

# Late Neolithic cultural elements from the Danube and Carpathian regions of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture

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**ABSTRACT** – *The relations of Precucuteni – Trypillia A cultures with the cultures of the Late Neolithic/Early Eneolithic of South-Eastern Europe were primarily determined by two factors: origin and cultural contacts. Ideas about Precucuteni – Trypillia A formation appeared sixty years ago on the basis of typology and stratigraphy. The first part of the twentieth century was marked by numerous investigations of Neolithic cultures in South-Eastern Europe and excavations of Trypillia A sites in Ukraine. First, we present these materials. Precucuteni-Trypillia A complex was a multi-component formation which included components of different Southern and Western components originating from different cultures from the wide Balkan-Carpathian area. At different stages of Trypillia, some directions of contact became more important than others.*

**IZVLEČEK** – *Odnosi med kulturami Precucuteni – Trypillia A s kulturami poznega neolitika/zgodnjega eneolitika v jugovzhodni Evropi se določajo predvsem na podlagi dveh faktorjev: izvora in kulturnih stikov. Ideje o oblikovanju Precucuteni – Trypillia A so se pojavili pred 60 leti na osnovi tipologije in stratigrafije. Za prvo polovico 20. stoletja so bile značilne številne raziskave neolitskih kultur v jugovzhodni Evropi in izkopavanja najdišč obdobja Trypillia A v Ukrajini. Najprej predstavljamo ta material. Precucuteni – Trypillia A kompleks je večkomponentna formacija, ki vključuje različne južne in zahodne komponente, ki izvirajo iz različnih kultur iz širšega balkansko-karpatškega področja. V različnih stopnjah kulture Trypillia so nekatere smeri kontaktov postale bolj pomembne kot druge.*

**KEY WORDS** – *Precucuteni – Trypillia A; intercultural relations; pottery; figurines; metallurgy; burnt houses*

## Basic concepts of the problems of the origins of Precucuteni – Trypillia A

In archaeology special attention was paid to the origins of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture, which is still quite controversial. Materials from Precucuteni culture were discovered in 1936 at Izvoare (level 1). Radu Vulpe supposed that the main role in the formation of Precucuteni was played by Bojan-Giulești culture, and this event was connected with the area between the Carpathians and the Dneister (Floresti I site) (*Vulpe 1957.111–120*).

Ion Nestor attributed a primary role in the formation of Precucuteni to LBK traditions (*Nestor 1951. 22–23*). Excavations in Carpathian Moldova were of special importance in this problem (Traian-Dealul

Viei, Traian-Dealul Fintinilor) in the 1950's. After it Vladimir Dumitrescu divided Precucuteni culture into stages I, II, III, and considered that Precucuteni I appeared as result of a connection of a few cultural components. The main component, he thought, was LBK (Linear Band Pottery) with the participation of Boian-Giulești culture; he also mentioned the Hamangia and Bug-Dniester cultures (*Dumitrescu 1963*). Later, he wrote about the assimilation of the BDC (Bug-Dniester Culture) population by Precucuteni III tribes to the East (*Dumitrescu 1973.304*).

Hortensia Dumitrescu supposed the relations of the late LBK with Precucuteni, based on materials from

Traian-Dealul Fintinilor (*Dumitreşcu 1960.36–37*). She considered the figurines at Precucuteni and anthropomorphic reliefs on pottery to have come from Criş culture. At the same time, she wrote that some types of incised decoration and flutes on pottery from Traian-Dealul Viei were similar to decoration on Vinča A and Vinča-Tordoş pottery. This would mean that Precucuteni I appeared in Moldova from the west, from Transylvania, via the Muresh valley. This route and relations with Boian-Giuleşti culture are marked by finds from Tordos and Traian-Dealul Viei of pottery with specific decoration. According to Dumitreşcu, such cultures as LBK, Boian, Criş, and Vinča-Tordoş formed a substratum for Precucuteni (*Dumitreşcu 1960.38–41*).



**Fig. 1. Sites of Precucuteni-Trypillia A at Moldova and Ukraine.**

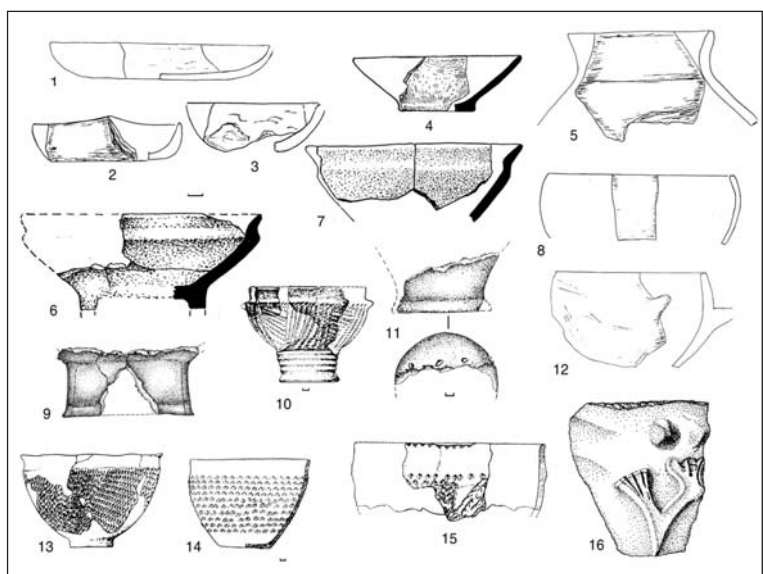
Eugen Comşa supposed that the main element of Precucuteni formation was Boian culture, which moved north and came into contact with LBK. Later, he wrote that Trypillia A in the East appeared on the basis of the Bug-Dneister culture (*Comşa 1973.20–21*).

According to Silvia Marinescu-Bilcu, Precucuteni I appeared after Boian culture had moved to Moldova and come into contact with the local LBK; some traditions of Vinča, Tordoş, and Hamangia were also assimilated (*Marinescu-Bilcu 1974.125–126*).

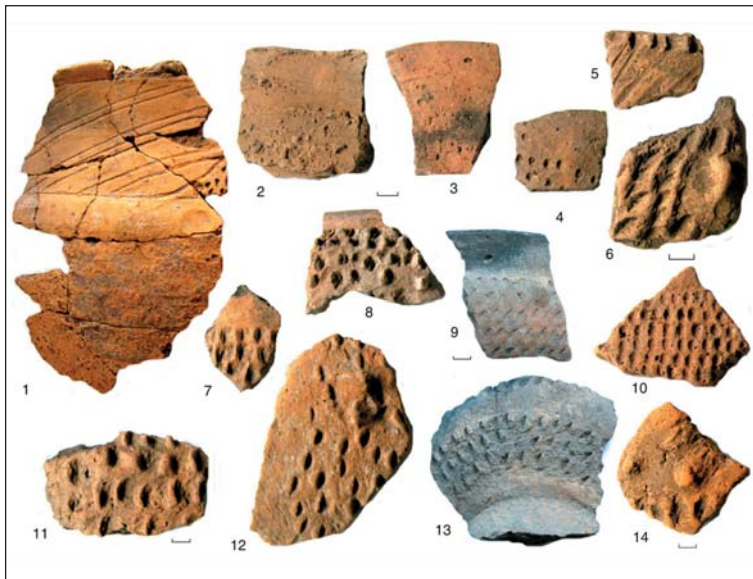
Valentin N. Danilenko suggested that Precucuteni ('Western habitat') and Trypillia A ('Eastern habitat') formations had different geneses. He wrote of the specific 'local Neolithic substratum', which was 'in interaction' with 'South-Danube cultures'. Precucuteni - Trypillia A and Boian, on the one hand and LBK on the other, he supposed, were independent phenomena (*Danilenko 1948.212–213*). In his opinion, the "...formation of Trypillia ethno-cultural unity, on the one hand, took place on the basis of BDC, and on the other, on a special Balkan-Danube Eneolithic culture which appeared under a progressive Anatolian influence and

belonged to the circle of Tordoş-type cultures." (*Danilenko 1969.224*). Among the cultures which had an influence on Precucuteni - Trypillia A, he mentions Boian, Criş and Hamangia (*Danilenko 1974.13–18*).

After excavations at Floresti I in 1950s Tatiana S. Passek believed it belonged to Boian culture and considered it the 'missing link' in the problem of the origin of Trypillia culture. She wrote that Boian culture played a major role in this process, but Criş and



**Fig. 2. 'Crude' or 'kitchen' ware of Precucuteni II - Trypillia A sites. 1–9, 11–12 Bernashivka. 10 Voronovitsya (after Zbenovich 1989). 13–15 Rogojeni. 16 Floreşti III (after Bodean 2001).**



**Fig. 3. 'Crude' or 'kitchen' ware of Precucuteni II – III – Trypillia A sites. 1–3, 7–8, 11–12 Bernashivka. 4–6, 10–14 Gayvoron. 9, 13 Grebenyiv Yar.**

Bug-Dnister cultured were also involved (*Passek 1962.17*).

The origins of Precucuteni – Trypillia A are considered by different archaeologists as a synthesis of different cultural traditions. This tradition is presented by several archaeological cultures (LBK, Boyan, Vinča, *etc.*) which existed in the Neolithic in the Danube-Carpathian area. Southeastern Transylvania was the area in which contacts between the above-mentioned cultural traditions were observed, so it was the most probable area in which the earliest Precucuteni – Trypillia A settlements appeared. At the same time, archaeologists focused on different cultures as the most probable ancestors of Precucuteni – Trypillia A (*Sorokin 1992; Burdo 2001a; 2001b*). The most indicative information could have been obtained from the study of pottery from the Precucuteni – Trypillia A sites.

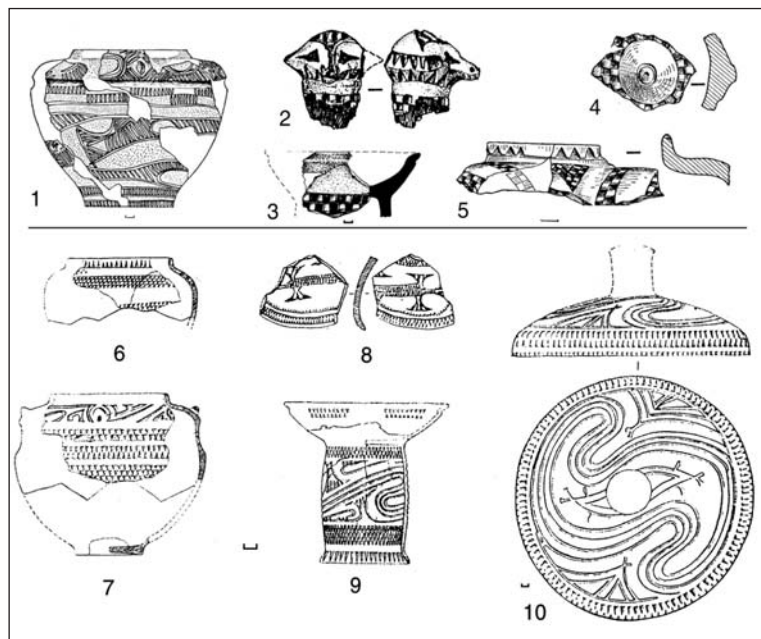
### Pottery of Precucuteni – Trypillia A

The most explored sites of the Precucuteni II – Trypillia A in Moldova are Rogozany, Putinesti I, Floresti I and III; and in Ukraine, Bernashivka and Okopy (*Bodean 2001; Zbenovich 1981; 1989*) (Fig. 1). The pottery found at Precucuteni – Trypillia

A sites can be divided into two groups: the first – 'crude' or 'kitchen' ware; the second – 'dining pottery'.

The first group – 'crude' or 'kitchen' ware, represents up to 50% of all finds at Floresti I and Bernashivka. This pottery was mainly fired in a reducing atmosphere. Most of the ware is without decoration. There were bowls, bowls on bottoms, pots with cylindrical mouths (Fig. 2.1–9, 11–12), sometimes decorated with sculptural details (Fig. 2.12–16) or pinches (Fig. 2.13–14), and the two combined in different compositions (Fig. 3.7–8, 11, 13), and barbotine (Fig. 3.2–3). Sometimes different kinds of decoration were used on one pot (Figs. 2.10; 3.1; 6; 9; 13–14). This group of pottery looks similar to materials from the Starčevo-Criș horizon.

The second group – 'dining pottery' with different kinds of incised decoration, supplied by white or, sometimes, red incrustation and red painting in different combinations with flutes and punch. Sometimes all or some kinds of decoration are observed on one vessel. The combination of red paint, white incrustation, and the black surface creates an impressive polychrome effect.



**Fig. 4. Pottery with incised decoration from Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites. 1– 5 Bernashivka (after Zbenovich 1981). 7–10 Rogozeni (after Bodean 2001).**

Vessels with incised decoration comprise up to 10% of the vessels found at Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites. The main forms with such decorations are fruit vessels (Figs. 4.3, 9; 7.9–10; 9.2), pear-like vessels (Figs. 4.4–5; 7.11–12; 9.3), lids with large handle (Figs. 4.10; 7.1, 4; 8.2–4, 6). Some elements of incised decoration are present on large pots (Fig. 5).

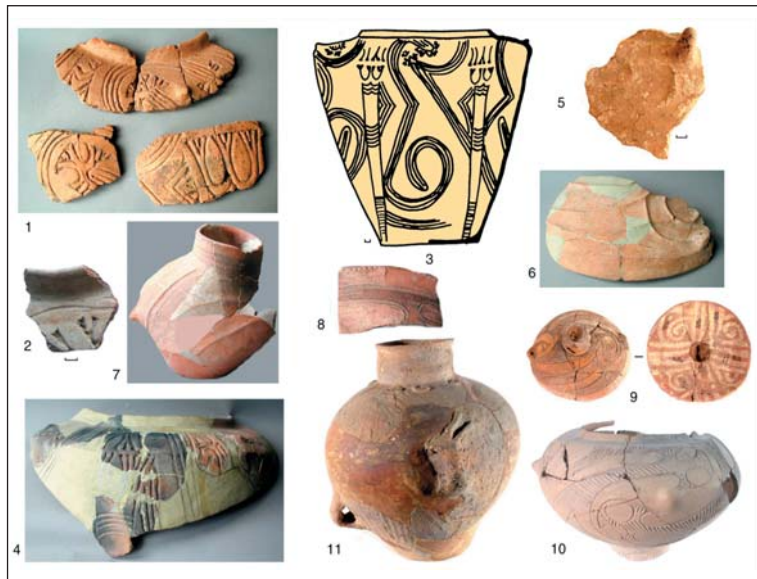
The incised composition, such as sections of lines, circles, ovals (Figs. 6.3–4; 7.9), zigzags (Figs. 6.5; 7.1, 4), ‘chess board’ (Figs. 6.6–7, 9, 12; 7.6), ‘wolf’s teeth’ (Figs. 6.2; 4.5) are usually created with spiral-like lines or ribbons with the imprints of stamp (Figs. 6.2; 4.9). Meander compositions are rare. At the Bernashivka site, a fragment of a vessel with a meander composition is similar to decoration of the Boian-Giulești culture (Fig. 6.1) (*Garvan et al. 2009.67*).

Stylised images of a snake with a body in the form of spiral bands and a head in the form of ‘fliers’ from the tie-triangles are widely distributed among the incised decoration of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A (Fig. 7.5, 11), but also known from Precucuteni III – Trypillia A sites such as Oleksandrivka (Fig. 5.4), Tymkove (Fig. 5.2–3), Slobidka-Zakhidna (Fig. 5.1). At Bernashivka, a fragment of pottery with a snake image of another type was found (Fig. 8.4).

Similar images of snakes are seen on Boian-Giulești pottery (*Comșa 1974.Pl. 16, 9*), as well as double spiral ribbons (*Garvan et al. 2009.67*).

Various prominent details are characteristic of ceramics with incised ornamentation (Figs. 6.3; 7.8; 4.4). At Bernashivka, a clay head of an animal (possibly from the cover handle) with incised decoration was found (Fig. 4.2). Such handles are known from sites of the Marica, Sava III, and Gradešnica cultures (*Todorova 1986.125, drawing 46, 5*).

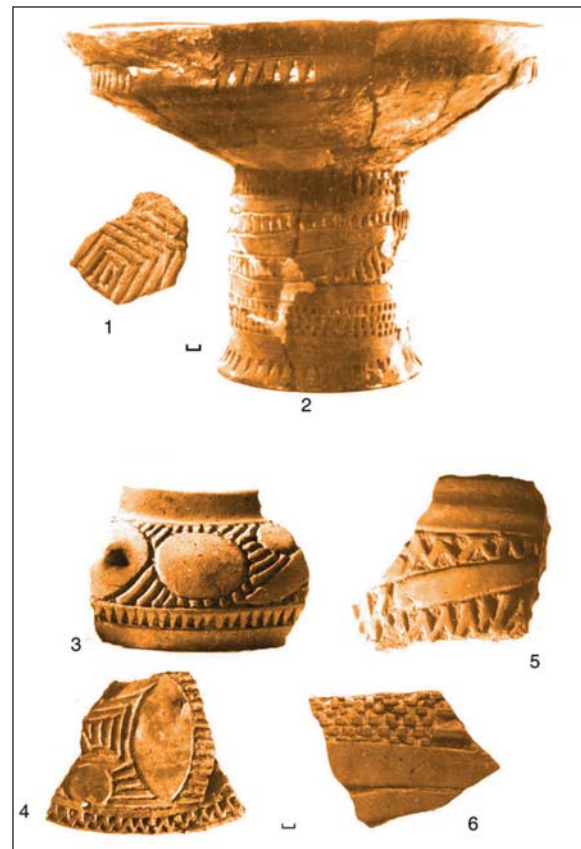
At the same time, forms of pottery with incised decoration from Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites (Bernashivka, Okopy, Floresti, Rogozani) look different from the pottery found at Boian-Giulești sites. Only covers with large handles are similar (*Garvan et al. 2009.66*). Only the technology for creating the ornaments and some elements of decoration, such as the ‘chess board’, ‘wolf’s teeth’, zig-zag, double-spiral ribbons,



**Fig. 5. Pottery from Precucuteni II, III – Trypillia A sites. 1, 3 Slobidka-Zakhidna. 2, 10 Tymkove. 4, 6–9, 11 Oleksandrivka. 5 Bernashivka.**

and a white incrustation of incised decoration appear common.

Incised decoration and such elements as the ‘chess board’, ‘wolf’s teeth’, zig-zag, double-spiral ribbons,



**Fig. 6. Pottery with incised decoration from Bernashivka (after Zbenovich 1981).**

and white incrustation were widespread among such cultures of the Low Danube region as Vadastra, Dudești, Sava III, Polanica III, Gradešnica. For example, the fruit-vessels from Precucuteni – Trypillia A are similar to those found at Vadastra and Gradešnica (*Todorova 1986.125*). At the same time, pottery with incised decoration from Precucuteni – Trypillia A has some special features (*Burdo, Kovalyoh 2001–2002b.155–158*).

Ornamentation with thin lines, usually filled with white paste, typical of Boian-Giulești was found mainly at Precucuteni I sites, where the pottery also had Precucuteni and Boian-Giulești features.

It was also found at Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites (Fig. 9.5–8, 13–14). Such decoration was typical of pots, fruit-vessels, bowls, pear-like vessels (Fig. 5.10) and covers (Figs. 5, 9). Lines with incrustation are formed by red paint between ribbons (Fig. 5.8). In exceptional cases, the patterns are applied with white paint inside the lid of the pear-like vessel (Figs. 5, 9). Lines form spiral tracks or patterns of circles, and ovals with groups of parallel line segments. There are also vessels ornamented with grids (Figs. 8.7–8; 9.1–2).

The stylised image of a snake is widely seen on pottery from Bernashivka (Fig. 8.2–6) and Okopy (Fig. 8.7–8). Different compositions with stylised images of snakes were typical of Precucuteni – Trypillia A ‘dinner’ ware (Fig. 5.10).

Vessels with complex ornaments found in Bernashivka (Figs. 4.1; 9.12) and Rogozany (Fig. 4.7) are similar to the pottery of the following cultures: Sava IV (*Todorova 1986.117, Fig. 40, 14*), Kodjadermen-Karanovo-Gumelnița II (*Todorova 1986.117, Fig. 32.13*), and Varna (*Todorova 1986.119, Fig. 41.7*).

Pottery decorated with ribbons filled by stamp imprints of different forms (with white incrustation) is typical of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A (Fig. 9.3–4, 9–12). This decoration was used for pear-like vessels (Fig. 9.10–11), covers (Fig. 8.1), bowls, and the bottoms of ‘fruit-vessels’ (Fig. 9.9). Very often, imprints of stamps formed incised lines and flutes (Fig. 10.2, 9), or lines used in combination with stamps and flu-



**Fig. 7. Pottery with incised decoration from Bernashivka.**

tes (Fig. 10.1–4, 9). Such decoration was known at Vinča and Sava (phase Varna), where it was used in combination with flutes. The combination of incised lines, flutes and red paint in one spiral composition was widespread at Precucuteni III – Trypillia A, and at the same time is notable at Boian-Vidra (*Comșa 1974.Pl. 21*).

Pots with cylindrical necks were found at Floresti I, Rogozany and Bernashivka. The top part of these pots was decorated with horizontal flutes (Fig. 10.3–4); they are similar to pots from Boian-Giulești (*Garvan et al. 2009.65–66*).

Pottery decorated only with flutes was very rare at Precucuteni II – Trypillia A phase and later. There are flutes mainly on the bottom of the vessels, pots, or decorative sculptural elements on the bodies. At Bernashivka, mainly small and rounded pots are decorated in this way (Fig. 10.5). At Precucuteni III – Trypillia A, this decoration occurs on pots (Fig. 10.7), pear-like vessels and jugs (Fig. 10.10), and rounded pots (Fig. 10.8).

This category of pottery, in my opinion, demonstrates the influence of Varna cultural traditions. The use of flutes to decorate pottery is also known from the Sava III – Sava IV sites and Gradešnica (*Todorova 1986.foto 37, 87*).

At Bernashivka (Fig. 5.5), Oleksandrivka (Fig. 5.6) and Grebeniykiv Yar, fragments of large pots decorated with flutes were found. Large vessels covered by wide flutes are known from sites at Sava IV (*To-*

dorova 1986.foto 36) and Kodjadermen-Karanovo-Gumelnița II (Todorova 1986.109, drawing 32, 13).

The bird-like vessels decorated with flutes from Oleksandrivka (Fig. 5.7) look similar to finds from cultures such as Criș, Vinča, Gumelnița, and Bolgrad-Aldeni.

### Signs of a 'Danube script'

Interesting sort of finds presented by signs, which corresponding with 'Danube script' (Videiko 2004. 459–460). Such signs can be seen on covers (Fig. 11.1–3), bottoms (Fig. 11.4–6, 10) (Fig. 11.10, 12), clay model thrones (Fig. 11.7–8) and figurines (Fig. 11.9). During the first period (phase Trypillia A), a rich collection of signs can be observed on pottery and clay figurines; most are in ornamental compositions, but some are outside. Compositions and signs are mainly curved on the surface of pottery and figurines. Sometimes paint (white or red) was used. It seems that the colour of the paint was also important for understanding signs.

Some signs (cross, groups of parallel lines) were placed outside the ornamental compositions. A unique sign is inscribed on the lower part of a pot from Bernashivka settlement, dated up to 5400–5300 BC, found during excavations by Zbenovich (Videiko 2004.460). It seems that this sign consists of four simple signs similar to the 'ligatures' in the 'Vinča script' (Merlini 2007). The single signs on the bottom parts of the pots are similar to signs from Vinča and Gradešnica cultures (Todorova 1986.208).

Another linear inscription was found on the clay figurine from Ruseshti Noi (Moldova, excavations by Markevich). A group of 'combs' and parallel lines was placed on the upper part of the figurine. Pogozheva found some fifty-six different signs, such as circles, spiral images, crosses, etc. (Pogozheva 1983. tabl. 7–12) on the clay figurines of the Trypillia A period (Moldova and Ukraine territory).

Some signs dating from the Trypillia A period (5400/5300–4700/4600BC) were found on pottery and figurines. Most have analogues in the Vinča, LBC, Karanovo, and other cultures (Merlini 2007. 113–136). The signs on pottery and figurines were connected with the older tradition of a religious



Fig. 8. Pottery from Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites. 1–6 Bernashivka. 7–9 Okopy.

script. The background to this tradition can be found in the Danube region (Winn 1981; Haarmann 2001).

### Anthropomorphic figurines

Anthropomorphic figurines are typical of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture from the first phases of development. A large collection of more than sixty statuettes was found in the dwellings of the settlement at Bernashivka. Typically predominant for Precucuteni II – Trypillia A were schematic figurines without decoration and with elaborate steatopygia (Fig. 12.2, 5, 7, 10). Figurines were probably painted, or even painted after firing, as evidenced by traces of white lining on some figures from Bernashivka (Fig. 12.7). Figurines were constructed from two vertical parts (Fig. 12.10). The practice of making figurines from two parts is found at such cultures as Criș, Boyan, Bolgrad-Aldeni, Petrești, and many other cultures of the Copper Age. No male figurines from Precucuteni II – Trypillia A have been found.

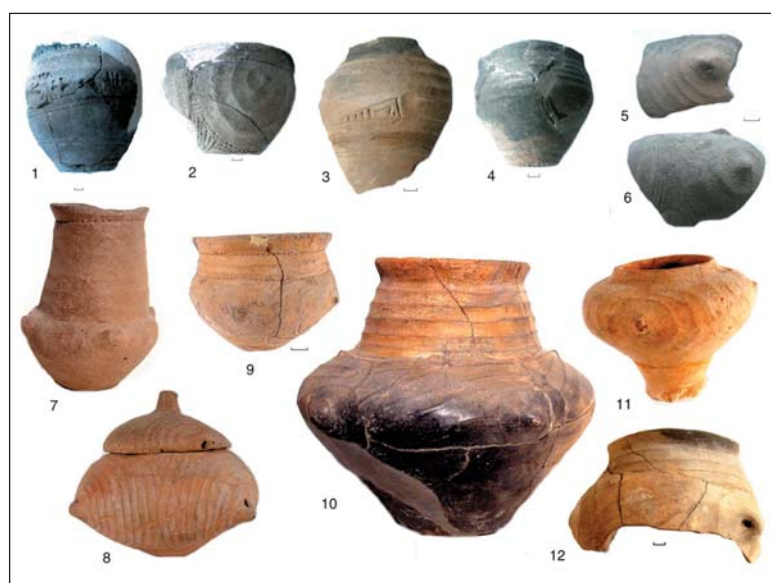
Female figurines depict standing figures, often imitating the pose of birds (ducks). Seated figures (Fig. 12.5) and clay models of chairs are less common (Fig. 11.7–8). Such figurines are similar to those in Criș culture. With rare exceptions, hands are not shown, while heads and faces are modelled schematically (Fig. 12.7). The treatment of heads of Trypillia A figurines have analogies in the plastic art from the Usoe culture (Todorova, Vaisov 1993.205, drawing 86), and the Casolt site of Petrești culture (Paul 1992.Pl. II, 4–5). In Bernashivka, two fragments of



**Fig. 9. Pottery from Bernashivka (Precucuteni II).**

anthropomorphic figurines with incised decoration were also found. They are larger than the other figurines. One of them represents the upper part of the schematic figurines with well-developed facial features (Fig. 12.4). The bottom part of this figurine was decorated with an incised composition unknown at Precucuteni – Trypillia A. At Bernashivka, several fragments of clay legs likely to have come from tables, altars, or vessels on legs were found. One of these legs – with three toes – probably imitates a bird claw (Fig. 12.1).

Predominantly schematic figurines without decoration and with elaborate steatopygia are typical at



**Fig. 10. Pottery, decorated by flutes from Precucuteni II – Trypillia A sites. 1–6, 12 Bernashivka. 7 Gayvoron. 8–9 Oleksandrivka. 10 Sabatynivka II. 11 Tymkove.**

Precucuteni III – Trypillia A (Fig. 13.1–2). At the same time, large figurines with incised decoration with white incrustation and red paint (Fig. 13.5) or on a grey ground were found in houses (Fig. 13.6). Stylised snake images can be seen on the abdomens of the female figurines (Fig. 13.3, 5). At Oleksandrivka, a fragment of a figurine with realistic facial features was found (Fig. 13.4).

The Precucuteni – Trypillia A figurines have different morphological and stylistic features, although some elements are similar in the cultures of the Neo-Chalcolithic.

### Deliberate house-burning

The largest number of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture sites (nearly 200) are concentrated in the region stretching from the Carpathian Mountains to the South Bug and Dnieper interfluves. Their locations are marked by finds of burnt clay fragments – the remains of dwellings. At the same time, cemeteries of Precucuteni – Trypillia A are unknown.

It must be emphasised that the cultures of LBC, Borian, Criş, Vinča, Hamangia, usually considered as ancestors of Precucuteni culture, are characterized mainly by inhumations, and in some cases, extended burials. It seems that the Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture dwellings in the form of ‘platforms’ and the absence of burials are interrelated factors. Many archaeologists conclude that Trypillian dwellings were burned and became ritual sites indirectly related to funerals (*Burdo 2003*).

Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture dwellings were reconstructed as houses with a garret or houses with two floors (Fig. 14). The ‘platforms’ explored during excavations are the remains of the garrets and ceilings of burnt houses. Sometimes these remains show traces of high temperature burning (up to 1000°C or higher), which is clearly seen on samples of pottery from such ob-

jects (Fig. 15.1). Tens of broken pots and other kinds of pottery, figurines, and tools were found during excavations under the remains of such burnt houses (Fig. 16). Burnt houses were found on most of more than 170 Precucuteni – Trypillia A sites (Burdo 2003a; 2003b), so this event was probably connected with a sacred cycle (Fig. 17). It seems that traces of the same sacred practice have been found at excavations on sites of some other archaeological cultures in the Danube-Carpathian region.

The problem of the so-called deliberate house-burning in the Neolithic and Copper Age in Central and Eastern Europe has frequently been discussed (Tringham 2005). Chapman believes that burnt houses were a widespread occurrence in the Neolithic and the Copper Age of Central and Eastern Europe. He reviewed the various ‘popular’ explanations of these events and considered that the most realistic explanation was that they were ceremonial (see Raczky 1982–83; Stevanović 1997; Chapman 1999).

According to Tringham, the earliest examples of house burning were connected with the late stages of Starčevo-Criş and the Early Neolithic in Bulgaria, and later at Vinča-Tordoş, Szakhalkat, Tisza, Boian, Gumelniţa, Vinča-Pločnik, Krivodol, in the Middle, Late Neolithic and Eneolithic of Bulgaria, and all phases of Precucuteni-Cucuteni – Trypillia (Tringham 2005.102).

Iuliu Paul supposed that this tradition of deliberate house-burning of Cucuteni culture came from Petreşti culture. As we know, the beginning of Petreşti culture (Petreşti A stage) corresponds with Precucuteni I and II (Paul 1992.31). On the other hand, Gheorghe Lazarovici considered that the large houses with clay floors of Petreşti culture show a Vinča C influence, and he noted that houses with a wooden platform and thick layer of clay appeared only in the Petreşti A2 stage (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2007.402).

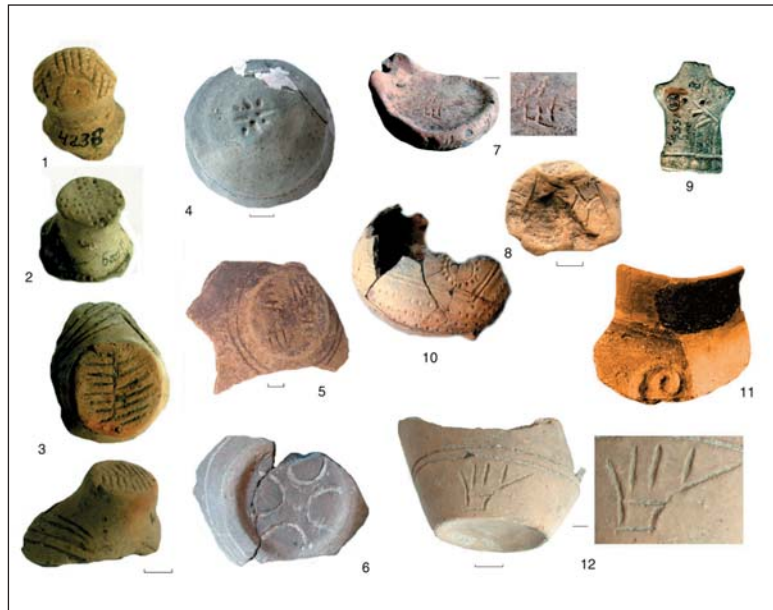


Fig. 11. Signs from Precucuteni II, III – Trypillia A sites. 1–3, 6–7, 12 Bernashivka. 4 Okopy. 5, 11 Oleksandrivka. 8 Mogylna-III. 9 Luka-Vrublevetska. 10 Slobidka-Zakhidna.

The closest analogues to the Precucuteni – Trypillia A situation – with burnt houses and rich finds in the remains of dwellings – are the Banat culture in Parta (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2006.235–291), the Tisza culture in Herpaly (Kalicz, Raczky 1987.110), in Gorzsa (Horvath 1987), the Vinča cultural group of Balta-Sarata, Bucovat, Dudeşti-Vinča culture, Vadastra culture (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2006. 172–178, 382, 398– 399, 512–514), from Obre II (Gimbutas 1991.60), and Boian-Spancov culture in Radovanu (Comşa 1974. 159–164). Such remains were also typical of Bolgrad-Aldeni sites (Dragomir 1983).



Fig. 12. Figurines from Bernashivka (Precucuteni II).



But I believe that few of these analogues are connected with the origin of the house-burning tradition of Precucuteni – Trypillia A, since they are either contemporary or later. The most probable assumption is that this custom was associated with the traditions of the chronological horizon of the Early Neolithic in Europe, as represented by such cultures as Starčevo, Criş and Karanovo I; for example: the remains of the burned house at the Kovačevo site in South-western Bulgaria (*Lichardus-Itten et al. 2002. 108–110*), the burnt clay constructions at the Muldava tell (Karanovo I) (*Gimbutas 1991.30*), and houses burnt at Criş culture settlements in Romania (*Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006.77–100*).

The tradition of deliberate burning appeared in the Precucuteni – Trypillia A stage. It continued later in the Cucuteni – Trypillia culture for more than 1500 years. Most of more than 4000 settlements of this culture were burnt in a similar way.

### Metallurgy and metalwork at Precucuteni – Trypillia A

Relations with other regions were important for the development of Precucuteni – Trypillia A metallurgy and metalwork. The first finds of copper objects date from excavations at Bernashivka (*Chernovol et al. 2009.464*) and Okopy (Fig. 18.8) (*Zbenovich 1989. 74*). Both sites are dated to the Precucuteni II stage.

The small copper awl discovered at Okopy was studied by Nataliia Ryndina; it was made from native copper, with some natural admixture of silver. The same copper was used for making the awl found at Luka-Ustinska and the copper strip from Gaivoron (both sites – Precucuteni III phase). This type of cop-

per is typical of Transylvania and differs from the copper from Marica – Karanovo V.

Ryndina writes that the chemistry of the copper objects from Okopy and other Precucuteni – Trypillia A sites is the same as that of the copper objects found at Starčevo-Criş sites. She also assumes that the tradition of processing native copper at Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture appeared under the influence of Tordoş culture, which was connected with Starčevo-Criş cultural complex (*Ryndina 1998.37*). The first stage of the development of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture metalwork, which is represented by the copper awl found at Okopy, is characterised by primitive skills and represented “*the first steps in working in metal*” (*Ryndina 1998.32–36*).

A Trypillian centre metalwork centre begins to form at the Precucuteni III – Trypillia A stage. This period is characterised by further developments in knowledge and technology. The copper ware demonstrates a close relationship with copper objects from Kodjadermen-Karanovo VI.

Ryndina singles out a special centre of metalworking for Precucuteni – Trypillia A – Trypillia BI – Cucuteni A. It was in the Dniester River basin and Dniester-Bug interflow. The development of this centre was connected with raw materials in Thrace and North Transylvania, and led to the export of large quantities of copper objects (*Ryndina 1998.32–38*).

Ryndina collected information on over 600 copper objects found at Precucuteni – Trypillia A sites (Fig. 18.1–7). The biggest batch – 444 items – was found at Moldova (‘Karbuna Hoard’), which was published by Valentin Dergachev (*Dergachev 1998*).

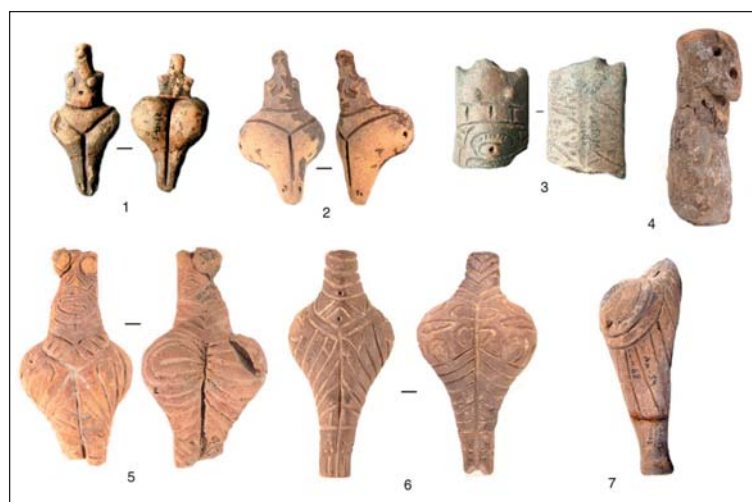
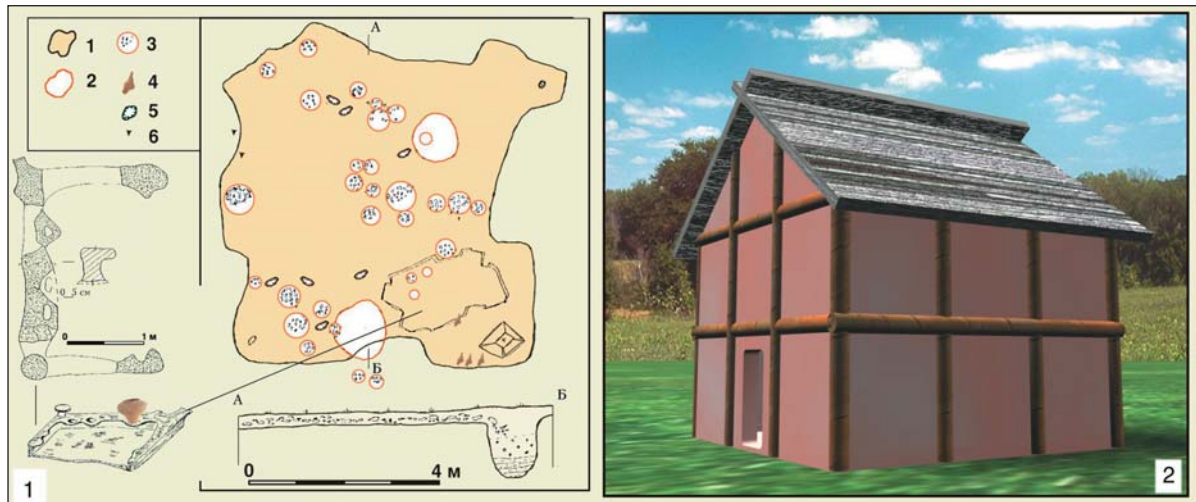


Fig. 13. Figurines from from Oleksandrivka (Precucuteni III).

The pottery from the Karbuna site is similar to finds from Oleksandrivka, which date to Precucuteni III – Trypillia A, and not to the transition to Cucuteni A1–A2, as Ryndina (1998. 127) supposes.

The copper axe from Karbuna (Fig. 18.6) is of the Pločnik type, which resembles a copy of axes from Vinča and Tordoş cultures. At the same time, the technology of this object studied by Ryndina is different: the axe was forged at a temperature of 900–1000° C, and a special hole punch technology. All these suggest a local production.



**Fig. 14. Dwelling from Tymkove. 1 plan (1 burnt clay, 2 pit, 3 pottery, 4 figurines, 5 stones, 6 stone tools). 2 reconstruction, based on excavations.**

The flat axe from Karbuna (Fig. 18.7) is similar to such tools from Kodjadermen-Karanovo VI. The chisel from Oleksandrivka (Fig. 18.9) also has prototypes in the Kodjadermen-Karanovo VI and Varna cultures, but employs a different technology: it was made from two pieces of copper, rather than a single moulded prefabricate, which is typical of the cultures mentioned above (Ryndina 1998. 129–131).

The copper anthropomorphic and disc-like plates (Fig. 18.1–3, 5) specific to Precucuteni – Trypillia A and Cucuteni A1 – Trypillia BI (Dergachev 1998. 21–22), and also known from Oleksandrivka (Fig. 18.10c) and Rusesti Noi, are very interesting. The typology and raw material of the Precucuteni – Trypillia A copper objects on the one hand correspond to Karanovo-Gumelnița and Varna, and Transylvanian metalworking traditions. On the other hand, this does exclude the identity and full independence of the development of the Precucuteni – Trypillia A centre of metallurgy and metalwork. Traces of it have been found in several places – Oleksandrivka, Vytylivka, Luka–Vrublevetska, Rusesti–Noi, and some others (Ryndina 1998. 127–129, 134–135). Ryndina supposes that knowledge of metallurgy and metalwork came to Precucuteni – Trypillia A directly with a tri-

bal group which took part in the creation of Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture (Ryndina 1971.98–99).

**Direction of communication and contact zones**

Only a few sites of phase Precucuteni I – Trypillia A are known in the south and south-east of Transylvania. The settlements of the Precucuteni II – Trypillia A phase were located to the east of the Carpathians and the Dniester River basin. According to Gheorghe Lazarovici, all the ceramic finds with incised ornamentation referred to Precucuteni I–II, outside south-east Transylvania, is an import at sites of the other cultures (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2007.399). These finds mark the direction of relationships with the Vinča Culture and relate to cultural groups in Transylvania, Banat, and Oltenia.

Near the region of the Precucuteni formation in south-east Transylvania, in present-day Romania, the Vinča culture had spread to Banat, West Oltenia, South Transylvania, and Crisana.

Lazarovici noted significant migrations during the periods of Vinča A1–A3 and C1, C2 from areas of Macedonia to south-western Transylvania. The ex-



**Fig. 15. Pottery from Oleksandrivka with traces of burning up to 1000°C.**

pansion of Vinča B2–C was a result of the emergence in the Banat and Transylvania of a variety of new cultural groups genetically related to the culture of Vinča. The emergence of such cultures, such as Vadastra, Gradešnica, and Petrești in the Banat and Transylvania probably related to the same processes. Lazarovici suggests that this was connected with some 'southern elements' and Lumea Noua culture. Excavations at settlements in the Banat region prove the southern origin and dating of this group (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2007:401).

Thus, the emergence of Precucuteni culture in south-east Transylvania can be seen as a result of complex migration processes and the interactions between communities of different cultures and cultural groups in the Carpathian-Danube region in the Neolithic (Lazarovici, Lazarovici and Țurcanu 2009).

Transylvania is a region rich in natural resources, with good lines of communication along the valleys of large rivers such as the Tisza and Mures and their tributaries. This led to the existence in this region of a contact zone between the Middle and Lower Danube, the Carpathians and the Balkans during the Neo-Chalcolithic period. Cultural diversity and the relative overpopulation of Transylvania were the probable reasons that the new emerging culture Precucuteni II – Trypillia A culture shifted outside of Transylvania and occupied territory to east of the Carpathians (from Carpathian Moldova to the Dniester).

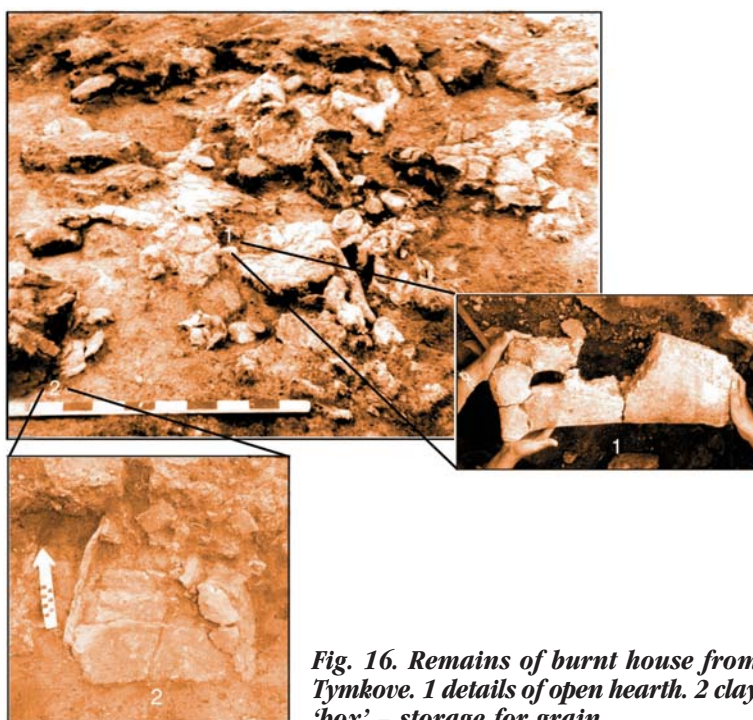
Certain features of the chronological horizon of Starčevo-Criș-Karanovo are clearly visible in the Precucuteni – Trypillia A materials. This phenomenon demonstrates the stability and conservatism of the ancient traditions. They could be obtained by Precucuteni – Trypillia A only as a heritage of cultures from the chronological horizon of Karanovo IV, preceding the formation of Precucuteni – Trypillia A (Comșa 1962; Burdo 2005; Burdo, Kovalyoh 1998).

In southeastern Transylvania there are sites at which the ceramic complex is distinctly mixed. Here we can see some features typical of Precucuteni and Bojan cultures. Such settlements as St. Gheorghe, Bancu, Ere-steghin, and Eugen Comșa refer to Boian-Giulești (Comșa 1974:33–35),

but Silvia Marinescu-Bilcu refers to Precucuteni I (Marinescu-Bilcu 1974). In the ceramic complex of Bernashivka (Precucuteni II – Trypillia A), specific items associated with Boian culture are rare (some kinds of incised ornamentation). But at the same time, pottery from many cultures has been found in the lower Danube: Vadastra, Dudești, Polanica, Sava. In these cultures, the forms of vessels with incised ornamentation and typical ornamental compositions of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A are similar. This suggests that Precucuteni II – Trypillia A culture can be attributed to a chronological horizon of cultures on both banks of the Lower Danube corresponding to Karanovo IV–V.

The appearance of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A culture in the region between the Carpathians and the Dniester can be considered as the spread of Bojan cultural traditions to the north-east across Transylvania. The features of the cultures on the right bank of the Lower Danube could have arisen in the ceramic complex of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A as a result of population movements along the rivers flowing into the Danube – the Olt, Siret and Prut.

Vladimir Slavchev suggests communication in a north-south direction between Precucuteni II – Trypillia A and Sava III cultures and Hamangia III (Slavchev 2005:39–54). He identifies a number of similar shapes and ornamental motifs in the ceramic complexes of Precucuteni III – Trypillia A, Sava IV, and Hamangia IV cultures. Slavchev (1997:1–14) suggests



**Fig. 16. Remains of burnt house from Tymbkove. 1 details of open hearth. 2 clay 'box' – storage for grain.**

that contacts between the populations of Precucuteni II – Trypillia A culture and Sava III culture and Hamangia III culture could have travelled along waterways.

In the west-east direction, contacts could have been made along the Tisza and Mures. Direct contact between Precucuteni II – Trypillia A communities with those of central Transylvania are indicated by finds of copper objects made from Transylvanian raw materials. Thracian copper probably becomes more significant from the Precucuteni III – Trypillia phase.

Later, the territory of Precucuteni III – Trypillia A expands to the north and south and especially east, to the watershed of the Southern Bug and Dnieper. During this period, we can observe interconnections between the communities of Precucuteni III – Trypillia A and Hamangia IV, Sava IV, Polyanitza IV, and Gradešnica cultures. The similarity of copper products from Precucuteni III – A Trypillia to copper items of the Karanovo VI culture complex suggests the partial synchrony of Precucuteni III – Trypillia A and Karanovo VI. This synchronisation is supported by finds of copper products originating from regions in Northern Thrace and decorations from spondilus that comprise the Karbuna treasure. However, the same hoard contained copper objects, which shows the continuity of contacts with Central Transylvania.

There is much evidence of direct links between Precucuteni III – Trypillia A and the cultural groups of Bolgrad-Aldeni II. Among the imported items at the Precucuteni III – Trypillia A settlements, especially in the southern zone, there are fragments of pottery and anthropomorphic figurines (Fig. 13.7) and flint from Dobrudja.

Among the common Precucuteni III – Trypillia A and Bolgrad – Aldeni II types of pottery are large jars with asymmetrical handles (Fig. 5.11), ornithomorphic vessels (Fig.



Fig. 17. 3D reconstruction of settlement burning (Oleksandrivka).

5.7), pots with fluted necks, bowls with double conical projections, ladles, and censers. The lower regions of the Siret and Prut rivers were probably the contact area between the populations of the Precucuteni III – Trypillia A, Hamangia IV cultures, and later with the Karanovo-Kodjadermen-Gumelnița cultural complex.

Pottery from the 7<sup>th</sup> level of the Durankulak settlement (Hamangia IV Culture) demonstrates forms and decoration similar to Precucuteni III – Trypillia A (Slavchev 1997). On other hand, there is a visible influence of Vinča culture. This means that some si-

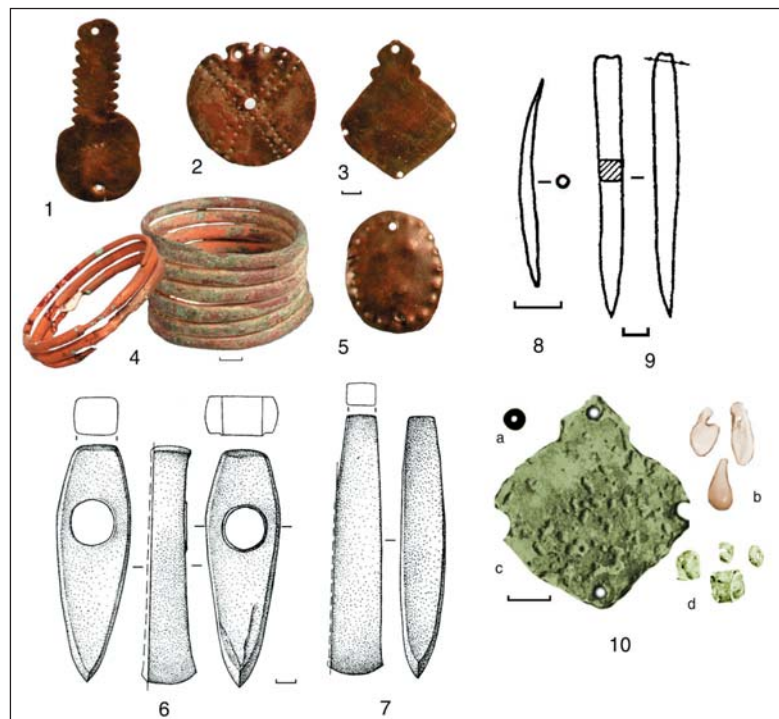


Fig. 18. Copper objects from Precucuteni II, III – Trypillia A sites. 1–7 Karbuna (after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici G.-C., Turcanu S. 2009; Dergachev 1998). 8 Okopy. 9 Oleksandrivka (after Ryndina 1998). 10 Oleksandrivka (a jet (?) bead, b bone pendants, c copper pendant, d copper beads).

milarities between Hamangia IV and Precucuteni – Trypillia were possibly connected with Vinča traditions. Some vessels from Precucuteni phases II and III are very similar to the pottery of the Sava III and IV complexes. The relations between these cultures (copper, spondilus) were perhaps accomplished through the mediation of Bolgrad-Aldeni II and Hamangia IV.

The final sites of Trypillia A on the Upper Dneister, contemporary with the beginning of Cucuteni A1, also demonstrate relations with Carpathian traditions (*Burdo 2001a; 2001b*).

It should be noted that many of the features of the ceramic complex from phases II and III of Precucuteni – Trypillia A are common to such cultures as Boian, Gradešnica, Vedastra, Sava, Hamangia (from latest phases), Bolgrad-Aldeni and Vinča (from the earliest phases). We can assume that this was due to the Vinča culture, which was involved in the genesis of many cultures and cultural groups of the Carpathian-Balkan-Danube region. Precucuteni – Trypillia A culture had intensive contacts with many cultures to the west and south, as is fully reflected in local cultural traditions.



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