

# Prehistoric Pottery of the Ancient Near East

## 3 – Pottery What do you do with it?

Olivier Nieuwenhuyse

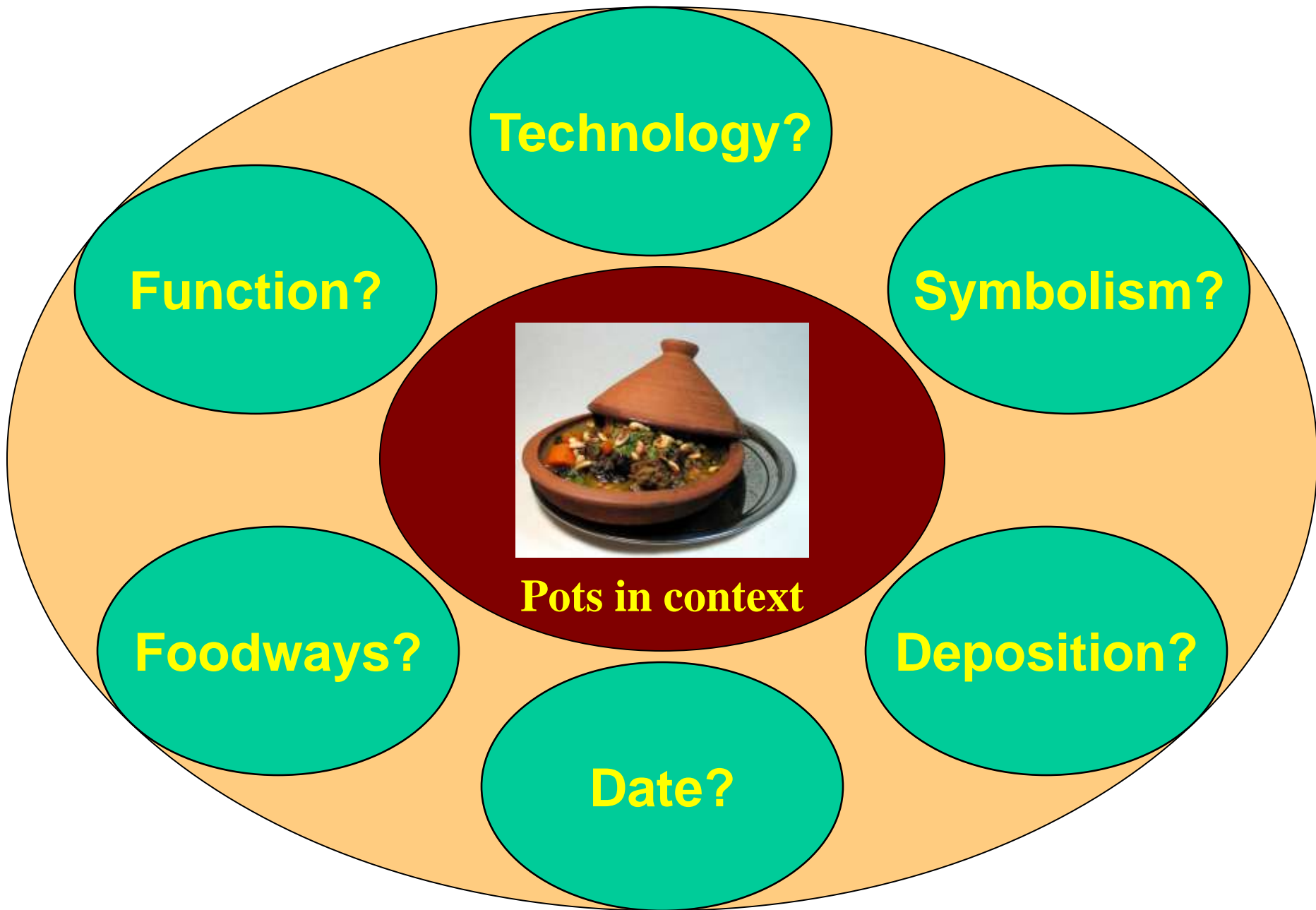
Brno April 2011



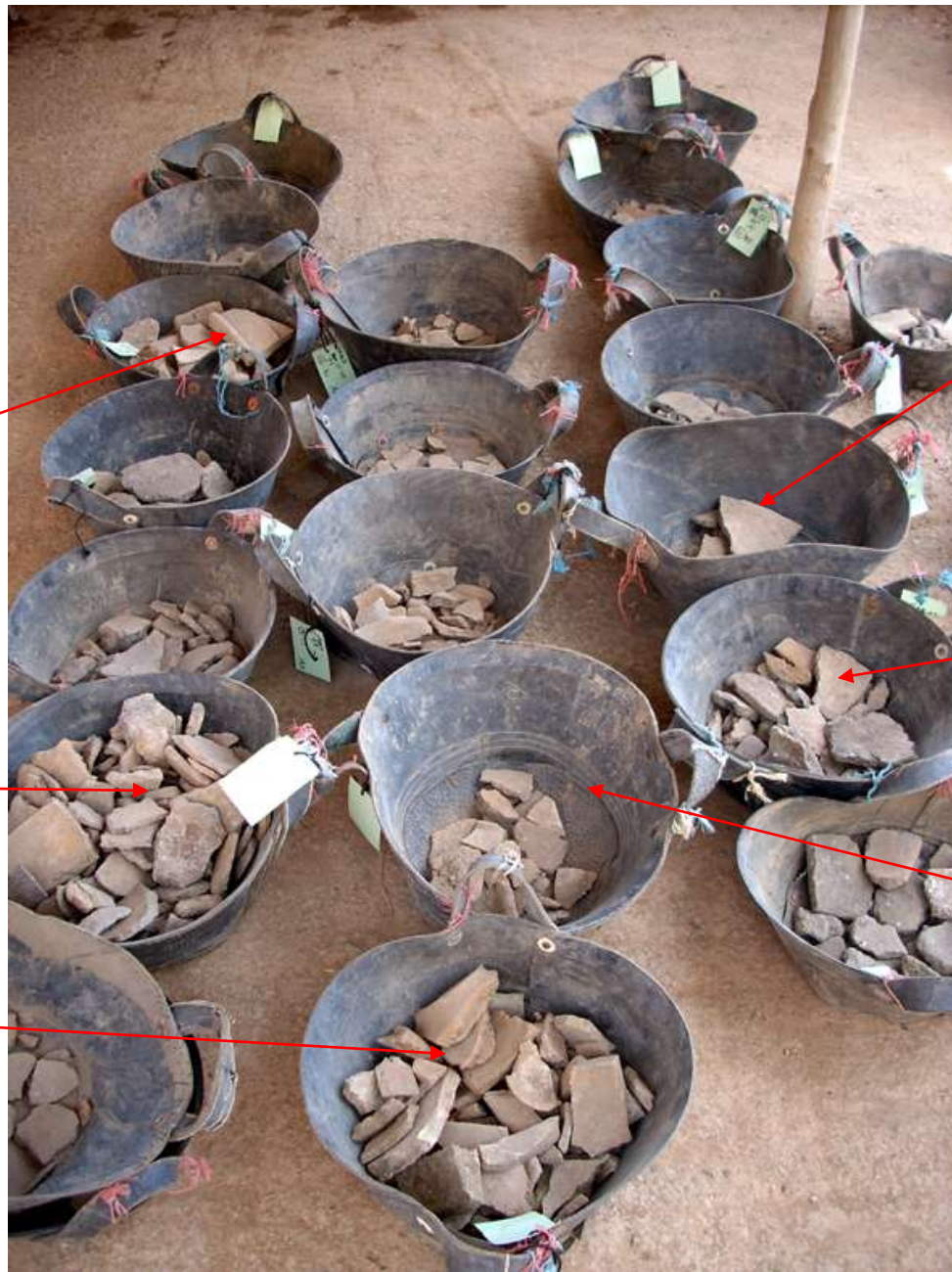
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut



Leiden University



**What can archaeologists do with sherds?**



Lots of sherds

Lots of sherds

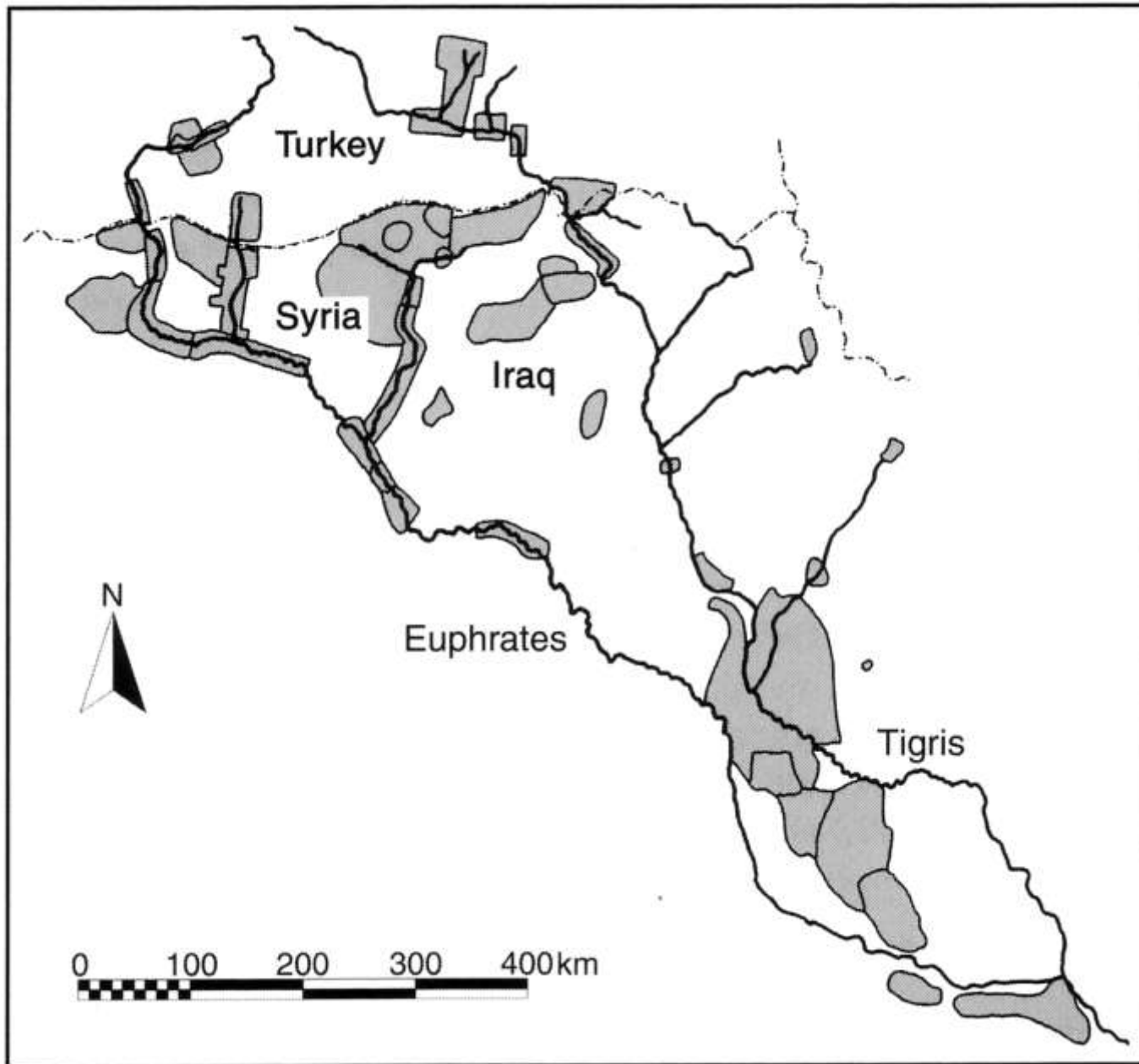
Lots of sherds

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Lots of sherds

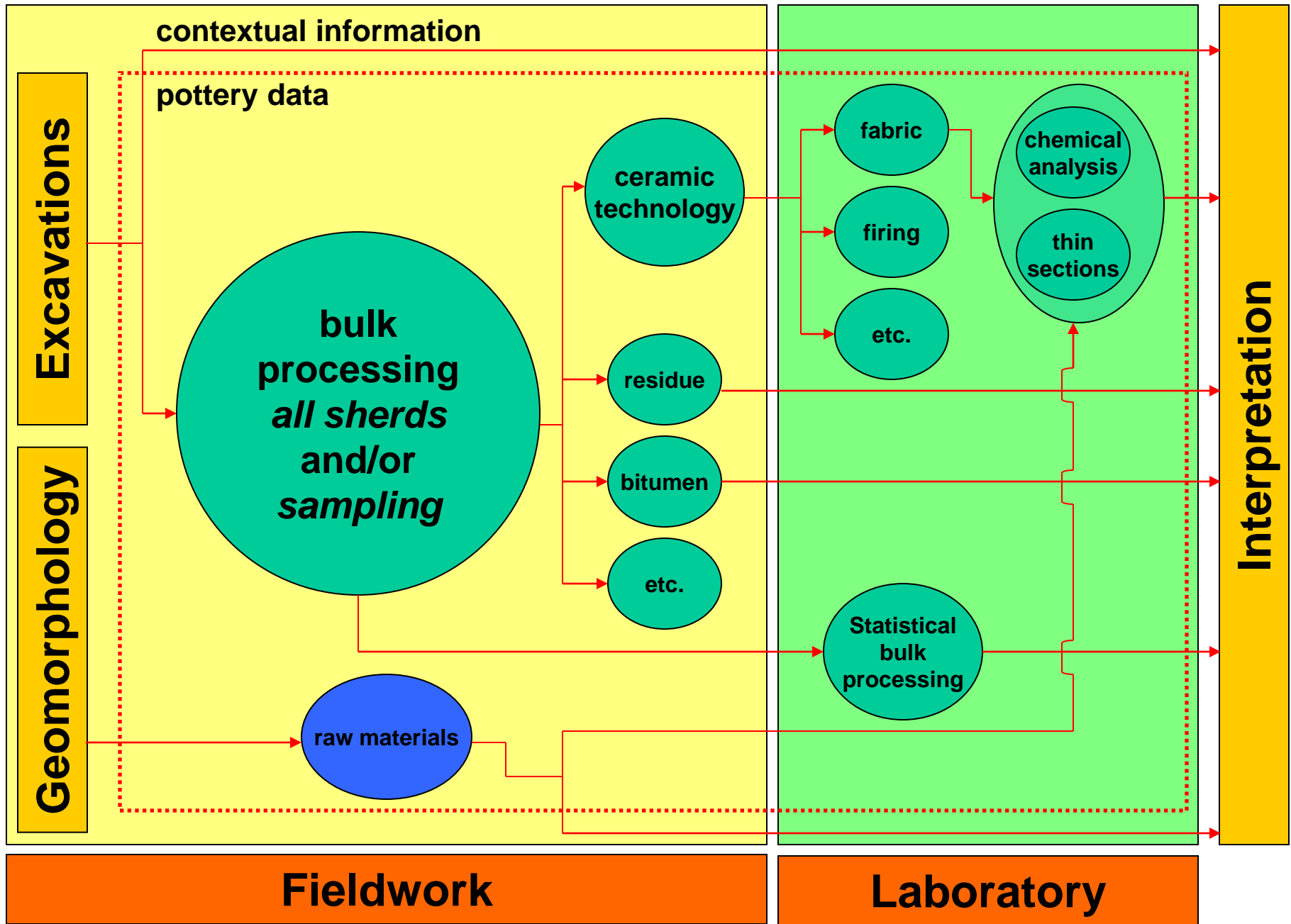
**The archaeologist excavates them – and then what??**



**The archaeologist collects them – and then what?**



**A pottery specialist!**



**All sherds? Careful sampling**

## Tell Chagar Bazar



**Setting up your own professional sherd yard**

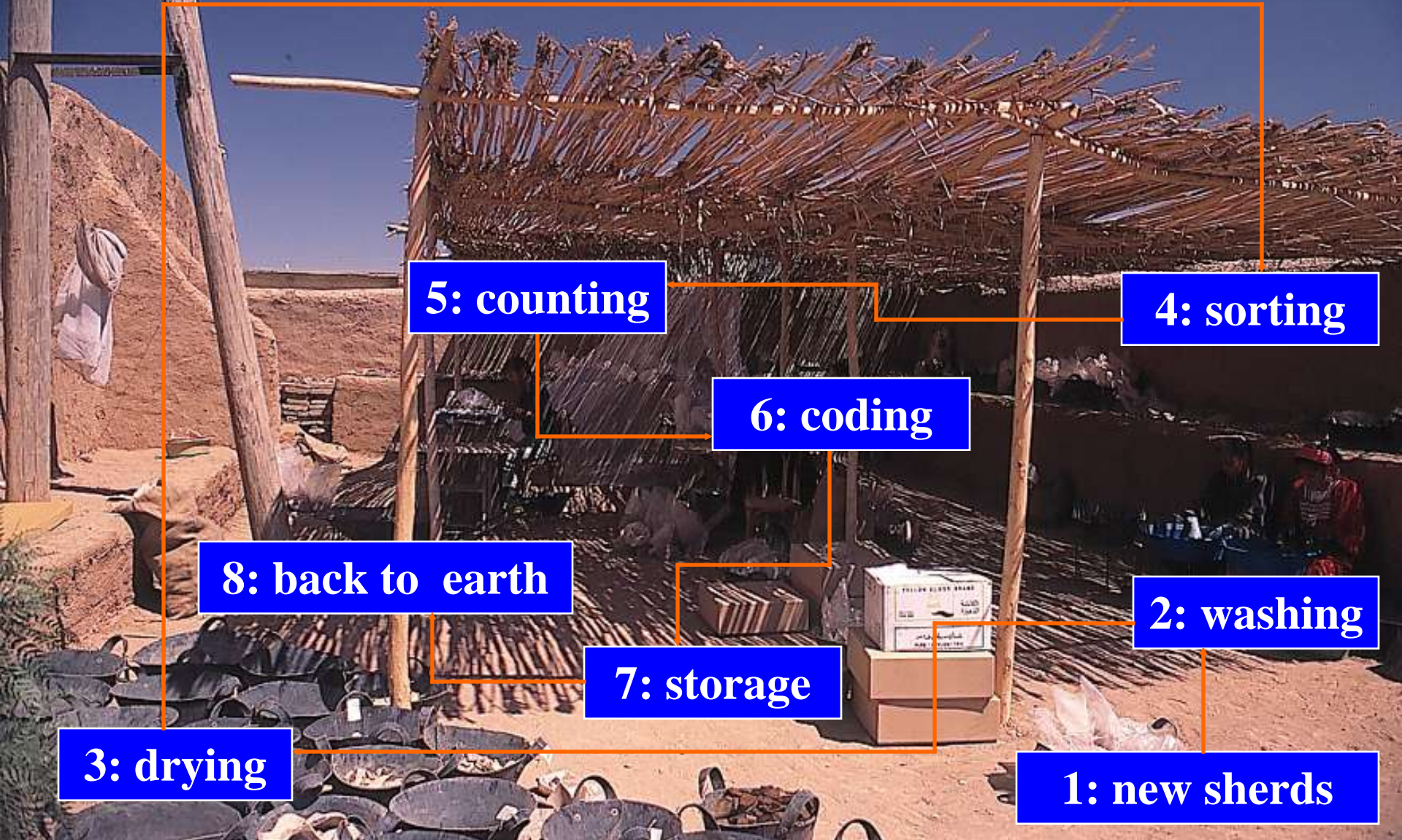
## Tell Sabi Abyad



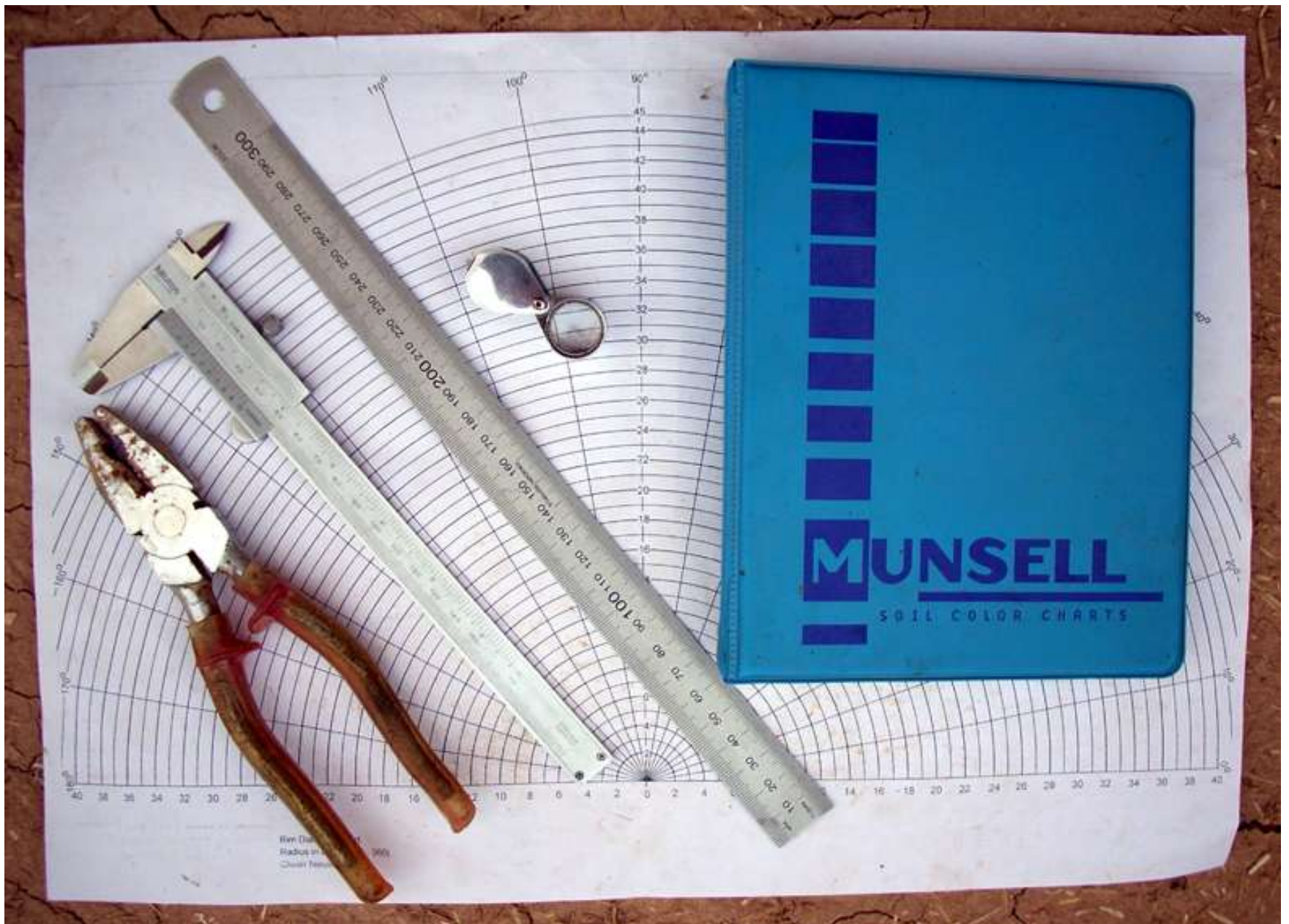
**Sherds are fun: a comfortable place in the shade**



# Sherdyardogram



**This is where the action is: sherd migration ("sherd flow")**



**No expensive high-tech equipment needed**



Sorted sherds

**First step: quantification – how much pottery?**

**Tell Sabi Abyad 2007 Late Neolithic Pottery Count**

<b>Square:</b>	<b>Locus:</b>		<b>Lot:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
	<i>Complete</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>1. Standard Fine Ware</b>						
2. SFW painted						
3. SFW paint/inc.						
4. SFW inc/impr.						
<b>5. Standard Ware</b>						
6. SW burnished						
7. SW painted						
8. SW paint/inc.						
9. SW incised						
10. SW r-slipped						
11. SW applique						
12. SW p.burn.						
40. SW bitumen						
43. SW impressed						
<b>13. Grey-Black Ware</b>						
14. Gr.Bl. p.burn.						
15. Gr.Bl. imp/inc						
<b>16. Dark-Faced Burnished Ware</b>						
17. DFBW slipped						
18. DFBW painted						
19. DFBW incised						
20. DFBW p.inc						
21. DFBW p.burn.						
<b>22. Mineral Coarse Ware</b>						
<b>23. Orange Fine Ware</b>						
24. OFW painted						
25. OFW slipped						
<b>26. Fine Painted Ware</b>						
27. FPW painted						
<b>28. Halaf Fine Ware</b>						
29. HFW painted						
30. HFW incised						
<b>31. Fine Ware general</b>						
<b>41. Early Fine Ware</b>						
<b>42. Early GBW</b>						
44. EFW red-slipped						
45. EFW painted						
46. EGBW pattern-burnished						
<b>51. Mineral Light Ware</b>						
<b>52. Mineral Dark Ware</b>						
53. MLW red-slipped						
54. MLW painted						
<b>45 LBA garbage</b>						

**How many sherds? Make your own counting sheet**

Tell Sabi Abyad 2007 Late Neolithic Pottery Count						
Square:	Locus:		Lot:		Date:	
	Complete	Section	Rim	Body	Base	Other
<b>1. Standard Fine Ware</b>						
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<b>45 LBA garbage</b>						

Shape of fragment

**Tell Sabi Abyad 2007 Late Neolithic Pottery Count**

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	<i>Complete</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Other</i>	
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**Type of pottery**

**CHAGAR  
BAZAR**

data  sondeig  quadre  estrat   
 locus  observ.

**SILEX** (indicat nombre)

nuclis   
 percutors   
 ascles corticals   
 ascles   
 làmines   
 laminetes   
 lam. cresta   
 lam. epsilon   
 tableta reavivatge

utils esclat   
 utils làmina   
 utils lamineta

**OBSIDIANA** (indicat nombre)

esclats   
 làmines ob   
 laminetes ob   
 indeterminats   
 utils   
 altres.

altres

Mobiliari polit   
 Ornament   
 Figurines   
 ind. os

**CERÀMICA** (indicat nombre de cada una de les 4 categories a baix detallades)  
 diferenciar el pintat Halaf si és monocrom o bicrom, pintura mate o brillant, monotó o bitó

	Totals	monocrom	bicrom	mate	brillant	monotó	bitó
Pintat Halaf informe	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pintat Halaf vores	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pintat Halaf bases	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pintat Halaf anses	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Plain Halaf informe	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Plain Halaf vores	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Plain Halaf bases	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Plain Halaf anses	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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groller informe

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NOTES

**Similar system, different site: Tell Chagar Bazar**

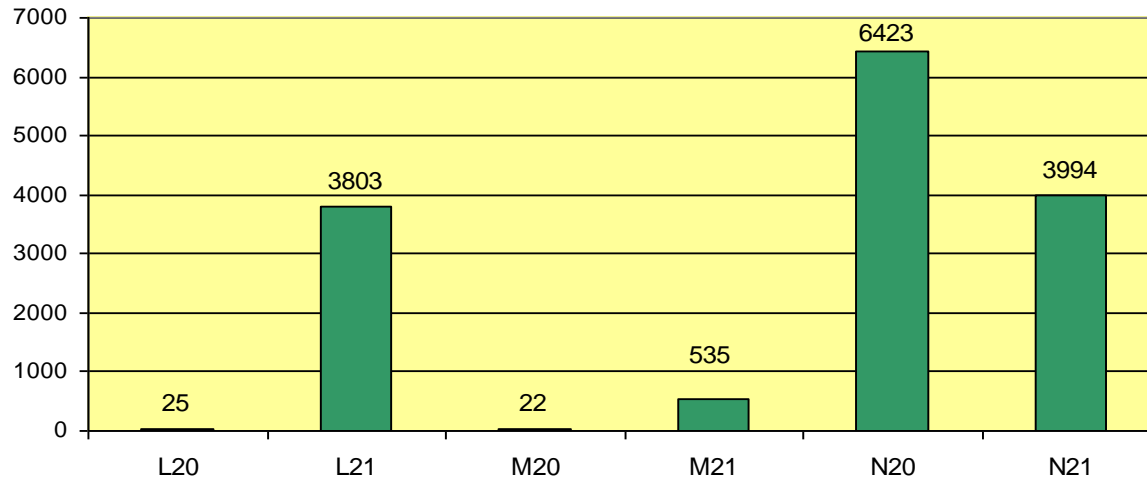


**To weigh or not to weigh...**

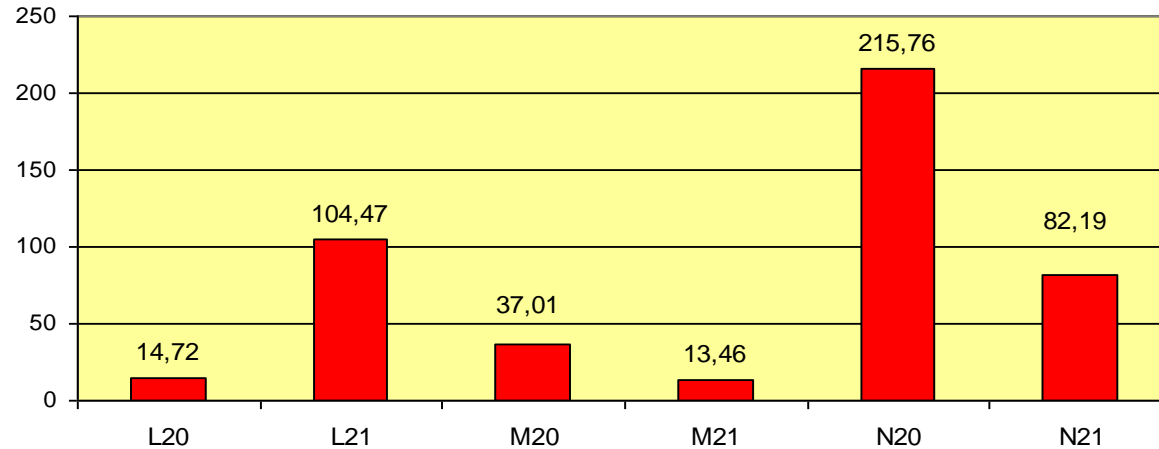


# How much pottery?

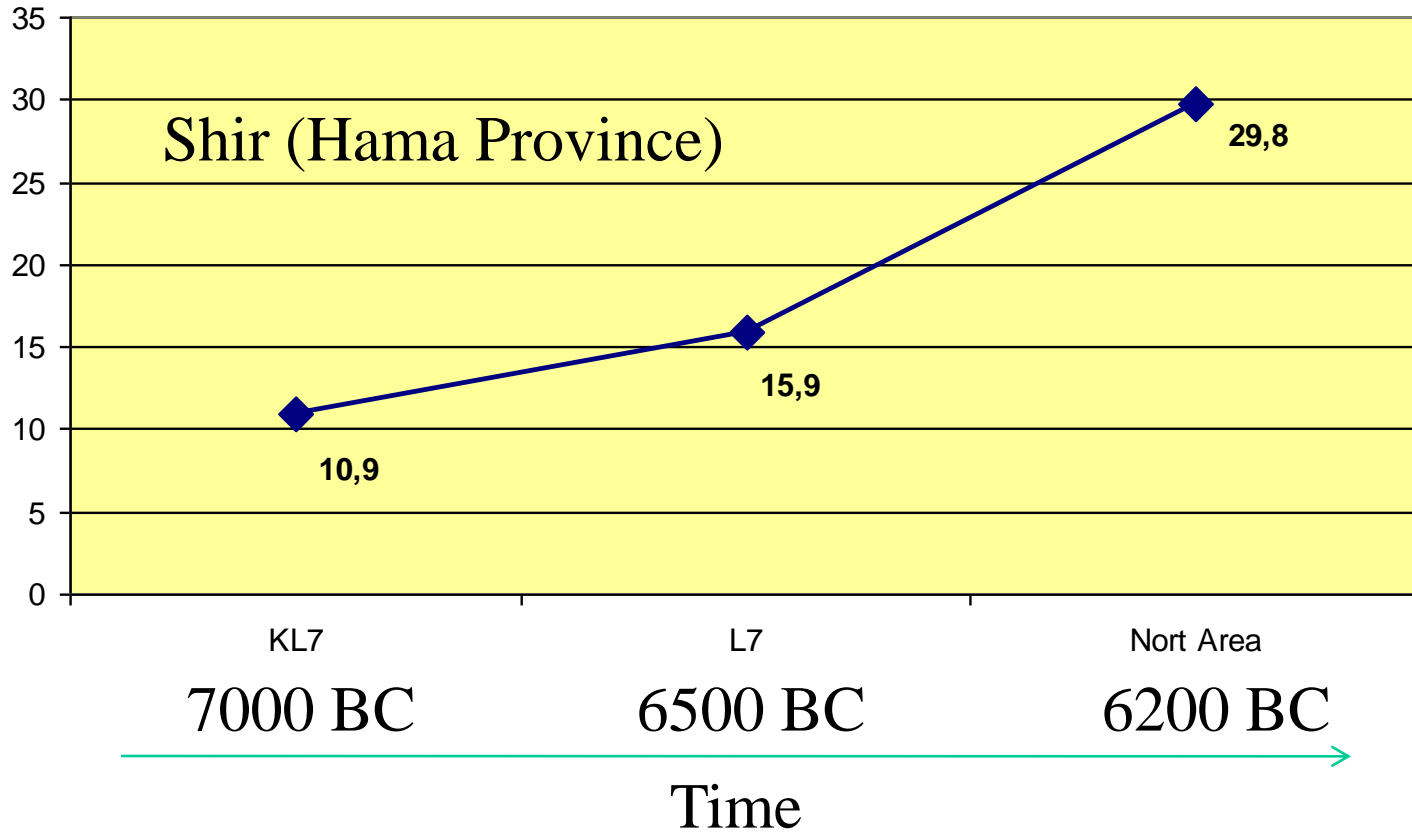
Number of excavated sherds counted



Weight of excavated sherds counted (kg)



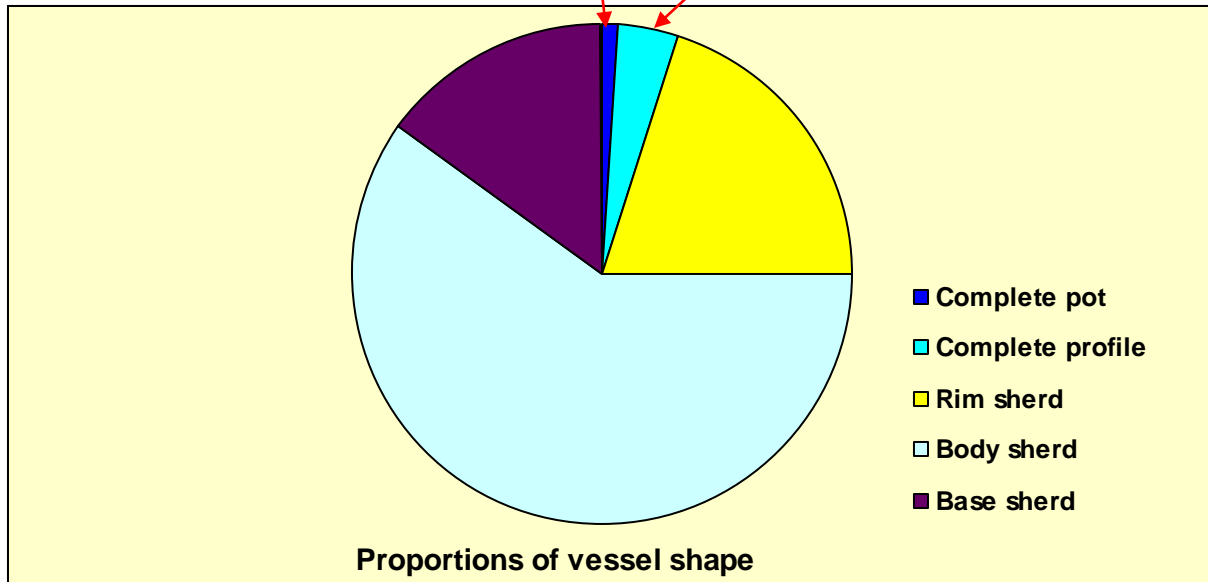
**Weights: a different measure of quantity**



“BMI index”

Average weight of body sherd (Body Mass Index)

**Weight: information on 1) fragmentation, 2) size, 3) strength**



## Fragmentation: depositional information

**Tell Sabi Abyad 2007 Late Neolithic Pottery codes**

Date	Lot	Locus	Square	sherds number	Shape										Size										Technology																																																
					drawn	shape	lip	rim .or.	r.shp	hand	l.tr.	car.	b.tr.	base	type	r.height	b.height.	t.height	thick	r.diam.	radius	s.diam.	b.diam.	bs dia.	weight	veg.	min	min.	sort	firing	excol	incol.	ex slip	in slip	ex surf.	in surf	ex dec.	in dec.	p.col.	p.lust	ware	secondary use																															
<p><b>Remarks :</b></p>																																																																									
																																						use traces																																			
																																										sherds	no.	sort	inter.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.	struc.	loc.

**Build your own code sheet**

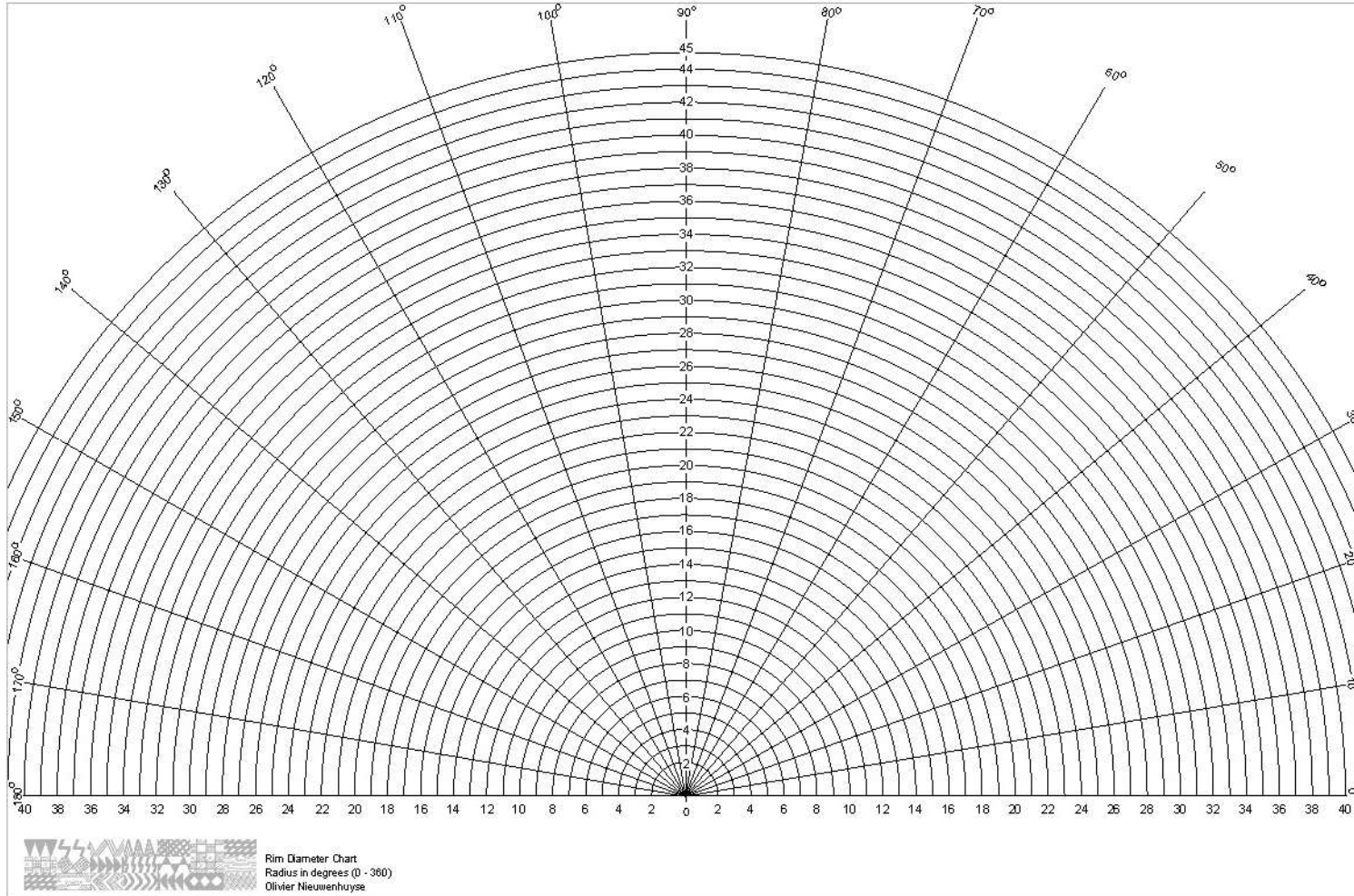












## Measuring rim diameter and thickness



**“Excavation is destruction” – well, so is fabric analysis**



**Quantity, size, and type of non-plastic inclusions**



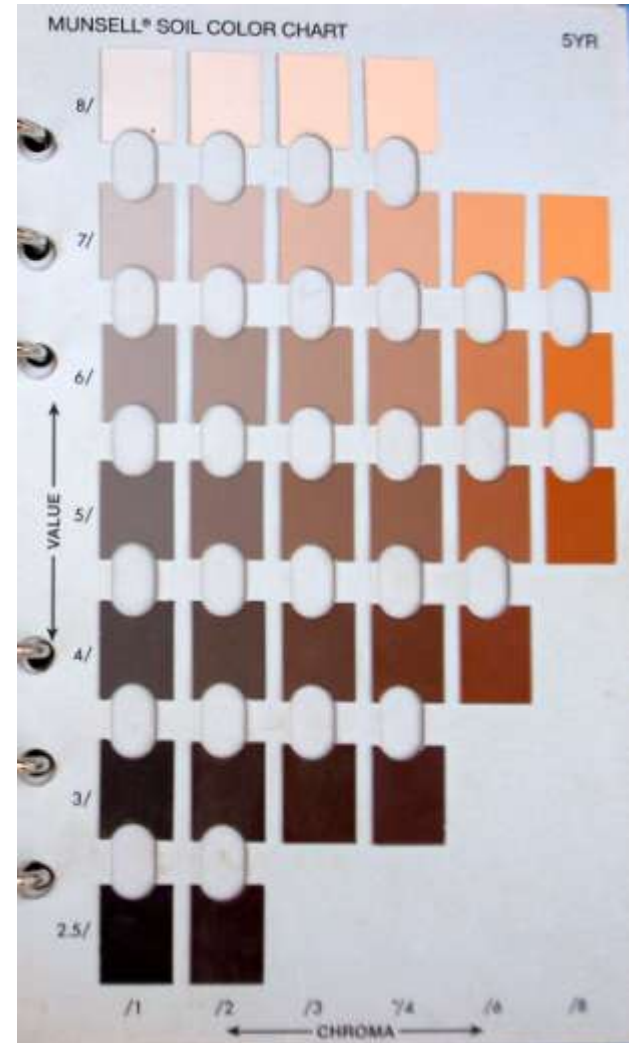
**“Pot reading” - looking for traces of the shaping process**



**Pot reading: traces of the shaping method: coiling**



**Pot reading: traces of the scraping the exterior surface**



**Colour: information on raw materials, firing, use, deposition**



**For instance: completely oxidized or not?**

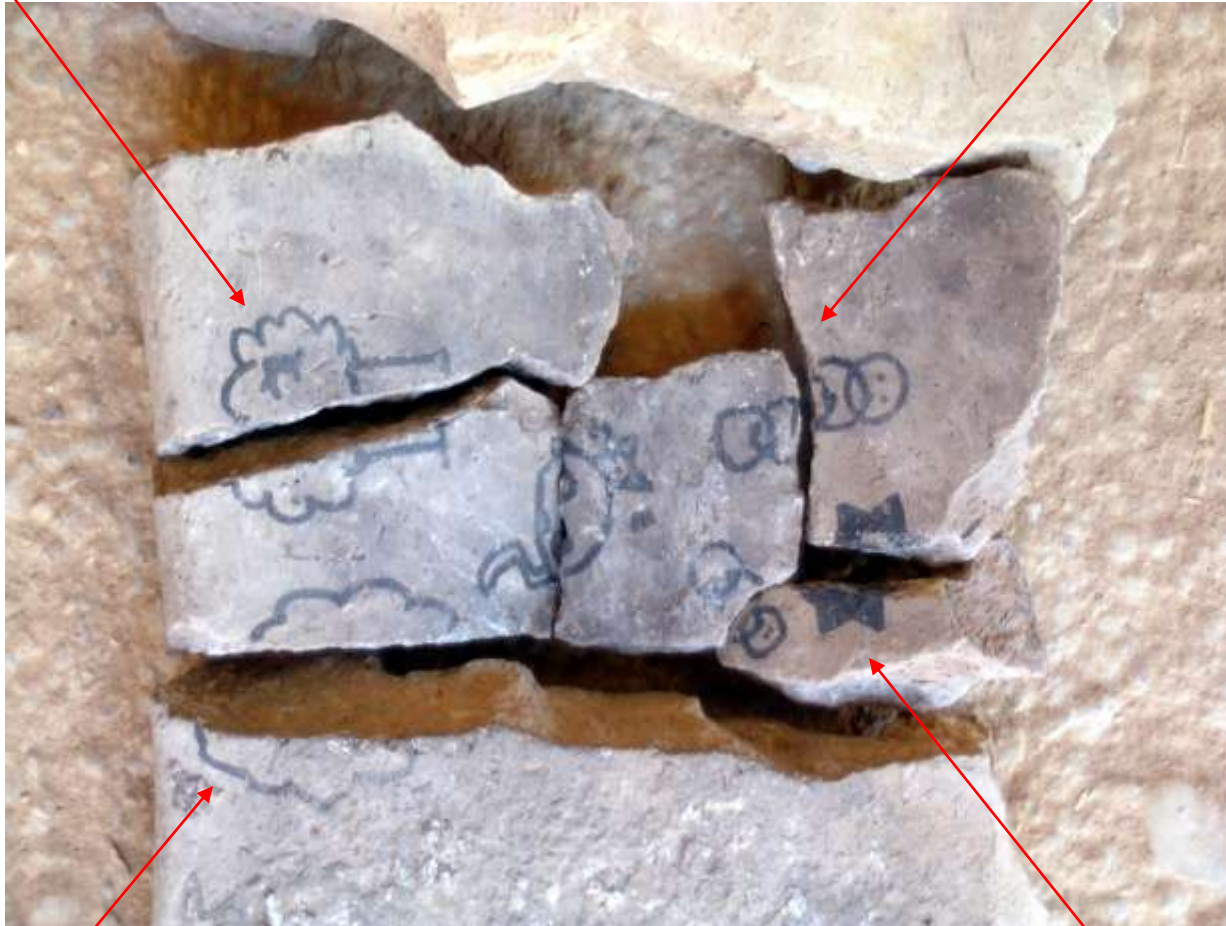




**Finally - to restore or not to restore, that's the question...**

Impossible to remove

Water resistant



Penetrating the pottery

Very conspicuous

**... but if you must ... use your mind! (*not* your marker)**



**Life after Death – 21th century depositional practices**



**Helping Salladin: a wall of sherds in the Hama 'Azm Palace**



Ancient site

Modern site

**Think carefully about your sherd deposition!**



شكرًا!

**Think about your future**