
The Neolithic of Attica, Greece: a view from Nea Makri

Catarina Miragaia*^{†1}, Peter Day², and Peter Tomkins¹

¹Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven) – Blijde Inkomstraat 21/3313, Leuven, Belgique

²Department of Archaeology [Sheffield] – University of Sheffield Northgate House West St. Sheffield S
MET, Royaume-Uni

Résumé

The recent, renewed interest in the Neolithic period of Attica, Greece and the ‘Attica-Kephala culture’ has been inspired both by new evidence from a range of excavations, and by a growing realization of the extent and volume of exchange within and between regions from the seventh millennium BC. The great volume of ceramics recovered offer a rare opportunity for integrated analytical study to shed light on this early mobility of goods and people. Macroscopic study of pottery in Attica and the nearby islands has contributed to building a robust chronological framework and examining the spatial distribution of stylistic attributes, both in shape and surface modification. These studies suggest an unexpected complexity, with Neolithic Attica being very active in some of the networks suggested for other areas of Aegean. In fact, the Neolithic is starting to show many of the attributes of mobility and contact that are more readily accepted in a consideration of this area for the Early Bronze Age. This paper will contribute to this growing enquiry by presenting and discussing recent findings from the analytical study of ceramic material from the coastal site of Nea Makri.

Excavated in 1977, Nea Makri is perhaps the most well-known settlement site in Attica. Its uninterrupted stratigraphy spans from the Early to the Late Neolithic and is the ideal assemblage with which to begin understanding pottery production and movement in the region. Its location on the east coast of Attica, facing the island of Evia and with open access to the Western Cyclades, puts it in an ideal location to investigate interaction between communities both on the mainland and on the islands. The site was published in detail by Pantelidou in 1991 and 1995 providing detailed information on chronology and pottery styles. The present study builds on those foundations by adopting a fabric-led approach involving thin section petrography to examine fabric diversity, technologies of production, and where possible to suggest the source of the pottery groups found at the site.

Evidence of significant consumption of pottery from other production centres in Attica and the islands throughout the Neolithic period have been revealed, including the islands of Melos, Kea and other areas of Attica. Detailed petrographic analysis shows that, far from being static or isolated, Nea Makri was a hub for movement, reception, and consumption of a range of pottery groups, including a long-standing tradition of local pottery production.

Mots-Clés: Neolithic, Aegean, Ceramic Petrography, Archaeometry, Attica, Pottery

*Intervenant

[†]Auteur correspondant: catarina.miragaia@kuleuven.be