

*The Social Life of Pots: Glaze Wares and Cultural Dynamics in the Southwest, AD 1250–1680*

Edited by Judith A. Habicht-Mauche, Suzanne L. Eckert, and Deborah L. Huntley

2006. Tucson, Arizona, USA: The University of Arizona Press. 376 pp.

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This book is a compilation of papers presented at a symposium entitled “The Social Life of Pots: Glaze Wares and Cultural Transformation in the Late Prehistoric Southwest”. Organised by the editors for the 2002 Meetings of the Society for American Archaeology, the symposium was held in Denver, Colorado. The authors in this book represent a multitude of researchers working throughout the glaze-producing pottery areas of the Southwest, including east-central Arizona, the Zuni region, the lower Rio Puerco of the East, and the central and southern Rio Grande Valley.

The “social lives of pots” in this book refers to the social and ideological contexts of production, distribution, and consumption, as well as the demise of glaze wares ceramics from the Southwest. Using the anthropology of technology framework, *chaine operateire*, practice theory (particularly the concept of *habitus*), the anthropology of consumption, and the concept of communities of practice, the authors present a case for glaze ceramics as a proxy indicator for studying social processes such as the movement of peoples; interregional and intraregional interaction; the formation of communities; and the social, religious, and political reorganisation of the Southwest.

The research reported in this book utilised an assortment of analytical techniques including typological and stylistic analyses, inferential statistics, optical petrography, instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA), electron microprobe analysis, wavelength dispersive spectroscopy (WDS) and inductively coupled plasma mass spectroscopy (ICP-MS). With these methods and techniques, the authors aim to develop broader frameworks for examining the changing role of glaze-decorated ceramics in the social dynamics of the late pre-contact Southwest. Although many of these analytical methods are already being used in the

Philippines, some are rarely used in studying potteries to elucidate the ancient ways of the Filipinos.

The first three chapters of the book are insightful, and they set the tone for the succeeding chapters. Habicht-Mauche (Chapter 1) begins with the social history of the southwestern glaze wares, including sources of raw materials, the history of glaze ware pottery, and the different archaeological sites associated with glaze ware technology in the Southwest. Stark (Chapter 2) then discusses the different theoretical frameworks that can be applied in studying these materials. In the third chapter, Eckert (Chapter 3) gives a synthesis of the production and distribution of glaze-painted pottery in the Pueblo Southwest. She describes the different groups and subtypes of glaze ware, kinds of decorations, as well as associated dating. It is astonishing how she was able to come up with an organised system of identification, classification, and dating of these types of ceramics.

The introduction of glaze ware pottery has been associated with the spread of new religious ideas and practices in the Southwest. These involved public feasts, dances, gift giving and exchange, and ritual performances that provided the contexts wherein new social identities and roles were constituted, asserted, integrated, and contested and sometimes diversified. Nelson and Habicht-Mauche (Chapter 11) comparatively examines the changing patterns of Rio Grande Glaze ware production and exchange using pottery from four Pueblo IV archaeological sites in the central Rio Grande region of New Mexico. They concluded that glaze ware vessels circulated through social and ceremonial arenas to define the emerging local and regional identities of the people and that the people have regional and interregional networks of economic complementarities and dependencies.

The transmission and spread of glaze ware technology is also subsumed within the migration of people and the dynamic social climate in the newly found social landscape of the people especially of the potters. Eckert (Chapter 9) believes that this dynamic change is reflected in the ceramic data in the Southwest. The data reflect the struggle of each potter on a daily basis to symbolise different aspects of ritual, social organisation and political structure of their village or community. The struggle is to negotiate various social strategies concerning her (since potters are mostly women in Southwest) family, ethnic group, ritual society, and exchange networks within a socio-religious system. On the contrary, Schachner (Chapter 7) interpreted the demise of Zuni glaze ware production and the

shift to Matsaki buff ware as the reflection of a large scale migration of people to the western section of the Zuni area. It is also an indication of Zuni community building and identity formation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The glaze ingredients and formula are used to define social relationships and identities both within and among communities of pottery producers and consumers. Fenn *et al.* (Chapter 4) argue that, in the Silver Creek area, the maintenance of diverse glaze paint recipes is a strategy for negotiating social distinctions and identities in the post-migration period in the Southwest both regionally and locally. Herhanh (Chapter 10), meanwhile, believes that in central and southern Rio Grande Valley, the increasing homogeneity of glaze formulas is an evidence for the cultural transmission of specialised knowledge within and among groups of potters who were mainly women. As for Huntley (Chapter 6), she interprets the shared and rapid adoption of glaze recipe, as well as proper firing conditions among Zuni potters, as a shared perception and belief about the “correct” way to make glaze paint. Furthermore, she surmises that this shared conception could only be done with regular and face to face communications among potters, which promoted constant interaction among community potters.

Other authors of the book examined the relationship between trade, exchange, and intercommunity interaction on a larger interregional scale using the glaze wares as point of reference. Laumbach (Chapter 8) interpreted the glaze ware from Pinnacle ruins as trade wares and as an indication of sustained social ties with the people of the Western pueblo. On the other hand, Leonard (Chapter 13) analysed the distribution of Rio Grande glaze-painted pottery on the southern High Plains to examine how trade and exchange relationships were played out between the Pueblo farmers and Plains bison hunters.

The mode of production and scale of craft specialisation that characterized glaze ware manufacturing are also discussed in the book. Capone (Chapter 12) suggests that the pattern of glaze ware technology in the Salinas area was a trend toward expedient technology and that, at that time, there was a region-wide concept of temper. Moreover, she also examines the scale and intensity of production of glaze ware employing Costin’s framework or parameter of organisation of production.

In chapter 5, Van Keuren uses design execution to infer patterns of learning, social interactions and style miscoding among producers of Four-mile pots along the Mogollon Rim. This suggests, according to him,

changes in the organisation of pottery manufacture in the area which possibly linked to the specialisation of knowledge in designing the pots, the exclusivity of ideological networks, and factionalism within large settlements.

From start to finish, the ideas are presented in an organised manner. The book begins with basic ideas and concepts about glaze ware technology, its history, classification and dating, and the different theoretical frameworks employed by the different authors. Cordell (Chapter 14) ends the book with a recapitulation of the ideas presented in the book, as well as a noteworthy acknowledgement of the pioneers of glaze ware research in the Southwest, which includes Alfred Vincent Kidder and Anna Shepard. Cordell further points out how the work of the current authors build on these pioneers' work, emphasising the significance of building on past researches rather than criticising them. These researches were, after all, carried out without the benefits of analytic techniques and instrumentations that current researches enjoy.

This book gave me a new perspective on looking at ceramics as a whole. It showed me that just like people, pots can have a social life, which starts from its inception up to its demise. There is always a social, political, religious, and ideological process that will affect its production, use, distribution, consumption as well as its cessation. The book is a reminder that there is more to the typological and stylistics analysis of potteries in terms of inferring and elucidating ancient lifeways and cultures. That is why I highly recommend that people read this book for its fresh approach to studying potteries, especially when applied to Philippine archaeology.

***Voices from Sulu: A Collection of Tausug Oral Traditions***

Compiled and Edited by Gerard Rixhon

2010. Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press. 436 pp.

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Sulu is an island archipelago south of the Philippines and a part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Its capital, Jolo, is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest island in the country. Comprising of only 2,135.3 km<sup>2</sup> in terms of land area, Sulu became one of the major and most powerful Islamic States