Stone-age Mini Skirt Discovered

For more than 40 years, fashion experts have argued over the origins of the mini-skirt. Some say British designer Mary Quant came up with the design in the 1960s. (----- 1 -----) And some experts even believe it made its first appearance in Hollywood ten years earlier.

But now archaeologists say the true origins of the mini skirt go back to the very beginning of civilization. They have uncovered evidence that Stone Age women were, in fact, wearing mini-skirts more than 7,500 years ago. (----- 2 -----)

A series of stone statues wearing the prehistoric fashions were found at one of Europe's oldest known villages. (----- 3 -----) The findings in this ancient village push back the origins of fashion and art in Europe by hundreds of years, to a time when our ancestors were actually just learning about farming. ‘According to the statues we found, young women were beautifully dressed, like today's girls,’ said archaeologist Julka Kuzmanović-Cvetković.

The unnamed tribe of people lived between 5400 and 4700 BC in the 120-hectare site at what is now Plocnik in Serbia. Various things found at the site show us that they knew about trade, art, and how to sew. They celebrated beauty and produced 60 different forms of wonderful pottery and statues. (----- 4 -----) Women, it seems, have always paid attention to their appearance.

Little is known about the life of the people – known as the Vinca – who made the statues. The Vinca culture developed quickly between 5500 and 4000 BC in Bosnia, Serbia, Romania, and Macedonia. It got its name from the present-day village of Vinca on the Danube River near Belgrade where eight villages have been found.

The latest discoveries suggest these early farmers were more advanced than we think. The dead were buried in a tidy cemetery, houses had stoves, and there were special holes for rubbish. People slept on rugs and fur, made clothes of wool and leather, and kept animals. (----- 5 -----) This is clear because some of the things found include toys such as animals and rattles of clay, and small, badly crafted pots apparently made by children at playtime. One of the most exciting finds for archaeologists was the discovery of a sophisticated metal workshop.

‘This might prove that the Copper Age started in Europe at least 500 years earlier than we thought,’ Dr Kuzmanović said.

The Copper Age was the first use of tools by humans. It is thought to have started around the 4,000 BC in south-east Europe, and earlier in the Middle East. The discovery of Europe's oldest underground mine at the nearby Mlava river suggested at the time that Vinca could be the first place in Europe to use metal, a theory which seems to be now supported by the Plocnik site.

A The trend at the time was to wear them with short tops and bracelets.

B This community was situated between rivers, mountains and forests in what is now southern Siberia.

C It was first discovered in 1927.

D It also seems that they were especially fond of children.

E However, others point to Frenchman André Courrèges.

F According to Dr Kuzmanović, these not only represent the things they respected, but also things they got enjoyment from.