

CLAY IN THE AGE OF BRONZE

Studies of creativity frequently focus on the modern era, yet creativity has always been part of human history. *Clay in the Age of Bronze: Essays in the Archaeology of Prehistoric Creativity* explores how creativity was expressed through the medium of clay in the Bronze Age in the Carpathian Basin. Although metal is one of the defining characteristics of Bronze Age Europe, in the Carpathian Basin clay was the dominant material in many areas of life. Here the daily experience of people was, therefore, much more likely to be related to clay than to bronze. Through eight thematic essays, this book considers a series of different facets of creativity. Each essay combines a broad range of theoretical insights with a specific case study of ceramic forms, sites or individual objects. This innovative volume is the first to focus on creativity in the Bronze Age and offers new insights into the rich and complex archaeology of the Carpathian Basin.

Joanna Sofaer is a Professor in Archaeology at the University of Southampton. She has published widely on the European Bronze Age and archaeological theory. She is the author of *The Body as Material Culture* (2006), editor of *Children and Material Culture* (2000) and *Material Identities* (2007), and co-editor of *Biographies and Space* (2008).

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Essays in the Archaeology of Prehistoric Creativity

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For GJAS

*A creative kid who wanted this book to be about pirates (or ninja). Maybe
next time . . .*

We know the past by pieces
by sherds
broken pieces of pottery found
beneath the earth's crust
having once been a part, expressing totality.

Now still a part more and less so
speaking history to us
being form in fragment.

What can we name it . . .
when a way of life still exists
and itself is a fragment
being part of the past and
projecting tenaciously into our time?

Patterns of existence . . . what for?
this life-way discovered and reported is not a
hard-fact fragment
it is a real existence
flowing
continuously in today from yesterday
making tomorrow.

In our totality of today we can see it only
as a fragment and learn some truth
in its form. Paradoxically in looking
we atrophy it making it hard and fast.

But this must be transcended for today was
yesterday and our living
will see tomorrow.

Potters are water-carriers of history's truths.
Fragments, Charles Counts (1971)

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For more than a decade I have had the privilege of working in Hungary at the Bronze Age tell settlement of Százhalombatta. I had become fascinated by the particular complexity and diversity of Bronze Age ceramics in the Carpathian Basin. I wanted to explore not only the nature of this diversity, but also the human practices and motivations that lay behind it. The HERA-funded project Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe (CinBA), which I led from 2010 to 2013 (grant number 09-HERA-JRP-CI-FP-020) (www.cinba.net), offered an opportunity to understand these in new ways through the lens of creativity. The project brought together colleagues from the Universities of Southampton, Cambridge and Trondheim, the National Museum of Denmark, the Natural History Museum in Vienna, the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, the Crafts Council and Sagnlandet, Lejre. It aimed to explore the fundamental nature of creativity in a critical period of human history by looking at developments in crafts that we take for granted today: pottery, textiles and metalwork. This volume is the fruit of that project.

Addressing creativity in the archaeological record has been both challenging and enjoyable. The intellectual, methodological and interpretive provocations that it offers have gone far beyond what I had anticipated. As a result it has been incredibly rich and stimulating, and has sparked many new ideas and collaborations. Although CinBA is now at an end, my own creative journey is just beginning.

It has been a joy and a privilege to work with all the colleagues involved in CinBA. I greatly value our discussions and friendship. This book could not have been written without the generosity of many archaeologists in the countries of the Carpathian Basin who kindly showed me material, answered queries and provided me with literature. I would like to thank Jacqueline Balen, Alice Choyke, Monica Constantin, Gabriel

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