Hunter-gatherers and farmers: neighbours in north-eastern Kuiavia, Poland

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ABSTRACT – The aim of this paper is to discuss the new discoveries made in the Tążyna-Parchania valley, in north-eastern Kuiavia, Poland. These discoveries put into a new light the problem of contacts between hunter-gatherers and farmers from the Polish Lowland.

IZVLEČEK – V članku razpravljamo o novih odkritjih iz doline Tążyna-Parchania v severovzhodnem delu regije Kuiavia na Poljskem. Ta odkritja na novo osvetljujejo vprašanje stikov med lovci-nabiralci in kmetovalci v poljskem nižavju.

KEY WORDS – Late Mesolithic; LBK; contacts; Kuiavia; Poland

INTRODUCTION

Kuiavia is located in the eastern part of the pre-valley zone of the Polish Lowland (Fig. 1), between two pre-valleys: Toruń-Eberswalde to the north and Warsaw-Berlin to the south (Kobusiewicz 1999). In the area between the pre-valleys, two geographical zones can be distinguished: the Kuiavian Lake District and the so-called Kuiavian Plateau.

The north-eastern part of Kuiavia consists of two geographical districts: the Pre-valley (which is part of the so-called Toruń-Eberswalde pre-valley) and the Kuiavian Plateau. Sandy soils dominate in the first region, whereas black soils are a characteristic feature of the Plateau (Fig. 2). The Pre-valley can be described as hunter-gatherers’ land and the Kuiavian Plateau as farmers’ land.

In the southern part of the Kuiavian section of the Toruń-Eberswalde pre-valley many of the Mesolithic camp-sites have been recorded (Fig. 2). The especially favourable conditions for hunter-gatherers in this area are due to the Noteć and Zielona Struga rivers. The surface of sites seems to testify to a degree of penetration of this area by hunter-gatherer groups in the early Holocene. Surface surveys and excavations of the area over several thousand square metres near Kolankowo did not allow the fixing of a definite limit to the sites (Domańska 1995). Flint artefacts appeared almost everywhere, among which,

![Fig. 1. Location of Kuiavia region in the pre-valley zone of the North European Lowlands.](image-url)
late Mesolithic products decidedly dominated.

The late Mesolithic assemblages (Fig. 3, 4) from this region culturally belonged to the so-called Postmaglemosian groups (Kozłowski 1989). The actually available ¹⁴C dates for these groups in Poland are no earlier than the beginning of the VII millennium b.p. According to S. K. Kozłowski in the VI millennium b.p. there occurs a peculiar cultural uniformity in Poland (Kozłowski 1989). This process is characterized by a gradual replacement of slim microliths by increasingly more numerous trapezes and dominant, irregular micro-side-scrapers among the tools on flakes. Such a taxonomic change is visible among the materials discovered on the borderline between the pre-valley of the Notec River and the Kuiavian Plateau. The late chronology of the sites from this area was also confirmed by two radiocarbon dates (the site Glinki 7 – 6280 b.p., the site Stara Wieś 9A – 5820 b.p.; after Prinke & Szmyt 1990). On the other hand, the Kuiavian black soils may be described as the most important ecological niche of the Linear Band Pottery culture (LBK) in the Polish Lowland. More than 20 sites of the LBK were discovered in the north-eastern part of Kuiavian Plateau (Czerniak 1994). Among them the Grabie 4 site represents the oldest phase of the LBK in Kuiavia. On the grounds of the pottery (Fig. 5) the site should be recognized as contemporary with Flomborn-áčkova-Zořípolé phase (Czerniak 1994) from the upland region. The basic raw material for tool production was Jurassic flint from southern Poland (Fig. 6).

For our studies, the concentration of the late Mesolithic and the LBK sites found on the sandy bottom of the Tążyna-Parchania rivers valley (Fig. 2), which joins the Pre-valley and Kuiavian Plateau, is the most important. Different hunter-gatherer and LBK task groups have been identified in this area.

The Mesolithic task groups from the Tążyna-Parchania rivers valley

The Dąbrowa Biskupia 71 site is an example of such a task group. The excavated area of this site is about 80 square meters, on which were found 243 artefacts, microliths being the most frequent (Fig. 7). The group of tools is only slightly varied functionally (Fig. 8), and support a hypothesis that we are dealing with a special task group at this site. It
should also be stressed that from the Tązyna-Parchania valley we know several surface collections (Fig. 2), which are characterized by the domination of microliths and an absence of side-scrapers, end-scrapers, and other types of tool. According to this material we may state that the Tązyna-Parchania valley was an area of special interest to hunters from the Pre-valley. We are dealing here only with special hunting camps; no traces of the base camps have been found. The base-camps were located on the southern bank of the pre-valley district only e.g. the Glinki 7 (Domańska 2003a) and Kolankowo 5 (Domańska 1989; 1995) sites. The diversity of the flint assemblages discovered on these sites (Fig. 9) speaks for the diversity of tasks performed with them.

Linear band pottery culture task groups from Tązyna-Parchania rivers valley

Two types of LBK sites were investigated on this area. Both of them can be dated to the II phase (so-called note phase) of LBK. The first type (eg. the Podgaj 32 site) is a small campsite situated on the sandy bottom of the Tązyna River valley (Czerniak 1994). The characteristic feature of the materials from this type of site is the specific technological
structure (Fig. 10) of pottery (the predominance of so-called kitchen ware) and the structure of the flint materials (Domańska 1995), which are distinguished by the use of local, and lack of imported, raw material, and by reference to the Mesolithic tradition of flint processing (Fig. 11). This type of site has been quoted as an example of a seasonal campsite. All sites of the Podgaj type form a concentration lying outside the main cluster of Mesolithic sites. The second type of site is known from the Chlewiska 132 site, and is located in the Parchania River valley. Unlike at the Podgaj site, the pottery and flint artefacts here are similar to the finds at the LBK sites on the Kuiavian Plateau (Fig. 12). On the site there were found about 100 stone artefacts, among them grinding tools (ready and semi-finished) predominate. They were made from the local raw materials. So, this type of site can be interpreted as a workshop where grinding tools were produced. It should be stressed that on the Kuiavian Plateau, where most of the LBK settlements were located, stone raw materials are very rare.

The results of contacts between Postmaglemosian hunter-gatherers and the LBK communities

The long history of hunter-gatherers and LBK communities in the north-estern part of Kuiavia is hardly legible in an archaeological record. Nevertheless, the zone of contacts between these communities can be distinguished in this part of Kuiavia. This zone was situated on the border between two types of landscape. One of these is a characteristic pre-valley, the second is typical of the Kuiavian Plateau. Within this zone an exchange of technological innovations and imports took place (Domańska 2003b):

\begin{enumerate}
\item The exchange of raw flint materials: The Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and early farming communities of Kuiavia used different flint raw materials. The late Mesolithic communities used mainly local flint resources obtainable on river banks and processed on the terrain of settlements, although several artefacts of chocolate flint are recorded for the Kolanowo 5 site, which is located in the pre-valley at the Kuiavian Plateau border. The artefacts seem to correspond with the LBK tradition, and their presence at this site may confirm contact between these two populations.
\end{enumerate}
The exchange of working techniques: The exchange of experience in local flint processing was confirmed by the LBK sites of the Podgaj type. Flint assemblages from these sites are distinguished by the use of local, and a lack of imported, raw material and by reference to the Mesolithic tradition of flint processing.

The exchange of ready tools: The exchange of ready tools is confirmed by the finds of shoe-last adzes at sites lying outside the Kuiavian concentration of LBK sites. Many such products have been recorded around Kuiavia (Zvelebil 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

The development of contacts between late Mesolithic hunters and the LBK farmers within that zone is characteristic, according to Dennell or Zvelebil, of a stationary frontier (Dennell 1985; Zvelebil 1998). This type of the agricultural frontier develops in stable or slowly changing situations, allowing the development of contact and exchange between foragers and farmers. In the development of this frontier the main role was played by the Tażyna-Parchania valley – the borderland between the Pre-valley area, where several dozen late Mesolithic base camps have been discovered, and the Kuiavian Plateau, distinguished by black soils and colonized by the LBK farmers.
REFERENCES


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