Note on Vădastra excised pots

Alexandru DRAGOMAN∗

Abstract: Taking for an example a defining ceramic category for the so-called "Vădastra culture" (southern Romania and north-west Bulgaria; approx. 5200-4900 CAL BC), namely the excised pots, in this note I tried to emphasize the alterity of the people in the past. The present note is born out of my dissatisfaction with the cultural-historical archaeology dominant in Romania. In cultural-historical approach the excised pots are reduced to the status of "guide fossils" (used for building historical narratives), strictly functional objects, "works of art" and/or propaganda objects. Alternatively, I suggested that the Vădastra excised pots, on one hand, and the human body, on the other, are metaphorically connected, that these vessels might have been perceived in the Neolithic as persons mediating between the world of the living and the world of the dead (ancestors), having transformative powers.

Keywords: Vădastra tradition, excised pots, anthropomorphic containers, figurines, red ochre, white paste, human bones, metaphors.

∗ "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, 11 Henri Coandă street, sector 1, 010667, Bucharest, Romania; al_dragoman@yahoo.com

Studii de Preistorie 6, 2009, p. 95-112.