



The Wheeler sitting in the trench turning the turntable

for use. They begin work at the turn-tables at about 6 a.m. and finish about 5 p.m. They usually make 10 to 16 jars in twelve hours. The kiln setting is done at about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning. The firing begins early in the afternoon; it lasts four to five hours and ends at sunset.

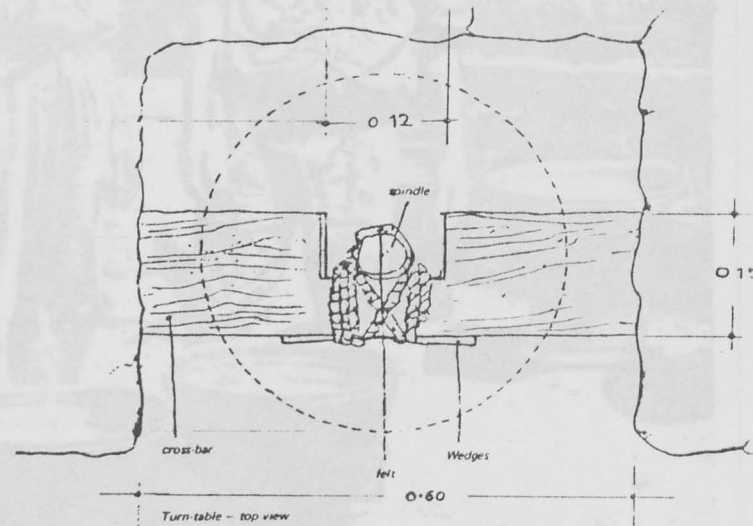
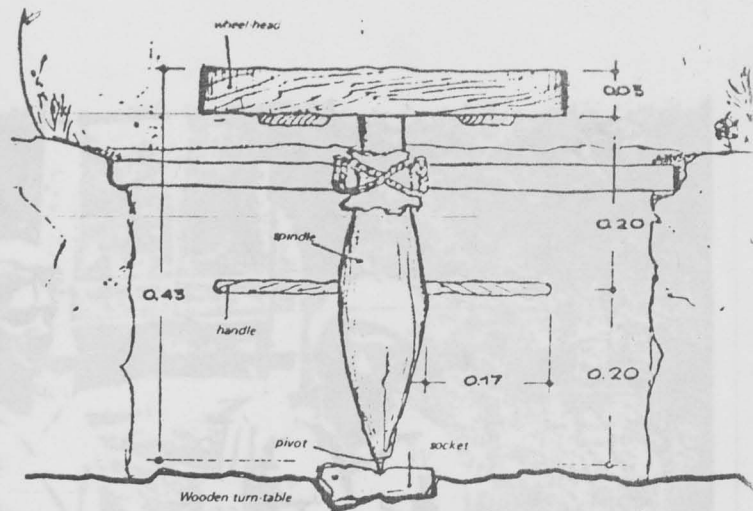
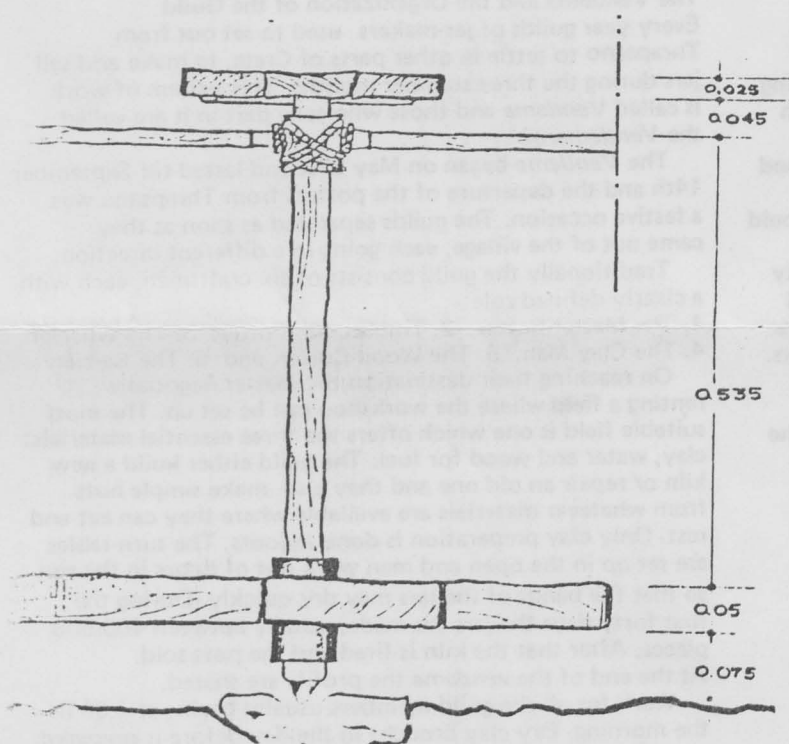
Dry clay and its preparation

Mixing raw materials has been an essential process since the earliest days of ceramics. In Thrapsano the clay is kneaded immediately before use. In general, the choice of dry clay and its preparation determine the kind of clay that will result and in turn, is directly related to the ceramic article to be made.

The place where the best clay can be found is already well known. The body is usually a mixture of clays, about 20% of which is more refractory, but often less plastic than the rest. In Thrapsano the clay is first dry mixed after seiving. It is then kneaded after the addition of water, and is then used immediately. This method of clay preparation seems to have been determined by the working conditions of the *vendema*: the material could not be stored.

The turn-table and the kick-wheel

The jars are made at low turn-tables rotated by hand. For each jar there is one wheel, or turn-table, operated by the Wheeler, who does not, however, take part in the making of the jar itself. The revolving movement of the turn-table cannot be continuous, nor can it be very rapid. The technique of making jars on this type of wheel is not based



on centring a mass of clay from which the final form will develop, but on the use of bands of clay fashioned at successive stages.

At Thrapsano a kick-wheel is also used but this is for producing smaller shapes: sometimes thrown, sometimes coiled or sometimes a combination of thrown and coiled techniques.

In order to set up the turn-tables and provide room for the Wheeler, the craftsmen dig a trench, which they widen by digging small square spaces known as "hearths" along one side at intervals of half a metre.

The bottom end of the "spindle", that is the vertical wooden axle on which the wheel rotates, ends in an iron pivot. This stands in a socket made from a stone or an iron slab. The top of the spindle passes through the centre of a wooden disk, which is the wheel-head.

The wheel-head is made of plane wood which is resistant to humidity. The spindle is made of olive wood because it becomes smooth with friction and turns easily. The spindle and the wheel-head stand upright with the help of the "cross-bar" which rests across the hearth of the "wheel trench". The "cross-bar" is a stop-plank with

