

On the use of pits near dwellings B17 and B18 at the Trypillian culture site of Nebelivka

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Cuvinte-cheie: cultura Trypillia, Nebelivka, groapă, lipitură, figurină, ceramica, oase, cărbune, ritualuri.

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During excavations at the settlement of the Trypillia Culture of the BII stage near the village of Nebelivka, pit-like objects were investigated, located next to the remains of buildings B17 and B18. Magnetic surveying conducted at dozens of settlements of the Cucuteni-Trypillian cultural complex revealed a huge number of such objects, but only a few of them have been excavated so far. Thus, the results and experience of relatively large-scale excavations in Nebelivka may be useful in further studying the Trypillian pits. The objects in Nebelivka were discovered using magnetic surveying, which showed their non-standard configuration. Archaeological research confirmed the results of magnetic surveying and provided significant material, the study of which allows reconstructing some aspects of the use of these objects. At first, archaeologists believed these were dugouts used as dwellings. Later, they began to be seen as a source of clay for construction and repair of dwellings, as well as a source of clay for pottery production. Researchers also considered their ritual function. As a result, we can talk about the initial purpose of the pits as pits for extracting building materials, and later as cult objects.

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Despre utilizarea gropilor din apropierea locuințelor B17 și B18 la situl culturii Trypillia de la Nebelivka

În timpul săpăturilor efectuate în așezarea culturii Trypillia din etapa BII, situată în apropierea satului Nebelivka, au fost investigate complexe de tip groapă, descoperite în apropierea complexelor de locuit B17 și B18. Prospekțiunile magnetice efectuate în zeci de așezări din complexul cultural Cucuteni-Trypillia au relevat un număr imens de astfel de complexe, dar doar câteva dintre ele au fost excavate până în prezent. Astfel, rezultatele și experiența săpăturilor de amploare de la Nebelivka pot fi utile în studierea ulterioară a gropilor trypilliene. Complexele de la Nebelivka au fost descoperite cu ajutorul cercetărilor magnetice, care au evidențiat configurația lor neobișnuită. Cercetările arheologice au confirmat rezultatele cercetărilor magnetice și au furnizat material semnificativ, a cărui studiere permite reconstituirea unor aspecte ale utilizării acestor obiecte. La început, arheologii au considerat că acestea erau adăposturi subterane folosite ca locuințe. Ulterior, au început să fie considerate o sursă de argilă pentru construcția și repararea locuințelor, precum și pentru producția de ceramică. Cercetătorii au luat în considerare și funcția lor ritualică. Ca urmare, putem vorbi despre scopul inițial al gropilor ca fiind gropi pentru extragerea materialelor de construcție, iar ulterior ca obiecte de cult.

During the 2013 excavations at the Trypillia Culture site of the near the village of Nebelivka (stage BII), buried objects were investigated, located next to the remains of buildings B17 and B18 (fig. 1) [Videiko et al. 2014]. Magnetic surveying conducted at dozens of settlements of the Cucuteni-Trypillian cultural complex revealed a huge number of such objects [Videiko 2021, fig. 2-5], but only a few of them have been excavated so far. Thus, the results and experience of relatively large-scale excavations in Nebelivka may be useful in further studying Trypillian pits. The objects in Nebelivka were discovered using magnetic surveying, which showed their non-standard configuration (fig. 1,1).

Archaeological research confirmed the results of magnetic surveying and provided significant material, the study of which allows reconstructing some aspects of the use of these objects. As a result, we can talk about the initial purpose of the pits as excavation pits for extracting building materials, and later as cult objects.

Archaeologists have encountered similar buried objects during excavations at the Cucuteni-Trypillia sites before. For example, a large depression was excavated almost 90 years ago at the well-known settlement of Volodymyrivka and was identified as the remains of a pit-house, which was built at the initial stage of settlement [Passek

1949, 90-92, fig. 45-46]. Excavations in Maydanetske in the 70s-90s of the 20th century. showed that such depressions have a bottom profile that excludes their use as dwellings, and the nature of the filling does not provide grounds for such reconstructions [Shmaglii, Videiko 2001-2002, 84-86]. At the neighboring settlement of Talianki, a pit located between rows of dwellings was fully explored. This object was interpreted as a place of extraction of clay, which was used in the construction and current repairing of buildings located nearby, as well as preparing building mixtures and, possibly, preparing clay for the production of ceramics [Kruts *et al.* 2005, 17-27, fig. 21-34]. In 2017, in trenches were laid on several similar pits, identified by magnetic survey at settlements of the Kosenivka type, in particular in Apolyanka. In the latter case, animal bones (including burnt ones), charcoal, ash and fragments of anthropomorphic (fig. 1,1) and zoomorphic (fig. 1,2) figurines were found in the fill among the ceramics [Videiko *et al.* 2025, 325, fig. 1, 6-12].

These examples, which are now much better known, demonstrate how the long-standing theme of "Trypillia pit-houses" has gradually given way to a more realistic interpretation of this buried objects, based on detailed observations of their fill and other characteristics. In this regard, the results of the excavations at Nebelivka, given the methodology used in this case to study the pit fill, may be useful for similar studies in the future.

Description of the excavations

In 2013, an excavation at Nebelivka was started 30 meters south of the mega-structure explored the previous year (fig. 1,1). At this location, magnetic surveying revealed the remains of several relatively large buildings arranged in a row, which are covered on the western side by pit anomalies. In the excavation area of 650 sq. m. The remains of two dwellings B17 and B18 and part of this environment, conventionally called pit B17 and pit B18) were investigated (fig. 1; 2; 3).

The remains of building B17 are represented by two layers of burnt daub – coating of wooden parts of the ceilings of the building. The site is oriented with its long axis in the direction almost east-west, parallel to the remains of the mega-structure building (fig. 1,2). The total length of the baked clay embankment is 24 m, the width in dif-

ferent sections was from 6 m to 8 m in the western part, 12 m long, and no more than 5.5 m in the eastern part. The remains of building B18 are located parallel to building B17 at a distance of 8 m to the south. The northern edge of building B18 was excavated to a width of 1-1.4 m (fig. 1,1). In accordance with the data of geomagnetic survey, the remains of dwelling B18 are 3-4 m shorter than the neighboring building.

The cultural layer around the remains of building B17 was previously interpreted by geophysicists based on the results of magnetic surveys as a "ditch". To study the nature of the cultural layer, test-trench was extended far beyond the boundaries of the building remains in the form of a buildup of plaster. In a trench dug between buildings B17 and B18, a section was obtained that showed the presence of a cultural layer between the buildings. This cultural layer differed from the yellow loam that was under the remains of the houses. It was dark brown in color, with spots of rodent burrows filled with yellow loam (fig. 1,4-5). The thickness of this cultural layer was from 0.2 to 0.35 m. Among the finds in this layer, fragments of pottery of various sizes were found. In addition, three fragments of anthropomorphic figurines and fragmented animal bones were also found in it. The intensity of saturation of finds of this cultural layer decreased with distance from the remains of burnt houses.

In the western sector of excavation No. 3 from the side of the pit next to building B17, a gradual lowering of the cultural layer was revealed with its transition to filling pit B17. In this area, the saturation of finds starting from a depth of 0.7-0.8 m from the modern surface was significantly higher than in the above-described "ditches" around the edges of the buildings (fig. 1,4-5) Summarizing the observations of the nature of the cultural layer in different sections of excavation No. 3, it can be stated that around the construction site of building B 17, the soil layer on the ancient surface was removed to a depth of 0.2-0.35 m compared to the horizon of the earthen floor, represented by yellow loam. The yellow loam taken from the depression was probably used for the production of building mixtures. The results of this activity were recorded by magnetic survey and shown on the plan as "moats" that cover the remains of the buildings from three sides (fig. 1,1). At the time of

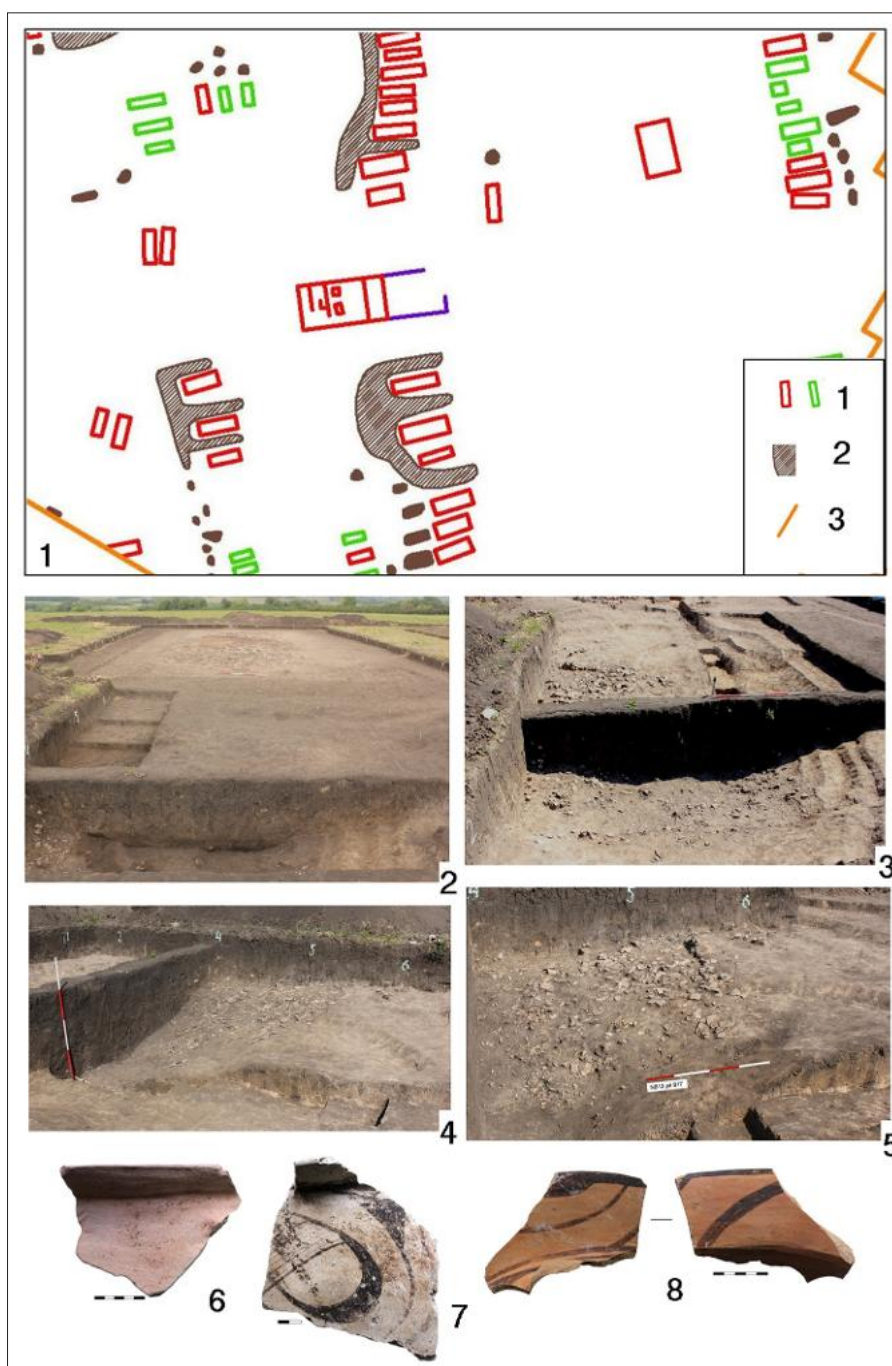


Fig. 1. Nebelivka: 1 – part of plan with houses and pits B17-B18 (1 – remains of burnt houses, 2 – pits; 3 – border of prospection); 2 – house and pit B17 at the first stage of excavations; 3-5 – pit B17 at the layer of finds; 6-8 – fragments of the large vessels.

the burning of the houses, these depressions were almost filled to the top with a cultural layer. During the excavations, it was noticeable that along the place where the walls of the buildings were, depressions were preserved, into which fragments of plaster and other clay finds found along the perimeter of the burnt clay deposit later fell.

The pits identified by geomagnetic survey to the west of the ends of buildings B17 and B18 were marked with paint before the excavation began. On the geomagnetic survey plan, the pit of building B17 was shown as an irregularly shaped spot with a diameter of 1.2 m. For the pit of building B18, only its center was marked. The excava-



Fig. 2. Nebelivka, pit B18: 1 – at the first stage of explorations; 2 – fragmented details from pottery kiln; 3 – profile; 4-5 – fragments of the large vessels.

tions were initially carried out in accordance with the geophysicists' marks (fig. 1,2-5). The pit of house B17 was semi-round in plan (the dimensions within the excavation were traced – up to 14 m in diameter) and is located in the western sector of the excavation. Here, a 0.2 m thick arable layer was removed, followed by a 0.4 m thick soil

layer. It turned out that in this area the chernozem layer lies at a depth of 0.6 m, while around the burnt clay mound at this horizon a cultural layer in the form of brown humus loam was discovered (fig. 1,3-5). Fragments of ceramics and pieces of plaster were found in the black soil horizon layer above the pit. Starting from a depth of 0.6 m from

the modern surface, edges 0.7 m wide were left to obtain sections and observe the shape and nature of the pit filling.

Starting from a depth of 0.8-1 m from the modern surface, the number of finds in some parts of the pit increased significantly. For this reason, it was decided not to fill the pit with layers, but to leave the finds in situ and to carry out a horizontal cleaning of the find deposit. It consisted of a large number of fragments of ceramics and parts of vessels, large and small animal bones, including some aurochs horns, pieces of red baked clay without plant impurities, greenish fragments of ceramic products with rounded edges, and some fragments of anthropomorphic figurines (fig. 2; 8).

During the clearing of the fill of pit B17, many small fragments of ceramics measuring 1×2-2×2 cm were found, the total number of which was over 1500. The finds (animal bones, fragments of ceramics) lay in an almost continuous layer on the slope towards the center of the pit, which descended to a mark of 1.3-1.8 m from the modern surface. In the central part of the pit, a relatively smooth slope ended in a depression with a diameter of 1.2-1.4 m, which further reached a depth of 3.5 m from the modern surface (fig. 1,4-5). In the western and southern parts of the pit, a slope with ledges was recorded. On these ledges, fragments of ceramics and animal bones were also found in groups and individually (fig. 1). The fill of the pit consisted of dense black soil. Such compaction was the result of the gradual washing away of the soil by rains. It is typical for buried objects that have been open, unfilled, and exposed to precipitation for a long time (fig. 3,1).

After cleaning the finds left in situ, it turned out that they were located in separate clusters, of which 14 were identified. Each cluster included fragments of ceramics of various sizes from various vessels, animal bones, mainly cattle (fig. 4-5). Some clusters contained pieces of fired clay and details of clay structures, fragments of anthropomorphic figurines (fig. 3; 8). In total, 17 fragments of anthropomorphic figurines were found in this object (fig. 6-8). The dismantling of all these clusters was carried out with leveling of the finds. The thickness of the layer saturated with finds was 0.1-0.2 m, increasing downward along the slope, which is clearly visible in the profile of the central edge (fig. 3,1). Three layers are visible in this

profile. One of them consisted of layers of clay burned to a red color. The two layers consisted of charcoal, separated by a thin layer of loam. The thickness of the charcoal layers in some places was from 1 to 3 cm, and originally it should have been larger. These spots of charcoal occupied a significant area in the bottom part and on the slopes of the walls of the pit. The total diameter of the charcoal spot reached several meters. This indicates a huge amount of ash and charcoal (possibly up to one cubic meter) that once simultaneously, and twice, fell into this pit. It is clearly visible on the profile that the charcoal layers are located below the filling horizon, saturated with bones and fragments of ceramics (fig. 3,1, bottom left). In the fill of pit B17, items related to pottery production were found. These were fragments of kiln channel covers (fig. 3,7), a lump of fired clay with fingerprints (fig. 3,5) and slag with fragments of vessels (fig. 3,6). In the lowest part of the pit fill, many fragments of animal bones and small fragments of pottery were found. In many cases, traces of crimson-colored ochre were traced on the pottery fragments and bones. It seemed that the lumps of this mineral paint were placed in the vessels before their fragments got into the pit.

It is especially worth emphasizing the finds in the pit of fragments of pear-shaped vessels with incised ornament. Their first finds were made at a depth of 1.2 m to 1.8 m from the modern surface. During the excavations of buildings at the settlement near Nebelivka, such ceramics were represented by single fragments. The fact that fragments of pear-shaped vessels with incised ornament were found in the pit filling at different depths indicates the illegality of allocating an "earlier" horizon on this basis. Also noteworthy is the presence in the pit filling of parts of the collapses of large thick-walled painted vessels up to 0.8 m high, the finds of which are absent among the ruins of buildings (fig. 1,6-8). The difference in the composition of ceramic assemblages originating from pits and buildings is probably due to certain features of the sets of dishes that were usually left in the dwelling before the settlement was burned and the ceramics that fell into the pit as a result of certain rituals. The pit at house B18 (hereinafter referred to as pit B18) was only partially investigated in a trench 2 m wide. This object was even larger than the pit of dwelling B17.

Its excavated part was about 8 m long in the upper part. The depth of the pit reached 2.5 m from the modern surface (fig. 2). Its upper part was filled with black soil to a depth of 1.2 m. Below, a filling began, similar to that found in the pit of house B17, including a layer of small fragments of

burnt plaster scattered in the soil (fig. 3,2-3). In addition to animal bones and pottery fragments, four fragments of anthropomorphic figurines (fig. 8,3-6) were recovered from the investigated part of the pit. Fragments of large vessels (fig. 2,4-5) were also found in pit B18, which were not found

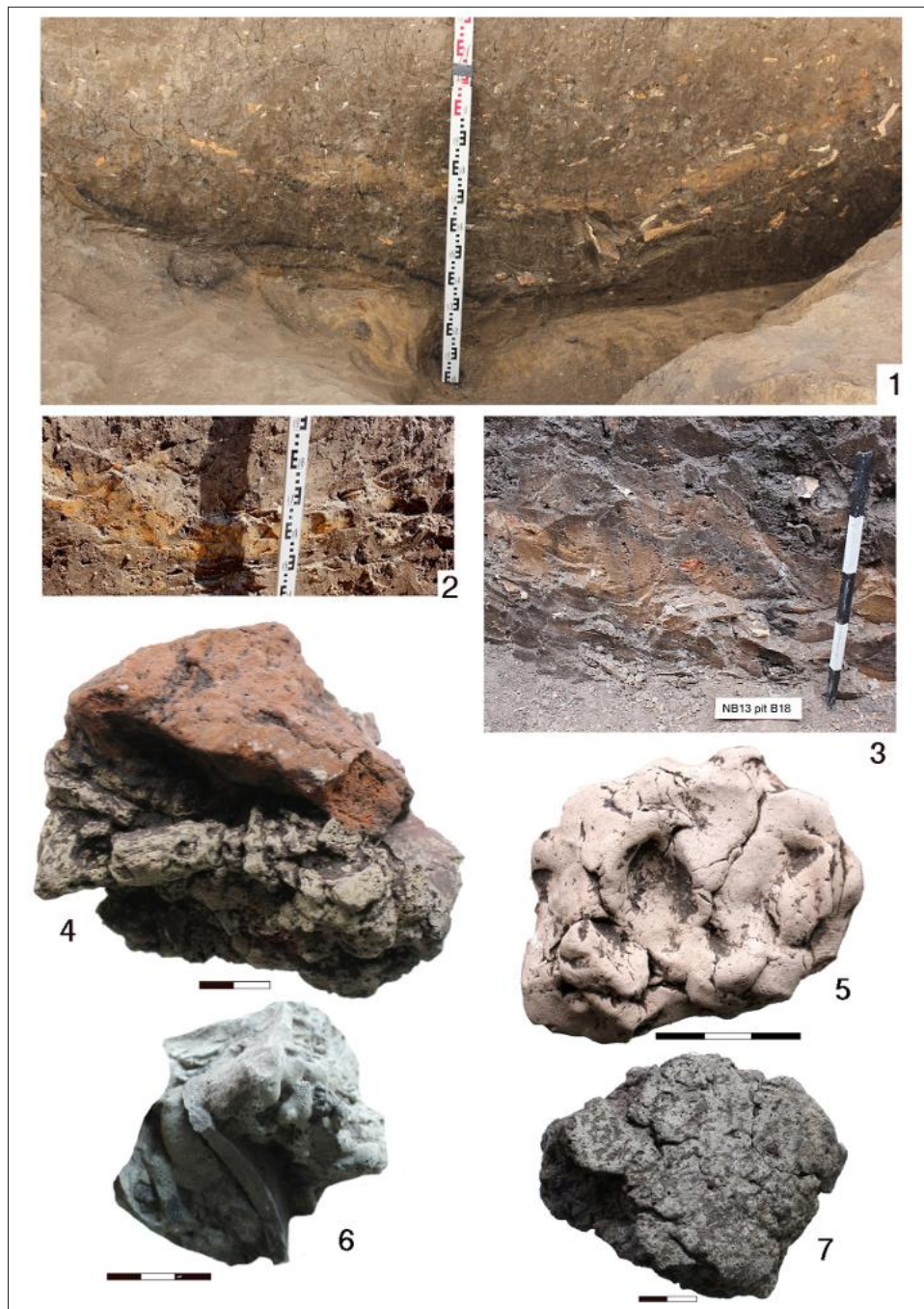


Fig. 3. Nebelivka: 1 – profile of pit B17, bottom part; 2 – pit B17, layer with burnt daub; 3 – pit B18, layer with burnt daub; 4 – burnt daub from kiln(?); 5 – piece of clay with imprints of human fingers; 6 – fragment of pottery with heavy burnt daub; 7 – fragmented detail from pottery kiln.

among the remains of house B18. It is especially worth noting the discovery of fragments of pottery kiln structures, lids that were intended to cover canals (fig. 2,2).

Observations during the excavations showed that the pits near houses B17 and B18 at the beginning of their operation were associated with the collection of loam and clay, which were intended for the production of building mixtures. The lower parts of both pits were filled during the operation of the buildings. The filling of the lower parts of the pit contains layers of coal, the burnt coating is associated with the construction of the buildings and pottery kilns (fig. 2,2; 3,4-7). Portions of "garbage" consisting of charcoal, bone fragments, ceramic dishes and figurines periodically fell into the pits. Later, after the cessation of the settlement, the pits, which were not filled to the top, were filled with the surrounding soil, which contained cultural remains, as well as black soil as it was formed.

Finds from pits B17 and B18

Stone products are represented by single specimens, dominated by cracked stones from grain grinders and grinding stones, which were found both among the remains of dwellings and in pits in a broken form. Flint products are represented by a tool for processing horn bone, made on a plate using the jet retouching technique, which was found in the filling of pit B17.

Ceramic vessels in the pits were found in the form of fragments. The dishes belong to two groups of products known from previous years of excavations at the Nebelivka settlement: the so-called "kitchen" and dining. The minority of finds in all studied complexes belong to the group of "kitchen ceramics", which is made of mass with an admixture of sand and grit, in individual fragments there are inclusions of crushed shell, noticeable due to the white color. The forms of kitchen utensils are exclusively pots of various sizes. Fragments of large pots were found only in pits. The neck of these pots is usually covered with vertical ridges, at its base there are sometimes decals, including zoomorphic ones. There are impressions of a "caterpillar", a round stamp. Fragments of vessels decorated with a crossed ornament in the upper part on the shoulders are less common. The group of "table" vessels can be divided into two

subgroups according to the technique of applying the ornament: with a recessed ornament and with painting. Ceramics with a recessed decor are few. The recessed ornament was supplemented by painting the spaces between the lines. This group is represented by one type – large pear-shaped vessels. The majority of "table" ceramics are vessels covered with a black or dark brown painting applied over engobe. These are cups, cup-shaped vessels, conical bowls, footed bowls, amphorae, sphero-conical, biconical (of various types and sizes) and pear-shaped vessels. According to the shapes and decor, the ceramics from the excavations of all the objects studied in the 2013 season can be attributed to the Nebelivka group of the Trypillian culture of stage II. Pear-shaped vessels decorated with a deep ornament with white inlay and painting find analogies among the finds made in nearby Volodymyrivka [Passek 1949, fig. 53].

However, the number of finds of similar vessels in Nebelivka suggests that this type of products, previously known mainly from the monuments of the Volodymyrivka group, was also quite common in the Nebelivka group.

In pit B17, 18 fragments of anthropomorphic figurines were found (fig. 6; 7; 8,1-3), and in the trench that passed through pit B18 – 4 fragments (fig. 8,4-7). In the filling of pit B17, most of the finds of fragments of anthropomorphic plastic are associated with accumulations of material that included fragments of ceramics, animal bones, and fragments of clay structures (fig. 4-5). Anthropomorphic plastic is represented exclusively by fragments of terracotta of large, medium and small sizes, not a single whole figurine was found. It should be noted that individual fragments of figurines from the Nebelivka pits have a spotted surface, which can be explained by the involvement of plastic in rituals associated with fire. According to the nature of the clay mass, several technological groups of anthropomorphic figurines can be visually distinguished. The first group includes products made of kaolinite clay that is light after firing, their color varies from white to pale pink, pale gray and pale beige. It is from such clay that the dishes of the Nebelivka settlement were mainly made. It should be emphasized that in general, the kaolinite clay raw material used for sculpting figurines differs both in structure and in impurities. On the breaks it is noticeable

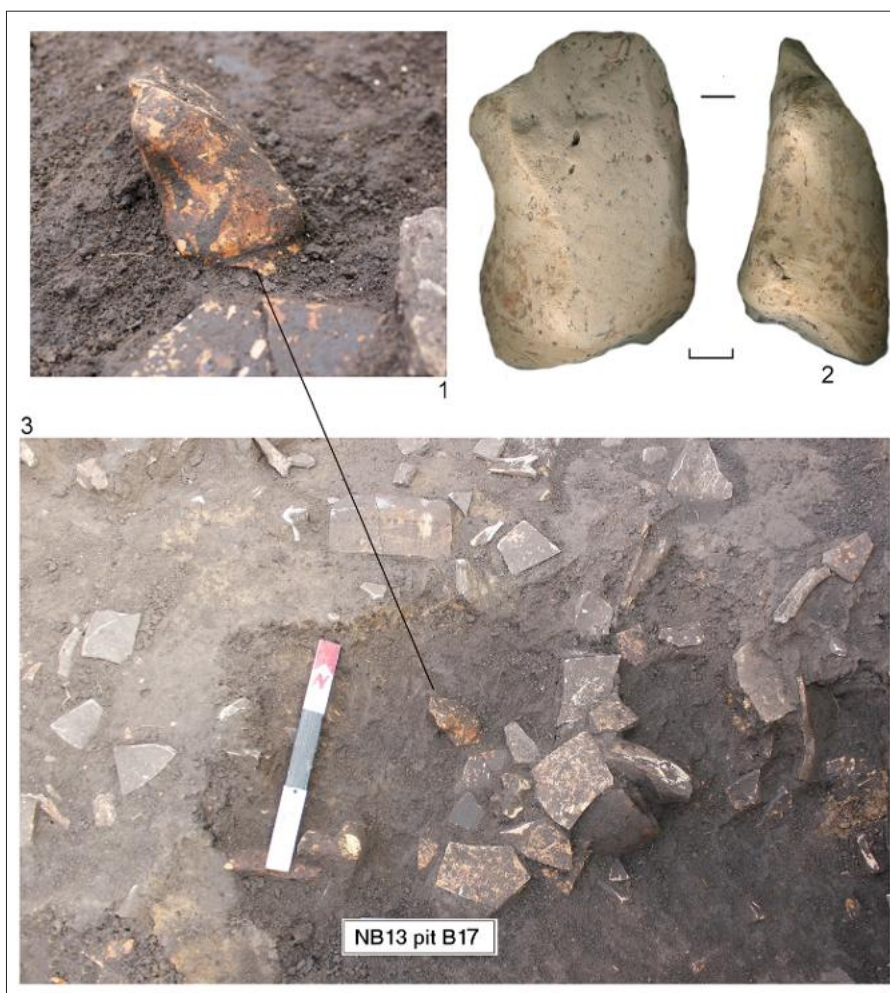


Fig. 4. Nebelivka, pit B17, cluster of finds with fragmented human figurine.

that in some cases the clay is lumpy or layered, does not differ in high plasticity, and in others the mass is fine-structured, homogeneous, dense, well silted. Sometimes micropores from burnt plant impurities, imprints of larger plant fractions, and in several cases presumably imprints of grains are visible in the clay. In addition, the presence of mineral impurities, mainly sand and quartz grains, and in isolated cases lumps of ferruginous clay are noted. Probably, all impurities, except for cereals, are natural impurities in the clay, and the significant variety of characteristics of kaolinite clay can be explained by the fact that the figurines were made from clay taken from different places. Figurines of various sizes were made from kaolinite clay, from very large (fig. 7,3-8) to very small (fig. 6,6). Products made of kaolinite clay require high-temperature firing. The surface of figurines made of such clay was carefully smoothed, cov-

ered with a matte orange engobe. Painting or decorative details were applied with dark brown paint or, sometimes, with drawn lines. It should be noted that the original surface of the figurines is very often not preserved, and in such cases the painting and engobe can be judged only by individual spots of paint.

Other technological groups include figurines made of fine-structured clay, the mass of which differs in density, degree of exhaustion, impurities and color. These technological groups are characterized by medium and small-sized figurines. The color range of products varies in yellow-orange tones, only a few figurines are distinguished by a dark gray color (fig. 6-7).

The second technological group includes figurines made of fine-structured clay with an admixture of small mineral particles (sand, lime inclusions), and/or very small particles of burnt or-

ganic matter. Presumably, these impurities are of a natural nature. There are single figurines made of fine-structured, dense, well-silted clay of light pink, light orange or pale gray color, without visible impurities. In total, 8 fragments of such figurines were found in all 2013 objects. The surface of such products is carefully smoothed. It was probably polished, possibly painted, however, the poor preservation of the fragments does not allow us to judge this with complete certainty. On one of the medium-sized figurines, spots of bright red ocher are clearly visible (fig. 7,1), which probably covered the entire surface of the figurine. It should

be emphasized that the considered technological groups of anthropomorphic plastic are selected conditionally, exclusively as a result of visual observations. Therefore, they should be considered rather as a certain way of systematizing figurines, and not a technical and technological analysis.

The study of anthropomorphic plastic from various objects of the Nebelivka settlement shows that there is no clear correlation between technological groups and formal and iconographic types of figurines. At the same time, all large figurines are made of kaolinite clay. Figurines made of kaolinite clay predominate among anthropomorphic

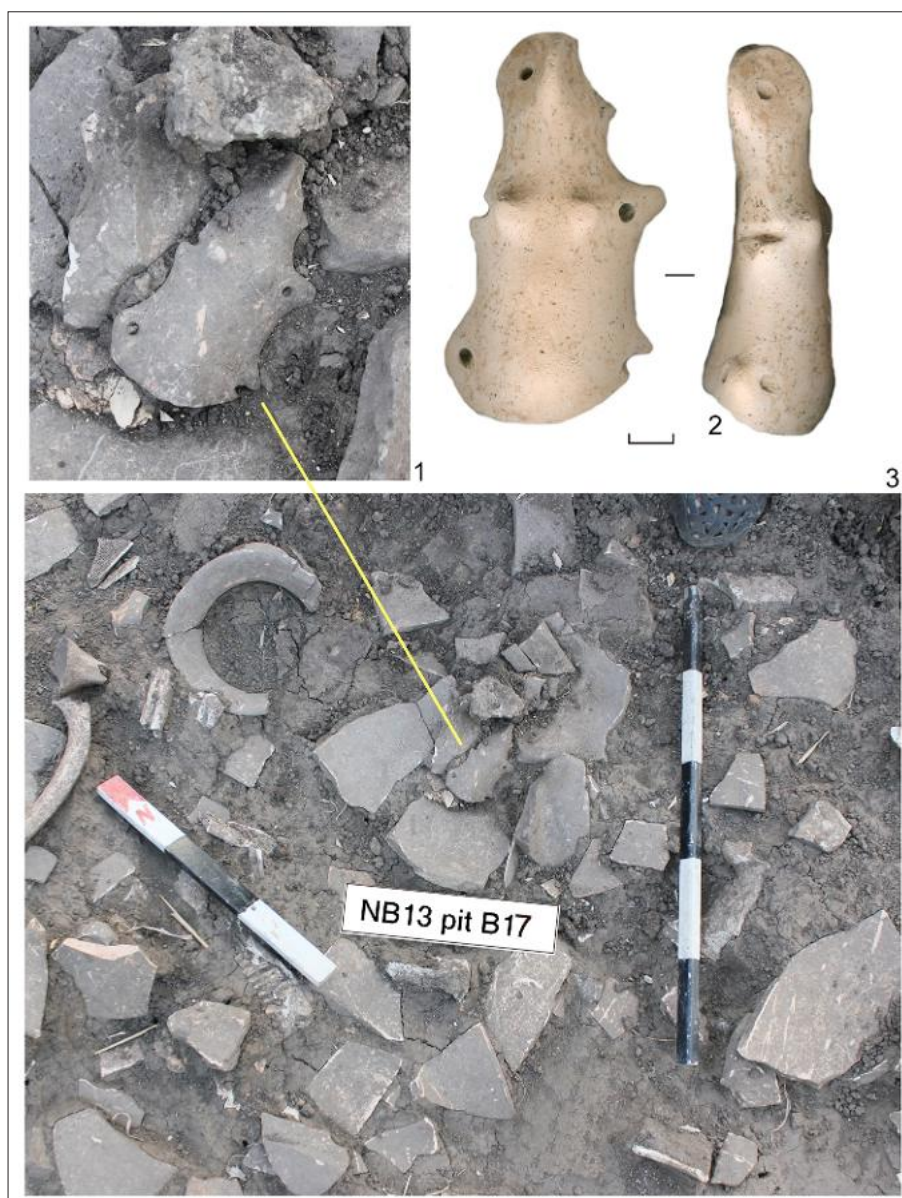


Fig. 5. Nebelivka, pit B17, cluster of finds with fragmented human figurine.

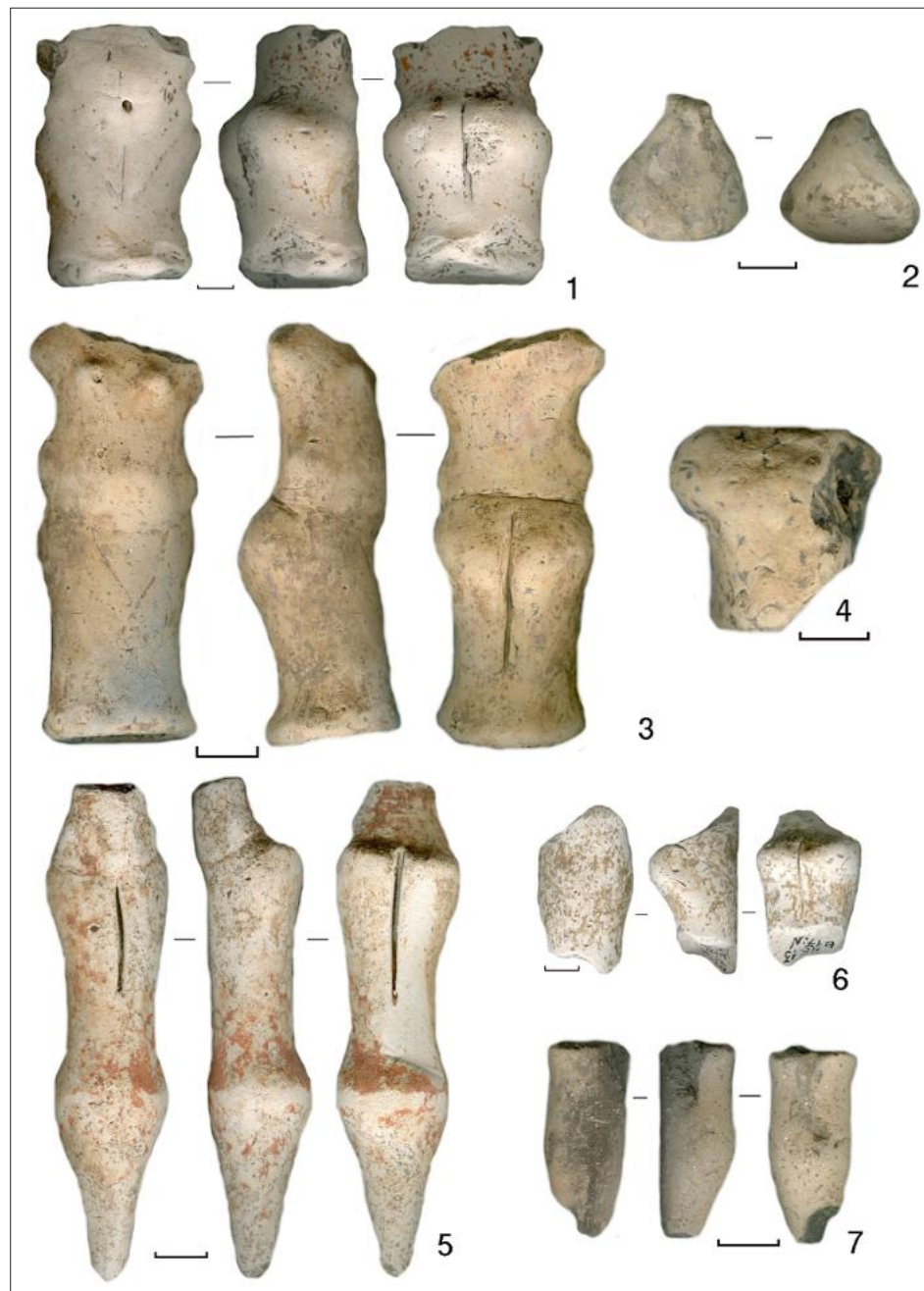


Fig. 6. Nebelivka, pit B17: 1; 3-7 – fragmented figurines of different types; 2 – zoomorphic token.

plastic from pit B 17, where 11 out of 17 such figurines were found. In pit B18, 3 out of 4 such figurines were found. In total, 25 figurines made of kaolinite clay were found in all objects of the 2013 excavations, which is slightly more than half of the anthropomorphic plastic.

The nature of the fractures of anthropomorphic figurines suggests that many of them were formed from two vertical halves. This method of

molding is characteristic mainly for large figurines, as well as for the manufacture of the lower parts of figurines. Figurines on a spindle-shaped leg, which belong to the most common type of anthropomorphic plastic Nebelivka, were probably made from a single piece of clay (fig. 6,5-7).

Anthropomorphic figurines from the objects studied in 2013 in Nebelivka share some common features. In the vast majority, they conditionally

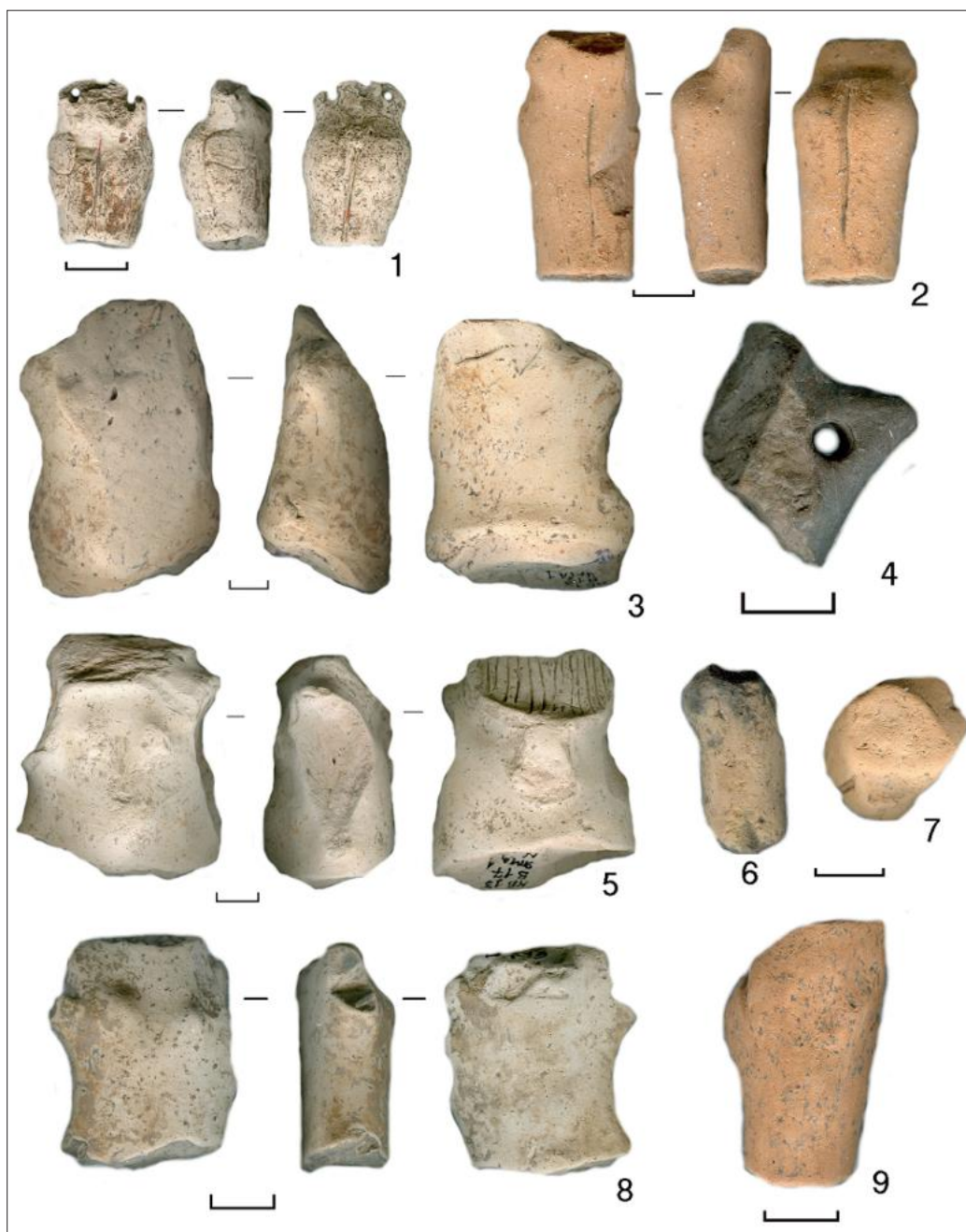


Fig. 7. Nebelivka, pit B17: 1-8 – fragmented figurines of different types.

schematically reproduce the appearance of a person. Single figurines are distinguished by features of realism (naturalism), which are manifested in the modeling of hands, feet, and other details. Realistic plasticity has not been found. Female images include fragments on which sexual characteristics are clearly marked, or convey the image of a pregnant woman. Most fragments do not provide information about the gender of the im-

ages and are characterized as anthropomorphic. The gender of the figures does not affect their formal typology, for which only more or less large fragments of plastic can be used. Some figurines of this subtype were covered with red paint, which is recorded on the Nebel figurines only in the form of barely noticeable spots. On some fragments of figurines, a painting in the form of oblique lines converging at an angle or parallel ribbons applied

with dark brown paint on orange engobe has been preserved. Other subtypes of standing figurines, which are distinguished by their massiveness, are represented by a smaller number of finds. Among them are massive figurines with a straight body on a columnar leg (fig. 6,1,3).

A fragment of the upper part of a very large figurine was found in pit B 17 (fig. 8,3). Judging by the height of the fragment, the sculpture could reach a height of at least 30 cm. The torso comes from a figurine made of pale gray kaolinite clay. The vertical fracture suggests that the figurine

was molded from two vertical halves. Its surface is carefully smoothed, the presence of engobe is indicated only by individual spots of light brown paint. The torso is very massive, the chest is shown by disproportionately small sticky tubercles. The protruding belly of a slightly unusual, trapezoidal shape probably symbolizes pregnancy. On the back of the statuette, a sculpturally modeled hairstyle traditional for Trypillian plastic art has been partially preserved. It can be assumed that the torso belonged to a standing sculpture on a columnar leg. In addition, the fragmentary large

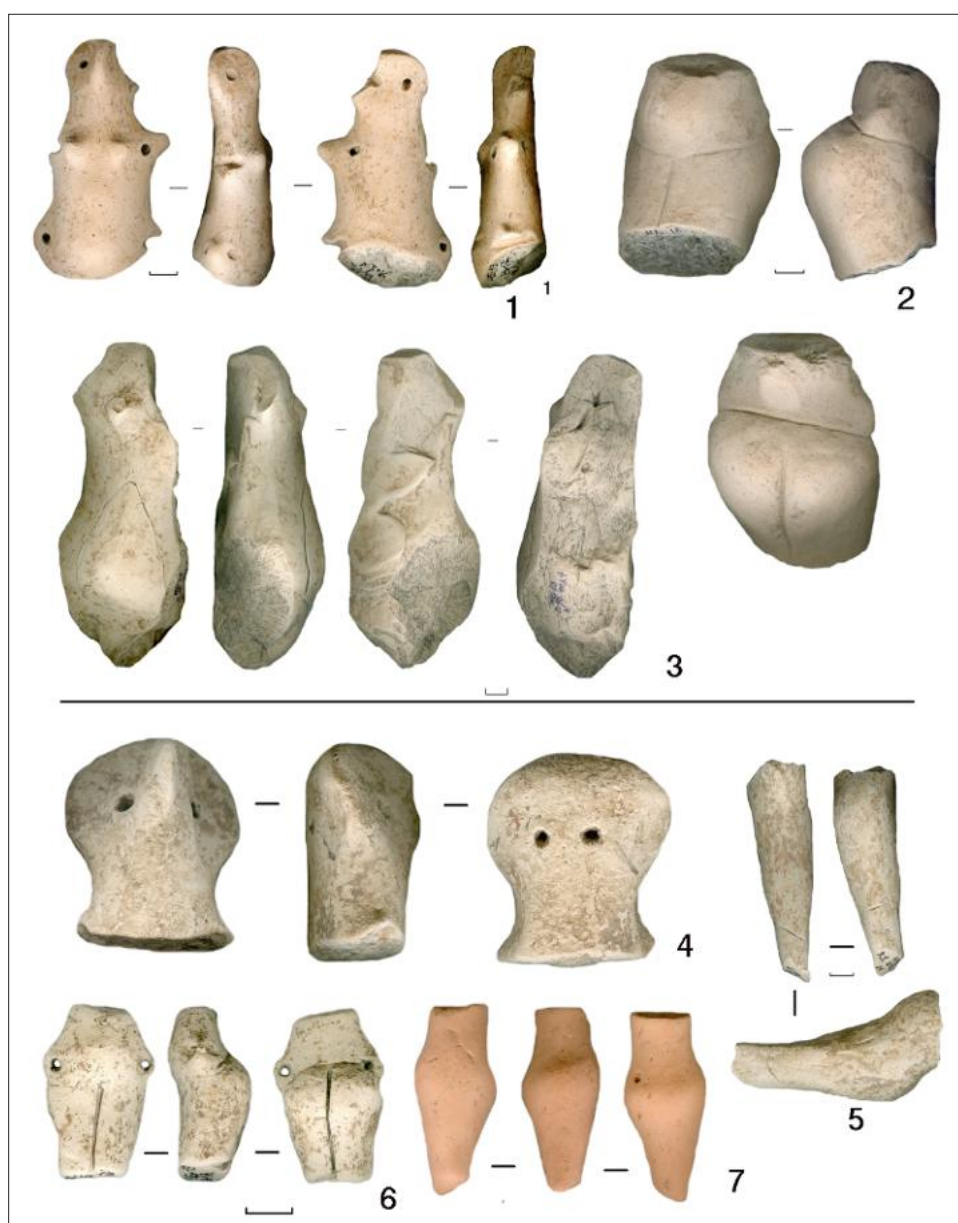


Fig. 8. Nebelivka, fragmented figurines of different types: 1-3 – from pit B17; 4-8 – from pit B18.

statuettes made of kaolinite clay from pit B17 probably belong to the same subtype of anthropomorphic plastic art. Both have a plastically modeled hairstyle in the form of a knot on their backs. Moreover, in one case (fig. 7,5) the strands of hair are shown by drawn vertical lines, as in the realistic figurine from Volodymyrivka [Passek 1949, fig. 48. 2].

In structures B 17 and B 18, located next to the megastructure, and especially in the pits associated with them, massive figurines predominate; it is with such subtypes that the upper parts of massive figurines can be associated. Analogies for figurines of these subtypes are found not only in the collections of anthropomorphic plastic of Trypillia B II monuments, but also among figurines of some settlements of the Tomashivka local-chronological group of Trypillia C I [Burdo 2014, fig. 18]. Zoomorphic plastic is few and is represented by a zoomorphic cone-chip (fig. 6,2). The zoomorphic cone presumably depicts a bovine.

Conclusions

The results of the study of pits B17 and B18 and their filling make it possible to propose the following reconstruction of the processes of their formation and filling. Both of them were dug during the construction of the buildings. The builders used both clay and loam. The need for loam clearly exceeded the need for clay. Therefore, the builders had to use loam not only from the pit, but also from the excavations around the buildings. As a result, "moats" were formed around the long sides of the buildings, later filled with a cultural layer. The pits remained open to rain; their lower parts were noticeably filled due to soil washouts. At this stage, a small number of fragments of ceramics and animal bones fell into the pits. At the same time, a significant amount of coal and ash was thrown into the pit, at least twice. This is how the layers of charcoal that we observed in the pit profile were formed. After that, the soil washout gradually covered the coal. At this stage, a burnt clay coating without chaff admixtures was thrown into the pits. In both cases, red layers were formed (fig. 3,1-3). Such a coating could be part of the structures of the hearths of furnaces or altars, which were repaired from time to time, and the destroyed parts were "hidden" in the pits. After that, the soil washout gradually covered the filling

of the lower, deepest part of the pits. Thus, a surface was formed, covered with a layer of soil, onto which fragments of ceramics and animal bones began to be thrown in certain portions. In these accumulations, of which 14 were traced, fragments of anthropomorphic figurines of various types were also discovered. Perhaps we are faced with a component of some ritual for the burial of the remains of sacrifices that took place in buildings or near them. A pit with a similar filling was discovered during excavations in 2012 near the mega-structure – the Nebelivskyi Temple [Videiko, Burdo 2015].

At this stage, a relatively small number of items related to the work of the pottery cell also found their way into pit B17. These are parts of ceramic covers of the kiln channels (fig. 3,6-7). The same fragments were found in the investigated part of pit B18 (fig. 2,2). They are similar to those discovered during the 2014 excavations of a similar object in Nebelivka [Burdo, Videiko 2016, fig. 5, 6]. The pottery production can also be associated with melted ceramic fragments baked in the glaze and a lump of clay with fingerprints (fig. 3,5-6). Similar things in the case of the 2014 pottery kiln were also "buried" in the pit together with fragments of ceramics and anthropomorphic plastic [Burdo, Videiko 2016, 97-98, fig. 5, 8]. The difference is that in the studied parts of pits B17 and B18, much less parts of the pottery kiln were found. As a result of the above-described practice of moving a significant amount of pottery fragments and animal bones to the pits, a continuous layer up to 10 cm thick was formed, mainly on the side adjacent to the remains of the building. This indicates a probable place from where most of the finds in pit B17 were moved. After this activity ceased, the pit began to be excavated. fill the soil washes under the influence of precipitation. This is how a black filling was formed, clearly visible both in plan (fig. 2) and in profiles (fig. 1). The finds of small fragments of ceramics in this filling should be associated with the erosion of the cultural layer after people left the settlement. Thus, we can conclude that the filling of the pit is a consequence of the action of natural factors and anthropogenic factors.

Such pits are a separate type of buried objects in the settlements of the Trypillian culture. They differ markedly from pits-places of "burial"

of burned buildings [Burdo, Videiko 2016b] in all respects – from shape and size to the formation of the filling. They are an important component of the settlement complex, the study of which can give researchers interesting results.

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