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RARE INSIGHTS INTO CERAMIC BIOGRAPHIES: REMARKABLE VESSELS FROM THREE LINEAR POTTERY WELLS FROM SAXONY, GERMANY

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The analysis of archaeological finds often focuses, by necessity, on their fragmentary occurrence. For example, regular pottery analysis from prehistoric contexts is limited to thousands of individual sherds that rarely represent more than 10% of a former vessel. Now, what about the rare cases where whole vessels are found? Beside the so-called grave pottery, about whose production, use and last function is discussed quite a lot, there is since some years a relatively new category of finds, in which whole vessels are found more often: the wells of the Linear Pottery Culture (LPC). Due to their storage in a humid environment, these vessels have also preserved organic material and thus a multitude of previously unknown details of clay vessels. Thus, rare insights into individual "fates" of some vessels are possible here.

In addition, the impression increasingly arises that the wells were at least partially deliberately refilled after their use as water sources. However, this was not done with "waste" material as in other pits of this culture, but with complete clay vessels, some of which are still intact and usable today. Thus, some of the meanwhile numerous Early Neolithic well finds showed that parts of the backfill of such well shafts must have been regularly deposited: The well as a momentary Pompeii premise.

On the basis of a selection of Linear Pottery well finds from Saxony, Germany, we want to present some individual vessel biographies, which show all aspects of a longer use and special treatment: the use, repair, redesign of the decoration and further use, but at the same time also their deposition and thus the abandonment of their "earthly" life.

Keywords

Linear Pottery Culture, Early Neolithic Wells, Pottery use, Deposition processes, Vessel biographies

Note/comment