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## **THE NEOLITHISATION OF SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN STARČEVO AND IMPRESSED WARE THROUGH LITHIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS**

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Neolithic cultures in Europe are generally defined on the basis of different ceramic styles, with early farming groups distinguished by differences in pottery production.

In the case of Southeast Europe, two main Neolithic groups have been identified based on two different ceramic styles: the Impressed Ware culture of the coastal areas (Adriatic) and the Starčevo-Körös-Criş complex of the continental Balkans.

Because of these differences in ceramic style and other aspects of material culture - such as the presence/absence of anthropomorphic figurines - archaeologists have tended to study these groups separately, as representative of two distinct paths of Neolithisation (maritime vs continental).

To re-examine the development of the Neolithic in South-Eastern Europe and the relations between these apparently distinct groups, this presentation considers lithic data obtained from coastal and inland sites of Croatia and Montenegro, associated with both Impressed Ware and Starčevo cultures.

Are there significant differences in lithic production traditions (e.g. use of different methods and techniques, different types of tools) and if so, do they coincide with traditional distinctions between these two archaeological cultures?

Do differences in lithic (and ceramic) production signal different processes of Neolithisation, with varying influences of migrant farmers from different regions of the Near East and local hunter-gatherers?

Finally, are there similarities between Starčevo and Impressed Ware production, which could point to the existence of contacts between these two cultural groups? To answer these questions requires re-focusing attention on the logistics of material culture production at the borderlands (cultural peripheries) where interaction is most likely to have occurred.

### **Keywords**

Neolithisation, South-Eastern Europe, Starčevo, Impressed Ware, Social interactions, Lithic technology

### **Note/comment**