

WHAT INSPIRED THE VEKERZUG POTTERY?

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What inspired the Vekerzug pottery?

The note discusses the question of models of the Vekerzug wheel-made pottery known from the northwestern Black Sea region and the eastern Balkans, both wheel and hand-made. The explanation of this phenomenon may be found in transmission of technique and shapes of the various Aegean “Aiolian” grey wares and the coarse ware produced in Greece and northwestern Anatolia. Such models could not be found in the fine wares. The Vekerzug pottery shapes and their eastern inspirations were earlier and more sophisticated than the Braubach group in the west, but on a more general level both of them were, similarly as metal objects, part of the more general koine connecting the continental and Mediterranean cultures of the Early Iron Age.

In my book on the Early Iron Age relations (Bouzek 1997, 194–200, 232–244) I was able to follow relations between the Hallstatt culture and the East in realm of bronze and iron objects only. However, with the progress in the field in general, looking more closely it was possible to identify such relations even in the field of pottery. These include for example the new study of Hallstatt period in Eastern Slovakia (Miroššayová 2017), and other papers published in a splendid *Archaeolingua* Series volume edited by E. Miroššayová, Ch. Pare and S. Stegmann-Rajtár (2017), including studies on the western part of the Carpathian Basin (Metzner-Nebelsick 2017; Stegmann-Rajtár 2017), together with progress in the field of North Aegean and East Balkan grey and related wares (esp. Avram et al. 2009), North-West Anatolian grey wares (Gebauer 1993; Chabot Aslan 2009) and a comparison with the situation of the so-called Braubach ware in the west (Bouzek et al. 2017), which came later to Bohemia than the Vekerzug pottery. All these enable now to bring renewed attention to questions suggested previously esp. by P. Alexandrescu (2000) and P. Romsauer (1991). There was already some knowledge of the Mediterranean civilisation in the temperate climatic zone of Europe, and this note intends to bring attention to this field of study, also as memory of the nice days which I spent on several occasions in the friendly city of Košice.

Interestingly, the basic links showing some inspiration and relation between the first wheel-made pottery in the northeastern and northern Balkans can be seen not in the fine tableware, but in the medium or coarse ware shapes, which were less sophisticated and nearer to the technique used generally by the northern potters. There is the family of the grey wares (Alexandrescu 1978; and esp. Alexandrescu 2000, 138–173), concentrating in particular in the northwestern corner of the Black Sea region, an area with early relations with the Aegean (Bouzek 1990, 13–17; 2011; 2013; Kopylov 2009; Sîrbu/Niculifă/Vanciugov 2005; Vančugov 2001). Indirectly important are in this respect also results of chemical analyses conducted mainly on the imported pottery at Histria (Coja/Dupont 1979; Cook/Dupont 1998; Dupont 1983; 2001; Dupont/Baralis 2014). Another link was likely across western Bulgaria (Božkova 2002; 2005; 2015; Catling 1998; later pottery Bouzek 2002; 2003) and along the Black Sea coast in general (Avram et al. 2009; Bayne 2000; Bouzek/Domaradzka 2009; Domaradzki 2002; from Apollonia Božkova/Nikov 2004/2006; Nikov 2012).

Then there is the cruder variety from Transylvania, which is often hand-made (Crișan 1969; Moscalu 1983), with the pottery of the Vekerzug culture usually of finer character (Miroššayová 2017; Romsauer 1991), but some specific shapes of kitchen ware show also reflections of plain wares from Greek cities in the northern Aegean and even in Classical and Hellenistic Greece (Blondé 2007; Rotroff 2006; Sparkes/Talcot 1970). Some of the latter were also popular for their specific contents, but we do not have enough results of chemical analyses in this respect. The few we do have until now, seem to show that the diet in all

comparable areas was similar to the traditional diet within these areas until modern times. Though with local specifics and differences, Hallstatt Europe had some general phenomena reflecting their functional and formal counterparts in the Aegean and Black Sea, including some kind of general knowledge about even the more distant neighbours.



Fig. 1. Fragmentary Vekerzug amphora from Minice (photo courtesy V. Čisťáková).

the koine of Early Iron Age was expressed not only in the field of metal objects, but in that of pottery as well. In the Vekerzug pottery it preceded the rise of the so-called Braubach ware, whose shapes were less sophisticated.

The previous papers by the jubilee on Urnfield roots of the Hallstatt culture in eastern Slovakia (Miroššayová 1998) suggest a hope that such area of study might find an attraction in the field of her interest. In Bohemia the Vekerzug ware is well represented at Minice (Fig. 1), a hillfort in Central Bohemia, with interesting stone structures at the acropolis and with presence of other exotic finds such as worked pieces of coral (Trefný/Slabina 2015, 56–59, fig. 8; 9: 8).

The existing puzzle of the previous discussion may best be explained in the frame of more detailed study of the grey ware in its varieties, known in the Aegean as the Aeolian ware and some facies of the coarse or kitchen wares. The links between them and transfer of technique and shape was easier than in the field of more sophisticated glazed wares; to some extent

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Co inspirovalo vekerzugskou keramikou?

J a n B o u z e k

Souhrn

Příspěvek je věnován problému předloh vekerzugské keramiky točené na kruhu známých z okruhu šedých keramik severozápadního Černomoří a východního Balkánu, vyráběných na kruhu i v ruce. Vysvětlení tohoto jevu lze najít v inspiraci šedou keramikou v Egeidě zvanou aiólskou a v tzv. kuchyňském zboží 9.–7. století před n. l. v řeckých poleis. Jejich technika výroby a tvary bylo daleko snadněji přebíratelné než sofistikovaná technika firnisových a malovaných váz. Východní vlivy ve vekerzugské keramice byly ranější a vyspělejších tvarů než západnější okruh tzv. braubašského zboží, ale v obecnějším smyslu je šíření hrnčířského kruhu a vyspělejších tvarů, podobně jako tomu bylo i u kovových výrobků, součástí obecné koiné rané doby železné společné mírnému pásu evropskému spolu s vyspělejším Středomořím.

Obr. 1. Fragment vekerzugské amfory z Minic (foto V. Čistáková).

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