

Quaternary International 2020 Special Issue

Formation and Transformation of Early Neolithic Lifestyles in Europe in the second half of the 6th millennium BC

Neolithic Lifestyles

The main results of the international conference “LBK & Vinča – Formation and Transformation of Early Neolithic Lifestyles in Europe in the second half of the 6th millennium BC” will be published in a Special Issue of the renowned journal *Quaternary International*. The archaeological conference, financed by the German Research Foundation and the state of Baden-Württemberg, was organized by Prof. Dr. Raiko Krauß (University of Tübingen), Dr. Jörg Bofinger (State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments in Baden-Württemberg) and Dr. Bernhard Weninger (University of Cologne), who are also guest editors of this Special Issue.

20 contributions thematize the cultural-historical upheavals of the second half of the 6th millennium BC. These upheavals led to the formation of societies with complex social structures in Southeast Europe, as a result of which sedentary farming communities became established in Central Europe, marking a fundamental turning point in human history. The archaeological record shows that the introduction of agriculture, stock breeding, ceramic production and house building in Central Europe spread from the western Carpathian basin; Human genetic studies support this view. The changes in the social structure of societies in Southeast Europe and Eastern Central Europe are linked to the Vinča culture, which is named after an archaeological site near the Serbian capital Belgrade. The earliest Neolithic groups in the areas north and west of it are referred to as Linearband ceramics (LBK) reflecting the characteristic decorative motifs on the oldest ceramics.

The new settled way of life in Central Europe is at present under investigation as part of a cooperation project between the University of Tübingen and the State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments in a small area to the west of Tübingen (the municipality of Ammerbuch). The first results of the ongoing archaeological excavations and accompanying scientific studies on the natural environment are presented in this volume. The social changes in Southeast Europe, which take place at about the second half of the 6th millennium BC, provide the basis for new cultural techniques, such as the development of metallurgy, mobility by wagon and wheel or the introduction of new agricultural techniques, which are ultimately fundamental to our current way of life and economy. Through the comparison of finds from the new excavations in the region around Tübingen with the cultural-historical changes in the southeast, the underlying social processes now, for the first time, become more understandable.

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