

## A BIRD-SHAPED STONE SCEPTER FOUND AT POPRICANI (IAȘI COUNTY, ROMANIA)

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The piece we present comes from a fortuitous discovery made in 1964, in the north of the Popricani village (Iași County, Romania), on a hill-side (Ciobanului Hill) above the Jijia River.

The piece was carved from a flat stone (probably sandstone). The material, quite soft, allowed for the sketching of many anatomical features. The length of the item is 129mm, while the maximum width (at the “handle”) is 73mm, decreasing gradually towards the end of the beak-tip, where it reaches only 20mm. The stone plate is 17mm thick.

The piece represents, quite realistically, the head, the beak and the long neck of a water fowl, the decoration being made by incised lines, and the eyes made by small hollowed-out pits. Based on the details quite accurately rendered, we can say that the bird belongs to the order *anseriformes* – ducks, geese and swans are the most well-known representatives of this order.

By its general appearance, the piece falls into the category of stone zoomorphic sceptres that represent, in realistic or abstracted versions, various animals. Indirect data suggest either a dating in the Late Eneolithic (in the Cucuteni culture environment) – Final Eneolithic or the Late Bronze Age – Early Hallstatt.

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