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Complexul Muzeal Național „Moldova” Iași
Muzeul de Istorie a Moldovei
Piața Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt, nr. 1
Iași, RO-700028
Telefon: 04 0232218383
Fax: 04 0332408166
e-mail: cercetari.istorice@yahoo.com

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NEW DISCOVERIES IN OLD COLLECTIONS: A “DOUBLE JANUS” ANTHROPOMORPHIC VESSEL DISCOVERED AT TRUȘEȘTI*

Senica ȚURCANU¹

Keywords: *anthropomorphic vessels, Double Janus, Cucuteni – Trypillia culture, Gumelnița – Karanovo VI culture*

Cuvinte cheie: *vase antropomorfe, dublu Janus, Cucuteni – Tripolie, Gumelnița – Karanovo VI*

Introductory considerations

The present study is a continuation of our concerns in recent years, which aimed at highlighting and systematizing several types of artifacts that indicate the existence, since the 5th-4th millennia BC, in the imaginary universe of the Gumelnița-Karanovo VI and Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complexes, of a double-faced character, most likely with attributes similar to the god Janus Bifrons from the classical mythology².

Synthesizing the archaeological data known in the specialized literature, we identified five main categories of double-faced artifacts – which we call “janiform type” – subdivided, each, into several types. Among them, along with anthropomorphic statuettes (genuine, with bowl on the head or anthropomorphized cylinders), there are also containers, which may have been lids and anthropomorphic vessels.

Among the anthropomorphic vessels, we have indicated as double-faced vessels both some containers that fully reproduce the human figure (present in the Gumelnița-Karanovo VI cultural environment), as well as others that partially reproduce the human figure or can even be classified as “pars pro toto” (both types constituting a characteristic presence of the Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural environment)³.

* A romanian version of this paper has been published in *Analele Banatului, S. N., Arheologie – Istorie*, XXIX, Timișoara, 2021, p. 117-136.

¹ “Moldova” National Museum Complex – Moldavia’s History Museum, IAȘI.

² S. Țurcanu, *Originile preistorice ale unei iconografii clasice. Reprezentări janiforme în Chalcolitica Europei Sud-estice*, in *ArhMold*, XLIII, 2020, p. 175-207.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 184-187.

The category of anthropomorphic vessels that “partially reproduce the human figure” includes representations that do not have explicitly figured heads or hands and reproduce the human (female) figure from the waist down, having, it is important to emphasize, a *quasi-symmetrical profile* (pl. 3-4). They depict the abdomen (rarely the entire torso), hips and legs of a female figure. In the upper part of these containers, the human torso appears as a cylinder with a circular or ovoid section, continued (in the lower part) with the legs rendered plastically, according to the typical way of representing statuettes, i.e. joined, with the hips broadly modeled, making a single body with the entire container. The base of these vessels is – most frequently – the circular or oval bottom of the container. The human anatomical morphology is highlighted by plastic modeling, incisions or deep grooves whose visual effect is doubled and enhanced by the painted, grooved or incised decoration.

The decoration of these artifacts includes typical motifs and decorative elements frequently found on statuettes⁴. They are positioned on and below the abdomen (diamonds, spirals, sexual triangle) or in the neck area (neck ornaments, pendants). The analysis of this decoration allowed us to highlight the fact that the two faces of these vessels are frontal representations of female anthropomorphic silhouettes positioned back-to-back⁵. In some cases, the two faces of the vessel were decorated and even shaped differently (pl. 3/4; 4/2), in others, they are depicted almost identically (pl. 3/3; 4/1, 3-4).

In our previous study we identified with certainty the presence of such artifacts at Trușești-Țuguieța⁶ and Drăgușeni-Ostrov⁷ (both sites on the current territory of Botoșani county), but also at Duruitoarea Veche and Duruitoarea Nouă (Râșcani district, Republic of Moldova)⁸. Similar artifacts were also discovered at Ruginoasa-

⁴ D. Monah, *Plastica antropomorfă a culturii Cucuteni-Tripolie*, ediția a doua revăzută și adăugită, BMA XXVII, Ed. „Constantin Matasă”, Piatra-Neamț, 2012, *passim*.

⁵ S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 184-187. The situation was also noted by S. Marinescu-Bîlcu. Without insisting on the idea, and without extending the comparison to the vessels discovered at Drăgușeni or Trușești, S. Marinescu-Bîlcu considered that one of the anthropomorphic vessels from the Republic of Moldova (an artifact from Duruitoarea Nouă, which was wrongly published as being from Cuconești (cf. V. Sorochin, *Aspectul regional cucutenian Drăgușeni-Jura*, BMA XI, Piatra-Neamț, 2002, p. 114) that it can “possibly be considered a *double anthropomorphic vessel* because *both faces have the appearance of the ventral face*” (cf. S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *Noi dovezi ale tradițiilor precucuteniene în mediul cultural cucutenian*, in *SP*, 1, 2001, p. 97).

⁶ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *Trușești. Monografie arheologică*, Ed. Academiei Române, București-Iași, 1999, fig. 284/4; S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, pl. VI/3; VII/2, 4.

⁷ A. Kovács, *Vasele antropomorfe din Muzeul Județean Botoșani și metafora corpului feminin*, in *ActaMT*, XIV, 2018, p. 18-20, fig. 2-7; S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, pl. VII/1, 3.

⁸ V. Sorochin, *op. cit.*, fig. 84/3; 101/8-9; S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, pl. VIII/2-3.

*Dealul Drăghici*⁹ and *Bălțați-Dealul Mândra*¹⁰ (both settlements in Iași county), but also – with great probability – at *Brânzeni IV-Livada din Deal* (Edineț district, Republic of Moldova)¹¹. We have no doubt that the number of vessels of this kind was greater. Unfortunately, the high degree of fragmentation of the ceramics discovered or the disappearance of the decoration from a large part of the surface of some artifacts, does not allow us nuanced observations.

Some of these vessels belong to the ceramic species with deepened and grooved decoration associated with bichrome painting, others are painted trichrome or even bichrome. They belong to a short chronological interval located at the level of Cucuteni A₃ and A₄ stages that evolved during the second half of the 5th millennium BC¹².

Different in shape, but with a similar message, we consider to be the slightly earlier vessel, discovered in the Precucuteni III settlement from Ruseștii Noi I (Ialoveni district, Republic of Moldova)¹³.

A rediscovery: an anthropomorphic vessel of the “Double Janus” type in the Trușești-Țuguieța settlement

Up to this moment, we can say with certainty that the settlement from Trușești provided the most numerous whole or fragmentary anthropomorphic vessels discovered in the Cucuteni-Trypillia area. From here come ceramic fragments from at least 30 specimens discovered in various contexts, in dwellings, annexes or pits¹⁴. Practically, the artifacts discovered in Trușești make up more than half of the total number of anthropomorphic containers known, until now, in the entire Cucuteni-Trypillia area.

More than half a century after its systematic investigation, the settlement from Trușești remains the largest fully investigated Cucutenian settlement on the territory of Romania. Carried out over a decade, between 1951-1961, under the coordination of professor Mircea Petrescu-Dimbovița from Iași, the systematic researches on the

⁹ C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, *Ruginoasa – Dealul Drăghici. Monografie arheologică*, BAM XX, Ed. Karl A. Romstorfer, Suceava, 2012, fig. VII.3/1; IX.63.

¹⁰ M. Dinu, T. Marin, *Une découverte appartenant à la culture de Cucuteni à Bălțați (départ. de Iași)*, in SAA, IX, 2003, fig. 7/6.

¹¹ V. Sorochin, *op. cit.*, fig. 92/2.

¹² D. Monah, *op. cit.*, p. 167-188; C.-M. Lazarovici, *New Data Regarding the Chronology of the Precucuteni, Cucuteni and Horodișteța-Erbiceni Cultures*, in J. Šuteková, P. Pavúk, P. Kalábková, B. Kovár (eds.), *Panta Rhei. Studies on the Chronology and Cultural Development of the South-Eastern and Central Europe in Earlier Prehistory Presented to Juraj Pavúk on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday*, Studia Archaeologica et Mediaevalia XI, Bratislava, 2010, p. 74, fig. 1-4.

¹³ V. I. Markevici, *Mnogosloinoe poselenie Novie Rusești I*, in KSlA, 123, 1970, p. 66, fig. 14.1; S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, fig. VIII/1.

¹⁴ M. Petrescu-Dimbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

Țuguieța hill led to the discovery of 98 dwellings (of which 93 from the phase Cucuteni A and 5, from the phase Cucuteni B) covering an area of approximately 3 ha¹⁵.

As we have already stated, the materials that are the subject of our interest are those belonging to phase A. More precisely, the settlement from Trușești illustrates a regional aspect from the north-east of Moldova with analogies in the space between the Prut and Dniester which evolved in the A₃ chronological sequence having strong ties in A₄¹⁶. For this chronological interval, a peculiarity of this site is the association of painted ceramics, in a high proportion, with ceramics with deepened, incised and grooved decoration combined with painting and made in negative technique, with a positive visual effect, which has been named in the specialty literature “Trușești species”¹⁷.

Returning to the anthropomorphic vessels, the situation we found regarding the extremely high number of such special containers discovered in Trușești can be due, with great probability, to the fact that the site from which they come has been fully researched, providing a number of items directly proportional to the investigated surface. However, taking into account the fact that only in some of the settlements dated in the same period were discovered anthropomorphic vessels, it is not excluded that the site from Trușești had a special, important character among the settlements from the Moldavian Plain in the second half of the fifth millennium BC.

We remind that the archaeological research carried out on the Țuguieța hill brought to light, in addition to the anthropomorphic vessels already mentioned, numerous and varied types of artifacts considered to be related to the spiritual life of the Cucutenian communities, cult tables and altars (some with containers for sacrifices), anthropomorphic statuettes with cups for offerings in the upper part, as well as constructions with special, monumental arrangements, interpreted as community sanctuaries. All these discoveries outlined the hypothesis of the existence in Trușești of a main settlement with the role of a tribal and cult center around which the settlements in the area gravitated¹⁸.

The materials discovered at Trușești are today in the heritage of at least six large museum or research institutions in Romania¹⁹.

Moldavia’s History Museum in Iași preserves in its collections several of the most representative artifacts discovered in Trușești. These items have been integrated

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 19-22.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 19-22, 673.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 266-495.

¹⁸ C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, S. Țurcanu, *Cucuteni – A Great Civilization of the Prehistoric World*, Ed. Palatul Culturii, Iași, p. 157-161.

¹⁹ The Archaeology Institute from Iași, Moldavia’s History Museum within the “Moldova” National Museum Complex in Iași, the National History Museum of Romania, Botoșani County Museum, Neamț National Museum Complex and the National Museum of Bukovina.

into the exhibitions organized during the last decades all over the globe, becoming known throughout the whole world. Along with these artifacts, in the heritage of the museum in Iași there are also lesser-known materials, unpublished or, in some cases, published without being analyzed in detail.

We will focus on such a situation in the following lines. The main purpose of our study is to (re)introduce into the scientific circuit – with all the rigorous details – an anthropomorphic vessel of a particular type discovered at Trușești more than six decades ago (pl. 1-2). Its correct typological description and framing brings a new perspective on the symbolism embodied by these containers which constitute an important category of sacred objects with a hermeneutic potential still quite poorly deciphered.

The vessel that is the subject of our interest comes from the inventory of pit 34.

Located in the vicinity of mound no. 1, with dimensions of 1.40 m x 0.50 m and a depth of 2 m, pit 34 had an extremely rich inventory. Its filling contained both undecorated, common-use containers, as well as numerous fragments of cups and beakers, of vessels with a bulging body with a wide open or cylindrical mouth, lids, bowls and stands, whole and fragmentary, painted trichrome or decorated with grooves and deepened decoration associated with crude red. Along with these, other painted ceramic artifacts were discovered, such as, for example, a fragment of a binocular vessel, a vessel with a zoomorphic protome or a ladle handle. All these items alternated with layers of ash and coal²⁰.

The vessel that is the subject of our interest was included in the illustration of the monograph as “a vessel with a lobed bifrustoconical body, with brown, white and crude red decoration, from G. 34”²¹, without paying special attention to it in the text²².

In fact, the bowl with a “lobed body” is an anthropomorphic vessel of a particular type, unique so far among the archaeological discoveries from the Cucuteni area. Viewed from any of the four directions, the vessel renders a female anthropomorphic figure viewed from the front. More precisely, it renders the abdominal area and hips of four female figures positioned back-to-back. The female silhouettes are rendered in a typical representation for Cucutenian anthropomorphic vessels with emphasis on the abdomen and groin area, on the amply modeled hips forming a common body with the entire container. Referring to the typological classification we previously made for some of the anthropomorphic vessels with a quasi-symmetrical profile, mentioned at the beginning of this study, we can appreciate that this container is of the “double Janus” type.

²⁰ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 201, fig. 167/2; 168/5; 169/7; 170/6; 171/16; 172/1, 4; 173/1; 187/6; 188/2, 4; 189/1, 3, 6; 192/5; 198/13; 204/9-10; 208/5; 209/3; 211/6; 226/6; 242/6; 259/3, 6; 263/2; 264/2; 283/10; 295/1; 310/5; 313/6; 315/3; 318/9; 326/1.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 277, 280, fig. 174.

²² The item can be found in the inventory of Moldavia’s History Museum within the “Moldova” National Museum Complex Iași with inventory number 550.

The “double Janus” container was made by plastic modeling and transformation of a bifrustoconical container with a slightly flared mouth. The vessel has a wide mouth and a maximum diameter greater than the height. Its decoration, made in negative, with a positive visual effect, is typical of the so-called “Trușești species”²³. It is made up of decorative bands reserved from the background of the vessel through the technique of deepened stripes made by pressing into the soft clay. The highlighting of the bands by painting them with black-brown, the addition of crude red color in the interspaces and the inlaying of the deep stripes with white creates a special decorative effect.

Although the vessel has been restored from several fragments and completed to the extent of approximately 30-40%, its original portions allow for an effortless reconstruction of its original appearance and decoration.

The dimensions of the bowl are: H = 21 cm; maximum D = 28 cm; D mouth = 21 cm; D base = 9 cm. It shows traces of secondary burning, and part of its pictorial layer and especially the white inlay have been affected by the passage of time.

The rim of the bowl is narrow and flared. It was painted red on the outside. It is delimited from the actual body of the vessel by a deep stripe inlaid with white.

In its upper part, the container is frustoconical. On this portion, the abdominal area of the four silhouettes is depicted, highlighted as such by means of the decoration. The main decorative motif of this register is a wide band covered with black-brown color, bordered by deepened stripes inlaid with white. In the waist area, this band represents a girdle/ a belt that constitutes a continuous representation that contours the perimeter of the vessel's neck.

In the groin and hip area the wide band is arched to realistically suggest the human anatomy. Each of the four female figures is thus highlighted and indicated.

In the central abdominal area of each individual anthropomorphic figure, a semicircular motif descends from the waist – made with the same type of decorative band, slightly narrower – which seems to depict a belt buckle. Although not all of these “buckles” are fully preserved, we can make the observation that they were not identical. Deep white-encrusted stripes grouped in threes or fours flank the semicircular motifs and connect the two main decorative elements of this register, the girdle and groin.

The middle area of the vessel is the one that has been plastically transformed by modeling to suggest the hips of a female figure with the ample roundness typical of a Cucutenian representation. The central register of the vessel is divided into what Professor M. Petrescu-Dimbovița saw as four lobes. An exceptional plastic achievement, each of them outlines, in fact, the upper part of the legs – common to two adjacent anthropomorphic silhouettes – delimited by deep grooves on each side and ending at the groin. Horizontally positioned coiled spirals made with the same type of

²³ M. Petrescu-Dimbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 266-267.

wide black-brown band – looking like a groove – bordered by deep stripes inlaid with white decorate the hip area. In the interspaces are made groups of oblique stripes inlaid with white, positioned in pointed oval bands.

A wide band made in the same style delimits the lower edge of this area and ensures decorative symmetry by outlining the perimeter of the vessel. This decorative artifice ends naturally the register that has been anthropomorphized, being proof of the Cucutenian craftsmen’s ability to focus the viewer’s attention on what they wanted to highlight.

The lower part of the vessel, frustoconical, is covered with cream-white paint. It does not present any other type of decorative motif. The base of the bowl is circular.

The vessel was also painted red on the inside²⁴. In the area of the rim of the vessel – on the inside – a decoration of wide and short, vertical strips of cream-white color was made which, on the red background of the vessel, creates the appearance of a “checkerboard” decoration. A variant of this type of decoration appears in exactly the same area, but on the outside, on one of the artifacts from Duruitoarea Nouă²⁵.

Discussions

In all the literature devoted to these special vessels, anthropomorphic vessels have generally been regarded as part of cult paraphernalia, even if it is difficult to specify in what way or under what circumstances they might have been used.

For all historical periods and in all cultural areas the metaphor of the vessel seen as a correspondent of the human body is recognized and documented through numerous ethnological and anthropological references. Referring to this reality, we can say about the anthropomorphic vessels that they have a dual character with a special added value. On the one hand, they are containers, on the other hand, they are human or partially human in form. Beyond their utilitarian function, the symbolic potential embodied by their particular form had multiple valences.

It was considered that the anthropomorphic vessels may have been, at the same time, both usual and ritual vessels, the sacred character of the figures represented not being incompatible with the utilitarian function of the container. It is known that in

²⁴ Little is known about the interior decoration of anthropomorphic vessels. Sometimes these items were not decorated, and sometimes the decoration was not preserved in good condition or was not included in the illustration. If we refer to the data known to us from direct contact with some items, but also to the whole and fragmentary artifacts published in detail, we can make the observation that – when it was decorated – the interior of these containers was ornamented only with certain decorative motifs. They consist especially of an alternation of narrow or wider, white or red, vertical lines or bands. In general, this decoration is not found on other types of vessels. With certainty, it can be connected with the symbolic valences of the anthropomorphic vessels, valences that, unfortunately, we cannot reconstruct today.

²⁵ V. Sorochin, *op. cit.*, fig. 101/9.

many civilizations, images of divinities or ancestors have decorated, over time, various pieces of household equipment²⁶.

In most cultural areas, the most numerous anthropomorphic vessels have the body modeled with feminine features, which is why, implicitly, the interpretations related to their symbolism have considered them a “visual metaphor for abundance”, connecting them with the woman as the giver of life or, more abstractly, with the desire for prosperity²⁷.

Until now, we are not aware of any analysis of the contents of these containers, so we do not have any information on the materials or substances they may have contained.

We can, however, make a few observations regarding the context of the discovery of these special artifacts, as presented in the specialized literature.

A first observation we make is that, although they are artifacts with a low frequency, *anthropomorphic vessels sometimes appear grouped within the same construction*.

We mention, in the first instance, in this direction, two situations from Scânteia-Dealul Bodeștilor/ La Nucii (Iași county), a settlement dated to the Cucuteni A₃ phase²⁸.

The first of them is connected with dwelling 1 considered to be a domestic sanctuary²⁹. From here come two fragments of anthropomorphic vessels³⁰ that were discovered alongside a special and extremely rich inventory that included anthropomorphic (75 artifacts) and zoomorphic statuettes (30 artifacts), zoomorphic protomes (7 specimens), fragments of altar tables, a human skull fragment but also numerous ceramic fragments and tools (a copper needle, polished stone axes, bone awls, flint tools or strikers)³¹.

The second situation that we present was recorded in dwelling 5³². Its inventory includes two fragmentary anthropomorphic vessels as well as the remains of a *pythos*-type vessel with anthropomorphic decoration in alto-relief (a praying silhouette or, possibly, from the category of those indicated as coupled, but fragmentarily

²⁶ A. Nițu, *Reprezentări antropomorfe pe ceramica de tip Gumelnița A*, in *Danubius*, II-III, 1969, p. 38.

²⁷ E. Bánffy, G. Goldman, *Neolithic Beliefs*, in Z. Visy (ed.), *Hungarian Archaeology at the Turn of the Millennium*, Budapest, 2003, p. 112-117; D. Boghian, *Unele considerații asupra vaselor cucuteniene antropomorfe și antropomorfizate*, in *ArhMold*, XXXV, 2012, p. 117-118 and bibliography.

²⁸ We thank, in this way too, dr. hab. Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici, coordinator of the archaeological research from Scânteia for providing the unpublished information cited in this material.

²⁹ C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura Neoliticului și Epocii cuprului din România II. Epoca cuprului*, BAM IV, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2007, p. 228-229.

³⁰ C.-M. Mantu, *Vases anthropomorphes du site Cucuteni A₃ de Scânteia (departement de Iași)*, in V. Chirica, D. Monah (eds.), *Le Paléolithique et le Néolithique de la Roumanie en contexte européen*, BAI IV, Iași, 1991, p. 329, fig. 3/3.

³¹ V. Chirica, C.-M. Mantu, S. Țurcanu (eds.), *Scânteia. Cercetare arheologică și restaurare. Catalog de expoziție*, Ed. Helios, Iași, p. 15.

³² Unpublished information provided by dr. hab. C.-M. Lazarovici.

preserved)³³. At this time, we do not have any other data about the inventory and furnishings of this dwelling.

Two other fragmentary anthropomorphic vessels were discovered together in dwelling 2 from Cervicești-*La Mărișcă* (Botoșani county), Cucuteni A₃ settlement³⁴. Their markings indicate that the artifacts were recovered even from the same area of the dwelling (the northwest one). Only the bases and, to a small extent, the actual body have been preserved from both vessels. Both artifacts have the base in the form of a rhomboid pedestal on which the toes were figured. The dimensions of the rhomboid pedestal on which the vessels were supported (17.2 cm x 13.5 cm, for artifact no. 1; 12.2 cm x 10.8 cm, for artifact no. 2), seem to indicate an obvious difference of size of the two containers and, implicitly, of capacity. Were these anthropomorphic vessels, two parts of an assembly, each with a well-defined functionality? Did they fulfill similar or complementary functions? Hard to say! We have no other data regarding the context of their discovery for these artifacts either.

A similar situation was also observed at the level of the A₄ phase, at Drăgușeni. In the inventory of dwelling 15 – only partially investigated – two anthropomorphic vessels were discovered, one of which was miniaturized³⁵. In this case, the difference in capacity of the two anthropomorphic containers is obvious. The presence of a miniature artifact may involve a special discussion, the disjunction between the utilitarian and the symbolic being difficult to indicate. Beyond their use as containers for certain substances, numerous miniature items have been indicated as cultic paraphernalia, as artifacts that are part of the “sacred props”, their presence being documented in constructions indicated as domestic or community sanctuaries³⁶.

In the case of dwelling 15 from Drăgușeni, bones and tools made of bone, chipped and polished stone, an anthropomorphic statuette and numerous ceramic fragments were recovered from its inventory. They come from painted vessels such as bowls, cups, fruit bowl type vessels, but also from supply vessels or even belonging to the “Cucuteni C” species³⁷. Besides these, we should mention the clay paste that indicates the existence of a bench or a table, a grinder, as well as a fairly large stone that

³³ C.-M. Mantu, *Reprezentări antropomorfe pe ceramica așezării Cucuteni A₃ de la Scânteia, (jud. Iași)*, in SCIVA, 42, 1992, 3, fig. 1/1.

³⁴ S. Țurcanu, A. Kovács, *Conexiuni sudice. Metamorfoza unui tip particular de vase antropomorfe în arealul civilizației Cucuteni*, in C. Croitoru, G.-D. Hânceanu (eds.), *Ion Mareș – In honorem*, 2022, in press.

³⁵ S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, A. Bolomey, *Drăgușeni. A Cucutenian Community*, Ed. Enciclopedică & Wasmuth Verlag, București-Tübingen, 2000, p. 137, fig. 161/1=171/3, 180/2.

³⁶ C.-M. Lazarovici, *Semne și simboluri în cultura Cucuteni-Tripolie*, in N. Ursulescu, C.-M. Lazarovici (eds.), *Cucuteni 120 – Valori universale*. Lucrările Simpozionului Național, Iași, 30 septembrie 2004, Universitatea „A. I. Cuza” Iași, Centrul Interdisciplinar de Studii Arheologice, Academia Română – Filiala Iași, Institutul de Arheologie, Ed. Sedcom Libris, Iași, 2006, p. 86.

³⁷ S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, A. Bolomey, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39.

still had traces of color and that was most likely used for grinding some color pigments. A large number of stones of various sizes whose presence and role inside the construction is difficult to explain, differentiating it from other investigated buildings, completes the picture of discoveries in this building.

In the Stoicani-Aldeni cultural environment, too, situations are cited where several anthropomorphic vessels were discovered inside the same building. Thus, in one dwelling, dwelling 3 from Dodești (Vaslui county), fragments from no less than four anthropomorphic vessels were discovered³⁸. Unfortunately, there is a complete lack of data regarding the inventory and the characteristics of the construction from which they came, which, in our opinion, had a special character. Regarding the two vessels that could be restored, what their discoverer himself noted – and draws our attention in the context of our analysis – is the fact that “the second item has a slenderer silhouette” and also “the bottom differently shaped”. The two mentions indicate, with great probability, a difference in size and, implicitly, in capacity, between the artifacts. Secondly, we note that there is a high probability that the four vessels were part of an assemblage in which they had complementary rather than similar roles.

A situation that can confirm this interpretation comes from the Gumelnița cultural environment. Thus, in the Sultana-*Malu Roșu* settlement (Călărași county), in dwelling 2/1975 – dwelling dated to the Gumelnița B₁ phase – no less than four anthropomorphic containers or with anthropomorphized features were discovered³⁹. In this case, from the same structure come an anthropomorphic vessel, an anthropomorphized lid and a bifrustoconical vessel with lid with anthropomorphic features modeled on both the vessel and the lid that covered it⁴⁰. The four anthropomorphized artifacts are placed in connection with a structure about which it has been said that it might be “a miniature sanctuary”⁴¹. Along with the respective structure made of clay on a wooden support⁴², several objects that can be indicated as

³⁸ A. Nițu, *Vase antropomorfe ale ceramicii Stoicani-Aldeni din sudul Moldovei*, in *CercIst*, II, 1971, p. 81-86.

³⁹ V. Opreș, T. Ignat, C. Lazăr, *Human-shaped pottery from the tell settlement of Sultana-Malu Roșu*, in H. Schwarzberg, V. Beker (eds.), *Bodies of clay. Prehistoric Humanised Pottery*, Proceedings of the Session at the 19th EAA Annual Meeting at Pilsen, 5th September 2013, Oxbow books, Oxford & Philadelphia, 2017, p. 193-195, fig. 11.3, 11.4, 11.8, 11.9.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 197-202.

⁴¹ T. Ignat, *Cultura Gumelnița pe valea Mostiștei*, Ed. Muzeului Municipiului București, București, 2018, p. 35-36.

⁴² The structure was described as made “of adobe from which four pieces measuring 60 x 50 x 25 cm were recovered. These had finished edges and a concave face and a perfectly flat face. On the flat side, two or three successive retouches can be observed”. On the edge, the recovered pieces had holes that were interpreted as “traces of wooden dowels for holding the four pieces together”. We also note the information that “reconstructed they had the shape of a house” (cf. T. Ignat, *op. cit.*, p. 35-36.)

cult paraphernalia were discovered: "a pair of miniature clay hands, a bone figurine with a copper earring, a small zoomorphic vessel", a deposit numbering several dozen vessels "of very good quality and of great decorative value, including anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels"⁴³. All these were integrated in a construction that had no hearth and in which some fragments of grinders, bone tools, a copper needle, a flint arrowhead, animal bones and shells were also discovered. This construction was affected by the excavations of Barbu Ionescu, and Constantin Isăcescu assumed that "The Goddess from Sultana", the famous anthropomorphic vessel, might come from this special archaeological context⁴⁴.

Returning to the anthropomorphic or anthropomorphized containers, in this case, it is obvious that the artifacts that constitute the subject of our interest performed complementary functions in an obviously ritual context.

A second observation we make regarding the context of discovery of the anthropomorphic vessels is that *several specimens appear grouped, in the same context, not only in spaces of use, but also in areas of final storage related to deposition, waste and abandonment*. We have in mind, with this observation, the pits discovered in the settlements.

Thus, from Trușești, from pit 40, appreciated because "it stands out, in particular, due to the wealth of material", fragments of three anthropomorphic vessels come⁴⁵. Along with them were discovered several tools, dozens of whole and fragmentary vessels (among which we mention, as special, the binocular-type and support-type vessels, miniature, with zoomorphic protomes, but also common-use containers such as cups, bowls and vessels with a high neck), several fragments of fired clay ladles, numerous anthropomorphic and zoomorphic idols and a fragment of a *phallus*.

A similar situation seems to have been observed in the pit investigated at Bălțați-Dealul Mândra – dated at the same chronological level as the Trușești settlement – where at least two anthropomorphic vessels come from⁴⁶. The inventory of the pit was characterized as extremely rich. It consisted mostly of pottery alternating with thick layers of ash and charcoal but also with fragments from perforated clay slabs of the type used in pottery kilns to separate the fire chamber. To these are added quite numerous animal bones⁴⁷.

From the inventory of this pit come stone and bone tools, anthropomorphic female statuettes (four specimens), an ornamental copper disc, a fragment of a *kernos*-

⁴³ T. Ignat, *op. cit.*, p. 35-36.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 202, fig. 285/5, 287/1, 331/1.

⁴⁶ M. Dinu, T. Marin, *op. cit.*, p. 75-96, fig. 6/9, 7/6.

⁴⁷ S. Haimovici, *Observațiuni cu privire la resturile animale descoperite în stațiunea cucuteniană din faza A₄ de la Bălțați (jud Iași)*, in *CercIst*, XVI, 1997, p. 31-37.

type vessel, as well as a large amount of ceramic fragments from numerous painted or common-use vessels of which many could be reconstructed. Among the ceramic forms that were discovered alongside the (at least) two anthropomorphic vessels⁴⁸, we mention pyriform vessels, of the support- and fruit bowl-types, vessels with a globular body and a long leg with a lid, lids, cups, but also bowl-type vessels and numerous fragments of clay spoons and ladles. Along with them, we should also mention the remains of storage and supply vessels, frustoconical or *pythos*-type, painted red inside.

All this special inventory made the discoverer consider that the pit discovered at Bălțați did not have an ordinary household character, but that it was a pit belonging to a potter's workshop. The vessels broken during firing or during their manipulation by the potter were thrown into it, an explanation that can justify – from the perspective of the author of the research – the extremely large number of vessels that could be completed from this closed feature, but also the presence of the perforated clay plates.

Regarding the discoveries from the Scânteia settlement, only three of the more than 200 pits investigated in this site had two anthropomorphic vessels each in their inventory⁴⁹.

The most spectacular discovery related to anthropomorphic vessels is the two containers from pit 4, both completely preserved⁵⁰. The two artifacts are very similar in size (item 1: H=12.2 cm, Dmax=5.2 cm; item 2: H=10.5 cm, D=5.5 cm)⁵¹, but their appearance is somewhat different. Both items render an anthropomorphic vessel of the type that has been considered to “insert the container into a hollow figure”⁵². The first specimen generally respects the morphology of the human body; the second rests on a slightly flaring foot and shows a narrowing with a threshold in the neck area that most likely indicates the existence of a lid. Were the two containers vessels with complementary or similar functions? Hard to indicate!

Neither in the case of pit 4, nor in regard to the other two pits, 11⁵³ and 195⁵⁴, do we have any data on the associated materials. From the published illustration, the two fragments from pit 11 appear to have been close in size.

⁴⁸ We prefer this wording because the published text does not specify the exact number of anthropomorphic vessels indicated by the discovered fragments. The two authors refer to several anthropomorphic vessels and illustrate two of them. Starting from the observation that several objects mentioned in the published text were not included in the illustration, we assume that it is possible that the number of anthropomorphic vessels discovered in a fragmentary state was higher.

⁴⁹ Unpublished information provided by dr. hab. C.-M. Lazarovici.

⁵⁰ A. Nițu, V. Chirica, *Două vase cucuteniene cu caractere antropomorfe recent descoperite*, in *Hierasus*, VI-VII, 1989, p. 17-20, fig. 1-2; C.-M. Mantu, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 329-330, fig. 1/1.

⁵¹ V. Chirica, C.-M. Mantu, S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁵² A. Nițu, V. Chirica, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁵³ C.-M. Mantu, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 331, fig. 2/3; 3/2.

⁵⁴ Unpublished information provided by dr. hab. C.-M. Lazarovici.

A third observation we make regarding the contexts in which the anthropomorphic vessels were discovered, concerns *the materials with which these items are associated at the time of discovery together with which they make up a coherent whole*. Naturally, the processing of archaeological data with a global and integrative perspective allows a better perception of the context and conditions of use of any artifact.

We mention, in the first instance, and in this direction, some new data from the Scânteia settlement. Thus, at least three special items were discovered in the inventory of dwelling 4: an anthropomorphic vessel, a bowl with an anthropomorphic protome on the rim⁵⁵ and a *pythos* with relief decoration⁵⁶. The two anthropomorphic figures that are rendered on the storage vessel have been interpreted as a representation of the divine couple. The interior of the *pythos* (which is painted entirely in red) and the relief spiral (which is positioned diametrically opposite to the anthropomorphic figures) make this large container one of the most interesting and exciting finds in the reference cultural area.

The association anthropomorphic vessel – *pythos* is also worth mentioning in a pit, pit 35 from the same settlement⁵⁷. In this last case, the *pythos* was decorated with at least one anthropomorphic silhouette in relief of the coupled type⁵⁸, a type of association also recorded, we remind, in the case of dwelling 5.

Artifacts with a particular character were also discovered in the inventory of dwelling 4 in the Cucuteni A₃ settlement from Ruginoasa-Dealul Drăghici (Iași county). In association with the miniature anthropomorphic vessel⁵⁹ from this structure were discovered numerous anthropomorphic and zoomorphic statuettes, conical idols, a clay plaque, as well as some decorative objects of burnt clay and boar's tusk, artifacts with a rare frequency that may have constituted elements of a necklace/ suit. The pottery includes numerous and varied vessels, among which we mention a low support type vessel documenting southern connections with the Cucuteni civilization⁶⁰.

Interesting details about the discovery context of an anthropomorphic vessel also come from the Gumelnița cultural environment, from the same settlement mentioned above, from Sultana-Malu Roșu, from Gumelnița B₁ level. The vessel we are referring to was discovered inside dwelling L2/2003, a dwelling "exceptionally outstanding in terms of furnishings and inventory"⁶¹ characterized as "particularly

⁵⁵ Unpublished information provided by dr. hab. C.-M. Lazarovici.

⁵⁶ C.-M. Mantu, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 310-314, fig. 1/3-4; 2; V. Chirica, C.-M. Mantu, S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 51, 103, cat. nr. 180.

⁵⁷ Unpublished information provided by dr. hab. C.-M. Lazarovici.

⁵⁸ C.-M. Mantu, *op. cit.*, 1992, fig. 1/2.

⁵⁹ C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, *op. cit.*, 2012, p. 302, fig. VIII.3/1.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 57-69, 187-189, 249, 292, table 1, fig. VIIB.184-185; VIII/2-4, VIII/37-41.

⁶¹ R.-R. Andreescu, C.-A. Lazăr, A. Topârceanu, V. Oană, P. Mirea, C. Enăchescu, M. Ungureanu,

rich⁶². The dwelling – unfortunately, partially preserved – had several interior arrangements (hearths, grinders, clay boxes). From its inventory come numerous bone and antler tools, fragments of clay and bone anthropomorphic statuettes and zoomorphic statuettes. Besides these there was an impressive amount of ceramics (more than 50 whole or reconstructable vessels, of different shapes and sizes, decorated with barbotine, incisions, graphite or plastic decoration) but also some special artifacts with an extremely rare frequency. One such artifact is a frustoconical support vessel with four triangular handles at the top, painted in white and red, very well preserved⁶³.

From the same context comes a small gold leaf pendant located near a hearth whose functionality was appreciated as “rather cultic”⁶⁴. Among the special artifacts discovered here, several pieces of ornament attract our attention (triangular perforated bone plates, as well as many perforated snails), which most likely constituted the elements of a costume (unfortunately the area where they were discovered was affected by a pit).

We note the association anthropomorphic vessel – various vessels appreciated as cultic paraphernalia – elements of a costume of a special character (priest, shaman) – gold item – hearth with special characteristics whose functionality was appreciated as “rather cultic, considering the size, the way of construction and the context in which it was discovered”⁶⁵.

The association gold item – anthropomorphic vessel also appears in the settlement of Vitănești-Măgurice (Teleorman county)⁶⁶, in a dwelling from the Gumelnița B₁ level. The item from Vitănești is a pendant belonging to the category of gold anthropomorphic representations, a violin-shaped schematized artifact. It was discovered in the inventory of dwelling 15 alongside: a whole anthropomorphic vessel of a particular type (vessel with a human mask applied under the rim and arms with three fingers in a praying position), an anthropomorphic female statuette of the type seated on a chair/ throne, weights of clay, vessels broken *in situ*, but also other artifacts that imply a special symbolic significance⁶⁷.

Sultana, com. Mânăstirea, jud. Călărași, Punct: Malu-Roșu, in CCAR. Campania 2003, București, 2004, p. 324; R.-R. Andreescu, C.-A. Lazăr, V. Oană, P. Mirea, V. Voinea, C. Haită, C. Enăchescu, M. Ungureanu, Sultana, com. Mânăstirea, jud. Călărași, Punct: Malu-Roșu, in CCAR. Campania 2004, București, 2005, p. 366.

⁶² R.-R. Andreescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, 2004, p. 325.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 324-325, pl. 66/2-3; R.-R. Andreescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 365-367; R.-R. Andreescu, C. Lazăr, V. Oană, K. Moldoveanu, *Câteva considerații asupra unor descoperiri din Locuința nr. 2 din așezarea neolitică de la Sultana-Malu Roșu*, in *CercArh*, XVII, 2010, p. 9-20.

⁶⁴ R.-R. Andreescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 366.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ R.-R. Andreescu, P. Mirea, K. Moldoveanu, I. Torcică, *Noi descoperiri în așezarea gumelnițeană de la Vitănești „Măgurice”*, in *BMJT*, 1, 2009, p. 77-79, pl. XII/1-5.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77-79.

We have in mind, first of all, a few containers – a supply vessel and a bowl – that show traces of repairs through perforations⁶⁸. The practice of perforating vessels for repair is primarily aimed at extending the life of a vessel. Secondly, it was observed that sometimes vessels of common types are repaired, with an investment of time and energy that is difficult to understand in the conditions where the containers could have been easily replaced, as in this case from Vitănești. Under these circumstances, it has been hypothesized that their function and symbolic meaning, possibly in connection with the social role of their possessor, could have determined this type of behavior⁶⁹.

We emphasize the special character of the presence of gold artifacts in the two dwellings, given the circumstances that, since prehistoric times, the presence of these artifacts was directly connected with prestige, power and hierarchies, either social or religious⁷⁰.

In the case of Chalcolithic prehistoric societies, it is considered that gold was directly connected with “the dead and the gods”⁷¹, an axiomatic statement confirmed – in general – also in the Gumelnița area north of the Danube⁷², but also – in a particular way – through the situations highlighted by us in this study.

We cannot end this short excursion into the world of the Gumelnița culture, without also mentioning the association anthropomorphic vessel – gold pendant in the case of the artifact known as “The Goddess from Vidra”. When the famous anthropomorphic vessel was published, it was stated that “numerous anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, as well as a gold pendant”, were found near it⁷³. The actual context of the discovery led the researcher who carried out the excavation to hypothesize that the vessel “was probably in a sanctuary”, and even that the gold pendant adorned the anthropomorphic vessel⁷⁴.

In addition to the archaeological data already centralized and subsumed to our first observations, the most numerous information regarding the materials with which the anthropomorphic vessels are associated at the time of discovery are provided, for the Cucutenian cultural environment, by the discoveries from Trușești⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ I. Torcică, *Observații asupra unor vase gumelnițene cu perforații din tell-ul de la Vitănești „Măgurice”, jud. Teleorman*, in *BMJT*, 2, 2010, p. 99-105.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 101.

⁷⁰ C. Eluère, *Gold and Society in Prehistoric Europe*, in G. Morteani, J. P. Northover (eds.), *Prehistoric Gold in Europe*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht/ Boston/ London, 1995, p. 29-31.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁷² R.-R. Andreescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 78.

⁷³ D. V. Rosetti, *Săpăturile de la Vidra. Raport preliminar*, in *Publicațiile Muzeului Municipiului București*, I, 1934, p. 27, 43-44, pl. I-II, III/1, 3.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

⁷⁵ Unfortunately, in the case of Hăbășești, where, according to the data in the illustration, at least 15 artifacts were discovered, the place of discovery is indicated only for one of them (cf. Vl. Dumitrescu,

In a centralizer that we made on the basis of the data published in the monograph of this settlement, the most frequently next to the anthropomorphic vessels are mentioned the support-type vessels (discovered in dwellings X, XII, XV; annex 16; pits 7, 34, 37, 39, 40, 53, 58, 102, 156) and the binocular-type vessels (in dwellings III, VII, X, pits 34, 37, 40, 156)⁷⁶. Beyond their obvious use as a single or double support, both types of vessels have a functionality that is difficult to indicate. If the support-type vessels are artifacts with a high frequency in the discoveries belonging to phase A, the binocular-type artifacts appear less often or even not at all in certain settlements, as is the case of the site from Hăbășești, fully excavated⁷⁷. The special shape of the binocular-type vessels has polarized the attention of specialists. Far from being unanimous, the opinions regarding the role and functionality of these artifacts agree to consider them a special type of vessels with the role of paraphernalia in ritual and/ or cult activities⁷⁸. Their absence in some settlements leads us to assume that the activities in which they were involved were carried out only by certain communities/specialized individuals, under special conditions.

In the same settlement where the most numerous anthropomorphic vessels in the Cucuteni area were discovered so far, there are several situations in which anthropomorphic containers are associated with vessels that, traditionally, were interpreted by specialists as connected to the sacred universe as “objects for worship”, “vessels for libations”, or as items with a vague role in everyday life. In general, to these must be added some artifacts that were signs of a certain type of differentiation (social and/ or cultural) such as scepters and ornaments (the case of the ornamental copper disc, cited above, from Bălțați), the miniature items of various types or even special household implements and tools.

Thus, from a context from which an anthropomorphic vessel originates (pit 102), a zoomorphic scepter-type artifact was discovered, an artifact with a low frequency in the entire Cucuteni area⁷⁹.

From the category of special containers, we cite vessels with zoomorphic protomes (dwelling XV; pits 34, 39, 40, 58, 102, 172), miniature vessels (dwelling X, pits 40, 156) or even fragments belonging to vessels with plastic decoration in relief (pit 7)⁸⁰.

H. Dumitrescu, M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, N. Gostar, *Hăbășești. Monografie arheologică*, Ed. Academiei RPR, București, *passim*).

⁷⁶ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 31-37; 40-42; 201-202.

⁷⁷ Vl. Dumitrescu *et alii*, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁷⁸ I. Palaguta, «Binoklevidnyye» izdeliya v kul'ture Tripol'ye-Kukuten': opyt issledovaniya kategorii «kul'tovyykh» predmetov, in RA, III, 1-2, 2007, p. 110-137.

⁷⁹ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 206, fig. 382/6; L. Solcan, G. Bodi, *Bovinele în viața comunităților din prima fază a civilizației Cucuteni-Tripolie: între economic și simbolic*, in *CercIst*, XL, 2021, p. 55.

⁸⁰ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 43-45, 47.

Also, in association with the anthropomorphic containers, we must mention fragments of altar tables (dwelling LXXXIII) and phallus fragments (pits 37, 40), anthropomorphic statuettes with cups for offerings in the upper part (dwelling LXIX), anthropomorphic (dwellings XII, LXXXIII; pit 40) and zoomorphic statuettes (dwelling XV; pits 7, 40)⁸¹.

Somewhat frequently, in association with the anthropomorphic vessels we should mention the ladles (dwelling LIX 69, pits 34, 37, 40), domestic instruments whose utilitarian role is far from being clearly indicated. From the category of tools, we should mention, with a somewhat higher frequency, the presence of axes, in one case even a hammer-axe (dwellings X, XII, XV, LXXXIII, pits 40, 172). Sporadically, flint, bone and antler tools are mentioned.

As for the vessels of common use, when they are indicated it is obvious that they belong to all the ceramic species. In this sense, we can mention the lids, the bowls with a convex body, the pyriform vessels, the cups, the bowls, but also the storage vessels such as the *pythos* vessels.

In the vast majority of cases (pits 7, 37, 39, 40, 53, 58, 156, 185), all the mentioned materials appear interspersed with lenses of charcoal, ash and burnt materials – about which, sometimes, it is stated that they are present in consistent quantities – associated, less often, with adobe (pits 34, 93, 172)⁸².

In the case of the fragments of anthropomorphic vessels discovered in pit 35, at Drăgușeni⁸³, it is obvious that the stratigraphic unit that housed them had a special character. This (unfortunately, it could not be fully researched as it exceeded the surface of the trench in which it appeared) was described as a wide alveole with the bottom burnt and irregular in depth. The materials in its filling are out of the patterns of the usual finds in the settlement. In this case, the ones that attract attention are the osteological remains from the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*) and stag. Very interesting is the fact that some (many!) of these were in anatomical position⁸⁴.

Along with the numerous osteological remains, ceramics and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic statuettes (two objects of this type), flint and stone tools, broken stones, pieces of adobe were discovered – in a fragmentary state.

Several functional hypotheses have been advanced for this feature. Referring both to the high number of osteological remains, and especially to their presence in an

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 43-45, 47.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 198-213.

⁸³ In pit 35, two fragments were discovered which were said to be, with high probability, part of the same container (cf. S. Marinescu-Bilcu, A. Bolomey, *op. cit.*, p. 137, fig. 171/1-2).

⁸⁴ In the monograph, it is explicitly stated that an aurochs skull was found connected in anatomical position with the spinal cord, but also that large artifacts were deposited with the bones in anatomical connection (cf. S. Marinescu-Bilcu, A. Bolomey, *op. cit.*, p. 47).

anatomical connection, Alexandra Bolomey assumed that the said surface might have been a place for depositing offerings. The presence of the archaeological materials mentioned above – next to and at the same level as the faunal remains – did not, however, allow such a hypothesis to be supported. Another hypothesis, rejected with arguments, was that a pit-house existed on this place. Consequently, the respective stratigraphic unit was interpreted as a natural hollow of the land exploited by the inhabitants of the Cucutenian settlement and published as a pit⁸⁵.

From the information presented, it is obvious that the pits where the anthropomorphic vessels were discovered are not ordinary household pits.

We emphasize the fact that, both at Bălțați and at Trușești, in most cases where anthropomorphic vessels were discovered in the pits, the inventory of these was described as “rich” or “a lot of ceramic material” was observed in the filling of the pits⁸⁶. Dozens, even hundreds of vessels – many still intact – have been recovered from such pits.

In our opinion, the specific nature of the inventory and its extreme variety involving artifacts that it is difficult to understand why they were abandoned to be found in a pit – seems to indicate that this was the end point of activities with a particular character. It is very likely that the artifacts discovered in the pits, many still intact and in a perfect state of preservation and use, were abandoned here after the completion of a ceremony. It is interesting that these artifacts were discarded without being “sacrificed” in the sense of destroying or breaking them.

We note the presence of storage vessels of various types, some of considerable size – such as *pythos* or pyriform vessels –, alongside those implying individual use and consumption (cups, mugs, plates, bowls), as well as the presence, in almost all cases, of special tools for handling food, fluid solids (grains, seeds) or liquids (scoop-type vessels, ladles)⁸⁷. Equally, we underline the presence of some vessels that are supposed to have been used for presentation and offerings in sanctuaries or on altars, during ceremonies (fruit bowls, globular vessels with a long leg, supports or even binocular-type vessels), along with various other containers and objects that we conventionally designate as cult paraphernalia⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, A. Bolomey, *op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

⁸⁶ M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. Florescu, A. C. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 198-213; M. Dinu, T. Marin, *op. cit.*, p. 75-96.

⁸⁷ G. Bodi, L. Solcan, *Considerații asupra unei posibile tipologii funcționale a formelor ceramice cucuteniene specifice fazei A*, in *ArhMold*, XXXIII, 2010, p. 315-323.

⁸⁸ A. Kovács, *Despre vasele ritualice din sanctuarele neolitice sud-est europene*, in *Angustia*, 17-18, 2014, p. 67-88; Eadem, *Temple, sanctuare, altare în Neoliticul și Epoca Cuprului din sud-estul Europei = Temples, sanctuaries, altars in Neolithic and Copper Age from South-East Europe*, Ed. Karl A. Romstorfer, Suceava, 2016, *passim*.

We add to all these ascertainties, as a constant, the presence of ash, burn and charcoal lenses that are in connection with these artifacts as well as the presence of osteological remains.

Is it too risky to assume that those pits – in which there were also anthropomorphic vessels – contain the material remains of a ceremony that included – in addition to the divine service – a banquet or a ritual feast and in which many members of a community were involved, or even from several communities in the same area?

Like many other rituals recorded throughout the history of mankind, after the final celebration, all the physical remains of the ceremonial were abandoned *observing certain customs*. All containers, food scraps, tools and utensils related to preparation and serving (many of them made of organic materials that have not reached us), but also the so-called oven plates (which could also have served as a kind of grills facilitating the preparation of the food), as well as the crematory ones (including the ashes and coals) were thrown or even buried in specially dedicated pits; some vessels were broken during this activity, others were not, a situation that allowed them to be recovered whole during archaeological research.

The pit from Drăgușeni – somewhat different from the majority of the features presented, but fitting into the same pattern – may even indicate the existence of a certain way of preparing food, according to the recipe that today we indicate as “on a stick”, followed by the excarnation of the animal and the abandonment of the skeleton in anatomical position, in the pit specially intended for storing the remains of this activity. The two species of animals hunted/ slaughtered and consumed, the aurochs and the stag, both wild, could suggest special valences of the ceremony.

In the second case where we have archaeozoological data, at Bălțați, there is a greater variety in terms of the fauna consumed. The animal bones come mostly (about 80%) from domestic species (cattle, pigs, goats/ sheep), but wild species (boar, stag, roe deer)⁸⁹ are also present.

Corroborating all the observations so far, in our opinion, the hypothesis that the pits where (also) anthropomorphic vessels are found contain the remains of ceremonies that ended with a feast is extremely credible. Unfortunately, we will remain at the level of assuming as to their motivation, object and manner of unfolding.

Final considerations

As we already stated at the beginning of this study, in our previous research, synthesizing the archaeological data known in the specialized literature, we identified the existence since the 5th-4th millennia BC, in the imaginary universe of the Gumelnița-

⁸⁹ S. Haimovici, *op. cit.*, p. 31-37.

Karanovo VI and Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complexes, of a double-faced character, most likely with attributes similar to the god Janus Bifrons from classical mythology⁹⁰.

We also indicated the fact that we can speak of a true iconographic tradition found starting from Anatolia⁹¹, throughout the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic in wider cultural areas (Sesklo, Vinča, Linear Pottery culture and its regional aspects, the Banat culture (the Bucovăț group), Tisza, Lengyel, Petrești, the culture of painted ceramics from Moravia), to Central Europe⁹². The presence of such artifacts on vast spaces in a time interval of more than a millennium leads us to consider that they constitute the expression of a very well structured symbolic code, integrated in a transregional communication system.

Images of a double-faced deity appear illustrated in Sumerian iconography from the 3rd millennium BC⁹³. This was a messenger or servant of Enki, the Sumerian god of creation and water, but also knowledge and crafts.

In the 3rd millennium, double-faced deities are portrayed not only by the Mesopotamians, but also by the Egyptians, the African populations or the tribes of

⁹⁰ S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 175-207.

⁹¹ L. M. Meskell, C. Nakamura, *Çatalhöyük figurines. Archive Report on the Catalhöyük Season 2005*, p. 168-169, fig. 83.12401.X7 (on line: http://www.catalhoyuk.com/archive_reports/2005/ar05_29.html, accesat 28. 11. 2019).

⁹² B. Jovanović, *La ceramique anthropomorphe de l'énéolithique des Balkans et du Bas-Danube*, in *AJug*, V, 1964, p. 10, pl. I.2, 11-12; M. Gimbutas (ed.), *Neolithic Macedonia as reflected by excavation at Anza Southeast Yugoslavia*, The Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 1976, pl. 13; M. Gimbutas, *Mythical Imagery in Sitagroi Society*, in C. Renfrew, M. Gimbutas, E. E. Elster (eds.), *Excavations at Sitagroi. A Prehistoric Village in Northeast Greece*, vol. I, The Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986, fig. 9.59; P. Raczky, *Öcsöd-Kováshalom. A settlement of the Tisza culture*, in L. Tálás, P. Raczky (eds.), *The Late Neolithic of the Tisza Region. A survey of recent excavations and their findings: Hódmezővásárhely-Gorzsa, Szegvár Tűzköves, Öcsöd-Kováshalom, Vésztő-Mágor, Berettyóújfalu-Herpály*, Budapest-Szolnok, 1987, p. 80, fig. 39; C.-M. Lazarovici, Gh.-C. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura Neoliticului și Epocii cuprului din România, I, Neoliticul*, BAM IV, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2006, p. 384-385, fig. IIIc.19; D. Nikolić, J. Vuković, *Vinča ritual vessel: archaeological context and possible meaning*, in *Starinar*, LVIII, 2008, p. 62-62, fig. 8.14; Z. M. Virág, *The Eastern Periphery of the Central European LPC in the region of Budapest (Connections between the Transdanubian LPC and the Alföld LPC)*, in J. K. Kozłowski (ed.), *Interactions between Different Models of Neolithization North of the Central European Agro-ecological Barrier*, Papers presented on the Symposium organized by the project FEPRE (The formation of Europe: Prehistoric population dynamics and the roots of socio-cultural diversity), Kraków, 2009, p. 17-21, fig. 4.2, 4; K. Somogyi, Z. Gallina, *Besonderes anthropomorphes Gefäß der Lengyel-Kultur mit doppelter Gesichts- und Menschendarstellung aus Alsónyék (SW-Ungarn)*, in A. Anders, G. Kulcsár, G. Kalla, V. Kiss, G. V. Szabó (eds.), *Moments in Time. Papers Preseted to Pál Raczky on His 60th Birthday*, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2013, p. 437-456, abb. 3.1a-b, 4-5; S.-A. Luca, *Two Statuettes Discovered at Tărtăria-Gura Luncii in the Campaign of Preventive Researches from 2014-2015. "The Goddess with the Snake" and "Janus"*, in *AUVT*, XX, 2018, p. 36-40, fig. 5-9; M.-M. Ciută, B. Ciută, *Artefacte din alabastru, descoperite în siturile vinčiene timpurii din valea Mureșului mijlociu*, in *Arheovest*, VII, p. 84-86, fig. 13-14.

⁹³ A. Golan, *Prehistoric Religion: Mythology, Symbolism*, Jerusalem, 2003, p. 333.

northern Russia, Oceania or pre-Columbian America⁹⁴. However, there is no definite information on their attributes. Called Usumu or Izimud by the Sumerians and Izumi by the Hittites, this deity becomes Janus for the Romans⁹⁵.

In general, in various mythologies, double-faced artifacts were considered to be the expression of the power to see and know everything due to the opposite attributes: to look at the same time in opposite directions in time and space, to the past and to the future, in and out, in the real world and in an imaginary world or in two imaginary worlds⁹⁶.

Returning to the anthropomorphic vessel that is the subject of our interest, it certainly fits into the series of double-faced artifacts identified and indicated in our previous study, being characterized, in addition, by what has been defined as a "multiplication of the image"⁹⁷.

Image multiplication has been indicated as a complex form of religious symbolism involving the intensification of the image through repetition "with the number of representations in direct correlation with the level of power represented"⁹⁸.

It has been considered that a multiple image can presume diverse concepts and valences involving fluidity, ambiguity and personal choice⁹⁹. Do we have, in this particular case: four distinct female representations? a female representation with four faces whose potency was multiplied fourfold? Beyond multiplication by repetition, did the number four have special symbolism for the Cucutenian communities, as various other types of finds seem to indicate?

It is known that also in the Roman world Janus Bifrons had a double variant, less often illustrated, indicated as *double Janus*, *Janus geminus* or *quadriform Janus*¹⁰⁰. It was considered that the four faces of Janus Quadriform indicate that the world it represented had four horizons and the year four seasons, and that in general its potencies and valences were the same as in the case of Janus Bifrons¹⁰¹.

⁹⁴ G. Dumézil, *La religion romaine archaïque (avec un Appendice sur La religion des Étrusques)*, Payot, Paris, 1966, p. 326; A. Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

⁹⁵ A. Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

⁹⁶ M. Aldhouse-Green, *An Archaeology of Images. Iconology and Cosmology in Iron Age and Roman Empire*, Routledge, London, 2005, p. 211-213; J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrant (coord.), *Dicționar de simboluri. Mituri, vise, obiceiuri, gesturi, forme, figuri, culori, numere*, Ed. Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 461.

⁹⁷ M. Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992, p. 169-205.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁰ T. W. Baldwin, A. W. Gilbert, T. O. Mabbott, *A Double Janus*, in *PMLA*, 56, 2, 1941, p. 583-585.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 584.

Janus had many and varied valences¹⁰². He was the divine personification of every beginning and end, looking at the same time to the past and to the future. The first month of the year was dedicated to him, as well as the first day of each month. The fact that Janus was conceived as a god of all beginnings led to his perception as a kind of Creator, a Demiurge dominating the Universe and presiding over universal life and movement, the father of all gods¹⁰³.

It has been considered that the name Janus is the late form of the name Dianus. The latter has as its proto-form Div, a name that connects it with the image of a Neolithic god. Not all philologists accept this etymology, but it is important to point out that Janus was primarily a god of the earth, beginnings and creation. Interestingly, in Sanskrit the name *janis* means woman supporting theories that point to an original feminine form for the name *Janus*¹⁰⁴.

The ontological difficulties in accessing ancient mentalities through archaeological data are known, despite the possibilities offered by cognitive archaeology¹⁰⁵.

If the double-faced artifacts were the bearers of symbolic messages with cultic and/or social impact easily decoded by the participants in the ceremonies in which they were integrated a few millennia ago, the observation can certainly be extended to the quadruple artifact that we introduced in the scientific circuit through this study.

The ornamentation of containers with figures or their modeling in anthropomorphic shapes is a constant in the prehistoric imagination. We must take into account the fact that in the case of these artifacts their function as a container takes precedence. It has been considered that “they are generated by the idea and the necessity to manipulate in a synthetic form the anthropomorphic image of the divinity and the ritual vessel”¹⁰⁶. In general, it has been considered that the anthropomorphic vessels contained special substances that had to be protected, as “the body of the woman protects the unborn child”¹⁰⁷, although there are situations – admittedly, rarer – in which the anthropomorphic vessels render men¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰² Mm. Ch. Daremberg, Edm. Saglio (coord.), *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, tome troisième, première partie (H, I, J, K), Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1900, p.609-615; G. Dumézil, *op. cit.*, p. 322-328.

¹⁰³ Mm. Ch. Daremberg, Edm. Saglio, *op. cit.*, p. 612-613; A. Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 333-336.

¹⁰⁴ A. Golan, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

¹⁰⁵ C. Renfrew, E. B. W. Zubrow (eds.), *The Ancient Mind. Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.

¹⁰⁶ A. Nițu, *op. cit.*, 1969, p. 22.

¹⁰⁷ E. Bánffy, *Neolithic Eastern and Central Europe*, in T. Insoll (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Prehistoric Figurines*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017, p. 708.

¹⁰⁸ J. H. Gaul, *The Neolithic Period in Bulgaria. Early Food-producing Cultures of Eastern Europe*, Bulletin of the American School of Prehistoric Research 16, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1948, pl. LVII/1-3;

In the case of the Cucuteni civilization, all the anthropomorphic containers known until the publication of this artifact, rendered either a realistically modeled female figure (with anatomically differentiated face and back) (pl. 3/1-2), or two female figures positioned back-to-back and represented frontally (pl. 3/3-4; 4/1-4).

Unique among the archaeological discoveries in the Cucutenian world, the quadruple artifact – introduced into the scientific circuit through this study – constitutes another way of plastic, synthetic expression of the existence of a multifaceted character associated with a container and, implicitly, with its content.

The poor state of conservation of the container as a whole, does not allow us to make nuanced observations on possible differentiations between the four faces. We consider that they exist and are evident, rather, at the level of details.

The artifact depicts only the abdominal area and the hips of some female characters. What we can observe is the fact that through the manner of plastic rendering – showing only that part of the female body directly and organically linked to fertility – the double Janus type anthropomorphic vessel from Trușești can rather be integrated into the series of “pars pro toto” artifacts, bringing this vessel closer to the *gynaecomorphic* vessel from Ariușd-Dealul Tyiszk (Covasna county)¹⁰⁹.

Did the four figures, positioned back-to-back, protect the contents of the respective container, in the ceremonies in which it was used, to a completely different extent than the anthropomorphic vessels with only one or two faces?

Did the anthropomorphic faces of these containers act as mediators between the terrestrial world and the worlds with which people could connect through the liquids, possibly with psychoactive potencies, that these vessels contained? If so, did the multiple faces of the vessels enhance and potentiate the possible connections?

Were the anthropomorphic vessels the special attribute of priestesses or shamans, as some theories claim¹¹⁰?

These are questions to which we can hardly give an answer beyond the level of hypotheses.

In the light of what has been presented and as the conditions of discovery that we have just reviewed seem to demonstrate, what is certain is that we can observe some *patterns of use and abandonment* of these containers, as well as the *high frequency of*

R.-R. Andreescu, *Plastica antropomorfă gumelnițeană. Analiză primară*, MNIR, Monografii III, București, 2002, p. 73, pl. 54/3.

¹⁰⁹ S. J. Sztáncsuj, *Grupul cultural Ariușd pe teritoriul Transilvaniei*, Ed. Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 240-241, pl. CCXXII/1; S. Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 188, pl. IX/2.

¹¹⁰ J. Kovárník, *A probe into the spiritual life of prehistoric people, a reflection of shamanism in archaeology*, in E. Pásztor (ed.), *Shamanism and Nature Worship Past and Present/ Sámánizmus és természethit régen és ma*, Bajai dolgozatok 23, Keskeny és Társai 2001 Kft., Budapest, 2019, p. 77-80.

certain connections with other rare artefacts, many related to prestige and hierarchies (social or religious) or interpreted in archaeological studies as "cult objects".

The conclusion determines us to emphasize, in our turn, the role of these containers as paraphernalia, artifacts that were used in ritual scenographies with a precisely defined role (which today can only be intuited), polysemantic, constituting a special channel of non-verbal communication¹¹¹.

NOI DESCOPERIRI ÎN VECHI COLECȚII: UN VAS ANTROPOMORF DE TIP „DUBLU
JANUS” DESCOPERIT LA TRUȘEȘTI

(Rezumat)

Scopul principal al studiului nostru este acela de a (re)introduce în circuitul științific – cu toate detaliile de rigoare – un vas antropomorf de un tip particular descoperit la Trușești-Țuguieța (jud. Botoșani) acum mai bine de șase decenii (pl. 1-2). Descrierea și încadrarea sa tipologică corectă aduce o nouă perspectivă asupra simbolisticii înglobate de aceste recipiente care constituie o categorie importantă de obiecte sacre cu un potențial hermeneutic încă destul de puțin descifrat.

Publicat în monografia așezării ca vas cu „corp lobat”, recipientul constituie un vas antropomorf unicat, până în momentul de față, în cadrul descoperirilor arheologice din arealul Cucuteni-Tripolie. Din oricare din cele patru direcții este privit, vasul figurează o siluetă antropomorfă feminină privită frontal. Mai precis, el redă zona abdominală și șoldurile a patru siluete feminine poziționate spate în spate. Siluetele feminine sunt redată într-o reprezentare tipică pentru vasele antropomorfe cucuteniene, cu accent pe zona abdomenului și cea inghinală, pe șoldurile amplu modelate făcând corp comun cu întreg recipientul. Raportându-ne la încadrarea tipologică realizată de noi anterior pentru unele dintre vasele antropomorfe cu profil cvasisimetric, considerate ca vase cu dublă față de „tip janiform” (pl. 3-4), putem aprecia că acest recipient cu patru fețe este de tip „dublu Janus” fiind caracterizat de ceea ce a fost definit ca o „multiplicare a imaginii”.

Prezentarea vasului de tip „Dublu Janus” de la Trușești ne prilejuiește și o trecere în revistă a datelor arheologice cunoscute privitoare la contextele de descoperire ale vaselor antropomorfe cucuteniene sau din arealele culturale contemporane și învecinate. Analiza lor ne-a permis să observăm mai multe modele de utilizare și abandon ale acestor recipiente, ca și frecvența ridicată a anumitor asocieri cu alte tipuri de artefacte rare, multe indicate în studiile arheologice drept „piese de cult”. Datele sintetizate susțin rolul vaselor antropomorfe

¹¹¹ H. Schwarzberg, *Durch menschliche Kunst und Gedanken gemacht. Studien zur anthropomorphen Gefäßkeramik des 7. bis 5. vorchristlichen Jahrtausends*, Münchner Archäologische Forschungen 1, Leidorf 2011, *passim*.

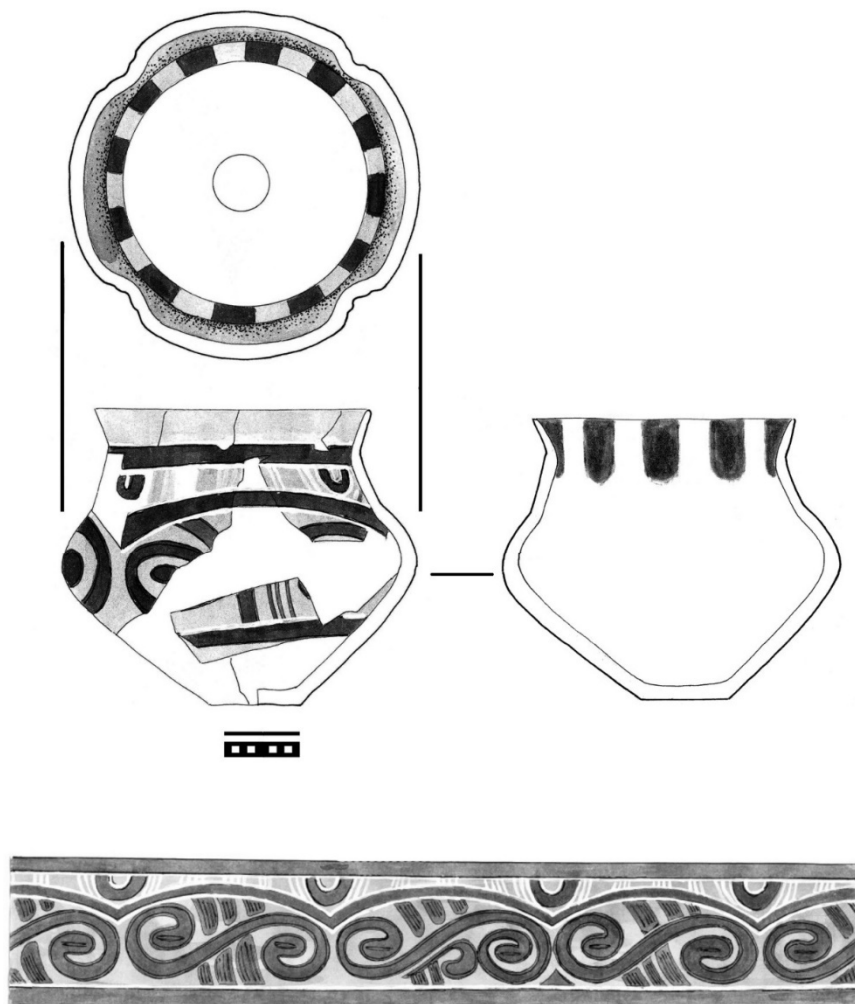
ca paraphernalia, artefacte care erau utilizate în cadrul unor scenografii rituale cu un rol precis definit (care astăzi nu poate fi decât intuit), polisemantic, constituind un canal special de comunicare nonverbală.

LISTA ILUSTRAȚIILOR:

- Pl. 1. Vas antropomorf de tip „Dublu Janus”. Trușești, cultura Cucuteni, faza A (foto S. Țurcanu).
- Pl. 2. Vas antropomorf de tip „Dublu Janus”. Trușești, cultura Cucuteni, faza A (desen R. Ionescu).
- Pl. 3. 1-4, vase antropomorfe. Cultura Cucuteni, faza A. 1, Hăbășești; 2, Cucuteni; 3, Drăgușeni; 4, Trușești. 1-4, după Țurcanu 2020.
- Pl. 4. 1-4, vase antropomorfe. Cultura Cucuteni, faza A. 1, Duruitoarea Nouă; 2-4, Trușești. 1-4, după Țurcanu 2020.



Pl. 1. "Double Janus" anthropomorphic vessel. Trușești, Cucuteni Culture, phase A (photo S. Țurcanu)



Pl. 2. "Double Janus" anthropomorphic vessel. Trușești, Cucuteni Culture, phase A
(drawing R. Ionescu)



Pl. 3. 1-4, anthropomorphic vessels. Cucuteni Culture, phase A. 1, Hăbășești; 2, Cucuteni; 3, Drăgușeni; 4, Trușești. 1-4, after Țurcanu 2020



Pl. 4. 1-4, anthropomorphic vessels. Cucuteni Culture, phase A. 1, Duruitoarea Nouă; 2-4, Trușești. 1-4, after Țurcanu 2020