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**FROM NOMADISM TO THE SEDENTARY WAY OF LIFE.
A CASE OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE LATE NEOLITHIC
AND THE EARLY BRONZE AGE COMMUNITIES IN
SOUTH-EASTERN POLAND: 2900–1650 BC¹**

At the beginning of this article I would like to emphasize that the terminology used here, referring to various forms of breeding economy, is based on the suggestions of V.A. Shnilerman [1980]; K. Tunia [1986]; O. Bar-Yosef and A. Khazanov's [1992]. In the light of the theories mentioned there only the population of the earliest horizon of the Corded Ware culture may be defined as practicing pastoral nomadism in the form most approximate to model interpretations. Pole apart model represent the economy of the Mierzanowice culture, in which breeding of animals grazing on pastures around the permanent settlements was supplemented by land cultivation, at the same time being a rejection of any form of the nomadism. Breeding activities of the population of the late stages of the Funnel Beaker culture and the Cracow-Sandomierz group of the Corded Ware culture are the intermediate forms between the above mentioned, extreme types of this kind of economy.

1. STATE OF DISCUSSION

Slovakian researchers see a decisive role of influences from the East on the formation of the Early Bronze Age civilization in the area of Małopolska and Slovakia. So in reference to the Koštany group [Pastor 1965, 1969] as well as Nitra group [Točík 1963, 1979; Vladar 1973] and to the so-called Chłopice-Veselé type they stated unequivocally their eastern roots. This thesis was emphasized in the strongest way by Jozef Vladar, who wrote: "Nach dem bisherigen Forschungsstand ist die

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Entstehung des Chłopice-Vesele-Typus mit dem osteuropäischen Gebiet zu suchen, nicht in Klempolen" adding that: "Die Träger der Glockenbecherkultur drangen im jüngeren Abschnitt ihrer Existenz durch Marchtal und die Mährische Pforte nordwärts nach Klempolen. Erst in dieser Zeit, bzw. etwas später, konnte es zur Expansion des Chłopice-Vesele-Typus aus dem osteuropäischen Raum nach Klempolen" [Vladar 1973: 255]. The same researcher maintained that the development of the local metal working in Slovakia occurred in connection with migration of the new population from the East European areas (probably from Caucasus) what was indicated by the use of the so called arsenic copper in metallurgic production [Vladar 1973: 254]. Also in Andrzej Kempisty's conception the Chłopice-Veselé group had extensive, Euro-Asian links. Its connection with the considerable movements of people was undoubted [Kempisty 1978: 420]. The radical population change in the Early Bronze Age in Małopolska had already been indicated earlier by Leon Kozłowski. He associated this change with climatic changes. However, he did not point to the East as an area of the source of migration of the newly arrived population [Kozłowski 1928: 3-35].

On the other hand, the local origins of the Early Bronze Age cultures in Małopolska were pointed to by Jozef Kostrzewski [1939-1948: 204-206], Konrad Jażdżewski [1981: 310-311], Witold Hensel [1973: 131-132], Klaus Schäfer [1987] and Marek Gedl [1989]. According to Jan Machnik's interpretation [Machnik 1967, 1978, 1987, 1991] the process of formation of the Chłopice-Veselé group/culture was much more complicated. It was formed in the river basin of the upper Vistula as a result of an interaction of a part of Corded Ware and Bell Beaker culture. A little later this group spread by means of migration around the western part of the Carpathian Mountains. However, it differed much from the cultures which preceded and co-created it. The cultural change in Małopolska was to be a part of processes occurring on larger areas. According to Jan Machnik it may be connected with the population movements in the Anatolian-Aegean and Caucasian zone which caused further migrations occurring like a chain reaction [Machnik 1967: 184-190, 1973: 127-165, 1978: 9-29, 1987: 154-164, 1991: 173-185].

However, it is difficult to see in the attempts made so far anything more than analysis on the level of cultural units in which particular researchers explicitly [Kowalczyk 1959] or implicitly (all the other authors) suggested a relation of cultures and cultural groups with the specific tribes. Apart from pointing to changes in climate (Leon Kozłowski) those researchers who were in favor of the culture change at the beginning of a new epoch did not present concrete reasons of migration movements. Those who were in favor of continuation did not present causes of the state of affairs which they suggested either, particularly in face of the evident civilizational turning point in the areas of the Carpathian Basin and areas occupied by the Únětice culture.

I think that further dwelling at the level of cultural taxonomy units as far as the question of the origin of the Carpathian Epicordic Cultural Circle longer gives any hope for progress in this field. Neither do I consider it proper to search only for one reason which caused a complex socio-cultural process. To answer to the question: what happened at the beginning of the bronze age in Małopolska, why just in this and not another moment and what mechanisms shaped the processes of evolution at this time we should involve the knowledge in the field of settlement forms, economy, social structures and ideology not only about the period we are interested in but also from the time which preceded it immediately. In the causal chain of events that form the picture of the Early Bronze Age civilization in Małopolska an important role was played by breeding economy in its many aspects: economic, social, organizational and ideological.

2. ENEOLITHIC

The beginning of socio-cultural transformations in the loess zone of Małopolska, the last link of which was the formation of the Mierzanowice culture, was an introduction of slash-and-burn system at the turn of the 5th and 4th millennium BC as a basic and regular agrotechnical treatment [Kruk 1993: 11-14]. It was accompanied by a considerable increase in size of settlement microregions. Hierarchically differentiated communities of the Funnel Beaker culture appeared [Milisauskas, Kruk 1984]. Significant changes were found in many other disciplines, among others in the technology of the flint processing.

Practicing an extensive system of agriculture caused the process of considerable ecological changes in the form of deforestation of great areas, particularly on the loess uplands. Open areas were made more permanent through grazing large herds of cattle and sheep. There was a fundamental contradiction in this system. Janusz Kruk wrote: "Its rise and economic efficiency was connected with the forest. In practice, it consisted in the destruction of these resources" [Kruk 1993: 11]. Populations using this method of cultivation were in a sense trapped. In the modified environment conditions were better for stock rearing than for a continuation of slash-and-burn agriculture. Thus there occurred the collapse of the Funnel Beaker culture and the permanent agricultural settlement system which had been dominant so far, and the prevalence of the Corded Ware culture which based its economy on the semi-migrating and migrating pastoralism [Kruk 1993: 14].

The sequence of events, which were reconstructed by Janusz Kruk, was an indispensable condition for the domination of breeding activities on the loess uplands of Małopolska at the end of Neolithic. However, it did not prejudge the shape of the socio-cultural structures at this time. A condition that was conducive to the strengthening of the trend of economic transformations described here was the appearance of a new model of economic behavior as well as social and cultural in the form of penetration of the Małopolska region by the representatives of the oldest horizon of the Corded Ware culture. Their appearance at any different moment in history would not have caused changes of a similar character and scale to those which occurred just at the end of the Neolithic. At this moment the question whether they came from the East (what is very probable) or not is not very important. It is important that they brought with them a new, fully-formed model of culture which legitimated the social system that was better adapted to the performance of tasks different than those of the economy of slash-and-burn agriculture. The groups of newcomers were not large. Their life style might have been most approximate to the model nomadic pastoralism [Bar-Yosef, Khazanov 1992: 2] in the prehistory of the area discussed here. An archaeologically visible trace of existence of these groups were the oldest sub-barrow graves of the Corded Ware culture. Acculturation processes of the part of population of the Funnel Beaker culture, which had already earlier been specialized in breeding activities, surely occurred quickly. Probably this population increased the number of the nomadic herdsmen of the Corded Ware culture, described as the Central European Corded Ware culture horizon.

Different situation prevailed among the populations which were still dealing with agricultural activities. In the "Baden-like" form (loesses of the western Małopolska) or not "Baden-like" (all the other areas) they continued traditions of the Funnel Beaker culture. However, the deforestation processes that have previously been mentioned were still deeper and deeper. Obviously this was conducive to the further development of the population of breeders and decreased the chances of the agricultural populations. A similar effect might be brought about by the asymmetry in the mutual relations of both populations. On the one hand, there were breeders-warriors who were well equipped with stone battle-axes and bows, and on the other, farmers who partly lived in the fortified settlements. Constant decrease in the number of farmers, accompanied by the simultaneous increase in the number of herdsmen led to another trap, this time of an economic character. Communities of breeders could not survive without access to agricultural products [Moszyński 1953: 46-48; Kruk 1980: 325; Shnilerman 1980: 230-243; Robertshaw, Collett 1983: 73]. At the moment when agricultural settlement disappeared in the middle of the 3rd millennium BC pastoral population of the Corded Ware culture faced a very serious crisis. The condition of its further existence was to undertake agricultural production. The drama was getting even more dramatic by the ideology that was

prevailing among the breeders. It can be resolved to a statement that a person who became a herdsman once should no longer humble himself by taking up agricultural activities [e.g. Evans-Pritchard 1940: 80]. In a situation when existence was threatened whole populations of breeders or their part started to practice other activities, mainly agriculture. Taking up agricultural activities was not a barrier for breeders that could never be passed both in the technological and organizational sense [Mace 1993: 369-370]. Archaeological form of this state of evolution of the communities of the Corded Ware culture was the Cracow-Sandomierz group. On the other areas of Małopolska groups of breeders were still existing that adhered to the "old Corded Ware culture" traditions. Traces of their existence were found in the Carpathian Mountains, in the Sandomierz Basin, on the Grzęda Sokalska and in the basin of the upper Dniester [Machnik, Ścibior 1991]. Until recently this type of the communities of the Corded Ware culture was described as Lubaczow group [cf. new suggestions in this matter by Machnik 1992]. In the Volhynian Upland communities of the late stages of Globular Amphora culture were developing at that time (Fig. 1).

Cultural assemblages, burial rites and settlement systems of the older phase of the Corded Ware culture groups from the western Małopolska loess uplands and from the areas located outside the loess zone (e.g. the Sandomierz Basin) show great similarities. However, with respect to the obvious differences in the degree of anthropogenic transformations of both zones and of the cultural milieu in which the Corded Ware culture people lived one should doubt whether the degree of pastoralization and nomadization was the same in these two regions. More forests and the lack of agricultural settlement in the Sandomierz Basin for sure forced the Corded Ware culture population to develop some form of nomadic agropastoralism and one should seriously consider gathering activities as very probable in this case.

Changes occurring in the western Małopolska uplands whose result was the rise of the Cracow-Sandomierz group of the Corded Ware culture appeared to be firm. The rise of small cemeteries, apart from the stabilization of the settlement network, may indicate restriction of mobility of human groups and probably greater role of agricultural activities in the economic structure. A certain microregionalization and stabilization of the settlement network may also be the proof of the beginning of the transformations in the character of social ties from the kinship ties dominant among the nomads to the territorial ties [Penkala-Gawęcka 1987: 150]. Funeral rites of the Cracow-Sandomierz group contain features of the ritual replica of equality and completeness of rights of all the adult members of the community. The lack of barrow mounds over the selected graves, identical construction of graves and fundamental unity of their equipment point to egalitarianism of these communities [Kempisty 1978: 389-391]. The gender symmetry of persons buried on these cemeteries is in sharp contrast with the rules of the burial rite of the old Corded Ware culture where male burials prevailed.

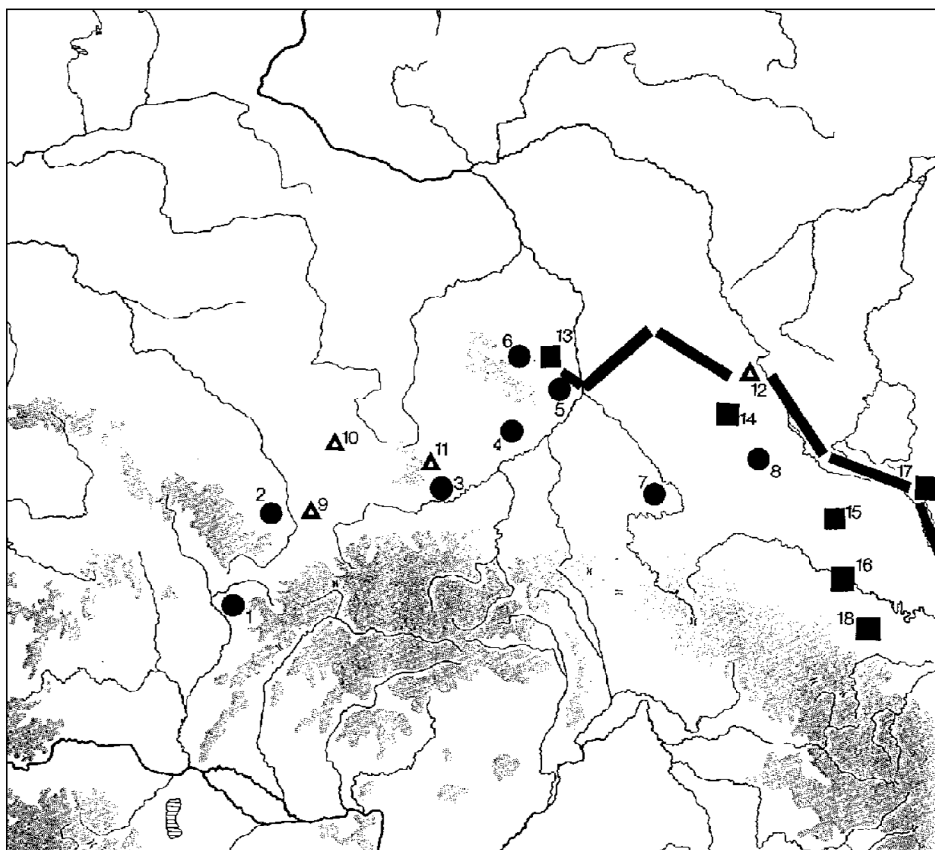


Fig. 1. Distribution of sites of the proto-Mierzanowice phase, where circles — graves, triangles — settlement materials, quadrangles — single elements of the proto-Mierzanowice phase (vessels, flint axes) within grave complexes of the Corded Ware culture, black line — permanent boundary between zones of settlement of the Corded Ware culture (in the South) and Globular Amphorae culture (in the North); 1 — Hulin, 2 — Kietrz, 3 — Cracow-Nowa Huta, site Kopiec Wandy, 4 — Żerniki Górne, 5 — Mierzanowice, 6 — Starachowice-Wierzbnik, 7 — Chłopice, 8 — Lvov, 9 — Syrynia, 10 — Piaseczno Kolonia, 11 — Iwanowice, 12 — Swierszczów-Kolonia, 13 — Nikisiałka, 14 — Lubcze, 15 — Klimkowce, 16 — Okniany, 17 — Plaucza Wielka, 18 — Gwoździec Stary.

In spite of assimilation of certain new elements inspired from the East (niche graves), communities of the Cracow-Sandomierz group reproduced in principle only the type of material culture that was characteristic of the local old Corded Ware culture groups. The new type of economy, forced by the historical situation, stimulated transformation of the settlement network and principal features of the social structure. As it seems the reason of continuation of the older traditions was in the extreme attractiveness of the herdsmen's culture. Quite often it has been found that pastoral communities, forced by the conditions to practice agriculture, in symbols, customs, in religious sphere were still interested in breeding (e.g. Robertshaw, Col-