

Geometric shapes: representations of patterns on Cucuteni Culture Ceramic and figurines

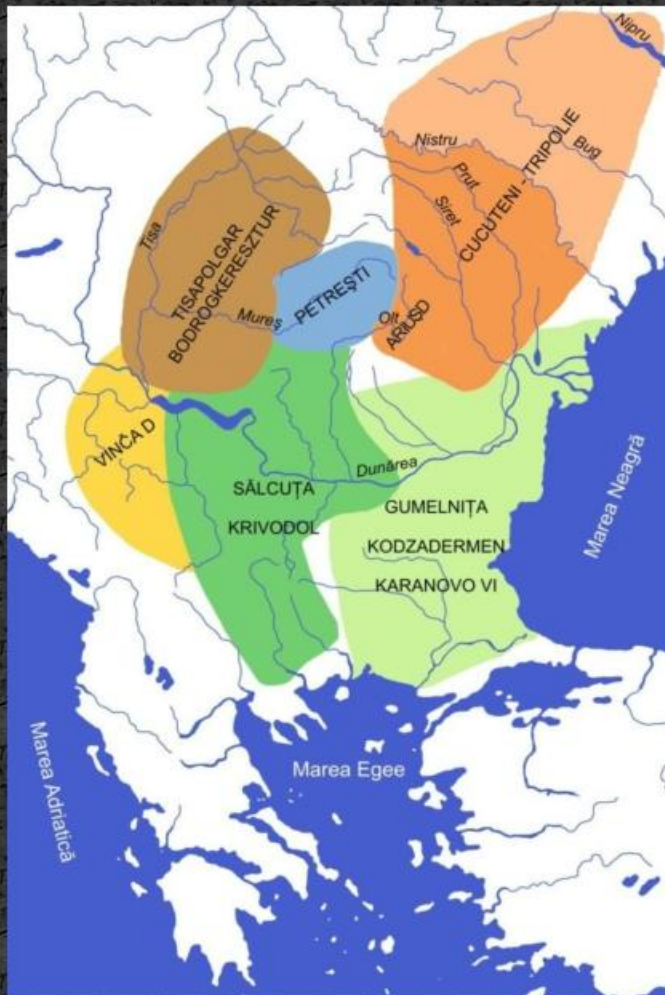


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Cucuteni Culture



- ❑ The **Cucuteni Culture** has known a long existence, for nearly a millennium, in a vast area of approximately 350,000 km², with material traces on the territory of three current states: Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine.
- ❑ The name of this civilization was given following research carried out at the end of the nineteenth century in three important settlements: Ariușd and Cucuteni-in Romania and Trypillia in Ukraine.
- ❑ The Cucuteni culture evolved between 4600-3500 BC. From the evolutionary point of view, three main stages of evolution are distinguished: A (4600 - 4100 BC), A-B (4100 - 3800 BC) and B (3800 - 3600/3500 BC), each with several stages.



Settlements

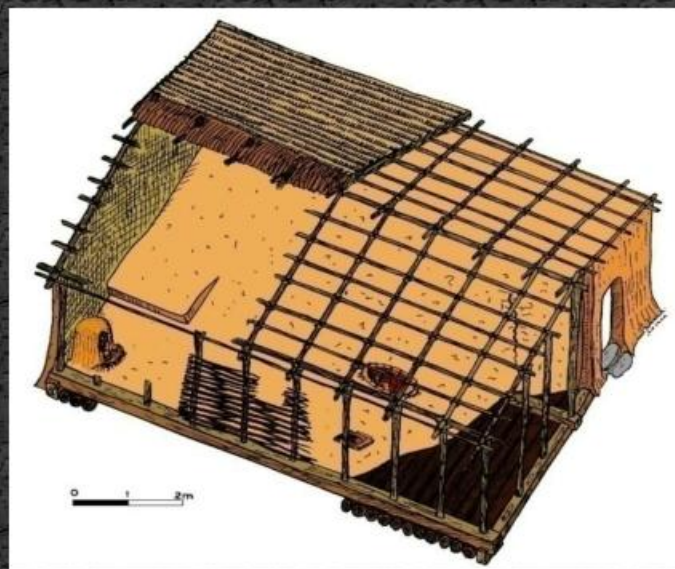


Hăbășești, RO



Maydanetske (Ukraine), Enciclopedia Tripolie, Kiev, 2004

Dwellings





Ceramic



Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru, FCM III



Izvoare, Piatra-Neamt, MIAPN, 454



Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru, MIAPN, 13184



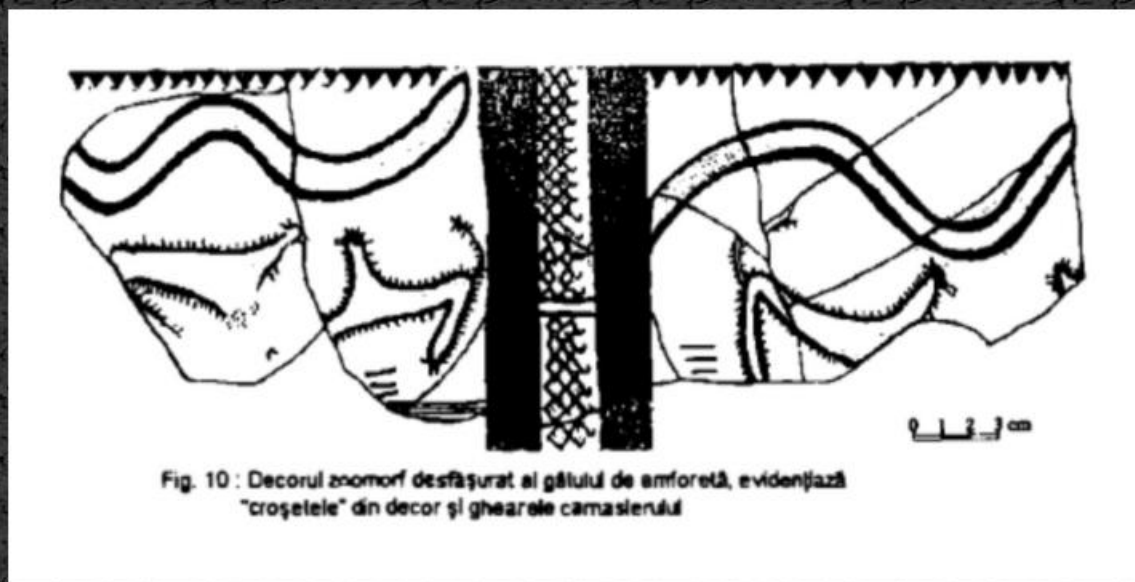
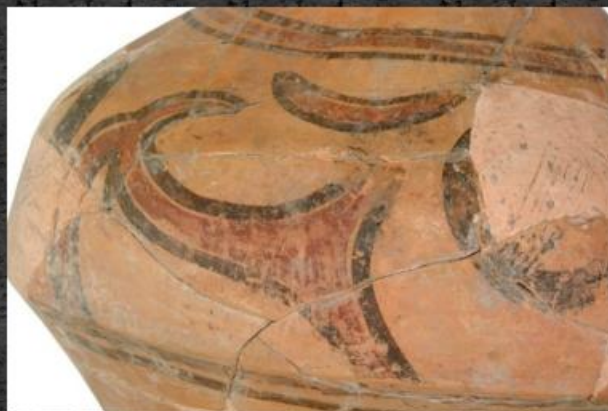
Scanteia, MIMIS 17266







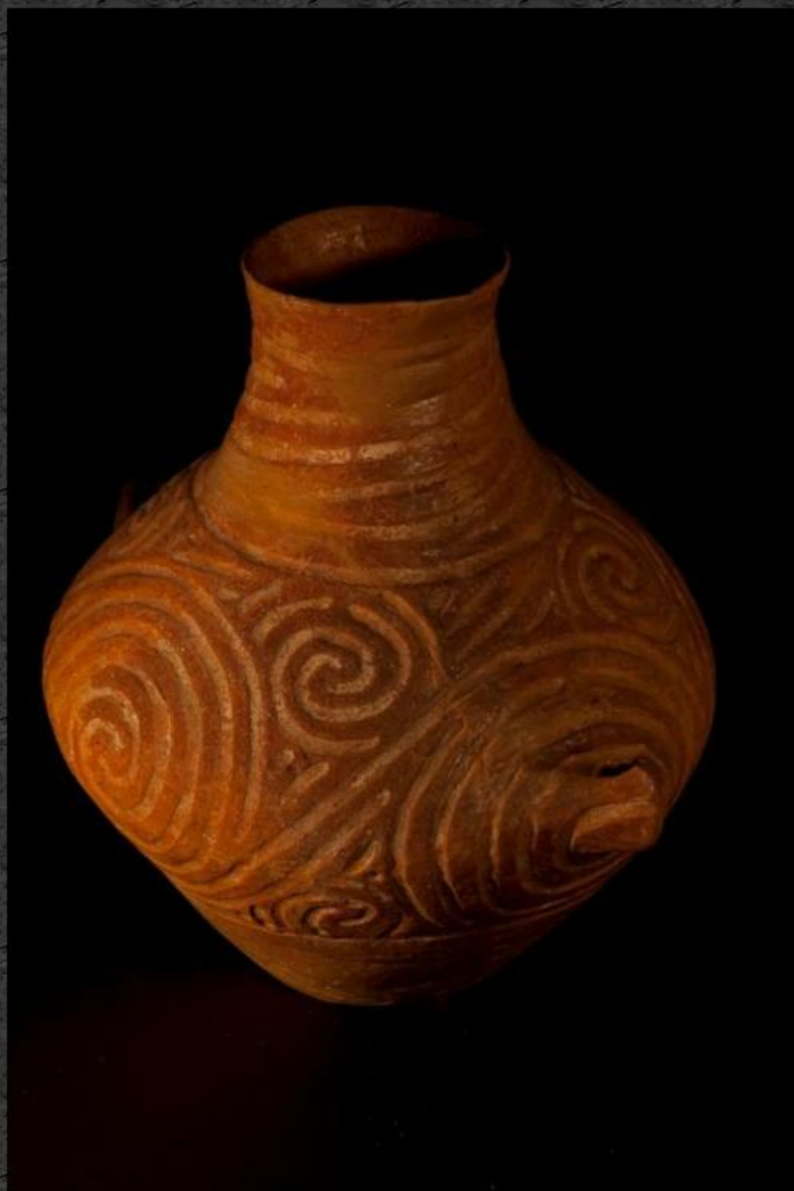
- Both through the quality of the pottery and the originality of the painted decoration, the Cucuteni civilization goes beyond the artistic manifestations of contemporary civilizations. The diversity of dimensions, the elegance of the ceramic shapes is absolutely impressive. The quality of the paste from which the dishes were made, as well as their burning in special ovens, at temperatures of almost $1,000^{\circ}\text{C}$, outlines a certain specialization of the Cucutenian craftsmen.
- Through the artistic value of the clay pieces, but also because of their scientific and historical importance, the artifacts in the exhibition are part of the national cultural treasure and undoubtedly of that of humanity.



Spiral pattern

- ▣ For the painting three mineral colors were used: red, white and black with a special mastery in the decoration of vessels, the decor being made according to their shape and size.
- ▣ We notice at the cucutenian potters an exceptional sense of proportions, of ingenious combinations, using simple or geometric decorative motifs, schematic representations of people or animals. The same creativity and sense of proportions is proven by the anthropomorphic statuettes. The spiral in the Cucutenian decoration is of two types: the single and the double spirals, which fold and unfold from the same central point. The coiling of the spiral on the Cucutenian vessels is done with great precision, undoubtedly acquired as a result of a long exercise of the craftsman.
- ▣ The spiral is one of the universal symbols, being found in all the great civilizations of the world. The realization of this symbol is as much enigmatic, as it is spectacular. It was thought that the flat spiral evokes the trajectory of the labyrinth, or the return to the center.
- ▣ The double spiral could represent the two complementary movements, evolutionary and involutionary, the cycles of life and death, in a perpetual motion. Representing the sun, the water, or the universal movement, the Cucutenian spiral, regardless of its meanings, remains one of the most fascinating symbols present on prehistoric artifacts.







Rhombus and square

- Primary geometric shapes, the square and the rhombus represent in the universal symbolism the solid, material part of existence. Often the square and the rhombus have the significance of the cardinal points or the four seasons, being representative for the four basic elements: earth, water, air, fire. Both the square and the rhombus are static symbols, expressing immobility, in direct opposition to the spiral, a symbol of movement. The straight sides and angles of this symbol suggest the order and rigor.
- In the cucutenian decorative register, the square and the rhombus appear rarely as simple signs. They are often combined with other geometric signs or figurative symbols, such as petals or circles. Sometimes the angles of the square or rhombus are composed of several strips of broken lines, which recompose forming complex geometric shapes.
- They are often used to demarcate the statue's womb, with signs and symbols linked to the procreative force of the woman. The delimitation is meant to emphasize the area of the womb, and also certain female attributes.





Geometry

- ❑ The Cucutenian signs and symbols must always be related to a series of beliefs and rites, which at the same time suppose a sacred level.
- ❑ The writing is a system conceptualizing symbols in a language, developing in an independent manner, often in completely different spaces. The sign is an indicator and it represents or expresses gestures, movement, thoughts, emotional states, unlike the symbol, which is an expressive process that suggests an idea or a state of mind.
- ❑ All artistic expressions are a characteristic feature of a culture, especially in the case of prehistoric civilizations. Every culture, every population, and generally every social system is actually the result of its own structural evolution. If a particular type of art is associated with a particular cultural form, one can identify the type of context that determined the evolution of that art. For the prehistoric period, one cannot emit absolute ideas about the exclusive use of signs or symbols, because no information transmission system uses only signs or symbols, but something from each category. Of course, for Cucuteni Culture one can see that a multitude of variants of signs have been used, and various iconographic elements are represented.





Jewelry

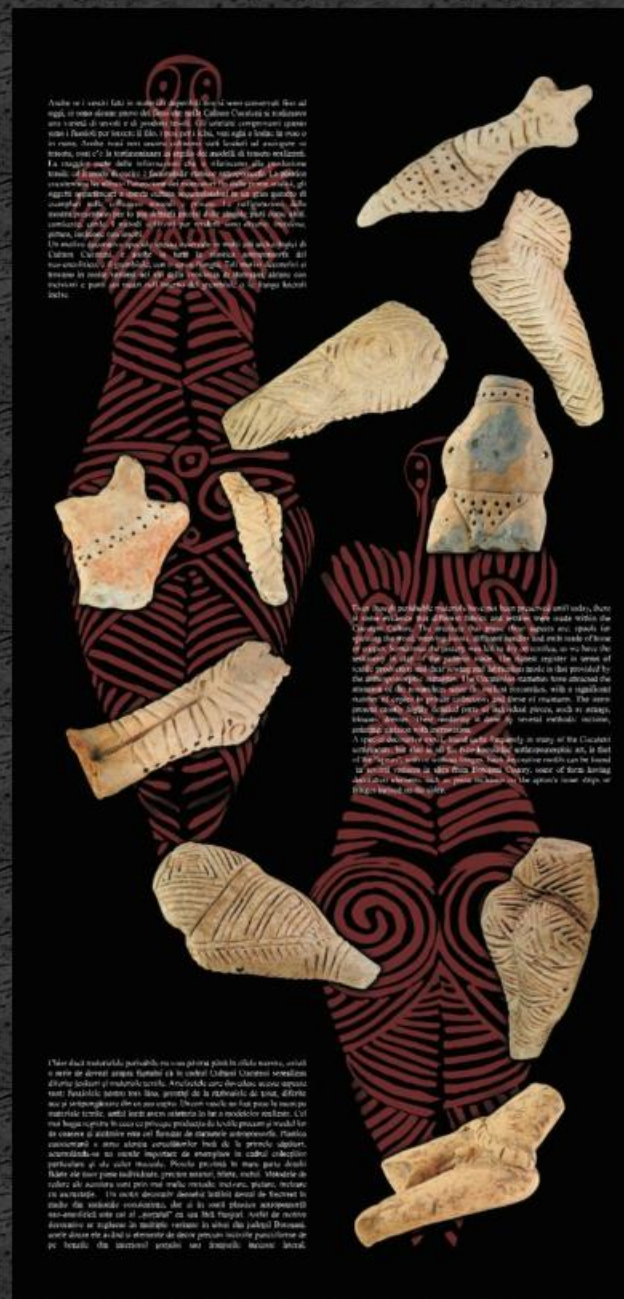
□ Jewelry is a universal accessory, found in all prehistoric civilizations of the world. Starting with the Paleolithic period, stone and bone jewelry were discovered. In the Cucuteni culture we find more elaborate adornments, made of clay, copper and gold. Either in roundels, tubes, plaques, or “en violon”, these pendants were probably integrated in necklaces. Important to mention are the necklaces made from deer teeth, which to a large extent imitate pearls, both in shape and texture. We note that many of the Cucutenian statuettes have rendered jewelry on their bodies that suggest either pendant necklaces or wide belts on the waist. Their representation on the body of statuettes can be linked to the suggestion of a superior social status. Both the necklaces and the belts are signs of prestige, worn by someone to show the character’s place and social role. The signs of distinction refer to the social, political, military and even religious hierarchies. It is important to note that most of the artifacts correspond to the representations on the Cucutenian statuettes.





Clothing

- Even though perishable materials have not been preserved until today, there is some evidence that different fabrics and textiles were made within the Cucuteni Culture. The artefacts that prove these aspects are: spools for spinning the wool, weaving looms, different needles and awls made of bone or copper. Sometimes the pottery was left to dry on textiles, so we have the testimony in clay of the patterns made. The richest register in terms of textile production and their sewing and fabrication mode is that provided by the anthropomorphic statuettes. The Cucutenian statuettes have attracted the attention of the researchers since the earliest researches, with a significant number of copies in private collections and those of museums. The items present mostly highly detailed parts of individual pieces, such as strings, blouses, dresses. Their rendering is done by several methods: incision, painting, incision with incrustation.
- A special decorative motif, found quite frequently in many of the Cucuteni settlements, but also in all the Neo-Eneolithic anthropomorphic art, is that of the “apron”, with or without fringes. Such decorative motifs can be found in several variants in sites from Botoșani County, some of them having decoration elements such as point incisions on the apron’s inner strips or fringes incised on the sides.















Cucuteni, Romania - 5000 BC



Naeem Khan, New York - 2014



Cucuteni,
Romania
4000 BC



Alexander
McQueen
2000s AD



Thank you for your attention