

IL NEOLITICO FINALE A FESTÒS:
PER UNA RICONSIDERAZIONE
FUNZIONALE DEI DATI DAGLI SCAVI LEVI

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ABSTRACT

This work has been pointed at reviewing the previous publications of Phaistian Neolithic pottery on the base of the new acquisitions provided by the recent excavations at Phaistos (directed by V. La Rosa) and by the study of the new ceramic deposits and related architectures that have reopened the problem of the definition of the Phaistian Final Neolithic.

Since the discovery of the Minoan Civilization, the attention in Minoan studies has been focused on the Palaces and the Neolithic was investigated only in order to better understand the origins of the Minoans. Little attention has been paid to this subject up to the last years, when it has been noted a rising interest, thanks both to new excavations and surveys and to a new trend of research that aim at reviewing old problems, questioning established facts and at re-examining material from old excavations, in order possibly to shed a light on various issues according to the latest studies and discoveries.

L. Vagnetti in her very good publication of the materials of the past excavations gave a typological approach to the ceramic catalogue, not always taking into consideration the bulk of fragmentary materials and their location. These materials have been now valued through a contextual and functional approach to try a reconstruction of the ceramic sets used by the inhabitants of the site, to clear, in some cases, the nature of their depositions and to establish the activity held. Thus the quantity evaluation and the functional study of the pottery and related structures from the past excavations have allowed understanding the articulation and the organization of the different areas of the settlement (domestic and working areas, communal spaces, burials). The study of the Neolithic structures and the related stratigraphies have allowed to date some of them to the EM I, and to understand the function of the others.

The study of the bulk of Neolithic materials has showed certainly the distinctiveness of Phaistos in respect of the other FN Cretan sites in terms of quantity and quality of the pottery wares. Moreover it has been reassessed also the role and the significance of Neolithic Phaistos, that showed a great concentration of vessels of communal consumption used for ritualised drinking/feasting practises, if compared with the other Neolithic sites in Crete.

The uniqueness of Phaistos can be without doubt the starting point to determine not only the settlement patterns of this site in the Neolithic but also its importance from this period onwards.