
Identifying pottery forming techniques and ‘ways of doing’ from a diachronic perspective: the example of pottery production of La Dou (Catalonia, Spain) during the Ancient Neolithic and Late Bronze Age

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Abstract

The reconstruction of forming methods in pottery production constitutes one of the manners to understand pottery traditions, the ways of making pots as well as the social and economic organization of pottery production. Despite its interpretative potential, pottery forming techniques have been practically unconsidered on the researches carried out for the Iberian Peninsula, since the introduction of first pottery products to the appearance of potter’s wheel.

The main objective of the present study is to provide a first approach of these techniques from a diachronic perspective through the analysis of pottery productions from La Dou (Catalonia, Spain) on its occupation phases. During the Ancient Neolithic (4800-4300 cal BC) the site had reiterative occupations with different fire structures linked to pottery sherds concentrations. Afterwards, the site was dwelled by a Late Bronze Age settlement (1200-900 cal BC) represented by a large pit with a burnt level compounded for log charcoals and vessels broken inside.

The paper presents the study of pottery forming techniques identified in both periods following the methodologies applied on last researches carried out in Europe (e.g. Livingstone 2007, Garcia and Calvo 2013, Gomart 2014). Through the analysis of manufacture macrotraces, it was observed that coiling methods and internal moulds were employed for building vessels during the Ancient Neolithic. Whereas, for the Late Bronze Age the variety of forming techniques was increased considerably by different methods of coils, slabs, moulds and work processes of pinching the clay.

First results obtained show there were similarities and changes in pottery forming techniques and in the ways those communities produced vessels. Even though the temporal distance between each period treated, could it be considered some preservations in the ways of producing ceramics? Otherwise, was there a diversification of pottery production in Late Bronze Age due to the variety of forming methods? These, and other, questions will be discussed during the proposed communication.

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