

1. State the objective of the project

The Tripolye culture is one of the most fascinating research topics in prehistoric archaeology and plays a crucial role in understanding the whole range of cultural fluctuations in the Eneolithic period. Also known as *'the last great civilization of Europe'*, Tripolye culture flourished between fifth and third millennium BC in the territory stretching from Danube in South to the central Ukrainian forest in north. Researchers were mostly focused in identification of its agrarian economic model, finely-crafted and decorated pottery, extraordinary material culture and widely discussed architecture of houses, that were forming a specific settlement (also known as 'giant-settlement' or 'mega-sites').

The aims of the present project include recognition, description and interpretation of the economic, social and ideological relations among mega-sites of Tripolye culture in northern Moldavia. Solving this problem is a complex issue requiring the application of interdisciplinary and innovative approaches. The following methodology allows for answer the questions how the meg-sites of Tripolye cultures were established, functioning and what were the relations between them. In conclusions it would be possible to put this issue in the context of Eneolithic cultural changes.

2. Description of the basic research to be carried out

The proposed project fully meets the criterion of basic research. The project includes theoretical, analytical and experimental work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge about the mechanism of the establishment and functioning of large settlements Tripolye culture and its interpretation. The originality of the research project is to develop and using interdisciplinary research methods, which in addition to archeology, involves different disciplines, both humanistic and accurate.

It will also be carried out library and archive query, allowing for the creation of a database and a detailed map of the investigated area, using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) (Analytical geography). In the further works, the database and created map will be used for application of mathematical procedures, allowing to determine the size of the populations of the settlements, the possibility of interactions between them and their temporal coexistence (paleodemography, paleoeconomy, mathematical modeling).

The estimated size of these sites and their marginal location in the context of major cultural centers of Tripolye culture in the region, making them extremely attractive research topic. The obtain results of research could shed new light on the issue of mutual relations in the context of center-periphery model (spatial analysis). During the query, new samples for further radiocarbon tests will be collected (laboratory analysis of ¹⁴C samples). Collected material will be subjected to the traditional archaeological analysis (analysis of the stylistic and relative chronology).

Results of previous work will be further reviewed and interpreted through the use of the mechanism of primary analogy to the primitive community and socio-regulatory process (ethnoarchaeology, cultural anthropology, theory of sociology). As a result, it will be possible to try to find possible references to intra-site spatial organization analysis, economics and social differentiation, and in a later stage of the ideology of Tripolian communities.

The final issue will be the revaluation of the collected data and try their comprehensive analysis in the context of cultural transformations in the era Eneolithic.

3. Present reasons for choosing the research topic

The main reason for choosing this subject is still a poor state of knowledge regarding the key role of Tripolye culture in northern Moldavia. The proposed project also responds to the need to introduce the Tripolye culture to the extended scientific discussion. So far, most of the research projects were regional research (mainly Ukrainian and Russian), and their results were not available to scholars in Western Europe. Changing that state can be observed only in the last decade, when works of international research had began. Unfortunately, their work, due to the scale and complexity of research problems can be defined as selective and incomplete. Most of them focused on several key settlements. These studies were of both excavation and the use of non-destructive testing methods (including geophysical surveys, performing aerial photography), allowing for an approximate determination of the size, shape and spatial organization of settlements. However, they have focused almost exclusively on individual sites, without taking into account their chronological and spatial relationships, trial delimitation centers, peripherals, and finally without a comprehensive analysis. A still growing amount of sources, database and the results of latest research, allow for overall analysis of function and describing the importance of Tripolye culture. It is even necessary for an understanding not only itself phenomena, but also all the cultural changes taking place between the fifth and the third millennium BC in Europe.