

The Neolithic ceramic from the Mariupol type cemeteries at the Middle and Lower Dnieper

Project: Department of Prehistoric Archaeology, Institute of Archaeological Sciences, University of Bern, under supervision of Prof. Dr. Albert Hafner

PhD project: Marta Andriiovych

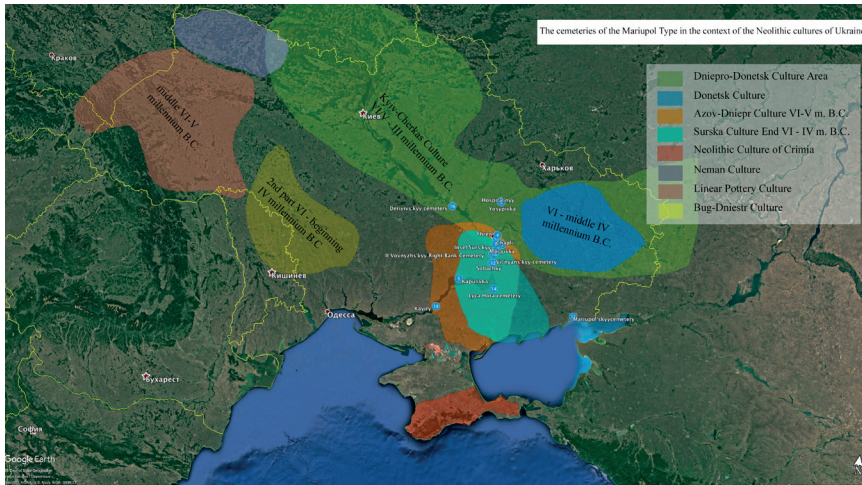


Fig. 1. The map of the Neolithic cultures and cemeteries of the Mariupol type.

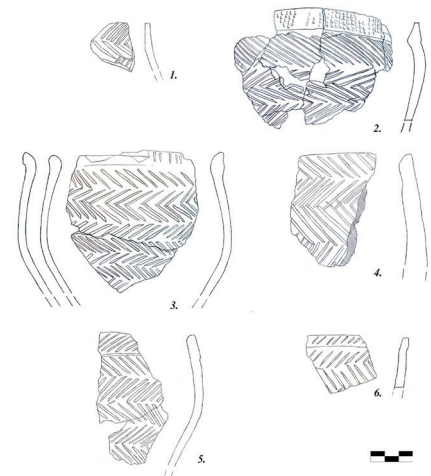


Fig. 2. Ceramics with linear ornamentation.

Neolithic sites of the area around the Ukraine were first studied at the end of the nineteenth century, but major progress was achieved in the decades after World War II. Neolithic populations show a highly dynamic development and the innovation of ceramic production describes this perfectly. Still under debate are the ways how innovative technologies related to ceramic production reached the territory of the Lower and Middle Dnieper (Manko 2010). Manko states that the spread of technological innovations is not related to specific climatic zones; he also mentions that the main driver of active change in the Neolithic period is the massive migration of populations. Dynamic developments in combination with intense communication between cultural entities makes it difficult to distinguish “archaeological cultures” in the classical sense, but leads researchers in Ukraine to use the more correct term of “cultural and historical areas” (abbreviation: CHA). Thus, researchers are trying to identify the features inherent in the local populations and to separate innovations brought in by migrating populations.

From 1927 to 1980 in the basin of the Middle and Lower Dnieper river 24 Neolithic burial grounds dating from the VII-V millennia BC were discovered (Fig. 1). Among them the sites of Lysa Hora, Yasynovate, Mykilske, Dereyivka, Chaplynka are the most important. The Lysa Hora cemetery had delivered the largest number of pottery fragments in the accompanying inventories. Telegin (1968) allocates for the ceramic complex of the Dniepro-Donets CHA basic forms: (1) egg-shaped, wide open amphora-shaped bottom pots with straight or slightly deflected rims; (2) flat-sided wide-open amphora-shaped or spike-shaped bottom pots; (3) round-bodied amphora-shaped bottom pots with narrowed neck, straight or drawn to the outside rims; (4) flat-bottomed rounded or biconic pots with straight or drawn to the middle collar rims.

Ceramics of the Lysa Hora and Mykilske cemeteries were typical flat-bottomed rounded or biconic pots with straight or drawn to the middle collar rims (Fig. 2). Kotova (2003) also draws attention to the characteristic impurities in clays, noting changes in com-

position occur due to the influence of neighboring cultures.

The most common motif of ornamentation are comb, pit-comb and punctured ornaments (Kotova 2003). Telegin (1968) identifies the ceramics of the Dniepro-Donets CHA as close to the ceramics of hunting and fishing cultures of Eastern Europe and North-West Asia. He compares the ceramic of the Middle Dnieper basin with the ceramic groups of the northern zones of Poland, Valdai, Kama and Late Narva cultures. Danilenko (1969) distinguished in the forest steppes of Ukraine a separate region of early pastoralists with flat-bottomed “collar” ceramics, connected with Central Asia and the Middle East.

The main aim of my study is to establish specific types of vessels depending on the shape/form, the composition of clay and the characteristic ornamentation, and to create a detailed typology and chronology based on it (Fig. 3), as well as to find migration and social contacts through comparison of the ceramics from the cemeteries with ceramics from settlements.

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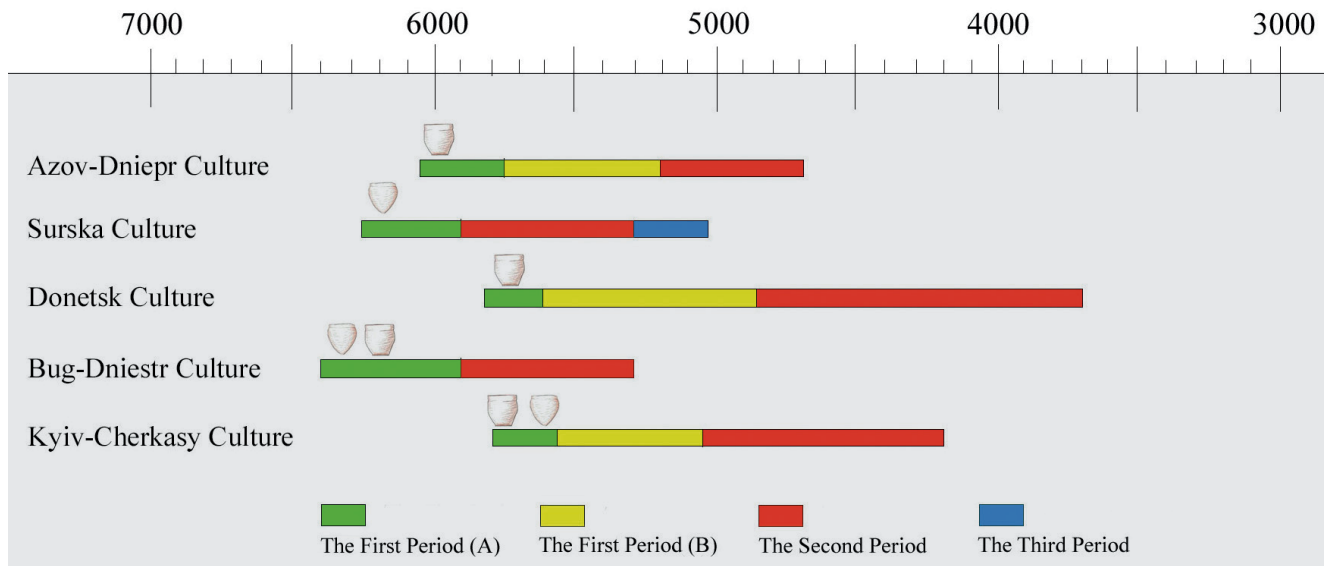


Fig. 3. The chronology and time synchronization between Neolithic cultures in the Middle and Lower Dnieper region.

I expect the following results of my PhD study proposal:

1. Identification of main evolution trends that are characteristic for ceramics from each burial site.
2. A reliable typological classification of Neolithic ceramics of the Lower and Middle Dnieper basin.
3. Identification of ceramic traditions that formed the basis of ceramic production.
4. Identification of ways of migration of populations and identification of networks of communication in the Lower and Middle Dnieper basin.

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