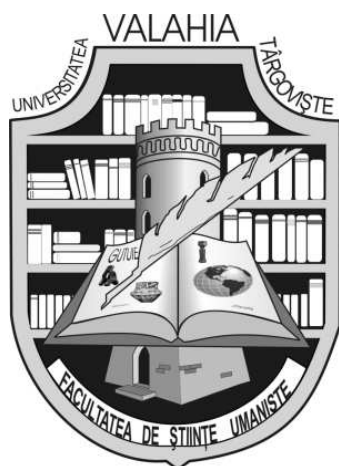


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L'Université Valahia Târgoviște  
Faculté de Sciences Humaines

# ANNALES



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## Eneolithic zoomorphic vessels from Wallachian Subcarpathians

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**Abstract:** *Eneolithic zoomorphic vessels from Wallachian Subcarpathians.* In Eneolithic settlements some vessels considered special were discovered, including those shaped like animals - zoomorphic vessels, and those imitating the human body - anthropomorphic vessels. Archaeological research in Romania has provided a number of zoomorphic vessels, included in a poor typological diversity. The eneolithic discoveries in northern Wallachia follow a similar pattern. In this study we aim to discuss several aspects that may be considered relevant to the functionality and role of this category of vessels. Along with the descriptive and typological analysis, we will make some correlations concerning the relationship between the primary context of discovery and the sparseness of these pieces, between the identified fauna and the executed model, the artistic quality and how representative it is of the typology of artefacts specific to this community. We will also reconsider certain findings, even though a critical analysis doesn't represent the central object of this study.

**Key words:** eneolithic, zoomorphic, typology, pots, ritual

**Résumé:** *Pots zoomorphes énéolithique dans le Sous-Carpathes de la Valachie.* Dans les établissements énéolithiques certains pots considérés comme spéciaux ont été découverts, y compris ceux en forme d'animaux - les pots zoomorphes, et ceux imitant le corps humain - les pots anthropomorphes. La recherche archéologique en Roumanie a fourni un certain nombre de pots zoomorphes, inclus dans une faible diversité typologique. Les découvertes énéolithiques dans le nord de la Valachie suivent un schéma similaire. Dans cette étude nous cherchons à discuter plusieurs aspects qui peuvent être considérés comme pertinents à la fonctionnalité et le rôle de cette catégorie de pots. Parallèlement à l'analyse descriptive et typologique, nous ferons quelques corrélations concernant la relation entre le contexte primaire de la découverte et la rareté de ces pièces, entre les animaux identifiés et le modèle exécuté, la qualité artistique et la façon dont elle est représentative de la typologie des artefacts spécifiques à cette communauté. Nous allons aussi revoir certaines conclusions, même si une analyse critique ne représente pas l'objet central de cette étude.

**Mots clés:** énéolithique, zoomorphe, typologie, pots, rituel

### Introduction

Pottery is a category of archaeological finds that constitutes the subject of a large amount of bibliography, numerous analyses and more or less conventional approaches have been published, classifications and typologies according to a wide range of criteria. Along with containers that have a domestic utility, two types of vessels are noticeable: those

shaped like animals - zoomorphic vessels, and those imitating the human body - anthropomorphic vessels. Research made in Romanian Eneolithic archaeological sites has provided a series of zoomorphic vessels; however, their typological diversity is rather poor. Along with vessels, zoomorphic plastic representations were also discovered, all of them being modelled in clay. Analysis usually relates zoomorphic representations

to magic and religious behaviour, and secondly to prehistoric art. In most approaches the functionality of these pieces was subsumed under the spiritual life of Eneolithic human communities.

Within the present-day territory of Romania, zoomorphic vessels appeared in the Early Neolithic, in Starčevo-Criș cultural horizon, being defined as altars or zoomorphic shrines (Z. Maxim, 1999; S. J., Sztancsuj 2007; A. Frînculeasa, 2011) and their presence increased in frequency during the Eneolithic Age (A. Frînculeasa, 2004; V. M. Voinea, 2005). In most of the cases, they were identified in Gumelnița settlements at Sultana, Gumelnița, Calomfirești, Aldeni, Hârșova, Măgura Jilavei, Căscioarele, Medgidia, Bordușani, Măriuța, Vlădiceasca, Vânătorii Mici, Ulmeni, Târgșoru Vechi, Dobrotești, Vitănești (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1961, 1990; A. Nițu, 1972; R. R. Andreescu, 1997; R. R. Andreescu, T. Popa 2003; A. Frînculeasa, 2004, 2004a; V. M. Voinea, 2005; K. Moldoveanu, 2012) and Precucuteni-Cucuteni-Ariuşd settlements at Târpești, Târgu Frumos, Ariuşd, Păuleni-Ciuc, Drăgușeni, Izvoare, Hăbășești, Prigoreni Mici, Poienesti, Cucuteni, Scânteia, Ghelăiești, Traian *Dealul Fântânilor*, Moldoveni, Trușești, Hoisești, Giurgești, Ruginoasa, Poienesti, Mihoveni, Gura Văii, Poduri, Văratice, Sîpeniți (A. Nițu, 1972a, 1972-1973; C. M. Mantu, 1994; A. Frînculeasa, 2004; G. Bodi, 2006; C. Bem, 2007; S. J. Sztancsuj, 2007; V. Chirica, M. Văleanu, 2008; D. Garvăn, 2009; D. Boghian, 2000; 2010a). They can also be found as isolated finds in Petrești culture at Rahău (I. Paul, 1992), in Sălcuța culture at the eponymous site (D. Berciu, 1939), in Vinča-Turdaș culture at Turdaș (A. Nițu, 1972; Vl. Dumitrescu, 1974).

In northern Wallachia only a limited number of such pieces was discovered (fig. 1/c), coming from the following archaeological sites: Teiu (Argeș), Ziduri (Argeș), Geangoiești (Dâmbovița), Târgșoru Vechi (Prahova), Colceag (Prahova), Mălăiești de Jos (Prahova), Seciu (Prahova), Aldeni (Buzău), Sudiți (Buzău) (A. Frînculeasa, 2004, 2007, 2010a, 2011; A. Frînculeasa, O. Negrea, 2010; D. Măndescu, 2007; A. Ilie, Fl. Dumitru, 2008; E. Paveleț, L. Grigoraș, 2011).

Zoomorphic vessels are well known in the Balkans, Anatolia, the Levant, Western and Eastern Europe (H. Todorova, 1978; C. Epstein, 1985; V. G. Zbenovic, 1989; M.

Gimbutas, 1991; V. Marchevici, 1996; E. Banffy, 1997; C. Becker, 1997; G. C. Doumas, 2000; R. R. Andreescu, 2002; N. Kaliz, P. Raczky, 2002; V. Voinea, 2005; S. J. Sztancsuj, 2007; L. Stratulat *et al*., 2008; G. Naumov, 2011).

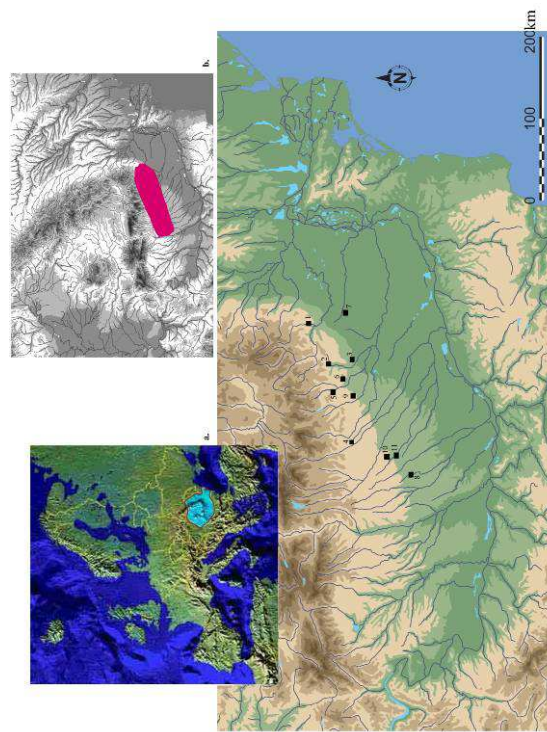


Fig. 1 – Map of Romania showing the distribution of the zoomorphic vessels discovered in northern Wallachia: a. the position of Romania in Europe, b. the area approached, c. settlements where zoomorphic vessels were discovered - 1. Aldeni, 2. Apostolache, 3. Colceag, 4. Geangoiești, 5. Mălăiești de Jos, 6. Seciu, 7. Sudiți, 8. Surdulești, 9. Târgșoru Vechi, 10. Teiu, 11. Ziduri.

### Methodological considerations

Along with the descriptive and typological analysis, we will make some correlations concerning the relationship between the primary context of discovery and the sparseness of these pieces, between the identified fauna and the executed model, between the artistic quality and how representative it is of the ceramic typology. Having as a starting point the symbolism of these representations, we prefer to focus the analysis on the piece, not on the image or shape.

### Landscape, settlements, cultural context

In Wallachian Subcarpathians the landscape is fragmented, the area being bordered on the north side by the Southern Carpathians, on the South by the piedmont plain (150 m altitude), on the western

and eastern sides there are the basins of two major rivers, Olt and Buzău. There is a diversity of relief forms ranging from plain to hills, the area being crossed by rivers with high flow rates, flowing in a north-south direction, with their source in the Carpathian Mountains, which some of them cross. This situation ensured communication lines between the north Carpathian communities from Transylvania and the south Carpathian ones from Wallachia. These contacts are confirmed by the existence of cultural influences, or by the so-called „imports”.

Within this area rich mineral resources are present, especially salt in the form of surface outcrops or deposits, but we can also find salt springs. Amber is another important resource, which apparently was exploited in a limited manner at that time, but the process intensified throughout the Bronze Age. It was also the case that in an area covered with extensive forests, wild fauna was largely exploited, both for primary and secondary products. Of great importance is the fact that this geographical area is crossed by a rich network of rivers. All these elements seem to have provided prehistoric human communities with necessary resources in order to inhabit this area for a long period of time; the existence of archaeological sites with deposits of 1.5 to 4 m thick is relevant in this regard. Settlements are located mainly near secondary rivers, that have reduced flows, on hill plateaus (Aldeni, Seciu), terrace edges (Mălăieştii de Jos, Târgşoru Vechi, Sudiţi) or at their base (Ziduri), but also in open flood-plains (Teiu, Geangoieşti, Colceag).

The chronological frame is marked by Gumelniţa-Karanovo VI-Kodjadermen culture, this area has a certain particularity determined by its peripheral position that seems to have ensured the contact between three cultural and geographical blocks: Boian-Gumelniţa, Precucuteni-Cucuteni, Petreşti-Ariuşd. As a consequence, within this area a local cultural aspect emerged, known as Stoicani-Aldeni, which comprised and synthesized some of the defining elements of these cultures (A. Frînculeasa 2007). The few 14C data available for this area show a cultural evolution in a chronological interval placed between 4300-3.900 B.C. (A. Frînculeasa, 2011).

#### **Fauna**

Analyses of wild or domestic palaeofauna

from the Eneolithic period in northern Wallachia indicate the presence of cattle, ovicaprids, suids, cervids, as the most important animals bred or hunted, to which we can add less important ones as dogs, rabbits etc. (A. Bălăşescu, V. Radu, D. Moise, 2005). Along with animal breeding, intensive hunting is also practiced, animals like cervids, wild suids, bovids were largely exploited (E. Popa, V. Radu, A. Bălăşescu, 2011).

Archaeozoological information about northern Wallachia is limited to a few series of fauna samples found at Aldeni, Drăgăneşti-Tecuci (A. Bălăşescu, V. Radu, D. Moise, 2005), Lişcoteanca (S. Haimovici, 1998), Însurăţei (D. Moise, 1999; V. Radu, 1999; A. Bălăşescu, V. Radu, D. Moise, 2005), Glavacioc (S. Haimovici, 2005), Urlaţi (A. Frînculeasa, L. Niţă, V. Dumitraşcu, 2008), Seciu (E. Popa, V. Radu, A. Bălăşescu, 2011), Mălăieştii de Jos (A. Frînculeasa *et al.*, 2012). The total number of collected and analysed fauna remains is of about 3200. In settlements from northern Wallachia, apart from Seciu, animal breeding is very important; there are a high percentage of domestic mammals, exceeding 88% at Lişcoteanca and 70% at Glavacioc. Cattle are the predominant species, followed by ovicaprids and suids. Dogs are sparsely present. In terms of palaeo-economy, the settlements found in this area, especially those of Stoicani-Aldeni cultural aspect, are more like Precucuteni and Cucuteni settlements than those belonging to Gumelniţa communities in the South, where sometimes hunting tends to exceed animal breeding. In the South, due to a diversified environment, Gumelniţa communities had different exploitation strategies. The presence of suids increased significantly as compared to previous periods, which indicates that the population began to develop a more sedentary lifestyle. Cattle maintain their predominant role, followed by ovicaprids (A. Bălăşescu, V. Radu, D. Moise, 2005).

#### **Typology**

The typology of Gumelniţa zoomorphic representations is poor, represented by containers, protomas and plastic modelled pieces, decorations. Containers and protomas are interrelated, the attachment of a zoomorphic protoma gives to a vessel its main zoomorphic feature, the container shape (rectangular or hemispheric) in most of the cases doesn't realistically design the depicted animal. It is also possible to attach a protoma to a vessel that is typical of the local pottery. A general classification, in several categories, of Eneolithic zoomorphic representations would easily include discoveries in northern Wallachia:



✓ Zoomorphic vessels – this category is composed of four subtypes of vessels: animal-shaped vessels, lids, askos pots and rhytons. In the case of animal-shaped pots we mention other subcategories: containers with lids, tubular vessels lacking the head, askos vessels.

✓ Protomas – they represent animal heads or cattle horns attached to vessel walls. In the same category we note the appearance of bucrania (I. Torcică, 2012).

✓ Figurines and statuettes - they are the most numerous, yet aesthetically modest. They depict mainly domestic animals (cattle, ovicaprids, suids, dogs), but also wild fauna (cervids). The modelling is rather simplistic, without a careful attention paid to anatomical details, which are only discreetly marked. Only few pieces are decorated with stitches that seem to represent anatomical details.

✓ Decoration - is less present in Gumelnița culture, more frequent in Cucuteni culture; on a vessel found at Teiu there was a representation of a goat associated with a snake (A. Nițu, 1972).

### About the pieces

In northern Wallachia 22 pieces were discovered, included in this study as follows: Ziduri (askos), Teiu (askos, three zoomorphic vessels), Geangoiești (askos, two zoomorphic vessels), Mălăieștii de Jos (three askos vessels, a rhyton, two zoomorphic pots, a lid, a pot with protoma), Seciu (askos, rhyton), Colceag (zoomorphic vessel), Târgșoru Vechi (lid), Aldeni (zoomorphic vessel), Sudiți (askos). The most numerous are the askos pots, 8 pieces of this kind are known.

*Zoomorphic vessels:* the pot discovered at Mălăieștii de Jos in dwelling 6 (fig. 2), is made out of fine, reddish colour paste, secondary burnt. The container is rectangular with slightly rounded body. On the body, both on the dorsal and lateral sides, a V decoration placed upside down is modelled in relief. The legs and corners of the vessel are marked by a rib applied in relief, vertically disposed. On the short sides of the container there are attached the head and tail of the zoomorphic representation.

The head is faceted, lacking other anatomical details, it is continued by a short conical neck. Above the shoulder of the

container, bounded by the cylindrical neck of about 1.5 cm high, is a circular mouth covered by a lid.



Fig. 2 – Zoomorphic pot discovered at Mălăieștii de Jos in dwelling 6.

The pot had four feet that were broken in ancient times and holes in the area between the shoulders and neck and in the dorsal part, communicating with small ears made for the lid, which allowed users to suspend the entire set, both container and lid. Protoma and container together are 105 mm long and 75 mm high and the lid has a diameter of 78 mm and a height of 30 mm. A rectangular container with rounded short sides was found in dwelling 6 at Mălăieștii de Jos (fig. 3/1-3). It had four legs broken in ancient times, being modelled of medium quality paste, reddish coloured. It has a shoulder that probably supported a lid. The vessel is 68 mm long, 39 mm wide, 37 mm high.

Another vessel is that from Colceag, coming from a fortuitous discovery (fig. 4/4-8). The pot represents a cattle with horns and legs broken in old times. The ovoid shaped container has a 50 mm diameter hole in the back and it was probably covered by a lid. The head is elongated towards the muzzle and extended towards the frontal part. The eyes are represented by a horizontal incision, the ears are also visible. The head and the short neck were modelled separately from the container and attached to it using a hole made in the vessel wall. The tail is drawn from the paste. The piece gives the impression of massiveness, suggested

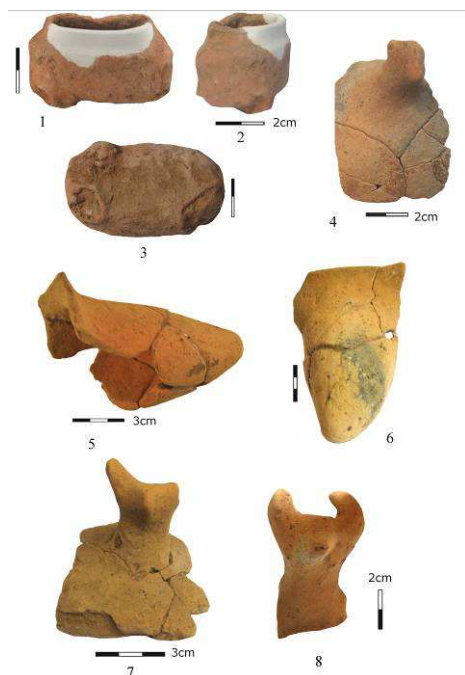


Fig. 3 – Zoomorphic pots from Mălăieștii de Jos: zoomorphic miniature pot (1, 2, 3); pot with zoomorphic decoration (4); rhyton pot (5, 6), lid with zoomorphic protoma (7); zoomorphic protoma (8).

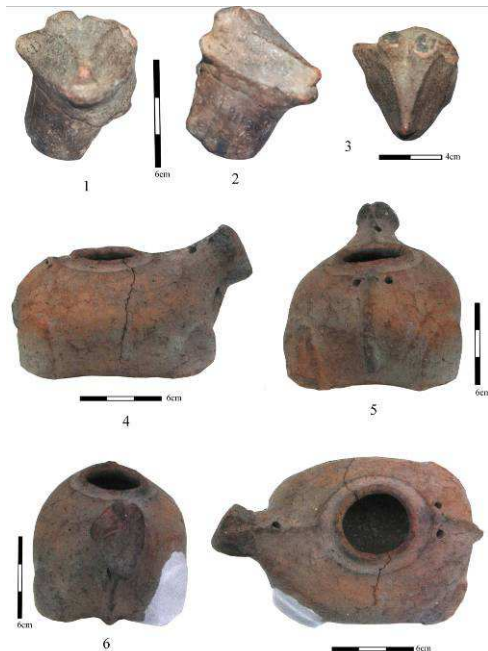


Fig. 4 – Zoomorphic lid discovered at Târgșoru Vechi (1, 2, 3); zoomorphic pot discovered at Colceag (4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

by the unnatural relation between the maximum length of 227 mm and maximum

width of 114 mm. The height at the top of the head is of 108 mm.

From Aldeni comes a vessel fragment that preserves the front part, with a zoomorphic protoma depicting a bovid provided with massive horns that are attached to the shoulders of the zoomorphic representation (fig. 5/3).



Fig. 5 - Zoomorphic pot discovered at Geangoiești (1, 2); zoomorphic pot discovered at Aldeni (3); bucranium discovered at Seciu (4); zoomorphic protoma discovered at Apostolache (5), pot with zoomorphic representations discovered at Teiu (6, 7)

At Geangoiești (fig. 6/4, 6) and Teiu (fig. 6/3, 5) two headless zoomorphic vessels were found, which had tubular body, four legs and tail. They are about 10 cm long and show parallels with pieces found at Căscioarele and Gumelnița (V. Dumitrescu, 1965; A. Frînculeasa, 2004). In the same category we can fit the pot discovered at Teiu, similar in shape, but with inseparable head, attached to the pot after being modelled separately (fig. 6/2). Is it probable that the other two pots from Teiu and Geangoiești were made in a similar manner but had lost the detached ends. From the same site comes a vessel without protoma (head), which has a cavity shaped in the dorsal part of the animal body (fig. 6/1). They are present both in Gumelnița culture at Măgura Jilavei, Vidra, and Cucuteni culture at

Drăgușeni, Scânteia, Prigoreni Mici, Cucuteni, Poduri (A. Frînculeasa, 2004; D. Garvăn, 2009).

*Rhytons*: the rhyton vessel discovered at Mălăieștii de Jos, in dwelling 5 (fig. 3/5, 6), is fragmentarily preserved, conical in shape and it is circular in section. The paste is of

good quality, yellow coloured. It has a length of 110 mm and a maximum diameter of 65 mm. The rhyton from Mălăieștii de Jos is included into cone type according to the classification of R. Koehl, even if the typology is made for Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations (K. Kristiansen, T. B. Larsson, 2005). The containers from this category were employed as libation vessels (N. Marinatos 1993). Another pot that could be included to the same type was found at Seciu (fig. 9/4-6). It is slightly curved and fragmentarily preserved, it has tubular shape. The eccentric part, better preserved, is slightly flared, funnel shaped, with perforated walls. The preserved part has a maximum length of 120 mm and a diameter of 45 mm.

*Askos*: the one found in dwelling 5 at Mălăieștii de Jos (fig. 8/1, 2), modelled in a relatively coarse paste, yellowish coloured, is missing the handle. The body is elongated, but still slender, with a height of 128 mm and a maximum length of 210 mm. The second askos was discovered in dwelling 6, is yellowish-reddish coloured, modelled in good quality paste, missing the handle (fig. 8/3, 5). Its body is slim, 123 mm high, and a maximum length of 165 mm. Another askos vessel coming from Seciu is elongated, hand modelled, with a height of 133 mm and a length of 225 mm (fig. 9/1-3). Other askos pots were identified at Teiu, Ziduri, Geangoiești, Sudiți (fig. 7). The one found at Teiu is 17.5 cm long (fig. 7/7, 8), and the one discovered at Ziduri has a length of 14.3 cm (fig. 7/5, 6). Several aspects must be noted: the medium quality paste used for modelling, the pots had no decoration, their use was prolonged as shown by their wear and lack of handles. In the case of Mălăieștii de Jos askos pots were stored together with other common vessels.

*Lids*: from Târgșoru Vechi comes a piece that represents a cervid head modelled by combining three distinct facets: the central part represents the frontal that, starting below the broken horns, is gradually narrowing, two other sides that individualized the mandible (fig. 4/1-3). Certain details are visible: the nose,

the mouth depicted by a horizontal cut, the ears rendered schematically, the left one being damaged. The horns are broken, only the basis can be found. The neck has cylindrical form, slightly flared base, only a small part of the lateral portion was preserved. The clay used for modelling contains pounded ceramic. It is light brown coloured, black on the inside. Dimensions: the length of the head on the antero-posterior line is of 6.6 cm, the maximum diameter of the neck is about 6.8 to 7 cm. The vessel shape seems to indicate the function of a sceptre attached to a wooden support, a situation that may find analogies in the pot found at Geangoiești (fig. 5/1, 2). From Mălăieștii de Jos comes a fragmentary lid that seems to have a rectangular shape, which probably overlapped a rectangular pot (fig. 3/7). A zoomorphic protoma with a height of 62 mm is preserved. The neck has a horizontal perforation that allowed the lid to be suspended.

Vessel with zoomorphic decoration: from the tell at Teiu comes a pot with spherical body, a height of 168 mm, a well defined cylindrical neck (fig. 5/6, 7), discovered in 1959 in dwelling X. On the outer wall two zoomorphic representations appear, a horned-animal and a snake (A. Nițu, 1972; Z. Maxim, 2005). We also mention three bucrania found at Seciu (fig. 5/4), Teiu (fig. 6/7, 8), Surdulești (I. Torcică, 2012) and zoomorphic protomas well known at the time, discovered at Apostolache (fig. 5/5), Mălăieștii de Jos etc (fig. 3/8).

### Analogies and chorological marks

In northern Wallachia archaeological research uncovered animal-shaped pots, lids, rhytons, askos pots and zoomorphic cups or cups with protomas attached to them (fig. 1/c). Animal-shaped pots were found at Colceag, Mălăieștii de Jos, Aldeni, Geangoiești, Teiu (A. Frînculeasa, 2004; A. Ilie, Fl. Dumitrescu, 2008; E. Paveleț, L. Grigoraș, 2011). They can be classified into two subtypes: a. cattle-shaped containers; b. pots with tubular body and a depiction of the legs and tail of the animal. Containers with lids, representing bovids, were found at Colceag, Mălăieștii de Jos, Aldeni. Vessels with tubular body, representing suids, that could have had animal-shaped lids were discovered at Teiu and Geangoiești (A. Frînculeasa, 2004). However, it was rather difficult to attach the head/lid, considering the morphology of these vessels. In addition, lids or protomas that can be attached/joined to such vessels have not been discovered yet. Most likely the lid (head) was glued, similarly to a pot discovered at Teiu.

A zoomorphic lid shaped in the form of a



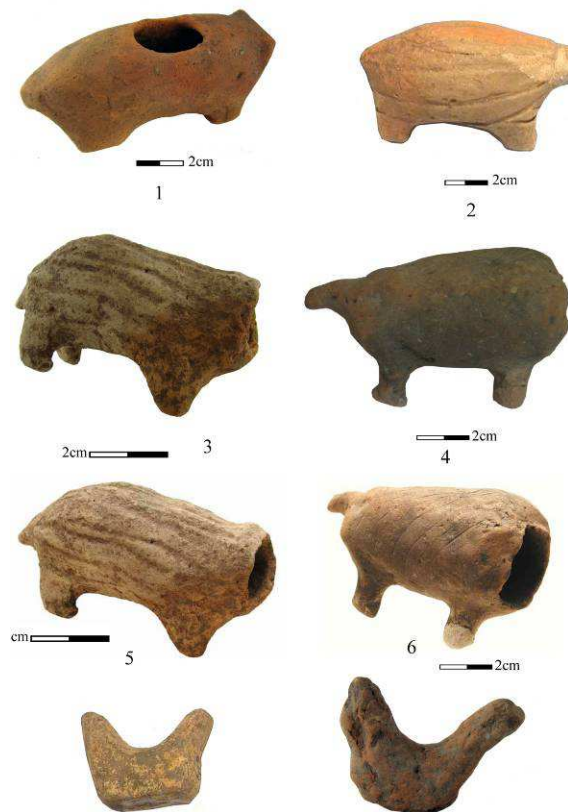


Fig. 6 – Zoomorphic pots discovered at Teiu (1, 2, 3, 5), Geangoiești (4, 6); bucranii discovered at Teiu (7, 8).



Fig. 7 – Askos pots discovered at Sudiți (1, 2), Geangoiești (3, 4), Ziduri (5, 6), Teiu (7, 8)

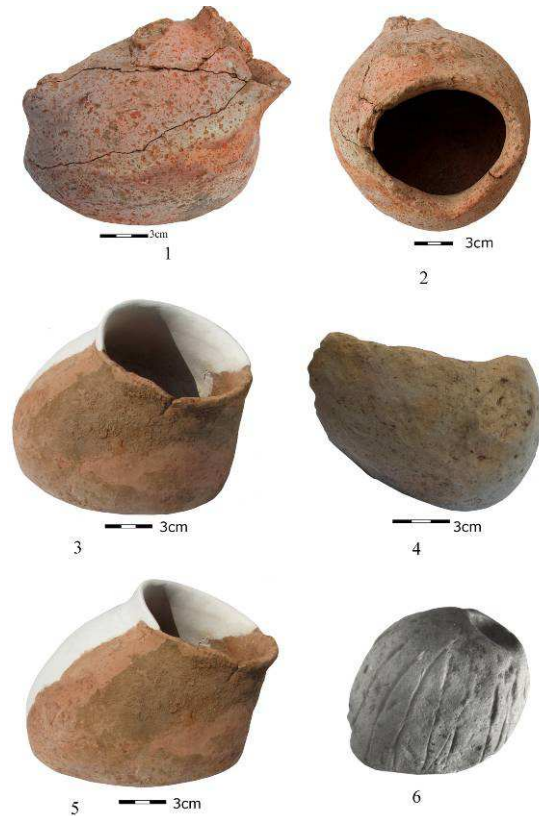


Fig. 8 – Askos pots discovered at Mălăiești de Jos from dwelling 5 (1, 2), dwelling 6 (3, 5), pit (4); miniature askos from surface discovery, without scale (6).

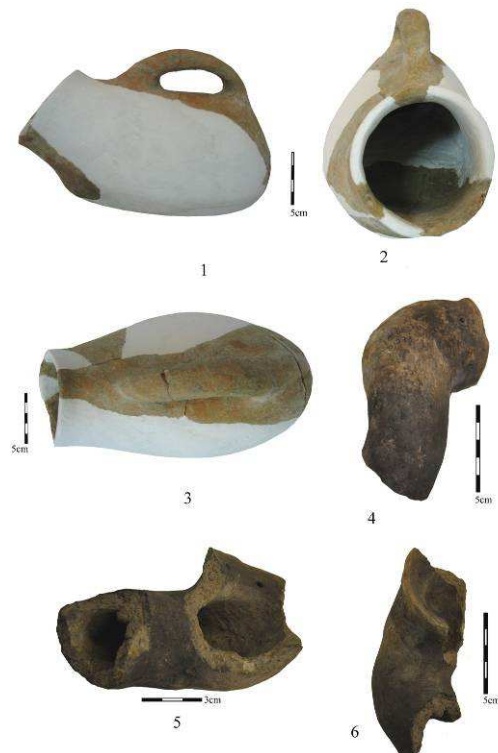


Fig. 9 – Askos discovered at Seciu (1, 2, 3); fragmentary rhyton discovered at Seciu (4, 5, 6).

cervid's head, with cylindrical neck, comes from Târșoru Vechi (A. Frînculeasa, 2007). Although not very numerous, zoomorphic lids appear in Gumelnița-Karanovo VI-Kodjadermen culture. We mention here the pieces found at Vidra - two pieces, Gumelnița, Vitănești, Goljamo Delcevo, Ruse, Goljamo Izvor - pot with anthropo-zoomorphic lid, Gorni Pasarel - anthropo-zoomorphic lid *etc.* (A. Frînculeasa, 2007; K. Moldoveanu, 2012). Lids that don't have a cylindrical neck, but a broader base can be related to zoomorphic vessels of rhyton or askos type, without head, which were found at Turdaș, Luncavița, Gumelnița, Vânătorii Mici *etc.* (A. Frînculeasa, 2004; V. M. Voinea 2005). Those with cylindrical neck could rather be protomas of zoomorphic sceptres. The piece from Târșoru Vechi shows similarities with a lid found at Vidra, which is a depiction of a cervid head (D. V. Rosetti, 1938).

At Geangoiești was discovered a tronconical vessel provided with two cattle horns (A. Ilie, Fl. Dumitru, 2008; D. Iamandi, 2009). Its form and some anatomical details seem to indicate a hybrid combination of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic features, type of representation known in Gumelnița-Karanovo VI-Kodjadermen cultural environment (Vl. Dumitrescu, 1977; R. R. Andreescu, 2002; K. Moldoveanu, 2012). Considering the fact that only the top part is preserved, we cannot exclude the possibility that this piece was a protoma of a zoomorphic sceptre, attached to a wooden support.

A form with special resonance, both by its occurrence and origins, is the askos type pot. Having southern roots and making their appearance in Neolithic period, askos pots were discovered in Anatolia, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (A. Nițu, 1972; C. Perles, 2003; V. M. Voinea, 2005). In the North of the Danube they appear in the developed Eneolithic period and continue to be present during the Bronze Age. In Romanian territory they appear mostly in the southern area, only few samples come from Moldavia. We can also find them in Republic of Moldavia and Ukraine (V. Slavcev, 2005). In Transylvania we only know the discoveries from Ariușd (S. J. Sztancsuj, 2007) and a pot from Turdaș (E. Lazurcă, 1977), that seems to be a hybrid form between zoomorphic vessels and askos pots, analogous

to those found at Vinča (A. Nițu, 1972), Luncavița (E. Lazurcă, 1977), Luca-Vrublevețkaia (A. Nițu, 1972). In northern Wallachia askos pots were found at Mălăieștii de Jos, Seciu, Ziduri, Teiu, Geangoiești, Sudiți (A. Frînculeasa, 2010).

Askos vessels appear in Gumelnița-Karanovo VI culture at Căscioarele, Caracliu, Jilava, Sultana, Vidra, Ciolăneștii din Deal, Seciu, Ruse, Hotnica, Banjata, Asmak, Stara Zagora, Dolnoslav, Mečkur (M. Șimon, 1986; S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1990; V. M. Voinea, 2005; A. Frînculeasa, 2010; 2011), in Precucuteni culture at Traian, Isaiia, Poduri, Luka-Vrublevețkaia, Coșernița, Alexandrovka (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 1974; V. Sorokin, 2001; D. Monah *et alli*, 2003; V. Slavcev, 2005; N. Ursulescu, F. A. Tencariu, 2007), but also Cucuteni-Ariușd culture at Rădășeni, Brad, Klișev and Ariușd (A. Nițu, 1972; V. Ursachi, 1991; S. J. Sztancsuj, 2007; C. Bem, 2007). For Sălcuța culture we know the finds from Sălcuța and Verbicioara (D. Berciu, 1961). They were also discovered in Stoicani-Aldeni settlements at Stoicani, Suceveni, Dodești (I. T. Dragomir, 1970, 1983), Vulcănești (Vl. Bielecki, 1978).

They were until recently considered reference points for the relative chronology of Gumelnița culture, with their earliest appearance in the A2 stage (V. M. Voinea, 2005; A. Frînculeasa, 2010), but the findings from Stoicani-Aldeni and Precucuteni cultural environments complicate the situation. M. Șimon considers that the askos vessel included in the Stoicani-Aldeni typology has Precucuteni origins (M. Șimon, 1986). Its presence in early Precucuteni III settlements on the eastern side of the Prut and in Stoicani-Aldeni settlements, leaves place for speculations about the origin and the chronological horizon when such pieces occur at the north of the Danube (A. Frînculeasa, 2012).

Rhyton type vessel - one piece comes from Mălăieștii de Jos and another one from Seciu (A. Frînculeasa, 2011). Both pieces are fragmentarily preserved, and the one from Seciu is questionable, so more sophisticated analysis are unnecessary. Rhyton vessels, although rare findings, were discovered in Gumelnița levels at Gumelnița, Căscioarele, Vidra, Sultana, Stara Zagora (S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, 2000; V. M. Voinea, 2005). They can also be found in Precucuteni culture at Poduri (D. Monah *et alli*, 2003), or Cucuteni at Trușești (M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, 1999). These two pieces from northern Wallachia appear to be earlier than those from southern Romania and at the same time they appear in the area defined by Stoicani-Aldeni discoveries.

Rhyton vessels (including those with

anthropomorphic features) appear in the Balkans on a chronological horizon situated around 6000 BC, the earliest findings come from Achileion, then towards west from Vashtemi (Albania), Crno Vrilo (Dalmatia), Cave Elia, Le Macchie (Italy), all in Impressed Ware contexts (P. Biagi, 2003; D. Mlecuz, 2007). A few hundred years after 6000 BC, the rhyton became a characteristic element of the Western Balkans, it can be found at Danilo, Kakanj, Smilčić, Cakran, Dunavec, Topoljanm, and after 5000 BC it appeared from Peloponnese, towards east in Kosovo, Bosnia and towards west in Italy (D. Mlecuz, 2007; G. Naumov, 2011).

The pot found at Teiu (fig. 5/6, 7), which has its outer wall decorated with a horned animal and a snake (A. Nițu, 1972; Z. Maxim, 2005) is still a unique discovery within Gumelnița culture, the presence of zoomorphic decoration on vessels is much more significant in Cucuteni settlements (A. Nițu, 1972, 1975).

Along with vessels, we can also find plastic modelled statuettes and protomas, present throughout the Romanian territory during the Neo-Eneolithic Age. For this category of pieces some general features must be noted: an usually uncertain discovery context, small dimensions, fragmentation, a lack of anatomical details, modest modelling, the raw material is represented mostly by coarsely prepared clay, with pebbles, ceramic fragments and sand used as a degreaser, an uneven burning.

## Discussions

The primary context of discovery for these pieces is usually the settlement, they were found inside dwellings or pits containing domestic filling. The zoomorphic vessels are represented in most cases by a single piece in the repertoire and ceramic typology identified in the settlement. This situation finds its correspondent all over Romania, it is a rare situation that two zoomorphic vessels from the same category appear at the same level of an archaeological site. An exceptional case is the site of Ariușd where 14 zoomorphic vessels were found, but the site has a very complex stratigraphy (S. J. Sztancsuj, 2007). As for plastic representations, they occur mostly outside complexes, with some exceptions they are usually fragmentary.

However, these observations cannot be applied to askos type vessels. At Mălăieștii de Jos three such pots were found (fig. 8/1-5), to which we can add a miniature piece that seems to fit in the same type or an imitation (fig. 8/6), at Seciu one pot was found, but also fragments belonging to a second one. From Teiu only a single vessel was recovered, although the site was fully investigated. At Sudiți, Geangoiești, Ziduri, research covered only small areas. The richest sample is that from the site of Mălăieștii de Jos, that was object to extensive research, but the pieces appear in complexes that define various stages of habitation and development of the settlement. The askos pot that has the form of a bladder or a duck may be included in the category of zoomorphic representations, in this case we mention the anthro-zoomorphic vessel from Gumelnița, whose body is shaped like an askos (R. R. Andreescu, 2002) or the zoomorphic askos pots from Turdaș, Luncavița, Gumelnița, Vânătorii Mici (E. Lazurcă, 1977; R. R. Andreescu, 1997; A. Frînculeasa, 2004), and in the south of the Danube the ones from Voina, Goljamo Izvor, Nova Zagora (A. Frînculeasa, 2004). It is also noteworthy the association between askos and bull representations, attested by a discovery from Koumasa (P. P. Betancourt, 1985; N. Marinatos, 1993).

The zoomorphic vessel with lid from Mălăieștii de Jos was (fig. 2) discovered in a burnt house along with other pieces that may be related to the spiritual component of this community's life: a zoomorphic miniature bowl, an askos, a phallus, two anthropomorphic statues that seem to be imitations of the ones specific to Cucuteni cultural environment, another two fragments of anthropomorphic representations, numerous vessels gathered around the fireplace. Inside the askos from dwelling 5 (fig. 8/1-2) were deposited two anthropomorphic representations made of bone (A. Frînculeasa, 2010), that are unique to this site.

No zoomorphic vessel appeared in funerary context. For rhyton vessels this assertion must be nuanced because a copy made out of marble was found in the cemetery at Varna, in funerary context (V. M. Voinea, 2005).

Zoomorphic vessels are made of a paste that is common for the usual ceramic. It is noteworthy for the askos vessels from Ziduri and Teiu the presence of coarse sand that is specific to late Gumelnița ceramics and at Mălăieștii de Jos the presence of pounded ceramic. The rhyton from Mălăieștii de Jos is the only pot that seems modelled from a finer paste (fig. 3/5, 6).

## Conclusions

All zoomorphic vessels and pieces that we identified depict images of domestic animals or wild fauna, species known and accessible to that community. The domestic animals represented are cattle, ovicaprids, suids, dogs and from the ones that represent wild fauna cervids and cattle are easier to identify. These are the mammalian species that are highly present in Neolithic fauna (A. Bălăşescu, V. Radu, D. Moise, 2005). Two mammals have priority in zoomorphic modelling: cattle and ovicaprids. Cattle are marked including by the presence of protomas and even bucrania. The latter are found in this area at Teiu, Surduleşti, Seciu.

The modelling is realistic, even simplistic, the pieces are small, the statues are up to 10 cm, the vessels don't exceed 25 cm. All zoomorphic vessels were provided with a lid. Also, for the vessels found at Mălăieştii de Jos, Colceag the presence of holes in the neck and coxal area allowed them to be suspended using ropes. The existence of lids could be a clue about the storage of substances, possibly spices, the possibility to suspend the vessels supports the same assertion. Similar vessels, that had the same type of holes, were found at Colceag, Traian, Sipeşti. Finally, the form cannot belong to a container with a common, household utility.

Vessels like rhytons and askos seem rather props pieces used in ritual activities involving the consumption of liquids and maybe libations. The statues are perhaps symbolic representations of zoomorphism and the decorations seem to induce a certain symbolic charge to the vessels.

In northern Wallachia there have not yet been identified fantastic representations, hybrid combinations or species eccentric to the natural environment of this area. Although few in number, hybrid representations are not lacking in Gumelniţa culture, in this regard we mention anthro-zoomorphic representations (R. R. Andreescu, 2002, 2012; C. Lazăr, V. Parnic, 2011; K. Moldoveanu, 2012). The findings seem to represent cult themes, possibly mythological. In this respect we note the vessel with zoomorphic decoration from Teiu where a horned animal is associated to a snake.

In the Neolithic Age zoomorphic representations, with the four types that are container, figurine, protomas, decoration,

follow the same coordinates as the anthropomorphic ones. The technical details and representation follow the same technique and artistic parameters. The figurines are small, lacking in most cases the anatomical details, only fragmentarily preserved, broken from old times. Schematic incised decorations, appear in relief or painted on vessel walls. Protomas generally represent human or animal heads. Zoomorphic containers are of better artistic quality and at the same time their dimensions exceed other representations, a situation similar to anthropomorphic vessels. Also, in both cases numerous plastic representations are androgynous. In zoomorphic plastic, sexual characteristics are exceptions, but the presence of gender duality is not ruled out, for example through the existence or lack of horns in the representation of cattle.

An association of the two symbols, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic is to be found at Mălăieştii de Jos, in the case of the askos vessel that had inside two anthropomorphic bone statuettes, but also in dwelling 6, where four anthropomorphic statuettes were discovered, along with a phallus and two zoomorphic vessels. It is also noteworthy the pot from Teiu that has represented on the exterior wall a horned mammal together with a snake (fig. 5/6, 7), whose head was shaped by pressing the soft clay and the realization of two lobes separated by a rib, a situation that finds direct analogies in the technical modelling of human faces for Gumelniţa anthropomorphic plastic art (R. R. Andreescu, 2002a). We highlight the association at a symbolic level of phallus representation and bucrania, both images are related to virility and fertility.

Similarities between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic plastic can be found concerning the context, the fragmentary state of the statues, probably result of the nature of the rituals. Both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic statuettes seem abandoned after their use in rituals involving their destruction. All these findings and conclusions express the existence in the Eneolithic period of religious beliefs and themes related to plant world, but also some where animals had a well-defined representation, both reflected in these plastic images that constitute symbols.

The premises are not the most relevant for drawing definitive conclusions. We ascertain the existence of vessels that find their utility only in recurrent manifestations in which we can guess the presence of a certain distinct character within the settlement. Regular manifestations can be inferred from the presence of these pieces in settlements, kept inside houses. Another clue is their wear, the

lack of legs or horns (for cattle representations), that seem to have been broken in ancient times. The presence of an important personage is indicated by the exceptional character, in most cases unique, of these pieces. The uniqueness within a settlement makes us think about totems rather than taboos, plastic zoomorphic representations have their correspondents fauna remains consumed by that community. Also, access to the symbol was large, marked by the presence of numerous animals modelled in clay, identified in all settlements. Finds seem to mark rather a symbolic character of these representations, the shape, size and detail seemed to be in many cases secondary marks. In most cases, in order to create an immediate visual effect, size is a first and important criterion. The few elements exposed report the possible presence of zoomorphism in the eneolithic age.

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