Reassessing Mimbres Mogollon Red-slip Pottery

Lori Barkwill Love (University of Texas at San Antonio)

OBJECTIVE:
Examine the attributes and chronology of the red-slip ceramics associated with Mogollon early (circular) pithouses.

SIGNIFICANCE:
Currently, there is no uniform typology for the red-slip pottery associated with Mogollon early (circular) pithouses. Red-slip ceramics (San Francisco Red) are often seen as a diagnostic characteristic of the Mogollon. However, red-slip pottery has been identified in other regions of the Southwest, suggesting that it may not be a unique feature of the Mogollon.

DATA:
A sample of red-slip sherd s from seven pithouse sites and pithouse chronometric dates

METHODS:
Attribute Analysis, Oxidation analysis, Bayesian Chronological Modeling

KEY QUESTIONS:
1) What are the characteristics of Mogollon early red-slip pottery?
2) Is the early red-slip pottery the same across the Mimbres, Upper Gila and Reserve areas of the Mogollon?
3) How does the red-slip pottery differ from San Francisco Red?
4) When did the red-slip pottery first appear?

RESULTS/CONCLUSIONS:
Red-Slip Pottery Attributes
- Fugitive slip (applied after firing) is rare and not representative of the early pottery. Both thick and thin slips can be found on the pottery. The red slip is not always obvious.
- Ninety-one percent of the pottery had at least some erosion on the surface. Given the likelihood of erosion, surface treatments (i.e., polish) should not be used as a diagnostic characteristic.
- Polish was commonly found on both thick and thin red slips.
- Early red-slip pottery is highly variable.

Regional Comparisons
- Early red-slip is found in low frequencies throughout the region at Early Pithouse sites, although maybe more common in the Mimbres than Upper Gila or Reserve.
- Thin slip and less polished wares were more common in the Mimbres area, but this does not appear to be a chronological difference.
- Rim thickness of bowls and jars was roughly uniform across the Mogollon.
- Scrapped interiors of jars was common in the Mimbres area.

San Francisco Red Attributes
- San Francisco Red had both thick and thin slip like the Plain Red-Slipped. None of the San Francisco Red sherd s were highly polished in this sample.
- San Francisco Red bowls and jars were thinner than the Plain Red-Slipped.

Chronology
- Red-slip pottery likely first appeared in the early fourth century AD. San Francisco Red possibly appeared in the early seventh century AD.
- At Mogollon Village in the UAA (~ AD 350) several sherd s of a bowl were recovered. The sherd s had a thick red-slip and polish, suggesting that the earliest red-slip was not thin slipped and unpolished.
- There is likely an association between the red-slip pottery and communal structures. The red-slip pottery appears shortly after the appearance of communal structures.
- At Mogollon Village, except for F22A, which is later in time, F12 and F13 (likely communal structures) had a higher percentage of red-slip ceramics.