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**The Ancient Grid Symbol as a
Timeless Symbol of Life:
The Ways the Fertility Symbol Emerged
and Spread around the Planet**



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Author's preface: For quite a long time humanity used to live in relative harmony with the environment, as evidenced by the tradition of veneration of spirits and of fruitfulness deity later on, practiced in world's each and every culture. Ancient Europeans associated fruitfulness to lush green grass areas which served as pastures for animals people hunted. On the walls of caves and grottoes ancient people left scratched symbolic images of the fruitfulness deity in the form of a rectangular grid representing these pastures. Gradually, this symbol of life, together with the derived symbol of "rain" in the form of a ladder, spread throughout Eurasia (including Sumer, Elam, Harappa, China) and America.

Even today, several varieties of a that rectangular grid adorn traditional clothes, carpets, ceramics, or pysanky Easter eggs from various peoples of the world. Priests (called shamans) of the Sami and other indigenous peoples of Siberia still draw it on their drums, right next to pasturing deer or horses. So let's recall this forgotten symbol of fruitfulness to try to return to living in harmony with our environment.

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to museums, acadmia edu, scientific foundations and many ordinary people posting in social networks, such as Pinterest, for publishing images of various archaeological findings featuring either rectangular grids or cross symbols.

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The First Tale: How People Have Differentiated Themselves from their Environment

Our ancient predecessors recognized their uniqueness as early as in the late Paleolithic Age. This fact is attested by pictures they left on rocky walls of many caves and grottoes. These images depict people, animals and hunting scenes, but also a whole array of various combinations of lines.

The earliest ritual symbolic pictograms were exactly those – combinations of straight lines. And it's understandable since straight lines are easiest to be carved in a rock. However, straight lines are hardly ever seen in nature, with only few exceptions, such as some sorts of trees. So maybe that's why a short straight line was used to symbolize either an upright standing person or this person's outstretched arm or leg. The same goes for man-made objects, such as a spear, an arrow, a rectangular construction, and so on.

A pattern of two intersecting short straight lines, or a cross¹, is actually the simplest combination of lines and it was the most widespread combination of lines throughout Europe and the entire world as well. The earliest depiction of a cross known for today is an engraved cross found in the bedrock of Gorham's Cave near the Gibraltar Seaport (Fig.1).



Fig. 1. The cross engraved in the bedrock of Gorham's Cave near the Gibraltar Seaport. Circa 39000-46000 BC. Image: *Stewart Finlayson*.

Ruth Blasco and Clive Finlayson from the Gibraltar National Museum, who were the first to discover this engraving, which consists of several cross-like carvings, called it 'the first known example of an abstract pattern engraved by Neanderthals'². The researchers have made a conclusion that these engravings were carved in a rock with the help of some sharp stone tool. In their experiment the scientists had to make more than 50 strikes to carve similar grooves. The longest horizontal lines were first to be carved, strikes moving from left to right. As for the

vertical lines, Neanderthals made them the way we would do them today – from up down.

Other *Homo sapiens* representatives continued the tradition of line carving and over time they have decorated many caves and grottoes in the territory of modern France, Spain and Italy and in the Northwest Black Sea coastal region with quite complicated combinations of straight lines. And the most common of these combinations was a rectangular grid (Fig. 2 to 5).



Fig. 2. Rectangular grids from Castello Cave. 19000-16000 BC, Cantabria, Spain.



Fig. 3. A rectangular grid from Valcamonica (Camonica Valley), Lombardy Italy. 8000 BC.

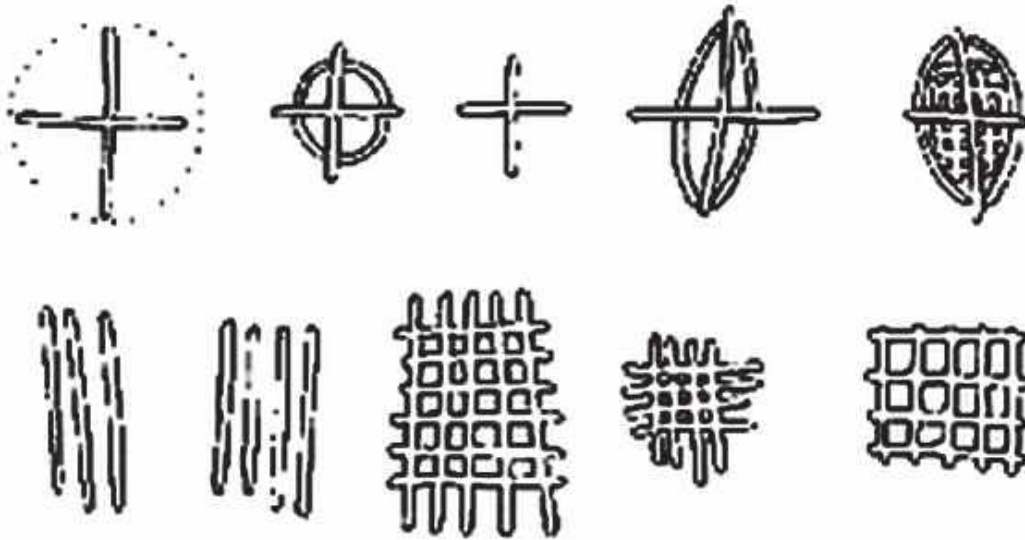


Fig. 4. Drawings of crosses and rectangular grids from the Lascaux cave complex. 18000-6000 BC. France.



Fig. 5. Rectangular grids and separate lines (each one denoting 'one count') on the table # 21 (according to B. Mikhaylov). 5000-4000 BC. The Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) Historical Reserve, Ukraine

More than half a century ago André Leroi-Gourhan, a famous explorer of French and Spanish Paleolithic caves, assumed that for our far ancestors a rectangular grid might symbolize feminine fertility³. But some other researchers saw in it a calendar symbol meaning Februar³. y. Luckily, this symbol was so important for ancient Europeans that in some cases they drew it without omissions, as a complete detailed picture. And these few images, found in distant parts of the continent, allow us to understand the symbol's true meaning (Fig. 6 to 11).



Fig. 6-7. Herbivorous animals touching rectangular grids with their muzzles. Lascaux Cave. 18000-15000 BC. France.

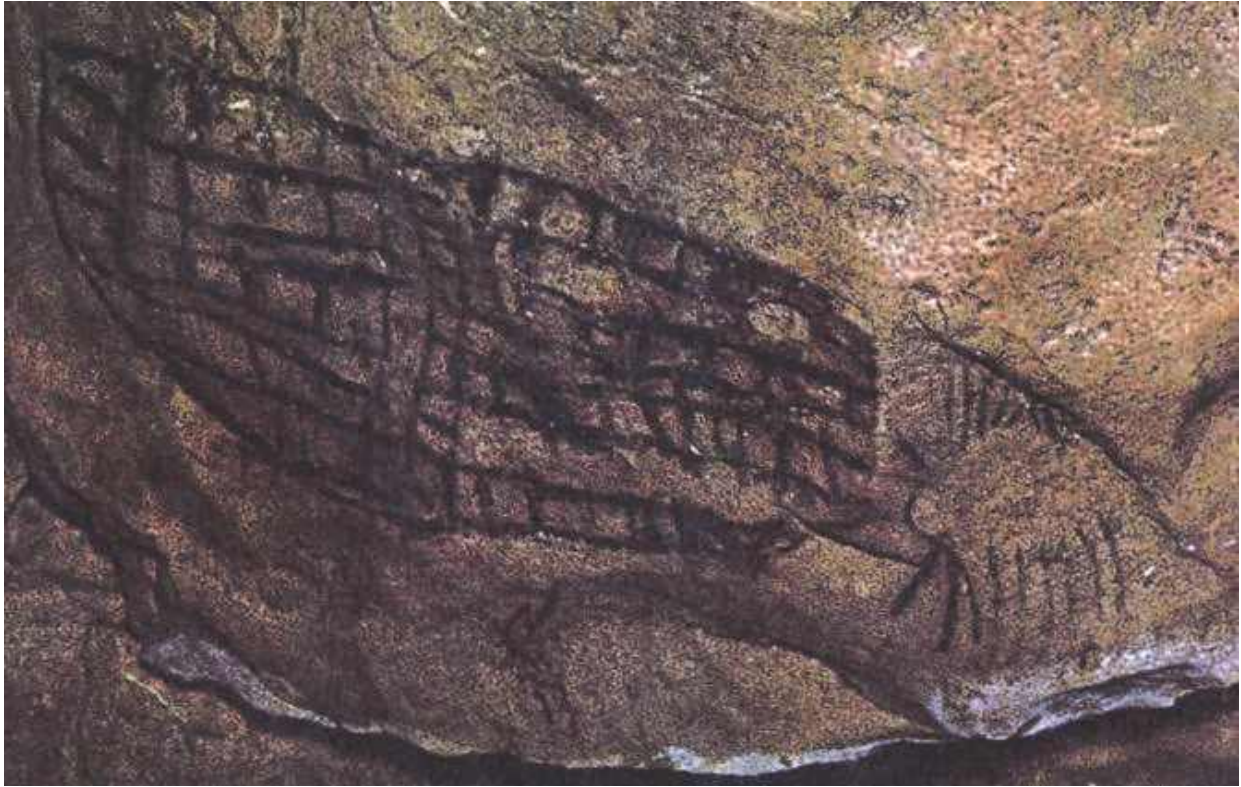


Fig. 8. Herbivorous animal touching a rectangular grid with its muzzle. Cave of Altamira, 33000-11000 BC. Spain.



Fig. 9. Drawing of an image from the sandstone rock showing two goats, a rectangular grid and two hunters, from 'Goat Grotto' of the Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) Historical Reserve^s, 8000-7000 BC. Ukraine⁵.

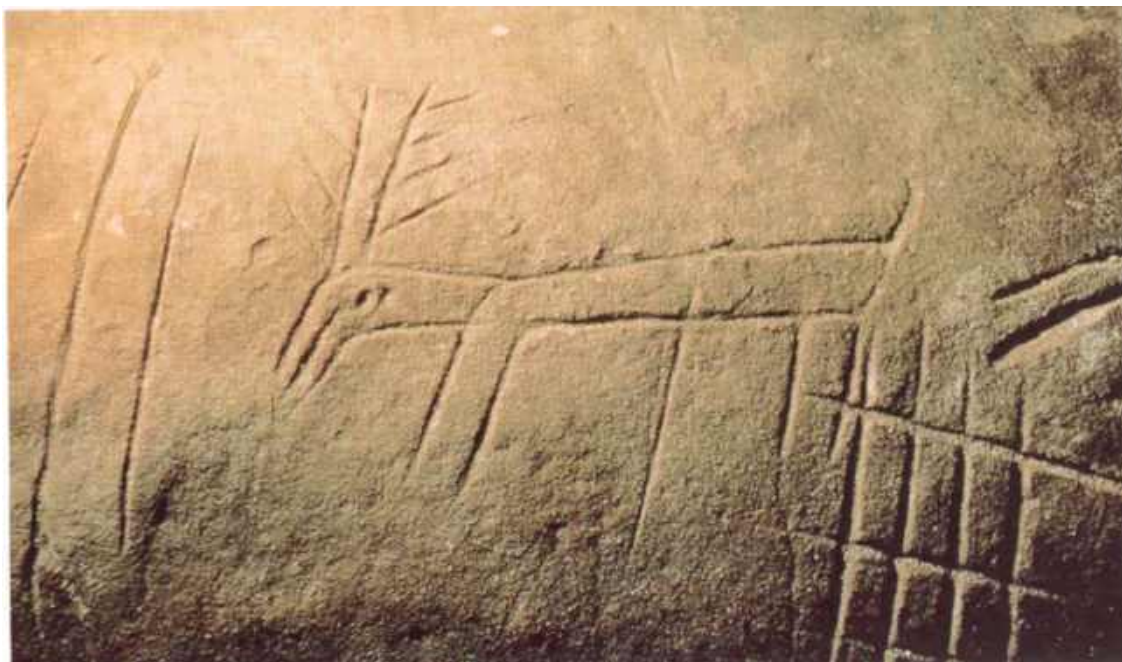


Fig. 10. Fragment of a rock with an image of a deer and a rectangular grid. Fontainebleau vicinity, 4000 BC. France²⁰.



Fig. 11. Fragment of a Trypillian ritual pot with images of an herbivorous animal and a rectangular grid, 3700 BC. The National Museum of Ukrainian History.

As we see, all these images depict various grazing herbivorous animals, which were game animals for ancient Europeans. Or, speaking in wider terms, they depict fruitfulness. Besides, all these facts are a convincing illustration showing the moment when *Homo sapiens* began altering the world using own imagination.

Now it's time to look into how a rectangular grid spread throughout the European continent. This is what the second tale is about.

The Second Tale: How *Homo Sapiens* Invented First Portable Information Storage Devices

Danish archaeology magazine '*Skalk*', in its October 2016 issue, reported the discovery of two 5 cm wide fragments of a flat rock with engravings on them⁴ (Fig. 12 to 13).





Fig. 12 to 13. Split stone tablet and its enlarged fragment. 2900-2700 BC. Bornholms Museum. Photo by René Laursen.

Last century saw dozens of findings of similar flat stone tablets bearing similar carvings of rectangular grids throughout Europe. The earliest of them is the tablet from the Northwest Black Sea coastal region with two rectangular grids carved on it (Fig. 14).

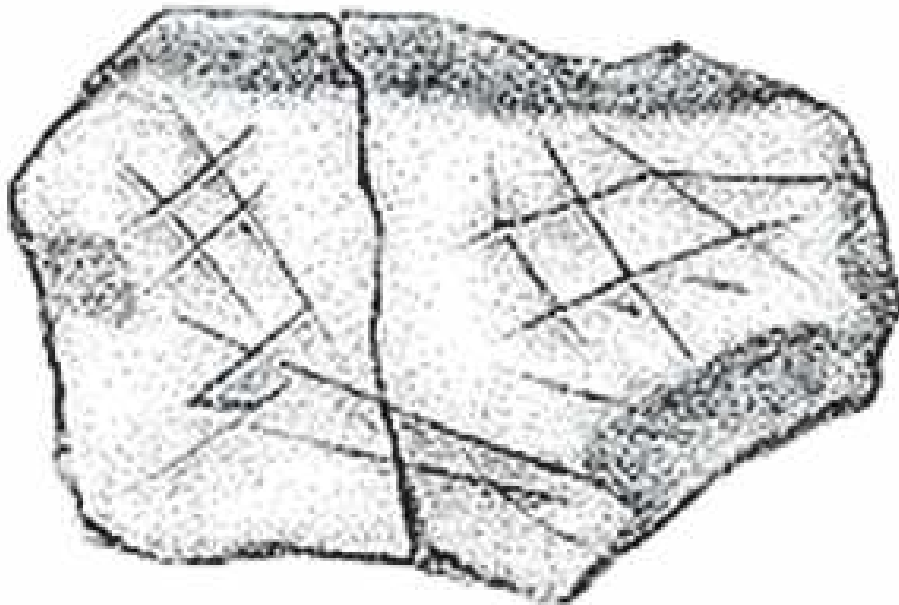


Fig. 14. A fragment of a flat stone with two rectangular grids carved on it, found near Cosăuți village, Moldova. 18000 BC.

Same as the stone tablet from Bornholms Island, this is also a flat rock. Seventy of similar flat rock tablets bearing one or more carvings, including rectangular grids, have been discovered and documented in 'Goat Grotto' of the Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) Historical Reserve in Ukraine⁵ (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Drawings of the carvings from the fragment of the rock tablet # 5 with two rectangular grids on it. 8000-7000 BC. (According to B. Mikhaylov).

A very similar pebble rock has been found in France (Fig. 16).

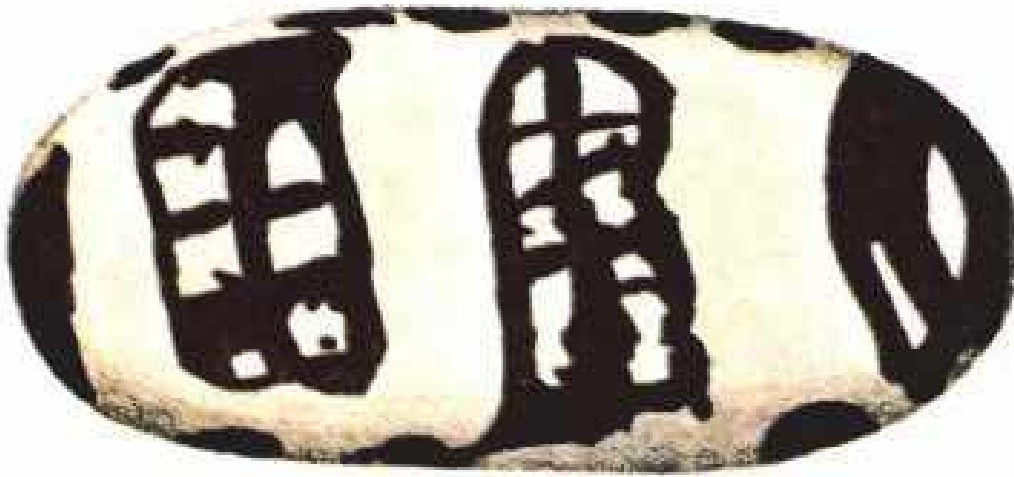


Fig. 16. A pebble rock with two rectangular grids from a cave in France. 8000 BC.

All these rock tablets are very small in size. They are small enough so it would be easy to carry them for long distances. Maybe here we see the world's first portable information storage devices.

European archaeologists have already proven that many manifestations of material culture, such as hunting tools, forms and sizes of dwellings, etc. were practically identical throughout Europe before the Last Glacial Maximum.

Half a century ago a Soviet-time archaeologist, Sergey Zamyatin, noted that 'culture of Upper Paleolithic people of pre-glacial Europe was common throughout its huge territory, so it could only have been formed on condition of close

communication'⁶. And rock tablets with carved ritual symbols or incantations were a common mean of communication.

People inhabiting Europe of those times had similar gods and similar rituals. Both rock tablets from Bornholms Island and from Moldova, shown in pictures 13 to 15, were probably smashed by priests, in special rituals held in bad crop periods. Maybe it was their way to punish an image of the fruitfulness deity for refusing to repay their sacrifices with rain and warmth.

The advent of Neolithic agriculture in Europe led to considerable growth of the fruitfulness deity's importance which then became crucial. This is what the third tale is about.

The Third Tale: Fruitfulness God's Forgotten Image

About 5800-5500 BC Northern Balkans and Northwest Black Sea coastal region, i.e. the territories of such modern countries as Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, became a place where two distinct archaeological cultures – the Vinča culture and the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture – emerged. The Vinča culture is famed for its world's earliest clay tablets and pottery adorned with symbols. A rectangular grid is one of them (Fig. 17).

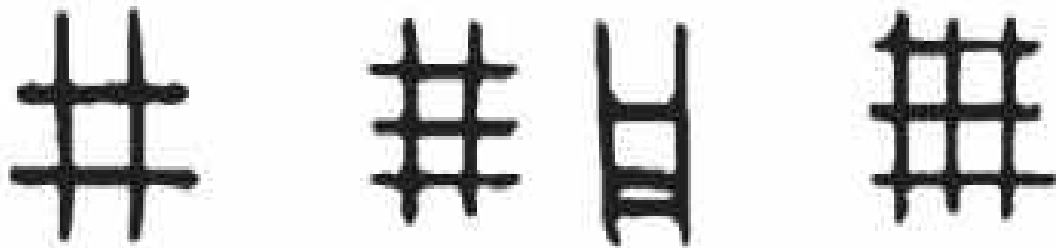


Fig. 17. Rectangular grid variations on pottery from the Vinča archaeological culture. 5500-4000 BC.

But there are even more examples of equally intricate rectangular grids adorning pottery from the Cucuteni-Trypillia archaeological culture. This culture flourished between 4500-3500 BC, at the end of the Holocene Climate Optimum. Several Europe's earliest agricultural proto-cities emerged in the territories between the rivers Dniester and Dnieper in this time. Each of these cities had from 5 to 30 thousand inhabitants. These proto-cities were composed of large two-story buildings with several families living in each (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18. Trypillian Maidanetske proto-city. 3800-3700 BC. Ukraine. Reconstructed model, by Kenny Antonseh and Vimmy Antonseh.

There was also a huge public temple building in the centre of each proto-city. These temples were probably world's biggest buildings of those times (Fig. 19)



Fig. 19. A temple from Nebelivka Trypillian proto-city. 4000 BC. Ukraine. Reconstructed model, by Kenny Antonseh and Vimmy Antonseh.

Like many other peoples of those times, ancient Trypillians worshipped Mother Sun and Father Moon, whom they saw in the sky daily. That's why the altars were made in form of a circle with a cross in the middle of it, whereas temples' tops were adorned with crescents. One ancient Ukrainian carol, which came to us through the ages, shows us the crucial role Mother Sun used to play in existence of both heavenly and earthly worlds:

*Fair Moon is the gentle lord,
Fair Sun is his wife,
Baby stars are their children...*

Archaeology gives us proofs that inhabitants of Cucuteni-Trypillia proto-cities were very well organized and armed. So there was only one thing they were afraid of: bad harvest years. Considering their large numbers they were no longer able to rely on more traditional hunting, fishing or gathering in trying times of bad harvest years. So there was no alternative but to worship a fruitfulness god, ask him for rain and bring him tributes. And, of course, praying to god is much more effective if you pray in front of a particular image picturing this higher power.

If the aforesaid reasoning is right, a schematic image of the fruitfulness god and rain must consist of certain combinations of rectangular grids. Let's start with the simplest ones from painted Cucuteni-Trypillia pottery (Fig. 20 to 22).



Fig. 20. Trypillian bowl with a rectangular grid in its centre. 3700-3500 BC. Oleksandr Polishchuk's collection.



Fig. 21. Trypillian bowl, 3800-3700 BC. The *Platar* Collection.



Fig. 22. A fragment of a Trypillian bowl with the image of grains. Maidanetske. 3700 BC. The NASU Institute of Archaeology collection.

And here we see more intricate combinations of rectangular grid fragments (Fig. 23 to 27).



Fig. 23. Schematic image on a fragment of a ritual Trypillian pot from Maidanetske proto-city. ZTK-47843. 3800-3700 BC. The *Trypillian Culture* State Historical and Cultural Reserve collection.



Fig. 24. Schematic image on a ritual Trypillian pot from Talianki site. ZTK-49327. 3900 BC. The *Trypillian Culture* State Historical and Cultural Reserve collection.



Fig. 25 to 26. Schematic images on fragments of ritual Trypillian pots from Maidanetske proto-city. 3700 BC. The 'Trypillian Culture' State Historical and Cultural Reserve collection.



Fig. 27. Schematic image on a ritual Trypillian pot. 3500-3300 BC. The Borshchiv Local History Museum.

Here we actually see a face of a fantastic mustached creature, with rectangular grids both sides of it. Maybe it is a portrait of the fruitfulness god we've been looking for? Just look at these drawings with holes for his eyes (Fig. 28 to 29).

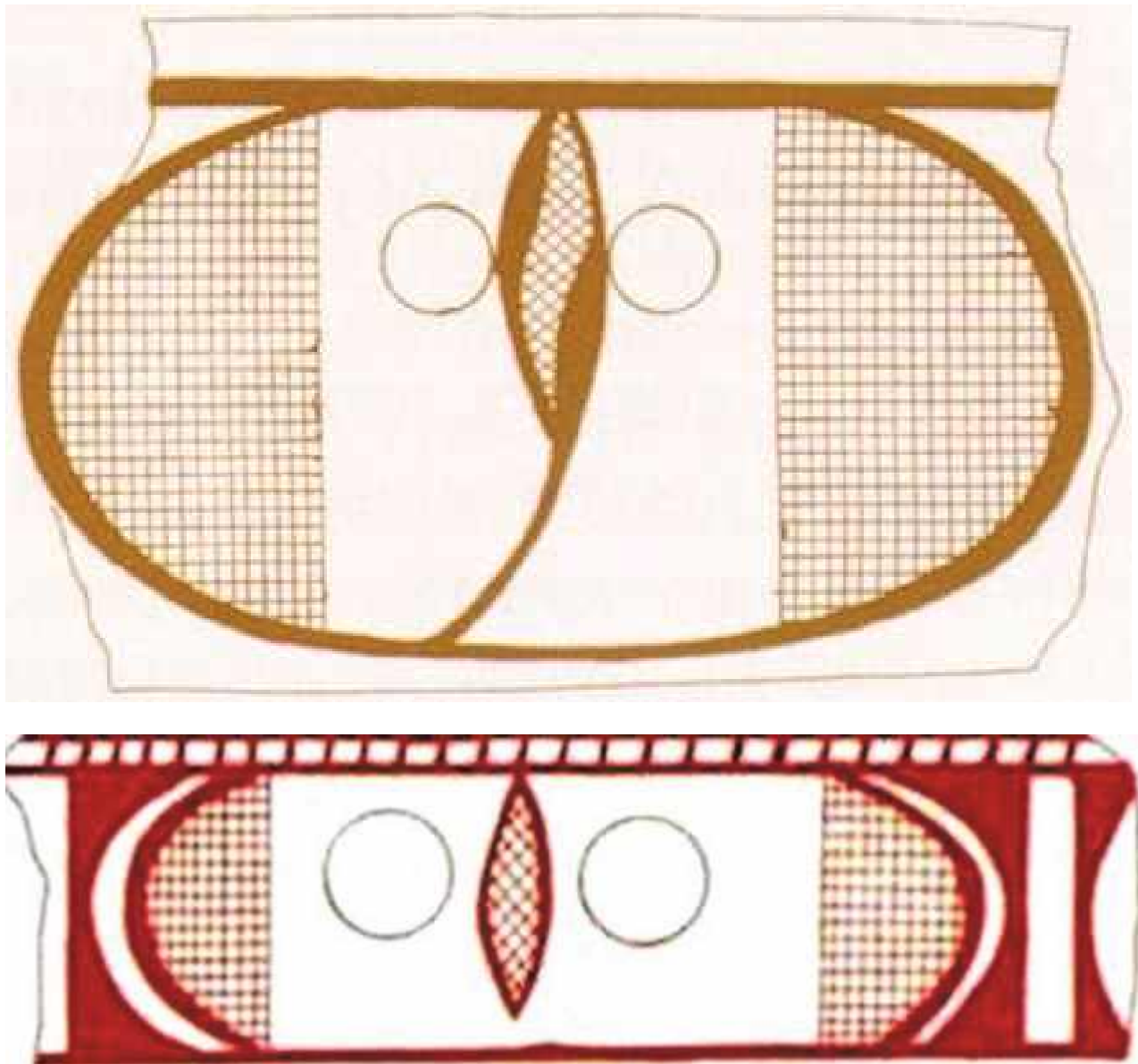


Fig. 28 and 29. Drawings on ritual Trypillian pots. Maidanetske. 3700 BC. The NASU Institute of Archaeology collection.

As we see, the nose of this creature looks like a wheat ear, and his wide-set ears, as seen on pictures 30-31, are probably good for hearing distant rumbling of thunder signaling a long-awaited rain.

Many other ritual pots are adorned with vertical rectangular grids (Fig. 30 to 32).



Fig. 30. Trypillian beaker. Maidanetske. 3700 BC. The NASU Institute of Archaeology collection.



Fig. 31 and 32. Trypillian beakers from the Talianki site. ZTK-10883 (left) and ZTK-10878 (right). 3900 BC. The *Trypillian Culture* State Historical and Cultural Reserve collection.

Maybe these vertical rectangular grids picture jets of a life-giving rain. Sometimes the rain is painted in a more realistic way, simply as straight vertical lines (Fig. 33 to 35).



Fig. 33. Trypillian beaker. 3700 BC. The *Platar* Collection.



Fig. 34. Trypillian bowl. 3600 BC. The *Platar* Collection.



Fig. 35. Trypillian pot. 3600 BC. Oleksandr Polishchuk's collection.

In western parts of the Cucuteni-Trypillia archaeological culture, in the territory of modern Romania and Moldova, a rectangular grid was no less popular (Fig. 36 to 38).



Fig. 36. Cucuteni beaker, 4100-4000 BC. History Museums in Botoșani, Romania.



Fig. 37. Cucuteni beaker, 4000 BC. History Museums in Botoșani, Romania.



Fig. 38. Cucuteni beaker, 4000-3900 BC. History Museums in Botoșani, Romania.

This symbol was also much respected in the West of Europe (Fig. 39 and 40).



Fig. 39 and 40. Pots with rectangular grid symbols. 6500-4500 BC, Museum of Ancient History, Valencia (left). Archaeological Museum, Cordoba (right). Spain.

On pictures 23 and 24, 30 and 35, 39 and 40 we see vertical grids and lines which, probably, symbolize rain. Cross-like combinations of rectangular grids on bottom parts of beakers from pictures 38 and 39 are even more interesting.

Compositions of rectangular grids and straight lines symbolizing rain can be called a hymn praising the fruitfulness god. But at the same time they are ominous signs heralding fall of the Europe's first city civilization. Inhabitants of Cucuteni-Trypillia cities used to cut off nearby forests, exhaust soils and pollute water. So at a certain moment they had to burn down their cities, complete with ritual pottery, household tools and urn-pots containing ashes of their dead, and to move elsewhere. And this new place could have been anywhere. The forest-steppe between the rivers Dniester and Dnieper was one of the most densely populated regions on the planet back in those. Incidentally, when by 3,500 BC Cucuteni-Trypillia proto-cities had disappeared, very similar Sumerian city-states emerged in Mesopotamia in 4,000-3,500 BC, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. In view of that many researchers from different European countries (Nicolae Vlassa, Adam Falkenstein, Anatoliy Kifishin, Yuri Shilov) ¹¹ believe that those cities were actually founded by former dwellers of Cucuteni-Trypillia proto-cities.

Yet more than a half-century ago another researcher, Marija Gimbutas, claimed that numerous symbols on Neolithic pottery of the Northwest Black Sea coastal region are, in fact, an "Old European Script". She also conjectured that in 3,200-2,800 BC Mediterranean was peopled by former dwellers that had migrated from this particular region¹⁸. They were forced to move by climatic changes, since starting from around 3,500 BC the climate was becoming increasingly arid: this was the so-called 'Subboreal' climate. As a result, the borders of the forest-steppe area

of the Northern Black Sea coastal region moved more than 100 km to the south, and a former steppe land turned into a semi-desert.

The clay rattle toy shown in picture 42 is a tragic symbol of these climatic changes. It has a form of a pregnant woman, has five little stones inside it, and is adorned with a rectangular grid¹⁸ (Fig. 41).

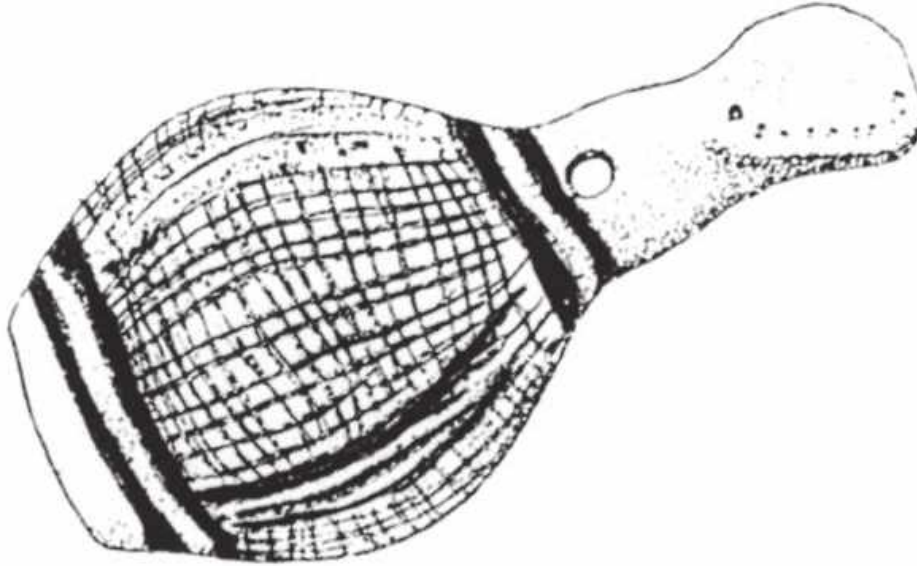


Fig. 41. Trypillian rattle toy. The Ofatinți burial ground. 3200-2900 BC. Moldova.

It was found in a burial chamber, next to a child's skeleton. Maybe these rattlers were used by last Trypillians in a vain effort to attract attention of the fruitfulness god, who was refusing to send a long-awaited rain to the arid dry-cracked earth. So eventually these last Trypillians became assimilated with nomadic cattle-herders, and transmitted their symbols to them¹⁹ (Fig. 42).

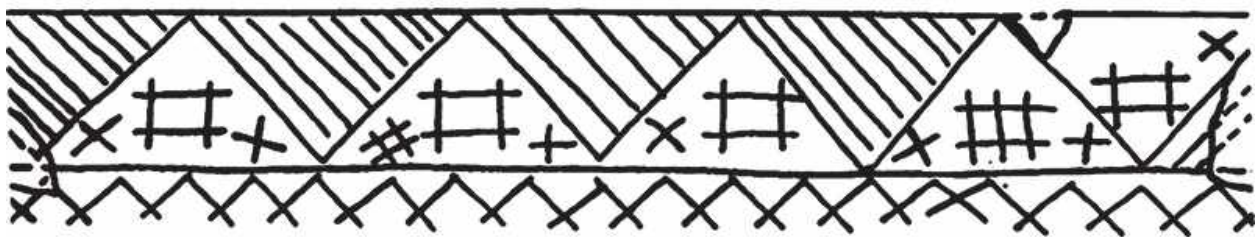


Fig. 42. Drawing of an ornament from a pot from the Srubnaya archaeological culture. 1700-1600 BC.

In pre-Sumerian times in Mesopotamia and Elam a rectangular grid symbol was not in much use. Its introduction to pottery of Sumer and neighboring cultures as a symbol meaning 'grass' or, in a broader sense, 'fruitfulness', might be considered a testimony proving that dwellers of former Cucuteni-Trypillia proto-cities took part in foundation Sumerian city-states. We'll try to look into it in the next chapter.

The Fourth Tale: Enki, the Wisest of the Gods

According to the Sumerian mythology, Enki is a brother and the closest companion to Enlil, the chief deity of the Sumerian pantheon. Enki is considered to be the wisest of gods. He can hear anything happening in the Universe, or travel to any corner on the Earth in his mind. He lives in a great abyss called 'abzu', and nobody, except him, knows how deep it is. He irrigates the Earth with waters from the groundwater ocean of fresh water at the bottom of his abyss. When he gets closer to heaven, waters accumulate in heavenly pools and then pour down as pouring rains. When he gets closer to the Earth disc, river sources overflow with fresh cool water filling dry riverbeds; reeds, grasses and trees guzzle up this water and then the entire world revives and starts to breathe deeply.

Enki in his primal form is associated with sperm and amniotic fluid. That's why on many Sumerian cylinder seals Enki is depicted with a flowing stream around him^s, often full of fish (Fig. 43 to 48).





Enki & Isimud / Usmu





Fig. 43 to 48. Prints from Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian cylinder seals showing Enki seated on his throne, 3000-1800 BC.

The only common characteristic between all these images is that Sumerian fruitfulness god Enki rules the world sitting on his throne in the form of our familiar rectangular grid. Maybe this was the source of the tradition to depict a fertile woman's loin as a triangle with a rectangular grid on it (Fig. 49 to 51).



Fig. 49. Female figurine from Yemen, 4000-2000 BC. From a private collection.



Fig. 50 and 51. Female figurines from Egypt, 4000 BC. (left) and Yemen, 4000-2000 BC (right). From a private collection. Hettite metal casting mold. 1700-1300 BC. Paris. Kurt Bittel and Erdinç Bakla archive (right).



Fig. 52. Disc-shaped figurine showing a family couple and a child, Central Western Anatolia, Turkey. 3000-2500 BC.

It's hardly surprising that in times prior to cuneiform Sumerian scribes had been writing the 'grass' pictogram, meaning also 'fruitfulness' in a broader sense, using nothing else but our familiar rectangular grid⁹ (Fig. 54).

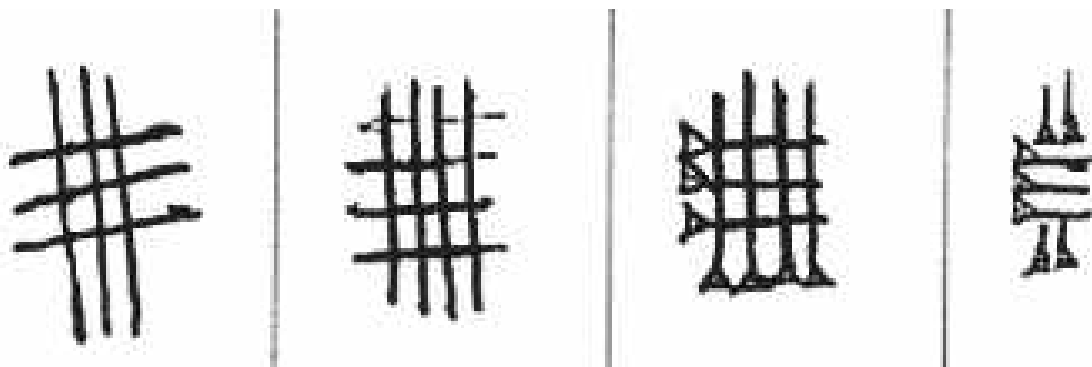


Fig. 54. Steps of transformation of the 'u2' (grass) word from a pictogram (two symbols on the left) into a cuneiform (two symbols on the right) according to the *Šumerisches Lexikon* by Anton Deimel⁹ (SL 593).

Here we see this pictogram on a cylinder stamp print¹⁰ (Fig. 54 to 55).



Fig. 54 and 55. Green chlorite cylinder stamp (left) and its print on a clay tablet (right). The Second Sumerian Dynasty. C. 2700-2500 BC. A private collection.

In the lower part of the tablet we see grazing donkeys (one donkey is touching a ‘grass’ pictogram with its muzzle). There were altogether 70 of these donkeys. And we know that because above the donkeys on the print we see seven globules denoting a number ‘ten’ each. Such numerical system, involving clay globules meaning ‘ten’ and little cones meaning ‘one’, was very popular in Cucuteni-Trypillia culture^{1,11}. Both to the left and to the right of the herd we see the print of the same shepherd. And we've already seen similar scenes with pasturing cattle on images from different parts of Europe (Fig. 5 and 6).



Fig. 6 and 7. Fragments of images picturing herbivorous animals and rectangular grids. Lascaux Cave. 18000-15000 BC. France.

From Mesopotamia the ‘grass/fruitfulness’ pictogram have travelled to the Indus Valley and other neighboring lands. And again we see familiar scenes and motives on local archaeological findings (Fig. 56 to 63).



Fig. 56. A bowl. Tepe Hezar. Iran. 3800 BC. Louvre.



Fig. 57 and 58. A square seal prints. Source: Harappa.com. Harappan civilization, 2600-1900 BC (left). Mohenjo-daro. 2200 BC National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi (right).



Fig. 59. A female clay figurine, Harappan Civilization, 3300-2800 BC. Source: Harappa.com.



Fig. 60. A print of a round seal with agricultural theme from Failaka Island. Dilmun civilization. 2000-1000 BC.



Fig. 61. Bowl from El Amrah 4000 BC. Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford. England.

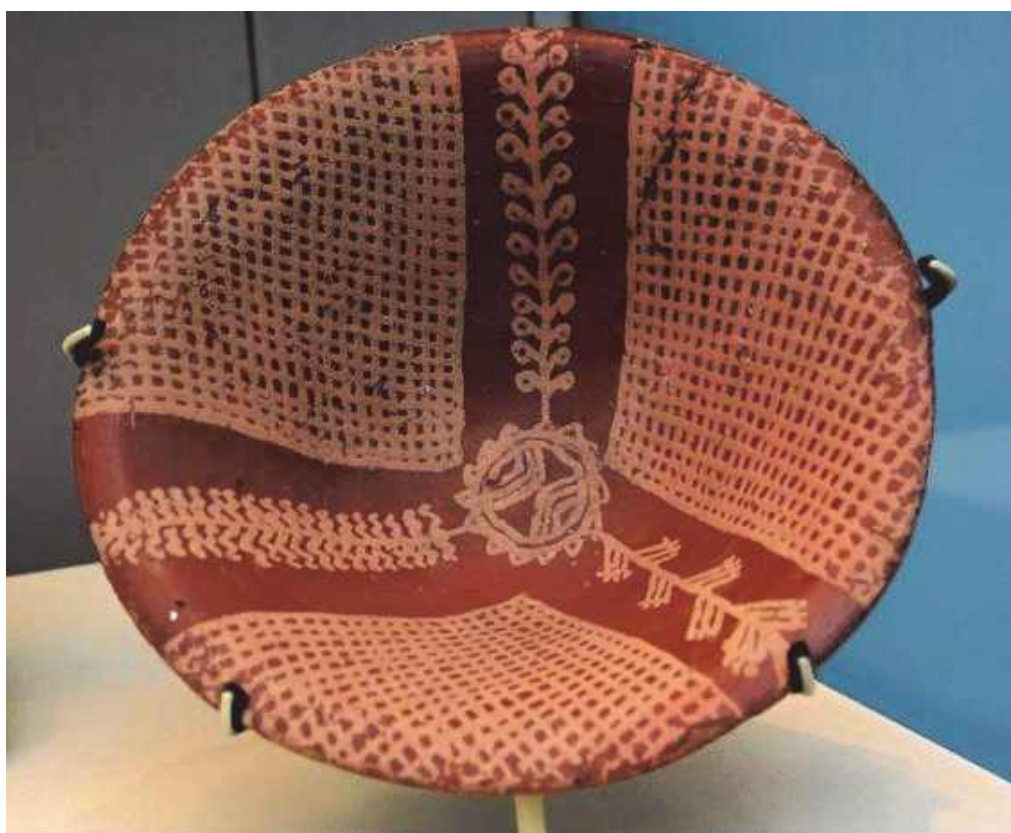


Fig. 62. Conical pottery Nagada II. Egypt. 3650-3300 BC. The British Museum.



Fig. 63. A bowl from Tepe Sialk, Iran. 1000 BC. Louvre.

We've already seen the similar cross-like combination of rectangular grids on pictures 37 and 38.



Fig. 37 and 38. Cucuteni beakers, 4000-3900 BC. History Museums in Botoșani, Romania.

For ancient Sumerians a cross meant “a ruler” (Fig. 64).

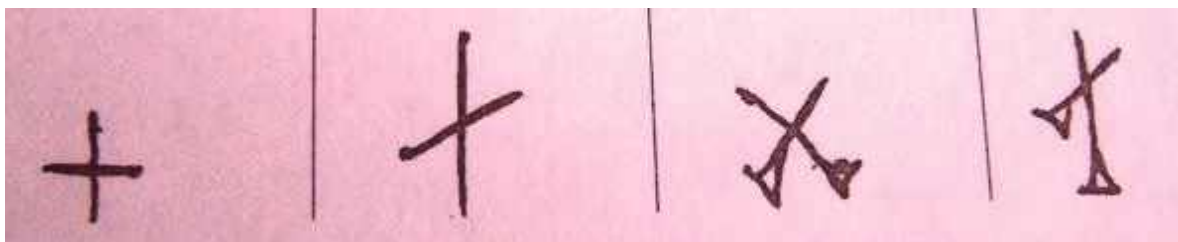


Fig. 64. The stages of transition of the word «pab» (ruler, father) from a pictogram (two symbols on the left) into cuneiform (two symbols on the right), according to the *Šumerisches Lexikon* by Anton Deimel⁹ [SL 101].

It had exactly the same meaning for Trypillians, the founders of ancient Sumerian city-states. They also used to mark their leaders with crosses¹ (Fig. 65).

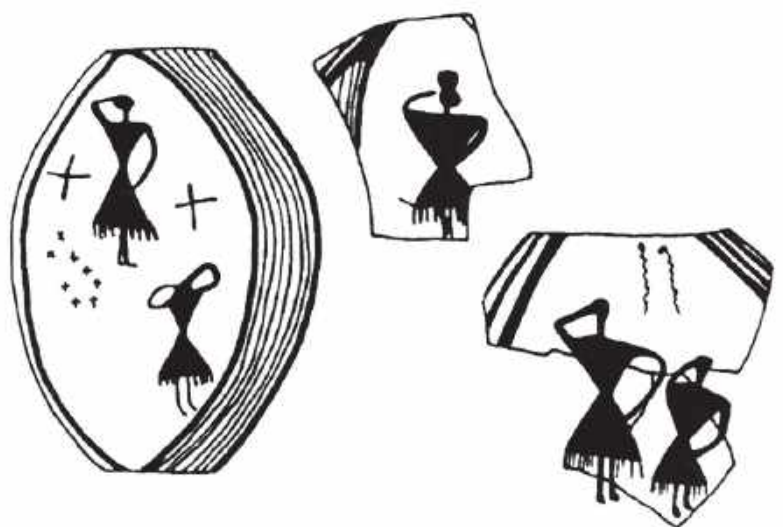


Fig. 65. Drawings of human figures on fragments of Trypillia pottery from various Ukrainian museums. 4000-3500 BC.

So, rectangular grids with crosses on pictures 37, 38 and 63 reflect the ages-old truth: **fruitfulness is a ruler of everything**.

Migrants from the Northwest Black Sea coastal region had learned from their former mistakes and upon coming to their new homeland they built a huge irrigational system, planted tens of thousands of date palms, countless fruit gardens and vineyards. This irrigational system continued to function diligently for another thousand years, even after disappearance of both Sumerians and their cities, and created diverse surrounding. Sumerians managed to create their own comfortable and sustainable niche in the planet's habitat. And they made it because they knew that a horrible retribution from gods awaits for those who fail to preserve nature and who ruin their environment. Actually that's what the Sumerians Great Deluge myth, borrowed later by Hebrew priests, is about. The Sumerian version of this myth tells about wise god Enki (*En*, or Akkadian *Ea*), who, in spite of the direct prohibition from Enlil, secretly warns Ziusudra (Biblical Noah) about future flood and tells him to build a huge boat (ark) and to fill it with two of every kind of animal, bird, and creature. Thus we can infer that for Sumerian priests the main priority was to

preserve every single thing living on Earth and Ziusudra (Ut-napištim of Assyrian myths), the best and the most worthy of men (innocent of sin), was charged with the task.

One of the most moving versions of this myth was found at the excavation of the famous Ashurbanipal Library in Nineveh. Its text was first publicized in 1872 by George Smith, one of the British Museum's trustees, who read it out before the Society of Biblical Archaeology: *All that was bright then turned into darkness. One man could not discern another, nor could people be recognized amid the destruction. Even the gods took fright at the Deluge, they left and went up to the heaven of Anu, lying like dogs curled up in the open. The goddess cried out like a woman in childbirth, Belet-ili (Ishtar) wailed, whose voice is so sweet: "The olden times have turned to clay, because I spoke evil in the gods' assembly. How could I speak evil in the gods' assembly, and declare a war to destroy my people? It is I who give birth, these people are mine. And now, like the spawn of fish, they fill the ocean". The Anunnaki gods (the great gods of heaven and of hell) were weeping with her, wet-faced with sorrow, they were weeping with her, their lips were parched and stricken with fever, they covered their mouths.*

For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts. When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled; I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay, and green fields turned into mud. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top; I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low, I sat down and I wept, the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water. I looked for land in vain, but fourteen leagues distant there rose an island... (Fig. 66).



Fig. 66. The tablet from the Nineveh excavation with the Song #11 of the Gilgamesh epic describing the Deluge. The British Museum.

But the original version of this myth was actually carved on sand-rock walls of the Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) caves sanctuary (Fig. 67).

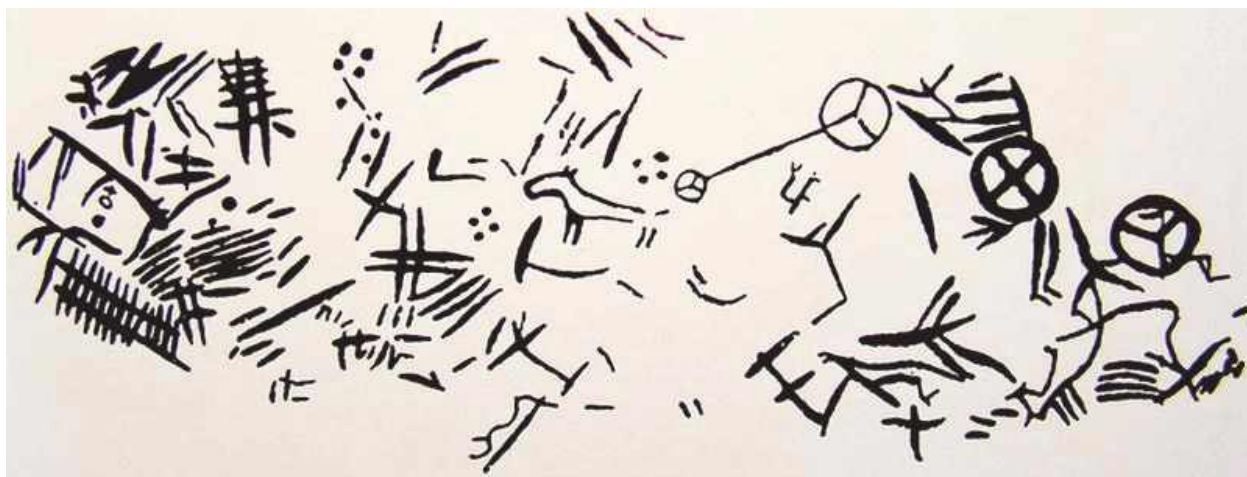


Fig. 67. Table № 27 with symbols (according to B. Mikhaylov). 6000-4000 BC. The Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) Historical Reserve, Ukraine.

Russian sumerologist Anatoliy Kifishin deciphered these inscriptions in the following way: *“In the fields of lillu there is a Great Wing standing – Nindara is sentenced to go a long way by waters pouring into the tomb, the Bird told Namtar to bind the dead, to bind those sentenced by water. As it was said by Aratta’s Utugs, Lamar in the 80th year condemns the Kings. Dumuzi appointed 40 donkeys and 40 first Chariots for the water judgement. The first chariots, according to the Sea Abyss knowledge, are doomed to carry the dead”*¹¹.

As we see, the text tells about a Trial by water and its numerous victims¹². According to the hypothesis of well-known scientists William Ryan and Walter Pitman, the afore-said catastrophic deluge happened circa 5460 BC, when waters of the Mediterranean Sea broke through a collapsed bedrock barrier at Bosphorus and surged in the freshwater lake 100 meters below. This is how the Black Sea of today emerged²². This event also created another sea – the shallow-water Azov Sea, waters of which have approached The Kamyana Mohyla (Stone Grave) sanctuary really close. Many scientists believe that that ancient Black Sea disaster was the proverbial Biblical Deluge. In 2003, William Ryan and Walter Pitman adjusted the time of the flood dating it back to 6800s BC²⁶.

In the next story we’ll try to find our rectangular grid at archaeological findings from the Mediterranean region, and to prove Marija Gimbutas’s hypothesis suggesting migrations of people from the Cucuteni-Trypillia Archaeological Culture region to the Mediterranean region.

The Fifth Tale: Fruitfulness Symbol in the Mediterranean

Museums and private collections around the world store thousands of archaeological objects dating back to II-I millennia BC, ornamented with many different kinds of the rectangular grids. Let's start with the Cretan Fruitfulness Goddess (Fig. 68).



Fig. 68. The Goddess of Myrtos. Crete. 2000 BC. Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos.

This figurine looks very much like the Cucuteni-Trypillia's rattle toy impersonating a pregnant woman, from picture 42. Besides, there's also a rectangular grid triangle symbolizing woman's loin, similar to many figurines of fruitfulness goddesses from Egypt, Yemen or Turkey, seen on pictures 51 to 54.

Numerous rectangular grids adorn the following ritual ceramic objects (Fig. 69).



Fig. 69. Fragment of a bowl. Crete. 1375-1300 BC. The British Museum.

And these three Cretan priests are engaged in a ritual in front of a fruitfulness deity altar¹⁰ (Fig. 70).



Fig. 70. An onyx seal. Knossos. Crete. 1500 BC. University of Cologne Archaeological Institute.

This altar resembles strikingly the rectangular grid throne of the Sumerian fruitfulness god Enki from the pictures 43 to 48.

Cyprus pottery is no less interesting. Here we see rectangular grids (Fig. 71).

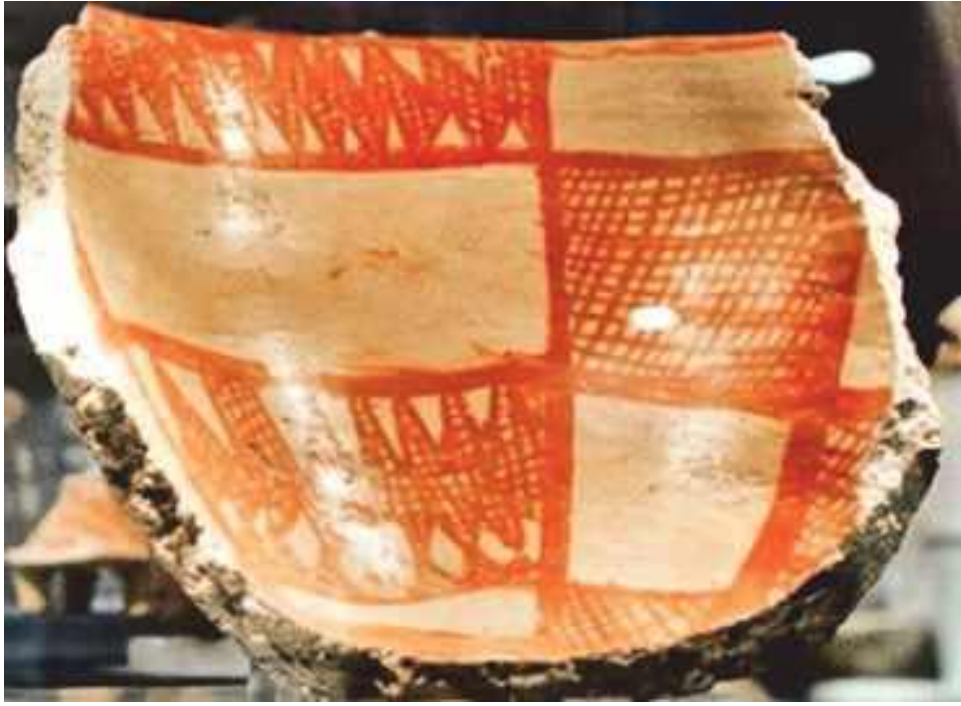


Fig. 71. A pot fragment. 2000-1700 BC. Cyprus Archaeological Museum, Nicosia.

And here are compositions made of vertical rectangular grids (Fig. 72 to 75).



Fig. 72 and 73. Jug. Cyprus, 1600-1200. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York (left). The British Museum (right).



Fig. 74. Jug. Cyprus, 1600-1150 BC. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York.



Fig. 75. Bowl. Cyprus, 1600-1200 BC. The British Museum.

These ornaments, composed of rows of rectangular grids, resemble very much the Trypillian ones in pictures 30 to 32, which, supposedly, depicted rain (Fig. 31 to 33).



Fig. 30. Trypillian vase. Maidanetske. 3600 BC. The NASU Institute of Archaeology collection.



Fig. 31 and 32. Trypillian vases from Talianki site. ZTK-10883 (left) and ZTK-10878 (right). From the 'Trypillian Culture' State Historical and Cultural Reserve.

The only difference is that Trypillian ceramics feature rectangular grids on upper parts of pots, whereas Cypriot ceramics – on their lower sides.

Cypriot ceramics sometimes also feature multiple rectangular grids in cross-like compositions (Fig. 76 to 78).



Fig. 76 and 77. Amphore. Cyprus. Cypro-archaic I, circa 750-600 BC. The Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens (left). Terracotta wall bracket. Cyprus 1050–950 BC. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York (right).



Fig. 78. Fragment of an amphora from Larnaca. 950-750 BC. Cyprus. The British Museum.

Another version of this composition can be seen on these three ritual jars from Miletus Island. Now they are exhibited in Louvre. The one below is very well preserved (Fig. 79).



Fig. 79. The enlarged fragment clay Rhodian oinochoe from Miletus Island. 610-600 BC. Louvre.

There are eight grid-like crosses, combined as a joint symbol, around grazing wild goats. All variations of this combined pictogram from the pictures 37-38, 63, 76-78 are visual reflections of the ages-old truth: **fruitfulness is a ruler of everything on Earth**. However, the following centuries saw a considerable decline in use of rectangular grid and grid-like cross symbols on pottery of Mediterranean, and for a reason.

We see the same symbols on pottery from other islands and mainland Greece (Fig. 80 and 81).



Fig. 80. A boeotian bowl c. 560-540 BC. Source: christies.com



Fig. 81. Griffin Jug. Cycladic, 675-650 BC. The British Museum.

In picture 80, the top of the bowl is decorated with rectangular grids square in form, and below the birds rest their beaks on the vertical grids symbolising rain (i.e. drinking water).

In picture 81, horses graze next to the rectangular grids. We have already seen similar images in pictures 6 to 11, 55, 57, 58, 61 and 63.

Another simplified but still very popular type of rectangular grid adorns this Roman bronze brooch (Fig. 82).



Fig. 82. Roman bronze brooch with traditional ornament. 100-300 AD. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York.

The following centuries saw a considerable decrease in representation of symbols of a rectangular grid and a cross-like grid on ceramics of Mediterranean countries and there were good reasons for this. At the end of II Millennium BC most parts of Western Eurasia faced an unprecedented drought. It brought one of the

largest migrations in human history and resulted in collapse of the majority of main civilizations of those times. In the Mediterranean region that mass migration was known as “*the Invasions of the Sea Peoples*”. Here’s how this event is recorded on the walls of the Medinet Habu Ramesses III mortuary temple: “*No land could stand before their arms, from Hatti, Qode, Carchemish (Karkamish), Arzawa and Alashiya on, being cut off at the time. A camp was set up in one place in Amurru. They desolated its people, and their land was like that which has never come into being...*” Some historians would later call these events “*the World War Zero*”.

By that time all inhabitable lands of the Mediterranean had been already densely populated, so barbaric newcomers had either to eliminate or to drive away local population. All these events were so bloody and disastrous that they were registered into mythology. Take, for example, the ancient Greek myth about Kronos, the Titan who used to swallow his own children to eliminate any possible competitors for his throne. And only his son Zeus survived, thanks to the trickery of his mother. Later Zeus put a special vile potion in his father's wine that caused Kronos to vomit up Zeus’s brothers and sisters. Then, after a long war, which took many years, the younger generation of gods imprisoned the Titans in Tartarus and came to reign on Mount Olympus.

That was actually a beginning of the era of cruel male heroes whose great deeds in form of killings are recorded on antique pottery or friezes of ancient Greek temples. This era is still on-going. Its dominant characteristics are masculine leadership (often quite irresponsible) and egotism, as in *Iliad*, *Odyssey* or *Aeneid*, where it’s masqueraded as gods’ will.

Thus, the formal reason that started the devastating Trojan War, which lasted for many years, was the so-called “abduction of Helen”, when Paris, son of the Trojan king, with the assistance of Aphrodite, managed to persuade Helen, wife of the Greek king Menelaus, to elope with him to Troy. She also took king’s slaves and treasure along. Much insulted Menelaus, with help of his brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, raised a huge army, and Helen’s former suitors, Odyssey being one of them, joined the forces.

Directors of modern Hollywood blockbusters have made this classic storyline much simpler and much more modern. Superman heroes of today don’t kill each other because of just some woman. Now they save the world from merciless dictators, or aliens, or terrorists.

The beginning of era of masculine heroes was marked by redistribution of responsibilities in the revamped pantheon of gods. One of Kronos’s daughters, Demeter, and not Zeus, who was the supreme deity of the pantheon, was now a patroness of fruitfulness, in place of her father. In Roman mythology this function was performed by Ceres (Fig. 83 and 84).



Fig. 83 and 84. Demeter, Roman copy of a Greek sculpture by Phidias (left). The goddess Ceres. 1st century CE. National Museum of Roman Art of Mérida (right).

A basket full of fruit, a sickle, a sheaf of grains, a pig and a cornucopia were now the main attributes of fruitfulness goddesses. Not a life-giving rain-grid of the Trypillian fruitfulness deity or fertile waters of the Sumerian god Enki. In spite of the outward grandeur of these two goddesses, both ancient Greeks and Romans seemed to rely more on their own resources. Thus Greeks were the first to attach an iron ploughshare to a plough. Whilst Romans mounted it on wheels and also attached a mouldboard, and thus created a modern type plough. Besides, they were famed for breeding cultivated crops, building thousands of viaducts, canals, warehouses and the extensive network of roads. All that guaranteed an interrupted flow of water, grains, wine and other supplies to the Empire's capital with its million inhabitants. So even if some part of the Empire should suffer from crop failure, crops could be transported to the capital from other regions.

Rome of those times was like a huge pump, pumping away most of the resources for its own use. So it's not surprising that this way of things didn't please

much people living on the Empire's periphery, in places like Judea in particular. And, consequently, this was the place where a new religion was born. Christianity confronted the oppression of cruel and greedy emperors from far-away Rome with mercy and justice of the almighty God's Son.

Constantine the Great was the first to grasp the new religion's potential to unite Empire's multiple peoples and tribes into a single unity and so he declared it the official state religion. Besides, it was him who in year 325, on the First Ecumenical ("worldwide") Council of Nicaea, suggested the cross symbol to be acknowledged as the main symbol of this new religion. This suggestion was approved unanimously. Because bishops from Empire's European provinces came from places where they would grow knowing since childhood that the cross symbol has always denoted "a **ruler**", someone in charge, on either Earth or in Heaven, and there's only one small step from paying homage to a ruler to worshipping the Saviour.

Christianity (and later Islam) declared saving souls of believers as its main mission. Consequently a person's earthly life suddenly became a short fleeting moment if compared to the eternity of the afterlife existence in Heaven. So it's not surprising that there's not a single word about the necessity to protect nature, or to at least cohabit with it in a non-aggressive way in the Biblical Ten Commandments. At the same time The Book of Genesis tells us that every living thing in existence was created by God, and so it's up to Him to decide whether it should live on Earth or not. In Chapter 9 of The Book of Genesis God bequeaths power over every living creature on the planet to Noah and his sons. In return He demands responsibility from all living creatures for shed blood, and also promises that "Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth". There'll be also a sign to attest this God's Covenant with men – a rainbow: *"Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth"* (9.9-16). These are probably the most poetic lines of the entire Old Testament.

It would seem that, after such drastic changes, the history of the rectangular grid as a symbol of fruitfulness should have come to an end in Europe and, above all, in the Mediterranean. Whether it is so or not, we will try to figure it out in the next part.

The Sixth Tale: The Grid as a Perpetual Symbol of Life

With the decline of antiquity both ceramics and fabrics generally become cruder. Here we see only simplified varieties of a rectangular grid (Fig. 85 to 90).



Fig. 85. Anglo-Saxon pot. Circa 500-700. Archaeopark West Stowe, England.



Fig. 86. Viking pot. Circa 600-650. Source: Wikimedia, arte_franca.



Fig. 87 and 88. Decorative jugs. France. Circa 1200-1300. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.



Fig. 89. Fabric samples from Tongeren, Belgium. 1276-1300 AD.



Fig. 90. Swiss embroidery from the Kloster collection. 14th c. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York.

Against that background of dull grayness, these two mugs below, crafted in the south of Spain by Moorish craftsmen, warm your soul with bright colors (Fig. 91 and 92).



Fig. 91 and 92. Pharmacy Jar. Valencia. Spain. 1400-1450 AD. Victoria and Albert Museum. London (left). The Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (right).

The Moors came to Spain from North Africa, the place originally populated by the Berbers, who have long been famous for their ceramics. This applies in particular to the Berbers of Morocco, Tunisia and Kabylia in Algeria (Fig. 93 to 98).



Fig. 93 to 95. Pots and a bowl with traditional Berber ornament. Kabylia Algeria.



Fig. 96. Pot with traditional Berber ornament. Morocco.

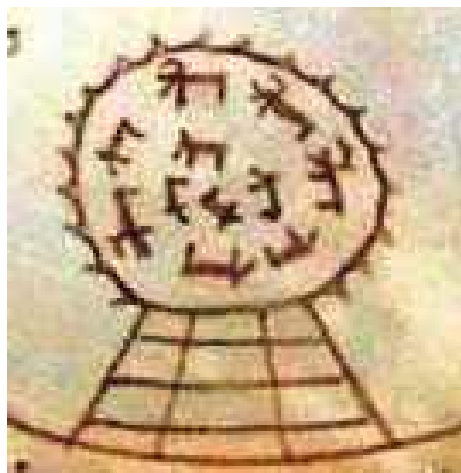
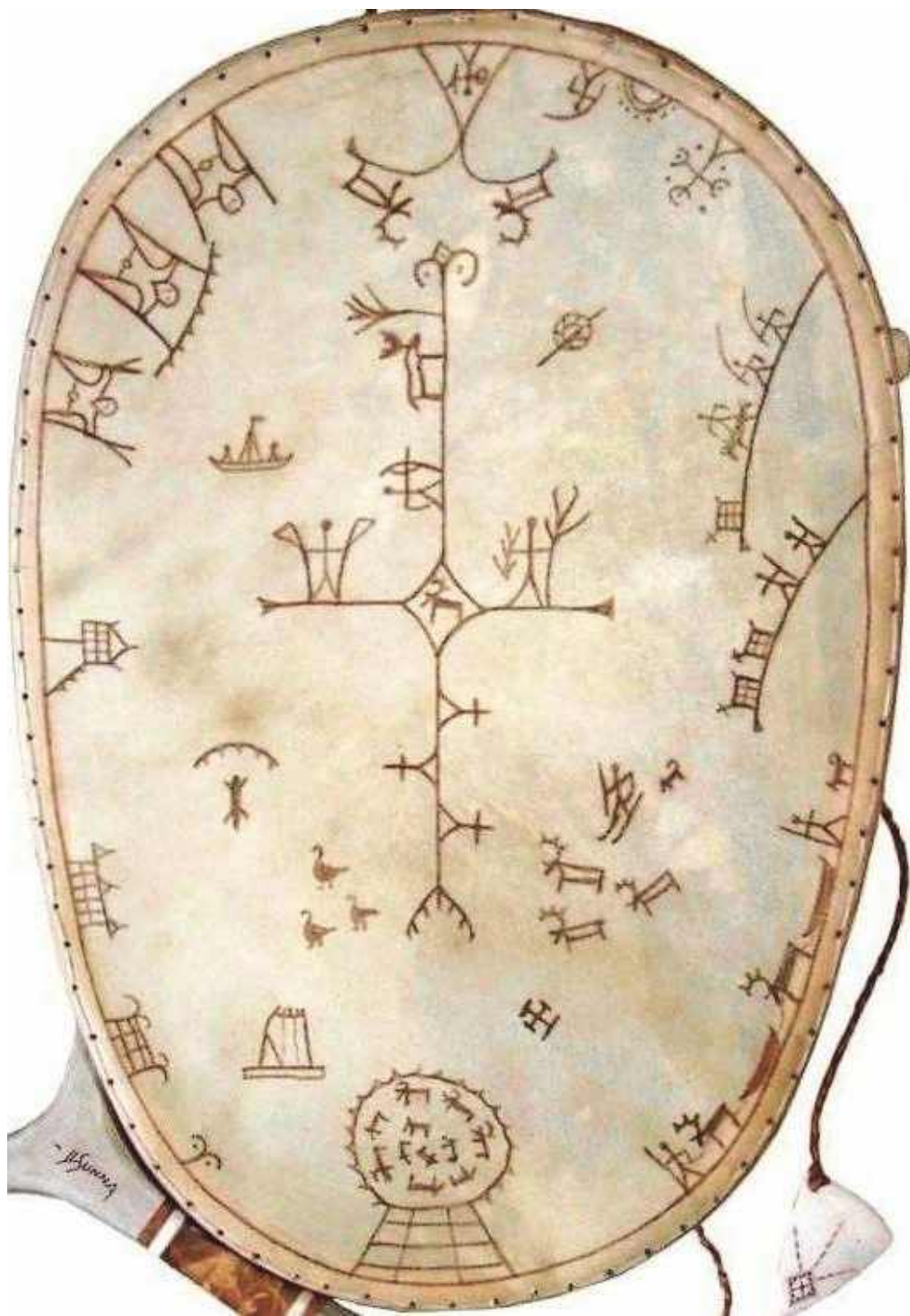


Fig. 97 and 98. Bowls and pot with traditional Berber ornament. Tunisia.

The bowls in pictures 95, 97 spot new growing plants right next to the rectangular grids, and here they are in picture 95, heated by the sun from the centre of the bowl. All these compositions are a real hymn to nature's fruitfulness. Pictures 96 to 97 show cross-shaped grids and 98 – vertical rectangular grid (presumably rain). As in the similar figures 37 to 38, 63 and 76 to 78, they are a visual reflection of the ancient truth that **the ruler of all living things on Earth is fruitfulness** and reflect a people's sincere effort to live in relative harmony with their environment.

The fact that these varieties of the fruitfulness symbol have survived among the Berbers to this day is explained by the isolation of these tribes. Back in ancient times, they were forced to move from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea deeper into the mainland, first by the Carthaginians and Romans, and later by the Arabs and French. Sami people from the north of Scandinavia - Lapland, nomadic reindeer herding shepherds, have been living for many millennia in even greater isolation. They are the only people in Europe who still have an archaic tradition of drawing grazing deer (next to a rectangular grid), which can be seen on tambourines of their shamanic priests (Fig. 99 to 108).







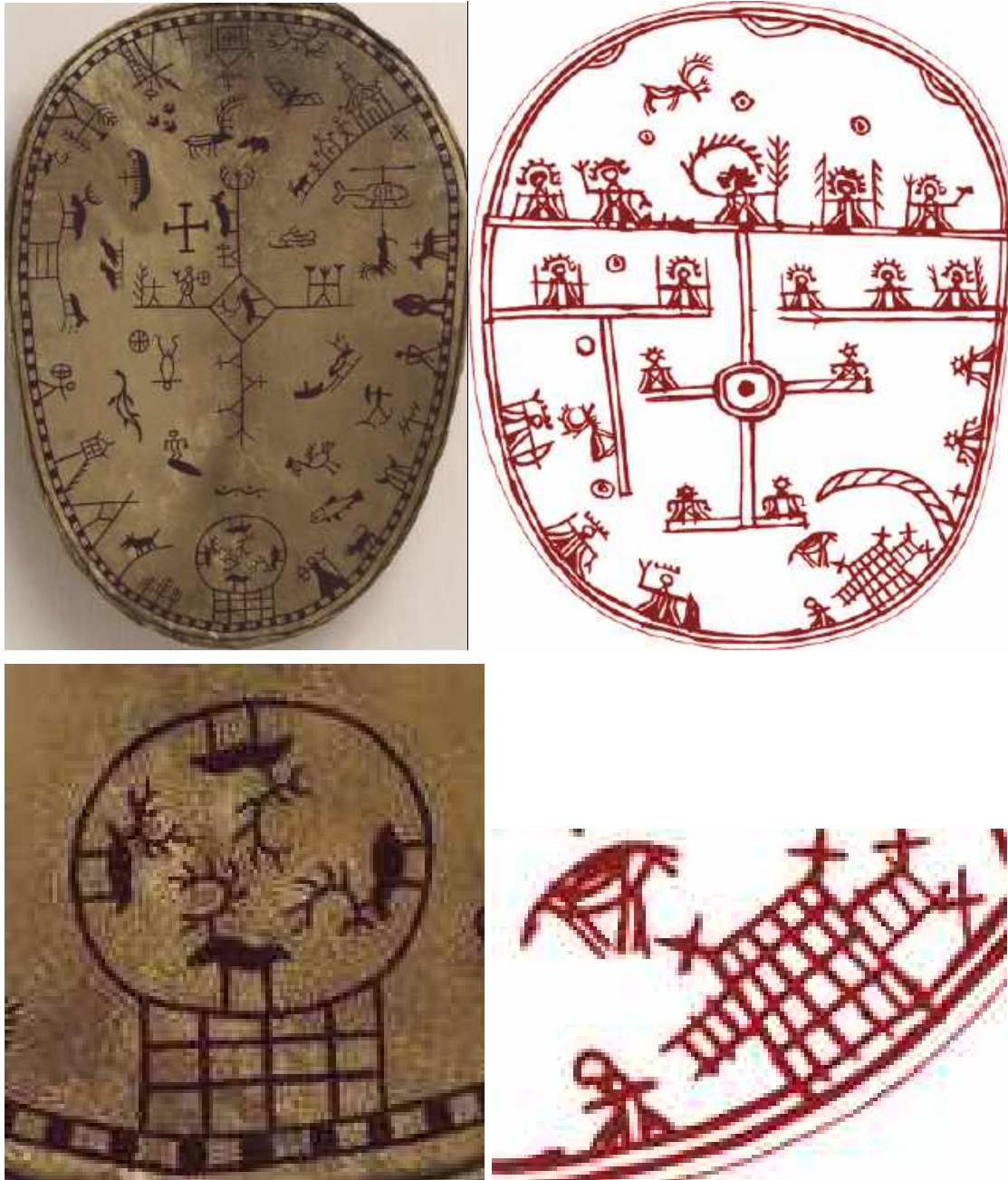


Fig. 99 to 108. Sami shaman drums of Lapland (Norway, Sweden and Finland) featuring traditional symbols and their enlarged fragments. Source: Wikipedia and <http://old.no/samidrum/>.

All of these drums depict the same old story where Sami shepherds and their reindeer keep travelling across the polar tundra in search of better pastures. We have already seen this everlasting story in pictures 6 to 11, 55, 57 to 58, 61, 63 and 81.

Here it's also worth to note the large number of crosses near the rectangular grids (i.e. pastures) and next to the figures of deer, in pictures 108 (above) and 109 to 110 (below).

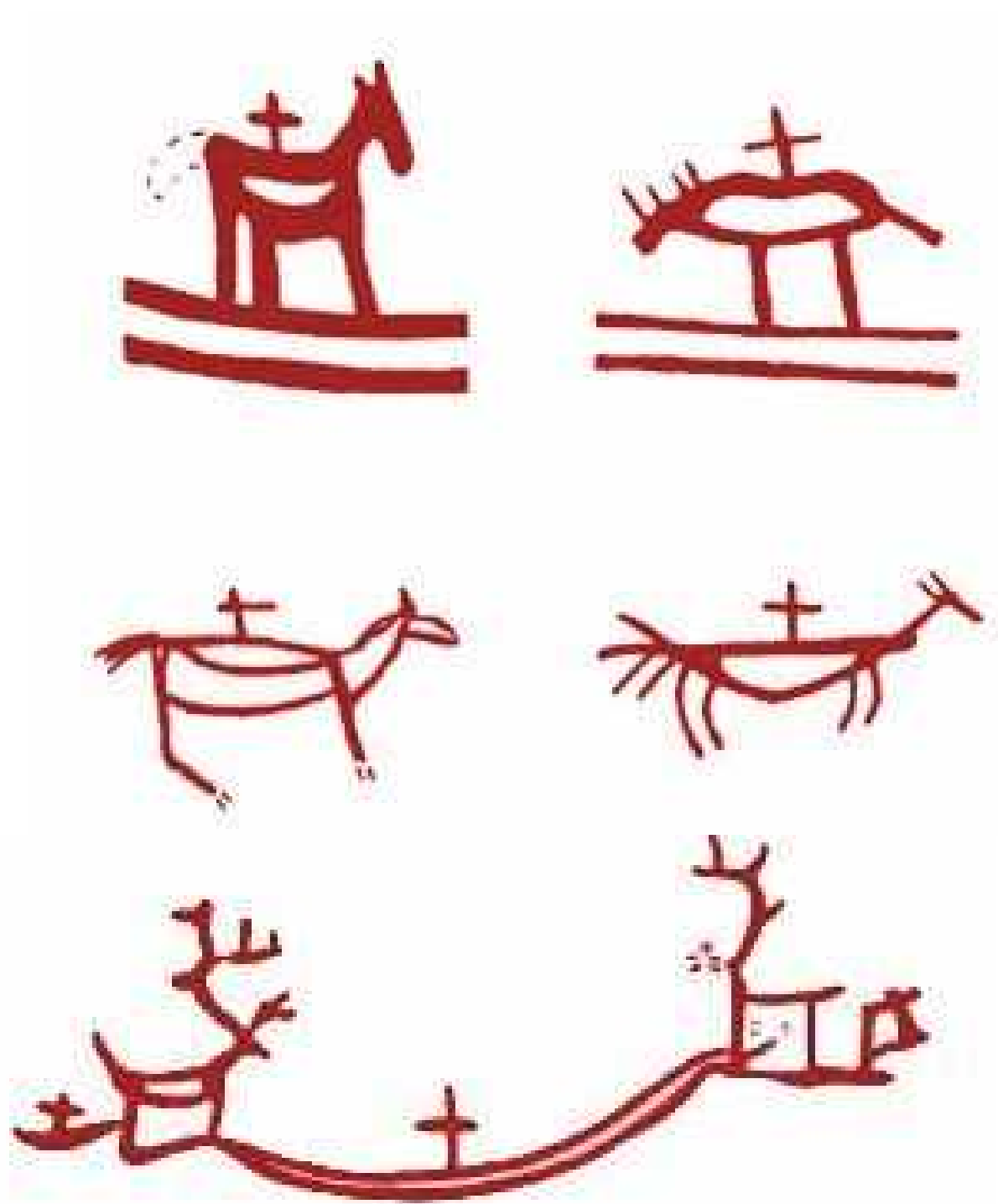


Fig. 109-110. Enlarged fragments of Sami shaman drums (Norway, Sweden and Finland) with images of the cross. Source: <http://old.no/samidrum/>.

The small crosses above the grid (meaning grass) remind us once again that fruitfulness is the ruler of all living things. The crosses next to the deer mean that deer are so important to the Sami that survival is impossible without them. It is worth noting that the tradition of marking animals that people hunt or raise with a cross has long been characteristic of northern peoples and North American Indians (Fig. 111 and 112).



Fig. 111 and 112. Ritual (dance) shields of Sioux Indians. 1850-1900s. USA.

Shamanic drums of Sami people also spot a kind of the rectangular grid (Fig. 113).

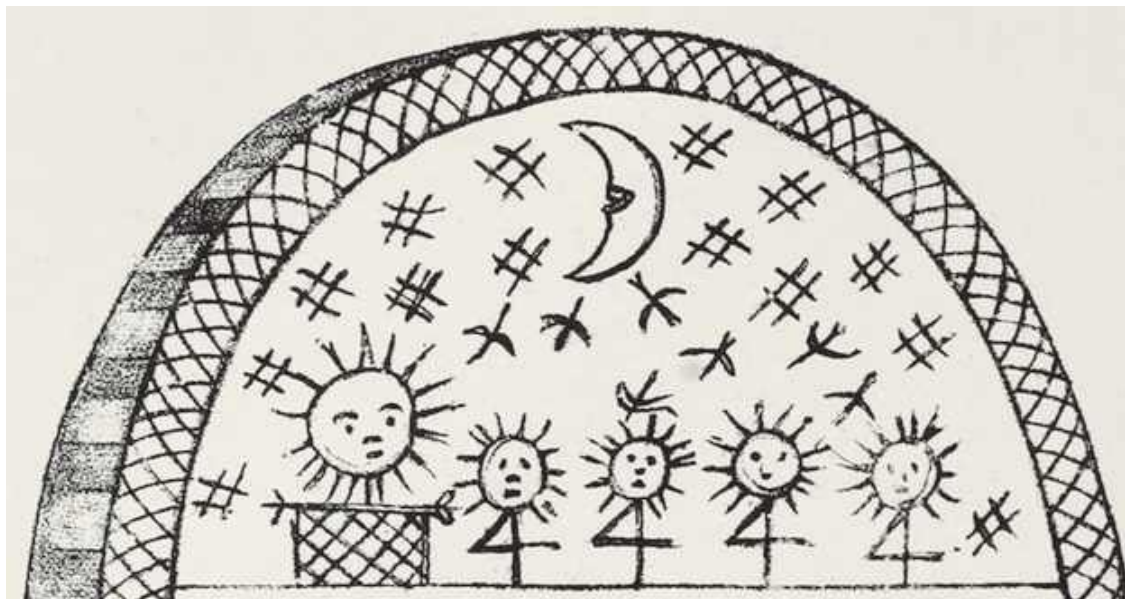


Fig. 113. Fragment sami shaman drums of Lapland featuring traditional symbols. 1900. Source: <http://old.no/samidrum/>.

This tambourine depicts the cycle of changing seasons (one large and four small suns and a crescent moon). Rectangular grids and birds symbolize the exuberance of life (fruitfulness, fertility) in the warm season. That's when the subpolar tundra is covered with thick grass which is home to countless birds that raise here their offspring. We have already seen this simplified version of the fertility symbol in pictures 14, 17, 36, 42, 82 and 90.

There are other peoples on the Europe's periphery who have also preserved some traces of honouring the fruitfulness god in the form of rectangular grid variations, placing them on folk clothes, embroideries, and household items (Fig. 113 to 126).



Fig. 114 and 115. A towel with a traditional ornament and its enlarged fragment. XIX century. Turkey.



Fig. 116. Fragment of traditional embroidery, circa 1700, Cyclades, Greece. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 117. A fragment of the traditional Novgorod rushnik (a ritual embroidered cloth). The Northern Rus Ensembles of the pre-Petrine Times Collection, reconstruction by Kolesnikov A.



Fig. 118 and 119. Traditional women's aprons. Wales, 1875 (left). Russia (right).



Fig. 120 and 121. Traditional women's aprons: Bulgaria (left), and Ukraine (right).



Fig. 122. A Ukrainian decorated Easter egg (Pysanka) in the National Museum of American History's collection.



Fig. 123 and 124. Estonian woman's ornament with traditional design and its enlarged fragment.



Fig. 125 and 126. A fragment of Turkish "tulu" carpet with traditional ornament (left). A fragment of a women's holiday shirt from Kargopol, Arkhangelsk region. The end of the XIX century. The Russian Historical Museum, Moscow (right).



Fig. 127 and 128. Traditional Bychkiv honey cake (gingerbread with honey) and its enlarged fragment. Transcarpathia. Ukraine.

Simple crafting women are, in fact, keepers of the tradition, but even they have long forgotten the primal meaning of this ancient fruitfulness symbol and refer to it as simply a “net”, a “grid” or a “grid-filled square”. At one time, this symbol was widespread on the territories of modern Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. But now let's try to find it in some other parts of Asia.

The Seventh Tale: The Rectangular Grid in Asia

Dozens of semi-nomadic peoples and ethnic groups, who traditionally graze their reindeer, horses, and sheep, live in Siberia and Central Asia. We can see very similar themes pictured on shamanic drums of Eastern Altai small ethnic groups, as on those of the Sami of Northern Scandinavia (Fig. 129).



Fig. 129. Teleut shamanic drum with traditional symbols. Eastern Altai. Russia.

The picture shows a very traditional for nomadic pastoralists scene of grazing horses. The pasture for them is depicted as row of plants and two rectangular grids, right under the sun floating across the sky. A similar scene can be seen on the shamanic drums of the Shors and Mongols in pictures 130 and 131.



Fig. 130. Shor shamanic drum. Kemerovo Region. Western Siberia. The beginning of the XX century. Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. St. Petersburg.



Fig. 131. Fragment of the Shor shamanic drum. Kemerovo Region. Western Siberia. Russia.



Fig. 132. Shaman with a drum. Mongolia. Beginning of the 20th century.

In 1949, two 2,500-year-old carpets, decorated with a rectangular grid, were found in the burial mound attributed to the Pazyryk archaeological culture (Fig. 133 and 134).



Fig. 133 and 134. Carpet (above) and its enlarged fragment (below) featuring traditional design. Pazyryk. Altai. 500 to 300 BC. The Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.

In addition to shamanic drums, a primitive grid decorated ceramics from East Asia from the Late Paleolithic-Mesolithic (Fig. 135-137).

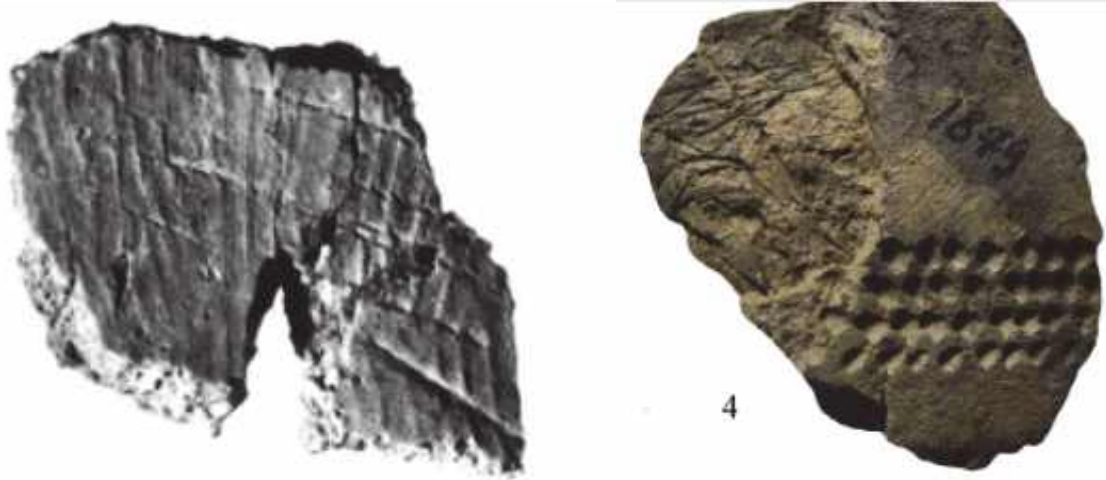


Fig. 135-136. Fragment of the world's oldest pottery from Xianrendong Cave, China, ca. 18000-17000 BC (left).²⁷ Fragment of pottery from the settlement of Altan, Amur Region, Russia, ca. 10000-9000 BC (right).²⁸

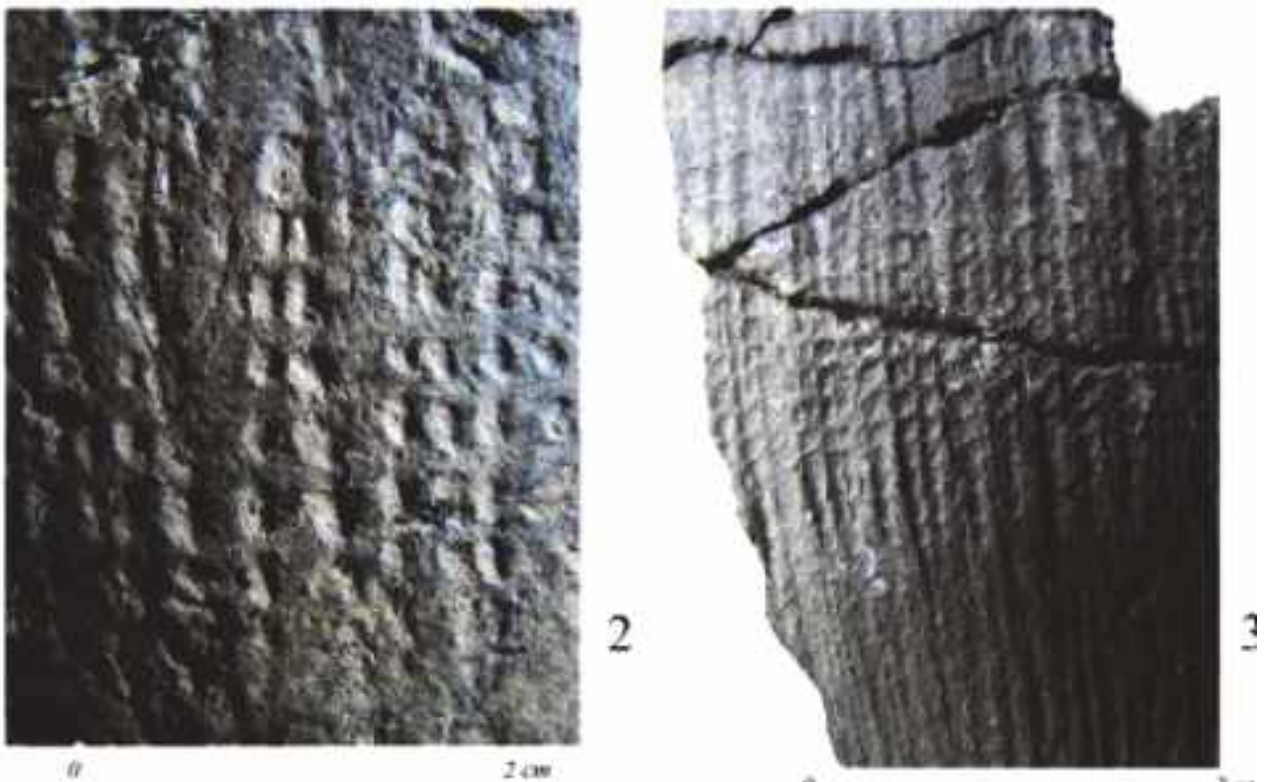


Fig. 137. Fragments of pots, presumably decorated with a rain symbol. Ust-Karenga settlement, Amur region, Russia, ca. 9000-8000 BC.²⁸

Chinese ceramics ranging from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age spot the same varieties of the rectangular grid as the ceramics of Kukuten-Trypillia, of ancient Mediterranean or North Africa. Here is a classic rectangular grid (Fig. 138 to 141).



Fig. 138 and 139. Painted Pottery. Majiayao Culture, ca. 3300–2050 BC. Museum Musée Guimet, Paris (above). The Metropolitan Museum of Art New, York (below).



Fig. 140. Painted Pottery. Majiayao Culture, ca. 3300–2300 BC. New.liveauctioneers (below).



Fig. 141. Pottery Jar. Han Dynasty Impressed 25-220 AD. Source: www.1stdibs.com/furniture/asian-art.

In Picture 140 we see plants sprouting between rectangular grids. Meaning that for Chinese farmers the rectangular grid also symbolized fertility.

The elongated rectangular grids in the pictures below probably represent rain and the raindrops in between them (Fig. 142 to 143).



Fig. 142 and 143. Painted Pottery. Majiayao Culture. 2200-2000 BC. Shanghai Museum (above). Banpo Complex, Yangshao Culture, 4500–3500 BC (below).

We have already seen similar motifs in pictures 30 to 33, 35, 39 to 40, 72 to 75, 80 and 87 to 88.

Chinese farmers also held in high esteem the cross-shaped grids (Fig. 144 to 145).



Fig. 144. Painted pottery. Majiayao Culture. John_Young_Museum_of_Art, Honolulu. 5000-2200 BC.



Fig. 145. Painted pottery. Majiayao Culture. 5000-2200 BC. Source: new.liveauctioneers.

We have already seen similar cross-shaped motifs in pictures 37 to 38, 63, 76 to 78 and 96 to 98. It seems that for Chinese farmers fertility and fruitfulness was also the ruler of all things living on Earth.

Even today the rectangular grid can still be seen on pottery of countries neighboring China. Japan in particular: here it decorates Jomon figurines and traditional oribe dishes (Fig. 146 to 149).



Fig. 146. Jomon female figurine. 1000-300 BC. Kiyotaki Cultural Center, Akita Prefecture.





Fig. 147 to 149. Ceramics for the Tea Ceremony (chawan). Japan.

The total similarity of the varieties of the rectangular grid on pottery of Kukuten-Trypillia, the Mediterranean and China in pre-Christian times reveals a great secret. It turns out that the ancient Europeans passed these symbols on to other Asian ethnic groups as an eternal truth. If this is so, then immigrants from Asia should have brought this symbol of fertility to North America as well. We will try to figure it out in the next section.

The Eighth Tale: The Rectangular Grid in Americas

North America

Today, it is generally accepted that first people came to North America from Northeast Asia between 24,000 and 13,000 years ago in small groups. They carried with them small flat stones with a priceless symbol-prayer scratched on them, in a form of a rectangular grid (Fig. 150).

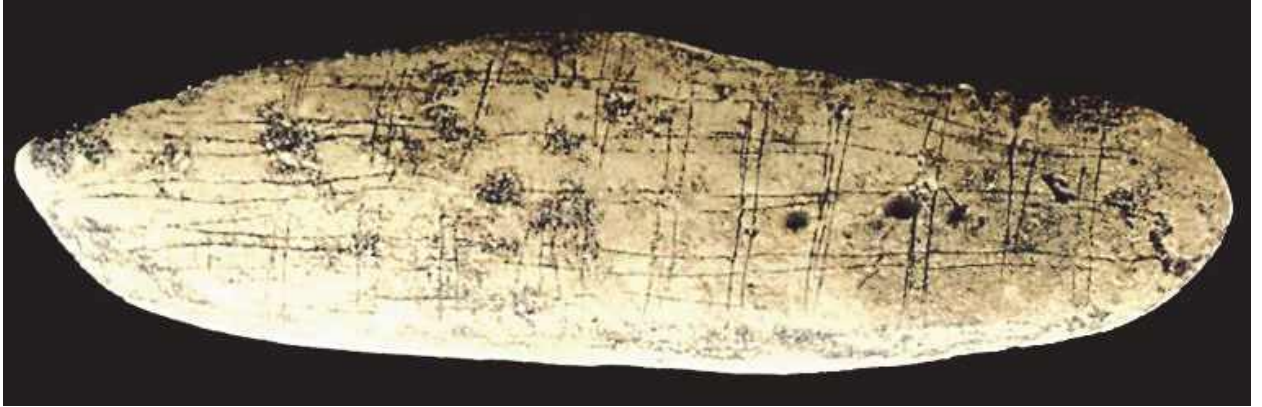


Fig. 150. An engraved flat stone from the time of the settlement of America, found in Texas. Source: texasbeyondhistory.net Clovis Stones.

Similar to ancient Europeans, Indians drew and scratched this symbol on stones (Fig. 151 to 152).

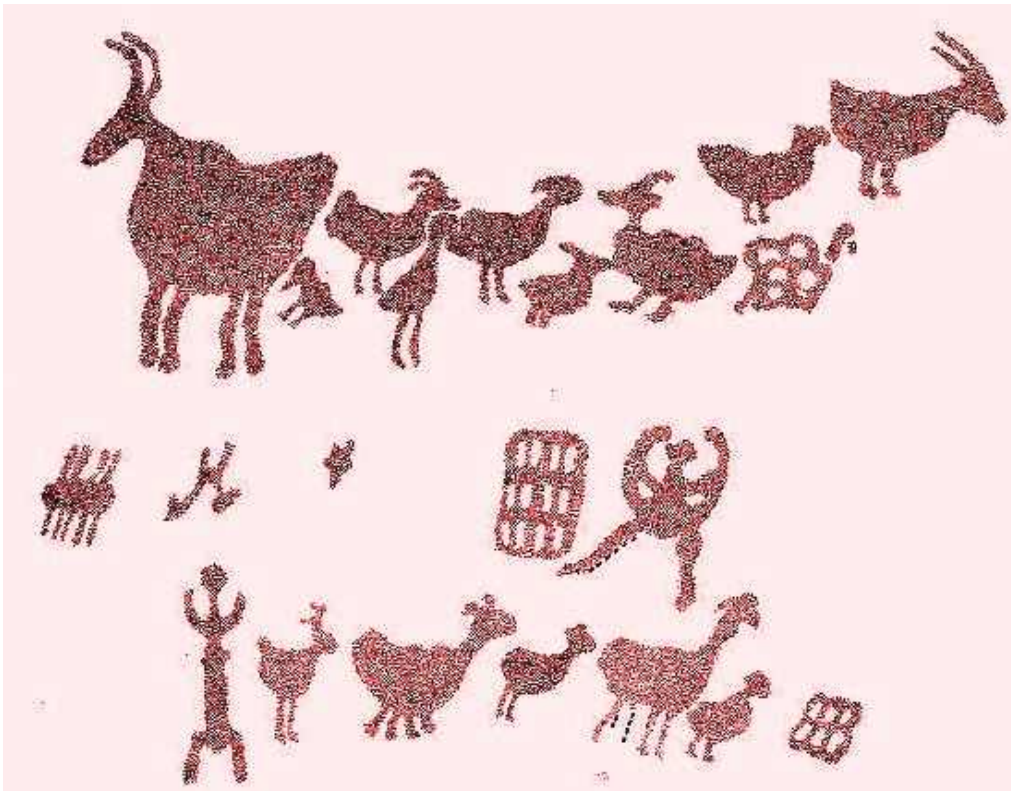


Fig. 151. The petroglyph at the Waterflow Site (LA 8970) west of Farmington, New Mexico³². Similar to Figures 6-11 from Europe, we see grazing animals.



Fig. 152. Navajo petroglyphs in Crow Canyon, New Mexico.

In this picture we see a giant corn stalk with two ripe ears, and an Indian shaman. A small rectangular grid and a cross to the left of the cobs indicate that a harvesting corn in abundance was vital to the Indians (Fig. 153).



Fig. 153. Palatki Heritage Site the Hopi. Sedona, Arizona. Circa 1150-1350.

Here we see a vertical grid depicting rain and an animal that drinks rainwater.

With the emergence of ceramics, a rectangular grid appears on bas-reliefs and Indian pottery (Fig. 154 to 157).



Fig. 154. Cup. Olmec. Mexico. 1500-1000 BC. Yale University Art Gallery, USA.



Fig. 155. Bas-relief of the god of rain and plants Tlaloc. In the Nahuatl language, Tlaloc is “the one who makes grow”³¹. The rectangular grid on Tlaloc’s face and the crosses in his eyes indicate that fertility is the ruler of all. Temple of Quetzalcoatl. 300-350 years. Teotihuacan. Mexico.



Fig. 156. Fragment of a sculpture of the goddess of horizontal waters (lakes, rivers) Chalchiuhtlicue.²⁹ This is indicated by the grid-collar of the goddess. Teotihuacan. 300-350 years. National museum of anthropology (NMA), Mexico City.



Fig. 157. Traditional Indian vessel. Cochiti Pottery, New Mexico.

And here are traditional Indian pots spotting vertical rectangular grids and raindrops (Fig. 158 to 159).



Fig. 158. Traditional Indian pot. University of Illinois Museum of Art (Krannert Art Museum).



Fig. 159. Centennial Museum pot from Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico. Circa 400-600.

A combined symbol of a rectangular grid and a cross is also found on Indian ceramics (Fig. 160 to 161).



Fig. 160. Votive vessel depicting Xilonen, the goddess of maize - Maya, found in the Valley of Mexico and its enlarged fragment, ca. 1500 AD. NMA, Mexico City³⁰

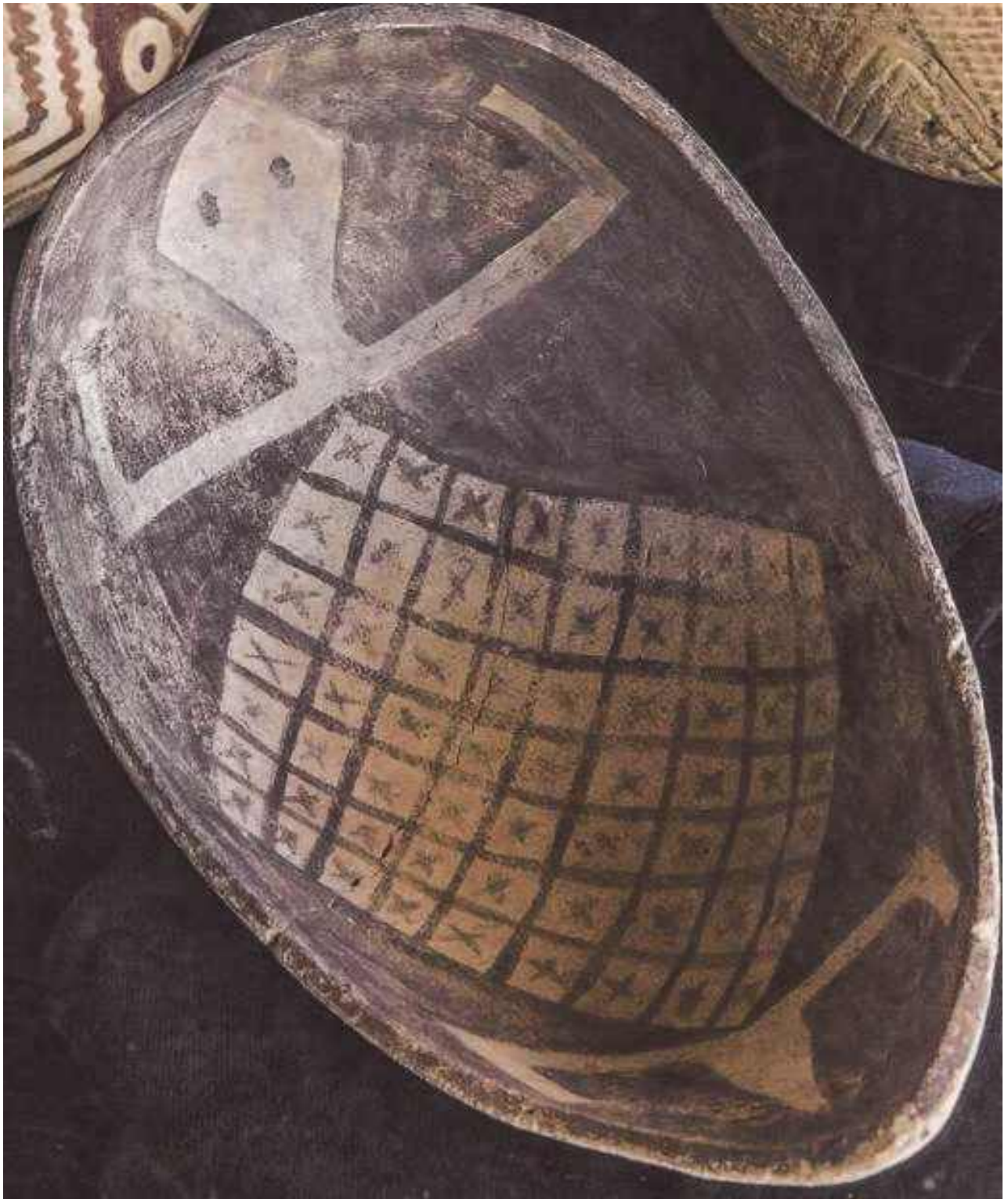


Fig. 161. Pueblo Hohokam Pottery at Mesa Grande. Arizona. Circa 1100-1400.

Traditional pottery of pre-Columbian American farmers (mostly from Texas and the US Southwest and Mexico) spot three main varieties of the fertility symbol - a rectangular grid, a vertical rectangular grid (presumably rain), and a rectangular grid combined with a cross (meaning '*fertility is the most important thing*'). The similarity of these varieties with comparable symbols on ceramics of Neolithic Age, Bronze Age and Eurasia's Antiquity is amazing.

South America

In the grottoes and caves of South America, ancient images of a rectangular grid have survived to this day (Fig. 162-163).



Fig. 162. Native American petroglyphs. Mountain range of La Lindosa, Guayabero River, Guaviare, Colombia.



Fig . 163. Sculpture, possibly of a fertility God. San Agustin Archaeological Park. Colombia, 3300-1400 BC.

Similar to North America, South America pottery is also often decorated with the same four varieties of the rectangular grid - square, horizontal (lake, rivers and seas), vertical (rain) and cross-shaped (Fig. 164 to 170).



Fig. 164. Cup Peru, Nasca, A.D. 5th century. Fine Arts Museum S. Francisco.



165-166. On the left is the spiny oyster *Spondylus princeps*. For the Chimu and Lambayeque Indians, it symbolized a connection with the Sea God,³³ who gave them fish, crabs, etc. In his honor, Indians used to make ritual plates showing divers collecting these oysters and decorated them with rectangular grid (right). 800-1450 years. National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru, Lima.



Pic. 167. Duck jug, presumably goddess of lakes, rivers and seas. Diaguita Culture. 900-1500 years. Archaeological Museum of Serena. Chile.



Fig. 168. Nazca culture. Figure, presumably god of rain. 350- 500 A.D. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Fig. 169. Nazca culture. Figure, presumably the god of rain, lakes, rivers and seas. 200 BC – 600 AD. Anthropological Museum, Lima. Ecuador.



Fig. 170. Diaguita ceramics. Circa 1200-1500. The Limarí Ovalle Museum, Chile.



Fig. 171. A pot with traditional ornamentation, purchased by Julia Fitzgerald in Cusco in 1974, Peru.

As we see, South American ceramics, spotting varieties of fertility symbols, are more diverse than that of North American Indians. It is also striking how little these varieties of the fertility symbol have changed during such a long journey across the continents of planet Earth. It seems that for our ancestors they symbolized unity with their environment and that is why they were so important.

No longer large tribes of Indian gatherers and hunters still live in harmony with the environment in the remnants of the once endless forests of the Amazon river basin. Scientists refer to these forests as to the lungs of the planet. Like our distant ancestors, these Indians sincerely believe that every living thing around them has their own spirits, and try to peacefully coexist with all of them. At the same time, their presumably "civilized" compatriots continue to cut down the remains of these primeval forests and, in search of gold, poison local rivers with mercury. This process of ruthless destruction of the environment is taking place simultaneously in many corners of the planet.

Nature allows moderate influence. American scientists found that indigenous peoples of North America had been using controlled fires for hundreds of years to burn parts of forests to create huge prairies and pastures. Consequently they were creating a landbase where bison and deer, which they used to hunt, flourished¹³. Besides, Indian tribes were constantly competing between themselves for the

territories. As a result, there was no overpopulation since any possible ‘excessive’ people would be eliminated in internecine clashes. This was how Indians found their ecological niche and managed to preserve majority of North America plant, animal and bird species, as well as water resources, intact. Indian chief Seattle described Indian’s attitude to the environment saying²⁴: “We know this: the earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth.”

American Indians, and many other primordial tribes, used to take only what was needed from nature. And considered themselves to be just one of the many kinds of living creatures. This attitude can be attested by ages-old images where cross symbol (attributed to rulers) marks not only people (chiefs specifically), but also animals they hunt to survive (Fig. 172 to 173 and 111 to 112).



Fig. 172. Mammoth figurine from the Vogelherd Cave. 33000-30000 years ago, Swabia, Germany.

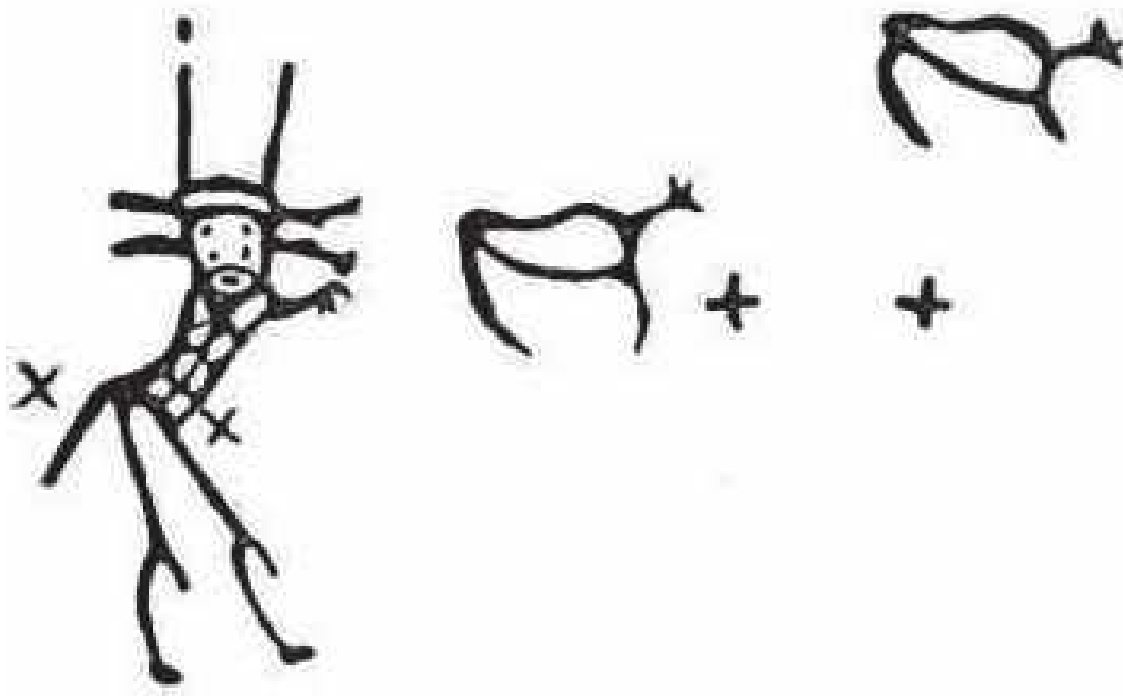


Fig. 173. Ochre painting on a rock. Siberia. Minusinsk Hollow. Koroviy Log (according to N.V. Leontiev). 1300-1100 BC. Russia.¹⁴



Fig. 111 to 112. Ritual (dance) shields of Sioux Indians. 1850-1900s. USA.

Very similar attitude was mimicked in the famous ‘Avatar’ movie where inhabitants of an imaginary planet never built cities and enjoyed living in harmony with nature instead, just like indigenous peoples of Americas did. But, unfortunately, in reality the end of the North America Indians’ story was far less optimistic than the one shown in the movie. In less than a century time span ‘civilized’ European settlers slaughtered almost entire aboriginal population, and put those who were lucky enough to survive in reservations. The same story happened on other

continents too. That means that things like leadership without taking responsibilities, together with egocentricity and illusory certainty that everything on this planet belongs exclusively to the 'best' representatives of the 'white' (or 'yellow') race were the reasons that led to the current-day climatic and ecological catastrophe.

Another large-scale example of the peaceful coexistence of man with his environment was described in the fourth chapter of this book. On advice of Enki, who was the wisest of the gods, dwellers of Sumerian city-states built thousands of canals and dams, even though it cost them tremendous efforts. These became a foundation for the future civilization, and for the next 4,000 years this irrigational infrastructure would provide people with bread, beer, wines and various fruit and vegetables. And only after 1258 AD, when hordes of a Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan had seized and destroyed Baghdad, slaying almost all of city dwellers and fellahin from surrounding villages, irrigational canals have clogged with silt, and lands, once bountiful, turned again into a semi-arid desert.

Hubert Reeves, a famous popularizer of science and a Canadian astrophysicist pinpointed these self-destructive ways of *Homo sapiens* saying¹⁵: **“Man is the most insane species. He worships an invisible God and destroys a visible Nature. Unaware that this Nature he’s destroying is this God he’s worshipping”**.

The 'visible Nature' responds punishing humanity with increasingly damaging calamities – hurricanes, deluges, scorching heat and invisible viruses, threatening life on the entire planet, which is so sad, since highly developed form of protein life is such a rarity in the universe.

All in all it looks like we now see the end of the time (the spiral cycle) when *Homo sapiens* could increase in numbers without any restrictions while plundering greedily the planet Earth resources. And the tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that modern humanity is split into two uneven parts according to their world outlook. Hundreds of millions of conscious people are willing to restrict considerably their material well-being to protect the environment. Thus, EU countries were able to reduce CO₂ (carbon) emissions to the level of the 1960s, while their economies tripled at the same time.

But at the same time billions of other people inhabiting the Earth either don't want or simply cannot change their irresponsible way of life. The self-proclaimed leaders of this majority are nuclear-armed totalitarian regimes who invest heavily in a senseless arms race and launch wars of aggression against their neighbors. That means that leaders of many countries, including the most powerful of them, by inertia continue to adhere to no longer relevant dogmas of global or regional hegemony and invest ridiculous funds into senseless arms race. So it's really dubious that earthlings would be able to unite in the years to come and to form a joint planetary environment rescue government. And that means that *Homo sapiens* will sooner or later enter the very long list of endangered species on the verge of extinction. António Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the UNO, believes that it can happen as soon as by the end of this century. And maybe then only isolated tribes of nomadic herders and primitive hunter-gatherers will have the biggest chance of survival.

Hundreds of years will go by. The environment will start to renew, and some of those who will survive will set off to conquer new lands, since this is in human nature. And they will find ruins of cities that once were great, with their roads and airports (see, for example the *Life After People* television series), and they will be shocked. Eventually a new myth will emerge telling about a Deathly Global Plague, or nuclear war, scorching heat, pestilence, or all of the above, unleashed by gods upon people for their sins. And maybe this myth will once again tell a story about a wise god, similar to the Sumerian god Enki, who will tell virtuous Ut-napištim (Biblical Noah) and his wife to hide away in some remote place (thick forest, or steppe, or tundra) and to avoid any contacts with other people. They will eventually become founders of the next human race, which will also inherit a rectangular grid – the symbol of fruitfulness and life in harmony with environment (Fig. 174).

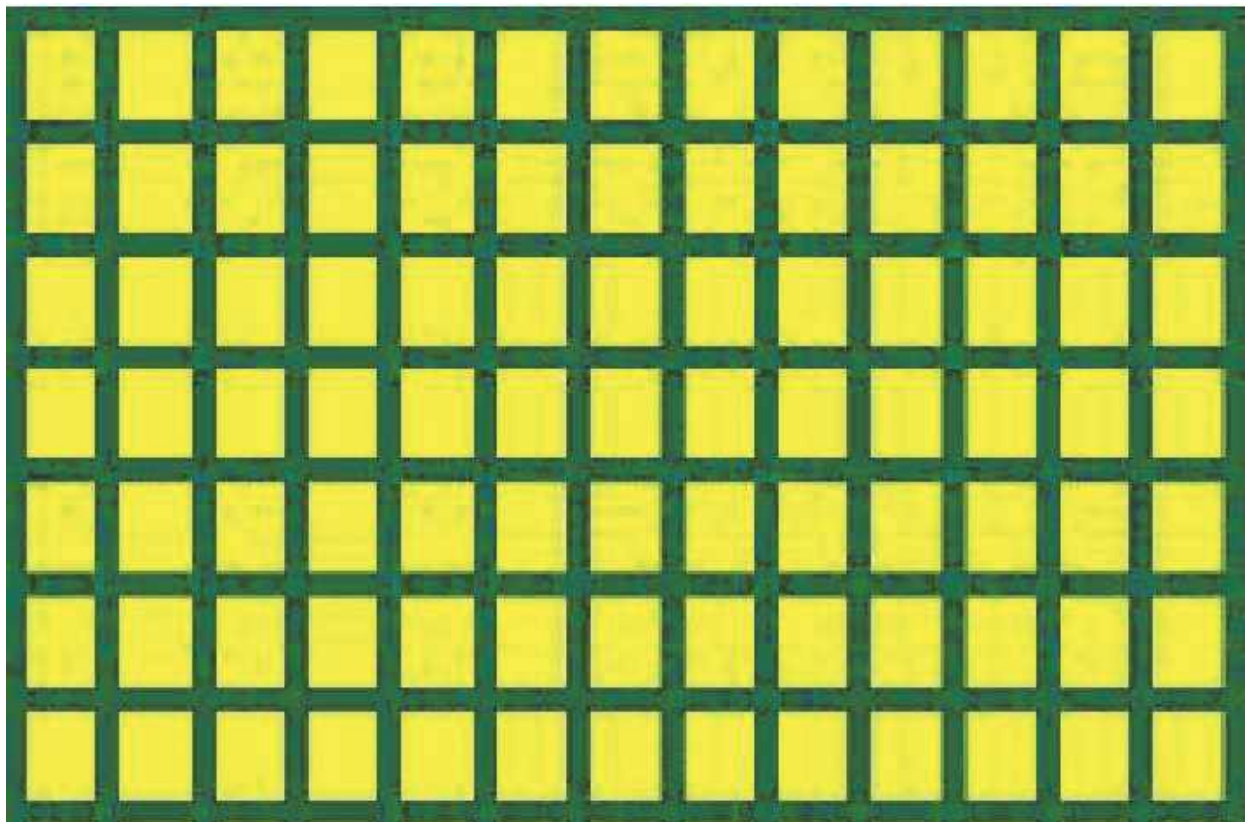


Fig. 174. The project of the flag of living in harmony with the environment.

And when numerous ruins left by once powerful yet irresponsible civilization will be before eyes of this new humanity there's some hope that they won't repeat our mistakes.

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Valentyn Moyseyenko
Мойсеєнко Валентин Станіславович

**The Ancient Grid Symbol as a Timeless Symbol of Life:
The Ways the Fertility Symbol Emerged
and Spread around the Planet**

Illustrated scientific and hypothetical project
(ілюстроване пошуково-наукове видання)

(англійською мовою)

На прикладі численних археологічних зображень демонструється захоплююча історія виникнення та розповсюдження Європою, Азією та Америкою одного з найдавніших і найпопулярніших петрогліфів у вигляді прямокутної решітки – символу родючості та життя у злагоді з довкіллям.

The fascinating story of how one of the world's oldest and most popular petroglyphs – a rectangular grid, a symbol of fruitfulness and living in harmony with the environment, emerged and spread throughout Europe, Asia and America, demonstrated through the example of numerous images of archaeological findings.

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