

Research on Bronze Age Pottery Traditions – Conceptual Approach

Andreja Kudelić (1), Natali Neral (1), Ana Maričić (2), Dinko Tresić Pavičić (3), Mia Marijan

(1) Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb CRO

(2) Department of Mineralogy, Petrology and Mineral Resources, Faculty
of Mining-Geology-Petroleum Engineering, University of Zagreb

(3) Kaducej d.o.o.



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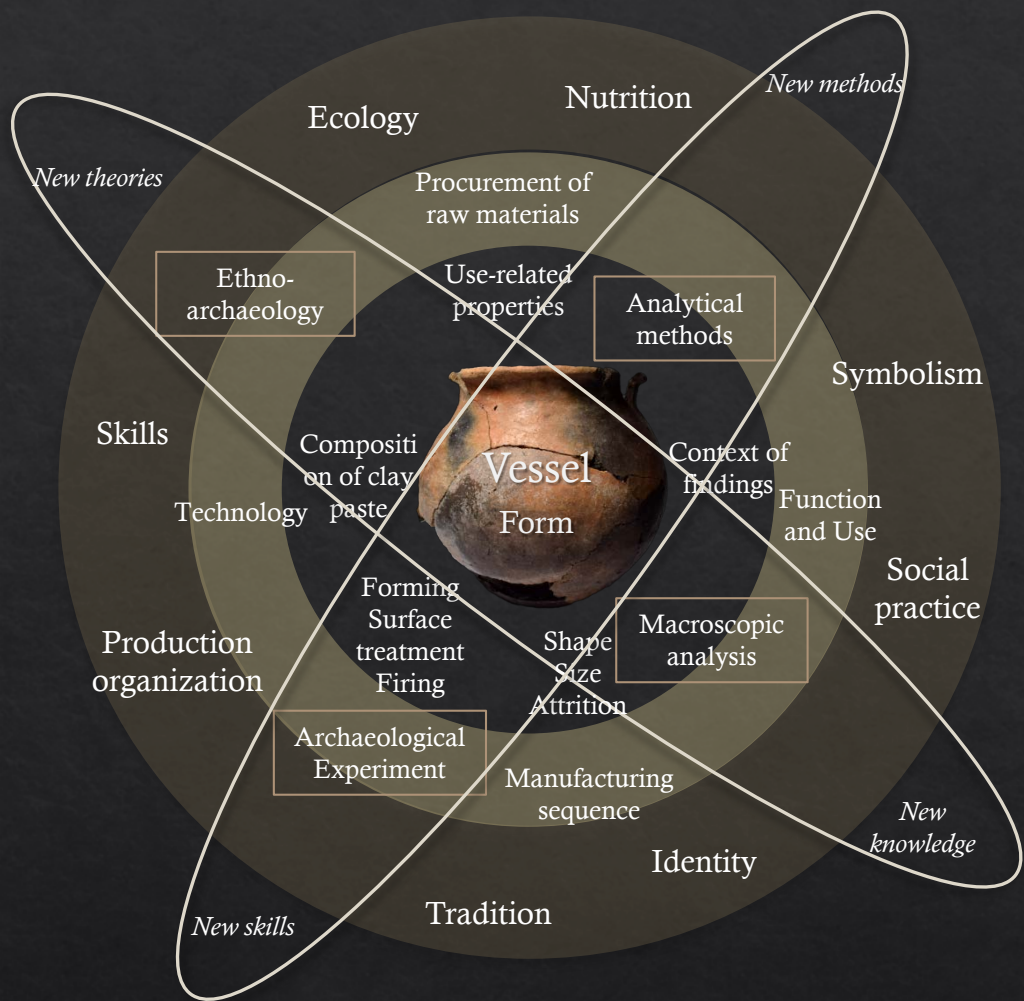


Technological features and cultural
practices in prehistoric pottery
traditions in Croatia
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Research group
Andreja Kudelić Ana Maričić, Dinko Tresić
Pavičić, Mia Marijan, Natali Neral

<http://prepot.iarh.hr/index.php/en/>



- raw material choice and the composition of the clay pastes
- identify a manufacturing sequence
- establish what kind of pottery was made
- how pottery was used and distributed
- formation of a reference collection of archaeological and geological samples

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2400 BC

Early Bronze Age

Middle Bronze Age

Late Bronze Age

80



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Anđa Petrović^{1,2}, Cristina Lemorini¹ & Stella Nunziante-Cesaro³

¹ Sapienza University of Rome, Laboratory of Technological and Functional Analyses of Prehistoric Artefacts, Rome, Italy

² Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia

³ SMATCH Italia (Scientific Methodologies Applied to Cultural Heritage), Rome, Italy

Reference collection as key element of use-wear and residue analysis of chipped stone assemblages: study of Iron Gates region (Serbia)

The experimental procedure has been one of the fundamental methods in the use-wear and residue studies of the chipped stone assemblages for decades. This type of approach is considered to have an important role in the cognitive development of the functional analysis, more specifically in the educational component. The paper aims to examine the impact experiments have in the case of addressing specific research questions and hypotheses.

The closed eco-niche like Iron Gates revealed the economical and social aspects of its inhabitants during the Late Glacial and Early Holocene. Everyday tasks and activities are known in recent years, when the particular study, targeting the function of the chipped stone tools from Lepenski Vir, Padina and Vlasac, was conducted. The research which consisted of 51 experiments resulted in the first reference collection in the region, which included both formal and problem-oriented trials.

The idea of the study is to address the necessity and the wide application of the experimental approach represented by simple activities, connected to the broad chronological span, as cutting, scraping, engraving performed on the materials available in Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic, as hide, bone, antler, or wood. Additionally, a number of problem-oriented experiments, as fish processing, or the use of tools after thermal stress were done to answer the particular research questions connected to the lifestyle of both local and incomer groups in the Transitional period.

Nikola Marković¹, Boban Tripković², Marko Porčić², Ana Tripković² & Jasna Vuković²

¹ Vukasovićeve 19a, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

² Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Preliminary X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis of Early Eneolithic Pottery:

Šanac-Izba near Lipolist (Western Serbia)

Šanac-Izba near Lipolist is an Early Eneolithic site located in western Serbia. It is a small site of only 40 m in extent surrounded by a wide ditch. The archaeological traces of several pits (pits 1-4) and one burnt building were revealed in 2013. The building and pit 4 can be generally dated to the Early Eneolithic, which correspond to the late 5th millennium BC of the regional chronology. The other pits were certainly dug later and filled up with redeposited cultural material



by natural processes. Pottery collected at the site represents a mix of cultural styles originating in the central Balkans and south Pannonian Basin. Diagnostic ceramic fragments were sampled preliminarily and analyzed to answer two research questions: 1) Is there a difference in the elemental composition of certain pottery types; 2) Can we observe a chemical and technological variability in the pottery belonging to different cultural traditions? The 41 powdered samples were taken from typologically defined pottery fragments, and the sample covers all features and many units. The elemental composition was obtained by the XRF instrumental method.

Andreja Kudelić¹, Dinko Tresić Pavičić², Natali Neral¹, Mia Marijan³ & Ana Maričić⁴

¹ Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, Croatia

² Kaducej d.o.o., Split, Croatia

³ Pod kosom 47, Split, Croatia

⁴ Department of Mineralogy, Petrology and Mineral Resources; Faculty of Mining Geology and Petroleum Engineering, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Research on Bronze Age pottery traditions – Conceptual approach

The tradition of studying archaeological ceramics in Croatia is deeply rooted in the culture-historical approach, especially when it comes to prehistoric pottery, which represents most of the archaeological record on prehistoric societies. However, turning the approach, by studying pottery throughout its lifecycle from raw material selection, different stages of production, to distribution and use, can provide valuable research contributions in a topic still not fully explored. Over the next five years, extended research on Bronze Age (2400-800 BC) pottery traditions on the territory of Croatia will be conducted. The paper will present the project concept and methodology approach. A prerequisite for the selection of archaeological material is a well-established stratigraphic and chronological context and in the initial phase, the ceramics will be classified with the focus on typology and style aiming at cultural and temporal determination. In addition, through a macroscopic examination of the pottery, an analysis of manufacturing techniques and vessel function will be carried out.

A large part of the research protocol will be focused on the analysis of archaeological ceramics and pottery raw materials using various analytical techniques (ceramic petrography, XRD, FTIR and geochemistry). All the information gathered will form a large set of data, that represent the basis on which the properties of production, distribution, and use through specific research questions, will be evaluated, and analysed. Therefore, the correlation of different interdisciplinary data sets, quantification methods, and digitalization of such data, currently presents the biggest challenge. In that sense, awareness of the advantages but also limitations of analytical methods and a well-formed theoretical framework, research questions, and hypotheses are key parameters of an optimal methodological approach.