

# PEKVA

large hand-wheeled pottery lid for  
covering bread during baking

Potter's craft (potter's of a Hand wheel)



- Potter's craft (pottery) is the working, modelling and making of various useful items of pottery soil (loncaruše, clay). The main product of this craft is a pot, and the whole craft was named after it.
- About importance of studying folk pottery in our country Peter Z. Petrovic said" ItIt deserves our attention, not only because of its rapid decreasing, but also because of its primitive techniques and usage.Knowledge of our old folk pottery, its shapes, tools, methods and usage, it will be of considerable help to study of Slavic and our old medieval pottery".
- The collection of potter's craft at the Ethnological department of the Museum of Republic of Srpska has 119 three-dimensional items. The collection consists of hand-wheel, knives and šaraljke (tools for decoration of pekva - tools, three of the process of making a pot, and pekva and dagara (Bosnian dish) and also finished products - pots of different size for storage and preparation of food (various dishes, pots with and without cover, petnjaci [oven pots], bardaci [cups], rukatke [brandy drinking glasses], dagare, pekve and so on).

- The largest number of these items was collected on field research conducted in the territory of Bosanska Krajina from 1947 to 1951.



- Potter's craft includes several processing techniques of pottery soil, and most important are: hand-processing, processing on a hand wheel, a foot-wheel processing and processing in dies.
- This craft has developed in places where the pottery soil was in sufficient quantity and good quality. Some of the centers of this craft in the Republic of Srpska were: Ivanjska, Dvorani, Milosevici and Zabari near Banja Luka and Mrkonjic Grad.
- For development of a potter's craft in these places we don't have much information, but in some documents is mentioned 1829, although it is considered that the craft is much older.
- In these places, the pottery craft was considered as a "last job" because the poorest residents, who had little barren land which they were cultivated in the most primitive way, were engaged in that craft.
- We still have to note that in these places women have never dealt with the craft, except, when they were assisted in the preparation of soil.

# PREPARATION

- As fresh potter's soil isn't suitable for working, it must first be prepared. Potter's soil is taken from two to three meters deep pits, after the extraction it must be put to dry and after drying the soil is mashed to the size of a walnut. During the process of mashing, stones and other impurities are cleaned out of the soil. Dried and triturated soil is placed in the trough, which is hollowed out of a single piece of wood, and then it is poured with water "extinguish". After a day or two, in the trough is added "vrsta" (dust which is obtained from calcite stone "zivac"). Then, this mass is mixed - stomping, with the heel of one leg while the other leg is still out of troughs, and during the mixing of the mixture is again cleaned various additives. Mixing the soil runs up to several hours. After mixing, the soil is ready for molding and shaping.

# TOOLS

- Besides four existing techniques in the processing and modeling of pottery soil, in these areas it was only worked on the hand wheel. The technique of the hand wheel is typical for Dinaric area, which also includes the Republic of Srpska too.
- Hand pottery wheel is made of wood (usually is used oak because of its strength) and consists of three parts: board, wedge or spike and wheel.

- Board is the wheel slot, at one end is thickened so that the fixed wedge could stand firmly.



- Wedge connects the board and the wheel and it is used for rotation the wheel on it.





- The wheel is average height of 16 centimeters, while its diameter is approximately 25 centimeters. The most important requirements the wheel must meet are: upper surface constantly rotates in one level, so that friction be as low as possible in order to achieve faster and longer rotations and that the wheel be lighter. According to the name of this part, the whole device got its name - the pottery wheel.





- Besides of hand pottery wheel, in making of pottery was used a knife, a curved knife, šaraljka and skin.
- A knife was used for cutting and scraping of pottery. The knife is made of wood, pointed top with two sharp edges; average length of the blade is 20 centimeters.



- For smoothing and polishing of products in the process of production is used a curved knife. For decorating, it is used šaraljka, tablet that is at one end pointed and at the other end is wider and flat, with few shallow teeth.



- For polishing of pottery products, in all phases is used skin, a piece of tanned calf leather.



# PRODUCTS

- Although tools for the pottery craft were very few and primitive, the potters were producing a wide range of products. The most important products of this craft are pots, made in different sizes from 1 up to 200 liters, and they were used for cooking food and storing food. The smallest pots were called ruje or rujice, while the slightly larger pots with the ring were called obrucasi or okrugljasi. These pots were used for cooking. The largest pots by dimension and volume were called jars and they were only used for storing drinks. Dish for holding cooked milk and cream collecting is called dagara, and it was used for eating. For baking was used pekva. Besides these products, were made kavenjaci (for coffee), petnjaci (oven pots), pots, pans, jugs, cups, bardaci (cups), mangala (barbecue), rukatke etc.



# PROCESS OF MAKING PEKVA

Besides pots very important product of the potter's craft pekva (soil sac - large hand-wheeled pottery lid for covering bread during baking). To the mid 20th century, almost every rural household had this product. And how is the process of making pots already shown in the literature, this time we will demonstrate the process of making pekva. The process of making pekve carried out in several phases.





1. Preparing for a pottery wheel. Fine triturated quartz ( $\text{SiO}_2$ ) sprinkles on pottery wheel so the soil wouldn't adhere.



2. The soil is put on the prepared pottery wheel and then it is begun with the creation of pekva, bottom is made. With left hand we turn the wheel and with right we are making the bottom.



3. Then, valjusak (svaljak) is made for further development of pekva



4. Building pekva –pekva's walls are starting to be made of valjusak.



5. Reconstruction of pekva - height and thickness of the walls of pekva are different, and with the help of wet skin is performed the alignment of the wall height and thickness. The skin is tightly held in right hand while the left hand is turning wheel.



6. Polishing of pekva - the inner part of the pekva is polished by a curved wooden knife.



7. Processing of pekva - wooden knife, at this stage pekva begins to take its shape.



8. Alignment of edges of pekva with wet cloth, at this stage pekva get the final look.





9. Making of “pasovi” (rings) on pekva. The location where ring is placed must first be scratched with knife.



10. Decoration of pekva - with curved wooden knife and šaraljka. Patterns on the pottery from mentioned places are very modest. Lines are usually straight or wavy and can be either single, double or triple, depending on how many teeth has “šaraljka”.



11. Punching holes for "kvak" (handle) - through four holes on the top pekva, a wire is entwined, which is used as a handle for lifting pekva and it is called "kvak".



12. Baking in a kiln.

13. After removing from a kiln, pekva is annealed with barley flour mixed with water.



The process of making pekva we took from the photo documentation of the Museum of Republic of Srpska, where it kept recorded photos of this process. Those photos were made by the curator Salih Rajkumar on field research, conducted in the village Ćoralići near Velika Kladuša, 1952, at the master Ahmed Ćoralić. Besides process of making pekva, in the documentation are kept photos of the process of making pots, took in the same survey.

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