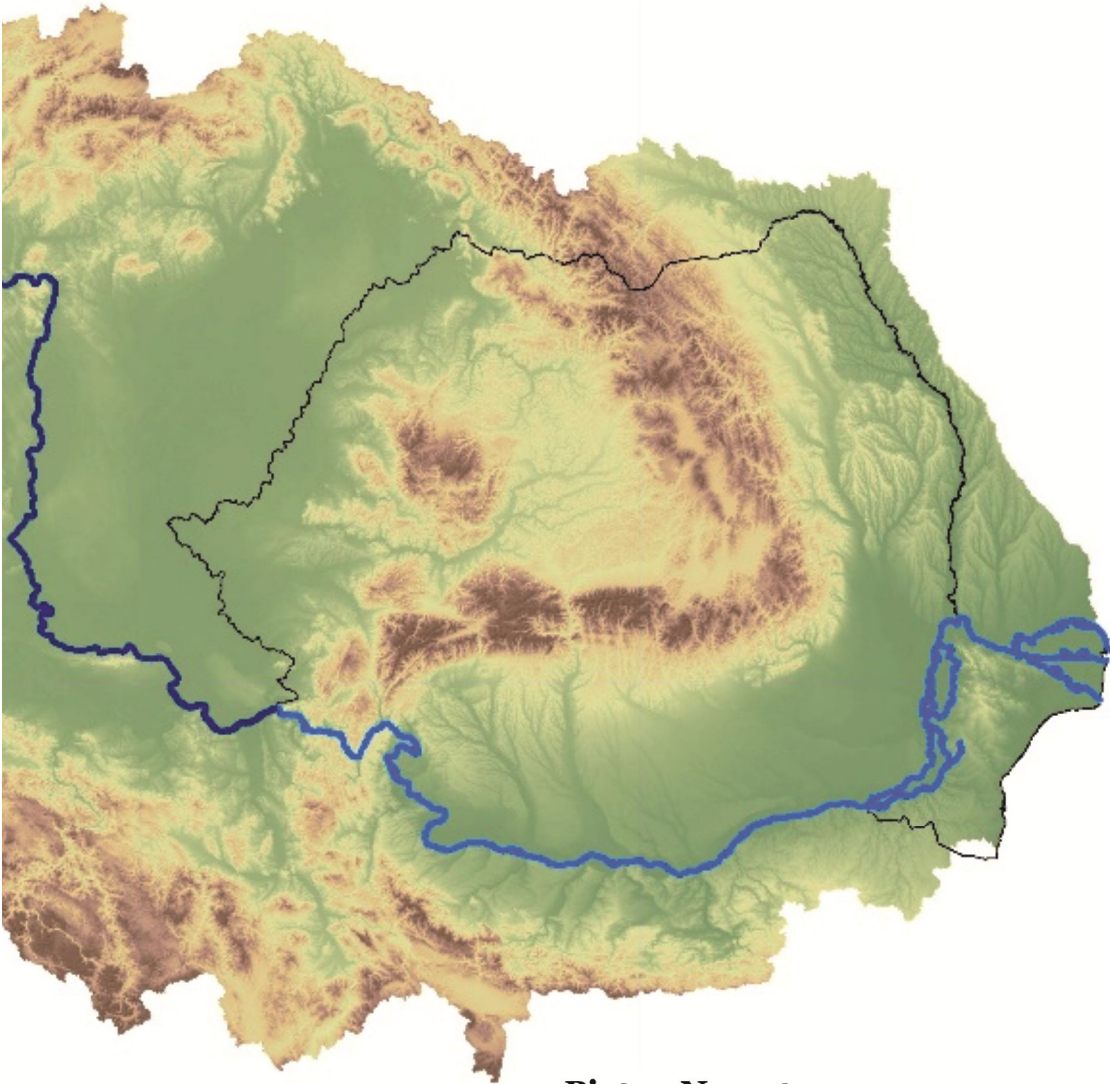


**FROM THE BLACK SEA TO THE BLACK FOREST.  
ON THE NEOLITHISATION PROCESS  
IN THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN**



**Piatra-Neamț  
2022**



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*Water*, 2022, 14, 3156, fig. 1.  
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**INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM**

**Programme and Abstracts**

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**BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE NEOLITHIC  
IN THE MIDDLE DANUBE VALLEY:  
CASE STUDIES FROM SOUTHEAST TRANSDANUBIA**

**Tibor Marton,  
János Jakucs,  
Krisztián Oross**

**Keywords:** *Southeast Transdanubia, Mesolithic, 6th millennium cal. B.C., Starčevo, early Vinča, early LBK, pottery styles, settlement pattern.*

The distinguished role of the earliest food producing communities of the Western Carpathian Basin is unequivocal in the formation of the central European Neolithic. Nevertheless, scarce evidence on the regional Mesolithic presence alongside the relatively late discovery of south-east European type pattern early Neolithic limited research opportunities and the accuracy of interpretations. Understanding various interactions between late foragers and earliest farmers, as well as the spread of Neolithic societies, requires broader archaeological context.

Despite of recent increase in the number of known Mesolithic settlements and systematic research in the south-east Transdanubian region, observations on latest hunter-gatherers remain sporadic and uneven (fig. 1).

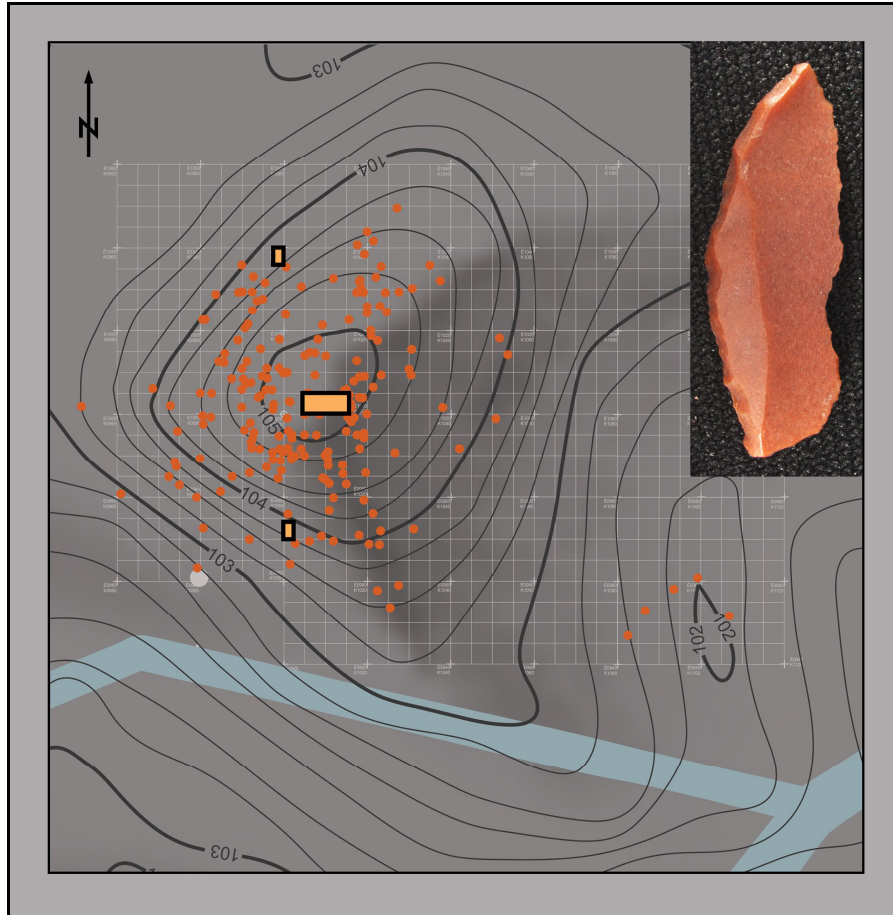
The Early Neolithic (Starčevo) settlement of southern Transdanubia also seems to be restricted to a limited number of micro-regions. At current stage of research, the archaeological record could also be biased towards the assumed main neolithisation route along the Danube and the most favourable ecological niches. Radiocarbon dating reinforced the presence of farming communities between the Mecsek Mountains and Lake Balaton between 5800-5500 cal. B.C. Further chronological research should focus on the question whether a temporal shift can be detected towards the north. In contrast to earlier assumptions on scattered and short-lived settlements, the Starčevo occupation at Alsónyék proved to be an extended and intensively used site over 7–10 human generations (fig. 2).

Southeast Transdanubia had been undoubtedly a region where Neolithic communities conventionally classified to have predominantly south-east and central European characteristics interacted in the second half

of the 6th millennium cal. B.C. Recent research suggests a high degree of entanglement between these groups in terms of their architecture, settlement patterns and their associated material culture. The well-known timber-framed longhouses are uniform all over the region. Settlement layouts also share common characteristics, as „row-like” clusters of houses could be recurrently reconstructed. Ceramic assemblages, however, show enormous variability (fig. 3).

Radiocarbon dating programmes enabled the re-assessment of regional chrono-typologies of pottery, suggesting that ceramic styles, traditionally interpreted as diachronic structures, often coexisted. Not only the conventionally accepted geographic boundaries of distinct pottery styles, but the entire concept of large material culture provinces needs to be reconsidered (fig. 4). Research done so far suggests that spatial and chronological dynamics of pottery decoration seldom follows the pace of changes in technological trends. Thus, emblematic technological features remain detectable across „cultural” boundaries. In many cases, their variations cannot be reconciled with traditional periodisation frameworks based on ceramic styles. Finds assemblages and structural observations from sites of this transitional area facilitate the mapping of morphological, technological, and functional patterns and enable the modelling of social processes.

Absolute chronological research revealed the robustness and significance of mid-54 century cal. B.C. developments and their close correlation with the transition to farming in more westerly lying areas of central Europe. The paper approaches this phenomenon from the perspective of the initial neolithisation process of the region.



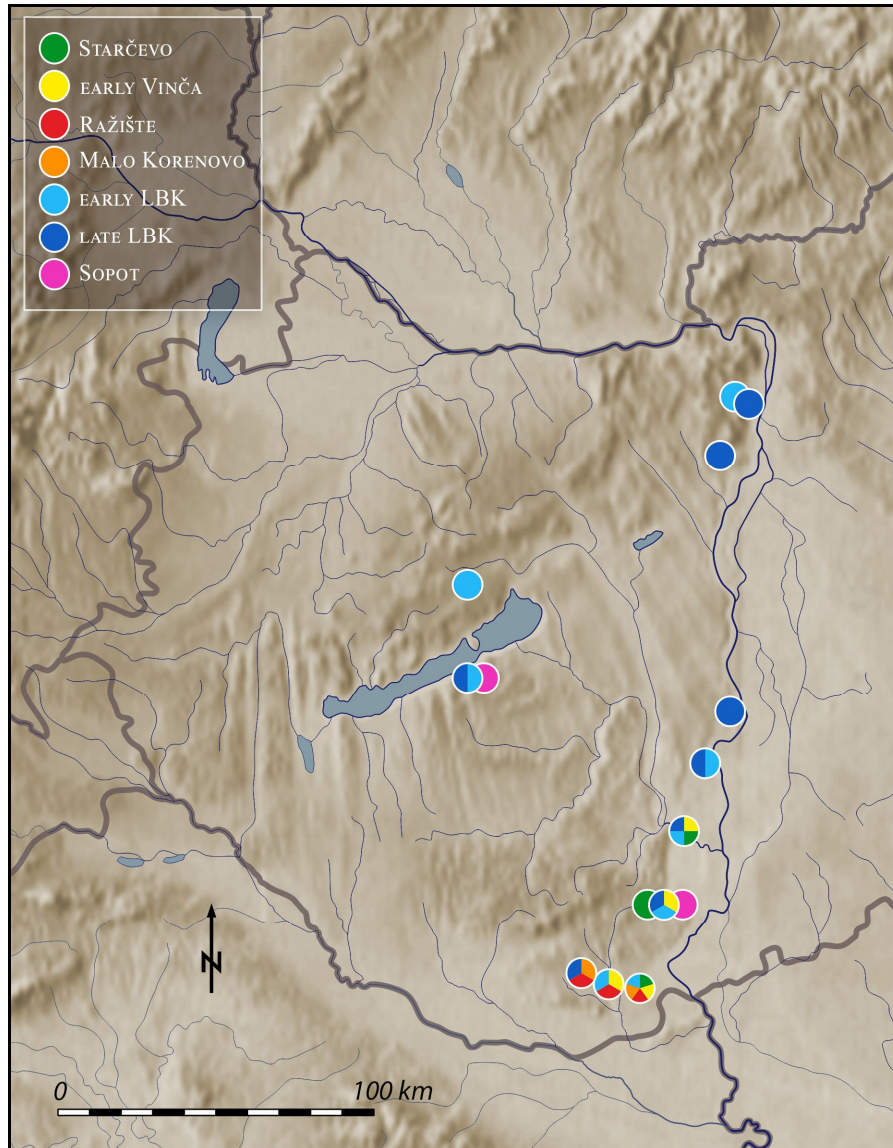
**Fig. 1.** *Distribution of finds on the Mesolithic site of Regöly 2.*



**Fig. 2.** *Starčevo pit-complex from Alsónyék.*



**Fig. 3.** *Early Vinča- and early LBK-style biconical vessels (Szederkény and Balatonszárszó).*



**Fig. 4.** *Distribution of pottery styles in eastern Transdanubia (6th millennium cal. B.C.).*