

Lost and found: The Funnel Beaker culture's megalithic tombs in the cultural and natural landscape of Greater Poland

The area of the Middle Warta catchment comprise of an important aggregation of the Neolithic, Funnel Beaker culture's (further FBC) settlements which reflect the 1500 years of a development in the area of these communities. In this region it is possible to observe the beginning signs of important socio-cultural changes that influenced the entire eastern group of the FBC. Such signs are surely the processes of which the that manifest themselves the emergence of *Wiórek* and *Luboń* styles that indicate the two crucial cultural turns in the so-called the "beaker package". Another indication of bonding the differentiated locally groups of the European FBC is the funerary tradition that is manifested in the emergence of monumental unchambered tombs. Since recent times, the state of knowledge concerning the Neolithic Greater Poland disallowed to incorporate this region into the discussion on the megalithic phenomenon of the FBC. As such, a peculiar and confusing situation occurred, that despite the existence of at least 3 000 known settlements in the region, and their presence in the zone at the crossroad of neighboring agglomerations, there are no funerary relics. To confront this picture with the knowledge on the megalithic tombs in adjacent regions creates a difficult need to interpret this funerary barren land surrounded by vast concentrations of cemeteries in Germany, Pomerania, Cuiavia, Lower Silesia and Lesser Poland. The absence of the megalithic constructions in Greater Poland was approached as an alimentary function of this types of funeral objects in the region. As such it is believed that the megalithic tombs were constituting the rights to specified terrain. Therefore, their absence might reflect no need for such legitimization and in consequence the Mesolithic roots of the local FBC.

The recent discovery of the megalithic cemetery in Sobota nearby Poznań, significantly changes this perspective. The preliminary and basic research conducted in order to justify the project's hypothesis and scope showed that our present knowledge of the megalithic phenomenon in Greater Poland remains underestimated and overlooked. Also, the growing number of newly discovered megalithic construction in the region on the lidar imageries change significantly our perspective.

The research plan of the proposed project assumes to conduct five main research tasks, which are strictly connected to the aims of the project:

Research task 1. Recognition of megalithic tombs in the Middle Warta Catchment. The following task aims to systematically overview the lidar scanning data in order to point out further potential megalithic constructions. After detection of such structures, the next step will be to verify them by the means of non-invasive (magnetometry) and invasive (drillings) survey. **Task 2. Excavations of the megalithic tomb.** Regarding the proposed excavations, they are going to be oriented towards recognition of selected one megalithic structure which will present the best perspectives – like state of preservation and its accessibility to perform fieldworks. **Research task 3. Attempt to assess the differentiation of intensity of the Anthropopressure and its record in the natural environment in the Middle Warta catchment.** During this research task it is planned to obtain one core from each of the wetland nearby the Sobota cemetery and FBC settlement cluster. **Research task 4. The cultural landscape of the Middle Warta catchment in the Late Neolithic and Early Eneolithic.** With the use of GIS analyses it is assumed to visualize the selected aspects of the location preferences of the FBC concerning the cemeteries and settlements. **Research task 5. Dissemination of research results.**

This project aims to include new data and thereby to appropriately estimate the role of Greater Poland in the transmission of patterns that created the cultural view of the Central European Plain in the first half of the IVth millennium BC. Therefore, the project aims directly to recognize the funerary sphere of the FBC in the area of the Middle Warta Catchment and to draw into the cultural and natural landscape.