



Fingerprints of Men, Women, and Children at Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Hama

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The current reanalysis of ceramics from Early Bronze Age Hama, Syria in the National Museum of Denmark by an international team presents a unique opportunity for the study of what ridge density of ancient fingerprints can tell us about the organization of ceramic industries. This work follows a 2015 pilot study by the author using Late Chalcolithic to Middle Bronze Age ceramics from Tell Leilan, Syria. The ceramic assemblage from Hama analyzed in the present study dates from the same periods as the Tell Leilan ceramics, but offers the perspective of a smaller site throughout these periods, in a neighboring region (inland Western Syria), as well as a larger sample size (total sample includes 429 prints), including many more complete vessels, a larger variety of objects, including figurines and miniature vessels, and an opportunity for collaboration with other analyses being performed concurrently. The results of this analysis provide an interesting narrative of changes in the social organization of ceramic production at the site during the periods beginning with the establishment of the Ebla palatial system. In addition, important insights into the process of potter apprenticeship, relationships between work and play, and parent-child relationships at Hama during these phases are suggested.