

THE CHIPPED STONE ASSEMBLAGE FROM THE EARLY CHALCOLITHIC SETTLEMENT AT ISAIIA – BALTA POPII

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Abstract: The paper presents, in detail, the investigations on the chipped stone assemblage discovered, during archaeological excavations, in the early Chalcolithic settlement at Isaiia - Balta Popii. The technological and typological analysis of the entire collection was accomplished taking into account the various raw materials that are its constituents. In the case of the raw material with the greatest frequency – the flint from the Moldavian Platform –, artefacts coming from all phases of the debitage are certified. The results obtained for Isaiia were then compared with those from other Precucuteni II - Tripolje A sites, highlighting the existence of technological and typological elements common for the lithic industries of the early Chalcolithic in Eastern Europe (North-East of Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

Cuvinte-cheie: Eneolitic timpuriu, tehnologie litică, tipologie litică

Rezumat: Lucrarea prezintă, pe larg, investigațiile asupra utilajului litic cioplit descoperit în timpul săpăturilor arheologice din așezarea eneoliticului timpuriu de la Isaiia – Balta Popii. Analiza tehnologică și tipologică a întregii colecții de piatră cioplită a fost realizată ținând cont de diversele materii prime care o alcătuiesc. În cazul materiei prime cu cea mai mare frecvență – silixul din Platforma Moldovenească –, sunt atestate artefacte provenind din toate etapele debitajului. Compararea rezultatelor obținute pentru Isaiia cu cele din alte situri Precucuteni II-Tripolie A, evidențiază existența unor elemente de tehnologie și tipologie comune industriilor litice de la începutul eneoliticului în spațiul est european (regiunea de nord-est a României, Republica Moldova și Ucraina).

INTRODUCTION

The emergence and spread of the Precucuteni-Trypilia A communities at the half of the fifth millennia B.C. is considered as the beginning of the Chalcolithic in nowadays north-eastern part of Romania, Republic of Moldavia and Ukraine. These human communities possessed a range of shared elements in their material culture and spiritual background, as similar habitat preferences, the overall use of incisions in decorating pottery, the same patterns in realising the anthropomorphic statuettes etc. The legitimate question is whether their lithic technology can be registered in the common cultural background or is a phenomenon that gained its own characteristics depending on various agents. Answering this question, at the moment, proves to be difficult since the published data, at least for the western settlements of the Precucuteni-Tripolje A (the area bordered by the Carpathian Mountains and the Prut River) are scarce and unequal in presenting the technological and typological features of the chipped stone collections¹. The only exception is the analysis of the

industry at Traian – Dealul Viei². These deficiencies are an impediment for an overall diachronic view, in an attempt to ascertain the main features of the lithic industry at the dawns of the Chalcolithic in the given geographical space. Additional to the impossibility of establishing the characteristics of the technology is also the lack of a coherent typological list for the categories of retouched products. Thus, we state the necessity of reconsidering the assemblages already published and also of analysing the newly discovered ones. Since the geographical space that we are referring to was not culturally isolated in the fifth millennia B.C., but was a part of the Precucuteni-Tripolje A area, it is essential to understand the lithic technology and typology in a broader cultural context. Thus, comparing the chipped stone inventories discovered in the Precucuteni-Tripolje A settlements from nowadays Romania, Republic of Moldavia and Ukraine is necessary in order to understand their shared attributes. Fortunately, data available, at the moment, for the settlements from the left of the Prut River are more concise and more focused in understanding the prehistoric technology.

¹ Păunescu 1970; Boghian 1995; 1996; Boghian, Tudose 1994; Marinescu-Bîlcu 1974; 1981; Țurcanu 2006; 2009; Vulpe 1957, p. 242–248.

² Țurcanu 2006; 2009.