

CAHOKIAN IMPORTS OR LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS: RAMEY INCISED TECHNOLOGY IN THE CAIRO LOWLAND

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INTRODUCTION

- Cahokian-like objects in the Cairo Lowland have garnered **little** inquiry from archaeologists as to what kind of connections they represent between regions¹.
- Three **Ramey Incised** vessels (Figure 1) were thin-sectioned to determine if they represented imported objects from Cahokia or were local emulations of Cahokian objects.
- The vessels are taken from features dating from AD 1175-1300 from the **Crosno (23M11)** and **Wickliffe Mounds (15BA4)** sites.

Research Question: Did these vessels come from Cahokia or were they made using local production practices? And what might this tell us about connections local communities of practice had with the American Bottom?



Figure 1. Ramey Incised from Crosno

BACKGROUND & METHODS

- Ethnographic studies² have shown that **certain ceramic traits are less likely to be negotiated during episodes of cultural contact** including source clays (clay pastes) and their mineralogical traits, and aspects of adding to and forming ceramic bodies^{3,4}.
- This project utilizes a microscopic analysis of petrographic thin sections and the **point counting method**⁵ to analyze the ways in which ceramic bodies were constructed by prehistoric peoples and the clay pastes used to do so.
- Specifically, this study **compares hinterland paste values to those from Cahokia** using metrics developed by Boszhardt and Stoltman⁶.
- They showed that pastes from the American Bottom are 1) low in sand and silt, 2) shell temper composes around 21.3 ± 6.4%, 3) use finely crushed shell, and 4) are slipped and burnished⁶.

RESULTS

Sand and Silt (Clay pastes)

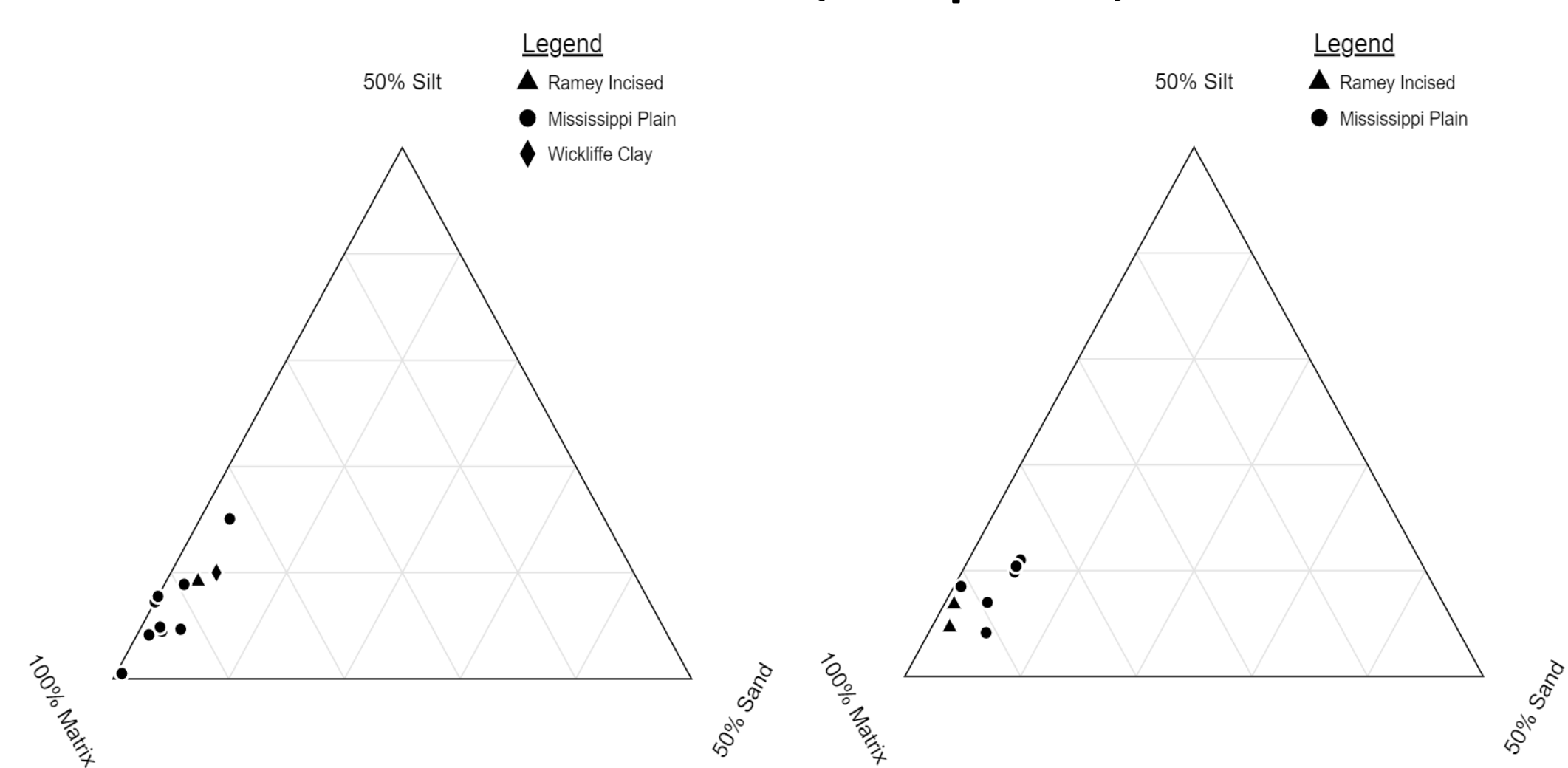


Figure 2. A Ternary Plot of Wickliffe Clay Pastes exhibiting point counting data from matrix, silt, and sand.

Figure 3. A Ternary Plot of Crosno Clay Pastes exhibiting point counting data from matrix, silt, and sand.

Shell Temper % (Body of vessels)

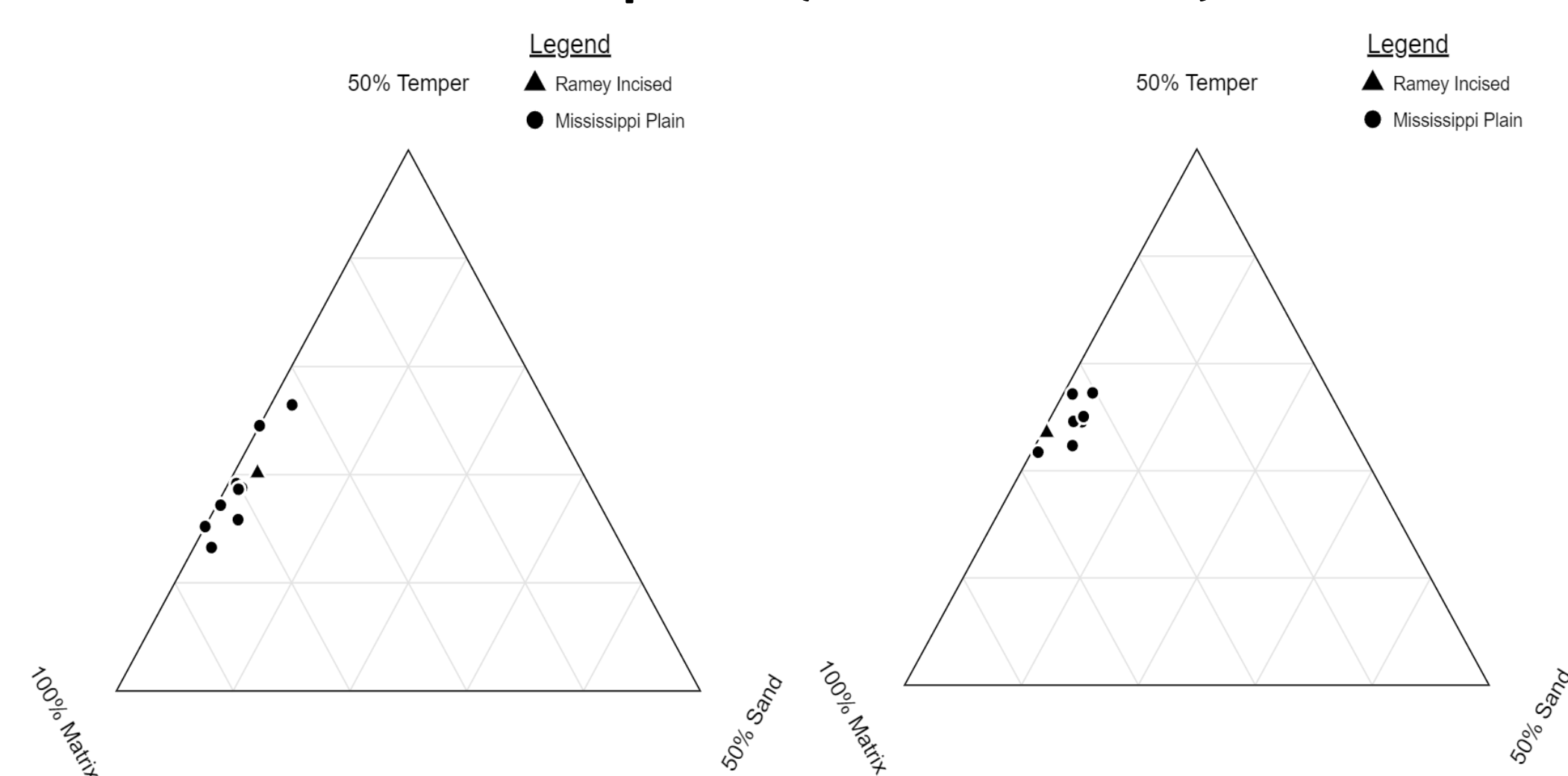


Figure 4. A Ternary Plot of Wickliffe vessel bodies exhibiting point counting data from temper, matrix, and sand.

Figure 5. A Ternary Plot of Crosno vessel bodies exhibiting point counting data from temper, matrix, and sand.

Shell Grain Size

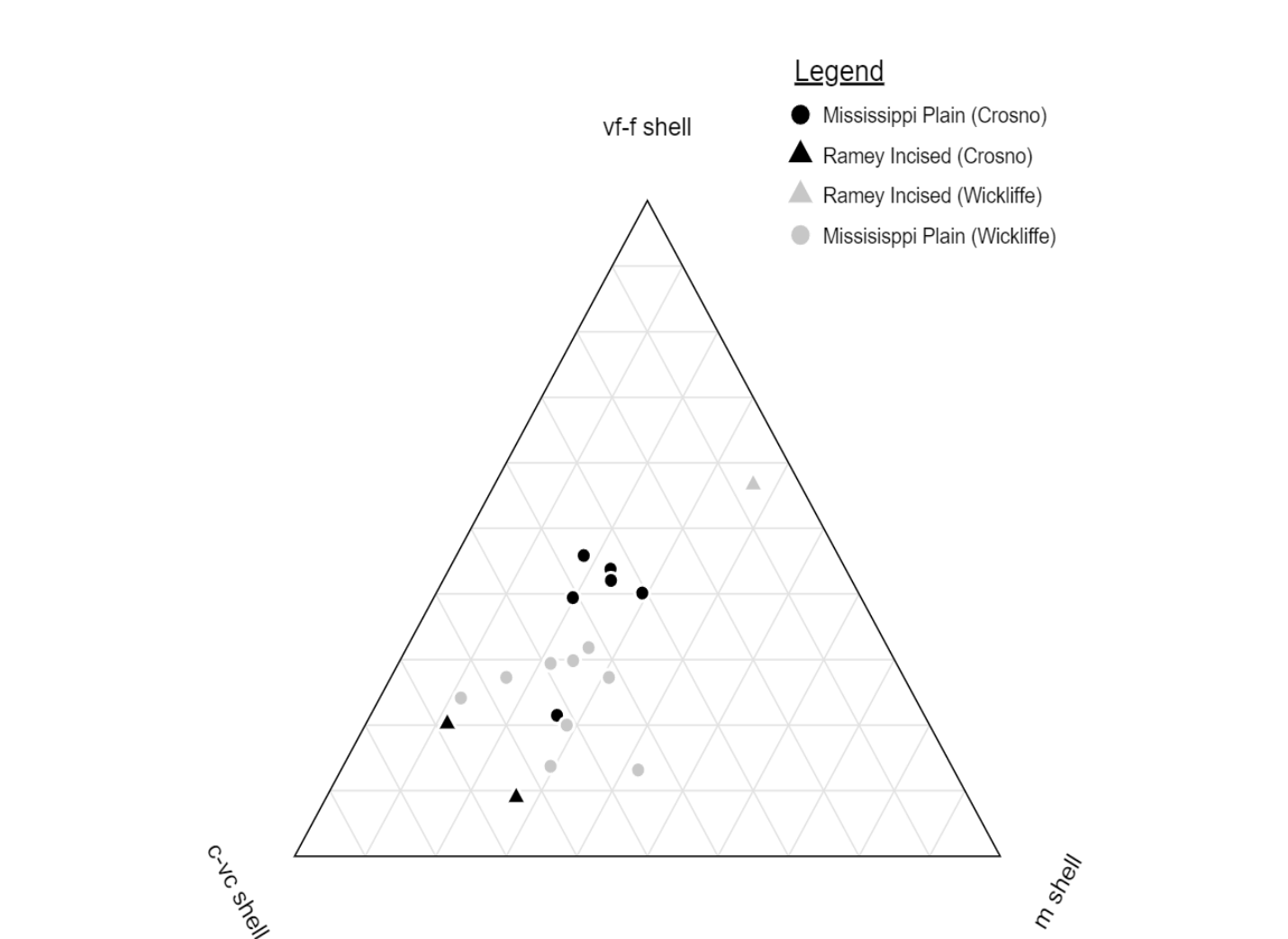


Figure 6. A Ternary Plot of shell grain size of very fine and fine, medium, and coarse to very coarse.

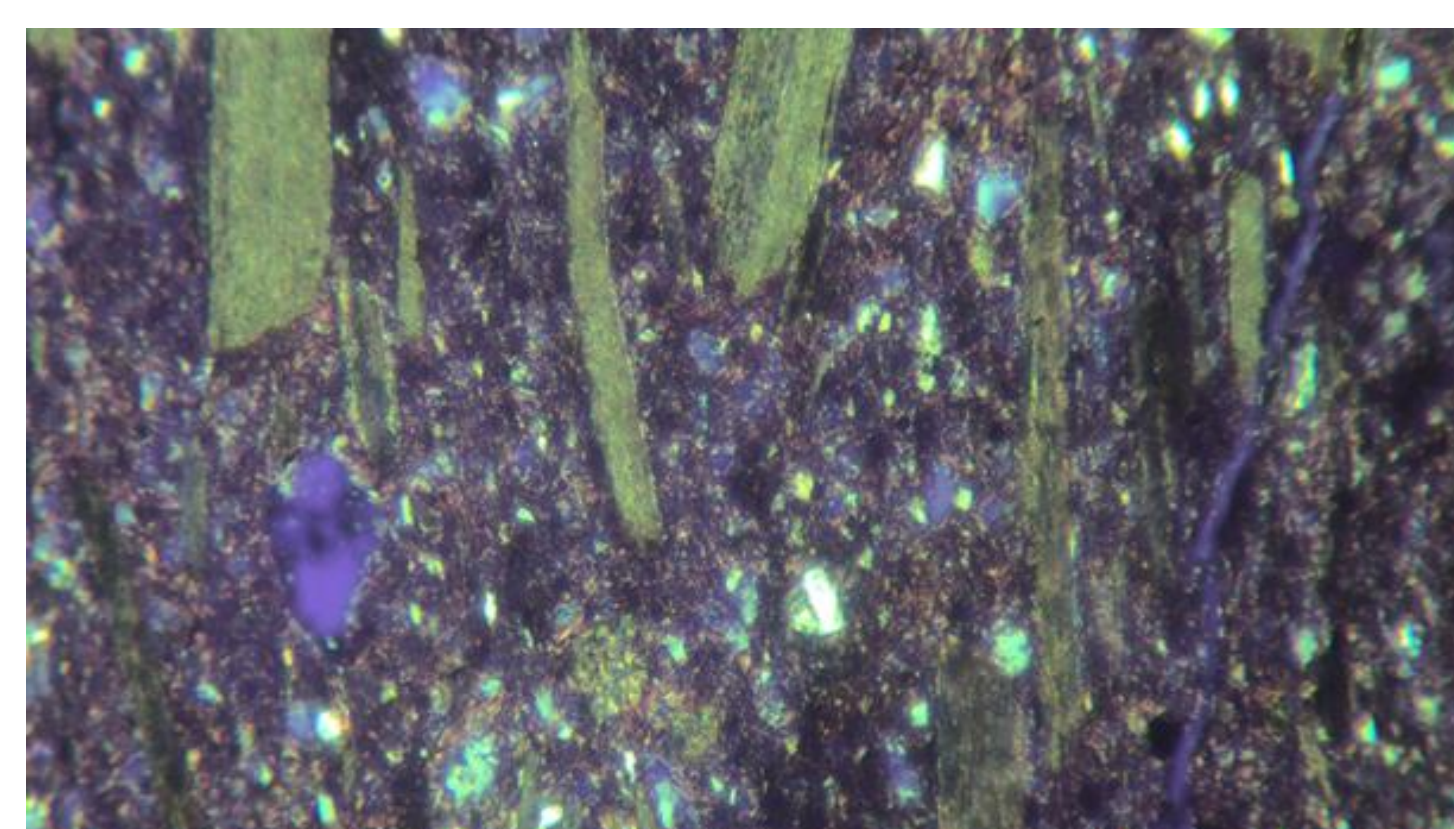


Figure 7. Crosno Mississippi Plain in XP with medium to coarse shell temper

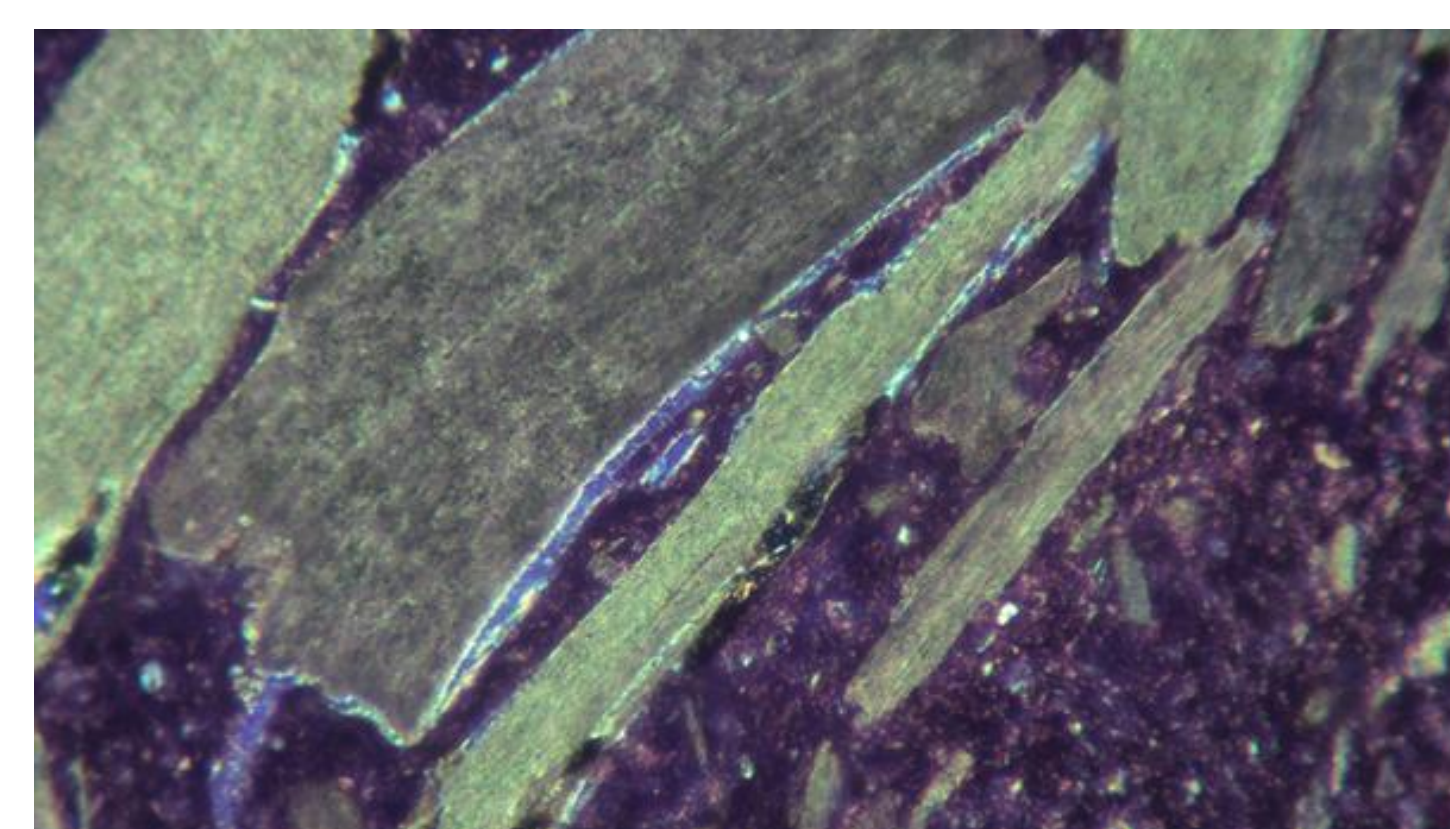


Figure 8. Crosno Ramey Incised in XP with mainly coarse shell temper

- Ramey Incised vessels have similar sand and silt content to local Mississippi Plain vessels (Figures 2 & 3).
- Crosno clays are similar to American Bottom clays when comparing silt and sand content but so are the Mississippi Plain (Figure 3).
- Wickliffe clays contain more silt than those from the American Bottom (Figure 2).
- The Wickliffe Ramey Incised vessel has similar shell grain size and amount added to the vessel body (Figure 6). When compared to local vessels, the shell grain size is significantly smaller.
- The Crosno Ramey Incised vessels have similar a larger shell grain size than those in the American Bottom and have more shell in the ceramic body (Figures 5 & 8).
- Shell preparation for both sites is very different for Ramey vs. Mississippi Plain vessels and Wickliffe vs. Crosno Ramey Incised (Figures 6, 7, and 8).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Results and Interpretation

	Low silt (0.7%)	Low sand (2.7%)	Shell temper in body (21.3 ± 6.4%)	Shell size between 2.8-3.5	Slipped	Local or Non-local?
Wickliffe RI	No (10%)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Local
Crosno RI.1	Yes	Yes	No (37%)	No	Yes	Local
Crosno RI.2	Yes	No (1.37% off)	No (0.2% over)	No	Yes	Local

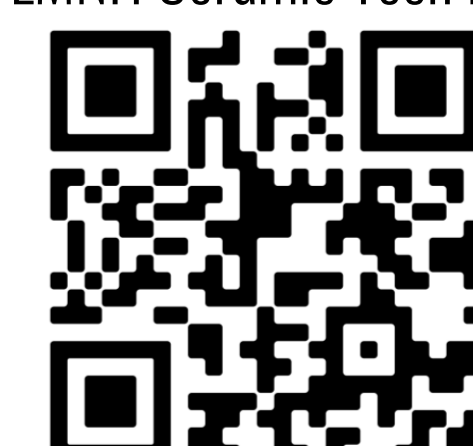
- The vessel from Wickliffe **heavily emulates** production methods from the American Bottom but is **formed with Wickliffe clays**.
- Crosno vessels #1 & #2 look to be made with Cahokia clays but with **non-local production** of the ceramic body. Local clays near Crosno could be similar backwater clays as found at Cahokia. Future geochemical studies can confirm this. The Ramey clay bodies are similar in Plain samples.
- Both sites, especially Wickliffe, show **emulation of highly visible and invisible production methods** hinting at a connection between communities of practice surrounding the production of Ramey Incised.
- Boszhardt and Stoltman's metrics could be improved with a larger sample to make it more robust for comparisons outside of the American Bottom.

REFERENCES

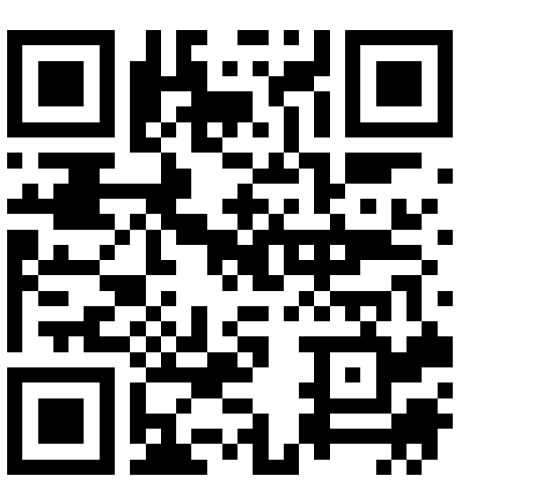
References Cited:



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