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NEW DECORATIVE MOTIFS IDENTIFIED ON THE STARČEVO-CRIŞ POTTERY FROM CRISTIAN III (SIBIU COUNTY)

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Abstract: The article comprises an addition to the catalogue of decorative motifs identified on Starčevo-Criş, after the ones published by the author in 2011 and 2013, this time after analyzing the pottery from Cristian III, Sibiu County. As in the case of the already mentioned studies the author presents both the drawings and description of the ornaments. **Key words:** Early Neolithic, Starčevo-Criş, pottery, ornamentation, Cristian III, Transylvania

When signing the introduction to a volume dedicate to the study of Neolithic pottery (Maxim, Popovici 1995) Radu Florescu appreciated that, through its artistic and symbolic richness the study of pottery is a *passionate and fecund activity* and [...] *it develops a complex meta-language, subtil and fine, quite difficult to decrypt* [...].

Indeed, for the specialists that are involved in the study of the prehistory, the ceramic material is, on one hand, a durable resource, considering its conservation into the soil during the passing of thousand years but, on the other hand fragile material, if we should consider its daily usage, an I am referring here to the usual pottery which served in domestic porpoises, but easy to break, as it is also the pottery that has a special destination, the one that specialist frame into the fine category, even though it is not the case of the same ceramic wear. These situations determine for many of the pottery not to *survive* the generation that created it. It is also true that there is pottery that was fragmented, broken and reused in the ancient period by the community or diverse tools or finery objects (Vuković 2015, 111-126).

So, through the quantity discovered in archaeological excavations, but also by its characteristics, which in many cases determined also the particularities of the culture that it belongs to, the ceramic fragments are an extremely important indicator for determining the relative chronological framing of the feature that it was discovered in.

In what concerns Radu Florescu's observation about the complex and difficult to understand language used by the archaeologists in describing the pottery, indeed, the unspecialized reader can be overwhelmed by the used terminology and, sometimes, the same problems appear in the case of the specialist too because there are situations when the same term can indicate different situations. I shall not discuss here, for example, the way archaeologist name colours for the ceramic fragments. It is well-know the fact that we can perceive differently the colours, or even if they are not perceived differently they are being named in accordance to our personal experiences, this being the reason why in the analysis is mandatory to use, right from the start, and in a unitary way, some colour sampling or the reporting to *Munsell* system, with the afferent codification, and in this case a code represents the three dimensions of colour: hue, value and saturation (Munsell 1919). But, in this last case, one can be in the situation of having different Munsel codes for the same colour of shard, due to the very small differences of the above-mentioned dimensions, in which case they are not so relevant for our interpretation (Tudorie 2013, 64-65).

It is also true that in case of the terminology used by the archeologists to describe the pottery there is a series of specific terms and here are some examples: *blacktopped* – a term used for indicating a special firing technique, a chromatic effect on the pot: the superior part has a black colour, and the inferior one red, or from the category of light brown, orange, yellow; *pseudo-barbotine* – an ornamental technique made by an easy tamponage made on the surface of the pot, when the clay is still flexible); *engobe* – a fine clay suspension, produced by decantation, opaque, which was used for covering the pot before the firing, with a thin layer, in order to cover some imperfections or for preparing the surface for painting (Lazarovici-Micle 2001, 214-216; for geologic terms used in studying the pottery: Ionescu-Ghergari 2006, 451-460; a short dictionary used for the study and description of the pottery it is included in Tudorie 2013, 223-224. For its elaboration the author used, besides the two sources above mentioned, a series of dictionaries as: Cinotti 1967; Yon 1981; Champion 1983; Consentino 1990). So, as anyone can notice, the unprofessional reader can be disarmed in his attempt to decode the information.

The quantitative analysis of the Neolithic ceramic material, its standardization, the framing of the fragments discovered in the archaeological researches for this period in the Balkan Peninsula area aren't a recent approach, this type of study was implemented long time ago and it provided important information.

But, this research method sill isn't a general one for the ones that study this period, because of several reasons, as it is the long period of material processing, but also the lack human resources that can easily describe macroscopically each sherd discovered in an archaeological feature and afterwards the computerized part of processing the information from the collected data.

Inspired by the methodology of data collection, but also the description method used in the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Tarcea-Lazarovici 1996, 683), even since 1984 also in Romania have started the attempts of projecting data bases for stoking the information about archaeological discoveries (Kalmar Maxim 1999, 8), so that in the end to be created a system that, on one hand allows the administration of data bases and on the other hand the processing of the information (Lazarovici-Micle 2001, 105

Working method

The site from Cristian, initially mentioned in the *Archaeological Repertoire* of Sibiu County (Luca et alii 2003, 90-92), was preventively researched during the works undertaken for the construction of Sibiu-Orăștie highway. The administrative territory of Cristian coumune, which is being placed at 10 km west from Sibiu, it is being composed of Cristian I zone, Cristian II zone and Cristian III zone (Luca 2015, 11). In the Cristian III point the following chronological sequences were discovered: Early Neolithic – Starčevo-Criș culture, Late Bronze Age: Noua Culture and Early Hallstatt period (Luca 2012, 127; Luca et alii 2013, 35; Luca et alii 2014, 7).



Map 1. The localization of Cristian, Sibiu County (Google Earth capture).

Using statistics as a working method in studying the ceramic material and the attempt to standardize the information obtained can raise different problems caused by: the great fragmentation of the material (there are only a few pots that can be reconstruct entirely), the comparison of different parameters indicated for some pot types of pots, establishing the groups and interpreting the context (Vuković 2011, 81).

Antother aspect that should be considered in analyzing the pottery, no meter the epoch, starting from the Neolithic until the Middle Ages, is its morphology. There are several patterns used for standardization, and an example could be analyzing the major components of a pot: the orifice (here being included both *the rim* and *neck* – if the case), the body (*the belly*, but also *the shoulder* of the pot, the last one being formed in the situation when the maximal zone of development of the pot is being on its superior side) and the base (*the bottom*, *the foot/feet*)(Rice 1987, 213). For the pottery that is being attributed to some archaeological culture, of same importance is the shape or the type of handles, the way they were perforated (horizontal/vertical) or not, but also their positioning on the surface of the pot or even their ornamentation.

The shape of the pots determined sometimes their classification, based on geometric shapes: sphere, ellipsoidal, oval, cylinder, hyperboid)(Rice 1987, 219).

The framing, for the Early Neolithic period, of the pottery, indicates a certain terminological unity.

For example, Gheorghe Lazarovici frames Early Neolithic pots in five large categories: *truncated bowls* with six variants: plate, globular, short, with a profiled bottom, narrow, tall, with an easily profiled rim; *cups with feet* with the following variants: truncated, short, with small foot; truncated, short, with tall foot; semispherical with a profiled rim, middle foot; globular, with tall foot; plat, with quadrilateral foot with or without perforations on the foot, lobed rim (*Zipfeland*); with truncated foot, short, tri-lobed; *pots*, with variants: globular; globular short, with a tendency of bi-truncated shape; piriform, semispherical with straight rim; asymmetrical; semispherical with little feet; *specific for Starčevo IV shapes* with the variants: plate bowls; profiled bowls; bowl with a profiled rim; bi-conical pot, and *shapes typical for Vinča A-Starčevo-Criş IV A-B* where are included the bowls and bi-conical bowls (Lazarovici 1979, 37).

Marius Ciută prefers, for the first phase of the Early Neolithic, the following framing: bowls (in this category are the pots for which of the rim is much smaller than the maximal diameter of the belly, having the sphere as a model); *bowls* (semispherical or cap pots, with the curbed walls determine an opened shape, the diameter of the rim being the maximal one; the base model is the sphere); *plates* (truncated pots, with straight walls, opened shapes, the diameter of the rim being the

maximal one, and the base model is an upside down cone) and *bowls* (bi-conical pots, with the base mode being two cone trunks overlapped)(Ciută 2005, 81).

The usage of catalogues and dictionaries for describing the ceramic material leads to eliminating the descriptive language, which is being replaced with a codification which means a great reduction of time for the material processing (Tudorie 2013, 62).

Generally, the specialists involved with the quantitative and qualitative study of the pottery, besides the fabrication techniques, that can include both microscopic and macroscopic investigations, then the observations regarding the morphology of the pots, it is also regarded the social context for pottery production, comprising here discussions referring to local production, domestic, or the existence of some specialized centers, the pottery being regarded as an indication for sedentarisation, mobility or presence of these communities in different seasons, the method used and communicating the information regarding fabrications techniques that are to be used by the following generations (Thissen 2007, 109-110) or reinterpretations of some decorative techniques – from the used terminology to the way that they were actually produced (Vuković-Svilar 2015-2016, 73-98).

Results

The results of the macroscopy study made on the pottery belonging to Starčevo-Criş culture, from Cristian III site, were already published, as is the case for the pottery from the sanctuary (Luca *et al.* 2016, 60-63), as the case of features: C269, C329, C577, C586 (Tudorie 2017, 7-14) and the rest of the features in the monographic study published in 2017 (Luca *et al.* 2017).

In what concerns the decorative techniques, the identified types were framed, in most of the cases, to the one already published by Zoia Maxim (Maxim 1999) and Anamaria Tudorie (Tudorie 2011, 7-16; Tudorie 2013, 73-75, 77, 82-88). The new types are being presented in this study.

Regarding the new decorative motifs identified on the pottery from Cristian III, we can say that the barbotine, incisions, *impresso* type motifs (with finger or object) and some plastic applications.

Graphic representation of the	Ornamentation	Code	Descri	ption
ornament	technique			
	Plastic	AV	Plastic	
	application		applicatio	n
			shaped	as a
			circular	button,
			having	the
			diameter	of 8

			mm.
	Plastic application and alveolation	AW	Plastic application spiral shaped with alveolation o its surface.
00	Plastic application and pinching	AX	Circular shaped plastic application with the diameter of aproximately 25 mm, with a pinch in the middle.
	Plastic application and alveolations	AZ	Ovoid shaped plastic application, presenting five alveolations displayed circularly on its surface.
	Impression made with an object, nail impression	EP	Series of <i>impresso</i> type ornaments, made both with an object and nail.
	Incision	FS	Deep incision, U letter shaped.

Incision	FT	Parallel organized incisions, displayed vertically on the pot's surface, intersecting perpendicular with other two incisions, parallel, displayed slightly
Incision	FU	oblique, from right to left, on the pot's surface. Organized incisions, parallel,
		displayed in truss frames with the angle towards the right side (the first register) and organized incisions, parallel, oblique displayed on the surface of the pot, from left to right, forming another series, with the point towards left.
Incisions	FW	Series of incisions forming curved-linear incisions.

	Incisions	EV	Not some door
	Incisions	FX	Not very deep incisions, displayed in slightly interrupted lines, vertically, from the right towards left, on the surface of the pot.
	Incisions	FY	Organized incisions, displayed in truss frames, with the point towards left.
	Incisions	FZ	Organized incisions, oblique displayed on the surface of the pot, from right towards left and from left towards right, intersecting and forming several V's.
N.K.	Barbotine	JR	Ornamental barbotine.
	Barbotine	JS	Ornamental barbotine organized in oblique rows (from left to right) in the inferior register and dragged with the finger

		towards the superior register.
Barbotine	JT	Barbotine organized in curved strips, vertically displayed on the surface of the pot.
Barbotine	JU	Barbotine organized U shape.
Barbotine	JW	Barbotine organized in rows, oblique on the surface of the pot – from the right towards the left side – and vertically.
Incisions and impressions made with finger-tip	TT	Combination of elements formed of two series of parallel incisions displayed oblique on the surface of the pot (from left to right in the superior register and frim right to left in the inferior register), bordered by from another slightly curved incision and impressions made with finger-tip.

	Impressions	TZ	Four rows of impressions made with an object, horizontally displayed on the surface of the pot, forming the <i>wheat spice</i> motif.
H_	Incisions	UA	Incisions forming the swastika motif.
	Incisions	UB	Series of incisions organized in truss frames, with the point up, intersected around maximal development of this motif with another horizontal, short, incision.
	Incision	UC	Two perpendicular incised lines, the longest side being vertically displayed on the pot's surface, and the shorter side horizontally.

	Incisions	UD	Series of organized incisions.
2200	Plastic application and alveolation	VO	<i>Belt</i> type plastic application, with two horizontal rows of alveolations.

Although the highest part of the decorated material could be framed in the older catalogues, 24 new types of ornaments were identified. From these, most of them are incisions (11 cases), followed by barbotine (6 cases), 5 cases are plastic applications, some of them combined with alveolations, one application has a pinch on it and 2 cases of impressions, made with finger-tip and nail, nail or with an object.

The analyze made on the pottery from the Cristian III site help us to add new information to the data base for the Early Neolithic pottery, this time with new elements belonging to phase III of Starčevo-Criş culture. Until this moment, the materials analyzed from Miercurea Sibiului-*Petriş* (Sibiu County), Cristian I (Sibiu County), Turdaş-*Luncă*, feature 164 (Hunedoara County), Săliştea (Cioara, Alba County), Iosaş-*Anele* (Arad County)(Tudorie 2013, 91-177), Ghioroc-*Balastieră Vest* (Arad County)(Sava et al. 2015, 39-64, 75-80) included, in almost all cases, materials belonging to the first two phases of development of the culture, as it was defined in the chronologic system elaborated by Gheorghe Lazarovici (Lazarovici 1979, 19; Lazarovici 1984, 48-104), excepting the site of Ghioroc-*Balastieră Vest*, which was framed in the IIIA phase of the culture (Sava *et al.* 2015, 75).

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