
Symposium: Ceramics

Maria de Conceição Rodrigues

Contribution to the study of African Iron Age pottery of the north of Mozambique

Maria de Conceição Rodrigues

With this work we aim to present a laboratory study based on some archaeological pottery collected in Mozambique in 1946. They were collected in the north of Mozambique - Riane Cave - in the Nampula province. In order to highlight the influences that each community had, their traditions and culture, we have dated the fragments, analysed the clay and studied the shapes and decoration technique. We have also compared it to the pottery of the African Iron Age from other sites of southern Africa already studied.

We shall not present conclusions, but rather hypotheses and with them raise questions related to the pottery of Early Iron Age, which lead to a semi-settlement of the populations. On the blooming of Iron Age, people went from gathering to farming and to pottery, iron and copper making.

The history of African societies, especially that of the Bantu people, is being written and the "traditional pottery" is undoubtedly a factor of great meaning and cannot be neglected when we are writing this history.

Ethno-archaeological research into the pottery of the central Balkans

Biljana Djordjevic-Bogdanovic

Ethno-archaeological studies of pottery have so far been based upon the available data from Africa, South or Central America and Asia. Europe has been considered uninteresting, because all ancient techniques of pottery making are thought to have disappeared by now. Fortunately for us, the European situation has turned out to be somewhat different. A careful analysis of the ethnological literature has shown the existence in Europe of several pottery-making centres using such techniques. One such centre has been chosen for the subject of this paper: the village of Zlakusa in western Serbia, where a rather archaic technique of pottery making still survives - using the hand wheel and open-flame firing.

Social organisation of pottery production in protohistoric Italy

Sara T. Levi

Recent archaeometrical studies on pottery technology (raw materials, manufacturing techniques, firing temperatures) performed on Italian Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (LL millennium-VIII century B.C.) pottery revealed a complex pattern of exchange of goods and raw materials, at a small and large scale. Other information from the analysis concerns the standardisation of products and the choice of specific temper types. These data, together with major technological innovation during the Bronze Age, linked to the network information exchange, give us a new perspective on the social organisation of production, that is moving, during the protohistory, from domestic to more complex levels.

Analysis of the decline of Cizou Kiln in Guantai

Wei Liu

After its prosperity in Jin Dynasty, Guantai Kiln declined in Yuan Dynasty. The very reason is still unclear. Two important factors may be war, the most important reason for the economic decline in North China by the end of Jin Dynasty, and ecological degeneration, which made it difficult for Guantai Kiln to acquire necessary raw materials and water; transportation conditions also deteriorated.

With the resurrection of the economy in Yuan Dynasty, Pengcheng Kiln, which is about 15 km away from Guantai, developed quickly and became the new centre of porcelain production, but Guantai Kiln declined and terminated by the end of Yuan Dynasty. Some possible reasons are analysed. Economics models are applied to calculate the flow of capital, labour and technique. Due to the lack of management records and documents of the commercial activity, we cannot say for sure the reason for the Guantai decline.

An archaeological research on origin of using coal as fuel in ceramic industry in northern China

Dashu Qin

This article intends to combine the discovery of coal mines with excavations in ancient ceramic kiln sites in Northern China with corroborating evidence from Chinese historical records. This article proved that the history of using coal as fuel in ceramic kilns in northern China began during the later phases of the Northern Song Dynasty.

The paper addresses the conditions and necessity of using coal as fuel in ceramic kilns in northern China. It outlines the evidence of coal usage found in archaeological excavation – namely the ancient coal mine sites, ceramic kilns and traces of coal on the surface of unearthed wares. It also assesses the impact of using coal on the ceramic production in northern China.

Prehistoric earthenware in Peninsula Malaysia

Dr. Nik Hassen Shuhaimi Nik Abd Rahman and Mr. Asayaari Muhamed

In this paper, attempts will be made to define the stylistic distribution of the prehistoric earthenwares in Peninsula Malaysia in terms of space and time. Also the issues of the origins and development of the earthenware will be traced.

Decorated prehistoric earthenware in Peninsula Malaysia can be categorised into the following types:

- I. Bound - paddle decorations in the forms of cord-mark, net-pattern, mat-mark, basket-mark and shell-mark.
2. Caved-paddle decorations in the form of rib-mark, basket-mark, criss-cross, mat-mark, linear-lines with geometric design, concentric-circles, wavy-lines with linear lines.
3. Grooving and gouging.
4. Incising

Results of the analysis of the earthenware indicate that there are two types: imported earthenware, and locally made wares. The imported wares came from central and north-east Thailand and the locally made earthenware were produced at the end of the Mesolithic period (Hoabinhian phase). Each prehistoric complex produced earthenware particular to that area as well as the earthenware common to all areas/complexes. The variety of earthenware indicates local origins and not introduction into Peninsula Malaysia by migrating people.

Interaction of steppen and wooded populations of the Russian plain in the Neolithic Age

Alexander Smirnov

This paper offers an explanation of the mechanism of ornamental evolution in the Neolithic cultures of Russia, which are characterised by traditions of pinpricking ornamentation and comb-stamped ornamentation, as well as the interrelation between these cultures and those featuring pitting or pit-combing vessel ornamentation. The traditions of the pinpricking ornamentation are typical for the settlements in the steppen lands. The chronology of the complexes with the pinpricking ceramics is unclear: they have simultaneously existed with the settlements whose inhabitants used the combing stamp, when decorating the vessels. The picture is qualitatively changed to the north, into the depths of the forests, where the oldest vessels have been decorated with the combing impresses; pinpricking ornamentation appears only later. During the Neolithic and Final Neolithic Age there were two cultural traditions of the pin-pricking-receding and combing ornamentations, reflecting the presence of two ethno-cultural groups within the population. Their interaction was reflected differently during the different periods, and this has defined the historical understandings of the evolution of this region.