



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Exploring local pottery production in Al-Ula: diachronic insights from the UCOP and MuDUD Projects

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Abstract

The Al-Ula Cultural Oasis Project (UCOP) and the Multiscalar Documentation of Urban Dynamics (MuDUD) projects, led by Archaïos, funded and steered by the French Agency for AlUla Development on behalf of the Royal Commission for AlUla, provide a comprehensive diachronic perspective on local pottery production in the Al-Ula valley. Spanning from the early second millennium BCE to the present day, these projects draw on two distinct corpora: surface collections from systematic survey conducted in the cultivated gardens of the Al-Ula oasis as part of the UCOP project, and stratified assemblages recovered from test soundings in different zones of the Old Town under the MuDUD project.

The UCOP corpus was examined using typological and macroscopic analysis, identifying local production mainly through comparison with the pottery excavated at Dadan, Hegra and al-Mabiyat. Conversely, 65 sherds from the MuDUD assemblage, covering all periods identified by both projects, were submitted to archaeometric analyses (MGR, XRF), providing more detailed insights into the technological and compositional aspects of pottery production. By integrating these complementary approaches, the results of both projects offer a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of Al-Ula's ceramic heritage across four millennia.

Keywords

Al-Ula oasis, Al-Ula Old Town, local pottery, Northwestern ArabiaNorthwestern Arabia, diachronic study

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