university of groningen

NWO



S·A·L·T AND POWER

EARLY STATES ROME AND RESOURCE CONTROL

Nazzano (Roma)

2 - 9 November 2025

Experiment info
Workshop book



Table of contents

The Salt & Power Project 4

The Piscina Torta productive site 6

Scientific output 11

The kiln 3K3 14

The experiment 18

The workshop 20

Abstracts 22

Il comune di Nazzano (testo italiano) 30

The Municipality of Nazzano (english text) 33

Tra il 2 e l'8 novembre 2025, nell'ambito del progetto Salt & Power dell'Università di Groningen, si svolgerà a Nazzano un esperimento archeologico. Il team del progetto, con l'assistenza dei propri collaboratori, tenterà di ricostruire e mettere in funzione uno dei forni da sale dell'età del Ferro rinvenuti nel sito di Piscina Torta (Roma). A seguire, il 9 novembre, si terrà un piccolo workshop presso la Sala Consiliare del Comune di Nazzano, durante il quale alcuni colleghi presenteranno diverse esperienze di archeologia sperimentale, e verranno discussi i primissimi risultati preliminari dell'esperimento.

Between 2 and 8 November 2025, as part of the Salt & Power project of the University of Groningen, an archaeological experiment will take place in Nazzano. The project team, with the assistance of its collaborators, will attempt to reconstruct and operate one of the Iron Age salt kilns excavated at the site of Piscina Torta (Rome). This will be followed, on 9 November, by a small workshop held in the Council Hall of the Nazzano Municipality, where colleagues will present various experimental archaeology initiatives, and the team will show the first preliminary results of the experiment.

university of groningen

S·A·L·T AND POWER
EARLY STATES · ROME AND RESOURCE CONTROL

NWO

The Salt & Power Project

Salt is indispensable to human society, both in the past and in the present. The health of humans and animals alike depends on this resource, and in antiquity, salt also played a crucial role in food preservation. It was the only means available to store and transport perishable goods over long distances, thus enabling the supply of essential foodstuffs to the earliest large urban centres, which could number thousands of inhabitants. For the emerging city-states of central Italy, control over salt resources was therefore of paramount importance, as it directly affected their economic and political stability.

The Salt & Power project aims to determine how salt was produced before the establishment of these early city-states and to understand how salt production evolved to keep pace with the increasing population of the early states, particularly that of Rome. To address these questions, the project employs a comprehensive and up-to-date methodological approach, integrating archaeological, geoarchaeological, and experimental techniques. Through this approach, it seeks to provide a historically significant case study that contributes to the broader global archaeological and anthropological debate on salt-making, resource management, and the dynamics of control over vital resources in prehistoric and early state societies.

This four-year project is based at the University of Groningen and is funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

Research questions

Control over the salterns in the Tiber delta was a key factor in Rome's ascent to power; however, direct physical evidence for such installations is still lacking. Our central research questions are therefore the following: When were salterns first established, and how was salt produced prior to their construction? How did communities meet the increasing demand for salt generated by the growing populations of the early states in central Italy—particularly that of Rome—and by what means was this vital resource secured?

Our investigation focuses on identifying the emergence of large-scale salt production, which we hypothesize took place in central Italy during the formative phase of the city-states, between the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, around 1000 BCE. Presently, the archaeological record consists primarily of remains associated with a form of salt industry known as briquetage. This technique involved the preparation and boiling of seawater in distinctive reddish ceramic jars to produce solid salt, a process well documented in ethnographic accounts and archaeologically attested in prehistoric contexts elsewhere in Europe. Because the jars had to be broken to extract the crystallized salt, briquetage sites are typically characterized by extensive accumulations of ceramic sherds.

Understanding the technological aspects of salt production provides valuable insight into patterns of labour organization, time investment, and overall scale of production—factors that can in turn be correlated with contemporary settlement structures and socio-economic systems. Our

Salt & Power Project team

Principal Investigator	dr Luca Alessandri	University of Groningen; Sapienza Università di Roma
Project leader	prof. Peter A. J. Attema	University of Groningen
Researcher	dr Francesca Bulian	University of Groningen
Senior scientific collaborator	prof. Jan Sevink	University of Amsterdam
Researcher	dr Agostino Sotgia	University of Groningen

reconstruction of this process has been achieved through the integration of geophysical prospection, archaeological excavation, functional analysis of artefacts, and chemical analyses of soils and ceramics.

This innovative, multi-scalar methodology enables us not only to explore ethnographically known protohistoric briquetage systems but also to identify archaeologically the later development of salterns—a more efficient mode of production based on the use of sequential evaporation ponds for salt precipitation, which emerged in conjunction with early urbanization. Understanding this transition from relatively small-scale, labour-intensive briquetage to large-scale saltern production lies at the core of our investigation into the processes of intensification and state control over salt production during the formation of early complex societies in central Italy.



The Piscina Torta productive site

The archaeological site of Piscina Torta, located within the Castel Fusano pinewood about 4 km south of ancient Ostia and roughly 25 km from Rome, represents one of the most extensive protohistoric salt-production areas known along the Tyrrhenian coast of Central Italy. The site occupies a low beach-ridge complex on the southern fringe of the Tiber delta, immediately adjacent to what was once the Ostia palaeolagoon, a shallow brackish basin that persisted until its reclamation in the nineteenth century. Recent multidisciplinary research conducted within the framework of the Salt & Power project of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology has shed new light on the geomorphological evolution, human exploitation, and environmental engineering of this exceptional coastal landscape, active between the mid-eighth and sixth centuries BCE.

Geomorphological and Environmental Setting

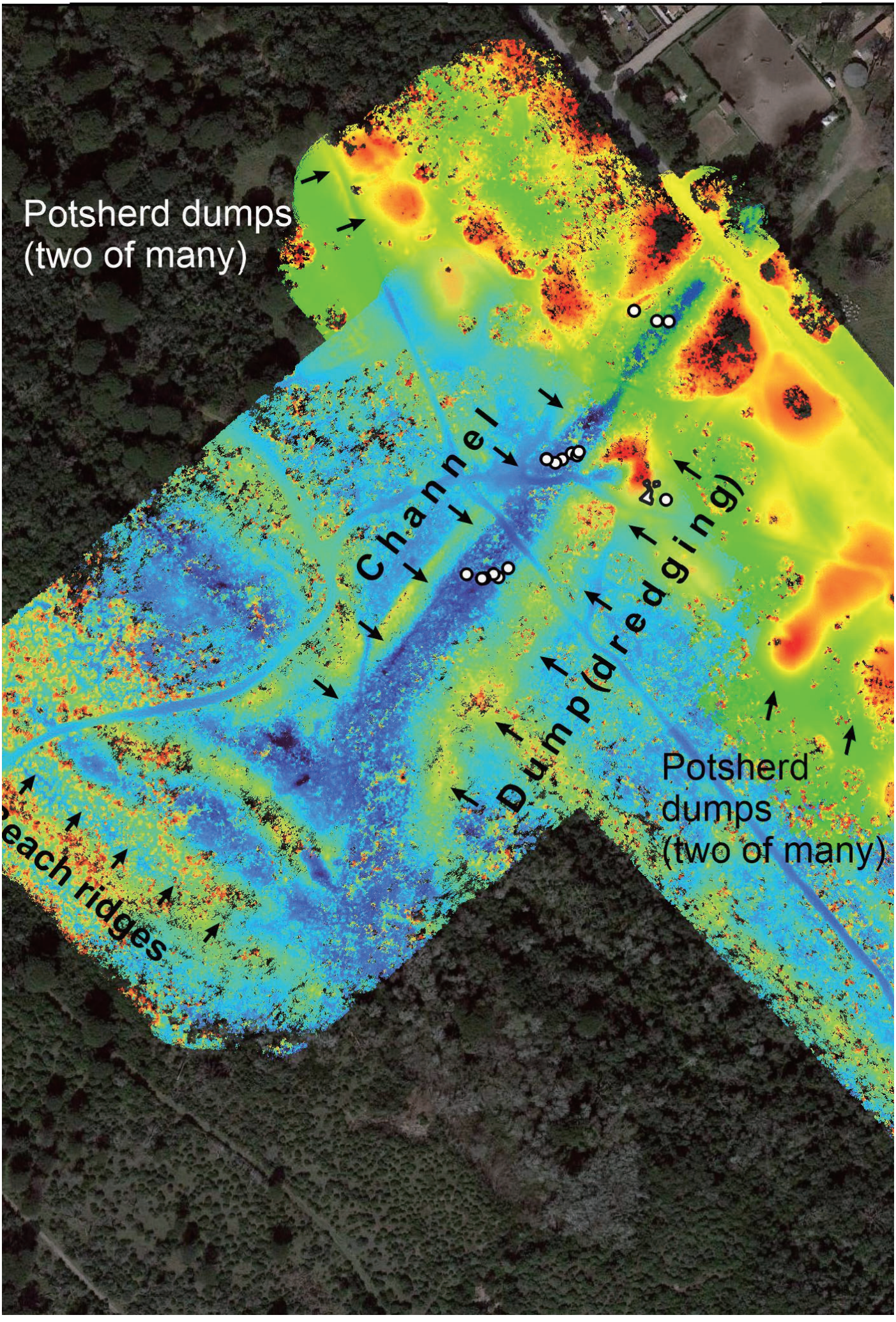
The southern Tiber delta constitutes a textbook example of a wave-dominated Holocene delta, whose evolution was driven by post-glacial sea-level fluctuations and high sediment supply from the Tiber River. Following the rapid transgression between ca. 14 000 and 6000 years BP, the former fluvial valley was drowned, producing a lagoon-barrier-island system that migrated landward as sea level rose. When the rate of sea-level rise slowed after ~6000 BP, the delta prograded rapidly, generating a succession of shore-parallel beach ridges and interdunal depressions that defined a mosaic of marine, lagoonal, and terrestrial environments .

Within this framework, the ridge on which Piscina Torta sits formed during the fifth progradational phase of the delta, dated between 910 and 800 cal BCE (Giraudi 2004; Bicket 2009). At that time, the shoreline lay about 1.3 km inland of the present coast, placing the site on the immediate margin of the southern sector of the Ostia lagoon. High-resolution LiDAR and electrical resistivity tomography (ERT) conducted by Bulian et al. (2024) revealed an elongated palaeochannel crossing the ridge and trending northwest–southeast. Stratigraphic, sedimentological, and palaeobotanical analyses demonstrate that this channel originated as a tidal inlet connecting the Tyrrhenian Sea with the lagoon, subsequently filled with alternating layers of marine sands, peats, and carbonate marls.

Crucially, during the period of occupation the channel was actively dredged and maintained, as attested by anthropogenically reworked sediments, dumped marly deposits rich in pottery, and discrete ERT signatures indicating excavation and refilling episodes. This evidence points to a deliberate management of water circulation for industrial purposes—an early form of hydraulic engineering ensuring the supply of seawater for salt production and possibly maintaining navigability for small craft. The site thus exemplifies the interplay between natural geomorphology and human adaptation in a dynamic deltaic environment

Discovery and Archaeological Context

Piscina Torta was first reported by Pisani Sartorio and Quilici Gigli (1984), who identified extensive surface scatters of reddish ceramic fragments covering nearly 15 ha. The material, consisting almost exclusively of thick-walled jars (olla-type vessels) dated to the seventh–sixth centuries BCE, led them to hypothesize a link with salt production or fish processing. Subsequent investigations by the Salt & Power team—combining intensive artefact survey, magnetometry, coring, and excavation—have confirmed both the protohistoric chronology and the industrial nature of the site.


Potsherd dumps
(two of many)
Channel
Dump (dredging)
Potsherd
dumps
(two of many)
each ridges



Surface and subsurface datasets show extremely high ceramic densities, exceeding any domestic or funerary context of the same period, while diagnostic forms, fabric, and firing techniques indicate purpose-made containers used for evaporating brine through the briquetage process. In this technique, seawater—either taken directly from the inlet or from evaporation ponds connected to it—was boiled in refractory jars until the salt crystallized; the vessels were then broken to extract the solid salt cakes. This explains the massive dumps of jar sherds, forming artificial mounds several metres high that still mark the landscape today.

Excavations in Area 1 have revealed sequences of dumped sands mixed with carbonised remains and pottery fragments, along with kiln structures and burnt clay pavements, confirming the large-scale, specialized character of production.

Chronology and Material Culture

Typological parallels of the ceramic assemblage place the main phase of activity between 725 and 525 BCE, spanning the Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition to the Archaic period. Radiocarbon dates from organic materials embedded in the channel fills and dump deposits corroborate this timeframe. The earlier levels, associated with kilns and fine sand floors, date around 725–710 BCE, whereas the upper dumps belong to the sixth century BCE, when evidence of dredging and marl deposition is strongest.

The homogeneity of the pottery—composed almost exclusively of ollae—suggests an industrial rather than domestic assemblage, while the near-absence of tableware or habitation structures indicates that production was carried out by specialized labour groups, possibly seasonal workers linked to inland centres. The ceramics' characteristic red-brown hue, thick walls, and coarse fabrics are consistent with high-temperature, repeated heating cycles typical of briquetage vessels across Europe, though the Italian forms differ morphologically from their northern counterparts, suggesting technological adaptation to local resources and firing conditions.

Methods and Interdisciplinary Approach

Research at Piscina Torta exemplifies the integrated methodology promoted by the Salt & Power project. Intensive surveys were performed on a high-precision RTK-GPS grid using open-source software (Epicollect 5, SW Maps) to record artefacts and contextual variables directly in the field. Data were processed through visibility-corrected density algorithms and interpolated using ordinary kriging, yielding high-resolution distribution maps that guided subsequent excavations.

Complementary magnetometric prospection (Sensys FM650 array) detected clusters of high-amplitude anomalies corresponding to kilns, furnaces, and dumping pits. Coring and sedimentological analyses, combined with LiDAR-derived digital terrain models, allowed correlation between archaeological and geomorphological features. The resulting dataset integrates topography, artefact distribution, and subsurface stratigraphy within a unified geospatial framework, enabling interpretation of the site as part of a broader lagoonal-coastal system rather than an isolated production spot.

The excavations

To date, four excavation campaigns have been carried out at the site of Piscina Torta between 2022 and 2025, the results of which remain largely unpublished. Two main excavation areas (Area 1 and Area 3) have been opened, within which four kilns—most likely used for salt production—together with their associated structures and dumping deposits have been investigated. In total, more than 100,000 ceramic fragments have been recovered (only rims and bottoms), all belonging to ollae or dolia.

Interpretation and Broader Significance

Piscina Torta stands as a unique testimony to early resource exploitation and environmental management at the dawn of urbanisation in Central Italy. Its scale, nearly 15 ha of concentrated production, implies an organised and possibly centralised enterprise serving the emerging city-states of Latium, foremost among them Rome. The strategic location at the mouth of the Tiber system, providing access both to maritime routes and to the inland river network, would have facilitated distribution of salt to the hinterland, fulfilling a crucial economic and nutritional demand.

The deliberate dredging of the channel and the monumental accumulation of production waste demonstrate collective planning and sustained investment, signalling that salt extraction was not a peripheral or household activity but part of a proto-industrial economy underpinning early state formation. The site thus bridges the gap between environmental processes shaping the Tiber delta and the socio-economic transformations that marked the rise of Rome.

Beyond its historical implications, Piscina Torta provides a rare case where geoarchaeological, geophysical, and archaeological datasets converge to document the continuous feedback between humans and a dynamic coastal environment. The inhabitants' ability to manipulate hydrology, maintain water access, and exploit saline ecosystems illustrates a sophisticated understanding of landscape processes.

Piscina Torta excavation team

Director	dr Luca Alessandri	University of Groningen; Sapienza Università di Roma
Responsible	dr Agostino Sotgia	University of Groningen
Excavation area supervisor (Area 1)	Luca Cusimano	Università di Roma Tor Vergata
Excavation area supervisor (Area 1)	dr Angelica Fiorillo	Università di Bologna
Excavation area supervisor (Area 3)	Virginia Gianni	Università di Roma Tor Vergata
Excavation area supervisor (Area 3)	Caterina Rossi	Università di Roma Tor Vergata
Digital recording supervisor	Giovanni Alberto Della Sala	Università di Roma Tor Vergata

Piscina Torta collaborators

Geomatics coordinator	prof. Valerio Baiocchi	Sapienza Università di Roma
aDNA analyses	prof. Flavio De Angelis	Università degli Studi della Campania; California State University Northridge
Geophysical surveys	prof. Wieke De Neef	University of Bamberg
Geophysical surveys	prof. Giorgio De Donno	Sapienza Università di Roma
Palaeomagnetism specialist	dr Anita Di Chiara	Istituto Nazionale Geofisica e Vulcanologia

Scientific output

Papers

Alba, R.B., Chiara, A.D., Alessandri, L., Cusimano, L., Sala, G.A.D., Fiorillo, A., Gianni, V., Rossi, C., Sotgia, A., Florindo, F., 2025. **Archaeomagnetic Dating of Roman Iron Age Kilns** (No. EGU25-19529). Presented at the EGU25, Copernicus Meetings. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu25-19529

Alessandri, L., Attema, P., 2021. **From briquetage to salterns in protohistoric central Italy.Research of a fundamental subsistence commodity**. IpoTESI di Preistoria 14, 161–168. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1974-7985/14338

Alessandri, Luca, Attema, P.A.J., Bulian, F., Sevink, J., De Neef, W., Baiocchi, V., Rolfo, M.F., Cifani, G., Ceccato, Z.L.A., Cusimano, L., De Vos, M., Di Giacomo, L., Fiorillo, A., Gianni, V., Improta, C., Rossi, C., Ter Horst, Y., Vagliviello, S., 2024. **Salt in Late Iron Age Italy. A multidisciplinary approach to the exploration of Italy's coastal exploitation sites: Piscina Torta (Ostia, Rome) case study.** Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports 53, 104361. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2023.104361

Alessandri, Luca, Baiocchi, V., Guarnieri, A., Ciardulli, A.M., 2025. **Drone-based laser scanning for improved archaeological surveys in heavily vegetated zones: A Roman coastline case study.**, in: 2025 IEEE 12th International Workshop on Metrology for AeroSpace (MetroAeroSpace). Presented at the 2025 IEEE 12th International Workshop on Metrology for AeroSpace (MetroAeroSpace), pp. 838–842. https://doi.org/10.1109/MetroAeroSpace64938.2025.11114655

Alessandri, L., Baiocchi, V., Monti, F., 2023a. **Intensive archaeological survey at Piscina Torta: use of a low-cost RTK portable kit to materialise a UTM grid on the ground**, in: Proceedings of the 2022 IMEKO TC4 International Conference on Metrology for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. Presented at the 2022 IMEKO TC4 International Conference on Metrology for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, IMEKO, Consenza, ITALY, pp. 181–185. https://doi.org/10.21014/tc4-ARC-2022.035

Alessandri, L., Baiocchi, V., Monti, F., Cusimano, L., Fiorillo, A., Gianni, V., Rossi, C., Attema, P.A.J., Rolfo, M.F., 2023b. **Low-cost GPS/GNSS Real Time Kinematic receiver to build a cartographic grid on the ground for an archaeological survey at Piscina Torta (Italy).** Acta IMEKO 12, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.21014/actaimeko.v12i4.1561

Alessandri, L., Belardelli, C., Attema, P.A.J., Cortese, F., Rolfo, M.F., Sevink, J., van Gorp, W., 2021. **Bronze Age and Iron Age salt production on the Italian Tyrrhenian coast: an overview**, in: Gnade, M., Revello Lami, M. (Eds.), Tracing Technology. Forty Years of Archaeological Research at Satricum, Babesch Supplement, 42. Leuven - Paris - Bristol, CT, pp. 25–40.

Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., Attema, P.A.J., Sevink, J., 2025a. **Salt production, trade and consumption in European pre-industrial societies: Analytical methods and socioeconomic contexts.** Quaternary Science Reviews 356, 109291. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2025.109291

Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., Neef, W. de, Dee, M.W., Plessis, J. du, Attema, P., Sevink, J., 2023c.

Paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the southern extension of the Tiber delta with the Ostia palaeo lagoon: interplay between human activity and landscape change (No. EGU23-8467). Presented at the EGU23, Copernicus Meetings. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu23-8467

Alessandri, L., Cardarelli, L., Cesaretti, A., Dan, R., Fiorillo, A., Sotgia, A., Cusimano, L., Della Sala, G.A., Gianni, V., Rossi, C., 2025b. **From pencil to pixel: assessing ceramatic 2.0 against manual and laser-aided techniques in archaeological pottery documentation.** Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage 37, e00435. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.daach.2025.e00435

Alessandri, L., Sottili, G., Belardelli, C., 2024. **A review of available analytical methods to detect ancient salt production**. Quaternary Science Reviews 338, 108809. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2024.108809

Attema, P., Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., Sevink, J., Sotgia, A., 2025. **Production and Demand of Salt in Ancient Italy from the Bronze Age to the Roman Period**, in: Eubanks, P.N., Dumas, A.A., McKillop, H., Alexianu, M. (Eds.), Meridians of Salt: Global Perspectives on Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology. Springer Nature Switzerland, Cham, pp. 211–233. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96692-7_11

Attema, P.A.J., Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., De Neef, W., Sevink, J., 2024. **Studying Coastal Resources and Resource Control in the Context of Early State Formation on the Tyrrhenian Coast (Italy),** in: Pirson, F., Schütt, B., Schulz, T. (Eds.), Tagungen Und Kongresse 3. Presented at the Micro-Regions as Spaces of Socio-Ecological Interaction, pp. 59–65. https://doi.org/10.34780/b573-qb3b

Bulian, F., Alessandri, L., Attema, P., Sevink, J., 2024. **Bronze Age to Roman period salt production in the coastal areas of peninsular Italy: Palaeoenvironments, production methods and archaeological evidence.** Quaternary Science Reviews 344, 108930. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2024.108930

Fulminante, F., Alessandri, L., 2024. **Salt Production in Central Italy and Social Network Analysis Centrality Measures: An Exploratory Approach**. Open Archaeology 10. https://doi.org/10.1515/opar-2024-0003

Books

Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., Attema, P.A.J., Sevink, J. 2025, **The prehistory of salt**, special issue of Quaternary Science Review

International conferences

Alessandri, L., Bulian, F., Attema, P.A.J., Sevink, J. 2022, **International workshop on the importance of salt production in antiquity**, 3-4 October, Dutch Institute in Rome

Bulian, F., Jiménez-Espejo, F. J. Alessandri, L. 2024, **Human influence on coastal paleoenvironments: a geoarchaeological perspective of human-environmental interactions from the Quaternary to the Anthropocene**, EAA session in Rome, 29 August

Attema, P.A.J., Sotgia, A., Alessandri, L. 2024, **Demand for salt: from Prehistory to the early modern period**, EAA session in Rome, 30 August

The kiln 3K3

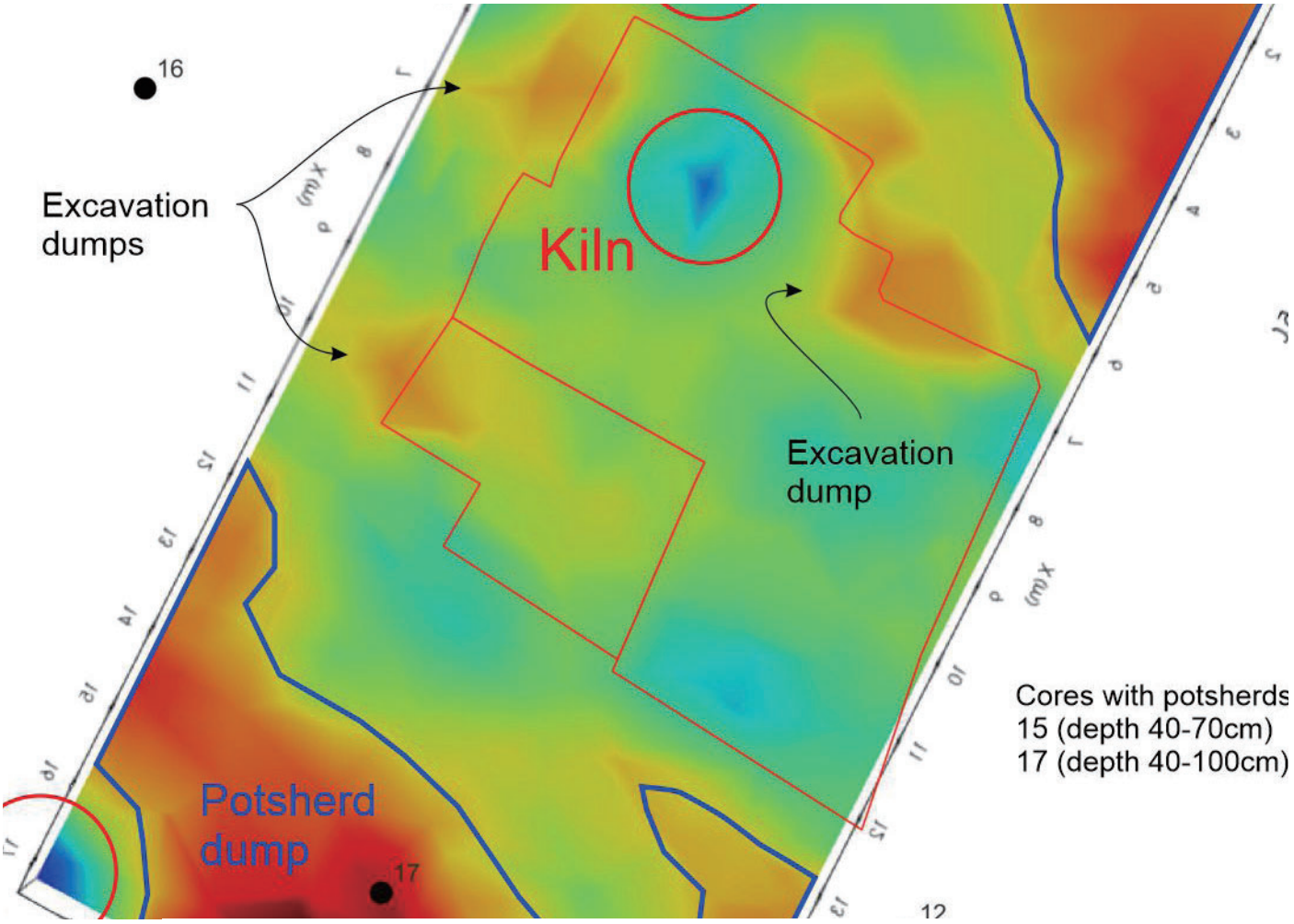
Kiln 3K3 was discovered in the so-called Area 3, beneath two later furnaces. It represents the earliest installation within the area, lying directly above the ancient dune. Its presence had already been detected through geoelectrical prospection (ERT, G. De Donno) prior to excavation. The kiln, which was filled with the usual dumps of ceramic fragments, was constructed in two distinct phases.

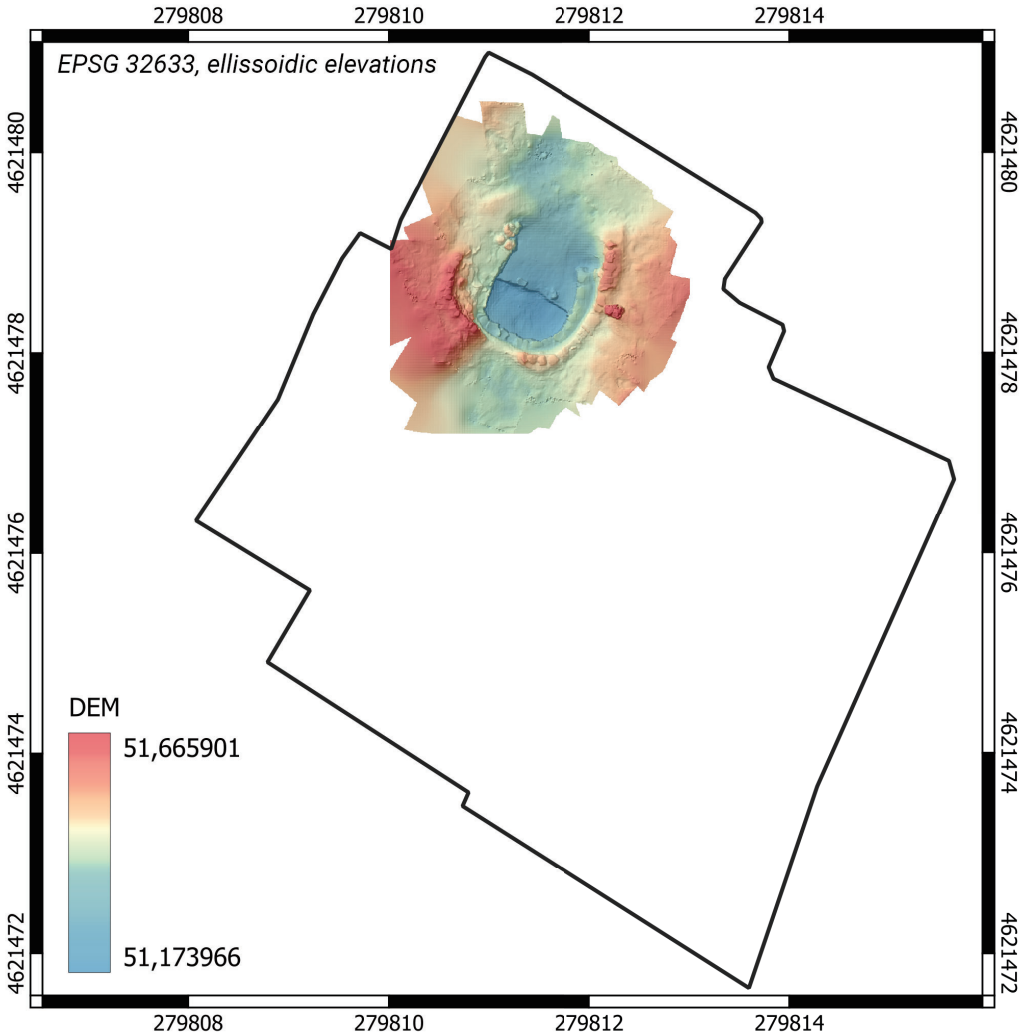
In the first phase, a roughly circular pit about one metre in diameter was lined with several courses of carefully arranged ceramic sherds laid flat and in a horseshoe pattern. At the two opposite ends of the lining, two small tuff blocks were placed. An opening was left to the north-east, and in front of it, strongly carbon-rich layers mark the point where the fire was lit.

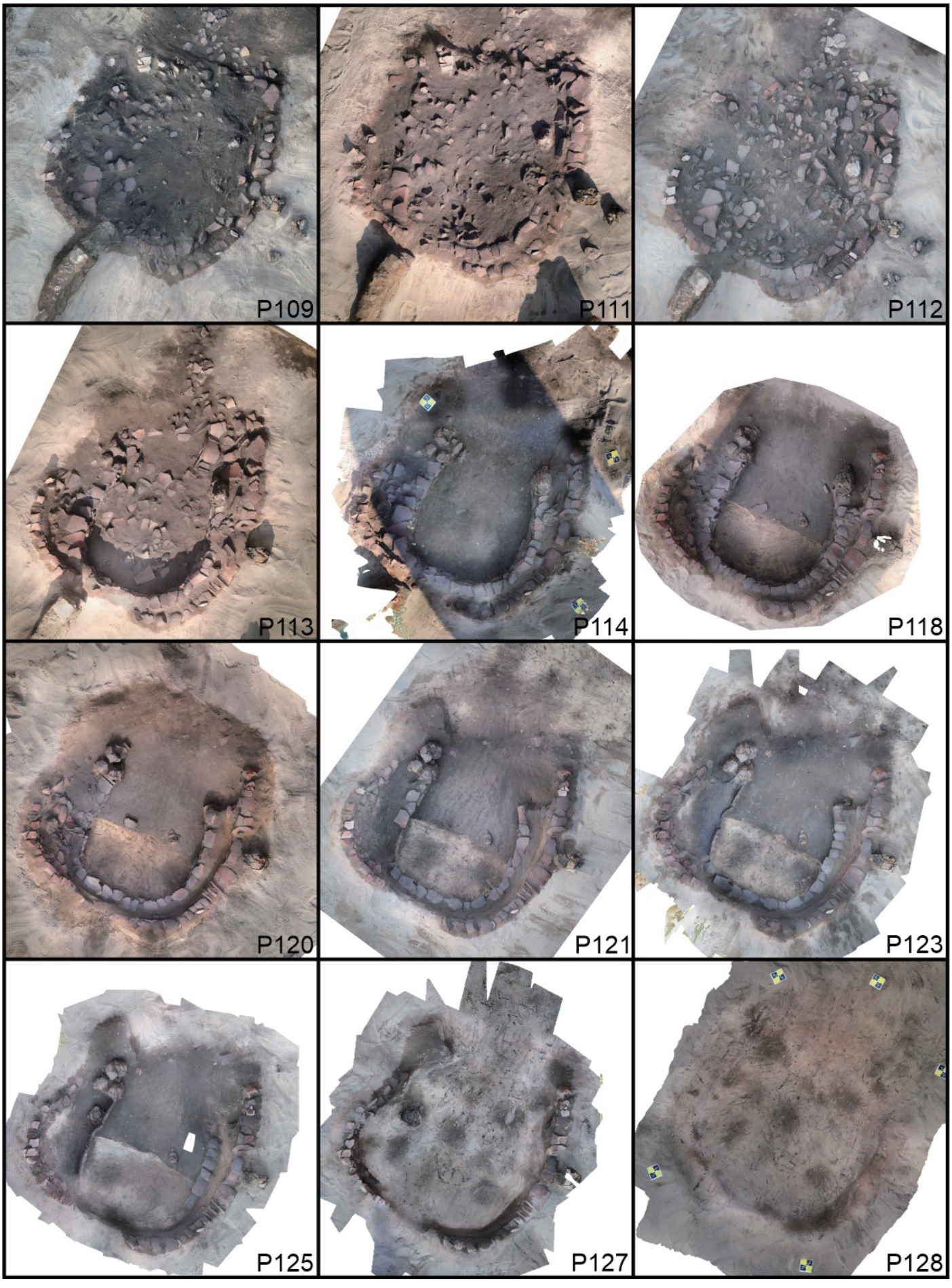
In a second phase, the kiln was narrowed by adding another ceramic lining. This new lining was built using the same technique as before on the eastern side, but differently on the northern side, where large fragments of dolium were vertically inserted, and the space created between them and the earlier wall was filled with soil and ceramic fragments..

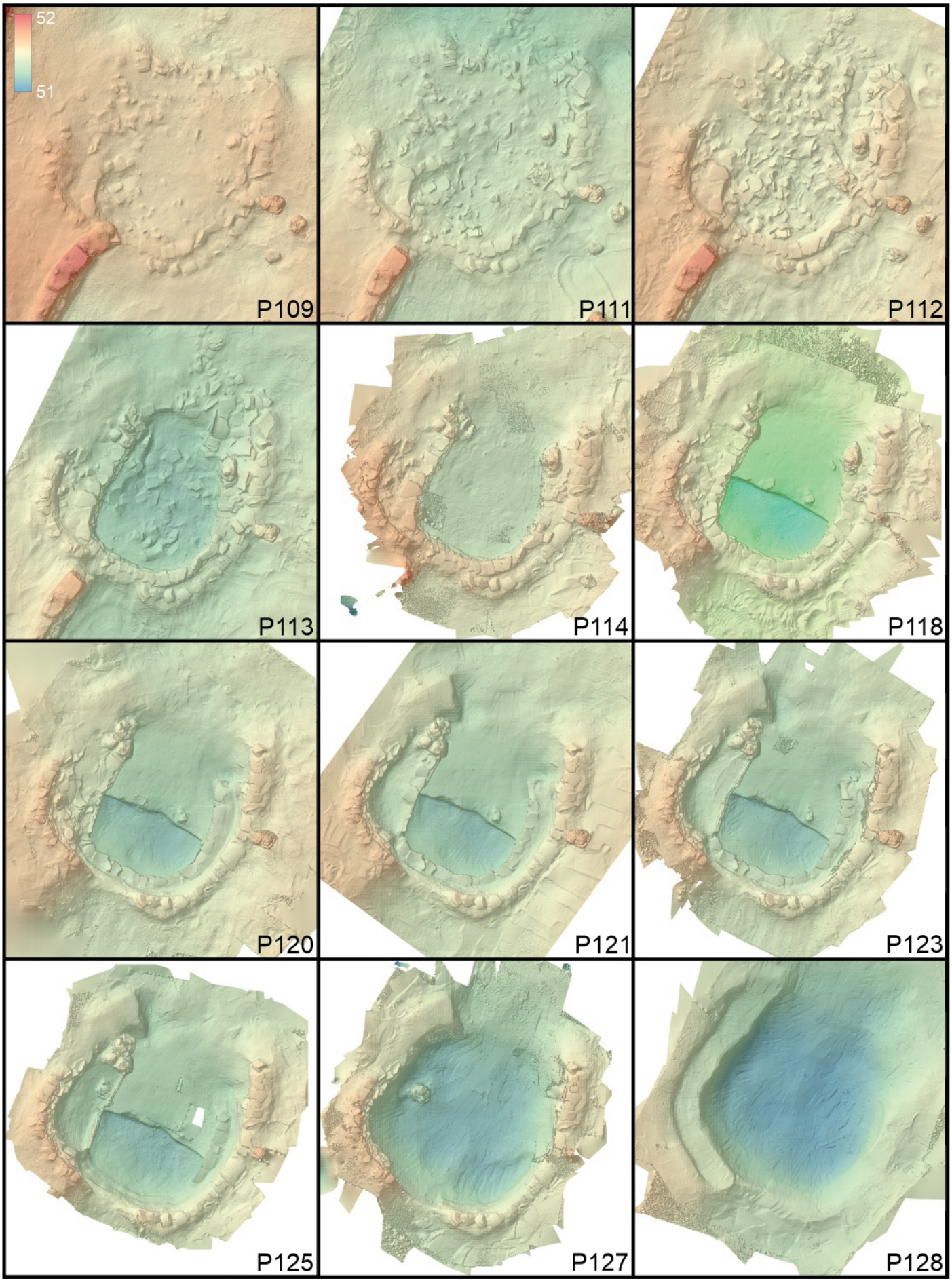
At the base of the earlier phase, one small tuff pillar was found still in situ, along with traces of at least two others. No evidence of a covering structure or of possible diaphragms resting on the pillars was identified.




16
Excavation dumps
Kiln
Excavation dump
Potsherd dump
17
Cores with potsherds
15 (depth 40-70cm)
17 (depth 40-100cm)


279808
279810
279812
279814
EPSG 32633, ellissoidic elevations
4621480
4621478
4621476
4621474
4621472
DEM
51,665901
51,173966


P109
P111
P112
P113
P114
P118
P120
P121
P123
P125
P127
P128


52
51
P109
P111
P112
P113
P114
P118
P120
P121
P123
P125
P127
P128

The experiment

The experiment, from the 2nd to the 8th of November, will consist of the faithful reconstruction of kiln 3K3 in the open area in front of Casale Bussolini. The kiln will subsequently be charged with vessels that have likewise been reconstructed on the basis of the morphological profiles identified among the ceramic fragments that originally formed the kiln lining. These vessels, characterized by a truncated conical shape, have been produced by Agnese Fischetti using manufacturing techniques that replicate as closely as possible those inferred for the original artefacts.

Once the kiln has been loaded—presumably with approximately seven or eight vessels—three firing sessions will be conducted. During these operations, a comprehensive set of parameters will be systematically recorded. Measurements will include: the kiln temperature throughout the entire firing process; for each vessel, the internal temperature, the rate of evaporation, and the total volume of brine employed (including both the initial charge and subsequent refills). In addition, the total amount of charcoal consumed during the process will be quantified, along with the total yield of crystallized salt.

Samples will also be collected from multiple points within the kiln and from the vessels, both at the beginning and at the end of each experimental firing, in order to investigate the physico-chemical alterations of the ceramics and to monitor variations in the magnetic field behaviour for paleomagnetic analysis. Brine samples will likewise be taken at regular intervals before, during, and after each firing to assess changes in their chemical composition over time.

The three firings are designed to test the outcomes obtained under different operational parameters: partial versus full filling of the vessels; the presence or absence of animal fat as a release agent to facilitate the extraction of the salt cake; and the adoption or omission of a pre-heating phase of the brine prior to refilling the vessels during firing.

The entire experimental sequence will be continuously recorded and broadcast live (24/7) via online streaming at the link https://saltandpower.gia-mediterranean.nl/2025/10/10/live-streaming/. In addition, a team of professional videographers will carry out independent documentary recordings to ensure comprehensive visual documentation of all procedures and results.





The workshop

On 9 November, starting at 3:00 p.m., the workshop “Rebuild the Past: Practices of Experimental Archaeology” will be held in the Council Hall of the Nazzano Municipality. The workshop will be divided into two sessions. The first will present a series of experimental archaeology projects, not necessarily related to salt production. The second will focus on the initial results of the recently completed experiment, with particular attention to the kiln, the reconstructed vessels, and the analyses progressively carried out during the process.

Workshop and experiment participants

cecilia.conati@uniroma1.it	Cecilia Conati Barbaro	Sapienza Università di Roma
raquel.bonilla@ingv.it	Raquel Bonilla Alba	Istituto Nazionale Geofisica e Vulcanologia
florencia.debandi3@unibo.it	Florencia Inès Debandi	Università di Bologna
anita. dichiara@ingv.it	Anita Di Chiara	Istituto Nazionale Geofisica e Vulcanologia
antonio.ferrandes@uniroma1.it	Antonio Francesco Ferrandes	Sapienza Università di Roma
agneselivia.fischetti@uniroma3.it	Agnese Fischetti	Università di Roma 3
vanessa.forte@uniroma1.it	Vanessa Forte	Sapienza Università di Roma
rolfo@uniroma2.it	Mario Federico Rolfo	Università di Roma Tor Vergata
evdokia.tema@unito.it	Evdokia Tema	Università di Torino
massimo.vidale@unipd.it	Massimo Vidale	Università di Padova



Rebuild the Past: practices of Experimental Archaeology
Programma [Programme]

	Time	Dur.	Title	Speaker
Casale Bussolini	10:00	120	Visita guidata alla riproduzione del forno da sale [Guided tour of the experimental replica of the salt kiln]	The Salt & Power team
Comune di Nazzano, sala consiliare	15:00	20	Saluti istituzionali [Welcome addresses]	Gianferro (Sindaco di Nazzano)
	15:20	15	Introduzione alla sessione - l'archeologia sperimentale [Session Introduction – Experimental Archaeology]	Attema
	15:35	15	L'archeologia sperimentale nell'investigazione dei falsi [Experimental archaeology in the investigation of forgeries]	Fischetti
	15:50	15	Maestri del fuoco: sperimentazioni su forni del Neolitico antico [Masters of Fire: Experimental Archaeology of Early Neolithic Furnaces]	Conati Barbaro, Forte
	16:05	15	Il progetto "Piantumazione Antica di orzo, farro, fave": archeologia sperimentale di coltivazione e di deposizioni in grotta [The project "Ancient Planting of Barley, Emmer, and Broad Beans": Experimental Archaeology of Cultivation and Cave Depositions.]	Rolfo
	16:20	15	La dieta nella preistoria: ricostruire i processi di preparazione del cibo attraverso l'archeologia sperimentale [Diet in Prehistory: Reconstructing Food Preparation Processes through Experimental Archaeology]	Debandi
	16:35	15	La produzione di ceramiche fini a Roma nel IV secolo a.C.: dati archeologici e prospettive sperimentali [The Production of Fine Pottery in 4th-Century BCE Rome: Archaeological Data and Experimental Perspectives]	Ferrandes
	16:50	25	Pausa caffé	
	17:15	15	Introduzione alla sessione - Il Salt & Power project e l'esperimento briquetage: il forno 3K3 di Piscina Torta [Session Introduction – The Salt & Power Project and the Briquetage Experiment: the 3K3 Kiln of Piscina Torta]	Alessandri
	17:30	15	I vasi da briquetage [The briquetage vessels]	Fischetti
	17:45	15	La fornace da sale [The salt kiln]	Sotgia
	18:00	15	Le analisi chimico/fisiche [Physico-chemical analyses]	Bulian, Sevink
	18:15	30	Discussion	

Abstracts

9 November

(in order of presentation)

L’archeologia sperimentale nell’investigazione dei falsi [Experimental archaeology in the investigation of forgeries]

Agnese Fischetti - *Università di Roma 3*

Italiano

Il riconoscimento dell’archeologia sperimentale come disciplina scientifica fondata su metodologie e protocolli condivisi a livello internazionale, ne conferma il valore quale strumento di indagine efficace e rigoroso. Oltre alla verifica o formulazione di ipotesi sulle tecniche e sui procedimenti adottati nel passato attraverso lo studio teorico e la ricostruzione pratica delle lavorazioni antiche, la sperimentazione trova oggi applicazione in una pluralità di ambiti, fra i quali lo studio dei falsi archeologici — in particolare dei manufatti ceramici — risulta di stringente attualità.
Il presente contributo intende illustrare come l’adozione di una prospettiva sperimentale, nello studio della cultura materiale, rappresenti un passaggio decisivo nell’analisi delle opere di dubbia autenticità. Attraverso la conoscenza teorica delle fasi di produzione dei manufatti antichi e la loro riproduzione pratica, è stato possibile elaborare parametri di confronto utili a individuare tracce di modernità in manufatti che si presentano fraudolentemente come archeologici.
A ciò si aggiunge la simulazione dei processi di invecchiamento che caratterizzano la realizzazione dei falsi, mediante espedienti quali l’usura delle superfici, le fratture, le lacune materiche o la sovrapposizione di patine volte a celare l’impiego di materiali e tecniche di derivazione industriale. L’esperimento ha quindi riguardato non solo la ricostruzione della catena produttiva teorizzata per i reperti antichi, ma anche la riproduzione delle forme di degrado che, imitando lo stato di conservazione, conferiscono un’apparente antichità ai manufatti.
Tale approccio integra la sperimentazione con l’indagine materica in senso lato, offrendo strumenti più raffinati per la distinzione tra autenticità e falsificazione, e contribuendo a contrastare le attività legate al mercato clandestino. Un mercato che, avendo raggiunto dimensioni preoccupanti, altera e compromette la corretta trasmissione del patrimonio culturale. Dei circa 40.000 reperti archeologici sequestrati nel 2024 dal Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale, quasi la metà è risultata costituita da falsi, generando un valore illecito stimato in oltre 80 milioni di euro, con gravi conseguenze sul piano della tutela, dell’integrità e della lettura del messaggio artistico originario.
Il contrasto a un fenomeno di tale portata richiede l’impiego congiunto di tutti gli strumenti metodologici disponibili, in un’ottica di sinergia tra approccio umanistico, conoscenza teorico-pratica delle tecniche antiche e applicazione sperimentale. Riconoscere gli indizi di modernità in oggetti di presunta natura archeologica e bloccarne la diffusione significa non solo far emergere il mercato illecito, ma anche preservare la coerenza concettuale e la purezza interpretativa del nostro patrimonio culturale.

English

The recognition of experimental archaeology as a scientific discipline grounded in internationally shared methodologies and protocols confirms its value as a rigorous and effective tool of investigation. Beyond the reconstruction of ancient practices and the testing or formulation of hypotheses concerning past techniques and procedures, experimental approaches are now applied across a wide range of fields. Among these, the study of archaeological forgeries—particularly ceramic artefacts—has become an issue of pressing relevance.

This paper aims to demonstrate how the adoption of an experimental perspective in the study of material culture constitutes a crucial step in the analysis of objects of doubtful authenticity. Through both theoretical understanding and practical reproduction of the production stages of ancient artefacts, it has been possible to develop comparative parameters that help to identify traces of modernity in objects fraudulently presented as archaeological.

In addition, the simulation of ageing processes employed in the fabrication of forgeries—through expedients such as surface wear, fractures, material losses, or the application of "patina" designed to conceal the use of industrial materials and techniques—has been undertaken. The experiment therefore involved not only the reconstruction of the production sequence hypothesised for ancient artefacts, but also the replication of forms of deterioration that, by imitating states of preservation, bestow a spurious appearance of antiquity upon the objects.

Such an approach integrates experimental practice with material analysis in the broadest sense, providing more refined tools for distinguishing between authenticity and falsification, and contributing to the suppression of activities linked to the illicit art market. This market—having reached alarming proportions—distorts and compromises the proper transmission of cultural heritage. Of the approximately 40,000 archaeological artefacts seized in 2024 by the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, almost half were found to be forgeries, generating an illicit value estimated at over € 80 million, with serious implications for the safeguarding, integrity, and interpretation of the original artistic message.

Counteracting a phenomenon of such magnitude requires the combined use of all available methodological tools, fostering synergy between humanistic approaches, theoretical and practical knowledge of ancient techniques, and experimental application. The recognition of modern traces in objects of presumed archaeological origin, and the prevention of their dissemination, not only exposes the illicit market but also safeguards the conceptual coherence and interpretative integrity of our cultural heritage.

Maestri del fuoco: sperimentazioni su forni del Neolitico antico [Masters of Fire: Experimental Archaeology of Early Neolithic Furnaces]

Cecilia Conati Barbaro - *Sapienza Università di Roma*
Vanessa Forte - *Sapienza Università di Roma*

Italiano

Cosa significava gestire il fuoco oltre 7.000 anni fa? Attraverso una prospettiva multidisciplinare applicata ai forni del sito Neolitico antico di Portonovo–Fosso Fontanaccia (Ancona) abbiamo ricostruito tecniche, tempi e strumenti impiegati, mettendo in luce il ruolo centrale del fuoco e il funzionamento di queste particolari strutture sotterranee. I risultati offrono nuovi dati sulla gestione, sulla durata e sulla versatilità d'uso dei forni, rivelando come le comunità del Neolitico fossero già maestre nell'arte di controllare il fuoco.

English

What did it mean to control fire more than 7,000 years ago? Through a multidisciplinary approach applied to the furnaces of the Early Neolithic site of Portonovo–Fosso Fontanaccia (Ancona), we have reconstructed the techniques, timing, and tools employed, highlighting the central role of fire and the functioning of these distinctive subterranean structures. The results provide new insights into the management, duration, and versatility of furnace use, revealing that Neolithic communities were already masters in the art of controlling fire.

Il progetto “Piantumazione Antica di orzo, farro, fave”: archeologia sperimentale di coltivazione e di deposizioni in grotta.

Mario Federico Rolfo - *Università di Roma Tor Vergata*

Italiano

Si illustrerà il progetto in collaborazione tra CNR – IGAG e la Cattedra di Archeologia Preistorica dell’Università di Roma Tor Vergata, prevede lo studio dei suoli dove piantumare varietà antiche di orzo, farro e fave in un’area dedicata, con l’obiettivo di conoscere la composizione dei suoli e recuperare tecniche di coltivazione tradizionali e utilizzo dei semi dalla preistoria per sensibilizzare la comunità sull’importanza delle colture antiche e far conoscere la biodiversità e la cultura locale. I semi saranno successivamente analizzati isotopicamente per comprendere quanto la gestione delle colture tramite la pratica della concimazione e irrigazione sia in grado di alterare i valori naturali delle piante. Infine, si prevede una attività sperimentale di tostatura e macinazione dei semi, secondo le tecniche preistoriche conosciute. Infine il progetto si concluderà con la deposizione e combustione dei semi in grotta e la deposizione sotto stillicidio, in modo da analizzare nell’arco di tempo prefissato le eventuali ulteriori variazioni isotopiche che l’ambiente carsico può produrre sui semi deposti.

English

The project, carried out in collaboration between the CNR – IGAG and the Chair of Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, involves the study of soils selected for planting ancient varieties of barley, emmer, and broad beans in a dedicated area. Its objective is to analyse soil composition and recover traditional cultivation techniques and seed-use practices from prehistory, in order to raise public awareness of the importance of ancient crops and to promote local biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The seeds will subsequently undergo isotopic analysis to assess how cultivation practices such as manuring and irrigation may alter the natural isotopic values of plants. Finally, an experimental phase will involve the roasting and grinding of seeds using known prehistoric techniques. The project will conclude with the deposition and burning of seeds inside a cave, as well as their placement under active dripping water, in order to monitor over a defined period the potential isotopic variations that the karstic environment may produce on the deposited seeds.


AREA 3

La dieta nella preistoria: ricostruire i processi di preparazione del cibo attraverso l'archeologia sperimentale [Diet in Prehistory: Reconstructing Food Preparation Processes through Experimental Archaeology]

Florencia Inès Debandi - *Università di Bologna*

Italiano

Lo studio delle strutture domestiche negli abitati preistorici richiede un approccio sempre più multidisciplinare, capace di integrare diversi tipi di analisi. In questo contesto, l'archeologia sperimentale rappresenta uno strumento fondamentale per testare ipotesi e comprendere i processi legati alla vita quotidiana delle comunità del passato.
Presso il Laboratorio di Archeologia Sperimentale del Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà dell'Università di Bologna sono state condotte numerose attività volte a ricostruire e verificare pratiche alimentari preistoriche — dalla selezione delle risorse alla cottura, conservazione, macellazione e utilizzo dei recipienti — attraverso esperimenti controllati. Tali attività combinano approcci materiali (repliche di strumenti e ricostruzione di strutture da fuoco), analisi dei resti (macroresti carbonizzati, residui lipidici) e studi sulle tracce d'uso degli strumenti.
I risultati hanno permesso di documentare e comprendere le sequenze operative ipoteticamente svolte dai membri delle comunità dell'età del Bronzo, fornendo nuovi dati per l'interpretazione delle evidenze archeologiche. L'obiettivo non è tanto fornire risposte definitive ai problemi interpretativi, quanto affinare metodologie di identificazione dei manufatti e di verifica delle ipotesi, incrementando così il potenziale ricostruttivo dei processi di preparazione del cibo nella preistoria.

English

The study of domestic structures in prehistoric settlements requires an increasingly multidisciplinary approach capable of integrating different types of analysis. In this context, experimental archaeology represents a key tool for testing hypotheses and understanding the processes related to the daily life of past communities.
At the Laboratory of Experimental Archaeology of the Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna, numerous activities have been carried out to reconstruct and verify prehistoric food practices—from the selection of resources to cooking, preservation, butchering, and the use of containers—through controlled experiments. These activities combine material approaches (such as the replication of tools and reconstruction of fire structures) with the analysis of remains (charred macroremains, lipid residues) and use-wear studies.
The results have made it possible to document and understand the operational sequences hypothetically performed by members of Bronze Age communities, providing new data for the interpretation of archaeological evidence. The goal is not so much to provide definitive answers to interpretative problems as to refine methodologies for artifact identification and hypothesis testing, thereby enhancing the reconstructive potential of prehistoric food-preparation processes.

La produzione di ceramiche fini a Roma nel IV secolo a.C.: dati archeologici e prospettive sperimentali [The Production of Fine Pottery in 4th-Century BCE Rome: Archaeological Data and Experimental Perspectives]

Antonio Francesco Ferrandes - *Sapienza Università di Roma*

Italiano

La produzione ceramica rappresenta un osservatorio privilegiato per comprendere la complessità economica e sociale delle comunità antiche, poiché riflette dinamiche di consumo, specializzazione artigianale e interazioni culturali. Nella prima metà del IV secolo a.C., Roma avvia una produzione di ceramiche fini a vernice nera, talvolta arricchite da sovradipinture di qualità, che testimoniano il livello tecnico raggiunto dalle officine locali e il dialogo con tradizioni mediterranee.
L'analisi di questi materiali solleva questioni centrali sulla distribuzione urbana, sull'organizzazione produttiva e sulla scala di diffusione, collocando il caso romano in una prospettiva più ampia di storia economica. In tale quadro, l'archeologia sperimentale offre uno strumento fondamentale per verificare le tecniche di lavorazione, i processi di cottura e le rese qualitative, consentendo di riprodurre gesti e conoscenze antiche. Il presente contributo intende quindi mostrare come l'integrazione tra dati archeologici e sperimentazione pratica possa fornire nuove chiavi di lettura non solo sulla cultura materiale di Roma repubblicana, ma anche sulle dinamiche produttive che hanno caratterizzato il Mediterraneo antico.
nd extends into the counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, but this presentation will concentrate on the Lincolnshire material.

English

Ceramic production represents a privileged observatory for understanding the economic and social complexity of ancient communities, as it reflects patterns of consumption, craft specialization, and cultural interaction. In the first half of the 4th century BCE, Rome developed a production of fine black-gloss pottery, sometimes enhanced with high-quality overpainting, which attests both to the technical skill achieved by local workshops and to their engagement with broader Mediterranean traditions.
The analysis of these materials raises key questions regarding urban distribution, production organization, and the scale of diffusion, placing the Roman case within a wider framework of economic history. Within this context, experimental archaeology provides a crucial means to test manufacturing techniques, firing processes, and qualitative outcomes, allowing ancient gestures and technical knowledge to be reproduced and better understood.
This contribution therefore aims to demonstrate how the integration of archaeological data and practical experimentation can offer new interpretative insights not only into the material culture of Republican Rome, but also into the productive dynamics that characterized the ancient Mediterranean.
beaches, following storms (eg Swinnerton 1932) brought attention to the area. Inland from the coast, however, the burial

Il comune di Nazzano



Sede del Comune di Nazzano

Nazzano è un piccolo comune di circa 1.300 abitanti situato nella Città metropolitana di Roma Capitale, arroccato sulla riva destra del Tevere. Il borgo offre da oltre mille anni una vista straordinaria sulle anse che il fiume disegna nella sua corsa verso Roma, dominando un paesaggio dove i campi di grano si alternano al verde dei boschi.

Le origini antiche

La presenza umana nell'area di Nazzano affonda le radici nella preistoria. La fertilità della pianura del Tevere, unita alla posizione strategica e sicura delle alture, fecero scegliere questa zona come residenza stabile già dalla tarda età del bronzo. Il colle su cui oggi sorge Sant'Antimo fu probabilmente il polo attorno al quale si sviluppò il primo insediamento. Nel periodo romano, studi recenti hanno identificato il centro come Civitas Sepernatis, divenuto in epoca imperiale Municipium Sepernatium, federato con Capena nell'agro capenate. Da "Seper-Natis" o "Natuim" deriverebbe probabilmente il toponimo attuale di Nazzano. La navigabilità del Tevere e soprattutto la facilità di guado in quel tratto furono determinanti per lo sviluppo dell'insediamento.

Il Medioevo e il castello

La prima testimonianza documentale medievale di Nazzano risale al 948 d.C., quando viene menzionato un "casale" sotto il controllo dell'Abbazia di Farfa. Nel 952 compare la più antica traccia di Sant'Antimo. Una bolla di Papa Gregorio VII del 1081 attesta l'esistenza di un "castellum a Nazanum", donato da un certo Farulfus al monastero romano di San Paolo fuori le Mura. Nel contesto dell'XI secolo, Nazzano si trovava in una posizione strategica: dall'altro lato del Tevere vi era la potente Abbazia di Farfa, fedele all'imperatore, mentre sulla riva destra i monaci di San Paolo controllavano Capena, Morlupo, Fiano, Civitella e Nazzano, formando una linea difensiva a guardia dell'accesso a Roma lungo la via del Tevere. Nei secoli successivi il castello passò di mano tra le grandi famiglie romane, appartenendo certamente ai Savelli tra la fine del '300 e l'inizio del '400. A metà del XV secolo tornò sotto il controllo dei monaci di San Paolo, che intervennero significativamente sulla struttura: all'inizio del '500 il castello era completato nella sua forma attuale. Il castello, di impianto quadrangolare con due imponenti torri, è caratterizzato da un'unica strada che si inerpica a spirale attraverso l'abitato, peculiarità che lo rende unico tra i castelli del Lazio. Oggi appartiene al CESMIL (Centro Studi Medievale Lazio).

Il patrimonio artistico e religioso

Chiesa di Sant'Antimo

Eretta nel X secolo sui resti di un tempio dedicato al dio Silvano, conserva nell'abside preziosi affreschi attribuiti ad Antoniazzo Romano. Si tratta della prima testimonianza architettonica medievale (952 d.C.) di un edificio sacro a Nazzano.

Chiesa di San Valentino

Edificata nel 1665 nello stesso luogo dove esisteva una cappella della Madonna di San Valentino, oggi si

presenta come un suggestivo rudere con il tetto collassato ma il pavimento ancora integro, realizzato con esagoni in materiale cementizio rosso. Documenti dell'Abbazia di Farfa menzionano una chiesa dedicata a San Valentino già nel 904 d.C. come "Fundum Pontianum ubi est aecclesia Sancti Valentinii". All'interno era conservato il sasso con l'impronta del ginocchio di San Valentino. Sotto il piano di calpestio è presente una grande cripta con le spoglie dei nazzanesi del vecchio cimitero.

La necropoli e il Pittore di Nazzano

La necropoli di Colle Carafa ha restituito reperti di straordinario valore. Il cosiddetto Pittore di Nazzano è un artista dell'area della Valle del Tevere, affine alla cultura falisco-capenate del IV secolo a.C., che dà il nome ai crateri a figure rosse provenienti dalle necropoli di Nazzano, Nepi e della valle del Tevere. Questi preziosi manufatti, trafugati tra la fine dell'800 e i primi del 900, si trovano oggi nei Musei Archeologici di Villa Giulia a Roma, al Louvre, al British Museum e in collezioni private.

Il lago e la riserva naturale

Nel 1956, in località Meana nel territorio di Nazzano, fu costruito uno sbarramento idroelettrico sul Tevere che diede origine al lago di Nazzano. Successivamente venne istituita la Riserva Naturale Regionale Nazzano Tevere-Farfa, riconosciuta dalla Convenzione Ramsar del 14 dicembre 1976 come zona umida di interesse internazionale per l'avifauna migratoria (265 ettari). La particolare topografia ha consentito la persistenza di una complessa zonazione di vegetazione igrofila, con ciperogramineti, lamineti elofitici, erbai palustri e lembi di foresta semisommersa a ontano e salice bianco, ecosistemi ormai rari altrove.

Il Museo del Fiume

Situato all'interno degli ambienti di servizio del castello, il Museo del Fiume rappresenta il cuore del sistema museale legato all'area protetta. Articolato in varie sezioni a vocazione didattica, il museo approfondisce i temi legati all'ecosistema fluviale: morfologia del territorio, fenomeni geologici del bacino del Tevere, flora e fauna dell'habitat fluviale.



Il percorso museale include:

- 21 diorami realizzati in tecnica mista con riproduzioni e preparati tassidermici
- Una sala idrogeologica con 6 diorami geologici
- Una sala botanica con 7 diorami sulla vegetazione fluviale
- Sale zoologiche con ricostruzioni dell'ambiente lacustre
- Una collezione ornitologica di 100 esemplari esposti, più altri 189 in deposito, rappresentanti le specie presenti nella Riserva
- Collezioni entomologiche specialistiche con oltre 1.000 esemplari
- Un percorso ipogeo chiamato "Le Grotte", dedicato alla geologia e paleontologia locale
- Una sala polifunzionale per eventi culturali e una sala per esposizioni temporanee

Il museo utilizza stereomicroscopi, moderni sistemi di proiezione e ambienti immersivi che simulano un percorso all'interno del letto di un fiume.

Storia recente

Durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale, nella primavera del 1944, durante la ritirata della Wehrmacht, Nazzano subì un cannoneggiamento tedesco in cui perse la vita una ragazza di 16 anni, Leonella di Stefano. I nazifascisti fecero anche esplodere il Ponte di Montorso sul Tevere, nel vicino comune di Torrita Tiberina.

Cultura e tradizioni

Nazzano mantiene una vivacità culturale significativa, con manifestazioni ed eventi che valorizzano il territorio e i saperi locali. Il borgo fa parte dell'Itinerario delle Forre Etrusche e della Valle del Tevere, progetto delle Strade dei Parchi del Lazio che attraversa i paesaggi fluviali e i borghi caratteristici a nord di Roma. Il territorio comunale è zona di produzione dell'Olio extravergine di oliva Soratte DOP, riconoscimento che testimonia la qualità delle produzioni agricole locali.
Il pendio scosceso su cui sorge il nucleo originario ha preservato Nazzano dall'urbanizzazione incontrollata, permettendo al castello di stagliarsi ancora oggi spettacolarmente nel cielo e alle strade di mantenersi integre, arrampicandosi a spirale verso l'alto. Questa caratteristica, unita alla storia millenaria e alla posizione panoramica sulla Valle del Tevere, rende Nazzano una tappa imperdibile per chi voglia scoprire l'autenticità dei borghi laziali.

Il **comune di Nazzano** si trova al centro del paese, in Via G. Mazzini n. 4. **Casale Bussolini** si trova in Via del Porto snc alle coordinate 42.224195, 12.598600

The Municipality of Nazzano

Nazzano is a small municipality of about 1,300 inhabitants, located within the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, perched on the right bank of the Tiber River. For more than a millennium, the village has offered an extraordinary view over the meanders traced by the river on its course toward Rome, overlooking a landscape where wheat fields alternate with the green of the surrounding woodlands.

Ancient origins

Human presence in the area of Nazzano dates back to prehistoric times. The fertility of the Tiber plain, combined with the strategic and secure position of the surrounding hills, made this area an ideal place for permanent settlement as early as the Late Bronze Age. The hill on which Sant'Antimo now stands was probably the nucleus around which the first settlement developed.

In the Roman period, recent studies have identified the site with Civitas Sepernatis, which became Municipium Sepernatium in the Imperial age, federated with Capena in the agro capenate. The current name Nazzano probably derives from "Seper-Natis" or "Natuim." The navigability of the Tiber and, above all, the ease of ford crossing in this stretch of the river were decisive factors in the settlement's development.

The Middle Ages and the Castle

The earliest medieval documentary evidence of Nazzano dates to 948 CE, when a casale (farmstead) under the control of the Abbey of Farfa is mentioned. In 952, the earliest reference to Sant'Antimo appears. A papal bull issued by Pope Gregory VII in 1081 attests to the existence of a "castellum a Nazanum," donated by a certain Farulfus to the Roman monastery of St. Paul Outside the Walls (San Paolo fuori le Mura).

In the context of the 11th century, Nazzano occupied a strategic position: on the opposite side of the Tiber stood the powerful Abbey of Farfa, loyal to the emperor, while on the right bank the monks of St. Paul controlled Capena, Morlupo, Fiano, Civitella, and Nazzano, forming a defensive line safeguarding access to Rome along the Tiber route.



In the following centuries, the castle passed among several great Roman families and was certainly owned by the Savelli between the late 14th and early 15th centuries. By the mid-15th century, it returned to the control of the monks of St. Paul, who undertook significant modifications to the structure. By the early 16th century, the castle had reached its current configuration.

The castle, with its quadrangular plan and two imposing towers, is distinguished by a single spiral road that winds upward through the settlement — a feature that makes it unique among the castles of Lazio. Today, it belongs to the CESMIL (Centro Studi Medievale Lazio).



Viale di accesso a Casale Bussolini

Artistic and cultural heritage

Church of Sant'Antimo

Erected in the 10th century on the remains of a temple dedicated to the god Silvanus, the Church of Sant'Antimo preserves within its apse a series of precious frescoes attributed to Antoniazzo Romano. It represents the earliest medieval architectural evidence (952 CE) of a sacred building in Nazzano.

Church of San Valentino

Built in 1665 on the site of an earlier chapel dedicated to the Madonna di San Valentino, the church today survives as a picturesque ruin, with its roof collapsed but the floor still intact—constructed in red cementitious hexagonal tiles. Documents from the Abbey of Farfa mention a church dedicated to Saint Valentine as early as 904 CE, described as "Fundum Pontianum ubi est aecclesia Sancti Valentinii." Inside, it once housed a stone said to bear the imprint of Saint Valentine's knee. Beneath the floor lies a large crypt containing the remains of Nazzano's former cemetery.

The necropolis and the Painter of Nazzano

The necropolis of Colle Carafa has yielded artefacts of exceptional value. The so-called Painter of Nazzano was an artist active in the Tiber Valley region, stylistically related to the Faliscan-Capenate culture of the 4th century BCE. His name derives from a group of red-figure kraters recovered from the necropoleis of Nazzano, Nepi, and other sites along the Tiber Valley. These exquisite vessels, illicitly excavated and trafficked between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, are today preserved in major museums such as Villa Giulia (Rome), the Louvre, and the British Museum, as well as in several private collections.

The lake and the nature reserve

In 1956, at Meana, within the territory of Nazzano, a hydroelectric dam was built on the Tiber River, giving rise to the Lake of Nazzano. Subsequently, the Nazzano–Tevere–Farfa Regional Nature Reserve was established. On 14 December 1976, it was recognized under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance for migratory birdlife, covering an area of 265 hectares.

The particular topography of the area has allowed the persistence of a complex zoning of hygrophilous vegetation, including sedges and reeds, floating and emergent aquatic plants, marsh meadows, and remnants of semi-submerged alder and white willow forests—ecosystems that have become rare elsewhere.

The River Museum

Located within the service areas of the castle, the River Museum (Museo del Fiume) constitutes the core of the museum network associated with the protected area. Structured into several educational sections, the museum explores themes related to the fluvial ecosystem, such as territorial morphology, geological phenomena of the Tiber basin, and the flora and fauna of the river environment.

The museum itinerary includes:

- 21 dioramas created using mixed techniques, with replicas and taxidermic specimens;
- a hydrogeological room with six geological dioramas;
- a botanical room with seven dioramas illustrating riparian vegetation;
- zoological rooms with reconstructions of lacustrine environments;
- an ornithological collection of 100 exhibited specimens and 189 in storage, representing species found in the Reserve;
- specialized entomological collections containing over 1,000 specimens;
- an underground section called “Le Grotte” (The Caves), dedicated to local geology and paleontology;
- a multipurpose hall for cultural events and a temporary exhibition space.

The museum is equipped with stereomicroscopes, modern projection systems, and immersive installations simulating a journey through a riverbed.

Recent history

During World War II, in the spring of 1944, as the Wehrmacht retreated, Nazzano was subjected to German shelling in which a sixteen-year-old girl, Leonella Di Stefano, lost her life. The Nazi-Fascist forces also blew up the Montorso Bridge over the Tiber River, located in the nearby municipality of Torrita Tiberina.

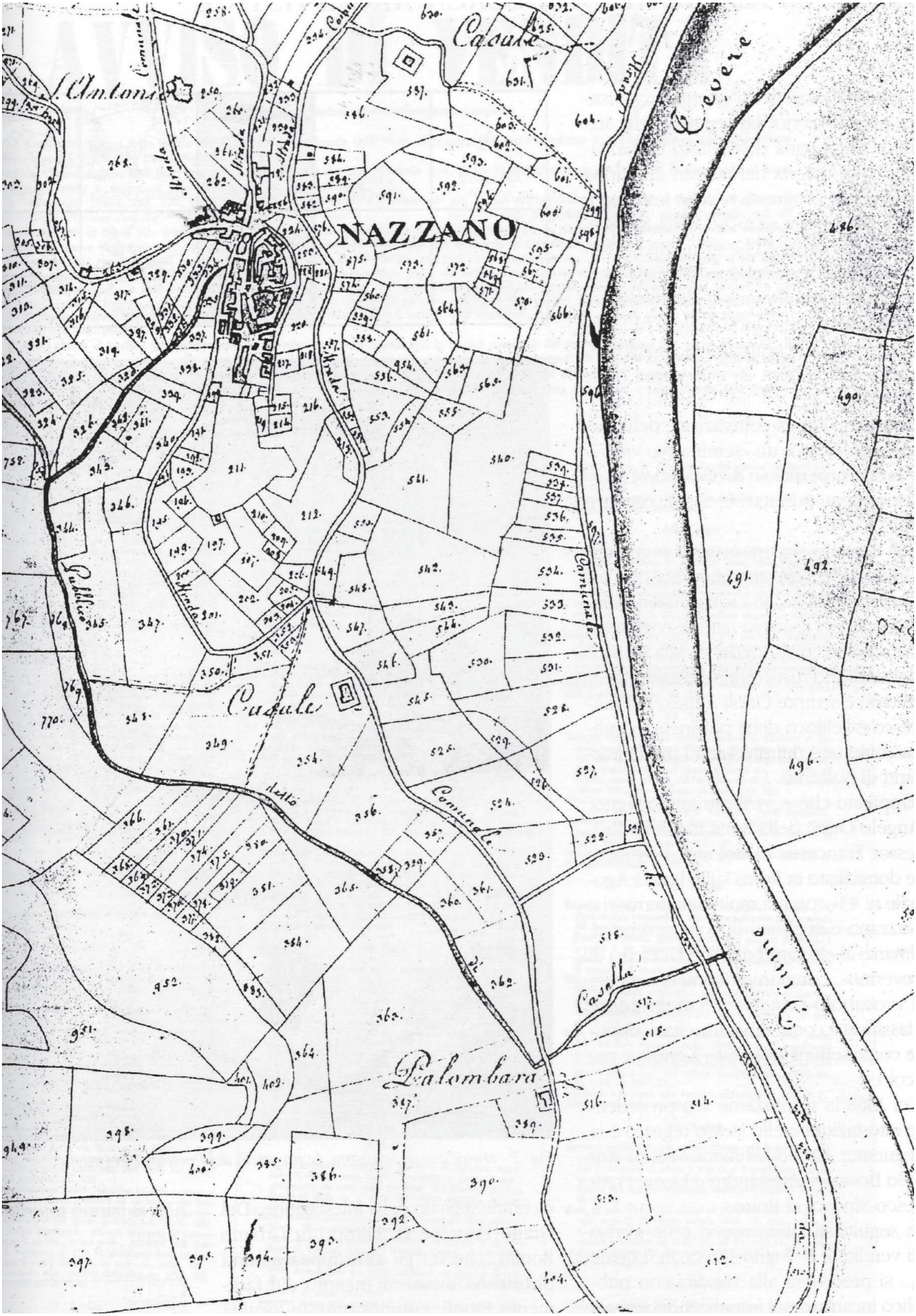
Cultur and traditions

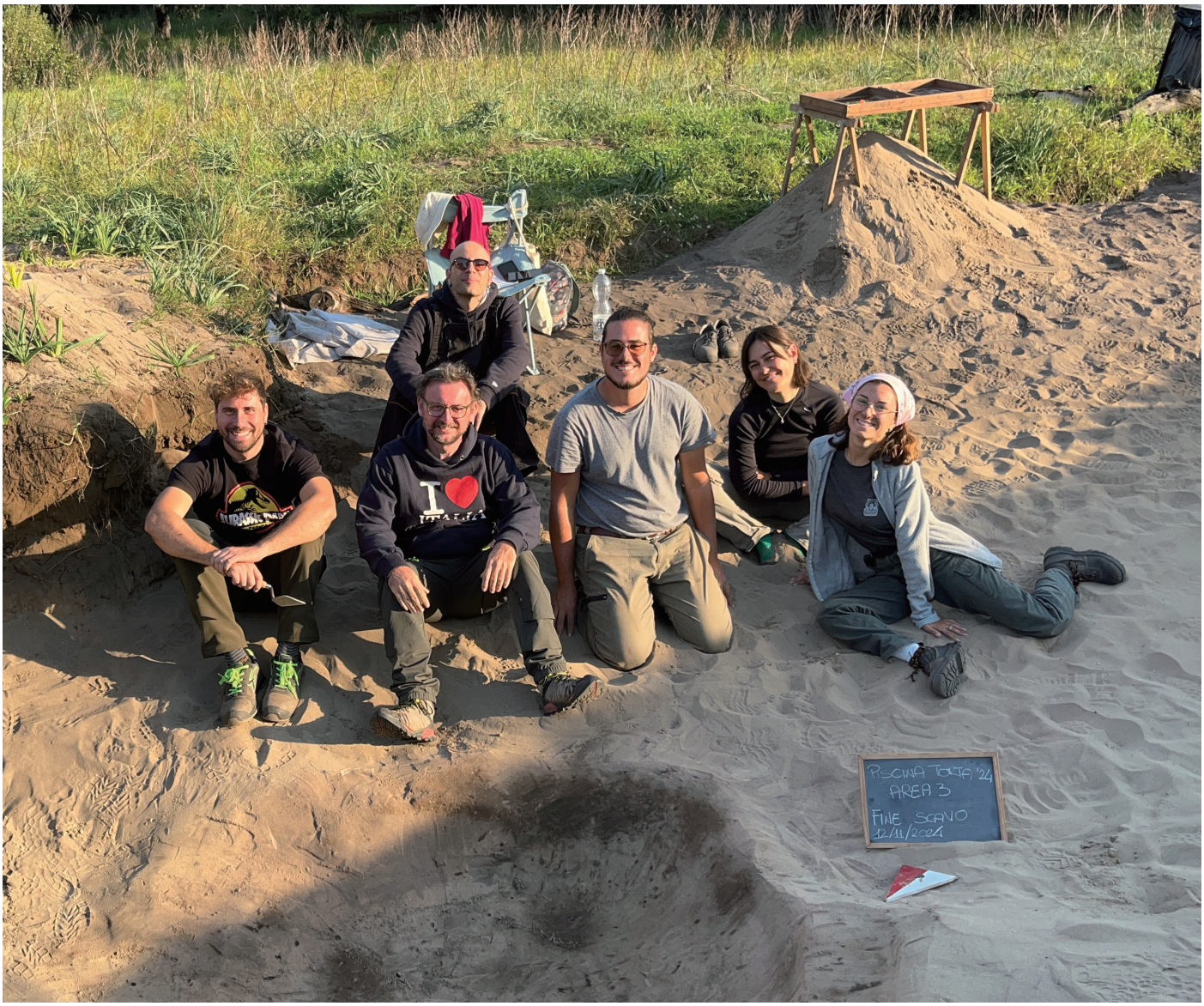
Nazzano maintains a vivid cultural vitality, with events and initiatives that promote local heritage, traditions, and environmental awareness. The village is part of the Itinerary of the Etruscan Gorges and the Tiber Valley, a project within the Strade dei Parchi del Lazio network, which connects the river landscapes and characteristic villages north of Rome.

The municipal territory is included in the production area of Soratte DOP extra virgin olive oil, a designation that attests to the high quality of local agricultural products.

The steep slope on which the historic core of Nazzano was built has protected the village from uncontrolled urban development, allowing the castle to still rise dramatically against the skyline and the spiralling streets to retain their original layout. This feature, combined with its millennia-old history and panoramic position overlooking the Tiber Valley, makes Nazzano an essential destination for those wishing to experience the authentic charm of Lazio’s historic hilltop villages.

The **Municipality of Nazzano** is located in the town centre, at Via G. Mazzini no. 4.
Casale Bussolini is situated on Via del Porto (no street number), at coordinates 42.224195, 12.598600.


NAZZANO
Tevere
Casale
Casale
Casella
Palombara
Pubblica
Comunale
Comunale
Comunale


PISCINA TOLTA '24
AREA 3
FINE SCAVO
12/11/2024

university of groningen

Reconstructing the Iron Age salt kiln of Piscina Torta: an experimental archaeology project

by L. Alessandri, A. Sotgia, F. Bulian, P. Attema, J. Sevink, A. Fischetti

S·A·L·T AND POWER

EARLY STATES ROME AND RESOURCE CONTROL

NWO

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

Comune di Nazzano

LIVE STREAM

2 - 8 November 2025

Reconstruction of the salt kiln



9 November 2025

10:00 - 12:00 - Guided tour to the experiment site
(Casale Bussolini, Nazzano)

15:00 - 18:15 - Experimental archaeology workshop
(Municipality, Sala Consiliare, Nazzano)

The experiment will be entirely broadcast live on the project website https://saltandpower.gia-mediterranean.nl/2025/10/10/live-streaming/

Sapienza Università di Roma · Tor Vergata Università degli Studi di Roma · Universiteit van Amsterdam · Roma Tre Università degli Studi · INGV