
Technological Choices and Social Inferences in the Copper Age Pottery Production of the Rome Area

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Résumé

Recent archaeological investigation in the Rome area revealed a long occupation during the prehistoric period. The archaeological evidences unearthed so far indicate the presence of human groups settled between the Tiber river, the Aniene river and the Colli Albani Volcano, between the 4th and the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. The integrity and the richness of the archaeological evidences, as domestic and relative burial contexts, represent a testimony of the sharing of a limited area where prehistoric human groups exploited the available resources and came in contact favoring the exchange of information within different traditions. To this matter, the study of domestic and funerary ceramic assemblages lead to define and highlight patterns of continuity or discontinuity in choices of production, providing data and insights useful to investigate and better understand the occupation dynamics of the area. Through the application of a multidisciplinary approach, which includes compositional analysis of the clay pastes, traces analyses and experimental archaeology, it was possible to reconstruct choices concerning raw materials exploitations and manufacturing processes (including modelling sequences, surface treatments and decoration techniques) adopted by the prehistoric groups. Such a study based on an empirical set of archaeological and experimental data lead to focus on social inferences in prehistoric communities and transmission of a technical knowledge, largely documented in ethnoarchaeological studies, and its related archaeological patterns. In this scenario, it has been possible to develop preliminary observations regarding the identity of copper age potters and their social role in a period, like the copper age, during which the social complexity is incipient rather than developed as suggested by the funerary context discovered in the Rome area.

Mots-Clés: Pottery, Technology, Copper Age, Craft

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