
THE OLD POTTER'S ALMANACK

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

This December issue of *The Old Potter's Almanack* presents three articles on archaeological ceramics, from Italian early Neolithic pottery, to Romanian Eneolithic cult objects of the Tisza-Vinča style, and the use of ceramics during iron brazing by medieval metalsmiths of northern Europe. The three articles focus respectively on the possible meanings of stylistic motifs, the interpretation of shapes, and clay selection for metallurgical applications.

Elena Natali offers an overview of the decorative patterns and styles of the impressed ware from the Neolithic site of Favella, in Calabria, southern Italy. The classical decorations obtained by fingertips, fingernails, tools and shells are described and analysed in detail using an experimental approach. The author identified types of 'instrument categories' and 'decorative types', and she rightly argued that this technological study could be applied to other contemporaneous sites, allowing a better understanding of the archaic Impressed Ware.

Cristian Eduard Ștefan presents a detailed account of Eneolithic ceramics from the multi-layered site of Șoimuș-la Avicola, in Hunedoara County, western Romania. The site attributed to the Turdaș culture, also yielded some possible cult objects. The author focuses on decorated prosomorphic lids, altars, and an anthropomorphic vessel, found in surface dwellings and storage pits. As Ștefan points out these specially shaped objects were probably not merely functional.

Anders Söderberg describes the functional role of ceramic shells during the brazing process of iron artefacts (bells, padlocks, weights), focussing on the functionally different workshops at Birka and Sigtuna, in Sweden. The author focuses on how padlock production was strictly embedded in the broader economic medieval world. Scientific analyses also show that the local clay outcrops used for metallurgical purposes were different to those exploited for pottery production.

To conclude, Silvia Amicone wrote a review on the inspiring workshop on "Tracing pottery making recipes in the Balkans, 6th-4th millennium BC", which took place in Belgrade in November 2014. The workshop is

a welcome platform for future collaborations between scholars working on Balkan prehistory.

Michela Spataro

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