CERAMIC ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Ethnoarchaeology:

Use of living traditions to shed light on archaeological evidence.
Add a behavioural dimension to archaeological interpretation

How to use ethnoarchaeology:

Find patterns of behaviour which can be correlated with material remains

e.g. distinguish between potters/centres by fabric or forming techniques;
Identification of production locations
Three main traditions are usually defined according to the technology used to form vessels:

- Non-wheel (with and without moulds)
- Hand-wheel
- Foot-wheel
POTTERY-MAKING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

This system provides a useful starting point for discussion, but is otherwise of dubious validity.

e.g. Malesici (foot-wheel used to make coarse pottery)

& Visnjica (hand-wheel used to make fine pottery)

and tends to suggest a kind of evolutionary hierarchy.

Other divisions could be based on techniques of forming, types of inclusions, range of products, etc.
POTTERY-MAKING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS
POTTERY-MAKING IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Pattern -
Rural hand-wheel pottery predominant with mainly-urban foot-wheel potters in the north.

Questions:
Absence of potters from large areas?
All foot-wheel potters post-1878?
‘HAND-WHEEL’ POTTERY-MAKING IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Distribution of potters using the hand-wheel in the western Balkans since c1900
‘HAND-WHEEL’ POTTERY-MAKING IN BiH

Most locations known from studies in the 1950s (Kalmeta & Popovic)
Little work since then (except TV reports on Malesici)
About 20 groups, widely distributed.
Others to be discovered (e.g. ‘Loncari’ place-names)

Further afield: found elsewhere in the Balkans and in Belorus, N Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, etc
‘HAND-WHEEL’ POTTERY-MAKING IN BiH

Vrkasic, Kralji, Zegar (Bihac)
Brezova Kosa, Skokovi (Cazin)
Demisevci, D Kamengrad, Husimovci, Podbrezje, Trnovo, Tomina…. (Sansi Most)
D & G Rujani (Livno)
Krasinac (Glamoc)
Mrkonjic Grad
Dvorani, Masenac, Milosevici, Misin Han, Tomisici, Zabari… (Ivanjska)
Glavica (Bugojno)
D Dobrkovici, D Gradac, Gostusa - Siroki Brijeg
Bistrica, Batusa, Vrse, Zdrimce (G Vakuf)
Pulac, Bijelobuce (Travnik)
Baljivac (Popovo Polje)
Ularice, Omanjska, Sivsa (Doboj)
Visnjica, Gromiljak (Kiseljak)
Lijeseva (Visoko)
Malesici, Stjepan Polje (Gracanica)
Dobrinja (Modrica)
Korenita (Drina valley)
Drinjsko (Visegrad, Drina valley)
Prebidoli, Mokronozi (P riboj)
‘HAND-WHEEL’ POTTERY-MAKING IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

- Red dots: Potters presently or recently active (c1970-present) in Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Yellow dots: Potters presently or recently active in Croatia and Serbia
HAND-WHEEL POTTERY

Defined by use of the hand-wheel

BUT great variety in the form of wheels and in the techniques used to prepare clay, form pots and fire them
RAW MATERIALS PREPERATION

CLAY
Glina/zemlja/ilovaca
Choice depends on availability and products
Prepared by drying, crushing & soaking

Jure Knezevic, Potravlje
RAW MATERIALS PREPERATION

ADDITIONS

Calcite (vrsta) and/or sand

Prepared by crushing, grinding and/or sieving

Choice depends on availability, vessel use, firing technology.

Implications for archaeology?
VESSEL FORMING

WHEELS
Composite & non-composite
High momentum & Low momentum
Set in bases of stone, wooden boards, branches, etc

METHODS
Forming the base
Building the walls – coiling-scraping and/or lifting
Shaping – by hand & wooden tools
Removing by cutting around the base
VESSEL FORMING

Demisevci

Ivanjska
VESSEL FORMING

Pulac
VESSEL FORMING

Krasinac

Ularica
VESSEL FORMING

Maria Medic, Gric

Meho Begovic, Visnjica

Technique of forming not fully determined by size or type of wheel
Some potters use different techniques according to size/shape of pot
SECONDARY FORMING AND DRYING

Ularica
FIRING

1. Open firing
FIRING

2. Enclosed open firing (e.g. Ularica)
3. Oven firing (e.g. Brezova Kosa, Krasinac)
4. *Kiln Firing*

*Visnjica*
FIRING

*Kiln Firing at Visnjica*
Kiln Firing at Visnjica & Lijeseva
THE PRODUCTS

Ularica

Malesici

Pulac
THE PRODUCTS

Visnjica
SALE

Malesici

Ularica
VESSEL USE

Cooking & Baking
Food preparation
Storage
Pourers
Display.....etc
FOOT-WHEEL POTTERS
PERSPECTIVES

1. POTTERY-MAKING in BiH

Continuity at Malesici (& Gracanica), Ularica and Lijeseva


Problems – lack of ambition, Lijeseva/Ularica poor quality,

Malesici/Gracanica confusion

2. ETHNOARCHAEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITY

Chart locations/identities of foot-wheel potters

Interviews with consumers

Excavation/sampling

Experiment
Example 1: Firing experiments
Question: Why add calcite; what is the effect of particle size, why quenching?
Example 1: Archaeological and ethnographic study of pottery-making and trade in the Bihacka Krajina

Evidence – pottery-making locations and pottery from excavation
What we would like to know – where does the archaeological pottery come from
How to find out – Define differences in fabric at source; test against archaeological pottery