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The Middle Neolithic ceramic assemblage of the Proto-Karanovo III period at the prehistoric site of Kalitinovo-Gerena near Stara Zagora (Abstract)

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The prehistoric settlement site is located to the east of Stara Zagora, in the Gerena locality near the village of Kalitinovo. In 2013, trench excavations were carried out in the western periphery of the site. In Trench IV, a Middle Neolithic layer was identified that belongs to the Proto-Karanovo III culture in Thrace. This paper discusses the archaeological materials from the layer.

No archaeological features were identified in the excavated area. The materials consist mainly of pieces of burnt daub, animal bones, pottery sherds and a few other artifacts. Within the limits of the trench, a Late Neolithic pit (pit 1) was revealed; it cuts through the entire Middle Neolithic layer and its bottom is dug into the sterile ground.

The Middle Neolithic ceramic assemblage from Trench IV at Kalitinovo-Gerena is characterized by transitional features that combine Early Neolithic and Late Neolithic technological groups and formal types. The tulip beakers with channeled decoration and the lugged pots are typical shapes of the Early Neolithic assemblages. Along with them, the layer yielded also formal types, such as broad and shallow dishes with the rim thickened on the inside, cylindrical beakers

with tall knobbed handles, barrel pots, jugs, and cylindrical-conical bowls that are typical of the Late Neolithic in the northwestern parts of Thrace. These ceramic types appeared for the first time in the Proto-Karanovo III period and evolved during the Late Neolithic in Thrace. For a short time, they coexisted with Early Neolithic ceramic types. The discussed assemblage bears the specific characteristics of transition from the Karanovo II to the Karanovo III culture and represents a specific transformational variant in the development of the Neolithic culture in Thrace labeled as Karanovo II-III.

Except for the flat site of Mednikarovo, this is the first time when material culture with transitional characteristics of Middle Neolithic type has been identified in the area of Stara Zagora. Until now, similar phenomena in Thrace have been found in the areas of Nova Zagora (Tell Karanovo and Tell Ezero), Sliven (the flat site of Glufishevo), and Kazanlak (Tell Kazanlak).

Most probably, these phenomena were contemporary and evolved almost simultaneously in the mid-6th millennium BC in the northwestern parts of Thrace.

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