

## CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON THE BÜKK CULTURE IN SLOVAKIA

### (BRIEF OUTLINE BASED ON EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS CONDUCTED OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS)

#### A BÜKKI KULTÚRA KUTATÁSÁNAK AKTUÁLIS HELYZETE SZLOVÁKIÁBAN (RÖVID ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ AZ ELMÚLT 30 ÉV EREDMÉNYEI ALAPJÁN)

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#### **Abstract**

*This article presents a short review on the state of research regarding Bükk Culture in Slovakia. Results of the field surveys and excavations within the last few decades are specifically considered. After the first Slovak summary on the subject written by J. Lichardus in 1974 it was S. Šiška who dealt with the particular questions of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia. On the basis of some differences observed on the pottery, associated with the diverse cultural background, the same author described the „eastern type of the Bükk Culture“ and suggested the possibility of the existence of two groups – the „western“ and „eastern“ ones. Their geographical extension could be synchronized more or less with the „Eastern-“ and „Western“ Upper Tisza Region cultural circles of the previous Eastern Linear Pottery Culture. The turning point in the knowledge of the discussed culture was due to the excavations on several very important sites as in the East Slovak Plain as well as in other parts of the settlement area in Slovakia.*

#### **Kivonat**

*Ez a tanulmány röviden összefoglalja a bükki kultúra szlovákiai kutatásának eredményeit, különös tekintettel az elmúlt évtizedek terepbejárásainak és ásatásainak eredményeire. A témáról készült első összefoglaló után, melyet J. Lichardus készített 1974-ben, elsősorban S. Šiška foglalkozott ezzel a kérdéssel. A kerámiában megfigyelt különbségek alapján, amelyeket eltérő kulturális háttérnek tulajdonított, Šiška elkülönített egy „keleti típust” a bükki kultúrán belül, és feltételezte két csoport - egy keleti, illetve egy nyugati csoport meglétét. Ezeknek földrajzi elhelyezkedését a Felső-Tisza vidék korábban a vonaldíszes kerámia kultúráján belül megfigyelt „keleti” és „nyugati” csoportjaival hozta összefüggésbe. A bükki kultúra kutatásában fontos új eredményeket hoztak a legutóbbi idők ásatásai, Kelet-Szlovákiában és az ország más régióiban is.*

KEYWORDS: SLOVAKIA, MIDDLE NEOLITHIC, BÜKK CULTURE, DISTRIBUTION AREA, CHRONOLOGY

KULCSSZAVAK: SZLOVÁKIA, KÖZÉPSŐ NEOLITIKUM, BÜKKI KULTÚRA, ELTERJEDÉSI TERÜLET, KRONOLÓGIA

#### **Brief outline of the history of research**

The archaeological investigations in the caves Domica and Ardovo in 1930s by J. Böhm, but mainly the systematic excavations in these caves as well as in the cave Čertova diera led by J. Lichardus in 1962-1963 (Lichardus 1964, 57 pp.; 1968, 18-19) contributed expressively to the better knowledge of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia. First of all on the basis of the finds derived from the above mentioned caves and also from ceramic material known from other Slovak and Hungarian sites the last mentioned author worked up the inner chronology of the Bükk Culture (Lichardus 1964, 62; 1968, 96 pp.; 1974, 83 pp.). In his monograph „Studien zur Bükker Kultur“ from 1974, which is still regarded as the basic comprehensive work on the Bükk Culture in the Slovak archaeological technical literature until now, apart from the

question of its origin J. Lichardus dealt also with the downfall and the chronological position of the Bükk Culture in the broader cultural context. His four phases dividing into A-AB-B-C shows up today as not very applicable for all kind of settlements (Šiška 1995a, 43-44). Moreover, the research in the past more than 30 years proved several of his opinions false (see already in Šiška 1979, 245-246).

Important turning point was brought about by the excavations conducted by S. Šiška in the East Slovak Plain at the sites Hnojné (1962), Zemplínske Kopčany (1971-1974) and Čierne Pole (1976) (Šiška 1979, 246 pp.), but especially in Šarišské Michalany in Šariš Basin (Šiška 1986; 1995a). Systematic investigations lasting several years (1981-1987) yielded huge amount of pottery carrying elements characteristic for all phases

observed on the ceramics from the known caves in Slovak Karst. According to features in the find material and find context (short-term settlement supported by small number of recovered houses) S. Šiška suggested the three phases system I–III (as it was worked up in the Hungarian Professional literature) as more suitable for so called open-air settlements (Šiška 1995a, 43–44). Similarly to the phase A, the final stage C connected with the „sudden“ downfall of the Bükk settlement presents one of the still opened and discussed questions.

Recently, the site Šarišské Michaľany was treated and evaluated in a complex way by R. Hreha in his PhD. thesis (2010).

M. Soják has specifically dealt with the problem of the appearance of the Bükk pottery in the strange cultural milieu of the younger – „Notenkopf“ - Phase of the Western Linear Pottery Culture and following Želiezovce Group in the Spiš Region. He has been also successfully devoting himself to the speleoarchaeology on the territory of East Slovakia already for several years (Soják 1998; 2000; 2007a; 2007b etc.).

### ***Distribution area of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia – short evaluation of the particular regions***

The main distribution area of the Bükk Culture corresponds basically to the settlement areas of the previous groups Tiszadob and Raškovce as the young and final stages of the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture (according to the exerted division in the Slovak archaeological technical literature). Each of these groups participated more or less in the formation of the discussed cultural unit (Šiška 1989, 129 pp.).

Delineating the characteristic development in the Upper Tisza Region, S. Šiška assigned two geographical cultural circles during the existence of the Linear Pottery Culture; the so-called *East Tisza Region* (East Slovak Plain, North-East part of Slovakia, Carpatho-Ukraine, North-West Romania and adjacent part of North-East Hungary) with the typical black painted decoration on the pottery and *West Tisza Region* (Gemer Region, Košice Basin, Šariš Basin in Slovakia, Bükk Mountains and river-basins of Hernád and Sajó in Hungary) with the dominating incised motives from the very beginning (Šiška 1989, 25–26).

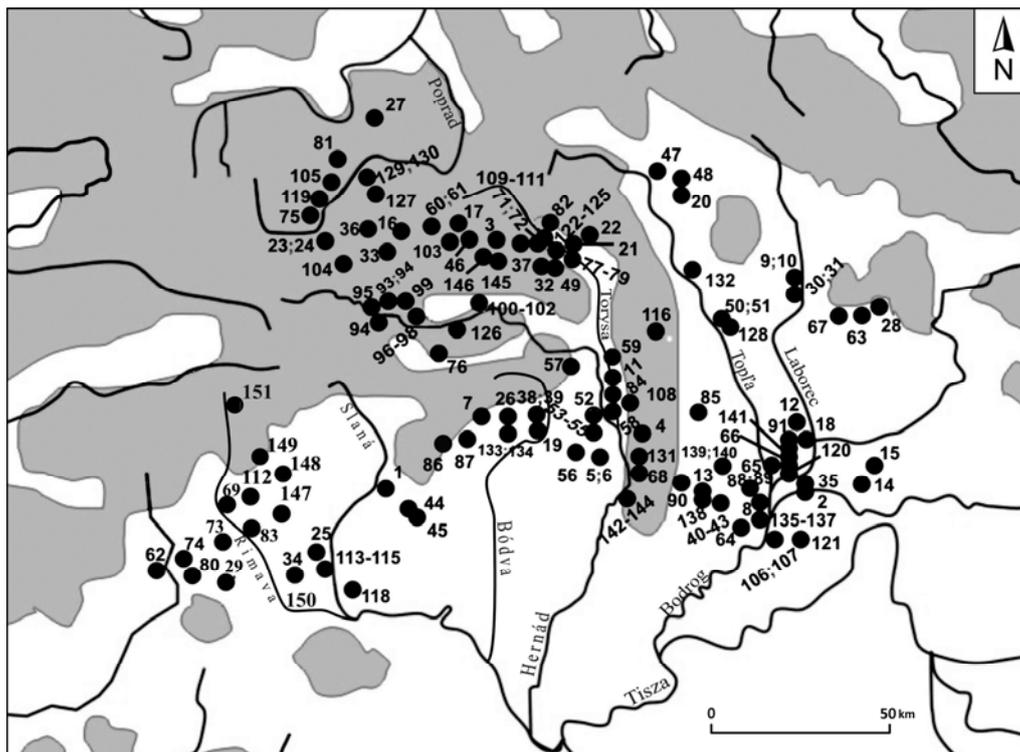
As it seems up to now the East Slovak Plain kept its unique position during the following Bükk Culture as well. Several differences in the ceramic material led the above mentioned author to outlining the very high possibility of the existence of two groups – the „eastern group“ and the „western group“ in accordance with the above defined circles (Šiška 1979, 257, 267–273).

### ***The main forms of settlements and the settlement development of the Bükk Culture in South-East and East Slovakia***

According to the distribution of the evidenced sites we can observe the spreading of the Bükk Culture from the Rimava Basin (or even more westward from the district Lučenec) as the part of the Gemer Region in the southeast of Middle Slovakia to the East Slovak Plain in the east and to the Šariš Basin in the north. The very specific place belongs to the Spiš Region settled by the communities from the Middle Danube Region. The find circumstances and the quantity of the Bükk pottery indicate more intensive penetration of the inhabitants (in comparison with the imports of the previous Tiszadob Group). From this reason this part of East Slovakia is regarded as the „northernmost area with the more coherent Bükk settlement“ (Fig 1; Soják 1998, 109).

In general there are two basic forms of Bükk settlements – „open-air“ sites and „cave“ sites. The first category can be further divided into „river-side“ or „hill-side“ and „hill-top“ settlements. The last mentioned ones represent a specific kind of settlement, probably established for the purpose of refuge and protection as observed by S. Šiška, especially together with the climatic change by the final stage of the Bükk Culture somewhere at the turn of the 6. and 5. Millennium BC. First, although sporadical evidence, however, came already from the young stage of the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture defined by the group Tiszadob and later from the classical phase – B – of the Bükk Culture (Hodejov– Nr. 29, Košice – Šaca – Nr. 56 – the numbers correspond with the numbers on the Fig 1; see also thereafter) (Šiška 1995a, 46; 1999, 56–59).

The „cave“ settlements are characteristic form of habitation for the Slovak Karst (Ardovo–“Ardovska jaskyňa” – Nr. 1; Kečovo – Cave Čertova diera – Nr. 44; Kečovo – Cave Domica – Nr. 45; Silica – Cave Silická ľadnica – Nr. 86; Silická Jablonica– „Zbojnická jaskyňa“ – Nr. 87 etc.). Several cave sites occur in the border line between the Slovak Karst and the Košice Basin (Háj – Cave Pustovňa - Nr. 26; Jasov – Caves Fajka – Nr. 38, „Oblúková“ and „Jasovská jaskyňa“ – Nr. 39; Zádiel–„Kostrová jaskyňa“ – Nr. 133 etc.) as well as in the Spiš Region, especially in the Hornád Basin (Poráč – Caves Šarkanova diera and Chyža – Nr. 76; Smižany-Tri skalky – Nr. 94; for more see also Soják 2007a, 2007b). The clear reason of their occupation hasn't been reliably clarified yet. One possible reason can be that because of the proper temperature of the interiors they could be utilized seasonally (Lichardus 1970, 87 pp.).



**Fig. 1.:** Distribution area of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia (the site numbers mentioned in the text correspond to the numbers in the map) (after Piatničková 2007, Catalogue of the sites, Mapa 2, adjusted).

**1. ábra:** A bükki kultúra elterjedése Szlovákiában. A lelőhelyek számozása a szövegben megegyezik a térképen jelölt számmal.

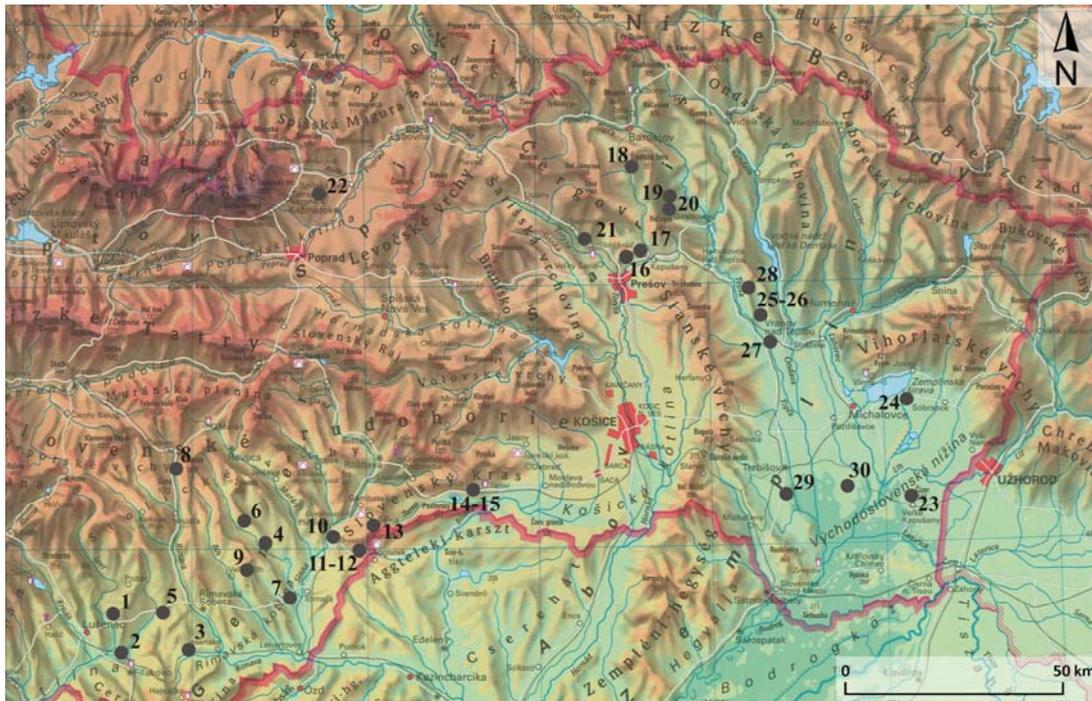
This theory could support the smaller number of the Bükk sherds from the right profile of the stream „Blatný potok“ and from the probes on its left bank as well as on the hill side of „Hájska stráň“ in front of the entrance to the valley „Zádielska dolina“ (Nr. 134) (Kaminská 1983, 126; Mirošayová 1984, 153; 1985, 159). Whether we can connect them in some way to the Bükk pottery finds from the cave „Kostrová jaskyňa“ in Zádiel or not is questionable (Bárta 1975, 17–18). The lack of the „open-air“ sites in the direct surroundings of most of the caves, however, does not allow us to make closer conclusions about their real function.

### **Short evaluation of the particular regions of Southeast and East Slovakia**

The westernmost or southwestern region of the Bükk territory in Slovakia is Gemer Region consisting of two geographical units – of the *Rimava Basin* and the *Slovak Karst*. In terms of the mutual contacts between two different cultural „worlds“ – on the one hand the Želiezovce Group and on the other hand Bükk Culture – the *Lučenec Basin* as the part of the Southern Slovak Basin (together with the Rimava Basin) seems very important (Fig. 2.). As the „contact zone“ on the basis of the find circumstances we could consider just the upper part of the river Ipel' where among

several Bükk settlements (Lučenec-„Ružová osada“ – Nr. 62; Ožďany-„Lapoš pod Bukom“ – Nr. 73; Prša-Borszék and Prša-Bércz – Nr. 80) the site *Pinciná-Pod bielou zemou* (Nr. 74) is situated. The probing and the field survey proved there presence of finds from the younger phase of Western Linear Pottery Culture and the following Želiezovce Group as well as the young stage of Eastern Linear Pottery Culture (Tiszadob Group) and Bükk Culture. It is very interesting, that traces of Lengyel Culture are also evidenced (Budinský-Krička 1947, 57, Tab. V: 12–21; Fottová & Kovár 2004, 53, Obr. 29: 4, 5, 19; Tóth 2010, Mapa 8–10, Cat. Nr. 223). Further to the west and southwest along the mentioned river the settlement area of the Middle Danube Region cultural units is extended. We can regard the finds of Bükk pottery in this milieu as imports (for more see Šiška 1995b).

There are two basic types of settlements in the Rimava Basin – „river-side“ (Stránska-Kraliny II – Nr. 150; Tornaľa – Králik-Močiar – Nr. 114; Tornaľa – Králik-„Švermova ulica“ – Nr. 115; Včelince-Feketesár – Nr. 118) and „hill top“ (Gemer-Várhegy – Nr. 25; Hodejov – Nr. 29; Nižný Skálnik-Magin hrad – Nr. 69, Tisovec-Hradová – Nr. 151 etc.) with main concentrations of sites in the river-basins Slaná and Rimava or their tributaries.



**Fig. 2.:** The most important sites discussed in the article. *Lučenec Basin*: 1 – Pinciná, 2 – Prša; *Rimava Basin*: 3 – Hodejov, 4 – Chvalová-„Chvalovská jaskyňa“, 5 – Ožďany, 6 – Rybník – Cave Praslen, 7 – Stránska – Kraliny II, 8 – Tisovec-Hradová, 9 – Vyšné Valice; *Slovak Karst*: 10 – Ardovo-„Ardovská jaskyňa“, 11 – Kečovo – Cave Čertova diera, 12 – Kečovo – Cave Domica, 13 – Silica – Cave Silická ľadnica; *Košice Basin*: 14 – Zádiel-„Kostrová jaskyňa“, 15 – Zádiel-„Zádielska dolina“; *Šariš Basin*: 16 – Fintice, 17 – Fulianka, 18 – Kľušov, 19 – Kochanovce, 20 – Koprivnica – Dubie, 21 – Šarišské Michaľany; *Spiš Region (Poprad Basin)*: 22 – Stráne pod Tatrami; *East Slovak Plain*: 23 – Čierne Pole, 24 – Hnojné, 25 – Komárany-Luckovo, 26 – Komárany-Vyšná roveň, 27 – Vranov nad Topľou – Čemerné, 28 – Vyšný Žipov, 29 – Zemplínske Hradište, 30 – Zemplínske Kopčany (the numbers don't correspond with the real numbers of the sites listed in the article).

## 2. ábra: A cikkben tárgyalt legfontosabb lelőhelyek

The existence of the “cave” settlements, however, cannot be excluded. Bükk pottery was obtained, for example, from the cave sites Chvalová-„Chvalovská jaskyňa” (Nr. 148) or Rybník-„jaskyňa Praslen” (Nr. 149), both in district Revúca. In general, not too much fertile soil prevails here (Mičian 1972, 400–401).

Similar to the question of the utilizing of the caves that hasn't been reliably resolved yet also the existence of settlements on the hill tops has not been adequately explained. It would request especially more extensive material basis to be able on the ground of the elaboration, evaluation and following comparison of the finds to make closer conclusions. The same situation applies to the discussed region, too.

As it was already written above, for the Slovak Karst and the adjacent part of the Košice Basin the “cave” settlements are characteristic.

It can be said that the Košice Basin belongs to the best investigated regions of East Slovakia in respect of the whole prehistory. The settlement network is

connected with the main rivers Hornád, Torysa and Olšava and streams Bodva and Ida. The majority of known sites is located on their terraces or the gentle slopes of the surrounding elevations south of Košice (Nr. 52–56 – several locations) on the most productive soils (Black-, Brown- or „Bottom land“ soils) (Mičian 1972, 395). As for „hill-top“ settlements S. Šiška (1999, 53) mentioned only three – Košice – Šaca (Nr. 56), Svinica (Nr. 108) and Tuhrina (Nr. 116).

Obviously, the valleys of bigger rivers were important communication main roads and could be interesting also in terms of following of the spreading of the settlements from the south (the adjacent part of North and North-East Hungary – see for example Csengeri 2005, Fig. 4) to the north (in this case up to the Šariš Basin and through this even more northerly till Little Poland – Šiška 1995a, 16). Surely, obsidian occurring in the nearby mountains „Slánske vrchy“ and more southward Tokaj Mountains was in the centre of attention.

The inhabitants penetrated further to the Šariš Basin through the Torysa valley. The excavations and

surveys proved the presence of „river-side“ or „hill-side“ settlements established along the river Torysa and its right-side (Svinka) or left-side (Sekčov, Delňa) tributaries, especially on the Brown soils. Moreover, „hill-top“ sites situated on the both parts of Torysa (Fintice – Nr. 21, Chmiňany – Nr. 32, Jarovnice – Močidl'any – Nr. 37, Veľký Šariš-Castle – Nr. 125 etc.) were settled for a short term.

Apart from the already mentioned „trade“ contacts primarily between the wider area of Kraków and East Slovakia leading through the discussed region, no less important are its mutual contacts with the East Slovak Plain. They have already reflected on the ceramics during the previous Linear Pottery Culture (occurrence of black paint inclusive of the independent black painted decoration, quadrangular mouth) and kept on during the Bükk Culture as well (as it can be observed in Šarišské Michal'any on the thin-walled vessels with rectangular mouth, sometimes also profiled in form of lobes). Very good evidence of these contacts are sites lying on the lower course of the stream Sekčov (Fintice – Nr. 21, Fulianka – Nr. 22, Prešov – Šarišské Lúky – Nr. 78) on the one hand and in the middle part of the river Topľa on the other hand (Komárany-Luckovo – Nr. 50; Komárany-Vyšná roveň – Nr. 51; Vranov nad Topľou – Čemerné-Na kútoch – Nr. 128; Vyšný Žipov – Nr. 132) (**Figs 1; 2;** Šiška 1995a, 15-16; 1999, 47 pp.). Along the valleys of these water courses the settlement could extend even to the foothills of the Ondavská Vrchovina, well documented for example through sites recovered during systematic surveys conducted under cooperation of the Slovak and Polish archaeologists in the 1990-ies, such as Koprivnica-Dubie – Nr. 20; Kľušov – Nr. 47 and mainly Kochanovce –Nr. 48 (Tunia 2008, 75 pp). According to the current state of research regarding the sites, the stream Sekčov probably played more important role in this process. There are, however, several known sites in the middle flow of the Topľa which could also indicate not only the direction of the mentioned contacts with the Šariš Basin but the possibility of the spreading of the Bükk settlement area to the north-west as well.

The distribution area of the Bükk Culture in the East Slovak Plain correspond in fact to that of the previous Raškovce Group. On the ground on the current state of research in this part of East Slovakia we can suppose the chronological succession of these two cultural units.

As the most widespread type of relief, the plain extending in the river-basins of the biggest rivers (Bodrog, Latorica, Uh, Laborec, Topľa, Ondava), it is necessary to count with the high probability of floods in the Middle Neolithic, too. Apparently from this reason the settlements were concentrated rather on the surrounding highlands with the altitude up to 300 m. This environs provided the

inhabitants the proper surface for deforesting and the productive soils for agriculture. In the area of Kráľovský Chlmec, and also of Veľké Kapušany to some extent and in the lower part of the river Ondava sand-dunes were utilized. A small percentage is represented by the most fertile soils in the form of Black- and Flood-plain soils on the river terraces south of Trebišov (Mičian 1972, 393 pp.). The most important sites like Čierne Pole (Nr. 15), Kašov (Nr. 40), Zemplinske Hradište (Nr. 139) or Zemplinske Kopčany (Nr. 141) belong to the first and the most widespread type of settlements.

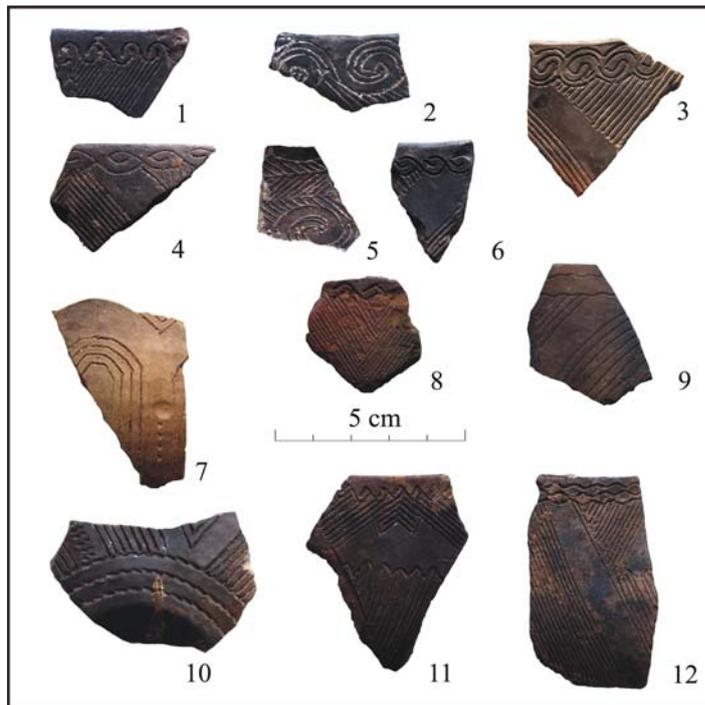
Along the river Laborec and its tributaries the communities of the Bükk Culture expanded northward to the surroundings of Humenné (Humenné-Krámová – Nr. 30; Humenné-Pod Sokolom – Nr. 31 etc.) and north-eastward to the foothill of the Vihorlat Mountains (Hnojné - Nr. 28; Lúčky-Na pláňach – Nr. 63; Michalovce-Hrádok – Nr. 67).

Very important task for the future research will be the attempt to find out the direction and the way of the penetration of the Bükk settlement to the East Slovak Plain and the role of the previous Tiszadob background in this process.

The Spiš Region had a special position within the Bükk Culture territory in Slovakia. Bükk pottery occurs together with the finds of younger phase of the Linear Pottery Culture and Želiezovce Group in different intensity, eventually with sporadic sherds of the Tiszadob Group, on most of the sites. The first and predominant form are the settlements established on the terraces of the main rivers Hornád and Poprad and their smaller tributaries or on the surrounding gentle slopes. The natural environment of this region subscribed to higher altitude of the known sites (more than 400 m). The most important of these is Stráne pod Tatrami (Nr. 105), which with its altitude of 662–675 m represents one of the uppermost situated neolithic sites with the recorded longhouses of the Linear Pottery Culture in the Central Europe (Soják 2000, 254).

The same find circumstances as in the case of the „river-side“ or „hill-side“ settlements can be observed also by the another two types – in the caves (see thereinbefore) or on the hill tops (Gánovce-Hrádok – Nr. 23; Iľiašovce – Nr. 33; Smižany/Spišské Tomášovce-Hradisko I – Nr. 95; Žehra-Spiš Castle – Nr. 146 etc.) concentrated primarily in the Hornád Basin (Soják 2000, 257-258; Šiška 1999, 48 pp.).

North-South exchange contacts are recorded in the presence of the Jurassic Cracow flint in the find material on the one hand and higher share of obsidian from the Zemplín Mountains in the Hornád valley on the other hand (Soják 2007a, 30).



**Fig. 3.:** Silica-Silická ľadnica. Ceramic finds from the cave.

**3. ábra:** Silica-Silická ľadnica. Kerámia leletek a barlangból

### ***Chronological position of the Bükk Culture and its development on the basis of some selected sites in Slovakia***

As it was already mentioned the first and up to now also the only exerted 4-phases division (A-AB-B-C) of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia was worked up by J. Lichardus (1968; 1969; 1974). The main criterion for chronological assignment was the character of the decoration on the thin-walled pottery from three key caves – Ardovo, Domica and Čertova diera. Later, S. Šiška, based on the situation intercepted in Šarišské Michal’any (Nr. 109) suggested a 3-phases system (I–III) originating from the Hungarian Professional literature which would better describe the current knowledge of the development of the Bükk Culture (Šiška 1995a, 43–44). According to this, most of the known Slovak sites would belong to the second phase comprising the Lichardus’ phases AB and B.

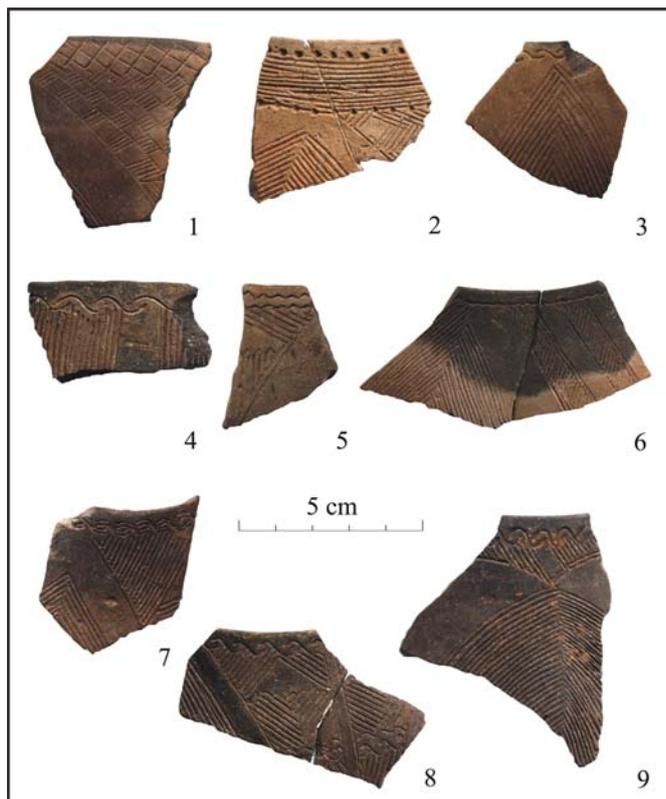
As it seems until now the individuality of the evolution of the East- and West Tisza Regions during the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture continued in the following Bükk Culture. The different cultural background (Tiszadob Group in the Gemer Region, Košice- and Šariš Basins and the Raškovce Group in the East Slovak Plain) caused the local colouring in the particular regions of East Slovakia. Rightfully, similar situation we can expect in the adjacent part of North and North-East Hungary.

Several differences in the pottery stimulated S. Šiška to define the „eastern type of the Bükk

Culture“ in the easternmost part of Slovakia. At the same time, he didn’t exclude that the future research can prove the existence of the independent „eastern group“ which would correspond to the „western group“ „with the centre in the area of the Bükk Mountains and in the Slovak Karst“ (Šiška 1979, 257).

The oldest phase – A – as it was assigned by J. Lichardus is „safely“ evidenced in Slovakia only in the caves Ardovo, Domica and Čertova diera that means in the area of the Slovak Karst. In the same period the groups Tiszadob and Raškovce should be still existing in the other parts of discussed territory. Almost the same situation is true for the final stage – C (except for some traces recorded in Šarišské Michal’any) (Šiška 1995a, 22–23, 44).

For the cave settlements, extremely thin-walled pottery with precisely treated surface is characteristic. The striking distinction in comparison with the „eastern type“ (group) is manifested mainly in the incomparably more varied decoration under the rim and inside the so-called big decorated triangles. The motive of the „running“ spiral in the form of the letters S and C is also typical which is completely missing in the East Slovak Plain (see Figures 1–4). This trend is confirmed by the ceramic finds from the further, not less important cave settlement – *Silica-Silická ľadnica* (Nr. 86), too (Fig. 3.; Bánesz 1962, 237 pp., Obr. 4; Demeterová 1983, 80, Obr. 45).



**Fig. 4.:** Vyšné Valice-Katona vágás. Selection of the thin-walled pottery.

**4. ábra:** Vyšné Valice-Katona vágás. Válogatás a finomkerámiából.

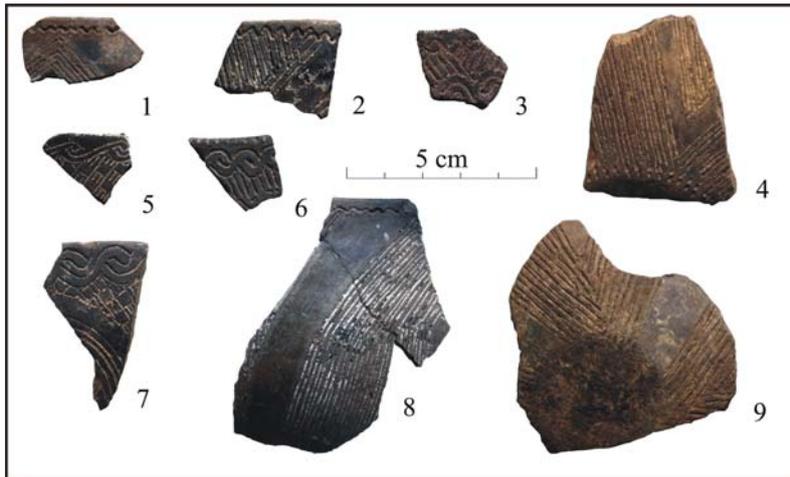
The high number of the ceramics coming from the caves in the Gemer Region is completed by not as numerous, but very important material from the „river-side“ or „hill-side“ settlements as for example from the site *Vyšné Valice-Katona vágás* (Nr. 147), published until now only in the form of very short references (Fig. 4.; B. Kovács 1985, 238). In connection with this type of “open-air” settlements it is worth to mention the site *Stránska-Kraliny II* (Nr. 150) where in 2005, rescue excavations were conducted yielding a large assemblage of ceramic finds (Rusnák 2007, 164–165). Concerning the „hill-top“ settlements, most of the known pottery, around 200 sherds, comes from *Hodejov-Castle* (Nr. 29) (Fig. 5.; Šiška 1999, 48, Obr. 2: 1–11).

Like the site *Zemplínske Kopčany* is important for the East Slovak Plain in light of its development in the Early and Middle Neolithic after the Slovak archaeological literature (Šiška 1989, 116–117, Tabela II), the settlement in *Šarišské Michaľany-Fedelemka* (Nr. 109) is a key site for the evolution especially of the final stage of the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture and following Bükk Culture in the Šariš Basin. As S. Šiška wrote, „in the rich find ensembles from Šarišské Michaľany are also features characteristic in the Slovak Karst for all four phases“ (Šiška 1995a, 43). On the basis of this site, he suggested a chronological system dated the site to the first (here represented by the still existing Tiszadob Group), but mainly to the second phase (J. Lichardus’ AB and B phases of the Bükk Culture).

According to some elements (several fragments with the yellow incrustation as well as zoomorphic and antropomorphic vessels resembling to the vessels from the Tisza Culture) the author supposes the beginnings of third or C phase of the Bükk Culture there, too (Šiška 1995a, 43–44).

As it seems just the Šariš Basin as it is documented in *Šarišské Michaľany* could be some way the „contact zone“, where the elements of the „western group“ on the one hand and the „eastern type“ (group) on the other hand met (see the chapter to the evaluation of the particular regions).

The base for defining the „eastern type“ were the ceramic finds from the key settlements – *Čierne Pole* (Nr. 15), *Hnojné* (Nr. 28) and *Zemplínske Kopčany* (Nr. 141) (all three: Šiška 1979). Later, these sites were completed with other, equally important ones, as for example *Kašov-Čepegov I* (Nr. 40; Bánesz 1991; Janšák 1935, 62–67, Mapa 11 - site „r“, Tab. XLVII; Šiška 1991, 69–74, Obr. 1–3), *Zemplínske Hradište-Konopianky* (Nr. 139; Chovanec 1988; 1997) etc. Although neither the forms nor the decoration of the pottery are so varied as in the „western group“ and the surface of the thin-walled vessels isn’t so well preserved, the singularity of the discussed type results from the presence of the sherds with traces of the black painted patterns together with the Bükk pottery, especially in the oldest or older period of the Bükk Culture as well as the pedestal vessels, the fragments of which came to light from all of the known settlements.

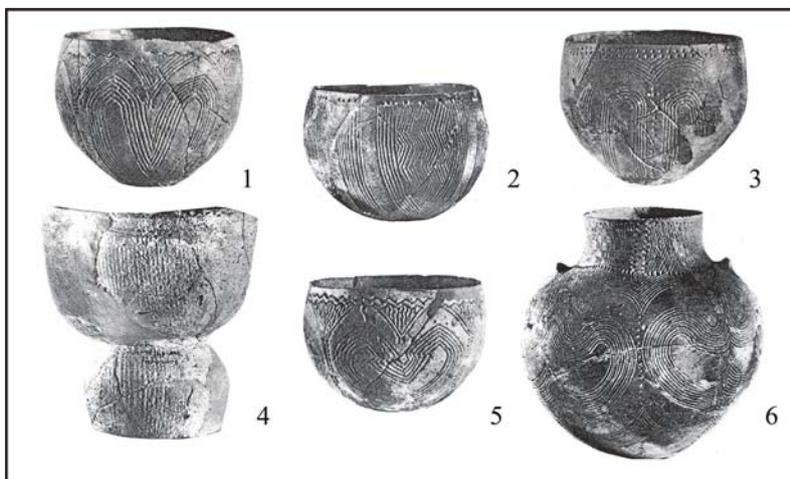


**Fig. 5.:** Hodejov-Castle. Selection of the thin-walled pottery.  
**5. ábra:** Hodejov, Válogatás a finomkerámiából.

As the surface of the pottery was often destroyed we can suppose that much more ceramics were originally black-painted (Šiška 1991, 70).

One of the most important Neolithic sites not only in the easternmost part of Slovakia is *Zemplínske Kopčany*. Apart from the finds belonging to both groups of the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture (Kopčany and Raškovce), there were also several features and six graves of the Bükk Culture found (Šiška 1979, 249–256, Taf. VII–XIII; 1989, 171–178, Tab. 38–47). J. Lichardus' opinion about the

chronological position of the last mentioned culture and the Raškovce Group was corrected according to the find circumstances encountered here and their succession was confirmed. Frequent presence or surviving of the incised decoration in Tiszadob style together with the characteristic Bükk motives on the thin-walled pottery as well as the strong influence of the Raškovce Group in form of the vessels on the hollow bell-shaped pedestal with the traces of the black painting allow to date this settlement to the older or even to the oldest phase of the Bükk Culture in the East Slovak Plain (**Fig. 6.**).



**Fig. 6.:** Zemplínske Kopčany. Ceramic finds from the graves. Grave 11 – 5; Grave 14 – 4; Grave 15 – 2, 6; Grave 16 – 1, 3. Without scale (after Šiška 1979, Taf. X–XIII).

**6. ábra:** Zemplínske Kopčany. Kerámia a sírokból. (Šiška 1979, Taf. X–XIII nyomán)

The rescue excavation on the site *Zemplínske Hradište-Konopianky*, conducted in 1987, yielded, despite of the small investigated territory, numerous and heterogeneous find material: richly decorated thin-walled and medium-thick pottery, several fragments with traces of the black painted patterns which together with the sherds from the pedestalled vessels refer to the previous cultural background. Attention should be paid to the larger number of knobs with the incised decoration and some pieces

from the anthropomorphic, but mainly zoomorphic vessels. The rich ceramic ensemble is completed by the obsidian chipped stone industry, polished stone industry, fragments of quernstones and those of grinding stones which indicate the production of the implements direct in the place (Chovanec 1988, 57; 1997, 31–32). The material from the site is under elaboration. Its analysis and evaluation could, at least partly, bring new light on solving the open

questions concerning the Bükk Culture in the East Slovak Plain.

The youngest site seems to be, up to now, *Čierne Pole*, dated to the classical phase. Characteristic for this site is the absence of the black painting pottery fragments (Šiška 1979, 246–248, Taf. I–IV).

### ***The interruption of the development in the Upper Tisza Region at the end of the Middle Neolithic and the decline of the Bükk Culture***

The evaluation of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia is necessarily extended to the question of the final phase and of the hypothetical possibility of migration of the inhabitants to the more favourable milieu of the another cultural units postulated by S. Šiška. The evidences of the migration should be the finds of the Bükk pottery on the settlements of the contemporary communities in the Middle Danube Region and in Southeast Poland (Šiška 1995b, 5, 10). Regarding the situation in Southwest Slovakia, however, in fact we have no reliable evidences until now which would confirm this theory. As it was already mentioned in terms of the mutual contacts between the East Slovak Plain and the Middle Danube Region shows the area of the South Slovak Basin very interesting (the sites Ožd'any, Pinciná and Prša – Nr. 73, 74, 80; Šiška 1995b, 12).

The end of the Bükk Culture can be put, in connection with the climatic changes, around the turn of the 6. and 5. Millennium BC. These supposed environmental changes caused expressive deterioration of the conditions for the agricultural development, especially for the production of plants. In the whole Upper Tisza Region the settlement network comes to a striking decrease. The finds of the human bones with the traces after cutting and cooking from Šarišské Michaľany could be related also to the economic crisis. Another consequence of the food crisis could be the short-time settlement of the hill tops, observed in the same time (Šiška 1995a, 44–46).

On the ground of the current state of research in East Slovakia the cultural development was interrupted here and some regions are settled again only in the Eneolithic or even later (the area of the Slovak Karst in the younger Bronze Age – Kyjatice Culture). The East Slovak Plain kept up its individuality because the following settlements were also inhabited in the Late Neolithic (Šiška 1995a, 45–46; 1995b, 11–12; 1999, 47 pp.).

### ***Conclusions***

Despite the fact that some J. Lichardus' opinions has turned to be outdated, we can say that his

monograph from 1974 is still the only comprehensive source on the history of the Bükk Culture in Slovakia. We have to keep in mind, however, several separate studies from S. Šiška (1979; 1995a; 1995b; 1999; 2000 etc.) and especially those dealing with the question of the Bükk Culture and the „eastern type“ (group) in the East Slovak Plain (Šiška 1979). The settlements which served as the basis for the definition are key sites at the present time, too (*Čierne Pole*, *Hnojné*, *Zemplínske Kopčany*, earlier only *Kopčany*). On the ground of the research results from this part of East Slovakia as well as from the other regions S. Šiška has already mentioned the some outdated ideas of J. Lichardus concerning the distribution area, cultural background and associated with this the origin of the Bükk Culture and finally its chronological position within the cultural development. His research proved that the East Slovak Plain, the whole Košice Basin and Šariš Basin were also part of the Bükk Culture territory. According to the find context we can't regard the finds from this regions only as the imports in the milieu of the Eastern Linear Pottery Culture as well as the Gemer-Linear Pottery at the moment as the basic cultural unit from which the Bükk Culture has formed. In the best case it represents only the local branch of the Tiszadob Group which could take a share in the creation of the discussed culture in the Gemer Region (Šiška 1989, 90–91). With reference to the relationship between the groups of the (Eastern) Linear Pottery Culture, especially the Tiszadob Group and the Bükk Culture, there are expressively sharper boundaries by the Slovak division than in the Hungarian Professional literature. While J. Lichardus considered the Bükk Culture contemporary with the Tiszadob(-Kapušany) Group and partly also with the (Sátoraljaújhely) Raškovce Group, the later inner chronology by S. Šiška clearly demonstrate the succession of these two cultures (Lichardus 1974, 14–15, 107, 111–112; Pavúk & Šiška 1980, 139; Šiška 1979, 245 pp.; Šiška 1989, 116–117, Tabela II).

Over the past more than 30 years a striking enlargement of the material basis of the Bükk Culture could be observed. New research bring about always more and more questions and because of the fact that the settlement area of this culture was spread also in the adjacent part of North and Northeast Hungary, the cooperation of the archaeologists in solving these problems should be self-evident. One of the important steps in the near future will be the planned extension of archaeometrical investigation on the Bükk fineware in connection with the question of the long distance trade of pottery to Slovak Bükk material, too.

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#### Abbreviations

AVANS: Archeologické výskumy a nálezy na Slovensku (Nitra)

Slov. Arch.: Slovenská archeológia (Nitra)

Vsl. Pravek: Východoslovenský pravek (Nitra-Košice)

Štud. Zvesti AÚ SAV: Študijné Zvesti Archeologického ústavu Slovenskej akadémie vied (Nitra)

