

НАЦИОНАЛЕН



ФОНД
КУЛТУРА

Книгата е издадена с конкурс
на Национален фонд „Култура“

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КИРИЛ ЙОРДАНОВ, КАЛИН ПОРОЖАНОВ,
ВАЛЕРИЯ ФОЛ

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ISSN 0204-9872

Academia Litterarum Bulgarica
© Institutum Studiorum Thracicorum
Serdicae, MMIII

Българска академия на науките
© Институт по тракология
София, 2003

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BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

THRACIA

15

IN HONOUR OF
ALEXANDER FOL'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Sofia • 2003

INSTITUTE OF THRACOLOGY
TANGRA TanNakRa PUBLISHING HOUSE

ACADEMIA LITTERARUM BULGARICA
INSTITUTUM STUDIORUM THRACICORUM
IN HONOREM ANNORUM LXX ALEXANDRI FOL
THRACIA XV
Serdicac, MMIII

SLAVIC CULTURE AND SLAVIC CIVILIZATION OR COMMUNITIES IMAGINED AND COMMUNITIES IMPOSED

Boris Naimushin

And now do I stand here, As European,
I can't be different, God's help to me! Amen!
(F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*)

The origin and history of the Slavs, their ethnic and cultural relations with the neighboring peoples (Iranian, Turkic, Thracian, Greek, Germanic, Celtic, Baltic, and Finno-Ugric) have long been the focus both of academic studies and heated political, patriotic and nationalistic debates. The purpose of this essay is to outline, against the historical background, some of the main aspects in today's relations - often uneasy and more often than not emotion-dominated - between the Slavic nations and countries.

These issues will be examined within the broader context of subjectivity, including race and ethnicity, and its role in the constitution and organization of social and political relations. Ideologies - like various manifestations of the so-called 'Slavic idea' such as Pan-Slavism in the 19th century or Slavic Unity *Slavija* today - represent a set of values constructed in order to attract followers from specific target groups and eventually manipulate their behavior. And since the imaginary and the unconscious occupy an extremely important place in the formation of our behavior, we may expect to see them play an equally important role in the formation of ideologies and subjectivities.

In analyzing the complex and contradictory situation in the contemporary world, we may rely on historical analogies and on a variety of theories and concepts. It is true that the dynamics and unpredictability of today's developments make most historical analogies rather superficial. Paul Valery, a famous French critic and poet, called history 'the science of what never happens twice'. Decades before him, Hegel noted that we learn from history that we do not learn from history. However, what we really *learn* from history is that the policies of the various Slavic states and nationalities over the last 200 years have been conducted primarily in accordance with what they regarded as their national interests and not the interests of the imagined 'Slavic

civilization' or 'Slavic community'. Initially, one may even be surprised by these frequent incidents of bitter hostility in the relations between Slavic peoples accompanied by similarly frequent incidents of friendliness toward non-Slavs. In the broader context, however, bitter rivalry between brothers is nothing new to history – think of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Israelites and Midianites. Sometimes this tension between brothers is defined as opposition civilization *versus* culture, technology *versus* ethics, science *versus* religion. What's more, some Slavophilic thinkers extend such opposition to the relations between the West and the East, defining the West as the bearer of civilization (i.e. order, rationality, materiality) and the East as the bearer of culture (freedom, creativity, spirituality). Thus, Nikolai Danilevsky, a famous Russian Pan-Slavist, wrote in 1869: 'Two sources on the banks of the ancient Nile began the main flow of universal history. One, heavenly and divine, has reached Kiev and Moscow by way of Palestine and Constantinople; the other, earthly and human, divided itself into two main streams, that of aesthetic-scientific culture and that of politics, which flowed through Athens, Alexandria and Rome into Europe' (Danilevsky 1869).

Speaking of the lessons of history, it may also be interesting to mention another historical analogy – our globalizing world with modern technologies spreading and imposing Western civilization and values in every corner of the planet *versus* the empire of Alexander the Great, who carried Greek civilization to the ends of the then-known world. It seems to me that both of these worlds can be described in terms of the clash of civilizations and imagined communities. As a result of Alexander's conquests, the then-known world went through a period of clashes of civilizations as he marched through Asia Minor, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Afghanistan to the borders of India. However, this world also acquired a unity – turning into an imagined and cosmopolitan Hellenistic community – based on the Greek language and the Greek civilization mixed with many Asiatic traits. If we add to this the contrasting economic extremes of the Hellenistic world, one may really wonder 'whether the Hellenistic age is not one of the most "relevant" in the entire human record for comparison with our own' (Lerner et al. 1988:169).

Clash of Imagined Civilizations or Conflict of Material Interests?

Samuel Huntington discusses the theory and practice of international politics after the end of Cold War in terms of 'clash of civilizations' arguing that the defining characteristic of the 21st century will be the interaction and conflict between civilizations rather than nation-states (Huntington 1993). The world is on the threshold of a new era where the growing interaction between societies and civilizations inevitably causes new problems and deepens the existing ones. The terrorist attacks in the USA in 2001 and in Russia in 2002 as well as many other international developments over the last couple of years have only proved the importance of the issues raised by Huntington. These issues are directly linked to the ongoing

globalization, which, as any large-scale process, brings not only many obvious benefits but also plenty of apparent and not-so-apparent negatives. Unfortunately, the current globalization model leads mainly to the escalation of the existing conflicts, including those on national and civilization basis, because this model is almost exclusively West-oriented. As a result, traditional and semi-traditional societies feel endangered by this rather ruthless encroachment on their culture, religion and values. The growing anti-globalization movement in Western Europe and North America also clearly shows that many people even in these countries are not happy with the current globalization model. Of course, globalization is an objective process brought to life by the very nature of the postmodern world and modern technologies, so it would be unrealistic and absurd to try and stop it. However, its current model is far from being optimal and human-oriented.

Huntington's approach focuses on the notion of 'civilization' and this, in my opinion, requires special attention. The term 'civilization', pivotal to many historical and political theories, has been used in various ways at different times. Thus, in eighteenth century France, culture was a synonym of 'civilization' implying a relationship between manners and morals, and embracing a pan-national type of refinement. The German signification of culture, in use at the same time, implied a nationally based religious, artistic and intellectual standard of excellence (Eagleton 2000). Today, civilization is also often viewed as a cultural identity representing the broadest level of identification, broader than nation or region, and is usually tied to religion or some other belief system. Thus, Huntington defines civilization as a cultural entity, as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of what which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people" (Huntington 1993). An opposing view claims that culture and civilization are in deep conflict. Such an approach was pioneered by Russian Slavophiles who described culture in terms of spirituality and divinity *versus* the earthly, materialistic civilization of the West. This distinction was further developed in the pessimistic philosophy of Spengler, for whom civilization is the death of culture (Spengler 1918).

In my opinion, *culture* and *civilization* may not be confused or opposed. Civilization is aimed at the cultivation of the order and therefore implies awareness and compliance. Culture is aimed at the cultivation of the soul and therefore rejects any form of physical or intellectual tyranny. In culture, it is virtually impossible to talk about progress or supremacy. Who is greater – Kant or Confucius, who is more gifted – Shakespeare or Dante, Brecht or Shakespeare, Pushkin or Omar Hayam? I can only agree that the major sign of progress in culture is the increase in the number of partners in the dialogue, the intensification of the dialogue between cultures.

In the long run, what Huntington describes as 'the clash of civilizations' can be with equal success explained as 'the clash of interests', having nothing to do with civilizations, religions and cultures but having everything to do with the struggle for

power, influence, oil etc. For instance, the famous American actor Dustin Hoffman used his appearance at this year's Empire film awards to express his views on President Bush's pending war with Iraq: "I don't think, like many of us, that the reasons we have been given for going to war are the honest reasons. I believe... that this war is about what most wars are about: hegemony, money, power and oil." Hoffman went on to claim that he felt that the Bush administration was "manipulating the grief of the country" in the wake of September 11¹.

In politics, there is (overt) ideology and there is (not-so-overt) strategy. Ideology is, to put it in modern terms, a screen saver of strategy, a publicity mass product aimed at attracting followers, developing in them a specific set of values, thus making their reactions as predictable as possible. Since ideology is meant for the masses, it has to appeal to the most basic instincts and needs – food, housing, family, security. As Nikolay Berdyaev put it back in 1937, 'The average man of our time possesses not ideas, he possesses instincts and affections' (Berdyaev 1937). From this point of view race, ethnicity and religion have always been among the most widely used elements in the formation of ideologies. History shows that even the most humane ideas, imposed by force, may lead to violence and bloodshed. The major paradox of the struggle between good and evil is that this struggle constantly gives rise to new evil – intolerance, violence, fanaticism: "The man, fanatical over some sort of idea, like a person who would save himself alone, cannot be said to seek the truth. The search for truth presupposes freedom. Truth is not external to freedom, truth is bestowed only by freedom. Outside of freedom there is only that which is useful, but not truth, there is only the interests of power. The fanatic of some sort of orthodoxy² seeks for power, and not for truth" (Berdyaev 1937).

The Slavic idea throughout the centuries

Benedict Anderson defines nations as 'imagined communities' – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because members will never know most of their fellow-members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. It is limited because it has finite, though elastic boundaries beyond which lies other nations. In other words, the nation is a construct that requires a certain amount of representational work (Anderson 1991).

¹ Guardian Unlimited. Dustin Hoffman blasts 'reprehensible' war. Staff and agencies, Thursday February 6, 2003. <http://film.guardian.co.uk/news/>

² Russian usage has two different words, both of which translate as "orthodoxy". The word "ortodoksiya" (as in the above quotation) bears a generic and pejorative sense of a narrow-minded adherence to a "right-belief" of any teaching. In contrast, the Russian word "pravoslaviye" ("right-glory" or "right-doxology") refers to Orthodox Christianity, which, as Berdyaev observes, properly precludes fanaticism.

Anderson's approach is fruitful for the purpose of this essay because, in my opinion, the Slavic community – *Slavjanstvo* – is a typical example of an imagined community. In fact, supporters of the 'Slavic idea' do not seem to have ever had common definitions of the notions such as 'Slavic unity', 'Slavic brotherhood', 'Slavic solidarity' etc. It cannot be denied that theoretical recognition of the 'Slavic unity' has always been present in the cultural and ethnic identity of all Slavic peoples. However, this recognition has more often than not come in conflict with the interests and aspirations of separate Slavic peoples and countries.

The Slavic cultural community appeared on the crossroads of history, in close contact with the West and the East experiencing influence both from the Roman Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox traditions, at the same time being greatly indebted to the steppe world of *Pax Nomadica*. Suffice it to say that supreme rulers of the Rus' adopted the title of 'khagan', which was in use, alongside the Proto-Slavic title of 'knyaz', at least till the reign of Vladimir and Yaroslav the Wise, i.e. till the second half of 11th century (Petrukhin 1995:123). This indisputable fact, supported by a number of historical documents, receives different explanations (e.g. as a borrowing from the Khazars, as an evidence of Khazar rule over Rus' in the past, as demonstration of independence of Rus' from the Khazars etc.). The title of 'khagan' was at that time a supreme title in Eastern Europe and unambiguously demonstrated the empire ambitions of the respective state in the steppe world. The adoption of this title by the early Rus' khaganate – and not of the Greek title 'Basileus' – shows that its relations with the steppe world on the whole and with Khazaria in particular were much more intensive than with the Byzantine Empire³.

Our ancestors inhabited vast territories in Europe from the Danube and the Balkan Peninsula to the Ural Mountains extending also across northern Asia to the Pacific Ocean and coming into contacts and conflicts with various local peoples and nations. As centuries went by, the former linguistic and religious unity of the Slavs began to disappear leading to the formation of the east, west and south Slavs. Additional divergence came along religious lines with the division of the Slavs into two main groups: those associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church and those associated with the Catholic Church. In the Middle Ages cultural and political relations between the Slavs were significantly reduced as many of the Slavic peoples lost their state sovereignty becoming part of the Habsburg (later Austro-Hungarian) and Ottoman

³ For more details on this controversial issue see, for instance, Golden, P.B. The Question of the Rus' Qaghanate. – In: *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2, 1982, pp. 77–97; Zuckerman, K. On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor – *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 53 (1995); Sedov, V. Russkij kaganat IX v. – In: *Otechestvennaja istorija*, 1998, No 4, pp. 3–15; Noonan, T. The Khazar Qaghanate and its Impact on the Early Rus' State: The translatio imperii from Itil to Kiev. – In: *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, eds. A. Khazanov and A. Wink. 2001. pp. 76–102.

Empires, and Prussia. The 19th century saw a certain resurrection of the rather faint feeling of Slavic ethnic, linguistic and cultural unity stimulated by the process of the formation of nations and nation-states and the awakening of the Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, where the actual political movement of Pan-Slavism arose.

Pan-Slavism, stimulated by the rise of romanticism and nationalism, was aimed at promoting the political and cultural unity of all Slavs. The first Pan-Slav Congress, held at Prague in 1848 and presided over by F. Palacky, was confined to the Slavs under Austrian rule. Its main objective was to demand equality with the Germans advocating Czech autonomy within a strong Austrian Empire as the best protection against German and Russian pressure. It was later, after the humiliating defeat suffered by Russia in the Crimean War (1853–56), that a specific form of Russian Pan-Slavism emerged based on imperial 'big brother' thinking and messianic conviction in Russia's special role in Europe and the world.

Russian Pan-Slavism insisted that there was strong opposition between Slav and non-Slav peoples with the former seeking political and cultural integration with Russia – the only great sovereign Slavic state at that time. Discussing the role of Russia in history, some Slavophilic historians and public figures (M. Pogodin, Y. Kireevski, P. Butkov etc.) developed a theory insisting on a special mission of the Russian people in solving the so-called 'Eastern problem' viewed as struggle between the Slavic world and Europe. Thus, A. Fadeyev claimed that it was Russia's mission to liberate the Slavs from Austrian and Ottoman domination by war and to form a Russian-dominated Slavic federation. In the same wake, N. Danilevsky wrote, 'The requisite political achievement of political independence has still another importance in the cultural as well as in all other spheres: the struggle against the German-Roman world (without which Slav independence is impossible) will help to eradicate the cancer of imitativeness and the servile attitude towards the West, which through unfavourable conditions has eaten its way into the Slav body and soul... But first, as a *sine qua non* condition of success, strong and powerful Russia has to face the difficult task of liberating her racial brothers; for this struggle she must steel them and herself in the spirit of independence and Pan-Slav consciousness...' (Danilevsky 1869).

Developed as a movement among intellectuals, scholars, and poets, Pan-Slavism rarely influenced practical politics. The Soviet government renounced it after the triumph of the Russian Revolution of 1917 promptly replacing it by the idea of 'proletarian internationalism'. The breakup of the USSR and the Soviet bloc resulted in the formation of fourteen new independent European countries based on nationality with ten of them being predominantly Slavic in language. Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus emerged from the European part of the former USSR, Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Yugoslavia divided into five Slavic countries – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. These new states are based on specific nationalities, but some scholars claim it would be inappropriate to label them nation states because each has its very own minority

problems (Mikesell 1983). Relations between these countries have gone through various stages from total denunciation of the past to ambitions to form new federations, e.g. between Russia and Ukraine. It seems that the initial hostility and suspicion between the former Warsaw Pact allies is beginning to wane and new pragmatic relations are being built. It takes time to overcome old stereotypes and negative emotions, to learn from history and develop a new type of relations.

The Slavic cultural community: problems and perspectives

Over the last decade, especially in Russia, the problems of the Slavic world have been the focus of numerous articles, books and projects based on the assumption that there exists a specific 'Slavic civilization'. For instance, in May 2000 a conference was held in St. Petersburg entitled 'The Slavic Civilization in the 21st Century'. V. Kalashnikov insists that east, west and south Slavs represent common civilization artificially divided along religious, political and military lines (Kalashnikov 2001). In fact, this idea, with insignificant variations, is to be seen in the works of many Russian scholars who ardently claim that Russia has always wanted to unite the fraternal Slavic peoples protecting them from numerous enemies of the Slavs. Such theories only strengthen my conviction that one of the major problems of today's Slavic movement is that its supporters quite often live in a strange 'virtual' world where reality and fantasy mix at will. The proletarian theory of 'rotting capitalism' transformed into the theory of 'exhaustion of creative potential of Western civilization'. As a result, it is claimed that it will not be possible to create a Central European alternative to American influence without the Slavs (Panarin 1999), because such an alternative must be pluralistic and based on at least three major traditions – Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox.

In my opinion, one of the main misconceptions, whether unconscious or not, of such theories is that they view the Slavic world as an independent reality, as a common civilization. In this respect I can only agree with A. Dugin that contemporary Slavs do not represent an independent reality and cannot be regarded as a single geopolitical category (Dugin 2001). The Slavs are divided along religious, political and cultural lines. Part of the Slavs belongs primarily to the European context (Slovenes, Croats, Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks) while the other part of them belongs to the Eurasian nomadic as well as Eastern Orthodox, i.e. Byzantino-Slavic world (Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Serbs, and Bulgarians). At the same time significant groups of the population of all these countries living in the so-called buffer or contact zones where Europe comes in contact with Eurasia. Vaclav Havel, the former President of the Czech Republic, even insisted on the necessity to strengthen the (positive, modern, intellectual) *Central European identity* of the peoples of Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovak Republic) as opposed to the (negative, backward, irrational or, at best, neutral) *Eastern European identity* of the peoples of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Russia etc.

The origin of the international debate about Central Europe and Central European identity was an article by Milan Kundera (Kundera 1984). According to him, Central Europe belonged to the West all along, and it was only the political developments following the Second World War that shifted it towards the East. As a result, Prague, Warsaw and Budapest made efforts to play up the specific cultural identity of Central Europe as distinct from Eastern Europe, especially the Soviet Union. Havel claimed that both "Central European identity" and "common historical experience" with Poland and Hungary could make a valuable contribution to the entire European and world cultures. "Macedonia definitely belongs to Europe," stressed in response the President of Macedonia Boris Trajkovski, answering a reporter's question about Macedonia's Central European identity.

There is no doubt that the Slavs as an indisputable ethnic and linguistic community share many common traits. I believe that there exists something that can be called a Slavic cultural community – *Slavjanstvo* – as **a unity of supra-ethnic mental structures**. However, I would be cautious to talk about the existence of a common 'Slavic civilization' as a geopolitical category because in contemporary world ethnic and linguistic ties are not a sufficient prerequisite for that. Endless referrals to common origin and related languages, not supported by realistic policies and economic incentives, can only result in nostalgic recollections and emotional declarations.

On the other hand, from the very dawn of human history, rivalry between brothers (in a wider sense) has been more than common. In fact, more often than not brothers fight and kill each other with more violence and more hatred than they would a stranger. Examples of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob etc. play a paradigmatic role being among the well-known ones. The story of the Israelites and the Midianites is maybe a bit less known but it also gives food for thought. Midian was a son of Abraham by his second wife, Keturah. So Israelites and Midianites were very closely related. Moses found sanctuary with Jethro, the priest of Midian, when he fled Pharaoh, and even married Zipporah, Jethro's daughter. When Jethro heard of what God had done to liberate the Hebrews, he went to meet Moses in the desert and congratulate him on such a wonderful liberation. Moses also took part in Midianite worship – the story in Exodus (18:12) is the evidence of a cultic comradeship between the Midianites and Israel. Apart from that, Jethro advised Moses on how to introduce greater discipline among his people laying the foundations of a future Jewish state. In spite of all this, because of the alliance of the Kenites with the Moabites in the days of Exodus, Moses ordered his people to handle the Midianites as enemies because of their idolatry. As a result, all Midian men, including their five kings, were killed, all their cities burned to the ground, all their women and children taken into captivity.

Similarly, Russia quelled Polish uprisings of 1830–31 and 1863–64; the Soviet Army suppressed the Prague Spring of 1968; Poland and the Czech Republic, just 12 days after joining NATO on March 12, 1999, supported the initiation of military campaign against former Yugoslavia; Bulgaria allowed NATO warplanes to use its

airspace for their bombing missions over Belgrade etc. These examples of 'fraternal relations' can only support the well-known *dictum* that in politics there are no friends or brothers but interests. From this point of view, 'Slavic solidarity' and 'Slavic idea' are a rather uncertain – and extremely insufficient – basis to rely on in international politics.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to emphasize that in spite of the obvious linguistic, cultural and religious differences there exists something that can be called a Slavic cultural community – *Slavjanstvo* – as a unity of supra-ethnic mental structures. The Slavic peoples are among the most numerous ethnic and linguistic body of peoples in Central and Eastern Europe – *And now do I stand here, As European, I can't be different, God's help to me! Amen!* – and share many common traits. Their future depends on many factors and, of course, on all of us, because even the most sincere and the most intimate feelings cannot be taken for granted and must be cultivated and cherished.

Thus, a meeting organized by Slovenian Culture Minister Andreja Rihter in December 2002 put forward an initiative to establish a forum of Slavic cultures, which would aim at protecting cultural identities and strengthening all forms of mutual cooperation between Slavic. The conference was attended by ministers (or their deputies) of Russia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Macedonia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of Srpska, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine participate in the project as well, although their ministers were not able to attend the meeting.

I recall an old anecdote of the famous *Radio Erevan* series. A listener calls in and asks, "Will there be World War III?" Radio Erevan replies, "There will be no World War III. However, there will be such a struggle for peace that no stone will be left unturned". I sincerely hope that there will be no WW III, no bloody struggle for peace or clashes of civilizations. We do not need that. What we really need is an ever-expanding dialogue of cultures, in which every voice of every culture will be heard and every single language will be preserved, including the languages and cultures of the Slavic peoples.

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INSTITUTUM STUDIORUM THRACICORUM

IN HONOREM ANNORUM LXX ALEXANDRI FOL

THRACIA XV
Serdicae, MMIII

MAIN TECHNOLOGICAL AND TYPOLOGICAL FEATURES OF CHIPPED STONE ASSEMBLAGES FROM NW TURKEY

Ivan Gatsov

The stone assemblages are collected or investigated from two regions - Nord-West Anatolia and European part of Turkey.

This area includes Eastern or Turkish Thrace – the lands that lie east of the Meric/Evros/river and a territory around the Sea of Marmara.

Until now the techno – typological studies have been focused on two main fields. The first one is directed to the epipaleolithic/mesolithic stone assemblages from the Turkish Black Sea dune sites – Agacli, Gumisdere, Domali. The latters are of particular interest for the investigations of the local Epilalaeolithic/mesolithic cultures in the area under study. (Özdoğan, Gatsov. 1994).

Simultaneously chipped stone assemblages from Eastern Thrace and Southern Marmara region have been processed. These are the collections from Hoca Çeşme, Ağağı Pınar, Ilıpınar, Fikir tepe, Pendik and Mentese

Black Sea Shore region

Epipalaeolithic/Mesolithic Transition. Techno – typological features of the chipped stone assemblages from Agacli, Gumisdere, Domali.

Regarding the technology the main feature can be considered to be the most common core type – a single platform with semi – rounded flaking surfaces for blades and bladelets.

To the group of retouched tools consists of end – scrapers on flakes, including specimens with microlith dimensions, backed pieces, perforators, retouched blades. Among the retouched tools end – scrapers usually with length up to 2cm prevail. Backed pieces – blades and flakes are significantly present as well.

European part of Turkey. Eastern or Turkish Thrace (Özdoğan, 1995; Özdoğan, 1998).

Techno – typological features of the Neolithic chipped stone Assemblages from Hoca Çeşme.

The assemblages which are in process of investigation are characterized by a relatively low level of technology and typological monotony. The main reason for