

Dmytro Gaskevych

Kyiv, Ukraine

Pottery With Admixture of Graphite and Exchange Networks in Neolithic of Ukraine: Problem Statement

Graphite is used in pottery production and decoration in different parts of earth for a long time. For example, in the Balkans making of clay vessels with graphitized surface emerged in the Struma river basin in the Neolithic (Sapareva Banja, Sitagroi I, Acropotamos-Topolnitsa, etc.). Later such ceramic widely spread in the areas of Chalcolithic cultures in the Lower Danube area. Pottery with graphite have been found at some Austrian, Moravian and Bavarian sites of the Linear Band Ceramic culture in the Upper Danube area. Relatively numerous vessels, made from paste with admixture of graphite, are also known in materials of Neolithic sites of Ukraine.

As long ago as 1960s Valentyn Danylenko noted that the vast majority of «graphite ceramic» in Ukraine was found in the Southern Buh river basin. He interpreted it as a pottery of so called «Samchyntsi» type of the Buh-Dnister culture and clearly connected its origin with largest in the country graphite deposit near the village of Zavallia, Haivoron district, Kirovohrad region. But such finds also are known in other areas, in particular on the middle Dnipro (Uspenka, Buz'ky I), in the Dnipro rapids region (Vovchok, Sobachky, Stril'cha Skelia, Kizlevy V, Mykil'sky cemetery) and the Northern Azov Sea area (Kamiana Mogyla-1). Mentioned sites are related to the Kyiv-Cherkasy, Surska and Azov-Dnipro Neolithic cultures. Their graphite ceramic has never been the subject of special study. It often has regarded as an import from the Southern Buh area. However, ornamentation of many of these vessels is different from the traditions of the Southern Buh Neolithic. Thus, these vessels may be made by local potters with other graphite raw materials, because there are known three major graphite-bearing zones: Buh-Teterev, Ingul, and Azov within the Ukrainian Shield. Also it can be assumed graphite from the Buh area, spreading through the exchange networks, was added in their clay. For example, in the Upper Danubian Neolithic and the Bulgarian Chalcolithic such networks have been recorded by the finds of graphite artifacts in particular with holes for stringing. However, finds of graphite raw material and articles of it still unknown on Neolithic sites of Ukraine.

Also there needs to solve a problem of time and origin of using graphite in pottery making in Neolithic of Ukraine – its independent emergence or rise under external

influence. People of the Buh-Dnister culture had close relations with population of the Lower Danube in the Early Neolithic. But expansion of settlers with linear band pottery along the Prut and Dnister rivers separated them in about 5300 cal BC. Finding of graphite ceramic on local sites of these new people are yet not mentioned, with the exception of settlement of the Kamyane-Zavallia, excavating by Dmytro Kiosak. It is noteworthy that this so far only site of LBK on banks of the Southern Buh is situated in the immediate vicinity of the Zavallia graphite deposit. It is possible that inhabitants of the settlement came here directly from Central Europe and they had preserved traditional Upper Danubian treatment of graphite as a prestigious material. In this regard, attention is drawn to shoe-last adze found close by the site whose raw material originated from the Iser Mountains of Northern Bohemia.

Verification of the adduced assumptions requires more detailed study and comparison of graphite ceramics from Ukraine and neighbouring territories, including apply of methods of natural science.