

Archaeometric characterisation of votive materials from the sanctuary of Apollo at Pompeii

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INTRODUCTION

The contribution presents the results of archaeometric analyses performed on votive ceramic samples found near the sanctuary of Apollo at Pompeii (Naples, Italy) during the excavations carried out in 1980-81 at the eastern side of the Forum of the city.

The characterisation of these votive materials is part of a wider project that aims to investigate different ceramic classes from Pompeii, focusing the attention on regional, micro-regional and extra-regional mechanisms of pottery distribution between the IVth century-79 AD.

The preliminary analysis, performed on common ware samples, verified the archaeological hypothesis about the presence of extra-regional productions in the considered period providing information on the complex trade mechanisms in the Bay of Naples (SCARPELLI *et alii*, 2011a; SCARPELLI *et alii*, 2011b).

In this second phase we considered the votive objects, ceramic materials dating to the IInd century B.C. and considered as local production of workshops (not yet identified) for devotees.

The samples belong to different typologies such as *Thymiatheria* (incense burner), terracotta figurines and miniature vessels (Fig.1) that have the function of votive offerings for the divinity.

Most of these are characterised by a similar composition to the common ware production (COTTICA *et alii.*, 2010), which is also presented for comparison.

The petrographic (OM), mineralogical (XRD) and chemical (XRF) analyses aim to verify the homogeneity, for the votive pottery group, concerning the raw materials and the production technology.



Fig. 1 – Miniature vessels samples.

The presence of volcanic inclusions and mineralogical phases of Vesuvian provenance (Fig.2), confirms the local production for all samples.



Fig. 2- Microphotograph of a representative terracotta figurine

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In addition the observed variations regarding the petrographic features and the chemical compositions (major and trace elements), could ascertain the presence of more ceramic ateliers specialised in the production of different potteries or, simply, verify the supplying of clayey materials from different sources in the Vesuvian area.

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