

The dynamics of the development of the system of “centers of power” in the Precucuteni-Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complex

Mykhailo VIDEIKO

 0000-0002-8708-0749

“Centers of power” refers to large settlements with 1,000 or more inhabitants. They appear in Ancient Europe before 5000 BC and known there for the next thousand years. To the east of the Carpathians, the oldest settlements of this type appear already in the II-III phases of Precucuteni-Trypilla A. In this period, their area did not exceed 20 hectares. After 4500 BC, centers with an area of 30-70 hectares appear. They existed in every local group in the territory between the Carpathians and the Dnieper. The eponymous site Trypillia, the territory of which reaches 70 hectares, belongs to this time. Research results indicate that the entire territory was settled at the same time. Rapid growth can be attributed to demographic processes. During this period, a planning scheme for large settlements was formed. It includes an unbuilt center and two ovals of houses located at a certain distance from each other. Settlements were fortified with palisades. The magnetic survey showed the presence of large, probably public buildings located in a certain part of the settlement in all such settlements.

The heyday of this type of settlement falls on the period between 4100-3600 BC. Their size reaches 200-340 hectares. The traditional planning system is running out. An exception is the area between the Prut and Dniester rivers, where known settlements are circular in plan. But the main components – fortifications, public buildings – are placed in a similar way. So there are reasons to talk about a common tradition for all regions of the spread of this cultural complex.

Such a concentration of the population became possible as a result of successes in the agricultural sector. Fertilization of the fields was introduced, and additional grain was used to feed livestock, which was confirmed by relevant studies. Settlements also became centers of pottery, as evidenced by multi-channel kilns known from 4000 BC.

After 3600 BC, the size of the centers decreases to 30-20 ha. The exception is a few settlements of 100-180 hectares located at the confluence of the Southern Bug and Dnipro rivers. This is happening against the background of a reduction in the total number of settlements and, accordingly, the population and existence.

Thus, the era of creation of “power centers” continued more than 1,400 years. Its peak falls on 4200-3600 VS. After that, it undergoes degradation for 200-300 years. In all cases, demographic processes were probably the trigger of this processes. They were accompanied by the search for an optimal social organization, in which the “centers of power” – large settlements – played a key role.