TECHNET: Technological innovation and knowledge networks: a multidisciplinary approach to Greco-Roman stone vases (H2020-MSCA-IF-2019 n.895286)

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Technology is one of the most transformative innovations of humankind: it has profoundly impacted economic, social and cultural history. Understanding humans' capacity to innovate provides fundamental tools for the study of technological advance and human progress. Technology applied to crafts has radically changed the relationship between maker and matter, that is mankind's ability to manipulate its material environment and transform it into useable objects for living.
Stone is the most challenging matter for craftsmen to process since it requires a complex series of technological choices and an articulate operational sequence. Consequently, stone vases, as objects made of stone, represent crucial analytical "tools" to investigate technological innovation in ancient crafts. Disclosing the processes and circumstances of transformative innovations in the ancient world helps us comprehend the mechanisms of modern technology and its role in shaping contemporary and future societies. Much ground-breaking research has shown that Protohistoric stone vessel production involved significant technological input and knowledge transfer, thus playing a key role in the development of Prehistoric Mediterranean craft traditions. Similar research for the Classical period is still lacking. The TECHNET action puts forward an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to the development of technology in ancient crafts using Greco-Roman stone vases as a case study.

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TECHNET'S starting hypothesis is that Greco-Roman stone vases have the potential to inform us on technological development, knowledge transfer through artisans' mobility and material practices in the Classical period. I intend to test this hypothesis through the combination of ethno-anthropological and sociological qualitative analysis with the latest digital tools and computer informed methods. The results produced by TECHNET will integrate current research on ancient material culture production and advance our understanding of technological innovation in antiquity.

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