

---

# Indigenous and foreigner practices: a technological study of ceramic artifacts from a Late Bronze Age site in central Sicily

Gianpiero Caso\*<sup>1</sup>, Domenica Gullì , and Robert Tykot<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of South Florida (USF) – United States

## Abstract

Sant'Angelo Muxaro is located at the top of a hill in Central Sicily, in the northern side of the Agrigento province. This site is well known among archaeologists because of its rock-cut tombs spanning the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age of Sicily (13th - 8th century BC). The most recent excavation (2006-2007) allowed archaeologists, with the help of the local community, to recover and record more than 100 burials along the southern slope of the hill, including human remains and grave goods (ceramic and metal artifacts) spanning several generations of the local prehistoric inhabitants. Although current approaches have focused their attention towards the definition of relative chronologies in regards to local cultural developments, a more comprehensive study in regards to pottery-making practices, the habits, and the technological choices involved in the creation of ceramic products is still lacking. Here, we show the results of an archaeometric analysis of pottery remains coming from the most representative burial contexts, ranging from the 13th to the 10th century BC. The opportunity to explore main ceramic technological trends over time in relation to raw material procurement, the steps involved in the *chaîne opératoire*, and the intensity and the scale of local cultural receptiveness or resistance, can potentially lead to a definition of the most common practices adopted by indigenous potters during a crucial time period in the central Mediterranean. Particularly, these tombs were used continuously through time for five centuries, thus triggering the opportunity to look at techniques and choices made by potters, and, then, tracing technological trends over time in regards to ceramic production. Therefore, through a combination of chemical and petrographic analyses of the grave goods, it is possible to identify evidence of the long lasting relationships between Sicily and the Aegean, at the time of the highest peak of eastern Mediterranean influences over indigenous people, who, in response, started to build up new forms of representation in order to express their identities.

**Keywords:** Technology, Ceramics, Archaeometry, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Sicily, Mediterranean

---

\*Speaker