
The Late Neolithic Pattern Burnished pottery from Halai in East Lokris, Central Greece: Macroscopic Analysis

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Résumé

This paper is concerned with the Late Neolithic Pattern Burnished pottery from Halai. The site of Halai is a coastal settlement, situated southeast of the bay of Atalante and northwest of the Euboean Gulf. The Neolithic habitation in Halai seems to start around 6000 BC and lasts until ca. 5300 BC. This period corresponds to a stratigraphic sequence consisting of five strata. The excavated part of the settlement is around 200 square meters. The houses that provide more explicit evidence regarding the domestic organization are in the west and northwest, with some of them having small hearths in the interior for domestic use. In the east, there is an open space with several hearths and a large number of cooking pots. Therefore, this area must have functioned as a place for the communal preparation of the food. In the same place, a significant amount of undecorated and decorated, mostly painted and pattern burnished, tableware has also come across, leading to a preliminary conclusion that both the preparation and the consumption of the food might have been common activities to a great extent.

Although the architecture and the size of the houses suggest minimal inequality among the families having lived in this settlement, the distribution of the decorated pottery can provide additional information for the social organization in the settlement. The Pattern Burnished pottery, a type of ware which has received little discussion for the Neolithic settlements in Central Greece, including a significant number of fragments coming from both the houses and the open space. The appearance of this type of ware in Halai dates to the beginning of the Late Neolithic I period and continues existing until the latest phase of this period. The paper aims to introduce the main characteristics of the Pattern Burnished pottery (shapes of vessels, ceramic composition, surface treatment, firing techniques, decorative motifs) from Halai, and its distribution in the settlement, as well as to discuss the similarities and differences in this type of ware from other sites in the Greek mainland. This presentation relies on the macroscopic analysis of the ceramic material from Halai and the existing bibliography. The ultimate goal of this paper is to 'fill part of the gap' of archaeological knowledge for the Neolithic settlements in Central Greece and their social relationships and exchange networks with other settlements outside of this area.

Mots-Clés: Late Neolithic pottery, Pattern Burnished ware, Halai, Central Greece, parallels, macroscopic analysis, social organization, exchange networks

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