

Craftsmanship and Gentilital Empowerment in the South Italian Iron Age

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The aim of this contribution is to understand the relationships between the craftsmanship activity and the construction of elite identities and hegemony in a main center of the South Italian Iron Age, Incoronata. Characterized by a mixed situation – potters Enotrians and Greeks were working together during a century, from the end of the VIIIth to the end of the VIIth Century B.C. – this site offers a crucial model for analyzing the mechanisms of a collective sharing of techniques, objects, rituals, imageries, and ideology between a non-Greek community dominating the Ionian coastal belt of Enotria and an Aegean group of people and potters arriving here.

In a pre- (or para-)colonial historical context, the recent archaeological investigation of Rennes University enlighten us on the leading role played by the indigenous community in this process, on the importance of the creation of a common (“middle”) ground for craftsmanship activities and ritual practices, in which the different communities encountered, as well as on the fundamental role of the ideological sphere, as a specific instrument for the social interaction and the construction of gentilital identities: a phenomenon, in which the “economic” sphere (as an autonomous and oriented activity) looks not to be able to be the key of understanding the complexity of local and international relationships of this world.