

NEOLITHIC MINIATURE CERAMIC VESSELS – PRODUCTION OF CHILDREN?

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Miniature ceramic shapes and especially miniature poorly made vessels are known from many archeological cultures and periods. Obviously, the interpretation of these practically useless pots remains unresolved. It was proposed that these vessels were used for ritual purposes, as offering at loam pits, potter's trial clay samples, prehistoric "pyrometers", or also as practice pieces by children learning to become potters or made by children as toys. We studied 7 of Neolithic miniatures from Těšetice-Kyjovice Site (approx. 5 kyr B.P.), assigned to the so called Moravian Painted Ware Culture (MPP), part of the Lengyel Culture Sphere. On various spots of the surface of these miniatures we observed pits due to impressed fingerballs. Additionally, sickle-like nicks corresponding to fingernail impressions, mostly located inside the vessel's concavity, were encountered. Aside the nailprints, the concavities were accompanied by imprints of epidermal ridges. We compared the imprints with imprints from other Neolithic ceramics and also with our reference sample. As a result of mutually independent evidences (breadth of epidermal ridges, size of fingerball concavities, size of nail imprints) it may be stated that children were directly involved in the process of creation, whatever function of the miniature vessels may have been.