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ORIGINS OF NEOLITHIC-ENEOLITHIC CREMATION RITES IN EUROPE AND SOFIEVKA TYPE RITUALS

Cremation rites are not adequately identifiable from the point of view of archaeology. In practice we register their specific states, places of burial strictly limited as far as space is concerned - in the form of pit graves and in cinerary urn graves. The awareness of this fact requires caution when we evaluate the European beginnings of the complex of funerary rituals in which we are interested.

1. THE STATE OF SOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE GENETIC INTERPRETATION OF EARLY FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT OF CREMATION RITES

The above remarks are particularly justified with reference to the epochs: Mesolithic - Neolithic - Eneolithic within which the beginnings of a given rite are observed [Cabalska 1964; 1967; Kalicz 1963:14-18; Voigt 1963; Jażdżewski 1981:147].

In this initial stage two periods were distinguished [Cabalska 1967:41]: I - of incidental applications of cremation with respect to a narrow category of the dead (for example, in the form of „size of punishment”) and II - applications in the character of „a distinct burial rite”.

PERIOD I - before ca. 3600/3500 BC (2800/2700 conv BC). The oldest manifestation of rites in which we are interested is dated to the turn of the eighth millennium BC and is connected with a Mesolithic community of the Maglemose culture. The cremated burial of the „layer” type was found in the area of the Melsted settlement on the island of Bornholm [Becker 1951:100, 171]. Of similar character are observations about the barely later Mesolithic settlements of the Komornica culture of Wieliszew in Mazovia [Więckowska 1975:418]. The next discovery which was already connected with an agrarian population is dated to the second half of the sixth millennium BC. Burnt human bones were found in an anthropomorphic vessel (the so-called Venus of Gorzsa) of the Körös culture, uncovered on a site located near the confluence of the Tisza and Marusza rivers [Gazdapusztai 1957:12].

A little bit more frequent, although many times more problematic, is the evidence of cremation from the decline of the sixth millennium and from the first half of the fifth millennium BC connected with the Vinča culture and the Linear Band Pottery culture [Garašanin 1958:17; Kahlke 1954:90f; Vencl 1961:114; Hoffmann 1973; Kaufmann 1976:70-73]. An intensification of source evidence of given rites (mainly in the form of cinerary graves) is dated to the decline of the first half and the second half of the fifth millennium BC. This concerns in particular the Northern zone of the Balkan-Central European cultural province, to be more exact, the areas occupied by the Stroke Ornamented culture, and especially the Rössen culture [Schranil 1928:46; Kaufmann 1976:70-73; Wolff 1911; Stroh 1938:83-84]. An important phenomenon of this period was the transmission of „the agrarian version” of the ritual discussed here beyond the areas of the loess uplands, among others, to the area of the lowland [Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa 1979:161]. This „version” of cremation seems to have been adapted at that time in the environment of co-creators of the „Megalithic circle”, the proof of which might be, for example, the cinerary grave of the Stroke Ornamented culture from Kowal in Kuiavia that was placed in a stone box and is dated to the middle of the fifth millennium BC [Czerniak 1980:205]. It is possible that the phenomenon signalled here activated a long-term process of development of „the Northern model” of cremation rites (whose determinant would be non-cinerary burials - in great measure „layer” ones) which are documented by the more recent studies of its Lowland manifestations; especially from the later periods [recently, Wierzbicki 1992:86-87]. However, in our evaluation here we assume that the primeval pre-sources of the said „model” were surely inherent in the endogenous ritual traditions of the Lowland communities of the Mesolithic epoch (Fig.1:a).

At the turn of the fifth and fourth millennia BC an important centre of the development of the cremation rite was located in the basin of the Upper Tisza, within the circle of the Polgár culture [cf. Šiška 1968]. The share of cremation graves as well as cinerary and pit ones is discernable here since in the Polgár III phase (the Tiszapolgár culture) [Šiška 1964:339-340] and the Polgár IV phase (the Bodrogkeresztúr culture, Lažňany group) it was intensified [Šiška 1966:62; 1972; Nevizánsky 1984:278-288].

About 35% of the graves in the Lažňany group (generally dated within the Hunyadihalom-Lažňany horizon to ca. 3650-3500 BC) [Kaczanowska 1980] contained the remains of a cremation [Nevizánsky 1984:288]. Both the pit and the cinerary graves, which were dominant, occurred here. The equipment of these burials was created out of pottery (one to three vessels) and, in individual cases, flint artefacts and amber fragments. Along with the influences of the Polgár centre, cremation infiltrates beyond the arc of the Carpathians, e.g. into the basin of the Upper Oder [Nowothing 1937]. It seems that the phenomenon signalled here may be treated as a prologue to the process representative of period II (Fig.1:b).

PERIOD II - after ca. 3600/3500 BC (2800/2700 conv BC). According to M. Cabalska, in the middle of the fourth millennium BC two „early centres” of crystal-

lisation of the „cremation as a different funeral rite” may be distinguished: those of the Baden and Middle Dnieper (which are later named Sofievka) [Cabalska 1967:45]. In her interpretation, manifestations of the growth of significance noticed there would constitute „a logical and purposeful crowning of the ideological-ritual attitude based on the spiritual concept of God the Creator and immortal soul”. The process would have external roots as a derivative of a new wave of influences from the Near East: „along the same trade routes which caused the dissemination of the knowledge about copper and bronze” [Cabalska 1967:43, 45]. An important role in the construction of this hypothesis was played by the studies of N. Kalicz [1963], who interpreted the Baden culture as the Northernmost group of the early bronze cultural complex, including Anatolia and the Balkans. This conception was supported by later studies by V. Němejcová-Pavúková [1981] concerning the internal structure of the said „complex” as well as Z. Sochacki’s [1991:14] studies on the spatially similar „zone of influence”. According to the latter author „the origin of the funeral rites [in the Baden centre] which appears „in waves” has not yet been explained, but the participation of South-Eastern impulses is most probable (. . .), Anatolian influences encompassed (even though in varying degree) many fields of life of the Baden culture population (. . .), they made it the then main transmitter of achievements and customs of the Near East within the Central European cultures which were developing more slowly” [Sochacki 1985:49]. In the case of cremation rites a particularly convincing identifier of „the Anatolian influence” was considered to be a burial ground in the centre - and specifically the anthropomorphic cinerary urn from grave 3 - of the Ózd group which suggested the possibility of the „infiltration of a small group of Anatolian population on the Upper Tisza(?)” [Kalicz 1963:7-14; Sochacki 1980:195; 1983:130; 1985:49].

However, Anatolia as well as the Tigris-Euphrates basin do not provide material for observations of convincing manifestations of the adequately early cremation rites which might have directly motivated the hypothesis quoted above [Jażdżewski 1981:171]. The oldest findings of this ritual are connected in the Near East with the site of the late Neolithic culture Halaf Yarim Tepe II, dated to the early centuries of the sixth millennium BC (a bi-ritual burial ground with 5 cremation graves „which were accompanied by remains of the intentionally broken vessels, among them anthropo- and zoomorphic vessels” [Bieliński 1985:234]). However, in the next millennia inhumation decisively prevailed in this region. A good illustration of this may be the burial rite of Mesopotamia of the early dynasty time (ca. 2800-2340 BC) where „inhumation was still the rule on all sites”; only sporadically was there found „a partial cremation” of the dead bodies [Ławecka 1989:61-62]. It is difficult to say how much this picture may be changed as a result of further investigations on sites, for example in relatively poorly recognized Anatolia.

At the same time one should note that the above observations may create a good background for the revision of the hypothesis of the exclusively Anatolian roots of growing importance of cremation in the middle of the fourth millennium BC. Such an attempt has recently been presented by L. Nikolova [Nikolova 1993].

According to her, the genesis of the Baden centre should be looked for to the north, in the Central Danube zone where the oldest objects may be found that are typical for it. She indicates the old cremation traditions in Central Europe (cf. earlier remarks concerning endogenous development of the „northern model” of cremation), exposing as the oldest links of the Baden centre the settlement environments of the Lažňany and Ohrozim groups. The cremation rite was spread from this area to the areas of the western part of the Lower Danube basin (the Kostolac and Coţofeni cultures) - Fig.1.

2. THE BADEN CENTRE — THE DANUBE RITUAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE LATE ENEOLITHIC PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

The range of the initial area of the centre may be identified with the territory of the Boleráz group (horizon) [Němejcová-Pavúková 1981; 1984; Sochacki 1980; 1985] and the Funnel Beaker culture groups which developed similarly to an Ohrozim type in Moravia [Medunová-Benešová 1967]. Therefore, these would be the areas between the Danube and the Drava, river basins of the Wag, Morava and Upper Oder (Fig.1:b, c). Within the area occupied by the above-mentioned group the „cremation funeral rite appeared suddenly”; in a not very clear genetic and developmental dependence on „the contemporary or almost contemporary” centre of development of the cremation rite from the Upper Tisza which is connected with the Lažňany group [Němejcová-Pavúková 1970; cf. Šiška 1972 and the earlier remarks].

The area in which this phenomenon has been studied most thoroughly within the barrow burial grounds of the Ohrozim type (generally dated to ca. 3650-3350 BC) [Pleslová-Štiková 1987:418] is Moravia. There, only cremation graves of the cinerary urn type were found. „Burnt bones, without ashes were deposited in pots and more seldom in bowls, beakers and in single cases into an amphora or a jug”. „In most cases the cinerary urns were reversed which placed the burnt bones in their upper part” (in four cases holes were found in the bottoms). Also, the vessels that accompanied them were turned down. Their number might have been as many as six (most often we can find two or three of them in the graves). In graves there were also found, apart from pottery, stone axes as well as flint tools and a fragment of „a spiral” and a fragment of copper wire. The whole of the burial pottery was very badly burnt („technologically different”); hence, it was also susceptible to destruction. Cinerary urns were placed either in shallow „pits” or on the earth surface and many of them were „secured” with stones which either covered or surrounded the place of the burial. Over a single grave or a cluster of graves rather low (up to 0.8m) oval earthen mounds were erected whose dimensions in projection were: from 4 to 21m x 2 to 9m [Medunová-Benešová 1967: 366-370]. The Ohrozim model

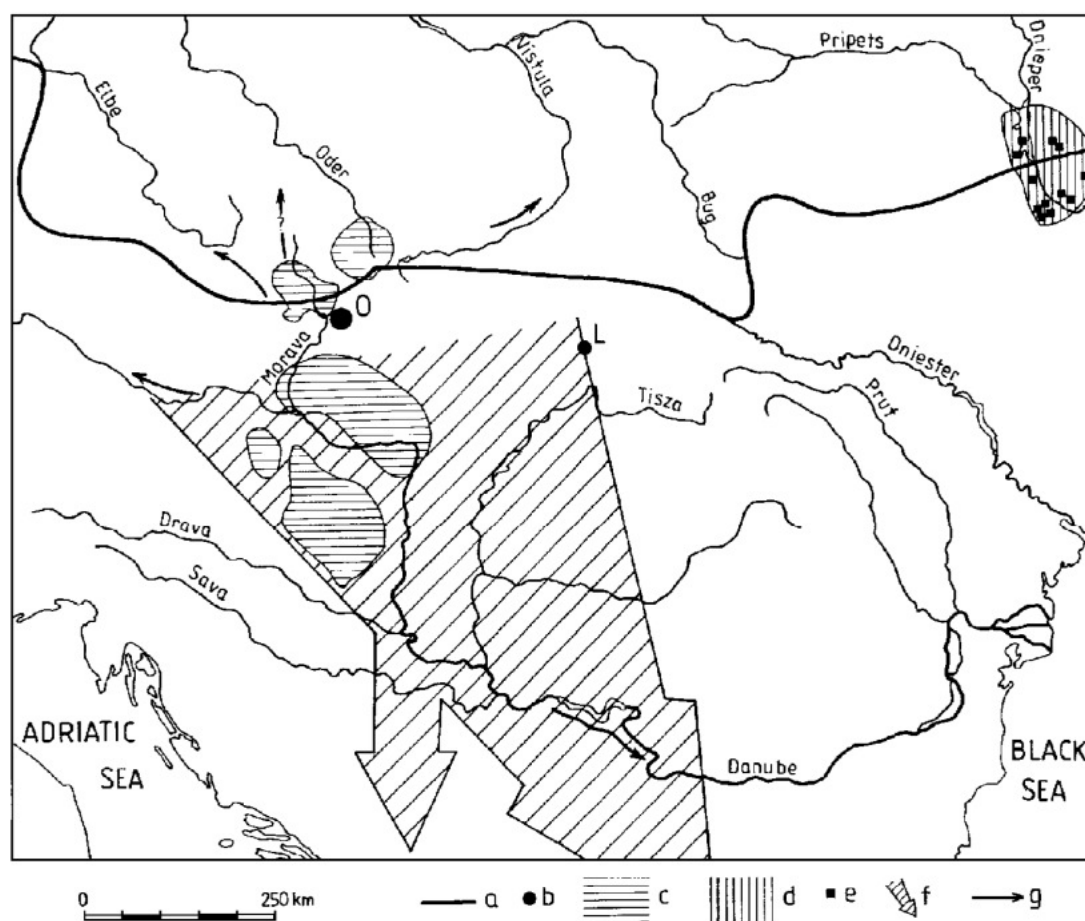


Fig. 1. Balkan-Central European cultural regions (areas) with participation of the cremation rites in the fourth-third millennia BC. Legend: a - southern boundary of "the Northern model of cremation rites" (of Funnel Beaker culture and the "forest"-East European subneolithic cultures); b - the oldest centres of "cremation as a distinct funeral rite" south of the arc of the Carpathians (L - Lažňany group, O - Ohrozim group); c - centres of early Baden culture; d - the Sofievka centre; e - Sofievka type sites; f - directions of transmission of the cremation rites in the Balkan zone according to L. Nikolova [1993]; g - directions of transmission of the Balkan cremation rites in Central Europe.

of cremation rites was also found north of the arc of the Carpathian Mountains, among the Funnel Beaker culture on the Upper Oder [Bukowska-Gedigowa 1975].

Within the „pure” objects of the Boleráz group the burial rites are not so well recognized and it is difficult to present a reliable assessment of the extent to which cremation was applied there [Nevizánsky 1985:251, 257]. Attempts at transferring observations from Moravia to other territories [cf. Němejcová-Pavúková 1970:185] are premature [Sochacki 1980:195]. Also due to these reasons the characteristics available concern a wider chronological perspective, namely the early (Boleráz)

and classical horizons of the Baden culture (dated roughly to ca. 3600-2800 BC [Němejcová-Pavúková 1981:286; Sochacki 1983:137]). This attempt is also motivated by the multi-phase development of large Baden burial grounds, also those which concentrated exclusively on cremation burials. An analysis, carried out in such a manner, may lead one to conclude that „cremation was secondary in the burial rites of the Baden culture population” [Sochacki 1980:194-195] and this sounds too general.

Corrected in such a way, the Baden centre in its range would also include, apart from the territory mentioned earlier, the river basins of the Tisza and Upper Elbe. These two areas demarcate at the same time two potential directions of the transmission of cremation rites. Of the 725 graves of the Baden culture listed by G. Nevizánsky, 225 (i.e. ca. 31%) were cremated burials [Nevizánsky 1985:258]. They were found on 22 sites which were concentrated in three areas: in the basin of the Upper Tisza, in the region of the bend of the Danube and between Lake Balaton and the Danube. The largest site in which cremations were found exclusively was the burial ground in Pilismarót-Basaharc, located within the latter of the above-mentioned „regions” and classified as Boleráz [Torma 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972; Nevizánsky 1985; cf. Sochacki 1980:194]. Between the Danube and the Drava there were also located other large burial grounds which either contained only cremations (Fonyód) or the number of cremations was significant (Budakalász). Neither the scope of the publications nor their form in some cases are satisfactory. This concerns in particular the lack of publications on the Pilismarót-Basaharc burial ground which was most important for the evaluation of the Baden model of cremation rites. It is generally known that in the Baden culture both cinerary urn and pit burials occurred, often utilising a stone cover. Amphoras, pots and bowls were mainly used as urns, sporadically jugs were used and in one case an anthropomorphic vessel (Center - cf. earlier remarks). In the graves there were also found some other vessels (one to three).

Since ca. 3200/3100 BC the scope of the centre began extending towards the area between the Sava and the Drina and included cultures which were close to Baden such as Kostolac and Coţofeni [Nikolova 1993 - also see more literature there], Fig.1:f.

3. SOFIEVKA CENTRE — RITE MODEL, GENETIC INTERPRETATION

In spite of the considerable interest that the discovery of Sofievka type burial grounds was accompanied by [cf. Videiko, *Cemeteries...*, in this volume], there exists no thorough analysis of the (a) morphological structural and (b) genetic aspects of the Sofievka model of cremation rites in the literature on the subject.

a. All the interpretations of the „Sofievka” rites offered so far were determined on the basis of a lack of a comprehensive analysis of data collected on site, i.e. a critical analysis of norms of identification applied during excavations of: (aa) objects (graves) and (ab) their shapes or character of sequences of ritual behaviour consolidated in the fillings [cf. Videiko, *Cemeteries...*, in this volume].

aa. Starting with J. Zakharuk's excavations in 1948, every vessel filled with bones (ashes) was identified as a grave as well as every cluster of bones [Zakharuk 1952; Danilenko, Makarevich 1956; Kanivets 1956, Kruts 1968]. On this basis a „classical” image of the Sofievka burial grounds was shaped and this image exists both in the literature which deals directly with the Tripolye culture and in more general studies on demography and social organization [e.g. *Arkheologiya* 1971; Kolesnikov 1993]. However, attention should be paid to the fact that already at that stage archaeologists were aware of the possibility of other interpretations. We can cite as an example here the application of more complex multi-aspectual identification norms by I. Samoylovski (during his studies of the Sofievka cemetery in 1947) [Samoylovski 1952:121-123]. The present analysis of all the premises - recordings in the diary, plans, photographs - reveals falsifications of the actual picture of the necropolis. As an illustration of this, we may use a schematic division - into separate graves - of groups of cinerary urns which were located in a distance of 10-30 cm from one another. In many cases they were recorded against the background of „bone concentrations” or over such „concentrations” which was interpreted as symptoms of vertical stratigraphy. The above-mentioned groups of „graves” were identified as sites of multiple „family burials” which, considering „the sedimentation properties” of the dune environment is difficult to imagine in practice.

ab. In the case of objects that were dug into the dune and badly damaged as a result of eolic processes as well as later settlement processes, there is an obvious difficulty in establishing the ranges of the grave „pits”. This also concerns the above-mentioned type of burial grounds where their outlines have not been established. For instance, it is not possible to consider as such the statements that bones - ashes of „non-urn” burials - were inserted in the round pits of small dimensions: 18-30cm wide and not less than 40-60cm deep (V. Kanivets's observations in the Chernin burial ground). Formation of such a pit on a dune foundation was simply impossible. Due to these reasons, all the previous attempts at characterization of the Sofievka cremation rites require a re-analysis. As a point of reference such recent (now holding) attempts as those by V. Kruts [Kruts 1977:120-121] should be mentioned. Kruts revealed the following features:

- the presence of both cinerary urn burials and pit ones (round pits);
- application of fabric containers in the case of the latter;
- deposition of equipment both before and after cremation of the body;
- location of graves in groups which may be interpreted in categories of family relations.

We think that apart from the possibilities of a re-analysis inherent in the documentation available from field investigations and the materials themselves (e.g.

space analysis of glued objects - artefacts), it is worth paying attention to the information value of observations of cremation burials of the Polgár cultural circle.

Of special importance here is the module of the biritual rites of the Tiszapolgár burial ground in Tibava [Šiška 1964] which was contemporary of the BI/BII phases of the Tripolye culture. The Tibava burials were located in rectangular pits, from 70 to 170cm x 50 to 100cm dimensions, East-West oriented. In the case of cremation burials, the bones were placed in cinerary urns or in „concentrations”. Sometimes both these forms co-occur in graves. What is also worth noting is the presence of ochre. Among the equipment, apart from pottery (between 2 and 37 vessels) there were also found flint, stone, copper and gold artefacts. The inventory was located by the dead person's head or legs; this principle was also observed in case of cremation graves. The genetic relation of these burials with the rites of the Lažňany group, chronologically closer to the Sofievka type cemeteries, seems to be obvious. However, in this latter case the quality of observations of the rite features is much worse. These facts justify reaching for „the Tibava module” which seems to be one that yields good cognitive results in spite of the possible methodological doubts.

The above-outlined „module” of cremation burials transferred to the Sofievka type burial grounds induces us to decrease the number of graves: Krasny Khutor - before re-analysis 170 graves = ca. 39 graves after re-analysis; Sofievka - 147 = ca. 30; Chernin - 94 = ca. 16; Zavalovka - 16 = ca. 4 [cf. Videiko, *Archaeological. . .*, in this volume]. In all, instead of 440 burials found in the literature, ca. 89 burials should be suggested. The set of equipment changes correspondingly. An example of this type of correction may be the reconstruction of one of the Chernin burials which combined nine „graves” (39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 47, 52, 62, 63) including four cinerary urn and five non-cinerary urn ones. Its inventory consists of four vessels which were used as cinerary urns, 12 arrowheads and 20 other flint artefacts (fragments of flint artefacts from „graves” 62 and 63 are glued together!) and a fragment of a copper object. In the case of the above-mentioned „graves” 62 and 63 the area plan situates them in stratigraphic relation: the cinerary urn „grave” (62) stands on the non-cinerary (urn) „grave” (63). Also in a similar relation occur „graves” 45 and 46. This arrangement may be considered a model for the Sofievka type burial grounds [cf. Videiko, *Archaeological. . .*, in this volume].

b. The genetic location of the Tripolye culture, its connection with the Balkan-Central European cultural province as well as the general knowledge of geography of civilisational currents in the middle of the fourth millennium BC justify combining the Sofievka model of cremation rites with the processes of its development discussed above (Fig.1:d, e). Taking into consideration the absolute chronology of the Sofievka cemeteries [cf. in this volume: Kovalyukh, Videiko, Skripkin, *Chronology. . .*, Kadrow, *Absolute. . .*], it means concentrating attention on three possible identifications of the generator of the „centre”: (ba) (the early Tripolye, middle Tripolye or early-late Tripolye) local roots, (bb) relations with the „Northern model”, or (bc) indirect borrowings from the circle of the Carpathian Basin (reception of the

following models: bca - Baden or bcb - Polgár). Evaluation of the reliability of the hypotheses that have been pointed out above should take into consideration not only the results of comparative analyses, but also typological-genetic features of grave inventories.

ba. In V. Kruts's work [1977], as well as in that done by his predecessors, the direct relations of the Sofievka „type of relics” with the older link of the Dnieper Tripolye culture Lukashi „type” and to a smaller degree the Volhynian Gorodsk-Troyanov „type” have been well-documented [cf. Dergachev 1980:142 and Videiko, Cemeteries. . . , in this volume]. This context of the „genetic background” justifies extension of the search area of the potential endogenous inspirations of cremation in the direction of „the Eastern Tripolye culture” [Tsvek 1985], where the initial zone for its Dnieper faction should be located. In all the above-mentioned centres of the Tripolye culture there are no manifestations indicating that a cremation rite was used. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that the set of sepulchral observations that is spatially or chronologically most related to the Sofievka concerning the Tripolye culture from Chapayevka gives evidence of inhumation, to be more exact, of supine burials, laid on the back and genetically identified as an expression of contacts with the Dnieper-Donetsk culture or with the Funnel Beaker culture [Movsha 1985:26]. Thus, we can state that the cremation cemeteries of the Sofievka type are the first objects of this kind within the Tripolye culture. So the cremation rites which we study here may not have been derived from the local, early- or middle-Neolithic traditions.

bb. As far as a comparative analysis of the features of the „Sofievka” rites with the Northern model is concerned, one's attention is drawn to its mostly „non-cinerary urn” character. „The Northern motive” is also emphasized by the developmental position of the Tripolye culture communities of the Sofievka stage [Kruts 1977]. This is a period of their extreme closeness with the cultural environment of the forest zone, and at the same time, of the development of ties with the Neolithic peoples of the Central European Lowland [cf. Dolukhanov, Tretyakov 1979] where the „non-cinerary urn” cremation rites are more and more often seen [Wierzbicki 1992:83ff.]. It should be remembered that the Sofievka type cemeteries were registered in a landscape which was very untypical for the Tripolye culture - the dune areas of a vast valley, north of the forest-steppe (loess) boundary of the Upland; it was representative for the „forest communities”. Also, in the grave inventories of the Necropolis people we are discussing here northern influences became distinct in the following versions: forest-East European as well as Central European [cf. in this volume: Kadrow, Koško, Videiko, Pottery. . . , Klochko, Koško, Weapons. . .]. Therefore, it cannot be precluded that in the development of the „Sofievka centre” some role might have been played by the impulses from the cultural circle of a long-lasting tradition of cremation (taken from the Mesolithic?) whose best-known centres were found in the Central European Lowland.

This interpretation is weakened, however, by the formal and quantitative shortage of adequate manifestations of cremation from the spatially indirect areas (Vol-

hynia, the Lublin Upland). On the other hand, it is possible to refer to observations of scattered cases of the application of cremation within the Volhynian group of the Globular Amphora culture [Sveshnikov 1983:12-13] of a similar, late chronology after circa 3150 BC [Szmyt 1996]. Another indirect authentication of the said conception may be found by drawing attention to the direct continuation of the Sofievka cremation traditions in the spatially and chronologically successive Middle Dnieper culture [Artemenko 1967:72-99] whose genetic relations with the circum-Baltic circle are obvious [recently Koško 1994a:156; as well as the most recent investigations by M. Kryvoltsevich - personal communication]. We should also remember that it was just at the beginning of the third millennium BC that in this circle grew the number of sources proving the use of cremation [cf. Voigt 1963; Wierzbicki 1992:83ff].

bc. The motivation for searching for genetic references in the circle of the Carpathian Basin is provided by typological-genetic analysis of grave inventories: flint artefacts, pottery, copper artefacts and arms [cf. in this volume: Budziszewski, Flint. . . , Kadrow, Koško, Videiko, Pottery. . . , Klochko, Koško, Weapons. . . , Klochko, Copper. . .], which, among other things, reveals the heritage of the Polgár circle. In the case of a comparative analysis of the Sofievka cremation rites with similar rites in the area of the Carpathian Basin we can notice a general asynchronism of the similarities observed: ritual features and inventory features, i.e. typological specificity of equipment in particular graves.

bca. If large, exclusively cremation burial grounds are found in the Baden centre (the Ohrozim-Boleráz „horizon”), then this similarity is not manifested in the most numerous group of elements of grave equipment, namely in pottery. It is difficult to see the early Baden features among the vessels from the Dnieper burial grounds as is the case with late Tripolye features among the sepulchral pottery of the Baden circle. The only general plane of analogy is the dissimilarity („peculiarity”) of the technology of manufacture of this group of ritual objects; it is found both among the materials of the Ohrozim type as well as those of the Sofievka type [Medunová-Benešová 1967:374; Bukowska-Gedigowa 1975:15-17; Kruts 1977:121]. In a non-pottery group of grave inventories one’s attention is drawn by the presence of stone axes, although these forms are different from the Sofievka type.

bcb. However, while in the Polgár environment no large, exclusively cremation burial grounds have been found (Tiszapolgár culture, Lažňany group), Polgár features are still clearly legible in the vessel stylistics from the Sofievka cemeteries [cf. Kadrow, Koško, Videiko, Pottery. . .]. The similarity also concerns the non-pottery inventories, and in particular the presence in both cases of copper daggers [Šiška 1972:140-143]. Previously we also indicated the similarities in the sphere of funerary ritual („Tibava module”).

The Polgár inspirations in the development of the Tripolye culture have been observed many times. In case of materials of the Gorodsk-Troyanov or Brynzeny „type” the Tiszapolgár „imports” have been found (Brynzeny-Tsyganka, Kosteshty IV settlements) or stylistic borrowings (Troyanov et al.) [Titov, Markevich 1974]. The Polgár „influences” were explicitly recognized in the region of the „Eastern

Tripolye culture”, simply ascribing to them the function of one of the generators of this group [Tsvek 1985; 1989]. This impulse would be legible here already at stage B of the Tripolye culture (4200-4000 BC), becoming pronounced in numerous „imports” and imitations of Tiszapolgár pottery.

The above-mentioned groups of the Tripolye culture, located in the eastern border zone of the scope of its communities, should be considered to be an indirect source of transmission of the Polgár tradition into the region on the Dnieper. These traditions might have also referred to the ideological ritual models, including cremation rites. However, at least thus far, this has not been documented by observations of the funerary rites of the middle Tripolye and early-late Tripolye communities stages B/CI).

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Our observations as outlined above justify our conclusion that the unequivocal (directly confirmed by sources) identification of the genetic background of the Sofievka cremation centre is impossible at present. Within the Dnieper Tripolye culture cremation appears as an exogenous ritual that also continued to exist after the culture’s disappearance. Neither is the social-ideological context of this adaptation known. In the social organization dimension a certain indication may be a simultaneous appearance of the stone battle axes, recognized as a sign of the emergence of a leader stratum („insignia”).

The main difficulty in solving this puzzle lies in the state of recognition of the closest cultural hinterland of the Sofievka „agglomeration” as far as forms of funerary ritual are concerned (on the basis of more general experiences of a considerable reduction of observations of cremation in the practice of area, archaeological prospecting may be assumed). In such a situation of the two admissible conceptions of the genesis of the Sofievka cremation centre: „Northern” (cf. the „Northern model” of cremation) or the Polgár, the former seems to be better justified on the grounds of general knowledge (Fig.1).

This opinion has a wider foundation in the presently revised conception of the directions of adaptation of cremation in Europe. When we reject the monocentric interpretation which is contradictory to the available source documentation and which indicates extra-European inspirations (Anatolia, the Near East), we consider justified paying more attention to the polycentric intra-European interpretation, contained in the hypothesis of the „Northern model”, i.e. to the archeometric and multi-aspectual analysis of all the manifestations of cremation in the area of the Central European Lowland and the western part of the forest zone of Eastern Europe [cf. on the question of relations between these areas: Koško 1994b]. When we look at the problem from this perspective, both Eneolithic cremation centres - the Baden and the Sofievka - should be interpreted as results of the reception of chronologically different, and spread over large areas, influences of the North (Neolithic-subneolithic cultures) which in given cases offered qualitatively new states of symbolic culture (Fig.1). It may be assumed that the main reason for this phenomenon was the ideological reinterpretation of cremation in the circle of the

Eneolithic culture, ascribing to it the „external” ideological valorization whose roots might have been in the circles of the Anatolian and Near Eastern civilisation [cf. in this volume: Klochko, Koško, Weapons. . . - genetic identification of daggers, Klochko, Stolpiak, Glass. . .].

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