Vessels for Toasting? The "Sauceboats" of the Coțofeni and Baden Cultures and their Balkan-Aegean Connections,

Abstract:

One type of the more "renowned" Balkan-Aegean objects is the so-called "sauceboat". Current studies on this subject have produced an incomplete repertoire or have only focused on certain aspects of this problematic topic. However, this type of ceramic vessel raises a series of issues that have been approached in the present study, in which a number of unique discoveries have been taken into consideration - a series of items that are absolutely fundamental in this endeavour. This study revolves around the vessels discovered in the Baden and Coţofeni regions, discussing their history, context, typology and chronology. In order to understand their functionality, I considered them within in the Carpathian-Balkan-Aegean context, where the presence of such items has already been established. Sauceboat-type vessels can be found across a large geographical area, and the majority of specialists consider the centre of their propagation to be the Aegean world, where such vessels, in varying forms typical of their place of origin, are known from the Early Helladic II, the Early Cycladic culture and the Early Minoic II. The outskirts of this area include Troy I in the east and the Carpathian Basin in the north. Although the area under scrutiny is on the outlines of the "civilised" Aegean-Anatolian world, Central European archaeological discoveries play a key role in the study of the evolution of the sauceboats along a north-south axis. The analysis of these discoveries showed that some items from the Carpathian Basin region were older than those from the Aegean-Anatolian world, beginning with the Cernavodă III/Coţofeni I horizon. Regarding their functionality, we do not yet have any undisputable evidence of what the contents of the so-called sauceboats were. They undoubtedly contained liquids which varied depending on the period, owner and context. Alcohol consumption, which is considered to be directly connected to the sauceboats of the Aegean-Anatolian world, need not have been a practice in the Carpathian-Balkan communities

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