



**BECAP 22**

Pots as media: Decoration, technology, and message  
transmission

Belgrade, May 12-13<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Book of abstracts**



1838



**BECAP – Belgrade Conference on Archaeological Pottery**

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Pots as media: Decoration, technology, and message  
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*Edited by*

Jasna Vuković and Vesna Bikić

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## **BECAP 22**

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## **Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

### **10.00 Keynote lecture**

Joanna Sofaer, University of Southampton, **Thinking through creativity in prehistoric pottery**

### **10.45-11.00 Coffee break**

## **IV Identities, networks, boundaries**

11.00 Márton Szilágyi, Pottery styles and identities in the second half of the 5th millennium BC in the Carpathian Basin

11.20 Jasna Vuković and Boban Tripković, Culture melting pot?: Mixed pottery traditions in the 5th millennium western Serbia

11.40 Esmeralda Agolli, Transmission through style: an attempt to understand the decoration of handmade pottery in Albania

12.00 Ivan Ninčić, Bassarabi Decorative Style as a Material Culture Trait of the Initial Stages of the Early Iron Age in the Western Parts of the Serbian Danube Region

12.20 Thomas Eriksson, Styles and tribes in decorated pottery c. 180-600 AD in Sweden

12.40 Vesna Bikić, Message on the pot: Sgraffito pottery decoration and group identities in the medieval Balkans

### **13.00-14.00 Lunch Break**

## **V Meaning and symbolism**

14.20 Ilya Palaguta, Ornament: Power, expression, technology. And where is meaning?

14.40 András Füzesi, Communicate through the feasting: long-term changes in the decoration of pedestal vessels in the Neolithic and Copper Age of the Great Hungarian Plain

15.00 Miloš Spasić Animals on pots: Ornaments curating social interactions among Late Neolithic Vinča culture communities

### **15.20-16.00 Coffee break**

16.00 Cesare Vita, Shapes and meanings. A preliminary study of the matt-painted pottery decorations and their role in the communication system of ancient communities in Southern Italy (half of the 7th - half of the 5th century BC)

16.20 Miroslav Vujović, Roman Chimney pot from Golubac (Cuppae)

16.40 Ivan Bugarski, Stick figures on early medieval pottery vessels

### **17.00 General discussion**

# ABSTRACTS



## **Stick figures on early medieval pottery vessels**

**Ivan Bugarski**

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The presentation will focus on simple (although attractive) incisions on early medieval pottery, namely, the stick figures which decorated some vessels - mostly but not exclusively from the Avar milieu. Building on a small corpus assembled as early as 1972 by Jovan Kovačević, this overview will mention several more finds, including those made from antler and bone. However, the main task will be to discuss the meaning of those signs. While one cannot entirely dismiss the possibility that these were runes or tamgas, I see no reason to go beyond the obvious – they could well have been somehow connected with children, who indeed often draw stick figures of family members. These figures were easy to incise on wet clay, and it is important to note that the drawings were made on handmade pots and not on those wheel-thrown, which were apparently the products of specialised workshops and presumably of greater value. We do not know whether these pots had been originally made for funerary purposes or put in graves after their lifetime use. Most of them came from the burials of the adults, but the Sarkel vessel warns us not to define these incised pots as exclusively funeral. In my opinion, the most plausible explanation for their occurrence in the graves could lie in the family status of the deceased. The placement of these specific grave-gifts can be seen as a touching gesture from the loved ones, by which the buried were sent to the afterlife with a sentimental token of their or their offsprings' childhood.