

FALL OF NEOLITHIC SOCIETIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND EXPANSION OF STEPPE POPULATIONS AT THE END OF THE 4TH MILLENNIUM BC

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The contribution presents the materials as well as the chronology and taxonomic position of the heterogeneous Wyciąże group from western Lesser Poland, dated to the 2nd part of the 4th millennium BC, which was the result of mixing of elements of Polgár and Baden cultures. The analysis of the presence of other heterogeneous cultural units in other regions of Central Europe (Mittelelbe-Saale-Gebiet and Kuyavia) showed that their existence was accompanied by crisis processes (Fall of Neolithic societies).

The source of a series of local crises in Central Europe at that time, resulting in a decreasing population and cultural hybridization (e.g. the case of Bronocic IV-V), seems to be local conflicts of a socio-cultural nature. They contributed to a serious weakening of the hitherto dominance of the FBC groups or the late Danube cultures. In the cultural sense, the element co-forming the heterogenization processes at that time was mainly the early Boleraz influence.

In periods of disappearance of hierarchical ties typical of the world system (Wallerstein), or the relationship between the center and the periphery (Braudel), horizontal network structures begin to dominate. The phenomena of poly(multi-)culturalism, heterogenization and multi-ethnicity appear (Maffesoli). Late antiquity (the spread of early Christianity) and modern times (Untergang des Abendlandes by Oswald Spengler or Le temps des tribus by Michel Maffesoli) are an excellent illustration of the flourishing of hybrid cultures in the conditions of a deepening socio-cultural crisis.

The end result of the long-term crisis of Neolithic communities was creation of space for new processes of cultural integration encompassing the entire continent in the form of the formation of the Corded Ware and Bell Beakers as well as the Yamna culture in the east.

Keywords

Eneolithic, FBC, late Danube, heterogenization, hybridization, polyculturalizm, Central Europe, Black Sea steppe, Carpathian Basin, crisis, conflict, fall

Note/comment