

THE TRZCINIEC AREA OF THE EARLY BRONZE AGE CIVILIZATION: 1950-1200 BC

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Editor's Foreword

The Trzciniec Culture, Trzciniec Cultural Circle and Trzciniec Horizon are the names of a cultural area in the borderland of Western and Eastern Europe at the 2nd millennium BC. For over half a century a discussion has been going on over the taxonomic identification (chronological and spatial) and genetic and ethnic interpretation of this cultural unit.

In the debate, the 1980's and 1990's mark a significant cognitive turn caused by the growth of the corpus of sources, the use of systematic methods for the study of mobile sources and the proliferation of regional ^{14}C datings.

The present volume of "Baltic-Pontic Studies" is an attempt to register this breakthrough and a proposal for a new fitting of the Trzciniec phenomenon into the synthesis of Early Bronze Age Europe. The records include rudiments of new regional systematizations, foundations of their chronologies based on radiocarbon datings and a discussion of the mechanisms of socio-cultural changes which gave rise to the Trzciniec cultural area and later contributed to its disintegration.

A long-term intention of this volume giving a multifaceted view of the effects of the said cognitive breakthrough is to encourage a careful scrutiny of the development mechanisms of the European Early Bronze Age Civilization, in particular the role played in them by the societies inhabiting the drainages of the Baltic and Pontic Seas.

Editorial comment

1. All dates in the *B-PS* are calibrated [see: *Radiocarbon* vol.28, 1986, and the next volumes]. Deviations from this rule will be point out in notes.

2. The names of the archaeological cultures (especially from the territory of the Ukraine) are standarized according to the English literature on the subject [e.g. Mallory 1989]. In the case of a new term, the author's original name has been retained.

3. The place names located in the Ukraine have been transliterat from the versions suggested by the author (i.e. from the Belorussian, Ukrainian, Polish or Russian originals).

Janusz Czebreszuk

“TRZCINIEC”. AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

A traditional definition of archaeological culture refers to taxonomic characteristics of material artifacts. Specifically, it is based on the recurrence of a set of traits in a given territory in a precisely defined period of time [cf. a review of definitions in Pałubicka, Tabaczyński 1986:58].

The definition of the “Trzciniec phenomenon”, the widely accepted model of which came into being under a profound influence of Aleksander Gardawski [1959, cf. general discussion: Gardawski 1959:10], is close to the cultural brick theory of David L. Clarke [Clarke 1968:246ff.]. Browsing through literature, one may conclude that the “Trzciniec brick” is made up of the following traits: in technology — an admixture of coarse broken stone, in morphology — a large, sinuous-profile and slender pot with a relatively small bottom, in micromorphology — slanted, widened and flared rims and in ornamentation — usually single relief strips where the neck joins the belly. It is also commonly accepted that the traits listed above are the most “Trzciniec-like” if they occur simultaneously on the same vessel. A large, sinuous-profile pot with a relatively small bottom and a slanted, flared and widened rim, decorated with a single relief strip where the neck meets the belly and made of clay containing a high amount of coarse broken stone is then **an ideal “Trzciniec” type**. Actually, the only “Trzciniec” ideal type.

Published some time ago, the research done in this area by Wojciech Blajer [1987] was highly instructive. He had carried out considerable work reviewing “Trzciniec” source materials and presented his results in the form of cartograms illustrating the dispersion of funerary rite traits [Blajer 1987:map 3] and selected traits of pottery and metal goods [Blajer 1987:map 4]. In addition, he delineated the range of pottery decorated with relief strips. Wojciech Blajer, however, did not draw any conclusions from his own findings whether it was justified to establish a separate

unit called the Trzciniec Culture. It has to be stressed here that the “ammunition” that he collected in his work would be, indeed, of great caliber. The conclusions following from his work are as follows:

Firstly, the only taxonomic indicator of the “Trzciniec” territory is pottery decorated with a relief strip.

Secondly, other pottery traits, flint goods and extremely rare metal goods [cf. recently Blajer 1998], settlement organization and funerary rites make up a true mosaic in the “Trzciniec” oecumene. This mosaic is better suited to identify regional differences than to search for a uniform system of supraregional links.

A question thus arises which I asked already in 1996 [Czebreszuk 1996:155], namely, how it is possible that an idea not meeting basic requirements set by classic archaeological taxonomy with respect to the category of archaeological culture has been taken to be exactly that for so many years and has taken root in all synthetic works ? [e.g. Sherratt 1994:247].

Hence it is indisputable that abandoning the cultural brick theory in defining the Trzciniec Culture is absolutely necessary. However, it remains to be discussed how deep and extensive the suggested reform should be.

On may part, I suggest to look at the “Trzciniec phenomenon” from a broad time and space perspective. This view opposes Aleksander Gardawski’s model, especially with respect to the broadly understood archaeological taxonomy closely related to an entirely new methodological framework [Czebreszuk 1996; 1998a; Makarowicz 1998b]. The Trzciniec issue may be divided into two fundamental levels: first of **interregional similarities** and the second of **regional peculiarities**.

A. INTERREGIONAL DIMENSION OF TRZCINIEC

The radical taxonomic assessment, expressed above, should not be taken to mean a rejection of the whole legacy relating to the “Trzciniec phenomenon”. It cannot be denied that there exists a small set of traits that occurs in various mutual arrangements and in regionally different contexts in the whole area considered as “Trzciniec’s”. Among them are forms of a large sinuous-profile pot with a relatively small bottom, frequently (but not always) decorated only with a relief strip where the neck meets the belly. Less frequently among these traits are slanted and widened rims and a peculiar technology of vessel manufacture (based on adding coarse broken stone).

Worth giving a thought is the regional variety of contexts in which the said traits occur. Already Aleksander Gardawski himself stressed this fact which, in his

opinion, usually reflected the significance of chronologically older groups [Gardawski 1959:111-129]. Credit goes to Wojciech Blajer for the observation that such local peculiarities include so fundamental a cultural trait as funerary rites [Blajer 1987]. We must be dealing with a similar situation in the case of settlement systems and ways of finding subsistence; cf. two examples: loess of Małopolska [Górski, Kadrow 1996] and sand of Kujawy [Makarowicz 1998b].

A.1. TRZCINIEC PACKAGE — INTERPRETATION ALTERNATIVE

I would like to suggest now to call the set of interregionally “Trzciniec” traits a package (specifically Trzciniec package) by analogy to the concept of Beaker package known from the literature which was proposed by Colin Burgess in 1976 to explain the phenomenon of Bell Beakers (BB) [Burgess 1976]. I am convinced that the suggested term reflects better, than both “culture” and “horizon”, the peculiarity of the phenomenon under investigation.

The definition of package (specifically Beaker package) suggested by the quoted author read as follows: “*This (i.e. Beaker phenomenon — J. Cz.) would see Beakers as something extra-cultural, connected with some sort of activity which was taken up by societies throughout Europe. Together with the artefacts with which they are regularly associated they could be said to form a 'Beaker package', which would be merely the outward manifestation of whatever international phenomenon is involved*” [Burgess 1976:309]. A (Beaker) package would thus be understood “*...as part of an artefact assemblage rather than a cultural assemblage. ...it represents no more than a fashion*” [Burgess 1976:310]. Being archaeologically inspiring, this definition is nevertheless quite general.

In order to facilitate further discussion, it is desirable to make the definition of cultural package more specific by listing its basic characteristics.

1. Identifying a phenomenon by calling it a package does not predetermine its cultural character (as is the case with many other archaeological categories, a package does not connote one and only one trait of a living culture); in this sense the concept of package refers to the form and not to the subject-matter of a given phenomenon.
2. A package has narrow cultural meaning, i.e. it concerns only one custom, institution or subpopulation in a given cultural group; the remaining elements of a given culture do not undergo any radical modification when a package appears.
3. The set of traits making up a given package must have been significantly culturally, which is evidenced by broad geographical ranges of individual packages.
4. It is possible to find the place (region) where a given package came into being.
5. A package is subject to dissemination, the mechanism of which is based primarily

on cultural contact; thus it spreads in societies that in one way or another are in contact, i.e. its ways of expansion reveal traditional channels of cultural contact; only secondarily can they be considered as creators of new spatial relations.

6. It is a taxonomically (formally) dynamic phenomenon and most probably culturally (content-wise) as well. It changes from region to region: a given cultural package in different regions is similar but never the same.

7. The final stage of investigation of a given package should be an interpretation of its cultural character, i.e. an answer to the question what cultural trait the package reveals.

Going back to the Trzciniec package, it should be observed at the outset that it was relatively meager in comparison to the preceding Beaker package, both in terms of constituting traits and in their formal richness.

A.2. TRZCINIEC PACKAGE. CONSTITUTING ELEMENTS

I shall briefly discuss now the three elements of the Trzciniec package mentioned above beginning with “Trzciniec technology” and slanted and widened rims and ending with the form of the “Trzciniec pot”.

The concept of “Trzciniec technology” is known especially from the Polish literature [Gardawski 1959:90; Miśkiewicz 1978:176]. It stands for a manner of vessel manufacturing based on the addition of coarse broken stone in thick-wall vessels with their surface smoothed out with a hard slick. The coarse admixture protrudes from the surface causing numerous fractures around such places. There are a few potential sources where it may have come from. To one of such sources, namely the Globular Amphora Culture (GAC), attention was drawn by Aleksander Kośko in the 1970's [Kośko 1979; Czerniak, Kośko 1980:259]. In the case of “Trzciniec” in Kujawy this source continues to be the most probable one [Czebreszuk 1996:158; Makarowicz 1998b].

Another source points out to a potential significance of the tradition of the Comb-like Pottery Culture which expanded to the south, as far as today's northern Belarus towards the end of the Neolithic. One trait characterizing the pottery of this culture is a technology based on the use of coarse broken granite and flint [Kryvaltsevich 1991; 1997; Czebreszuk 1996:158].

The last tradition that can be taken into account in the search for the origins of the “Trzciniec technology” is the Single Grave Culture (SGC). Only in the 1980's and 1990's could more information be gathered on the settlement pottery of this group. It turned out then that there were clear differences in the technology of making settlement and grave vessels. The former, specifically large vessels, were

most often made with the use of coarse broken stone technology [Stegen 1954; Liversage 1987; Mertens 1998].

To sum up, it can be claimed that regardless of the fact which of the above groups played a decisive role in the development of the “Trzciniec technology” one thing is now absolutely clear: the “Trzciniec” tradition of pottery technology has clearly its roots in the north, on the Lowland. It is worth mentioning here that the technological standard of the “Trzciniec” pottery in Małopolska, hence in the South, departs significantly from the formula recognized by Aleksander Gardawski to be characteristic of the said group, which has been made absolutely clear by the recent research by Jacek Górski [1981:24-25].

For the study of the origins of widened and slanted rims, the most complete set of data comes now from the Pripets drainage. Owing to the studies of Mykola Kryvaltsevich there has been registered a complete sequence of stylistic transformations of rims from the Middle Dnieper Culture to local varieties of the “Trzciniec” tradition. An initial appearance of widened rims has been recorded, too. In the end of the sequence classical, “Trzciniec”, widened and slanted rims have been placed [Kryvaltsevich 1991, Fig. 57:10, 17; 58:1; Czebreszuk 1996:158].

The crucial issue in the study of the origins of individual traits of the Trzciniec package is the form of the “Trzciniec pot”. Recently, its ties with the traditions of the Single Grave and Bell Beaker Cultures have been discussed [Czebreszuk 1996:157; 1998a; Makarowicz 1998b]. In the German literature this issue is closely related to the question of the so-called *Riesenbecher* which calls here for a more detailed discussion.

A.3. RIESENBECHER. DIAGNOSTIC VALUE

This concept was introduced into the literature by Karl H. Jacob-Friesen [1939]. However, it was only Kurt Stegen who defined this form and whose definition became a point of departure for studies of many German researchers [Struve 1955:132-133; Uenze 1961; Harck 1971/72; Lichardus 1979/80; Nelson 1988:161-173; Moser 1994; Mertens 1996; 1988]. According to Kurt Stegen *Riesenbecher* “*sind alle von einer groben Machart (wandstärke bis zu 2 cm), der Ton ist oft sehr stark mit kleinen Steinchen durchsetzt. Die Größe schwankt zwischen 30 und 50-55 cm (...). Ein Besonders charakteristisches gemeinsames Kennzeichen aller Riesenbecher ist der winzig kleine Boden. (...) Die Form des Riesenbeckers wird durch das S-förmige Profil in seiner ganzen Variationsbreite bestimmt. (...) Der Hauptanteil an der Variierung des S-Profiles, die bei den kleinen Bechern auf die mannigfachste Art. erreicht wird, kommt beim Riesenbecher der Gestaltung des Randes zu. In allen Fällen handelt es sich um*

einen kurzen, meist scharf abgesetzten Rand, der steil (...) bis trichterförmig (...) sein kann. Die Nahtstelle zwischen Rand und Körper wird oft durch einen Wurst oder Wellenleiste betont (...)" ... A detailed review of both the history of research and the current state of knowledge has been recently done by Andrea Moser [Moser 1994:3-5] and Kathrin Mertens [Mertens 1996; 1998]. Hence, I shall focus here on a summary of issues that are important for our discussion.

From the point of view of typology, forms included among *Riesenbecher* in the original definition are currently divided into two basic categories. The first comprises all-over decorated vessels called *potbeker* (a Dutch term adopted in the German literature) [cf. main source: Lehman 1965; Lanting 1973] which I shall ignore in further discussion, whereas the second consists of *Riesenbecher* proper, undecorated or with a relief element in the place where the neck meets the belly (one or two relief strips, or possibly a few handles placed symmetrically around the circumference).

Among the *Riesenbecher* five basic types are distinguished at present: (a) undecorated, (b) with several horizontal lines incised in the place where the neck meets the belly, (c) with a relief strip bearing undulating fingertip impressions, (d) with a single or double simple relief strip and (e) with a row of handles (buttons) [cf. the most comprehensive review: Moser 1994; Mertens 1996].

Relying on the comparative data and information on the contexts of occurrence of individual *Riesenbecher* types, each of the above types should be assigned a slightly different cultural and genetic position.

Owing to recent results of research into the settlement aspect of the Corded Ware Culture (CWC) in Central Europe, the variety with a relief strip bearing undulating fingertip impressions (type c) can be now dated to the early development phases of the CWC encompassing without doubt the pan-European horizon (A) and quite probably the whole old Corded Ware stage. This type of large (storage) vessels is now believed to be the most important indicator of the oldest CWC settlement materials [Buchvaldek 1986; Liversage 1987:120-121; Czebreszuk 1996:82; Wolf 1997].

Undecorated *Riesenbecher* (type a) do not have so unequivocal cultural and chronological connotations. Of crucial importance are in this case the contexts of their occurrence, for instance urns in a SGC cremation cemetery (e.g. Sande in Hamburg-Lohbrügge) [Schwantes 1936:79ff.], co-occurrence with type K axe in compact assemblages (Mannhagen, Kreis Lauenburg) [Kersten 1966:77ff.]. They also occur in megalithic monuments, usually in stratigraphically youngest positions (e.g. Oldendorf Kreis Lüneburg) [Körmer, Laux 1980:173]. Of great importance are ornamentation traits of many vessels from the already mentioned cemetery at Sande, namely zone patterns made with the use of the knurling technique [Schindler 1960:Taf. 87:4-6], showing affinity with the tradition of BB. The above observations justify the inclusion of the undecorated variety of the *Riesenbecher* in the developed

stages of the SGC and the beginnings of the so-called dagger period (in Danish nomenclature LN I), i.e. the period with BB.

The *Riesenbecher* with a row of handles (type e), called Hitzacker by Ole Hark [Hark 1971/72] was related by him to the Únětice tradition. Recently, exhaustive works by Bernd Zich have appeared discussing the north-western frontier of the Únětice Culture [Zich 1986] and the whole northern zone of that culture [Zich 1996]. However, there is no mention in these works about the *Riesenbecher*. Only in the case of type 20C storage vessels does the quoted author see any similarity of that form with the *Riesenbecher* of the Hitzacker type [Zich 1996:187, footnote 665]. The issue of the origins of the pottery with handles is not a simple one at all, nevertheless there is no doubt that these forms occurred in the area in question at the same time as old-Únětice finds. Furthermore, grave finds from Frauenmark, Kreis Parchim [Jacobs 1991:53 and Taf. 26:26, 27] and from Lanz, Kreis Ludwigslust [Jacobs 1991:57 and Taf. 27:14-17] indicate that the type under discussion was contemporaneous with the stage when BB traits occurred.

The type decorated with several horizontal, incised lines (type b) was identified by Hildegard Nelson as type 3 [Nelson 1988:162]. In Laave, Kreis Hagenow, site 1 [Jacobs 1991:56], two vessels decorated in this way together with a specimen of a variety close to potbeker were found, which testifies to the contemporaneity of the discussed type with BB. While the studies of Erwin Strahl prove that multiple incised line decorations are known from the interfluvial area between the Lower Elbe and Weser throughout the SGC development [Strahl 1990:204].

The type of the greatest interest to us, type d, with a single relief strip (or possibly two) will be discussed in greater detail, separately for each region of the western North European Plain.

North-west Germany (Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein), Fig. 1.

The discussed form of vessels is certainly contemporaneous there with the *Riesenbecher* with handles (type e), which is evidenced by finds from Rebenstorf, Kreis Lüchow-Dannenberg and from Templingen, Kreis Lüchow-Dannenberg. On the basis of an amphora also found there, these finds are related by Andrea Moser to the older stages of the Únětice Culture (UC) development [Moser 1994:14-16]. In Jeersdorf, Kreis Rotenburg, site 18, a fragment of a large sinuous-profile vessel with a double relief strip was found together with a container decorated with a “barbed wire” ornament [Strahl 1990, Taf. 52:3-4] which is dated to the decline of BB in Jutland and on the Lower Rhine. In Central European categories this is equivalent to the very beginning of BA1 according to P. Reinecke. Thus, generally speaking, in the said area, the forms under discussion are dated to the period from the SGC [Struve 1955:133], through the period of BB influence [Struve 1955:133ff.; Schirinig 1972:66; Lichardus 1979/80:357] until the beginnings of the stage revealing Únětice impact [Voelkel 1963:104; Hark 1971/72:22ff.].

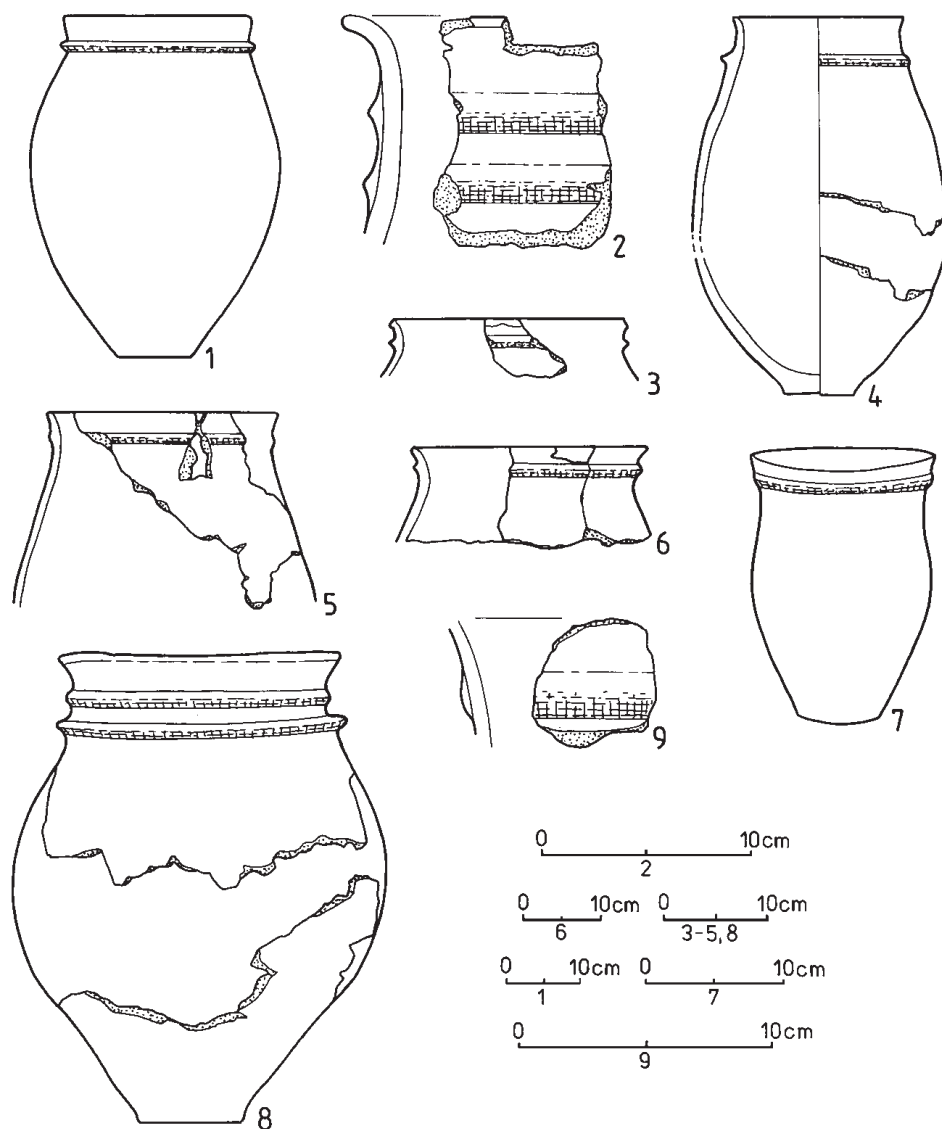


Fig. 1. Selected examples of type "d" *Riesenbecher* from Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. 1 - Rebenstorf, Kreis Lüchow-Dannenberg [Moser 1994:Abb. 2:5], 2 - Jeersdorf, Kr. Rotenburg, stan. 18 [Strahl 1990:Taf. 52:4], 3-5 - Hitzacker, Ldkr. Lüchow-Dannenberg [Moser 1984:Abb. 2:1-3], 6 - Borgdorf, Kr. Rendsburg [Struve 1955:Taf. 24:1], 7 - Hannover, Gr. Buchholz [Struve 1955:Taf. 24:5], 8 - Gross-Holzhausen, Kr. Osterburg [Moser 1994:Abb. 3:2], 9 - Elstorf, Kr. Harburg [Strahl 1990:Taf. 19:12].

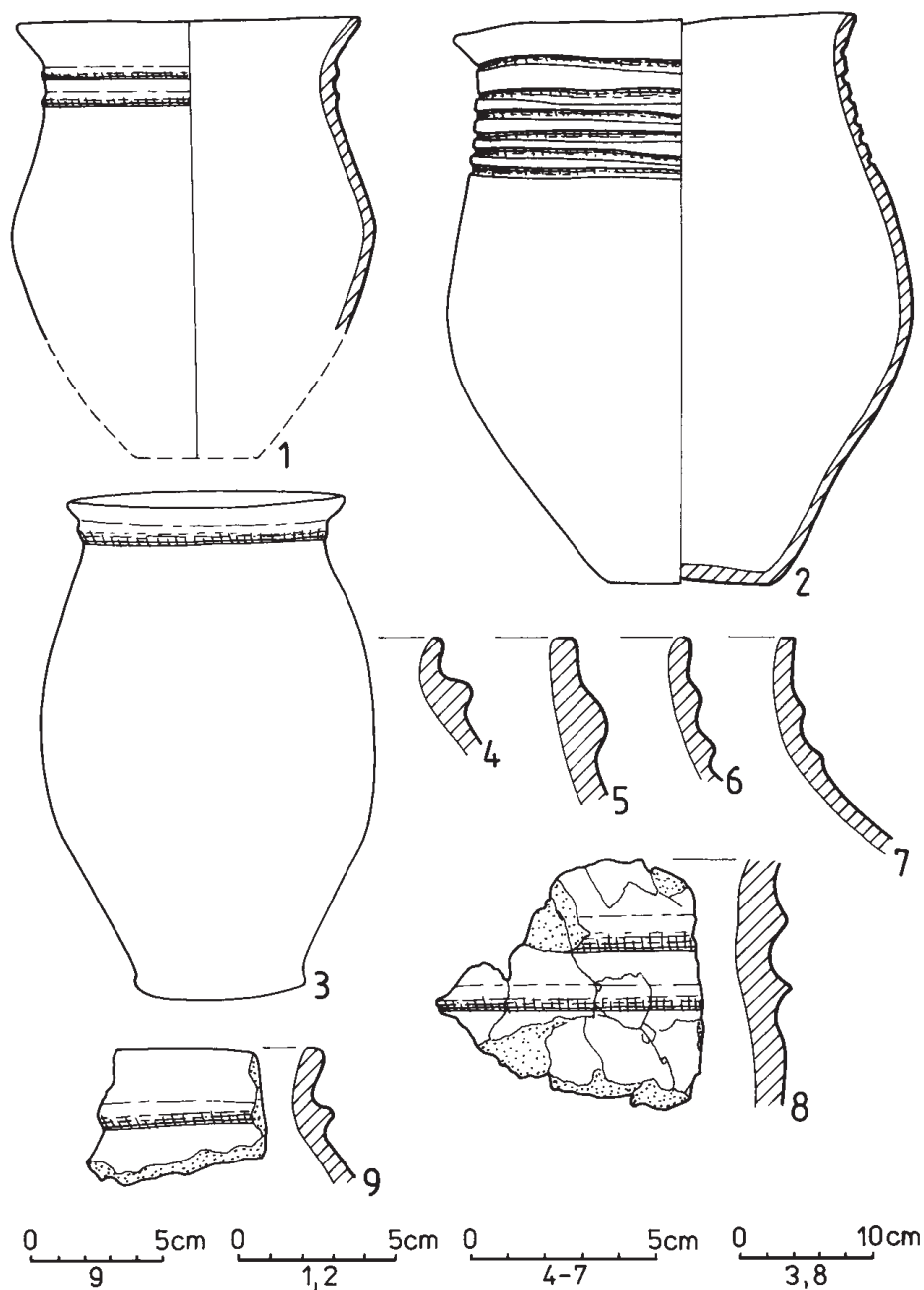


Fig. 2. Selected examples of type "b" and "d" *Riesenbecher* from Denmark. 1-2 - Myrhøj [Jensen 1973:Fig.27 and 40], 3 - Sebberup [Glob 1952:70], 4-7 Tastum [Simonsen 1983:Fig.6], 8 - St. Valbyvej [Schiellerup 1992: Fig.28], 9 - Vorbasse [Hvass 1986:Fig.11].

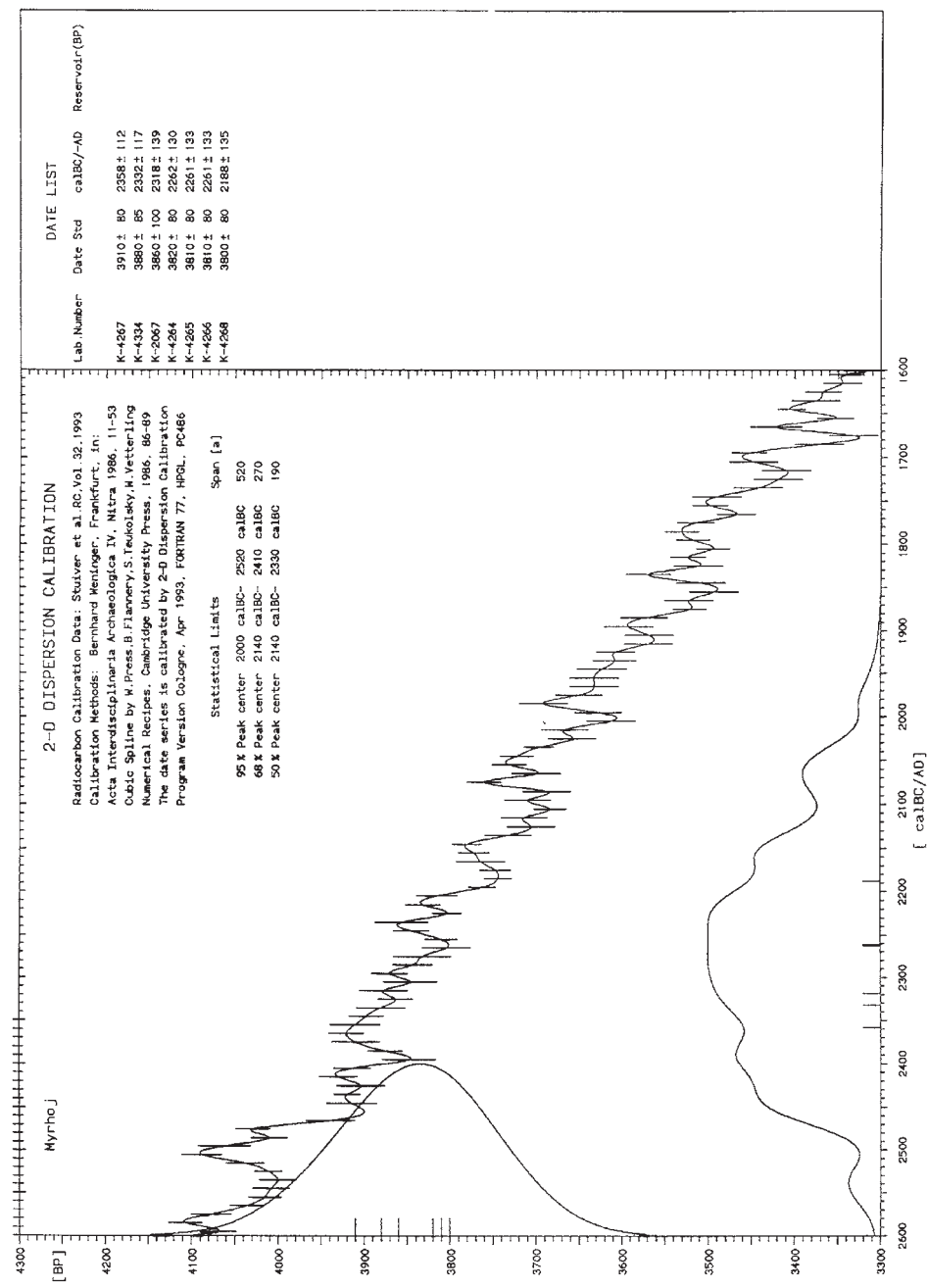


Fig. 3. Myrhøj, Northern Jutland, joint calibration of a series of seven ¹⁴C dates from the settlement. Values of individual dates according to H. Vandkilde [1996].

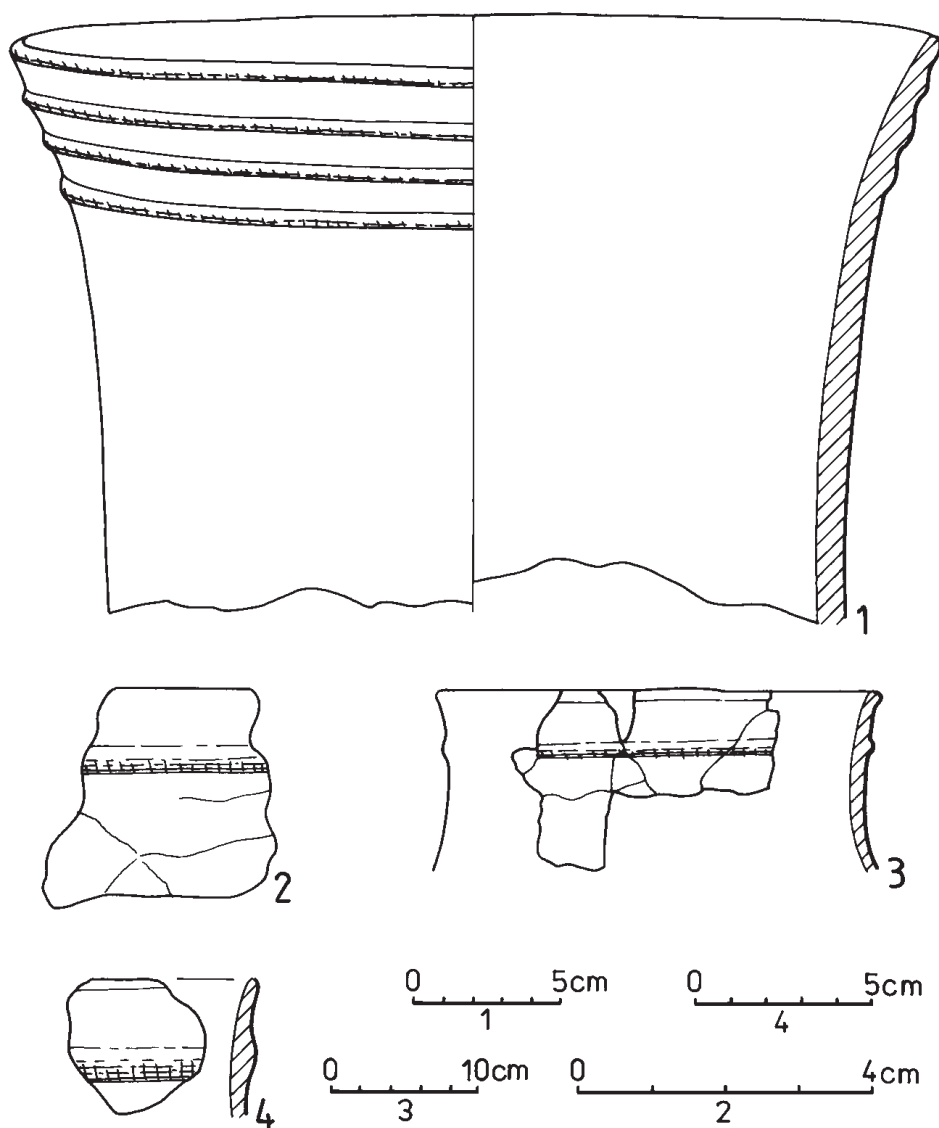


Fig. 4. Selected examples of type “b” and “d” *Riesenbecher* from north-eastern Germany. 1 - Lanz [Jacobs 1991:Taf. 27:17], 2 - Settin [Jacobs 1991:Taf.20:12], 3 - Rothenklempenow [Jacobs 1991:Taf.38:30], 4 - Grünhof [Jacobs 1991:Taf.30:11].

Jutland, Fig. 2.

From the chronological point of view, this is the most important of all the analyzed regions. The pot forms of interest to us here are known there from well-dated settlement assemblages. They appear already in the settlement at Myrhøj [Jensen 1973:92, Fig. 27] (cf. Fig. 2:1-2), eponymous for the group which represents a local variety of the BB in northern and central Jutland [Liversage 1987]. We have in respect of this site a series of seven ¹⁴C dates [Vandkilde 1996:372], the joint calibration of which shows that the settlement existed before the end of the 3rd millennium BC (Fig. 3). Next, these forms are known from settlements throughout the LN period, e.g. St. Valbyvej [Schilleup 1992:44, Fig. 28, 29], Vorbasse [Hvass 1986:333, Fig. 11], Tastum [Simonsen 1983:Fig. 6], only to disappear in the Early Bronze Age there, i.e. ca 1700 BC.

North-eastern Germany (Mecklenburg, Vorpommern and Brandenburg), Fig. 4.

This is an area which has not been studied much, which is reflected in the amount of sources published. Of fundamental importance in this respect is the work by Jörn Jacobs who has published a number of examples of relevant forms [Jacobs 1991:Taf. 20:8, 11, 12; Taf. 27:17; Taf. 28:30; Taf. 30:11] generally dating them to the whole period of development of the SGC.

The above review leads to several conclusions. The first and most important one concerns the validity and further use of the concept of *Riesenbecher* in the hitherto typological formula. In the light of the above comments there is no justification for it. Individual types of the *Riesenbecher* are related to different cultural traditions and are assigned different chronological positions (from horizon A of the CWC, through the SGC and BB until the stage of Únětice influences, hence from ca 2900/2800 BC until the beginnings of the 2nd millennium BC). This does not mean, however, that one should abandon altogether to define such a category of artifacts. Such an opinion has been recently voiced in the German literature by Erwin Strahl [1990]. He does not set up the *Riesenbecher* as a separate category [Strahl 1990:56-57] and claims that until recently settlement pottery of various SGC phases has been mistakenly assigned to it [Strahl 1990:204]. It would be advisable to use a more precise definition of the *Riesenbecher* which would include only such varieties of it that are primarily related to a single stage of prehistory (development of the SGC and LN) and a similar genetic relationship (SGC, BB, possibly Únětice influences). Taking this into account, I suggest to reserve the *Riesenbecher* appellation for types 'a', 'b', 'd' and 'e' only.

The second conclusion concerns the issue of the spreading of these varieties of the *Riesenbecher* that are of the greatest interest to us, namely type b with multiple, incised lines and type d with one or two relief strips. They occur in the vast, lowland area of Western Europe, from the mouth of the Rhine in the west, through Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland as far as Brandenburg and Mecklenburg in the east.

The third conclusion concerns the chronological and cultural position of these *Riesenbecher* types which formally most closely related to “Trzciniec” patterns types b and d). They are associated with the tradition of the developed SGC and local BB while the chronology of their occurrence covers in total the period from ca 2500 BC (beginnings of the developed phase of the SGC and the dawn of the “North European BB province” [Czebreszuk 1996:250] until about 2000 BC (i.e. contemporaneously with the old-Únětice stage of the UC).

A summary of the above discussion, encompassing criticism of the hitherto model of “Trzciniec” and the digression on the *Riesenbecher* as well, should include a few statements of a general nature. The first of them pertains to the basic element of the Trzciniec package, namely the slender, sinuous-profile pots with a characteristic ornament. They are genetically related with the SGC tradition and the North European BB province, hence with the orientation of cultural ties which has been completely ignored in the studies of the origins of “Trzciniec”. The question of the “Trzciniec technology” does not exclude the north-western “trace” in the search for the origins of the Trzciniec package, either. Only the third element believed to be an interregionally “Trzciniec” trait, i.e. slanted and widened rims, in the light of our knowledge does not bear any relation to the SGC tradition. Owing to its genetic connections, it leans rather towards the Middle Dnieper Culture. This situation reflects the dynamics of a cultural package. A broader presentation of the dynamics shall follow below.

A.4. “TRZCINIEC”. LINES OF REVISION

Let's confront now the above conclusions concerning the western portion of the European Plain with our knowledge on the areas traditionally believed to be the “Trzciniec” oecumene.

First, we should consider whether it is possible to date the moment of appearance of “Trzciniec pots” there with a greater accuracy or, more precisely, to establish that moment for individual regions within the “Trzciniec” territory. A precise placement in time of the beginnings of the said form is possible in the case of the Kujawy (broadly meant, including the Chełmno District, Krajna and Pałuki) and Małopolska centers.

In the first of the mentioned centers, the prototypes of “Trzciniec pots” (of both types: those decorated with relief strips and those with multiple, incised lines) appear in Biały Bór, commune of Grudziądz, site 17 [Bokiniec 1987:Fig. 2:11; 5:10], Narkowo, commune of Dobrze, site 16 [Czebreszuk, Przybytek 1997:Fig. 8:8; Przybytek 1996] (Fig. 5:1, 5), Dęby, commune of Dobrze, site 29A [Czebreszuk 1996:Fig.

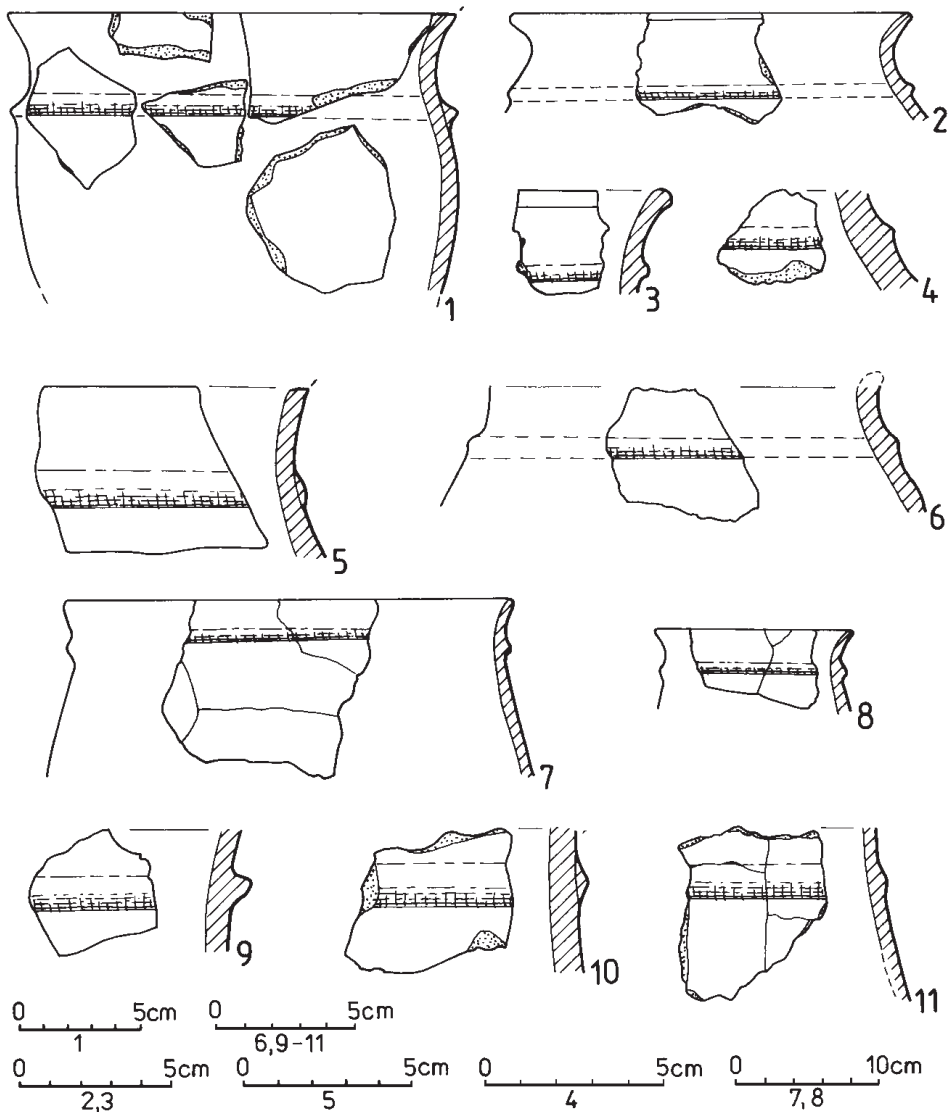


Fig. 5. Selected examples of *Riesenebecher* from Kujawy and the Chełmno District. 1,5 - Narkowo, gm. Dobre, stan. 16 [Przybytek 1996], 2,3 - Potok, gm. Włocławek, stan. 1 [Bokinić 1989], 4 - Chlewiska, gm. Dąbrowa Biskupia, stan.56 [Czebreszuk 1996], 6 - Dęby, gm. Dobre, stan. 29A [Czebreszuk 1996], 7,8 - Grudziądz-Mniszek, stan. 3 [Bokinić, Marciniak 1987], 9 - Smarglin, gm. Dobre, stan. 53 [Makarowicz 1993], 10 - Biały Bór, gm. Grudziądz, stan. 17 [Bokinić 1987], 11 - Mszano, gm. Brodnica, stan. 7 [Bokinić 1987].

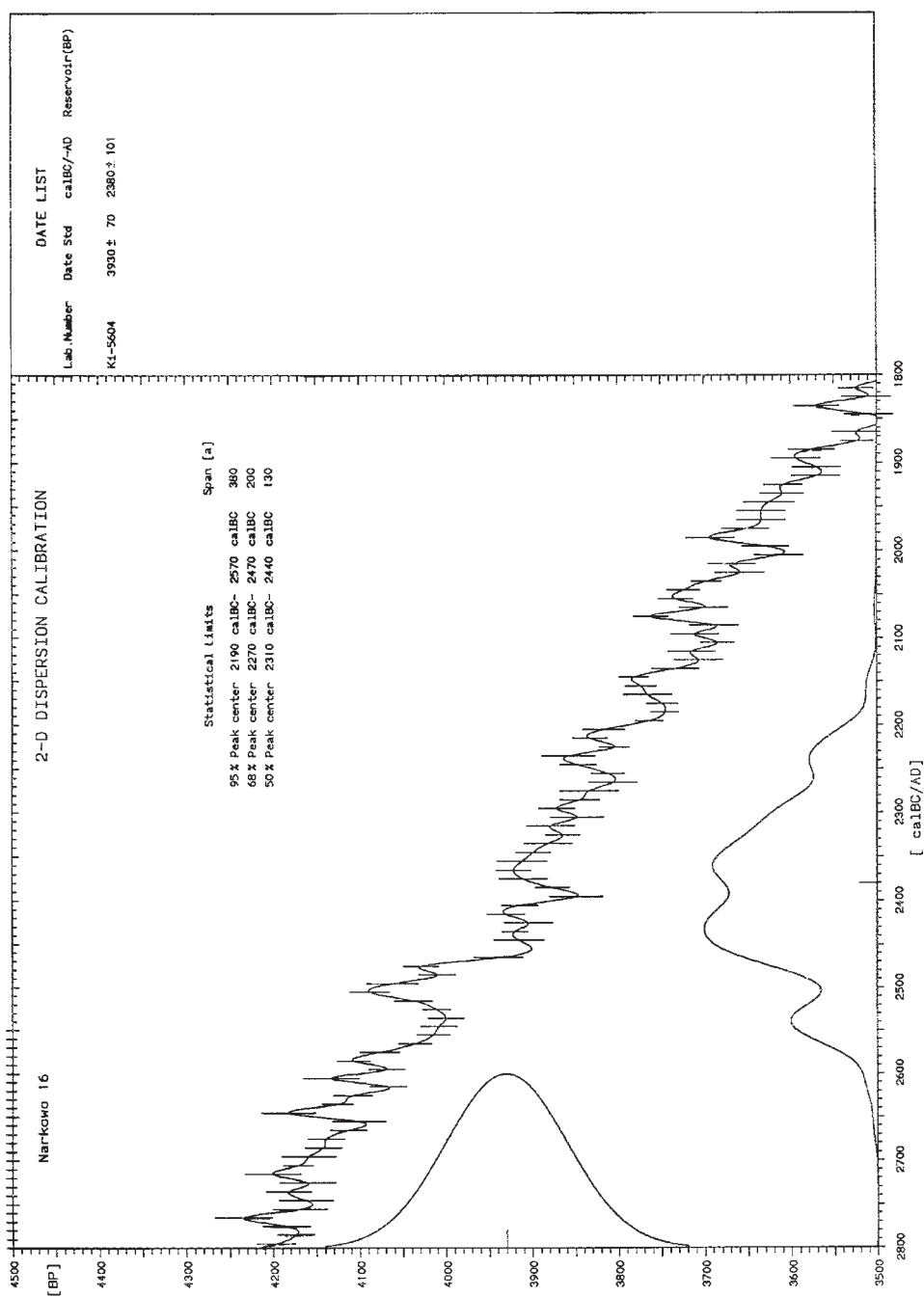


Fig. 6. Narkowo, commune of Dobre, site 16. Results of ^{14}C dating for a sample of charcoal from feature 23. According to J. Czebreszuk [1996].

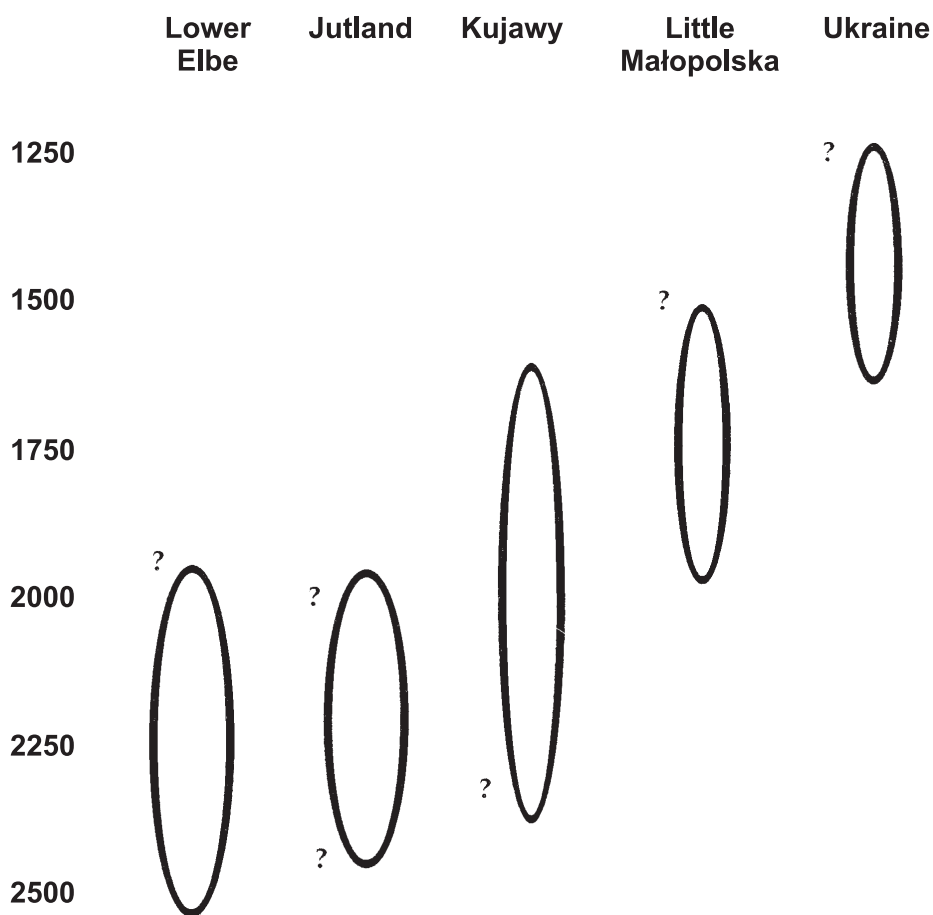


Fig. 7. Dating of the Trzciniec package in selected regions of Central Europe.

48:11] (Fig. 5:6), Toruń-Grębocin, site III [Bokiniec 1995:Table XVI], Grudziądz-Mniszek, commune of Grudziądz, site 3 [Bokiniec, Marciniak 1987, Fig. 9:3, 4] (Fig. 5:7, 8), Modliborzyce, commune of Inowrocław ("vase-like" form) [Knapowska-Mikołajczykowa 1957:64, Fig. 68b], Korzecznik, commune of Kłodawa, site 14 [Czebreszuk 1996:Fig. 53:30, 54:1, 17] and quite possibly in Brześć Kujawski, commune of Brześć Kujawski, site 4, pit 738 [Grygiel 1987:Fig. 2:2], Chlewiska, commune of Dąbrowa Biskupia, site 56 [Czebreszuk 1996:Fig. 45:15] (Fig. 5:4) as well as in Smarglin, commune of Dobrze, site 22 [Czebreszuk 1996:Fig. 35:27, 31, 40] and Smarglin, site 53 [Makarowicz 1993:Fig. 8:22, 23; 9:19, 26; 10:2] (Fig. 5:9). The set-

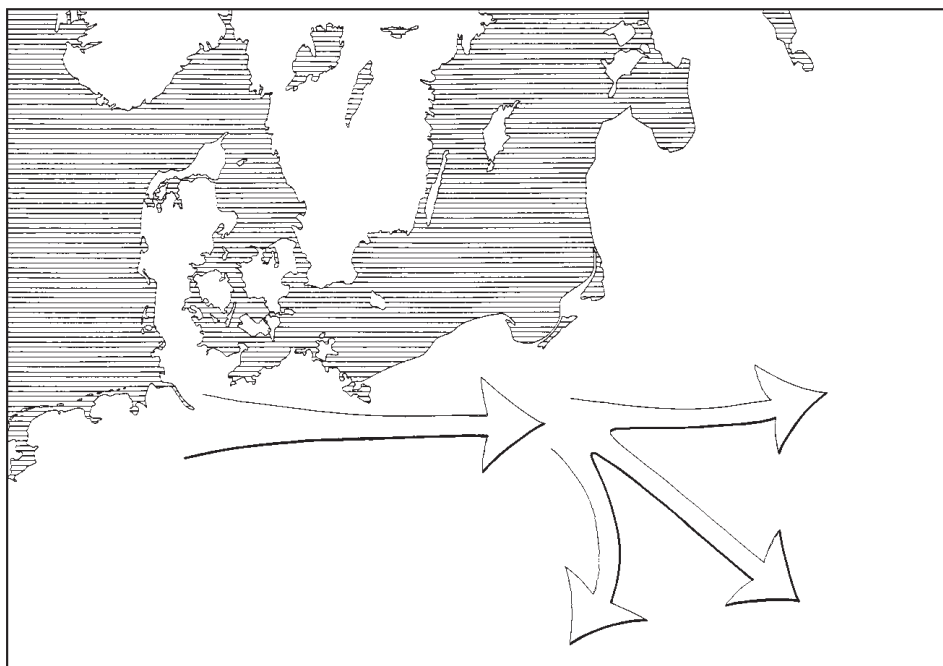


Fig. 8. Spreading routes of the Trzciniec package in Central Europe.

tlement in Narkowo has one dating reporting the age of 3930 ± 70 BP (Ki-5604) that sets an approx. interval of 2440-2300 BC (Fig. 6) [cf. Czebreszuk 1996:119-121 and Tab. 26]. Recently, another ^{14}C dating has been obtained for the materials from the settlement in Smarglin, site 22, which reported the age of 3950 ± 45 (Ki-6885) (kind information from prof. Aleksander Koško for which I am very grateful). The dating sets a period of time which is generally concurrent with that from Narkowo, namely from 2550 to 2350 BC. The mentioned finds, in particular from Biały Bór, Dęby, Narkowo and Smarglin (site 22 and 53), show that the beginnings of the presence of “Trzciniec pot” prototypes in the Kujawy center are tied to the appearance of the pottery ornamented with zone patterns utilizing the knurling technique which is characteristic of the oldest stage of the BB tradition influences. This process has been recently tentatively dated to the beginning of the second half of the 3rd millennium BC [Czebreszuk 1996:191-192].

In Małopolska we are faced with a very clear situation. “Trzciniec pots” with widened and slanted rims appear there as an element of a greater cultural whole, believed to be a culture of migrants, ca 1900 BC [Kempisty, Włodarczak 1996:132; Górski, Kadrow 1996; Górski 1997; 1998; Włodarczak 1998].

When comparing the time of occurrence of “Trzciniec pots” in different regions

of Central Europe (Fig. 7), it can be observed that they appear first along the western limits of the area of distribution, i.e. on the Lower Elbe and in Jutland, then in Kujawy and only later in Małopolska. Assuming that we deal here with one cultural process, a later chronology can be adopted for the “Trzciniec pot” in regions located east of Kujawy (Fig. 8). This conclusion is borne out by the first series of ^{14}C dates obtained for the materials of the so-called East Trzciniec Culture from the cemetery in Malopolovecke in Ukraine [Kovalyukh et al., Absolute (Radiocarbon) Chronology..., in this volume]. The finds obtained there can be dated to ca 1600 BC at the earliest. In sum, it can be plausibly claimed that the origins of the form in question can be related to the local SGC and BB groups from the western part of the North European Plain. While looking at the cartogram (Fig. 8) it can be also observed that the “Trzciniec pot”, or the most important element of the Trzciniec package, spread from the west to the east and from a certain moment (ca 1900 BC) also from the north to the south.

The “Trzciniec phenomenon” displays in this respect a trait that is characteristic of all packages. What is meant here is occurrence at different time in individual regions which can be linearly ordered. It is possible to indicate the region where a given phenomenon began and to show the lines, along which it spread. As an analogy may serve the dynamics of the BB which, for instance, ca 2300 BC withdraw from the areas on the Upper Danube (covered by *Blechkreiskulturen*) and from the Bohemian Basin and Moravia (occupied already by the UC) while at the same time develop on the south-western Baltic [Czebreszuk 1996; 1998; Czebreszuk, Szymt 1998; Vandkilde 1996].

Another important issue is the end (“decline”) of the Trzciniec package. In Jutland it takes place in LN II hence after 1950 BC [Vandkilde 1996]. Unfortunately we do not have such accurate dates for the regions of northern Germany. The chronology of the end of the Trzciniec culture is slightly better grounded in data in the case of Kujawy and Małopolska. The first and surprising observation in both cases is the fact that the end of the Trzciniec package cannot be identified with the end of the Trzciniec “culture” or “horizon”. In Kujawy, out of seven groups [Makarowicz 1998b; 1998c] of the “Trzciniec horizon” only the first three rely taxonomically on the Trzciniec package traits. Almost the same is true for Małopolska. In the sequence of stylistic changes traced by Jacek Górski, only the assemblages of types A1, A2 and A3 can be considered to be based on Trzciniec package traits while all the remaining ones (assemblages of types B, C and CD) can be called “post-Trzciniec package” [Górski 1997]. Projecting the said state of affairs on the time scale, it can be claimed in conclusion that the Trzciniec package ended in Kujawy ca 1600 BC [Czebreszuk 1996:Tab. 29] and in Małopolska ca 1400 BC [Górski 1997:Fig. 4]. It follows that not only the dates of the beginning of the Trzciniec package but also those of the end of it keep the same regularity, namely that the package ends first in the west and last in the South (Fig. 7).

This is then the general outline of the taxonomy of the interregional aspect of “Trzciniec”, i.e. what I suggest to call the Trzciniec package. The above proposals make for a radically different picture than that which can be found in the literature. In them, “Trzciniec” is generally a lowland phenomenon rooted in the areas on the south-western Baltic and developing between the Elbe and Dnieper and not — as it has been believed so far — between the Vistula and Dnieper.

B. THE ASPECT OF LOCAL VARIETIES OF “TRZCINIEC”

The other side of the “Trzciniec coin” is formed by its local varieties. In this respect, attention should be drawn to the special characteristics of “Trzciniec” in particular areas of the Lowlands as well as to the fundamental opposition of “lowland” and “highland” “Trzciniec”, or rather northern and southern.

B.1. “LOWLAND TRZCINIEC”

The Trzciniec package, like all other packages, particularly a beaker one, is a dynamic phenomenon changing taxonomically from region to region, to put simply, drawing on local traditions. I shall use here the changes visible on “Trzciniec pots” as an example (Fig. 9). Reaching as far west as the mouth of the Rhine one should start with zone with potbeakers only [Lehmann 1965]. Next, in the area between the Lower Rhine and Elbe a clear decrease in the number of potbeakers can be observed while the main role is played by forms decorated with a relief strip and multiple, incised lines [Strahl 1990]. In Mecklenburg and Brandenburg there are no more *potbeaker* [exception: Wetzel 1976] while the varieties with relief strips and incised lines continue to be found [Jacobs 1991; Rassmann 1993]. In the interfluvial area between the Oder and Vistula, the gamut of ornaments expands to include zone patterns often separated by a vertical element (heritage of the Kujawy BB variety, known as the Iwno Culture) [Czebreszuk 1996; Makarowicz 1998b]. Farther east (Mazowsze), next to still numerous ornaments with vertical elements, there emerge patterns of even more complicated structure (heritage of the Linin group of the Nemen Culture) [cf. review of sources in Gardawski 1959] which cover not only the upper zone of the belly but also lower portions of a vessel. Finally in Polesie, the rich ornament frequently covering “Trzciniec pots” is related to Middle

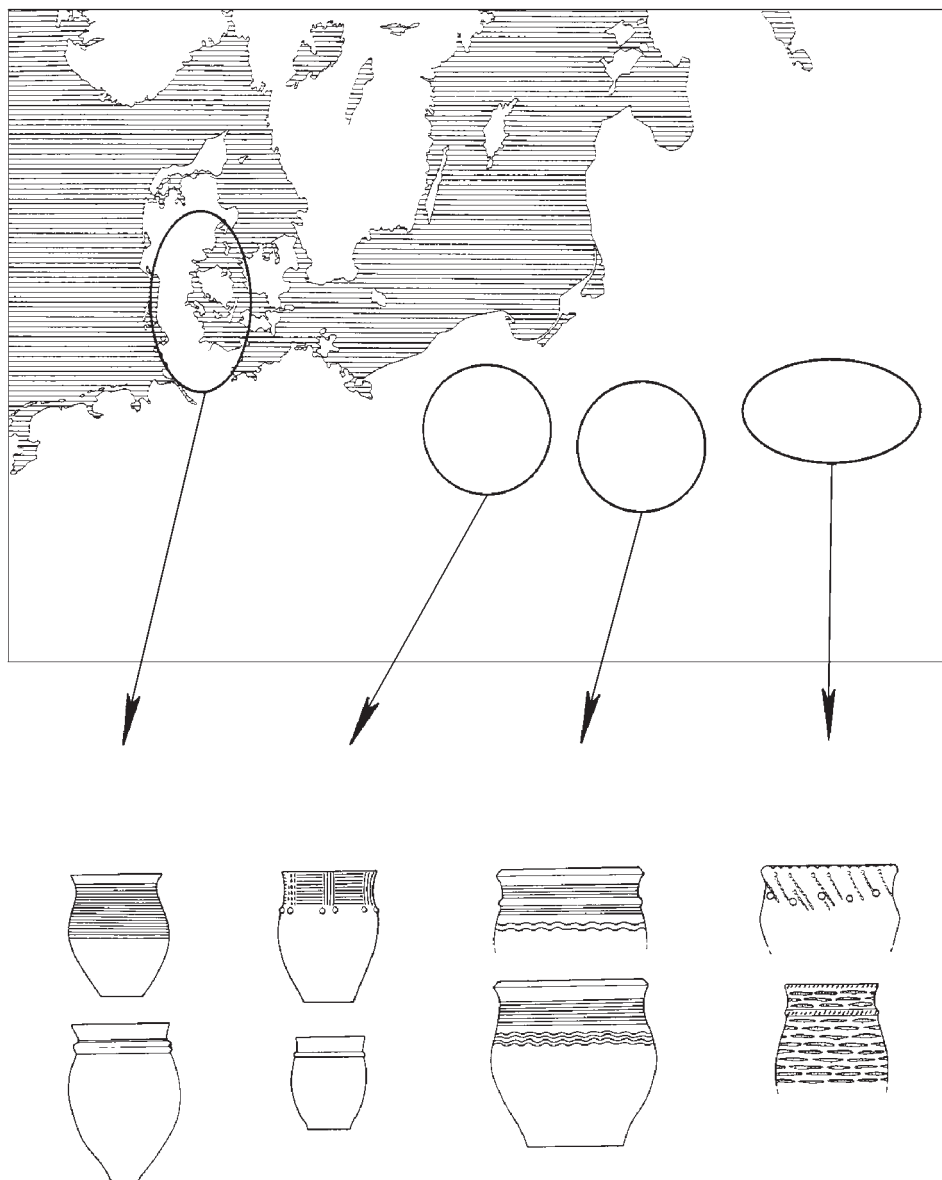


Fig. 9. The dynamics of stylistic changes of the form of the "Trzciniec pot" in the lowland regions of Central Europe.

Dnieper roots and the cultures of the Comb-like and Stroked Circle [Kryvaltsevich 1991; 1997:91-93].

The zones within the “Trzciniec oecumene”, outlined here along the west-east axis, generally reflect the differences from the previous periods by continuing the zones of the BB, SGC, SGC-BB (covering the area between the Lower Oder and Vistula) and the Linin group (or type) of the Nemen and Middle Dnieper Cultures. In this respect, “Trzciniec” does not change any boundaries set by a long Neolithic tradition. On the contrary, it continues the Neolithic division of the Lowland into cultural regions.

B.2. THE NORTH-SOUTH OPPOSITION WITHIN THE “TRZCINIEC” OECUMENE

To begin with I shall define more closely the opposition mentioned in the heading. It is based on ecology, precisely on the fact of existence of two opposite ecosystems. The first consisted of sandy, poorly diversified lowland areas whereas the second was characterized by lush vegetation growing on loess covered highlands. Curiously enough, this ecological opposition is not equally clear geographically. There are lowland enclaves of abundant ecosystems (e.g. Kujawy) but there are also sandy areas within the highland belt (e.g. Niecka Nidziańska). This fact is of great significance for the cultural plane. The fact that Kujawy often served as the “outpost of the South” in prehistory is rather universally accepted [lately: Koško 1996]. Less prominence is given in the literature to a hypothesis which would stress the importance of places like Niecka Nidziańska as an “extension” of the Plain.

Let's go back, however, to the main subject. The opposition is clearly visible in settlement rules. “Trzciniec” on the Plain is in most cases made up of relics of small dune settlements, usually poorly preserved and with a small number of artifacts [Czebreszuk 1996; Makarowicz 1998b]. In features that survived in a better condition, for instance in Borowo 12 [Ignaczak 1996; Czebreszuk 1996:159-162; Czebreszuk, Ignaczak 1997], the settlement consisted practically of one house (household cluster). It is worth noticing that such a settlement model has a very long tradition on the Plain, going back to Mesolithic societies and continued by the Funnel Beaker Culture (TRB) or the CWC. In this respect, “Trzciniec” practically does not change anything ideally fitting into the hitherto rules of settlement organization.

In a specific moment of the cultural evolution of the system, i.e. ca 1900 BC, its traits become visible in the South, specifically in the immediate vicinity of Małopolska loess soils [Górski, Kadrow 1996]. After some time, on loess areas, a network of stable “Trzciniec” microregions develops with orderly central settlements comprising

a number of household clusters [Górski 1997], thus fitting ideally into settlement rules prevailing on Małopolska loess soils practically from the beginning of the Neolithic [Kadrow 1991; Kruk 1993]. This dynamic cultural success of “Trzciniec” in the south is commonly believed to be an effect of a migration of relatively large groups of humans from rather indefinite areas of the Plain to the south [see recent mature interpretation in Górski, Kadrow 1996]. A distinctive, worth mentioning characteristic of the process, peculiar not only to “Trzciniec” but also to other, earlier Lowland groups which emerged in the south in a specific moment of their development (I specifically have the TRB in mind here), is the fact that the movement to the south (interpreted as relatively large migrations) is closely connected with a radical change of the settlement system. The group that appears in the South takes on characteristics of stable microregional and village settlement, “peasant” all in all, which makes it fit well into the traditions of local societies. Thus it is also in this respect that “Trzciniec” did not differ from groups on previous stages. However, let us ask a question: What were the reasons of those putative migrations from the north to the south? Did among Lowland societies exist a certain “southern attraction” making them travel south in larger groups from time to time?

Jacek Górski and Sławomir Kadrow, who devised the most comprehensive model of Mierzanowice Culture (MC) – Trzciniec Culture (TC) relations, put forward a solution which does not pose any of the above questions. The model may be reconstructed in the following points:

1. A migration of a “Trzciniec” population from the Lowland takes place; this is a premise not subject to any discussion,
2. Initially the migrants occupy in the south only those ecological niches which they know from the Lowland,
3. The migrants come into contact with local settled farmers represented by the MC, which was then in a crisis; they adopt traits that will enable them to exploit loess niches,
4. The migrants take over the loess areas adapting to their purposes the model of stable farming settlements with a microregional settlement structure and assimilating the remnants of local populations (MC).

Jacek Górski and Sławomir Kadrow, in their model of MC-TC relations, assume the existence of a specific reason why late MC societies acquired “Trzciniec” characteristics. The reason was a structural crisis of the former [Górski, Kadrow 1996:26]. Hence, they look at the situation as a unique occurrence and not as an example of a more general rule (the “southern attraction”). This model, however, should be discussed further. The phenomenon of Małopolska traits being superseded by northern ones is not, as has already been observed, exclusively connected with that moment in prehistory when the MC and TC came into contact. This state of affairs should make us consider an entirely different hypothesis from the previously discussed one to be able to provide a culturally plausible explanation of all the

facts. Specifically, one should consider a hypothesis attaching much less importance to migrations (continuous or periodical) from the Lowland onto the Highlands at the same time, however, adopting periodical spreading of new cultural ideas (in the archaeological form of a package) as the main mechanism of the observable changes. The ideas that were disseminated were born from time to time on the “Lowland cultural hotbed” stretching from the Lower Rhine through Jutland and Mecklenburg to Kujawy. Under this hypothesis there would not be any “expansion of Trzciniec populations” from a rather indefinite “north” to Małopolska [cf. Górski, Kadrow 1996:22]. Emerging from the new hypothesis, the new model can be described in the following points:

1. A premise is adopted maintaining that in certain enclaves in the south there always existed populations following a Lowland cultural model; the enclaves roughly corresponded with ecological niches in which natural conditions were similar to those on the European Plain,
2. The said communities were characterized by the absence of cultural barriers that would separate them from Lowland societies, contrary to loess area communities,
3. In the period when the early and classic phases of the MC developed in loess areas, the said communities must have displayed, broadly speaking, “corded” tradition traits [Budziszewski 1998],
4. The “Trzciniec” traits appear in the south first among the post-Corded societies occupying sandy niches to transform certain aspects of their culture; the societies “become” “Trzciniec-like”,
5. To overcome the barrier separating the societies of sandy and loess oecumenes, “Trzciniec” traits needed more time but it happened ca 1700 BC at the earliest [Górski, Kadrow 1996, Fig. 2],
6. Finally, the Trzciniec package is shared also by the communities of settled farmers of loess areas.

However, acceptance of this model entails adoption of an assumption about considerable differences in the chronologies of identical or very similar stylistic states in individual regions and in different ecological niches within the same region. I shall indicate a few analogies being in point here. The long co-occurrence of TRB and CWC societies and the contemporaneity of old and classic “corded” patterns have been rapidly gaining ground in the literature both in respect of the Plain [Czebreszuk 1996; Koško 1997] and the highlands [Machnik 1997]. In the case of Małopolska, the ecological opposition: loess plateaus vs. sandy troughs had had a cultural dimension since the Early Neolithic [Kruk 1980]. In the above outlined context, the date of appearance of “Trzciniec” traits, i.e. 1900 BC, may be adopted as the wane of CWC societies in the sandy ecological niches of the region [Budziszewski 1998]. We would then deal with a situation in which a new cultural package (specifically the Trzciniec package) from the “Plain hotbed” spreads according to the fundamental principles of a culture: first among the societies cultivating the way of life which is the closest

to that of the Plain. The surmounting of the ecological barrier of loess areas takes time, which has been very well depicted in detail by Jacek Górski and Sławomir Kadrow [1996].

Adopting one of the outlined hypotheses is unequivocally related to the way the “Trzciniec” phenomenon is perceived. A cultural interpretation prefers the former while an interpretation in terms of a package prefers the latter.

CONCLUSION

What was “Trzciniec” then? It was a cultural package or a phenomenon of a limited scope on the scale of a culture; changes that it brought affected only certain segments of the culture. I would like to repeat here the observation relating to the relations between the Trzciniec package, Trzciniec culture and Trzciniec horizon. We have observed that the Trzciniec package is related to the older stages of both the culture and horizon. However, more profound processes of cultural integration originating with early Lusatian sources, especially visible in the spreading of cremation funerary rites [Czebreszuk 1997; Górski, Kadrow 1996:20] (so-called second cremation horizon), are related to the younger groups of the Trzciniec horizon in Kujawy and the younger assemblages of the Trzciniec Culture in Małopolska. As long as in both regions we deal with the Trzciniec package (TH1-3 in Kujawy and assemblages of types A1, A2 and A3 in Małopolska) one can only try to find local peculiarities in the funerary rites in the whole “Trzciniec” zone [e.g. Małopolska, Górski, Kadrow 1996:20-21]. “Trzciniec” as a whole remained then in this respect a mosaic [Blajer 1987].

The Trzciniec package must have been a single rite, a single institution or a ritual type which, while moving from community to community, from region to region, evolved and acquired new elements or lost others. Here again I shall cite the example of the Beaker package. It modified only a certain aspect of a culture, specifically it was an outward manifestation, most probably in the form of spontaneous ranking, of aspirations of the nascent higher stratum (forerunners of present-day aristocracy). At the same time, other areas of the culture remained unchanged either for all (e.g. rules of settlement and subsistence) or for some people (e.g. the phenomenon of the parallel use of single graves and megalithic tombs in Jutland and northern Germany throughout the “Beaker age.”). The same must have happened to the Trzciniec package. It was a limited scope cultural proposition. The area of what was local in the “Trzciniec” times was rather vast, which I tried to stress earlier. In particular, in individual Lowland “provinces” of “Trzciniec”, under

a thin layer of similarities one can observe abundance of regional characteristics reflecting a division into cultural regions from earlier periods.

I will repeat the question: What was “Trzciniec”? On the taxonomic scale it was a phenomenon which took a very different course from the model hitherto accepted in the literature. With its roots it reached to SGC and BB societies from the north-eastern end of the European Plain, namely from Jutland and northern Germany where since the middle of the 3rd millenium BC early forms of basic “Trzciniec” characteristics had been known. Hence, the main direction of expansion of the package runs from the west to the east. However, this is not a process of moving the same, constant set of traits in that direction. The Trzciniec package, while moving from region to region, changes drawing on local traditions. However, the amplitude of these changes does not oscillate in any significant manner throughout the whole expanse of the European Plain, from Holland as far east as Belarus and Russia. What we see is a continuum of cultural changes with two extremes: BB in the west and the Middle Dnieper Culture and forest communities in the east. The western limit of the Trzciniec Culture which has been recognized in the literature so far is rather evidence of the failure of German and Polish archaeologists to communicate on this issue rather than any form of boundary in prehistoric Europe*.

Translated by Piotr T. Żebrowski

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP	– Archeologia Polski, Warszawa
APL	– Archaeologia Polona, Warszawa
AR	– Arkheologia, Kiev
BPS	– Baltic-Pontic Studies, Poznań
ESA	– Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua, Helsinki
KSIA AN USSR	– Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Arkheologii AN USSR, Kiev
MANH	– Materiały Archeologiczne Nowej Huty, Kraków
MIA	– Materiały i Issledovaniya po Arkheologii SSSR, Moskva
PBF	– Praehistorische Bronzefunde, München
SA	– Sovetskaya Arkheologia, Moskva.
SPA	– Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Kraków.

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