

THE POTTER, BETWEEN SPECIALISED PRODUCTION AND ROUTINE ACTIVITIES? MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF A COPPER AGE KILN

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One of the peculiar aspects of the Trypillia sites in Eastern Europe (beginning of the 4th mill. BCE) is the first attestation of some fired constructions in earthen architecture, mostly interpreted as technologically advanced kilns for pottery making. These structures had separate compartments for the heating material and the pottery to be fired and two or more parallel channels in the under-construction. Based on the fine quality and large quantity of painted ware assemblage at Trypillia sites, pottery production is seen as one of the earliest specialised handicrafts in Europe. In order to understand more about the potter's activities and the role of the potter in society, at the mega-site of Maidanetske, in central Ukraine, we applied a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation of one of these structures, including its surroundings and related pits. Evidence from charred botanical macro-remains, phytoliths, faunal remains, geochemistry, archaeological finds and stratigraphic information related to the kiln will be discussed and, when possible, compared with data from other excavated structures unrelated to the kiln. How do cereal processing, wood selection, and an unusual faunal record enter the potter's lifestyle? Can we trace a first, strict, labour division or is there attestation also of daily routine activities at the kiln? Through the archaeological, archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological record at Maidanetske, in comparison with similar excavated kilns at other Trypillia sites, some socio-economic aspects will be discussed about Copper Age society and production, on the light also of ethnographic models.

Keywords

kiln, pottery, crop processing, phytoliths, macroremains, society

Note/comment