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### **Between the Seas: Baltic - Pontic Contact Space in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BC**



The presentation is devoted to some selected questions from the prehistory of areas situated between two seas: the Baltic Sea on the North-West and the Black Sea on the South East. To be precise, the subject-matter are territories between two big rivers, namely the Vistula and Dnieper. There is the so called Dniester-Bug limes, one of the most important ecological and cultural borders of our continent, that runs across the areas in question. Despite many essential differences, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC the territories between the Vistula and Dnieper rivers were covered by the network of multidirectional circulation of people and new ideas. From the given point of view symptoms of presence of the eastern origins patterns on the Vistula, as well as the western origins patterns on the Dnieper are discussed and some proposals of their interpretation are done.

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### **Neolithization of Right-Bank Ukraine**



There are two main versions of neolithization of the territory of Ukraine – from the south-east and from the south-west, or the Caspian-Caucasian and the Danube-Balkan. If the first theory spread in the post-war time in the form of the concept of "eastern impulse" by V.M. Danylenko, then the second theory became popular since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of modern scholars tend to think about the Balkan-Danube origins of the Ukrainian Neolithic. The analysis of previously known and newly obtained sources, gives grounds for the author of these lines to made a conclusion about neolithization of the Ukraine's territory by the agricultural population of the Danube in the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. It was at this time of the Atlantic climate maximum in Central Europe that the warming and humidification of the climate occurred, which created exceptionally favorable conditions for the colonization of the region by the Balkanian early farmers of the through the Danube.

Without excluding completely the possibility of some southeast influences on the Neolithic of Ukraine, one can speak about four main waves of Neolithic innovations from the Balkan-Danube region to Right-Bank Ukraine:

1. Hrebenyky culture - (end of the 7<sup>th</sup> - beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC cal)
2. Krish – Bug-Dniester culture (from the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC)
3. Danube (LBK) (second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC)
4. Cucuteni-Trypillya (5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC)

**Hrebenyky.** The first proto-Neolithic wave of migrants from the Balkans was the representatives of Hrebenyky tradition, which left sites in the Odessa region at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> - beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC (cal.). The lithic inventory of the latter is characterized by numerous series of regular trapezes at the sections of the pressure blades, which has direct parallels in the Early Neolithic of Thessaly and among the lithic inventory of the Krish-Starchevo culture. The latter points to the genetic connection of Hrebenyky with the ancient Neolithic of Eastern Greece. The lithic inventory of the Hrebenyky sites



has the features that prove contacts with the local Kukrek population of the North-West Black Sea area.

**Krish.** Moving from Transylvania to the east in the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, reached the Dniester area, where they are represented by Sakarivka-type sites communities of the Krish culture played particularly notable role in neolithization of Right-Bank Ukraine. The oldest in the Ukraine Neolithic Bug-Dniester culture was formed as a result of the synthesis of the Krish Neolithic traditions with the local Kukrek, about the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Its inventory naturally combines the Krish culture pottery and Hrebenyky lithic assemblage with an expressive flint complex of the local Kukrek culture (Pechera 1, Dobrianka 1, 2, 3).

**LBK (Linear Pottery culture).** The third wave of Neolithic settlers of Right-Bank Ukraine can be considered LBK population, which moved from the Upper Vistula eastwards to the Volhynian plateau and then south to the Upper Dniester, in Moldova and the Bug-Dniester interfluve in the third quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Pressure from the West of new Neolithic settlers on the Bug-Dniester population led to its movement in the north-eastern direction – to the Kyiv-Cherkasy Dnieper area, and possibly to Nadporizhzhia. These processes of the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC launched the neolithization of the Middle Dnieper area, including Kyiv Polissia. Therefore, flint tools and pottery from the earliest Neolithic sites of the Kyiv region – settlements of the Lazarivka type (Lazarivka, Prybir 7a, Krushnyky) have direct parallels in Bug-Dniester assemblages of the Middle Bug region.

**Cucuteni-Trypillya.** The resettlement of the Bug-Dniester population in the Kyiv-Cherkassy Dnieper area was intensified in the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC due to the strong pressure from the fourth wave of the Balkan-Danube colonists – the population of the Cucuteni-Trypillya culture, which at that time began to colonize the forest-steppes of Right-Bank Ukraine from the territory of Moldova. The ultimate victory of the reproductive economy in the forest-steppes of Right-Bank Ukraine is linked with the Trypillians.

As to the mechanism for the sharing of Neolithic innovations from the Balkan-Danube region in the Right-Bank Ukraine, there is no reason to believe that it was different from the principle of their distribution in the neighboring territories of Central Europe, Danube and the Northern Balkans. The vast majority of researchers believe that the neolithization of the Danube and Central Europe took place in the mode of their "balkanization", that is, the spread of Neolithic innovations from the Balkans through the Danube through the resettlement of Neolithic colonists to the north. It was in the mode of agricultural colonization that the communities of the Danube (LBK) and Cucuteni-Trypillya cultures distributed in Right-Bank Ukraine.

It should be noted that with the distance from the Balkan Neolithic Center, the synthesis of the culture of aliens with the autochthons of Europe played an increasingly important role. In particular, the Neolithic colonists of the Krish culture reached the Dniester in their pure form, but the east of the Bug-Dniester area was a synthesis of the Krish with local Kukrek traditions, resulting in the formation of a hybrid of the Krish-Kukrekian and Bug-Dniester cultures. It became a kind of transistor of Neolithic innovations from the Danube to Mesolithic indigenous peoples of the Middle Dnieper and Kyiv-Zhytomyr Polissya. Further to the north, in the forest zone of Eastern Europe, Neolithic innovations (first, the skills of ceramic production, and later the reproduction economy) spread not because of agricultural colonization, but through their borrowing from the south.



Speaking about the chronological frames of the neolithization of Ukraine, one should bear in mind the lack of compelling evidence of Neolithic sites with ceramics that would date back to the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Very early dates (the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC) made on BDK ceramics by the Kyiv laboratory need to be checked.

Thus, archaeological data convincingly testify to the neolithization of the Right-Bank Ukraine, the Middle Dnieper and Southern Polissya during the 6<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC due to the powerful influence of the waves of Neolithic migrants from the Balkan-Danube region (Hrebenyky, Krish, LBK, Cucuteni-Trypillya). With the participation of their representatives on the local Mesolithic substrate, the Neolithic cultures of the Right Bank appeared. Synthesis of local Kukrekian traditions and the Neolithic Krish culture gave birth to the Bug-Dniester culture.

Thus, today, in the competition between two versions of neolithization of Ukraine – the south-eastern steppe and the south-western Danube-Balkan wins the latter. V.M. Danilenko's concept of "eastern impulse" has now substantially lost its position and needs additional argumentation. This does not exclude the possibility of new facts and arguments in the future in favor of eastern influences on the formation and development of the Neolithic of Ukraine.

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### **Trypillya – Strategy and Results of an European-Ukrainian Project**



In the late 5<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE in the Trypillya-Cucuteni cultural complex there was observed the emergence of the so-called mega-sites represented today by several thousands of burnt houses arranged in a specific spatial layout, with specialized workshops and highly developed material culture. These settlements, which have been the subject of ongoing discussions, in particular about possible urban characteristics (proto-cities), represent a unique phenomenon in European prehistory, and attract the interest of not only Ukrainian researchers but also other European ones scientists. Since 2011, German-Ukrainian cooperation has been conducted with a view to achieving a deeper insight and more comprehensive understanding of this "chapter" in the European prehistory and Trypillian societies in particular. The main goal of this cooperation is to combine the experience and knowledge of Ukrainian colleagues with the natural-science methods and fresh look of the German team. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we are trying to gain a better understanding of the development and transformation of social relations, spatial behaviour, economics and land use in Trypillian communities.

In order to understand better the trigger and processes of formation and decline of Trypillya mega-sites, on the one hand, it is necessary to apply a diachronic approach to the social processes under study. On the other hand the spatial dimension of the phenomenon needs to be investigated at micro, meso-, and macro-scale. For this purpose, within the large area of the Trypillya -Cucuteni cultural complex three test regions with key sites have been chosen. In each of these test regions an attempt is undertaken to reconstruct and interlink demographic processes, technology, the organization of societies and their ideology.

Starting from large scale geomagnetic prospections on several mega-sites of the Bug-Dnieper region, based on works on the mega-site Maidanetske, a strategy has been de-