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Køkkenmødding of Eastern Ukraine

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A kitchen heap (also kitchen midden or shell heap) or køkkenmødding is an archaeological site that contains domestic waste which may consist of animal bone, mollusc shells, ceramics, and other artefacts. Although historically the term køkkenmødding is associated with the Ertetbel culture, however, it became more extensive over the time. Here it is used to denote accumulations of saltwater and freshwater mussels utilized by man. For the territory of Ukraine marked out three types of køkkenmødding: sea, river and lake. In Eastern parts of Ukraine within the middle of the Siverskyi Donets basin, river and lake køkkenmødding are known. They are dated with a transitional period from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic or if to be more specific from the middle of the 7th until the end of the 6th millennium BC.

Sites of the transitional period located on the banks of rivers (Pavlograd) as well as on the high sand terrace above the lake (Tuba-V and Tuba Vb). Those sites are dated by the second half of the 7th millennium BC. Considering the specific features of the artefacts, they should be connected with the Matveyevo-Kurgansk culture circle.

Nowadays only one early Palaeolithic site with køkkenmødding – Starobilsk-I, that on the left bank of the Aidar River (left tributary of the Siverskyi Donets) is known.

According to the carbon dating, obtained from fragments of ceramic tableware, bone and charcoal, the Starobilsk-I site can be synchronized with 15-11th layers of the Rakushechnyy Yar (the Lower Don).

Finally, Late Palaeolithic sites that dated within the limits of the second half - end of the 6th millennium BC are presented by a wider circle of sites and settlements that located on lake terraces and on the banks of the rivers. Most of the settlements with køkkenmødding studied on the right bank of the Aidar River - Novoselivka-I, -II, -III.

Another site - Tuba-I is situated on the sandy fluvial terrace of the left bank of the Siverskyi Donets, nearby the Lake Matkino. The pit filled with the flaps of bivalve mussels was here localized. According to V.O. Manko Tuba-I belongs to the 3rd stage of the Tubian culture. In its turn, complexes of Aidar, conforming to the features of material culture considered as mixed - Tuba-Mariupol.

A characteristic sign for all sites is dense layers or accumulations that consist of flaps and shells of freshwater mussels - *Unio* and *Viviparus*. The fullness of these layers is

different and varies from a 0,05 m. to 0,45 m. In accumulations, except actual remains of mussels, there are other archaeological artefacts, among that wares of flint and bone, ceramic and faunistic complexes, and also wares from other kinds of stone and mussels.

During the Neolithic, the use of river/lake resources had no such value, as in a final Mesolithic-Neolithic. That is why, on this stage of the study, this question does not find a logical explanation yet, except that the wide use of mussels changed into agriculture, cattle breeding and hunt in the first place. It can be stated that flaps and shells of mussels were used to make decorations or adornments or as a grounded addition to ceramic mass as it was before. Nevertheless, it seems that the use of mussels' meat in meal did not have mass character.

Thus, such cultural phenomenon as køkkenmødding on the territory of East Ukraine existed for almost 1500 years. Its origins should be connected with the influence of cultures of the south and south-east directions – the North-eastern Azov region and Lower Don territories.