



Europa 2024 Postmediaevalis

Patterns and Inspirations

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Preface

EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS organised its fourth conference in 2024, this time on the subject of 'Patterns and Inspirations'. Scholars from 12 European countries working in the field of modern archaeology met in the heart of Warsaw, in spaces provided by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and in cooperation with the Faculty of Archaeology of Warsaw University.

From the very beginning, EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS has focused on the issue of Early Modern and Modern ceramic production, and this year's theme – Patterns and Inspirations – perfectly spotlighted the possibilities offered by the contextualisation of the study of ceramics. Each country perceives patterns and symbols in connection with its historical traditions and thus in somewhat different contexts, which can then serve as an inspiration for others and reveal possibilities that are not obvious at first glance. The visit to the Polish capital was another piece of this puzzle. The upshot was a friendly meeting of researchers who – despite the generational and language gap (English was not the mother tongue of any of the participants) – sought and found common ground. The resulting creative atmosphere resonated with conference attendees for a long time afterwards, and specific collaboration and exchanges were agreed before the end of the event. EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS 2026 will be hosted by the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar, Croatia.

A successful conference is both a cause for celebration and a challenge for the future, which is why specific and constructive feedback is essential for further meaningful operations.

As such, this foreword is partly a response to the article (appeal) by our Portuguese colleagues (CASIMIRO/SANTOS, in this volume). It has never been the ambition of EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS to organise a grand conference that fully addresses the wide-ranging entirety of post-medieval archaeology. From the very beginning, we have focussed on the topic of ceramic production in the broadest sense of the word, though without rejecting any papers

that only marginally touch on the specified subject. Based on our experience to date, we are convinced that past and present participants are very well aware of the limits of the testimonial possibilities of ceramics. The primary objective was to create a common platform that would make it possible to share and exchange knowledge about the development of Early Modern and Modern ceramic production. Establishing a specific topic for each conference sets a point of view or further elaborates a specific issue, making it possible to follow the given subject on a nearly European-wide scale. In a relatively small space, it is thus possible to see common features or differences across the entire European continent. And yet, we believe that it is essential to have at least a small connection to the given topic, because only in this way is it possible to create a coherent thematic meeting and subsequently a thematically aligned publication released within one year of the conference.

Looking back, it's perhaps not too bold to conclude that the conference has so far fulfilled the intention that engendered its creation. The current development of the membership base confirms interest in the conference and the fact that the topic has not yet been exhausted. The conference continues to attract a group of researchers and is expanding, especially when the venue changes, which makes it possible to not only learn about the history and beauty of the specific place, but also local research traditions. As the statistics show, the venue always draws a larger number of domestic researchers to the conference.

The study of ceramic production is an integral part of a much broader spectrum of questions that provide answers and help shed light on the way of life in contexts. Over time, the targeted and shared study of ceramic production, even if only at the level of individual details, can help in piecing together the larger story. Collaboration across Europe has the potential to connect researchers. It is still true that ceramics are the most common archaeological finds, artefacts which to a large extent reflect the life of the people in the given period. Defining appropriate topics, asking questions, and, above all, subsequent inter-



pretations contribute to an understanding of everyday life. It is not necessary to limit the scope of study to chronology, typology and morphology; through the study of ceramics, much more complex questions can be addressed regarding waste management, local or long-distance trade, differences between the distribution of consumer goods in inland and coastal areas, packaging materials and much more. There are many questions and related topics, and it should be noted that they reflect not only the development of the field itself, but also the development of contemporary society. Therefore, what is our response to the aforementioned challenge?

The EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS conference will stagnate only if we allow it to do so, i.e. if we stop trying to find new topics—if the field of ceramics becomes the target of knowledge and not a vehicle for even broader understanding. Hopefully, in collaboration with all of you who work closely with this topic, we will succeed so that our meetings will continue to bring us joy and be a source of inspiration and collegial friendship for all of us.

We believe our fourth conference was a success and hope that its quality is also reflected in this anthology. We offer pleasant reading and inspiration for your research activities.





Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank the reviewers who, on a voluntary and unpaid basis, helped the authors to improve the final texts with their comments and invaluable advice.

Special thanks go to the co-organizers of the conference and, at the same time, co-editors of the anthology, Magdalena Bis, Maciej Trzeciecki and Michał Starski, as well as to the institutions they work for. These are the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw. The conference was financed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Poland, through the Foundation of Friends of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The Czech Academy of Sciences has financially supported EUROPA POSTMEDIAEVALIS since 2018 as part of the *Strategy AV 21* project, *Anatomy of a European Society*. Furthermore, we must not forget our home institutions (the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague and the Centre for Processing, Documentation and Recording of Archaeological Finds). Without their support the preparation of the conference and the publication of the proceedings would not have been possible.



