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ASPECTS OF ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY AND THE EXPLOITATION OF THE HIGHLAND ZONE

RIASSUNTO - *Aspetti dell'etnoarcheologia e lo sfruttamento delle zone montane.* L'Autore prende in considerazione due diverse aree geografiche, parte dell'arco alpino centro-orientale e quello dei Carpazi, in cui sono state svolte ricerche sia archeologiche che etnoarcheologiche sui modelli d'insediamento attuale in aree montane. Viene in particolare sottolineata l'importanza dello studio etnologico per una migliore ricostruzione dei modelli di vita delle popolazioni preistoriche portando svariati esempi presi principalmente nei Balcani meridionali.

Ethnoarchaeology may be defined as postdiction into the archaeological situation from examination of traditional societies preferably those relevant to the region under study. South-east Europe has been until quite recently exceptionally rich in such evidence. As an area of complex relief it is also suitable for the examination of the question of prehistoric occupation and exploitation of the highland zone, which has for various reasons almost certainly been underemphasised in European studies until now. This paper can give only a selection of examples of archaeological and ethnoarchaeological situations relevant to the settlement of the highland zone.

Ethnoarchaeology involves multiple lines of enquiry and care is needed to avoid the many anachronisms which, from the point of view of the archaeologist, are present in modern traditional societies. One of its contributions is to throw light on biosocial questions not otherwise directly accessible from material archaeological remains, although such remains are always assumed to be the outcome of social behavior. One of its effects is to throw doubt on another assumption, that the identity of a human group is directly reflected by archaeological assemblages and their distributions. This idea underlay the tribal cultural equation which was for long the model of traditional archaeology but it is not borne out by ethnoarchaeological work. It is thus useful to bear in mind the fundamental problem underlying both archaeology and ethnoarchaeology, the question of what it is that constitutes the identity of a human group.

The highland zone has proved to be a refuge for human cultures through the course of time no less than for plant and animal species. It has never existed in isolation from the lowlands but the converse is also true. The reciprocities between them are seldom taken into consideration from the point of view of lowland ar-

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chaeology. Not all prehistoric groups had any relationship with the highland zone, let alone a specialisation in it, such as is apparent in later times among such groups as the Latin-speaking Aromâni (Vlahs) of Greece, or the specialised Romanian shepherds of the Carpathians. The traditional societies which provide the ethnoarchaeological evidence are for the most part specialised in mountain pastoralism, predominantly of sheep. The prehistoric groups which exploited the highlands did so initially for the purpose of hunting such attractive game as ibex. This seems to hold true for areas as far apart as the Sinai peninsula (one region in which this ethnoarchaeological work is currently being pursued), the Carpathians, or — despite the absence of faunal evidence from the site of Colbricon — the Italian Alps.

There can be no doubt that prehistoric peoples were aware of the resources of the mountains, but there has been a tendency to regard the highland zone as a natural barrier. In the highly fragmented relief of much of south-east Europe the very converse has often been the case. It was the advent of wheeled transport which imposed limitations on movement. To peoples moving on foot or with pack animals, the mountains which were their home became a means of communication and a link between separate mountain basins and river systems.

This can be exemplified from the case of peoples such as the Aromâni. In addition to their role as mobile pastoralists meeting the demands of the Ottoman Empire for mutton, and exploiting the deficiencies of the Ciftlik system which had reduced lowland agriculture to ineffectiveness and the fields to pasture, they also fulfilled inland the role of merchants and entrepreneurs which the Greeks filled on the seas. They ran mule trains throughout the Balkan peninsula and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and were only gradually superseded in this distributive role by the advent of the railways. They provide a paradigm¹ of several distinct ethnoarchaeological topics, but the fact that they were incorporated in this way into the historical and economic conditions of an empire makes it obvious that there is a danger of projecting anachronisms into the prehistoric situation. In this respect however they also provide a paradigm of ethnoarchaeological method. This can be applied at various levels, from the large-scale case of the Aromâni, whose complex history spans two thousand years and covers much of the area of south-east and central Europe, down to the case of the individual sheep fold.

The sheep economies of the earliest Greek and south-east European Neolithic (the FTN) do not necessarily attest to seasonal exploitation of the highland zone for pasture. A number of authors² have put the case against over-plausible assumptions regarding the nature, and even existence, of seasonal pastoralism in prehistoric contexts and it is not necessary to repeat those arguments here.

It is still however possible to pursue the idea that in specified periods of prehistory populations were aware of local upland resources, and to seek clues from ethnoarchaeology as to the means by which these may have been exploited. There is also more purely archaeological evidence for the presence of man in the uplands both for hunting and pastoralism. Such archaeological sites are as yet few, since it is one of the characteristics of the highland zone that settlement forms are based on ephemeral, seasonally renewable, resources; on an organic technology of wood, sheep-

¹ «paradigm» is used to mean a particular exemplar, which has real existence, and can be used to give insights into a general case. A «model» is an intellectual construct, which does not necessarily have real existence, but is used in a similar manner to give insight into the workings of a situation.

² eg., FLEMING (1972) and more recently LEWTHWAITE (1981) and HALSTEAD (1981). For an important critique of the uncertainties inherent in the «osteochaeology» which constitutes one of the main foundations of claims for «sheep economies» see also UERPMANN (1973).

skins, leather, or bark; and in the case of pastoralists on milk products, cheese, wool, etc.. It is ethnoarchaeology which gives us an understanding of this, and of other factors conditioning highland settlement. For example it draws our attention to the importance of gradient in selection of pasture, and to other factors conditioning the location of the *Stîne* (Sing. *stîna*), which are the classic sheepfold complexes of the Romanian Alps, in which the whole pattern of life can be seen most highly developed.

Early exploitation of upland grazing on a local scale would have been, like other forms of prehistoric seasonality, *empirical* in nature. Short-distance movement from a local base of this sort can still be exemplified from Romanian villages. Then in historic times, in the northern Mediterranean basin and in south-east Europe, under the Roman and Ottoman Empires in particular, pastoral transhumance developed what we might call *imperial* forms. These are on a larger scale and involve professional shepherds and long-distance movements. The definition and the distinction are not merely a matter of scale. The economics of an Empire, the markets which it provides and the social conditions conducive to pastoral transhumance, are very different from those which may have made seasonality worth while in the Neolithic. The association with the Roman Empire further appears in the remarkable correlation of transhumant pastoralism not merely with ecological conditions north of the Mediterranean but also with Latinity in such areas as Spain, France, Italy, Romania and Greece. In the last of these, and throughout the region south of the Danube inhabited by many other human groups, it is the Latin-speaking Aromâni who are involved; and similiary north of the river the Romanian shepherds of the Carpathian chain. It is thus a cultural as much as an ecological phenomenon.

In both the Imperial and Empirical cases there are many forms which seasonality takes, many mechanisms and combinations of social and economic structures to which it gives rise. These all tend to be lumped under the widely misused headings of «transhumance» or «nomadism». The seasonality of a traditional village may however be described as polyvalent, with different groups braching off at different times during the year to fulfil various tasks, and little reliance on monoculture. There is seldom a simple pattern of «up in summer and down in winter». Even the professional shepherds of the Carpathians, who remain all summer with their flocks in the mountain pastures, show patterns of sub-activities, especially among the subordinates of the all-important «baci», the experienced head of the *stîna* who must remain wholly devoted to the activities of the *stîna* and the maintenance of the flock for the whole summer. In this sense the behaviour of men is as much conditioned by that of their domestic animals as the reverse, and this is one factor affecting the exercise of the choice as to whether to adopt domestic sheep (which demand a good deal of continuous attention) in the early stages of the Neolithic. Some groups such as the Southern Bug culture or the Ertebolle chose not to do so, despite being in contact with early Neolithic sheep economies from which they derived many other traits.

The arduous professionalism of the Romanian shepherds has much light to throw not only on the nature and demands of a way of life carried out under almost authentically prehistoric circumstances, together with the tangible material remains of such patterns of behaviour, but also through its customs and beliefs upon something of the pagan spirit in which this was done, in the sense that it embraces beliefs and practices which are pre-christian in origin. The archaeologist, because he has no access to this dimension of prehistoric behaviour, makes a virtue of the necessity of ignoring it, but this the ethnoarchaeologist cannot do. Moreover he should not, since the inauthenticity of practice divorced from belief is apparent in every attempt

to propagate folk culture for touristic and propaganda purposes. These topics are perhaps too various to examine here, but they are not irrelevant to the attempt to understand the past through ethnoarchaeological means.

The *stîna* in particular — for very good reasons, and in a valuable (not a pejorative) sense — presents a picture in its ergonomics and organisation, of extreme primitivism. It is in its essentials as provisional as the rock shelter. Even if a substantially built log cabin is available the shepherds will not use this for sleeping in, because it insulates them from detecting the approach of such predators as bears. The usual structure is therefore a loosely built shelter, with many gaps in the planking through which sounds can be heard at night, and smoke escape. Bark is spread on the earth floor for sleeping, and used for many other purposes such as roofing. The hearth is used for the preparation of cheese, and the space available for four or five shepherds to sleep around it might be interpreted (were the site to be excavated archaeologically) as an indication of the type of all male society which the *stîna* represents. In this respect the ethnoarchaeology of the *stîna* supplements such work as that of Binford on the ergonomics of Magdalenian rock shelters. He has made suggestions for estimating the size and nature of the group present at the site, by considering the numbers of hearths, their relationships and dimensions. In this way it is possible to assess not only the numbers present at the site, but by reconstructing the relationships of sleeping spaces to hearths to estimate whether the group includes couples, or is a party of young unmarried male hunters, or to give other interpretations of the nature of the occupation.

Predators such as the bear have been mentioned, and an essential component of highland pastoralism is still the dog. The sheep dog of the Carpathians, Pindus Șar Planina, and other areas (including the Pyrenees for example) is a large mastiff with a primarily protective role. There is in some regions of Romania a small dog used in a herding capacity, usually for cattle, but protection from man and beast is the main requirement in the sheep dog. Descriptions of the «Molossian dog» of the Pindus in Roman times — *magna mollia rictus* — indicate that the type is an ancient one in these regions. At some *stîne* of the northern Carpathians in Romania bears come almost nightly to take sheep, and it is difficult to see the system of upland pasturage working at all without the dogs. A bear may indeed take very little notice of the dogs, but in combination with the shepherds he can be driven off by them, and they will protect the shepherd from attack. Dogs also have a very marked system of territoriality around the *stîna* on the pastures, and will fight (and eat) dogs from neighbouring *stîne*, as well as attacking strangers. They are so protective of the flock of sheep itself, and so undomesticated in their relation even to the shepherd himself, that they have been known to attack their own master, especially if he were to go into the sheepfold at night. The whole pattern of behaviour is relevant to our understanding of early dog domestication. South-east Europe has one of the main bodies of evidence in Europe for dog domestication, from sites of the Hunter-fisher Climax of the Danube Gorges such as Vlasac and Lepenski Vir. The question is what role these dogs played, first among the hunter-fishers, and then in the FTN and subsequent cultures of the Neolithic which took them up. In the light of the ethnoarchaeological evidence we can see that they are relatively small animals for a protective role such as that of the Romanian shepherds' mastiff. They could still have been useful for distracting large hunted animals, catching smaller ones, giving warning of nocturnal pests and predators, and in other ways suggested by the ethnoarchaeological evidence. Their morphology can be examined in this light, their size, power and possible functions set against the spectrum of animal resources known to have been exploited at the sites, and possible patterns of behaviour set

against what is suggested to us by the shepherd dogs. It is also possible to consider whether there could have been any question of seasonal upland pastoralism in prehistory without some evidence for the protection of dogs.

The shepherding practice of the Carpathians has in this and other ways evolved a whole series of conventions adapted to its purposes. It could hardly function otherwise; but in the conditions of industrial society it is not going to continue to be run in way which demands total commitment to an isolated, primitive, and often celibate life. It is this which makes all attempts at ethnoarchaeological work in societies like these which are changing rapidly year by year an urgent matter. Current studies of the *sîna* may help to illuminate to some extent the great variety of reciprocities between belief and behaviour. If this is taken into account for the prehistoric situation it may help us to avoid the projection of our own cultural values into the past.

Pastoralism further depends upon the existence of pasture. The archaeological evidence for this in south-east Europe is limited. There appears to be no equivalent to the north-east European landman phase of vegetation clearance. It is only the Bronze Age that we have the first palynological evidence for clearance in Bulgaria, in the Stara Planina and the Sredna Gora, claimed as evidence for animal husbandry at a high altitude (FILPOVICH, 1978), but even here it is the last four to five centuries which show the main evidence for deforestation.

There is now a good deal of sporadic evidence for prehistoric occupation at moderately high altitudes from Palaeolithic into Late Glacial and Early Neothermal times. Among the highest at present are the groups of small special-activity sites, ranging from 10 - 30 sq. metres in area, found grouped round lakes on the pass of Colbricon in the Dolomites (BAGOLINI, 1972; BAGOLINI *et al.*, 1975) one of which has been dated to 7420 ± 130 bc (R-895 α) (ALESSIO *et al.*, 1983: 251) and lie at 1900 - 2000 metres altitude, with a generally Sauveterroid industry such as is found at 200 metres in the Adige valley in the Romagnano sequence (BROGLIO and KOZLOWSKI, 1983) or at Vatte di Zambana (BROGLIO, 1981). There is unfortunately no fauna, but the presumption must be that such game as ibex were the objective. This is borne out by the faunal evidence from Romagnano which shows an emphasis on the exploitation of *Capra ibex* in the early Mesolithic and in the late Mesolithic continuing into the Neolithic on *Cervus elaphus*. It is in accord with a picture of increasing vegetation cover. The triangle Mesolithic of late Boreal date at Vatte was also exploiting ibex, chamois and red deer (BOSCATO and SALA, 1980) and the fauna at these sites is presumably a function both of season and altitude. The Early Neothermal occupation of the Adige valley is one useful paradigm of penetration into a highland zone in post-glacial times. The term post-glacial is appropriate in the Italian Alps, since they were in fact glaciated. The case may provide a model for the settlement such parts of the Carpathian chain as were also glaciated, but not necessarily for others which were not. It also illustrates the necessity to incorporate an understanding of environmental developments into explanations of such topics as the settlement of the highland zone.

The settlement of the Adige valley can be understood in terms of environmental changes following deglaciation. The valley runs southwards from Bolzano through Trento to Verona. It is fringed by abrupt limestone cliffs, broken occasionally by the narrow gorges of side streams, from the mouths of which steep talus deposits fan out onto the valley-floor. This is flat, and formed of gravels deposited to an enormous thickness (of several hundred feet) by braided streams during the erosion consequent on glacial retreat from the Alps. Until the end of this process of deposition the development of much vegetation cover was precluded. Only when the gravels had been deposited, the talus cones formed, and the area to some extent colo-

nised by vegetation, would it have been colonised by animals, and by man following on these (SALA, 1977). There seems to be no Epi-gravettian settlement of the region. An early and a late Mesolithic can be distinguished. The early stage is highly microlithic, with slender spiky points and triangles, and can be labelled Sauveterroid. This stage dates to the early 6th Mbc. (eg. Vatte di Zambana or Pradestel). The later Mesolithic industry has notched blades and trapezes as from Romagnano site III in the AB levels, and dates from around 5000 bc (BOSCATO and SALA, 1980). There is substantial continuity of this technology into the early Neolithic, represented eg. by the site of Gaban (BAGOLINI and BIAGI, 1988).

This picture of colonisation successively by vegetation, animals and man, is a much simpler model of events than can be applied to areas in south-east Europe which were not glaciated, but were continuously settled from glacial into Neothermal times. The nature of the sites in the Adige valley seems to support the model. There are regularities in their location and in the way in which they utilised the talus cones, well exemplified at Romagnano Loc, Vatte di Zambana or Pradestel, which have all been excavated. Where the talus fans out from the side gorge there is often a buttress of rock impeding the flow of the talus down the cliff face, with the result that a little hollow is formed high on the talus, between it and the cliff. The hollow at Vatte is on the north side of the talus, sheltered from the prevailing north winds, although others such as Romagnano and Pradestel face north. In these hollows mesolithic man built his fires under the overhang of the cliff, or as at Romagnano (where there is no overhang) perhaps with light shelters. Since the valley floor was occupied by braided streams, or even lake-filled in parts, there was a narrow foreshore along the foot of the cliff. The outlook provided by the sites on the talus cones was thus strategic for controlling the movement of animals along the valley. There is very little likelihood at these sites that important resources were located up the small side gorges, and the cliff faces are otherwise sheer. It is sites like Colbricon which document the exploitation of the higher altitudes.

This special and rather simple model is in some ways analogous to that of the mesolithic colonisation of northern Europe, in that it starts from a situation which is *tabula rasa* as a result of glaciation. It does point the need to understand the more complex situation of highland south-east Europe in relation to all such factors as environmental change, premisses of exploitation of animal species, and site location; and not just in terms of the tool kits used and their cultural labels.

In the region of Ceahlau in the eastern Carpathians of Romania there are sites at high altitudes, mainly on the metre terraces of the Bistrița. In particular Ceahlău - Scaune, at 1328 metres, and Bardosu - Bicaz Chei, at 1135 metres, are important evidence of the presence of hunters with tanged-point equipment of Swiderian affinities, seeking game at high altitudes. The main distribution of the Swiderian on the north European plain was in periglacial regions, adaptation to which would facilitated penetration to these altitudes in the Carpathians (PĂUNESCU, 1980: 537). Of 39 levels in 17 other Ceahlău sites 30 are Gravettian and 9 Aurignacian, illustrating that this is not a situation of *tabula rasa* but rather a complex palimpsest of Palaeolithic and Epi-palaeolithic occupation. The site of Dîrțu-Ceahlăului lies lower down at 520 metres. In addition to Gravettian material this produced pottery which was formerly attributed to the Criș group of the FTN; but the attribution is discussed by ZAHARIA (in *Dacia* VI, 1959: 49), and the two were certainly not associated in any form of «Pre-Pottery Neolithic» as was at one time widely believed. The concept is itself a good example of a model which although inappropriate was for a long time influential upon research and interpretation of the Neolithic in Greece and south-east Europe.

The archaeological succession in the Danube Gorges may also be regarded as an exploitation of the highland zone, not so much because of its absolute altitude but because of the nature of the terrain and the fact that access to the region itself involves penetration of the mountains. Here too there is a sequence which starts with Gravettian material and shows a continuity of developments from the Epipalaeolithic of Cuina Turcului I and II, during the eleventh and tenth millennia, through the Schela sites, Vlasac and Lepenski Vir and the FTN.

There can be no modern analogues for the hunting cultures discussed so far. The rich ethnoarchaeological material of highland south-east Europe is largely pastoral, but it would be a mistake to assume that this model can be applied wholesale even as far back as the sheep economies of the early Greek Neolithic or the FTN.

The best evidence for early settlement at high altitudes in the Carpathian chain comes from sites of the Dacian Iron Age, such as Meleia or Rudele, at 1300 - 1400 metres. These have been excavated by HADRIAN DAICOVICIU, and published in *Materiale si Cercetări Arheologice* (Vol. V: 386 / Vol. VI: 341 / Vol. VII: 311-14 / Vol. VIII: 469). They appear to have been part of a complex settlement pattern with multiple functions, near the mountain refuge and sanctuaries of the Dacians at Sarmizegetusa, which already lies at 1200 metres. There is indeed a remarkable resemblance between them and the main sanctuaries at Sarmizegetusa, the plan consisting in both cases of a D-shaped central hut within a circular enclosure. Meleia and Rudele are in a position on a saddle, with access to land of suitable gradient for pasture and at an altitude which would favour their interpretation as functional sites, perhaps *stîne*. But they also have features which argue against this, such as the presence of fine painted wares, which do not fit into the conditions of life in the *stîna*, where wooden vessels are universal. This problem has been examined extensively in the Romanian literature, eg. most recently in ANTONESCU (1980), and NANDRIS (1981). I would suggest at present that a better analogue for these sites may be found in the «Katun» sites of the Aromâni, Vlachs and Sarakatsani than more narrowly in the *stîna* (NANDRIS, 1985).

Two points can be made here: first that the Dacians were certainly exploiting the highland zone, in ways which can be illuminated by the ethnoarchaeology of modern Romanian settlement of the same regions, not only for pastoralism but also for village life; and secondly that even when it is argued that Dacian sites such as Meleia and Rudele were *not* pastoral, the arguments used are still derived from ethnoarchaeological data, by postdiction from the modern Romanian *stîne*, illustrating the importance of this kind of evidence.

The kind of site in question must not be thought to be limited to the *stîna*, which is a specialised pastoral site. Of more general importance is the idea of developing a Landscape Archaeology, which goes beyond the already accepted notion of interpreting major sites in the context of their resource zonations (or catchments), and seeks to infill the whole landscape by consideration of quite small-scale, and even ephemeral, domestic or specialised sites. A correlate of this is to accept the idea of polyvalent seasonality, that seasonal movement is not a simple to-and-from affair, but that small sub-groups diversify into different activities in many directions. The kind of site in question is well represented by the «Katun» settlements of the Vlachs - consisting of groups of beehive huts of various functions, but basically the living place of several families. Landscape archaeology may also be considered to be represented at such excavations as the site of the new Athens international airport near Spata, where valuable work is being done by the Greek Archaeological Service on the excavation of rural and domestic sites of the Classical and other periods, themselves quite small-scale farmsteads or other forms of settlement. In

this way we may hope to infill the landscape between the major sites, such as neolithic tells, which have received attention by virtue of being the most concrete and obvious targets for excavation.

Another example comes from Greek Thrace, at the village of Petrota near Maronia. The small village of Petrota is dominated by a rock, which gives it its name. This is the site of a Thracian acropolis dating c.1200-1300 bc., one of several in the region (PENTAZOS, 1972). The Thracian peoples, like the Dacians who may be included among them, characteristically made use of the highland zone to a great extent, and their peak sanctuaries are found in the Rhodope and other areas. The association of peak sanctuaries with highland pastoralism is also found in relation to Minoan civilisation on Crete. At Petrota there is a modern enclosure, a «stani» for goats, remarkable for its size and the skill with which it is constructed. The interior area covers nearly an acre (4 stremmata = 0.4 hectares), and is surrounded by a wide belt of thorns (see NANDRIS, 1985, for plan). It is functionally divided by fences and hedges, and illustrates the complex possibilities which an upland shepherd site can attain on a basis of purely organic components. The living hut attached to it is made in the conical form of Aromân or Sarakatsan huts, although the builder of the stani is Ali, a Turk of c.60 years of age. Ethnoarchaeology continually reminds us of the superficiality of giving easy cultural attributions to articles of dress or material culture. The structure was completed by Ali and his son in forty days, including collecting the materials. It gives rise to a great many ethnoarchaeological questions, not least when its size is compared with the average archaeological «sondage» which may be little more than a two-metre square. Some areas of the stani are dense in post-holes, others are almost totally devoid of them. The structures help us to interpret the individual groups of post-hole patterns which survive to the archaeologist, but given a limited excavation it is questionable what sort of interpretation of the site the archaeologist would arrive at.

One final topic may be mentioned, although it does not exhaust the possibilities of ethnoarchaeological method. It concerns aspects of personal appearance, and leads on to questions of personal and group identity which are of fundamental importance. The dress and personal appearance of prehistoric peoples is accessible from burials, or from representations, such as figurine material. The figurines of the neolithic in south-east Europe give indications of decorated costume and other features. This type of evidence was vindicated for example at the Gumelnița cemeteries from Varna, when the holes found beneath the mouths of Gumelnița figurines were seen to represent labrets in the lips (seen as gold studs on the face masks at Varna). The copper earrings worn by many figurines (or represented by holes in the ears of Gumelnița and Vinča figurines) were also found to be literally true, again as gold examples on the face masks. It is to be supposed that the copper belts and anklets found on some Gumelnița figurines, but not yet in burials, were also features of this peoples' dress. Metal belts were for long a feature of dress in south-east European peasant societies; woollen anklets are a feature especially of Macedonian and Sarakatsan costume, and woollen wristlets of the mens' costume of the Maramures in northern Romania. Labrets or lip-plugs were a feature of prehistoric societies in south-east Europe, especially during the Neolithic, and so apparently was tattooing or facial painting. The copper awls found in fourth millennium bc contexts in south-east Europe could have been used for the perforation of lips or ears, as well as for other purposes, and possibly even for tattooing.

Tattooing could be said to be a feature of the Thracian area, and there is other evidence for it in Europe. The tattooing of Thracian women with which the Classical Greeks came into contact is represented on a well-known vase by the Pistoxenos

painter (Akropolis, 439, published in *J.H.S.*, 9, 1888). It is possible that the parallel lines represented on one side of the faces modelled on greaves from the rich Thracian burials such as Moguilanska Mogila at Vraca, or the Agighiol Tumulus — dating to c. 400 bc. — represent a similar decoration. What is not so well known is all the ethnoarchaeological evidence which gives this tradition a long perspective in eastern Europe before and after the Classical period. In modern times the Aromâni, for whom a case for cultural continuity from Thracian times can be made, still tattooed their women, and the oldest of them still bear the designs which are now very simplified. Authors such as DURHAM (1928: 105) report the practice earlier this century, and it is among an assemblage of traits, such as the goat-hair tent, which link the Aromâni and Sarakatsani with Near Eastern pastoral and Bedouin tribes in one technocomplex. In the Neolithic, facial decoration is found on figurines (for example in Tripolje B context from Vladimirovka - *M.I.A.*, 10.) or on face-vessels, such as the polychrome example from fifth Mbc FTN context at Gradeshnitsa in north-west Bulgaria (NIKOLOV, 1974). A particularly interesting example is the series of identical designs found in the Tiszadob group of the developed Alföld Bandkeramik in northern Hungary on face sherds. The same motif, which clamps over the brows and nose of the face, is found repeated at several sites of the group, and it must have had a very well-defined connotation within the culture. There is the further evidence provided by prehistoric corpses from bogs, which has been summarised by DIECK (1975 and 1976). The earliest of these is attributed (on the grounds of its depth at six metres in the bog and the associated stone axe) to the Bandkeramik. If this is so it is of great interest because the bold design on the body and upper arm recall the deeply incised designs of Bandkeramik pottery, and because the decoration on the corpse is produced by cicatrice scars and not by tattooing. Three possible methods should therefore be distinguished, namely cicatrice scars, painting; and tattooing, of which the last can still be seen today. There are many further examples of tattooing from eg., Bronze Age contexts, and even tattooing needles. Solar and cruciform motifs such as were favoured in the recent Balkan examples were popular even in La Tene and Bronze Age times.

It is clear that in Prehistoric Europe body decoration, which we do not usually think of as a specially «European» characteristic, was widespread. For example lips were perforated and labrets worn; this custom probably declined after the Neolithic. Like costume and the designs on painted pottery, body decoration probably had multiple functions as a social signal, indicating status and affinities. This was the case with peasant costume in south-east Europe in historic times. There are no easy correspondences to be drawn, regarding cultural affinity or descent, and this complex topic has not yet been examined in the detail which it necessitates.

The ethnoarchaeological theme spans recent and prehistoric times. It has particular relevance for the Thracian area, and to the way in which bio-social topics need to be developed in archaeology. One powerful way in which to do this is to bring together the archaeological and ethnographic evidence, particularly in the context of south-east Europe which is rich in both. We have already progressed some way along the road of developing the necessary methodology, and must continue to do so.

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