 15, 3:169-172.

Craster, Herbert Henry Edmund. 1920a. "Francis Haverfield." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 9 (1919–20): 475–491.

_____1920b."Francis Haverfield." *The English Historical Review* 35, 137: 63-70.

Freeman, Philip W. M. 2007. *Francis Haverfield and the invention of Romano-British Archaeology.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Goos, Carl. 1878. "Bericht über die von Fräulein Sofie v. Torma in der Sitzung der historischen Sektion des Vereins für Siebenbürgischen Landeskunde im Aug. 1877 ausgestellte Sammlung prähistrischer Funde." *AVSL* 14, 3: 592-626.

Gyulai, Pál, ed. 1972. *Torma Zsófia levelesládájából* [*The correspondence of Zsófia Torma*]. Bukarest: Editura Kriterion.

Haverfield, Francis John. 1888. "Notes from Krain, Croatia, and Serbia." *Journal of Philology* 17: 274-288. Cambridge.

_____1891. "Notes on some Museums in Galicia and Transilvania." *Archaeological Journal* XLVIII: 189 (March): 1-13, pl. I-II.

_____1905. *The Romanization of Roman Britain.* London: British Academy.

_____1913. *Ancient Town Planning.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

_____1924. *The Roman Occupation of Britain.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

László, Attila. 1991. "Un pionnier de la recherche de la civilisation Turdaş-Vinča: Zsófia Torma." *Banatica* 11: 37-51.

Luca, Sabin Adrian. 2001. *Aşezări neolitice pe Valea Mureşului (II). Noi cercetări arheologice la Turdaş-Luncă. I. Campaniile anilor 1992-1995.* BMA XVII. Bucureşti: Edit. Economică.

Makkay, János, ed. 1999. *Holt lóra patkó. Tanulmányok Torma Zsófia (1840-1899) emlékezetére*, Budapest.

Reinecke, Paul. 1990. "Die südöstlichen Grenzgebiete der neolithischen bandverzierten Keramik, Korrespondenzblatt der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie." *Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* XXXI, 2:10-16.

Roska, Márton von. 1941. *Die Sammlung Zsófia von Torma in der Numismatisch-Archaeologischen Abteilung des Siebenbürgischen Nationalmuseums.* Koloszvár/Cluj.

Sayce, Archibald Henry. 1881. "Anhang III: Die Inschriften von Hissarlik." In Heinrich Schliemann, *Ilios. Stadt und Land der Trojaner. Forschungen und Entdeckungen in der Troas und Besonderes auf der Baustelle von Troja.* Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 766-781.

Torma, Zsófia von. 1879. *Neolith kökorszakbeli telepek Hunyad megyében.* ErdMúz, pp. 129-155, 190-211.

_____1882. *Über neolithische Wohnstätten in Siebenbürgen.* Corr., p. 90-98.

_____1889. *Schriftzeichen auf thraco-dakischen Funden.* Corr., p. 146.

Ursulescu, Nicolae. 2010. "Impresiile unui arheolog şi istoric englez despre Bucovina la 1889." In *Slujind-o pe Clio. In honorem Dumitru Vitcu.* M. Iacobescu, Gh. Cliveti, and Dinu Bălan, eds., 315-320. Iaşi: Junimea.

Vlassa, Nicolae. 1976. *Neoliticul Transilvaniei. Studii, articole, note.* BMN III. Cluj-Napoca.

Abbreviations

AVSL Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Hermannstadt/ Sibiu.
BMA Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, Alba Iulia.
BMN Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, Muzeul de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.
Corr. Correspondenzblatt der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, Berlin.
ErdMúz Erdély Múzeum, Kolszvár/Cluj.

Fifty Years of Tărtăria Excavations

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF GHEORGHE LAZAROVICI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 73RD BIRTHDAY

Institute of Archaeomythology
Sebastopol, 2014