

# WITH REFERENCE TO FORMATION OF NOUA CULTURE (a historiographic survey)

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The ethnohistory of Eastern part of Balkan-Carpathians and adjacent Northern Black Sea areas referred to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. traditionally makes the subject of a fixed interest for the science of history. Most distinctively this interest manifests itself when searching the problems of Thracians and Cimmerians genesis, as most ancient historically authenticated peoples within the region, as well as in connection with searching sources of Slavs culture.

In the course of these problems discussion the researchers most frequently run into a problem of the Noua culture contribution to above ethnoses. Such an approach looks appropriate since both chronologically and territory-wise Noua culture is tightly interwoven with the archeological cultures of the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. to which the specialists refer most ancient Cimmerians, Thracians and Early Slavs. Thus, in the North and North-East the Noua culture adjoins that of Komarov and its superseding Belogradovka cultures, the bearers of which, according to some researchers were Early Slavs<sup>1</sup>, while other researchers consider Thracians as such<sup>2</sup>, or else, references are made to a mixed Thraco-Slavonic population<sup>3</sup>. In the East and South-East the Noua culture joins Mnogovalikovaya Ceramics culture, Sabatinovka and Belozerskaia cultures, the bearers of which are most frequently identified with Cimmerians<sup>4</sup>. And, finally, in the West and South-West the Noua culture is conjugated with a number of Carpathian and Northern-Balkan cultures referred to Middle and Late Bronze, traditionally identified as Early Thracian ones<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, the Noua culture occurs at the intersection of three ethno-cultural regions, preliminary bound to the areas inhabited by Early Slavs, ancient Cimmerians and Thracians of the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C. (see the map)

The Noua culture, which due to its geographical location, played the role of a linking tie between the cultures of different ethno-cultural regions, affected to a certain extent, the formation of a number of cultures of Late Bronze Age and its final stage. Especially prominent its influence affected the appearance of Sabatinovka and Coslogeni cultures<sup>6</sup>. Some researchers advanced an assumption on Noua culture bearers participation in the formation of Belogradovka<sup>7</sup>, Belozerskaia<sup>8</sup> cultures, as well as in cultures referred to Early Thracian Hallstatt<sup>9</sup>. In this influence it is admissible to perceive one of the ethnic components of ethnic groups to which correspond above cultures. However, the ethnic affiliation of this component remains arguable. Some researchers consider its bearers to be Thracians<sup>10</sup>, others Thraco-Cimmerians<sup>11</sup>. It is worthy to mention that the problem of ethnic attribution of Noua culture with due account for all the date has not been investigated yet.

It occurs, that one of the most important constituent problems of further ethnic attribution of Noua culture lies with revelation of its genetic roots.

Back in early 30<sup>th</sup> I. Nestor made two observations important for the ethnogenetical interpretation of Noua culture.

The first referred to the fact that a horizon of antiquities synchronous to Monteoru culture immediately precedes Noua culture; the second is that Noua culture has the most close analogies in the Middle and Late Bronze Age cultures of Carpathian basin and Ukraine<sup>12</sup>.

Certain factors prevented adequate use of these observations for ethnogenetic reconstruction of Noua culture then. These were, firstly, the fact that systematization of Bronze Age materials in the region was making its first steps, and thus, none of whatever adequate concepts on culture and historical context of Noua culture formation existed, and secondly, by the fact that until early 50<sup>th</sup> the science was dominated by an idea that the Noua culture is distributed mainly within the intracarpathian areas, which imposed limitations on proper evaluation of Northern Black Sea analogies.

Shortly after T.Sulimirski, having systematized all the data known about Noua culture as per mid-30<sup>th</sup>, related them with the range of Thraco-Cimmerian antiquities<sup>13</sup>.

At the end of 40<sup>th</sup> beginning of 50<sup>th</sup> a large-scale excavations were initiated in Romanian Moldova which allowed to reveal, that the Noua Culture areal extends beyond the territories of Transylvania and encompasses practically all of Eastern Romania<sup>14</sup>.

In mid-50<sup>th</sup> there started excavations of Noua culture monuments within the Prut-Dniester area, which allowed to shift the Eastern boundary of Noua culture areal up to Dniester<sup>15</sup>.

Studying Noua culture in Prut-Dniester territory, along with continued excavations of Noua culture monuments in the territory of Romania stipulated a notable rise of interest towards ethno-cultural history of the region. As a result there appeared a whole number of generalizing papers with reference to Noua culture<sup>16</sup>.

Most important part of these belongs to M.Petrescu-Dîmbovița.

Having generalized all the data known by early 50<sup>th</sup> this researcher by making use of central-european analogies of bronze articles, dated Noua culture in his first papers as referred to XI-IX centuries B.C.<sup>17</sup>, while under the influence of new investigations by the chronology of Late Bronze Age of Hungary<sup>18</sup> in later years, he added two more centuries to this dating<sup>19</sup>. The relative chronology of Noua Culture has been reliably established, as stratigraphic observations during ashpit excavations allowed to place Noua culture between the Monteoru and Costișa cultures on the one side, and Early Thracian Hallstatt on the other<sup>20</sup>. Such a succession of cultures has lead the researcher to a conception on their genetic relation. According to his opinion Noua culture in the North originates from Costișa culture (considered as a version of Komarov culture by a number of researchers)<sup>21</sup>, whereas in the South from Monteoru culture<sup>22</sup>. By that time this problem has not been studied specially, the stated version was based on general notions on Thracian affiliation of antiquities of Bronze and Iron Ages of this region.

Having generally accepted the interpretation of Noua culture proposed by M.Petrescu-Dîmbovița, the soviet researchers made some rather essential additions by showing that by a number of features the Noua culture is close to Sabatinovka and Belogrudovka cultures<sup>23</sup>. A.I.Melyukova managed to establish that the Noua culture and the monuments of Sabatinovka type are intersynchronous<sup>24</sup>. This conclusion exerted great influence onto succeeding investigations of Noua culture and cultures contiguous to the latter.

By early 60<sup>th</sup> A.I.Melyukova, having compared pottery from settlements Gindeshty and Roshietichi on the one side, and that of settlement Magala on the other side, came to a conclusion on intracultural local variability<sup>25</sup>. E.A. Balaguri distinguished four local versions in Noua culture, which generally coincided with the areals of cultures referred to Middle Bronze Age of the region (Wiettenberg in Transylvania, Monteoru in Southern Moldova, Costișa and Komarov cultures in Northern Moldova and Carpathians adjacent territories)<sup>26</sup>.

Investigation of a multilayered site Magala allowed G.I.Smironova to compare chronologically mating data of Komarov culture, Noua culture and the Holigrady version of Thracian Hallstatt. The researcher came to the conclusion that the Noua culture appeared in Carpathian area in its shaped up form, its bearers assimilated and partially evicted the local Komarov population<sup>27</sup>. Extremely important is that clearly followed up stratigraphy of this monument allowed to confirm reliably the opinion expressed by M.Petrescu-Dîmbovița on relative chronology of Middle and Late Bronze Age cultures in the region<sup>28</sup>. The fact of certain coexistence of Noua culture with Komarov culture on one side and with Early Holigrady horizon of Magala on the other<sup>29</sup> established by G.I.Smironova is of principal value.

An invaluable contribution into investigation of Noua culture formation was done by E.Zaharia. She investigated and introduced into scientific use the cemetery Balintestî as morphologically and chronologically transient from Monteoru culture to Noua culture<sup>30</sup>. The interpretation of this monument by E.Zaharia corroborated correctness of an idea that the Monteoru culture was one of the genetical components of Noua culture<sup>31</sup>.

The results of Noua culture investigations in early 60<sup>th</sup> were summarized in a paper by A.Vulpe<sup>32</sup> on periodization of Bronze Age in Romania and in Ph.D. thesis by E.A.Balaguri<sup>33</sup>. They gave a final formulation to the concept that the formation of Noua culture results from a convergent development of cultures referred to Middle Bronze Age of Carpathians-Dniester area with the leading role of Monteoru culture.

During field investigations in 50<sup>th</sup> - early 60<sup>th</sup> confirmed and developed was the observation on similarity of Noua culture with Sabatinovka type monuments. It has been established that this similarity revealed itself not only in pottery, but in a wide distribution of ashpits, equal assortment of metal and bone articles. Since back in 50<sup>th</sup> were formulated and soon firmly established the notions that the monuments of Sabatinovka type are bound through their origin to Srubnaia culture of Povolzh'ye<sup>34</sup>, whereas Noua culture with the monuments of Middle Bronze Age of Carpathian basin<sup>35</sup>, the investigators unanimously up to 1964 were explaining this similarity as due to contacts between the bearers of these cultures only. However, with getting more profound notions on the scales and degrees of similarities between the antiquities of Late Bronze Age on both sides of Dniester river, the insufficiency of this explanation grew more tangible.

Romanian researcher A.C.Florescu was the first who ever tried to overcome this contradiction. Under the impression of acquaintance of Sabatinovka material he came to a conclusion on cultural alliance between Noua culture and Sabatinovka range monuments. To describe the cultural uniqueness of artefacts of Northern Black Sea and Carpathian-Dniester adjacent territories, the investigator introduced the notion of *cultural complex Sabatinovka-Noua*. Not denying the contribution of autochthons into the formation of Noua culture, A.C.Florescu paid special attention to cultural integration encompassing a large territory from Podneprov'ye up to Transylvania in transition from Middle to Late Bronze. According to the researcher, the decisive factor of this integration was mass expansion of Srubnaia culture bearers, the local-chronological version of which A.C.Florescu, same as O.A.Krivtsova-Grakova, considered the group of monuments referred to Sabatinovka type.

Similarity between monuments of *Sabatinovka stage of Srubnaia culture* (according to O.A.Krivtsova-Grakova) and Noua culture can be easily explained by general grounds on which these cultures were formed, as well as by consecutive cultural and ethnic ties between Northern Black Sea and Carpathian-Dniester areas<sup>36</sup>.

The influence of this concept onto the successive development of notions about this region ethnic history can scarcely be overestimated. This concept has been supported in the majority of subsequent papers in Noua culture and other cultures contiguous to it. Its attractiveness was due to the fact that firstly, it suited the dominating by that time notions on affiliation of Sabatinovka type monuments to Srubnaia culture, and secondly, was in line with a concept of Western expansion of Srubnaia culture, yet thirdly, as it was believed, it explained persuasively the actually existing great similarity between the Noua culture and a range of Sabatinovka monuments, and finally, with a good share of versimilarity explained sharp cultural changes occurring in Carpathian-Dniester and Northern Black Sea areas at passing from Middle to Late Bronze Age. It was probably due to these circumstances that this idea has predetermined the basic trends and the character of cultural and genetic interpretation of Late Bronze Age antiquities within the region. Although its author did his best to underline the hypotheticity of the advanced idea, as he was probably aware that not all of the premises were sufficiently reliable.

The investigation carried out by G.I.Smirnova on the first necropole of Noua culture in Bassarabia, Starie Bedrazhi seemed by that time a rather persuasive confirmation to Srubnaia culture participation in the formation of Noua culture<sup>37</sup>. The author determined fairly well the specificity of the investigated cemetery; it differed from the already known ones by instability of orientation alongside with mass colouring of skeletons<sup>38</sup>. According to G.I.Smirnova both these elements were inherited from Srubnaia culture<sup>39</sup>. As analogies to coloured bones in Bedrazhi, the researcher listed such "Srubnaia culture" burial monuments of Carpathian-Dniester region as Stoikani, Valea Lupului, Bogonos, Broshteni (Romanian Moldova), Kalfa, Sarata, Oloneshty, and Gradishtya (Bassarabia).

As it has been shown by later investigations, all the above listed burial monuments of Middle Bronze Age of Carpathian-Dniester region do not belong to Srubnaia culture and refer to Mnogovalikovaia Ceramics culture (MCC)<sup>40</sup>. Besides, as it is specified by the researchers of Srubnaia culture burial monuments, the ochra in burials of Srubnaia culture is encountered in isolated instances only<sup>41</sup>.

However, by that time, the reasoning presented by G.I.Smirnova seemed to be quite correct and was taken as sufficient confirmation to the idea of Srubnaia culture participation in the formation of Noua culture.

Though even then certain preconditions already appeared, yielding a chance to subject the advanced concept to certain doubts.

First danger for this theory was created when in early 60<sup>th</sup> S.S.Berezanskaya isolated the MCC (Mnogovalikovaia ceramics culture)<sup>42</sup>, with the latter not leaving any place for Srubnaia culture in the Western part of Northern Black Sea areas. This idea did not manage to find support with the researchers, and, probably, due to that fact it failed to exert proper effect onto the solution of problem related to Noua culture formation.

At the same time, i.e. early 60<sup>th</sup>, V.D.Rybalova, N.N.Pogrebova, and even more comprehensively, in 1968, I.N.Sharafutdinova, advanced a new interpretation of Sabatinovka type monuments. Its essence was concluded in a fact that in spite of a widely distributed notions the Sabatinovka culture is taxonomically independent and it is not a locally-chronological version of Srubnaia culture<sup>43</sup>. I.N.Sharafutdinova used to explain similarity of Sabatinovka culture and Noua culture not only by contacts between the bearers, but as well, by a genetic

relation which consisted in the fact that both cultures absorbed the traditions of MCC as well as of the Northern - Balkan and Carpathian cultures<sup>44</sup>. Soon after, A.M.Leskov subjected this point of view to a severe criticism<sup>45</sup>. Having accentuated the attention on disappointing inaccuracies, this criticism managed to alienate other researchers, and even the author of this idea N.I.Sharafutdinova from developing the concept of Sabatinovka culture independence<sup>46</sup>.

However, numerous investigations that followed, showed that this idea, especially with reference to independence of Sabatinovka culture and its genetic relation to MCC, appeared to be true<sup>47</sup>. As it is easy to notice, this idea disagrees with the stabilized concept of Srubnaia culture factor in the formation of Noua culture. But, for some reason, this disagreement was not noticed neither at that time, nor later.

And, finally, the third circumstance creating objective danger to the idea of Eastern (Srubnaia) contribution into the formation of Noua culture, lies with the lack of sufficient chronological foundations. Arising from his conceptual considerations (underlined by V.C.) A.C.Florescu assumed somewhat earlier dates for Sabatinovka monuments compared to Noua culture<sup>48</sup>. Methodological illegitimacy of such an approach to dating looks evident and does not require any comments. Following not the ideas but facts, one has to acknowledge that none of the required conditions were available for such a dating.

Thus, since mid 60<sup>th</sup> firmly established in science was the concept on dominating role of Western migration of Srubnaia culture population in cardinal changes of ethno-cultural situation in Carpathian-Dniester region. Contradictions contained in this concept were overlooked by that time.

In years to follow, i.e. end 60<sup>th</sup>, early 80<sup>th</sup> most of the researchers significantly contributing to study of Noua culture in 50<sup>th</sup> to 60<sup>th</sup>, have concentrated their efforts on other problems. Former interest to Noua culture weakened and up to late 70<sup>th</sup> none of somewhat substantial theoretical papers in Noua culture appeared. Most frequently, during these years, it attracted researchers interest in connection with searching adjacent cultures problems, as well as due to ever lasting field investigations. Major attention was given to studying metal objects of Late Bronze Age of Northern Black Sea and Carpathian-Dniester region. The works by V.A.Dergachev<sup>49</sup>, L.A.Novikova<sup>50</sup>, A.M.Leskov<sup>51</sup>, M.Petrescu-Dîmbovița<sup>52</sup>, V.S.Bochkarev<sup>53</sup>, E.N.Chernykh<sup>54</sup>, I.T.Chernyakov<sup>55</sup> showed that by the assortment, chemical composition and typological appearance the metal articles of Sabatinovka culture and Noua culture as a whole are similar. The similarity appeared to be so significant that both cultures were associated into the common Ingul-Krasny Maiak Metal Working Centre.

In determining reasons for this integrity three standpoints can be isolated. The extreme ones belong to A.M.Leskov and L.A. Novikova. A.M.Leskov is absolutely sure in Srubnaia origination of Ingul-Krasny Maiak centre<sup>56</sup>. L.A.Novikova, on the contrary, does not see any "possibility to bind formation of Noua culture with some *Eastern flow*, which emerged in the territory of Volga-Don interfluvial, and to attribute on these grounds Sabatinovka type monuments to the first stage in formation of Noua culture (Prenoua or Protonoua, according to A.Florescu)<sup>57</sup>. The author believes that *migration of Noua culture bearers occurred in reverse direction, i.e. from West to East*<sup>58</sup>. That specific set of metallic articles which is typical of Sabatinovka culture and Noua culture, according to L.A.Novikova, appeared in Northern Black Sea steppe as a result of mass migration of Noua culture bearers to the East, supplanted from Carpathian-Dniester region by the population of Early Thracian Hallstatt cultures<sup>59</sup>.

Since it has been reliably established that the appearance of Early Hallstatt cultures in Carpathian-Dniester region refers to the time not earlier than XII century B.C.<sup>60</sup>. Hence, following L.A. Novikova, one has to admit that namely to that time the initiation of Sabatinovka culture shall be referred. Naturally, arising from nowadays notions on the chronology of Late Bronze cultures, this looks inconceivable: in XII<sup>th</sup>,<sup>61</sup> or even by the end of XIII<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>62</sup>, the Sabatinovka culture is replaced by Belozerskaia one.

Thus, both viewpoints onto the reasons of similarity of metal objects in Sabatinovka and Noua cultures, equally fail to account for the fact that shifted by researches groups, either from East to West or from West to East are absolutely synchronous. In any case, neither A.M.Leskov nor L.A.Novikova made use of chronological correlation between Sabatinovka and Noua cultures to substantiate their outlooks onto this problem.

The viewpoint expressed by E.N.Chernykh looks more appropriate for the estimation of informative capabilities of metal articles and more coordinated with modern concepts on the chronology of Late Bronze. It consists in the fact that the cultural and historical content of the notion *metal working center* lies not with its correspondence to some or the other culture, but *firstly in metal working activity of a group (clan) of masters, who probably, were culturally isolated from surrounding population*<sup>63</sup>. And if this is so, then the reasons of metal articles identity in Sabatinovka and Noua cultures are found not in the sphere of ethnic processes, but in the sphere of metallurgical production set up. Hence, the discussion on origination of metal articles in Sabatinovka and Noua cultures has no direct relation to the problem of origination and correlation of these cultures. The major result of metal articles investigation was different - it revealed that the formation and development of cultures referred to Late Bronze in Northern Black Sea and Balkan-Carpathians regions occurred under conditions of an unprecedented by scales and pace astounding growth of metallurgy and a brisk increase, due to highly organized production, of relations between certain sections within this region<sup>64</sup>.

A new impulse to discuss the problem of Noua culture origination was given by a discovery in early 70<sup>th</sup> of Coslogeni culture in Lower Danube area bordering in the North with Noua culture, and in the East with Sabatinovka type monuments<sup>65</sup>. S.Morintz and N.Angelescu who discovered it, showed that same as in Sabatinovka and Noua cultures, Coslogeni culture sites are widely represented by ashpits, same stone, bone and metal articles, and more important, generally same pottery<sup>66</sup>. The funeral rite of this culture remains poorly studied yet. Scarce known up to date burials enter kurgans of Early Bronze Age, and so far are not distinguished from Northern Black Sea kurgan burials referred to Middle and Late Bronze Age<sup>67</sup>.

The above observations allowed to S.Morintz and N.Angelescu, in early 70<sup>th</sup> to combine all these cultures into a single *complex of cultures Sabatinovka - Coslogeni - Noua*<sup>68</sup>. Thus the concept advanced by A.C.Florescu on cultural uniformization<sup>69</sup> in Late Bronze Age in the region received its further development. According to S.Morintz, the decisive factor of this integration was ... *migration of tribes, who came from over the Dniepr river and scattered further to West, having occupied the steppe area from Dniepr up to Mostiștea valley (river falling into Danube on the North, approximately opposite Bulgarian town Silistra-V.C.)*<sup>70</sup>. It is remarkable that to support the idea on Srubnaia origination of gathering Sabatinovka - Coslogeni - Noua S.Morintz dates the beginning of Noua culture with a bit late time than the beginning of Sabatinovka culture (according to him, Noua culture appears at the end of XIV century B.C., whereas Sabatinovka begins in the middle of XIV century B.C.)<sup>71</sup>. Same as A.C.Florescu,

S.Morintz used to determine chronological correlation of these cultures based not on strict chronological characteristics of material, but on the necessity of correlating dates with their own notions on reasons of appearance of cultural identity of the region, occupied during preceding period by clearly distinguished cultures. However, within the frames of widely distributed although not finally evaluated notions on Srubnaia origin of Sabatinovka culture, there was not any other possibility to explain the similarity of Late Bronze Age cultures.

Wide perspectives for other explanation of the above specified cultural integration were opened in these years due to wide-scale investigations of Middle and Late Bronze monuments in Southern Ukraine. First of all extensive materials collected on the subject allowed to confirm the rightfulness of isolation of Mnogovalikovaia Ceramics culture<sup>72</sup>.

Special interest with reference to formation of Late Bronze Age cultures is attained to the fact (reliably established) of locally-chronological contiguity of MCC with Sabatinovka culture, Noua culture and Coslogeni. The areal of South-Western version of MCC includes western part of the area of Sabatinovka type monuments distribution, and in the North-Western section it includes the Eastern part of Noua culture territory<sup>73</sup>. The chronological contiguity of MCC with Late Bronze Age cultures has been decisively proved by V.A.Dergachev<sup>74</sup> and I.T.Cherneakov<sup>75</sup>.

New comprehension of materials allowed I.T.Cherneakov to join N.I.Sharafutdinova viewpoint that Sabatinovka culture is genetically bound not to Srubnaia culture, but to MCC<sup>76</sup>. Investigations that followed confirmed the rightfulness of this conclusion<sup>79</sup>. By mid 80<sup>th</sup> the idea of Sabatinovka culture independence was joined by many of those researchers who have earlier supported the concept on Srubnaia affiliation of Sabatinovka type monuments<sup>78</sup>. V.A.Dergachev having compared burial rites arrived to a similar viewpoint, although he believes that I.T.Chernyakov tends towards absolutizing genetical role of MCC in the formation of Sabatinovka culture<sup>79</sup> and considers impossible to explain all the specificity of Sabatinovka culture by Mnogovalikovaia culture fund only. According to V.A.Dergachev, impulses on behalf of Srubnaia culture played a rather active role in its formation, which can be supported by extensive distribution of tournette ceramics<sup>80</sup>. This viewpoint was shared by E.N.Savva<sup>81</sup>. Irrespective on how the problem of Srubnaia culture influence onto the formation of Sabatinovka culture will be solved, it is clear that the idea of its independence as an archeological culture and its genetical correlation with MCC advanced in the first half of 60<sup>th</sup> appeared to be true. Rather persuasive in this respect is periodization of MCC burials proposed by V.A.Dergachev. The researcher believes that the latest group of MCC burials "combines complexes showing strongly squirmed buried bodies with hands in front of face and squat pot-like vessels, which only on some occasions combine with bone buckles, and were never encountered along with classic MCC vessels." Further on the author comments that probably the complexes represented by squat pot-like forms actually correspond to a transition period from MCC culture to Sabatinovka horizon<sup>82</sup>. I wish to add here, that such a characteristic of the final stage of MCC agrees well with the concept advanced by I.T.Cherneakov on MCC growing into Sabatinovka culture.

Thus, the investigations carried out in the second half of 70<sup>th</sup> first half of 80<sup>th</sup> managed to change significantly the notions on ethno-cultural history of Northern Black Sea region in the Age of Middle and Late Bronze. The value of these investigations lies with the fact that they significantly changed the opinions onto the cultural and historical context of origination and

development of Noua culture. Adoption of new interpretation of Sabatinovka culture, i.e. not like a stage of Srubnaia, but as an independent formation, which appeared on basis of MCC, preconditions were created to reconsider traditional notions on the nature of Eastern features in Noua culture, making it closer to Coslogeni and Sabatinovka cultures. Now, when notions on the scales and role of *Western Srubnaia expansion* failed to find the proof, there appeared a necessity to give a new setting to the problem of cultural integration factors in Northern Black Sea, Carpathian-Dniester and Lower Danube regions in transition from Middle to Late Bronze. Recongnition of genetical relation of Sabatinovka culture and MCC, notable cultural similarity and synchronism of Noua, Coslogeni and Sabatinovka cultures - all these circumstances contributed to the fact, that first G.N.Toshchev, 1983<sup>83</sup>, and then I.N.Sharafutdinova, 1985<sup>84</sup> advanced an assumption on MCC bearers participation in the formation of Noua culture.

However, by that time this viewpoint was not properly substantiated and left without attention in the majority of investigations that followed.

Investigations of Coslogeni culture in Northern-East Bulgaria are of great importance for understanding ethno-cultural processes in the South of Eastern Europe<sup>85</sup>. According to H. Todorova, the problem of this culture formation shall be viewed in the context of brisk cultural, economical and demographical changes occurring not only in Northern Black Sea and Lower Danube regions, but in the whole Balkan-Anatolian region. Traditional for historiography reduction of these complex processes to mere migration of Eastern population H.Todorova considers wrong, pointing out that the problem of Coslogeni culture origination would be prematurely to solve until monuments of local cultures of immediately preceding period remain unexplored<sup>86</sup>. In this respect special attention is given to findings occurring in the layer underlaying the horizon of Coslogeni culture on site Durunkulak with pottery analogous to that characteristic of Northern Black Sea region for MCC<sup>87</sup>.

In subsequent years the interest of researchers to problems of Middle and Late Bronze chronology increased notably.

Since it is already a tradition with the researchers to bind Noua culture formation with mass migration of Sabatinovka culture bearers to the West the majority of investigators supporting it in such or the other way, are obliged to contend that Sabatinovka culture appeared somewhat earlier than Noua culture. A.C.Florescu was the first to give such a definition to the chronological correlation between these cultures, 1964<sup>88</sup>. Soon after A.I.Terenozhkin in his fundamental article on the chronology of Prescythian period, having followed A.I.Melyukova and pointing out to synchronous character of these cultures, accepted Noua culture dating as XIII- XII centuries B.C., nevertheless advanced an assumption that the Sabatinovka culture (in his understanding a locally-chronological version of Srubnaia culture) appeared somewhat earlier, in the middle of the XIV century B.C.<sup>89</sup>. Later on this viewpoint was joined by S.Morintz, L.I.Krushelnitskaya, V.A.Dergachev, and E.N.Savva<sup>90</sup>.

To make clear what are the foundations of this crucial concept, I shall allow here a quotation from L.I.Krushelnitskaya's book: *Synchroniyation of Noua and Sabatinovka cultures* creates an impression of a vicious circle: the chronological frames of Noua culture are dated based on Sabatinovka culture and vice versa. To our viewpoint, continues the author, multiple analogies between the dating objects of these culture do not necessarily confirm the same date

of their extreme chronological frames. And the concept of Noua culture origination itself with participation of Sabatinovka culture places the first one into chronological dependence on the second and assumes somewhat later initial date of Noua culture<sup>91</sup>. (my underlining - V.C.). Such reasoning can hardly be accepted sufficient and adequate. A conclusion that Noua culture was composed somewhat later than Sabatinovka culture is found in a flagrant contradiction with the assertion advanced by its adherents, stating that the Monteoru phase IIb immediately precedes Noua culture in Romanian Moldova<sup>92</sup>, and the MCC precedes Sabatinovka culture in Northern-West Black Sea region<sup>93</sup> including Prut-Dniester region<sup>94</sup>, as well as Noua culture in Northern half of Bessarabia<sup>95</sup>, and that the MCC final is synchronous to Monteoru IIb<sup>96</sup>.

Evidently, only A.Oancea and E.N.Savva attempted to substantiate the idea that the Noua culture emerged somewhat later than Sabatinovka one without any visible relation to their own notions on an important role of "*Eastern impulses*" in the formation of Noua culture.

A.Oancea reported that in a series of sites Monteoru IIa horizon is overlapped by layers with Sabatinovka ceramics<sup>97</sup>.

My personal attitude to this assumption is determined, firstly, by the fact that in the overwhelming majority of cases the author refers to non-published materials<sup>98</sup>, and secondly, according to my own observations it looks practically impossible to distinguish Sabatinovka culture ceramics from that of Noua and Coslogeni cultures arising from contact zone between these three cultures without a rather fine statistical analysis (note here that A.Oancea appeals specifically to contact zone monuments). The latter circumstance makes admissible the interpretation of this ceramics from sites of Northern-East Muntenia and Southern Moldova as Noua culture ceramics, which appears at final phase of Monteoru culture (IIb). The composition of ceramic findings at Balintești-Cioinagi cemetery supports the above assumption. Here, along with ceramics typical for Monteoru culture, available is the one characteristic of Noua culture<sup>99</sup>.

Second argument advanced by A.Oancea and joined by E.Savva is supported by two knives of "*Sabatinovka*" type in burials at final phase of Monteoru culture, Petroasa Mica and Monteoru<sup>100</sup>.

These findings could have been testifying that the Noua culture arose later than Sabatinovka only in case the right one would not be A.Oancea, who believes that the monuments type of Balintești are just a local version of Monteoru II b phase,<sup>101</sup> but his opponents, who consider these monuments within the frames of an isolated by them later phase - Balintești-Gîrbovăț, which corresponds already to the first stage of Noua culture (Protonoua)<sup>102</sup>. Although the problem on chronological correlation between Monteoru II b and Balintești-Gîrbovăț remains questionable, seems that there are no hindrances on the way of admitting Protonoua stage monuments synchronous to Monteoru IIb phase.

E.Savva arrived to a conclusion that Kurgan burials of Northern-West Black Sea regions, with Monteoru II ceramics referred to MCC by all the researchers, "*need to be synchronized only with the very final stage of MCC, and basically with Sabatinovka monuments*"<sup>103</sup>.

When estimating this assertion one shall keep in mind that V.A.Dergachev, based on thorough analysis of Kurgan burials of Pruto-Dniester area, arrived to a conclusion that the MCC and Sabatinovka cultures "*by localization of graves, their absolute and relative orientation, as well as by position of buried ones are identical and indiscernible*". The sole criterium,

according to V.A. Dergachev, "*to differentiate MCC complexes from Sabatinovka ones remains burial findings*"<sup>104</sup>. As to my knowledge, in any of the burials of Northern-West Black Sea areas with Monteoru Ia and Ib ceramics was not found typical for Sabatinovka culture objects, and E.N.Savva did not manage to discover any supplementary, specifically Sabatinovka elements of burial rite.

Thus, presently, there are no serious grounds to conclude that the Sabatinovka culture was composed somewhat earlier than Noua culture.

In 1990 M.Florescu and A.C.Florescu published a paper on Noua culture origination in Southern Moldova<sup>105</sup>. A conclusion on genetical correlation between Noua and Monteoru cultures has been confirmed again. Simultaneously, significant amendments were introduced regarding *Eastern factor*. According to the authors, small groups of Srubnaia culture bearers penetrating Carpathian basin did not manage to create any significant changes within the ethnic composition of local population, but, instead, having deteriorated stability in the region, provoked *reconstruction* here and appeared to be the most important factor of *uniformization*<sup>106</sup>. I believe, the paper left out not only the role ascribed by the authors to *Srubnaia-Khvalynsk* elements, but the very fact of their presence in the region as well. Referring some fragments of coarse ceramics to *Srubnaia* elements just by such feature as scratches or dashes on body, seems to be of minor persuasiveness. Rather indicative, though, that none of the analogies from *Srubnaia* monuments are presented to support the proposed interpretation.

Exclusively important meaning for understanding reasons and character of cultural integration of Carpathian-Dniester, Northern and Northern-West Black Sea regions have paleoeconomic investigations<sup>107</sup> of late years, due to which more and more evident becomes the fact that the transition from Middle to Late Bronze Age was marked by a qualitative leap in the development of productive economy<sup>108</sup>, the character of which was of the type that called for strengthening of economic, trade, cultural and ethnical relations between the autonomous groups of population.

To conclude the above historiographic survey I shall try to summarize certain ideas and on these basis to formulate the present condition of the problem, as well as to trace perspectives of its further research.

1.The fact that in the formation of Noua culture the bearers of local cultures referred to Middle Bronze Age (Monteoru, Costișa-Komarov, MCC, and to a lesser extent Wiettenberg) participated to some extent, is not subjected to doubts.

2.The most questionable problems are as follows:

a/ with reference to brisk distinctions of Noua culture from the local cultures of preceding period;

b/ with reference to reasons of an impetuous rapprochement of Carpathian- Dniester, Northern and Northern-West Black Sea regions.

In the investigation of these problems there prevails such an approach at which the major accent is made onto purely ethno-cultural processes (genesis, migrations, reciprocal influences, etc.). In my understanding such an approach highlights a widely distributed notion exaggerating the autonomy of ethnic processes in relation to extraethnic factors in the formation of an archeological culture. I believe, this conceals the major reason of the fact that the researchers failing to find in preceding cultures (Monteoru, Costișa-Komarov, MCC, Wiettenberg) a sufficient number (?) of sufficiently close/similar(?) *prototypes* of Noua

culture, conclude that it is impossible to explain its formation without participation of some external power, i.e. migration, influence, or some "impulses" on behalf of Srubnaia culture. I shall allow here to give a more precise definition: it is impossible within the frames of such an approach. I happened already to set out my own approach to the problem of archeological criteria of ethnogenesis in general<sup>109</sup> and with reference to formation of Noua culture in particular<sup>110</sup>. Therefore, I shall not reiterate it here, having just marked the problems, which I believe, ought to be investigated in the first place.

The first is the character and reasons of changes in economics in transition from Middle to Late Bronze in South-East Europe. Here, in particular, it is important to establish to what extent the new economic system corresponded to new nature-and-climatic conditions and to the achieved technological level.

The second refers to the sphere and level of integration in the frames of Sabatinovka-Coslogeni-Noua unit.

The third is bound to chronological correlation of antiquities of Middle and Late Bronze in Southern regions of Eastern Europe. Points of prime importance are as follows:

- correlation between lower dates of Noua, Coslogeni and Sabatinovka cultures;
- correlation between monuments of Monteoru IIb phase and those of type Bălinești-Gîrbovăț;
- chronological correlation between lower date of Sabatinovka-Coslogeni-Noua unit on the one side, and those *Srubnaia* monuments towards East of Dniepr river, where elements characteristic of Noua, Coslogeni and Sabatinovka cultures are being represented.

The fourth refers to Kurgan excavations in South-East Muntenia, Dobruddzha and North-East Bulgaria. These very excavations can *conceal* monuments of Middle Bronze, preceding Coslogeni culture in the region. It is quite probable that the significant place among these will be taken by MCC burials.

I believe this list of problems presents the minimum without which any attempts to investigate origination of Noua culture look rather premature.

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**АСГЭ** — Археологический сборник. Государственного Эрмитажа. Ленинград.  
**КСИА** — Краткие сообщения института археологии АН СССР. Москва.  
**КСИМК** — Краткие сообщения института истории материальной культуры. Москва; Ленинград.  
**КСОГАМ** — Краткие сообщения Одесского Государственного археологического музея. Одесса.  
**МИА** — Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР. Москва; Ленинград.  
**МИА ЮЗ СССР и РНР** — Материалы и исследования по археологии Юго-Запада СССР и Румынской Народной Республики. Кишинев, 1960.  
**СА** — Советская археология. Москва.  
**ЭБУ** — Энеолит и бронзовый век Украины. Киев.

**ААН** — Acta Arheologica Hungarica. Budapest.  
**AM** — Arheologia Moldovei. Iași.  
**AP** — Arheologia Polski. Warszawa.  
**BRGK** — Bericht der Romisch-Germanischen Kommission. Berlin.  
**SCIYA** — Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie. București.  
**WPZ** — Wiener Prahistorische Zeitschrift. Vienna.



**Map No1. South-West of Eastern Europe in the 2-nd half of 2-nd millenium B.C.**

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1.Sabatinovka; | 8.Wietenberg;    |
| 2.Srubnaia;    | 9.Tei;           |
| 3.Coslogeni;   | 10.MCC;          |
| 4.Noua;        | 11.Belozerskaia; |
| 5.Tryiniecka;  | 12.Verbicioara;  |
| 6.Komarov;     | 13.Monteoru;     |
| 7.Otomani;     | 14.Belogrudovka. |



