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Through a Smoke Cloud Darkly: The Possible Social Significance of Candeleros in the Terminal Classic Naco Valley

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Possible Functions

- Burning: Smoldering fires were used in and around candelero chambers.
- Heating: Candeleros were used for heating purposes.
- Storage: Candeleros were used to store goods.
- Symbolism: Candeleros may have had symbolic significance.

Possible Ottomans

- Smoldering are adorned with a limited set of motifs.
- Effigy monkeys are common in households that define an arc stretching across northern La Sierra (20-24%).

Missing Artifacts

- Vessels were involved in was most intensely at Nightly Sub6 and 16 where some of the highest candelero densities were recorded together with 4 large jars found at Sub1 and 16; 3 at the latter households (30%).

Decorative, Storage, and Networker: Candeleros are adorned with a limited array of incised and modeled decors. The most common incised decors are crosshatching and parallel diagonal or vertical lines. Modeling usually creates candeleros that evolve to howler monkey with an open mouth flanked by fringes of fur. These incised likely convey social messages as they uniquely subject the artifact and its use if these were involved in was most intensely at the social networking constituted through the production, distribution, and consumption of these items. The distribution of candelero motifs thus map to these webs.

Different households are dominated by distinct candelero decors:
- Crosshatching predominates in 3 closely spaced households (56-59%).
- Parallel diagonal lines dominate in 3 nearby households (27-28%).
- The effigy monkey form dominates in 1 household (33%).

Mean Average of Decorative Modes on Candeleros per Domestic Group

- Within this settlement zone, as through the valley, some sort of unity transcending household boundaries was expressed and enacted using candeleros that shared crosshatching designs.

Acknowledgments

The social signaling candeleros were involved in was most intensely carried out in northern La Sierra. Perhaps notion of settlement was encouraged by these networks.

References

- These sets complexly overlapped, most valley residents participating in a web materialized through candeleros decorated with crosshatch designs.
- Household and household clusters within this putative overarching social web were distinguished by their variable emphasis on other candelero motifs.
- The relatively high frequency of effigy monkey candeleros in northern La Sierra was for the latter case. In Far Periphery where effigy monkey forms are very rare, some sort of unity transcending household boundaries was expressed and enacted using candeleros that shared crosshatching designs.

Conclusion

- This social web, in turn, strongly equate the 4 households from their local socrepeters where effigy monkey candeleros are exceedingly uncommon. It may be that the styles found in other artifact classes, such as pottery vessels, incensarios, and figurines, convey distinct social information. Evaluating this notion, and the hypotheses listed here, requires further investigation of material patterning across Late and Terminal Classic valley contexts. Nonetheless, this exercise suggests that there is much to be learned from the study of an artifact class that has long been ignored.