

## **Chalcolithic Vessels with an Interior Handle - Arguments in Favour of an Hypothesis**

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This paper is aimed at studying three vessels from three Chalcolithic sites in Bulgaria that have a handle or handles on the inside of the vessel, e.g., on the bottom. While looking for parallels, I came upon a group of vessels from Egypt, Palestine and Greece, known as “spinning-bowls”.

One of the vessels that was discovered at the site of Djakovo, Kystendil region (Fig. 3) is dated to the very beginning of the Late Chalcolithic. The unusual combination of elements - proportions, six vertical handles on the exterior and an interior handle on the bottom - begs the question about its function as a spinning-bowl. It is very likely that the pot was tied from the handles and suspended. This design would make it possible to counter the tension of the thread pulling out. The weight of the vessel would create an opposite force, and the balance of the two forces would enable a process of spinning (Fig. 4).

The vessel from Hotnitsa, Veliko Tarnovo region, comes from the first building level of the tell settlement and is dated to the end of the Late

Chalcolithic (Fig. 5).

The vessel from Slatino comes from the third building level of the site situated in the Chardako locality and is dated to the beginning of the Early Chalcolithic (Fig. 6).

These vessels although different in shape and size have a common feature - a handle on the inside. This element gives reason to compare them with the spinning-bowls from later periods. The three vessels are dated to different periods of the Chalcolithic but within the framework of the 5th millennium BC, while the vessels from Egypt, Greece and Palestine are of a much later date. If we accept the three vessels as spinning-bowls, we could claim that the idea for their use emerged and developed in the Balkans, a territory where they had been used during most of the 5th millennium BC. Later they are found in Bronze age layers in Greece, Crete, Egypt and Palestine where they were developed, improved and adapted for various kinds of fibers and spinning techniques.