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Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

Book Review: Pots and Practices: An experimental and microwear approach to Early Iron Age Vessel Biographies by Annelou van Gijn et al (ed)

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Author(s): Linda K Anderson [1] ✉

[1] University of Texas, 413 Dan Troy Dr., Williamsville, NY 14221, USA.

New or not new to experimental archaeology and microwear methodology in archaeology? *Pots and Practices* presents a succinct methodology to the analysis developed by archaeologists and a practicing ceramic artist, an investigation into working together on the

relationship between two sites, their similarities and differences. Use-wear analysis insights are demonstrated by recreating vessels from the two sites by seven universities working together.

> The interesting passages of this book involve the recreation of the pottery according to the use-wear marks and process-created patterns.

This volume proceeds in a logical order, demonstrating the importance of a changed order of investigation. After introductions from the editors, the book is organized as follows: first, experimentally recreating vessels from the two sites; second, studying the life history of vessels in general and the specific vessels in the study. These chapters are followed by examining how permeable the ceramics were, and examining the vessel microwear from the two sites for alcohol preparation. The study examines how the use-wear indicated how the preparation of certain foods and drink was revealed by the patterns created on the recreated copies.

The interesting passages of this book involve the recreation of the pottery according to the use-wear marks and process-created patterns. Loe Jacobs, at Leiden University's Laboratory for Material Culture Studies, demonstrated this overlooked, and now valued, knowledge of recreating found artifacts. Previously, when I worked with Jacobs to research another method process, I recognized how important the input of a functioning ceramicist was to the results. The discovered value of using artists who have a wide range of insight into the artistic process has become invaluable to understanding the wider implications of archaeological investigation. Jacob's work revealed "aspects of the *chaine opératoire* that would have been otherwise hidden" (p.17). Van Gijn had noted that artifacts had been studied, now combining micro analysis with the creation of a large volume of recreated pottery. This meant that the added value of the methodology used by Jacobs revealed how an artist working in a lab could discover hidden processes. This book is highly recommended to those utilizing this process of combining a range of experiences, which contributes to a deeper level of investigation. Combining talents is useful for future investigations.

Book information:

Pots and Practices: An experimental and microwear approach to Early Iron Age Vessel Biographies. Volume 3 BEFIM. Annelou van Gijn, Janine Fries-Knoblach and Philipp W. Stockhammer, Eds. Sidestone Press, 2020

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Corresponding Author

Linda K Anderson
University of Texas
413 Dan Troy Dr.
Williamsville, NY 14221
USA
E-mail Contact