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The potters' perspectives: A vibrant chronology of ceramic manufacturing practices in the valley of Juigalpa, Chontales, Nicaragua (cal 300 CE - present)

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Propositions

1. Time is multiscalar, so chronologies should not be reduced to be graphically represented as two-dimensional charts; but expressed as narratives that encompass the complex mesh of overlapping, intersecting, unfolding, and becoming trajectories that make life vital and vibrant.
2. If things are palimpsests, they cannot be interpreted and used as chrono-markers.
3. Chronologies are not the histories of ceramic types and modes, so ceramic classification methodologies in archaeology should not be used for chronological purposes.
4. The study of ceramics is centered on socially situated and learnt bodily gestures, incorporated in fired clay.
5. When combined with other embodied practices, a technological approach to ceramics can portray aspects of the lives and power relationships of its practitioners.
6. Chronologies should be viewed as narratives in which the different itineraries of practices intersect and interweave in diverse bundles over various timescales.
7. The valley of Juigalpa has featured human communities at least since cal 300 CE.
8. Life in the valley of Juigalpa centered around Aguas Buenas; a monumental architectural site comprising almost 400 man-made architectural structures.
9. The transformation of Aguas Buenas into a local landmark took at least a few hundred years, starting from a central quadrangular plaza (circa cal 400 CE), surrounded by elliptical arcs (circa 600 CE), a residential area (circa 1200 CE), and modern houses (circa 1800 CE).
10. Ceramic technologies in the valley of Juigalpa began to leave traces at least around cal 300 CE, and continue through today.
11. Continuity in bodily gestures during the ceramic manufacturing process suggests that the people of the valley of Juigalpa have shared and still share tight bonds, which materialize in communities, constellations, and networks of practices.
12. The history of the ceramics in the area must include the unbroken continuum of pottery production practices.
13. Neither the presence of imported materials from Greater Nicoya, nor the local production of Greater Nicoya ceramic styles, are archaeological markers for the inclusion of Chontales in that cultural subregion.
14. Foreign ideas were adopted by the people of the valley, embodied, and practiced according to local ways of doing.

15. Clay was, and continues to be, an integral part of human experience in the valley of Juigalpa. It is used for making pots, building houses and ovens, for growing food for humans and animals, and for making bricks and tiles.
16. Archaeological research looks at the past from the present, so I cannot overlook the surging social movement and concomitant state repression in Nicaragua during the last two years.
17. I support the values of the 1979 Sandinista revolution, which promoted political, economic, social, educational, and health equality for all Nicaraguans; however, the current violent oppression, murder, and the arrest of political prisoners are all unethical practices, and as scholars it is our responsibility to take position in the conflict.