Micromorphological aspects of various human activities recorded in the Scafati pedocomplex (Napoli, Italy).

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The stratigraphic sequence of Scafati, about 3 km east of ancient Pompeii, is presented consisting of a multilayered sequence of repeated volcanic deposition and pedogenesis that was caused by several phases of volcanic activity and volcanic quiescence of Somma-Vesuvius, at least, the last 20,000 years. Micromorphological analysis were carried out at the soil material and selected volcanic deposits to establish a chronological succession of different phases of volcanic deposition, pedogenetic transformation but also to highlight the anthropogenic influence. The micromorphological analysis testified furrow irrigation and soil cultivation in the medieval stratigraphy and allowed the identification of very significant anthropogenic features in the Bronze Age/Iron Age paleosol, i.e. complex depositional crusts and dusty clay coatings and hypocoatings, which are often used as an indicator for tillage activity. In contrast to the clear macroscopic and chemical evidence of ancient soil cultivation, the Roman paleosol did not exhibit distinct micromorphological signs of soil cultivation.