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NEW RADIOCARBON DATES FOR STAGE CII TRIPOLYE CULTURE, NORTHERN MOLDOVA

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ABSTRACT

According to Tamara Movscha, vessels from the Funnel Beaker culture settlement in Zhvanets can be synchronized with the period of existence of the settlements in Zimno, Leżnica and Gródek. Based on the currently available radiocarbon dates, we can say that the long-term settlements in Gródek and Zimno existed from around 3650 BC. The older phase of the settlement in Gródek is dated to 3650-3400 BC, while the younger ones to 3400-3100 BC. The first is characterized by the presence of imports of tableware with the characteristics of the Brînzeni group dated to 3400-3100 BC. In order to verify the current attempts to position the above at a more precise

time, several radiocarbon analyses of the samples from the sites of Brînzeni and Gordinești group in northern Moldova were conducted.

Keywords: Funnel Beaker culture, Tripolye culture, Brînzeni group, Gordinești group

INTRODUCTION

In the last work concerning relationships of the Funnel Beaker culture (FBC) and Tripolye culture (TC) [Rybicka 2017] attention is drawn to the fact the dating of a set of FBC materials, among which imports of TC tableware ceramics with the characteristics of the Brînzeni group were identified, are older than published dating obtained for the settlements of this group, such as Brînzeni or Zhvanets [Rassamakin 2012; Bicbaev *et al.* 2017]. They allow to put the mentioned TC sites in the period of 3300-3100 BC. However, the TC imports within the south-eastern group of FBC can currently be placed in the period of 3600-3300 BC, i.e. in phase I of settlements in Gródek [Włodarczak 2006; Zawisłak 2013] and Zimno [Bronicki *et al.* 2004; Rybicka 2017]. According to Movscha [1985], vessels from the FBC settlements in Zhvanets can be synchronized with the period of existence of the settlements in Zimno, Leżnica and Gródek. Based on the currently available radiocarbon dates, we can say that the long-term settlements in Gródek and Zimno existed from around 3650 BC [Włodarczak 2006]. The older phase of the settlement in Gródek is dated to 3650-3400 BC, while the younger ones to 3400-3100 BC. The first of them is characterized by the presence of imports of tableware ceramics with the characteristics of the Brînzeni group [Zawisłak 2013; Rybicka 2017].

Moreover, the vessels with ceramic stylistics from Holyschiv [Gumiński 1989; Peleshchysyn 2004], stacked with the Gordinești group [Pozikhovskiy 2019], were recognized both in Gródek and Zimno. These vessels represent the younger stage of the occupation of these settlements [Rybicka *et al.* 2019].

Significant imports of Volhynia raw material identified in the eastern and south-eastern group of the FBC can also be connected to the period of 3600-3300 BC [Rzepecki 2014; Diachenko, Rybicka 2018; 2019]. Therefore, it is necessary to re-date the Brînzeni group. Here, we ought to emphasize that many researchers pay attention to the disputability of radiocarbon dating, which was also highlighted by the authors of the study on materials from the site of Bilcze Żłote [Kadrow *et al.* 2003: 120].

In order to verify the current attempts to position the Brînzeni group at a more precise time [Videiko 1999; 2000; Diachenko, Harper 2016], several radiocarbon analyses of the samples from the sites of the Brînzeni and Gordinești group

in northern Moldova were carried out (Table 1). The analyses were made by the method AMS in the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory.

As a result of laboratory research, remains of animal bones and cereal grains found in the following settlements were dated (Table 1): Brînzeni IX (XI), Costești IV, Varatic V-*Holm*, Brînzeni III – *Țiganca*, Hancauti-*La Frasin*, Gordinești II-*Stinca goala*, and Gordinești-*La izvor*.

BRÎNZENI GROUP: RESULTS OF RADIOCARBON DATING

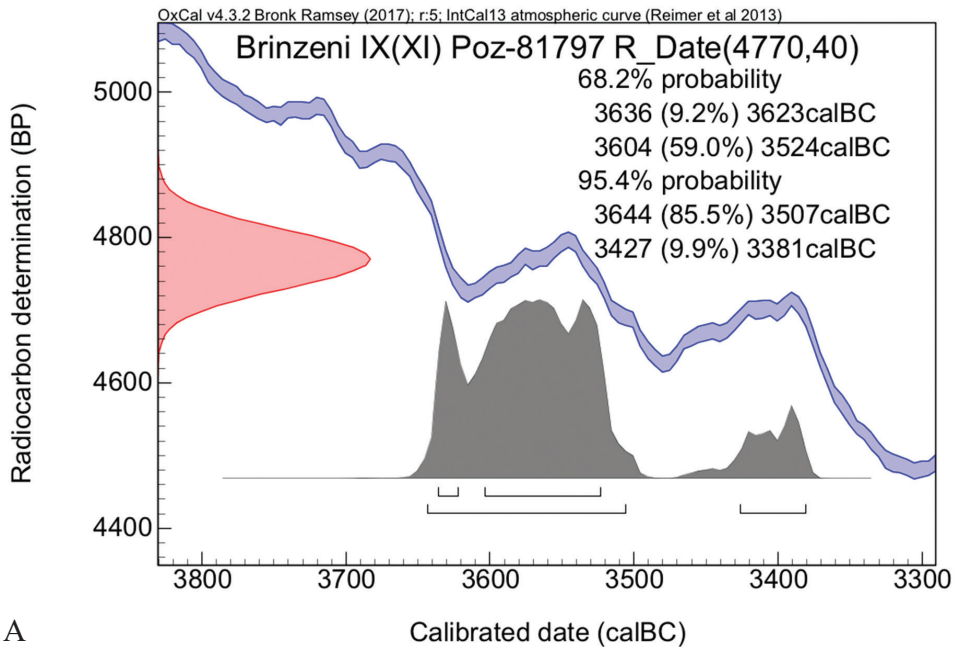
The result obtained for the Brînzeni IX (XI) site is Poz-81797 4770±40 BP, that is, after calibration 3636-3524 BC (68.2% probability) and 3644-3381 BC (95.4%) (Fig. 1.A). One date from Costești IV would appear to be quite similar. Its basic uncalibrated value is Poz-81803 4710±35 BP and therefore 3627-3378 BC (68.2%), and 3632-3373 BC (95.4%) respectively (Fig. 1B). The results of the second sample from Costești IV is Poz-81799 4635±35 BP, i.e. 3498-3364 BC (62.8%), and 3517-3354 (95.4%) (Fig. 1C). In the case of the sample from the Varatic V-*Holm* settlement, the designation Poz-81798 4690±35 BP was obtained. Its calibrated value is 3519-3376 BC (68.2%), and 3629-3369 BC (95.4%) (Fig. 1D). The youngest date is related to the Brînzeni III – *Țiganca* site. It is Poz-81800 4560±35 BP and after calibration is 3368-3124 BC (68.2%), and 3489-3104 BC respectively (95.4%) [Bicbaev *et al.* 2017].

Unfortunately, the lack of elaboration of the contexts of the analyzed samples is a disadvantage of the obtained radiocarbon determinations. A similar situation pertains to multiphase sites in Zhvanets [Rassamakin 2012; Tkachuk 2005]. Therefore, it is difficult to accept them indisputably.

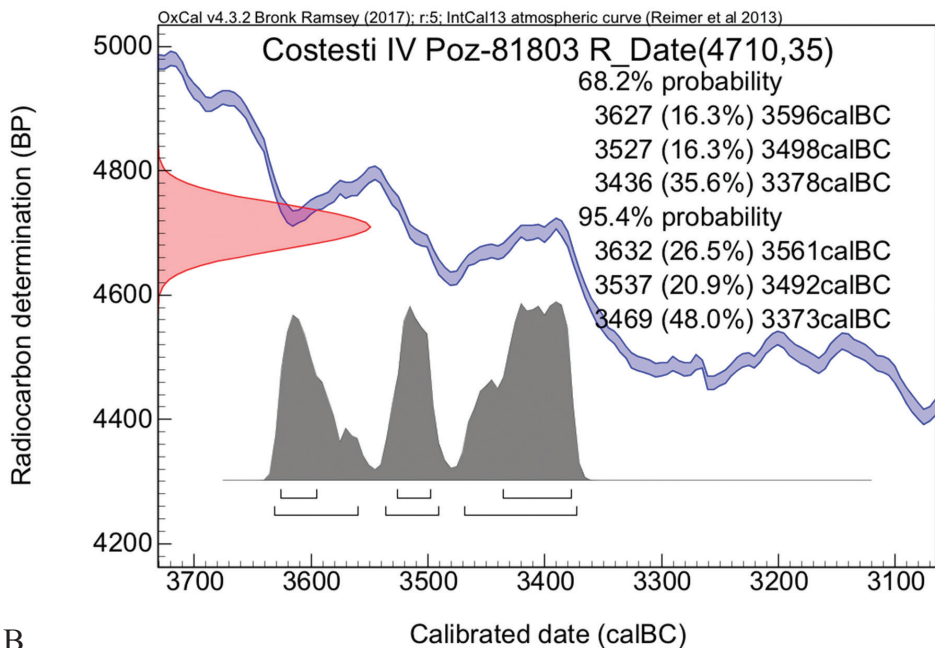
Accepting the presented dating results in a literal way, they generally fit into the chronology of the south-eastern FBC group [Włodarczak 2006]. Based on them, the Brînzeni group can be situated in the period from 3600 to 3100 BC (Fig. 2). This is, however, questionable in the context of the dating obtained for Zhvanets and the site of Brînzeni III-*Țiganca*. Previously published dates indicated a period of 3400-3100 BC [Rassamakin 2012; *cf.* Rybicka 2017]. Here, we should stress that in the set of materials from the Zhvanets site, apart from ceramics with characteristics of the Brînzeni group, there are artefacts of the Gordinești type.

Establishing a chronological position of the Brînzeni group is particularly important to determine a time when interaction between the FBC and TC began. Based on the available data, Piotr Włodarczak [2006] situated the settlement in Zhvanets in the horizon of 3100-2900 BC.

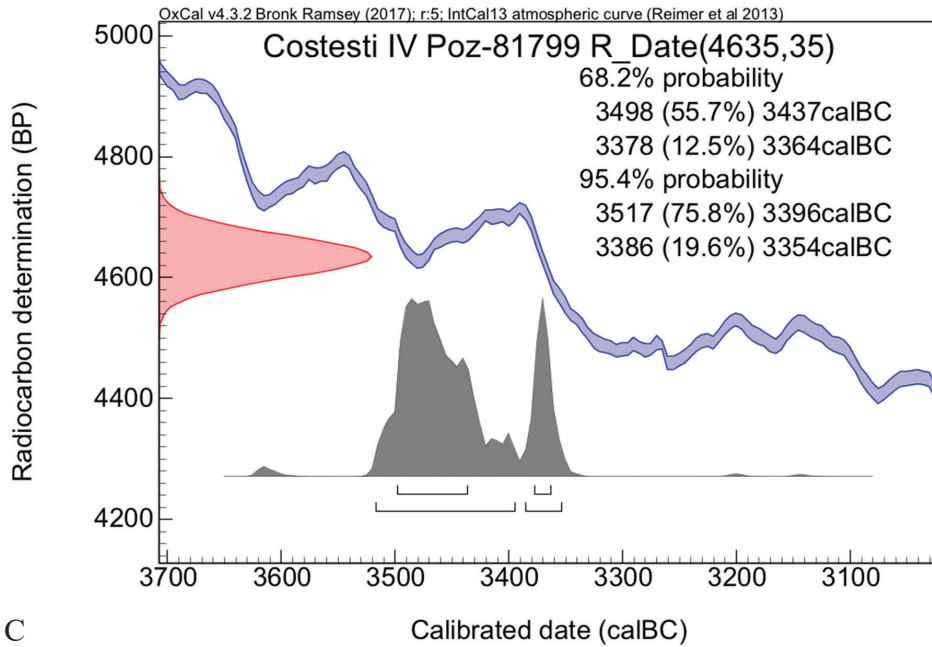
Due to the conservatism of the ceramics style of the western Ukrainian FBC clearly visible e.g. in Kotoryny on the Upper Dniester [Hawinskyj *et al.* 2013], it



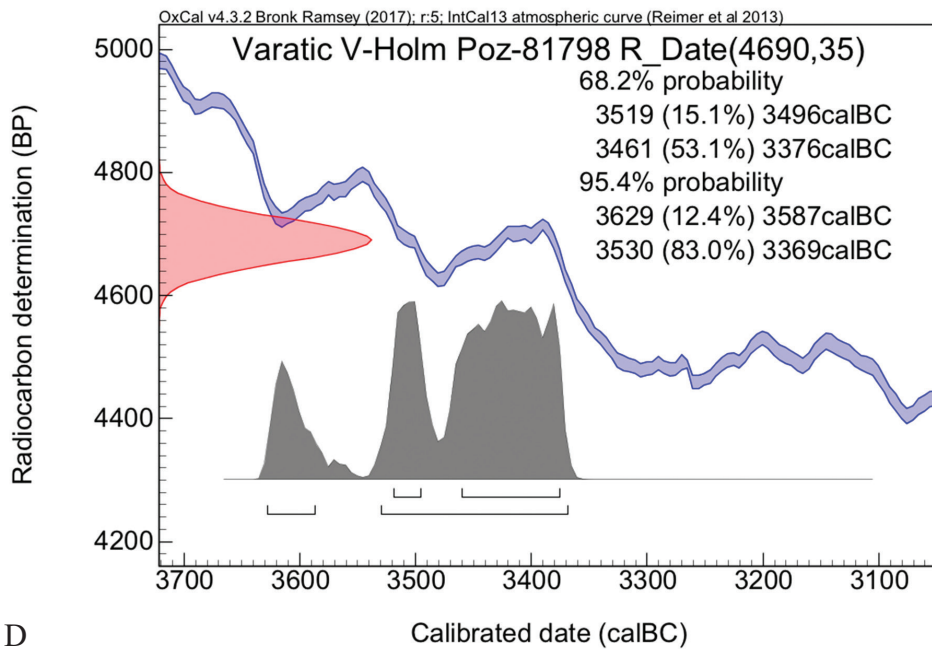
A



B



C



D

Fig. 1. Calibration of radiocarbon datings of of the Brinzeni group of the Tripolye culture: A – Brinzeni IX (XI); B and C – Costești IV; D – Varatic V-Holm. Calibration in OxCal v4.3.2 [Bronk Ramsey 2017], r5 IntCal atmospheric curve [Reimer *et al.* 2013]

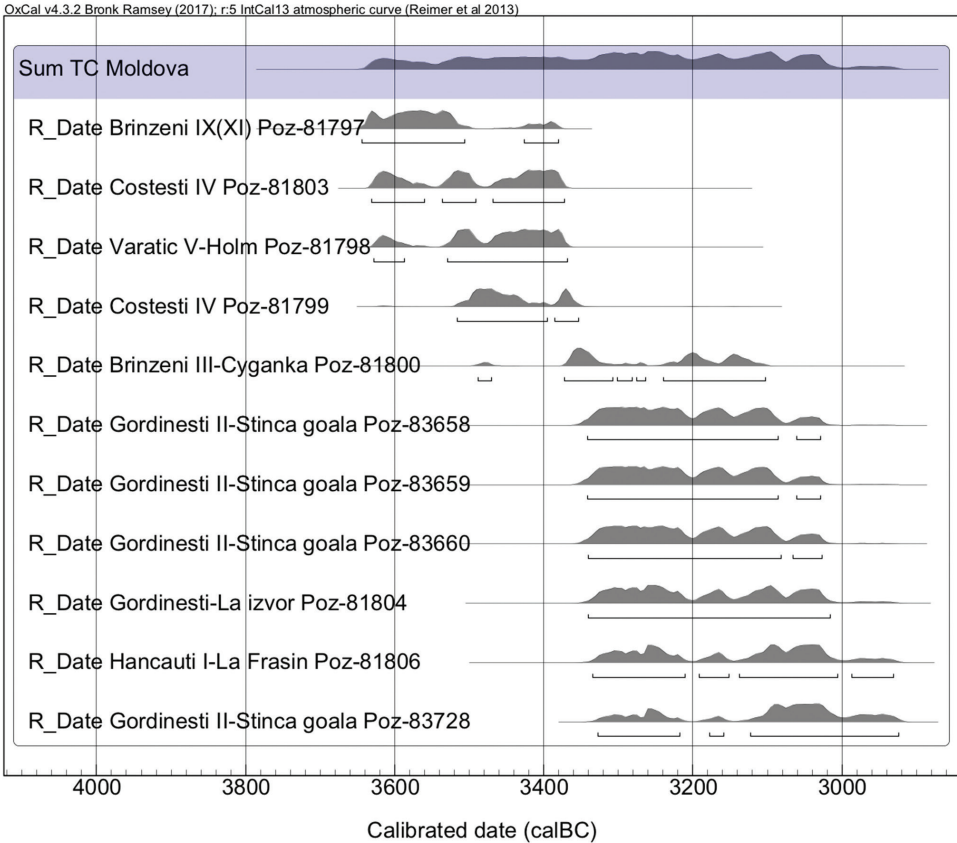


Fig. 2. Chronology of sites of the Brinzeni and Gordinești groups of the Tripolye culture. Calibration in OxCal v4.3.2 [Bronk Ramsey 2017], r5 IntCal atmospheric curve [Reimer *et al.* 2013]

is very difficult to precisely define the chronology of FBC imports discovered in Zhvanets and Brinzeni III-*Tiganca* [Rybicka 2017; Biciaev *et al.* 2017]. We may consider whether it is right to place Zhvanets settlements and the FBC ceramics derived from it at the time suggested above. From the perspective of the south-east FBC, contacts between east and west were already initiated during the existence of the first phases of large settlements located on the Western Bug River, such as Gródek or Zimno [Rybicka 2017] dated about 3650-3400 BC. The period about 3500-3300 BC can be seen as the time of intensive use of Volhynian raw material in the eastern group of the FBC and the appearance of imports of copper items with eastern characteristics [Papiernik, Rybicka 2002; Adamczak *et al.* 2015; Grygiel 2016; Papiernik 2016]. Imports of TC pottery were also recorded in a similarly dated older stage of the settlement in Kotoryny located about 100 km north of Zhvanets [Hawinskyj *et al.* 2013; Rybicka 2017].

If we consider the radiocarbon datings obtained for the TC settlements of the Bilschytvi type [Tkachuk 2002; 2005] dated 3600-3200 BC, as for the settlement of Sharyn [Kushtan 2015: 438], dated 3600-3250 BC, containing ceramics with visible references to the Brînzeni group, we may assume its earlier appearance. Furthermore, this can be supported by the result of radiocarbon analyses obtained for the settlement in western Volhynia with the characteristics of the Brînzeni group (e.g. Novomalin-*Podobanka*) [Rybicka 2016].

Taking into account the earlier suggestions [Tkachuk 2002: 210; 2005] regarding the presence of characteristics of the Brînzeni group in the Koschylyvtvi group and dating of the latter on the base of Bilcze *Złote-Verteba* site [Nikitin *et al.* 2010; Kadrow 2013], as well as the assumption of parallel development of such settlements as Brînzeni-*Țiganca* and Zhvanets [Nikitin *et al.* 2010], we can carefully suggest the existence of the Brînzeni group in the period from 3700/3600 to about 3400/3300 BC [Rybicka 2017]. Such dating accords with the chronology of

Table 1

Radiocarbon dates from sites and features of the Brînzeni and Gordinești groups of the Tripolye culture. Calibration in OxCal v4.3.2 [Bronk Ramsey 2017], r5 IntCal atmospheric curve [Reimer *et al.* 2013]

No.	Site	Lab. code	Sample	BP	BC		Group of the Late Tripolye culture
					68,2%	95,4%	
1	Brînzeni IX (XI)	Poz-81797	animal bone	4770±40	3636-3524	3644-3381	?
2	Costești IV	Poz-81803	animal bone	4710±35	3627-3378	3632-3373	Brînzeni
3	Varatic V- <i>Holm</i>	Poz-81798	animal bone	4690±35	3519-3376	3629-3369	
4	Costești IV	Poz-81799	animal bone	4635±35	3498-3364	3517-3354	
5	Brînzeni III- <i>Țiganca</i>	Poz-81800	animal bone	4560±35	3368-3124	3489-3104	
6	Gordinești II- <i>Stinca goala</i>	Poz-83658	calcined seeds	4480±35	3331-3096	3342-3029	
7	Gordinești II- <i>Stinca goala</i>	Poz-83659	calcined seeds	4480±35	3331-3096	3342-3029	
8	Gordinești II- <i>Stinca goala</i>	Poz-83660	calcined seeds	4475±35	3331-3093	3341-3027	
9	Gordinești- <i>La izvor</i>	Poz-81804	human teeth	4460±35	3326-3030	3341-3017	
10	Hancauti I- <i>La Frasin</i>	Poz-81806	animal bone	4445±35	3321-3022	3335-2931	
11	Gordinești II- <i>Stinca goala</i>	Poz-83728	animal bone	4430±35	3308-2941	3328-2925	

imports of the TC within the groups of the eastern and south-eastern FBC, as well as with above presented results for the sites of Brînzeni IX (XI), Brînzeni III-*Țiganca*, Costești IV and Varatik V-*Holm* (Figs. 1-2; Table 1) [cf. Markevich 1981].

GORDINEȘTI GROUP: RESULTS OF RADIOCARBON DATING

Pottery characteristic to Holyschiv type complexes from western Volhynia were discovered in the set of materials from the FBC settlement in Gródek [Gumiński 1989]. They are treated as bearing the stigma of the Gordinești group [Pozikhovskiy, Okhrimenko 2005; Pozikhovskiy 2019], where it represents the second phase of occupancy of this settlement, which is dated 3400-3100 BC [Włodarczak 2006]. Some references to the youngest stage of the TC were also observed in the set of artefacts from the Zimno settlement [Peleshchysyn 2004; Kadrow 2005]. According to Sławomir Kadrow [2005], the second phase of this site can be dated 3050-2600 BC. These currently discussed dates [Rybicka *et al.* 2019], taking into account the presence of pottery with stylistics features of the Moldovan group of Gordinești in set from the second phase of Zimno, suggest the very young age of this group or its Volhynia variety represented by the settlement in Holyschiv [Rybicka 2017; Pozikhovskiy 2019]. Valentin Dergachev thought, however, that the handles with one or two lumps present in Gordinești can be linked with the impulses of the Volhynian group of Troyaniv [Dergachev 1980] dated about 3400/3300-3000/2900 [Rybicka *et al.* 2019: Table 4]. These comments show that dating, both the appearance and disappearance, of the Gordinești group is not uniquely clarified.

In 2016, a re-examination took place in a settlement at Gordinești II-*Stinca goala* (Fig. 3) which is the eponymous site of the Gordinești group [Șirbu *et al.* 2019], well-known from the earlier publication of Dergachev [1980]. In view of the above considerations, organic samples from a homogeneous context, i.e. the interior of the dwelling, were taken for radiocarbon research (Fig. 2; Table 1). Among them there were three samples of cereal grains and one of animal bones. As a result, the following analyses obtained: Poz-83658 4480±35 BP, i.e. 3331-3096 BC (68.2%) and 3342-3029 BC (95.4%); Poz-83659 4480±35 BP, i.e. 3331-3096 BC (68.2%) and 3342-3029 BC (95.4%). Analysis of the third sample brought the result Poz-83660 4475±35 BP, i.e. 3331-3093 BC (65.8%) and 3341-3027 BC (95.4%) respectively. The determination of an animal bone is Poz-83728 4430±35 BP, i.e. 3300-2941 BC (68.2%) and 3328-2925 BC (95.4%).

Similar results were obtained for human bones identified in the grave at the site of Gordinești-*La izvor* located near the Gordinești II-*Stinca goala* settlement: Poz-81804 4460±35 BP, i.e. 3326-3030 BC (68.2%) and 3341-3017 BC (95.4%).

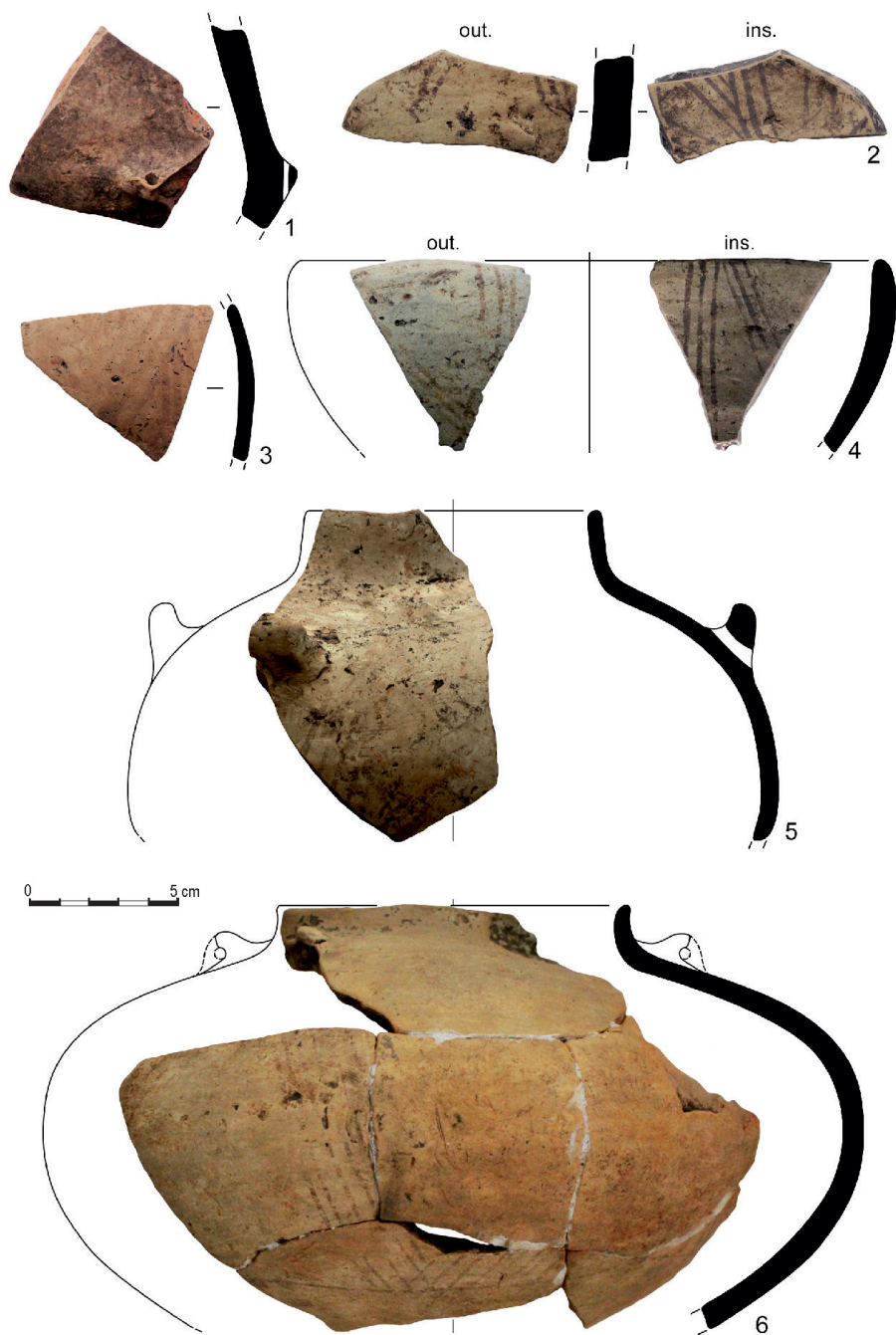


Fig. 3. Gordinești II-*Stinca goala*, Edinet District. Selected pottery of the Tripolye culture

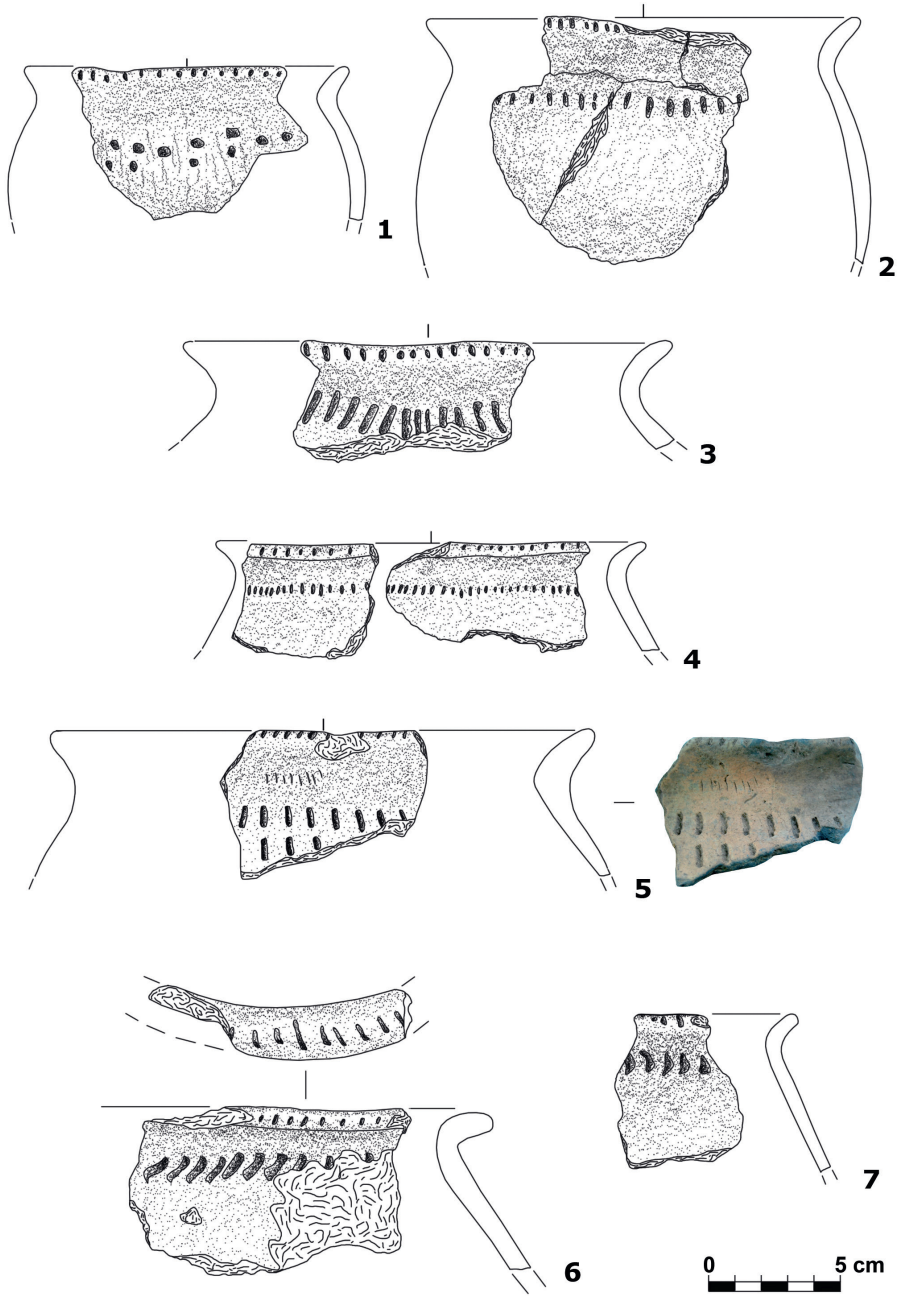


Fig. 4. Vynnyky-Zhupan, Lviv Province. Selected pottery of the Tripolye culture

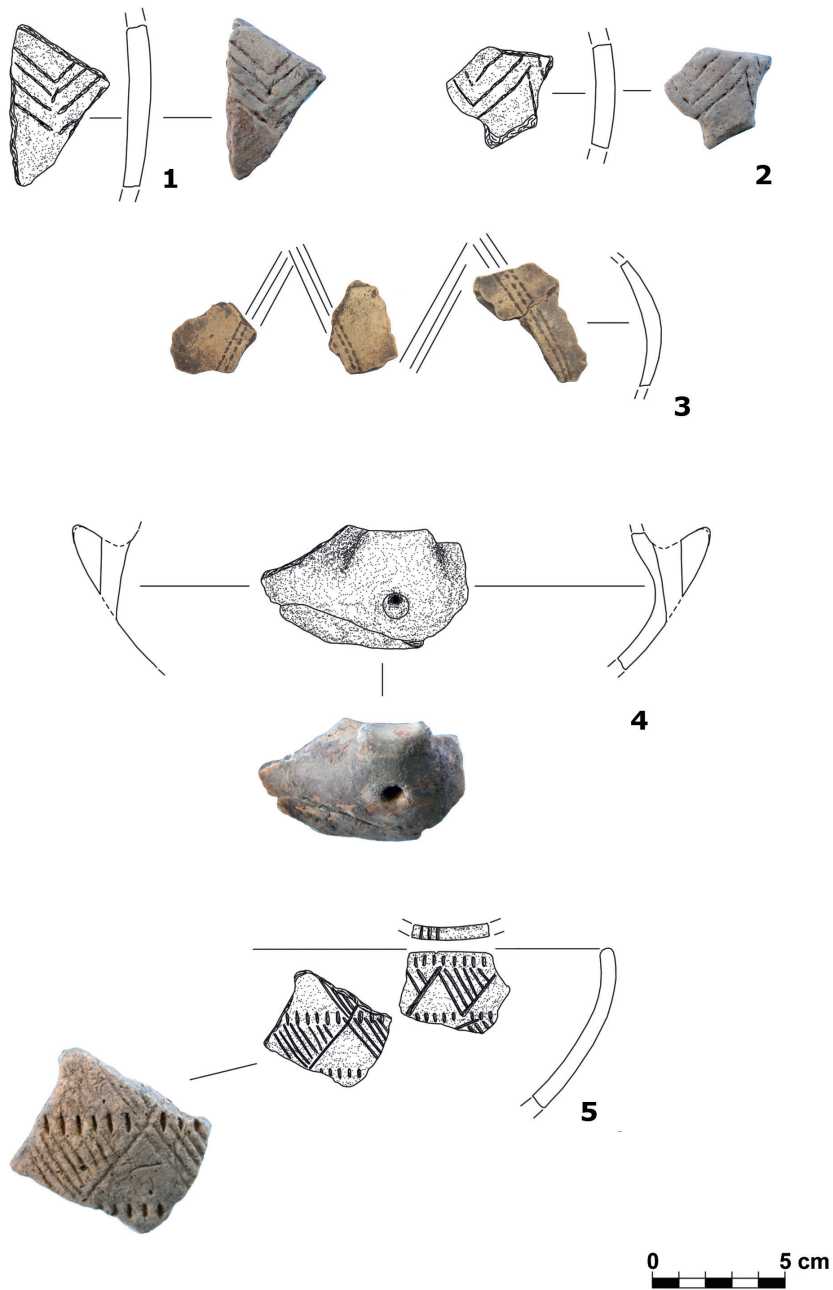


Fig. 5. Vynnyky-Zhupan, Lviv Province. Selected pottery of the Tripolye culture

The last dated sample comes from the site of Hancuți I-*La Frasin*. Its uncalibrated value is Poz-81806 4445 ± 35 BP, i.e. 3321-3022 BC (68.2%) and 3335-2931 BC (95.4%) respectively.

All the mentioned results are very similar and indicate a horizon of 3300-3000/2900 BC. Furthermore, they correlate with other radiocarbon dates obtained for materials with characteristics of the Gordinești group on the Middle Dniester [Goslar *et al.* 2015] or with references to it (e.g. a site in Kurgany-*Dubowa*) [Rybicka 2017]. Now, we have the result Poz-84779 4430 ± 35 BP, i.e. 3308-2941 (68.2%) and 3328-2925 (95.4%) from the Vynnyky-*Zhupan* site in western Ukraine – a settlement with characteristics of the Gordinești group (Fig. 4 and 5) [Rybicka *et al.* 2019; Verteletskyi 2019]. This may indicate a very fast adaptation of southern patterns within the western Ukrainian variety of the TC. However, it is currently still difficult to determine the place in time of Lystvyn-Holyschiv settlements in the context of the Moldovan group of Gordinești.

CONCLUSION

The presented data show the difficulties in the chronological classification of various TC groups. Many researchers have been examining this problem [*cf.* Kadrow *et al.* 2003; Rybicka 2017, here further references]. The lack of studies on materials from many important settlements of the TC results in problems in the evaluation of radiocarbon analysis effects and the presentation of changes occurring within this culture. Unfortunately, it is currently not possible to conclusively establish whether the Brînzeni and Gordinești groups could develop partially in parallel during the second half of the 4th millennium BC, as literal acceptance of radiocarbon dating could suggest.

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