



Actes du XIV^{ème} Congrès UISPP, Université de Liège,
Belgique, 2-8 septembre 2001

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SECTION 9

Le Néolithique au Proche Orient et en Europe
The Neolithic in the Near East and Europe

SECTION 10

L'âge du cuivre au Proche Orient et en Europe
The Copper Age in the Near East and Europe

Sessions générales et posters
General Sessions and Posters

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CERAMIC STYLE IN NEOLITHIC SOCIETIES IN GALICIA (NW IBERIAN PENINSULA). SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PATTERNS OF FORMAL REGULARITY

M. P. PRIETO MARTÍNEZ

Résumé : *Le style céramique aux sociétés néolithiques à la Galicie (Nord-ouest de la Péninsule Ibérique). Patrons de régularité formelle: Similitudes et différences.* On présente l'évolution du style céramique au Néolithique galicien au travers des aspects formels en utilisant la Chaîne opératoire comme outil méthodologique et l'Archéologie du Paysage comme cadre théorique. On utilise un enregistrement empirique tout neuf à Galicie: les sites en plein air. On utilise une méthodologie qui nous permet d'étudier de manière systématique la poterie appartenante à différents moments et contextes du Néolithique. On cherche le patron de régularité formelle, c'est à dire, similitudes et différences stylistiques, et à cette fin, on réalise une comparaison à divers degrés de la chaîne opératoire: (a) céramique funéraire et domestique au Néolithique Initial/Moyen, (b) céramique funéraire et domestique au Néolithique Final, (c) céramique tout au long du Néolithique. On croit que la reconstruction de la technologie céramique c'est un autre aspect qui peut contribuer à savoir si les changements formels peuvent être en rapport avec les changements au patron de rationalité des sociétés néolithiques à Galicie.

Abstract: We present an evolution of ceramic style in the Galician Neolithic period considered using its formal characteristics. We used the Operative Technological Chain (Chaîne Opératoire) as a methodological tool and applied the theoretical premises of Landscape Archaeology. The archaeological record used is quite innovative in Galicia: open-air pottery sites. This methodology allows us to systematically study pottery from different periods and contexts in the Neolithic period. We were searching for the pattern of formal regularity, stylistic similarities and differences; to do so, a comparison was made at several stages of the Technological Chain: (a) funerary and domestic pottery in the Early/Middle Neolithic, (b) funerary and domestic pottery in the Later Neolithic, and (c) all pottery throughout the Neolithic period. We believe that the reconstruction of pottery technology is an important aspect that helps us to investigate formal and social changes and their relationship with transformations in the rationality of Neolithic societies.

Keywords: Operative Sequence, Operative Technological Chain (OTC), Ceramics, Formal Analysis, Style, Patterns of Formal Regularity, Landscape Archaeology, Later Neolithic, Early/Middle Neolithic, Galicia.

1. INTRODUCTION*

The little information which exists about Neolithic ceramics in the Iberian Peninsula is quite irregular and fragmented, and there are very different degrees of awareness about the periods it comprehends, as we shall see. Investigation into the ceramics from the Early/Middle Neolithic (E/MN) (4500-2700 BC), considered in the Iberian Peninsula as a strict definition of the Neolithic period, is incomplete. In fact, the most recent study dates from the end of the 1980's, and attempts to present a summary of the information which existed until that point in time (López 1988)¹. In Galicia, situated in the north-western corner of the Iberian Peninsula, there is even less information about this period of recent prehistory, as the only studies published to date deal with three little-known open-air sites in O Reirol, A Cunchosa (Vázquez 1988) and O Regueiriño (Suárez and Fábregas 2000). More information is available for funerary contexts, which has led to the publication of two articles (Eguileta 1987, Fábregas and Fuente 1988). The information available

about pottery from the Late Neolithic (LN) (2700-2300 BC), referred to in the Iberian Peninsula as the Chalcolithic Period, is much more plentiful, as more sites are known and some of them have been excavated. Several articles have been published about these sites in the last ten years, although the most complete investigation comes from northern Portugal (Jorge O.S. 1986). Today in Galicia, despite a lack of information about sites from the LN, it is still possible to fill in more details. At the end of the 1980's the first sites from this period were discovered (González 1991, Eguileta 1996). The information which exists about open-air Neolithic sites has still not been brought up to date (the widest range of ceramics studied systematically is detailed in Prieto 2000), partly because the empirical base has grown considerably in the last decade, and partly because it has not been fully published.

2. EMPIRICAL PREMISE

The empirical premise of this study is the investigation of ceramic materials recovered from a total of 53 sites (fig. 1), in both domestic and funerary contexts.

For the domestic context, our documentary material is based on 40 sites, although we directly worked with 16 open air sites uncovered by archaeological investigations connected with major public works (oil pipelines, gas pipelines,

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¹ To date the most prominent studies have been presented at congresses, for example at the Congreso del Neolítico in the Gavá Peninsula in 1996, in Valencia in 1999, or in several Peninsular Archaeology congresses, in particular in the year 2000. However, since then there have been no further studies of the period.

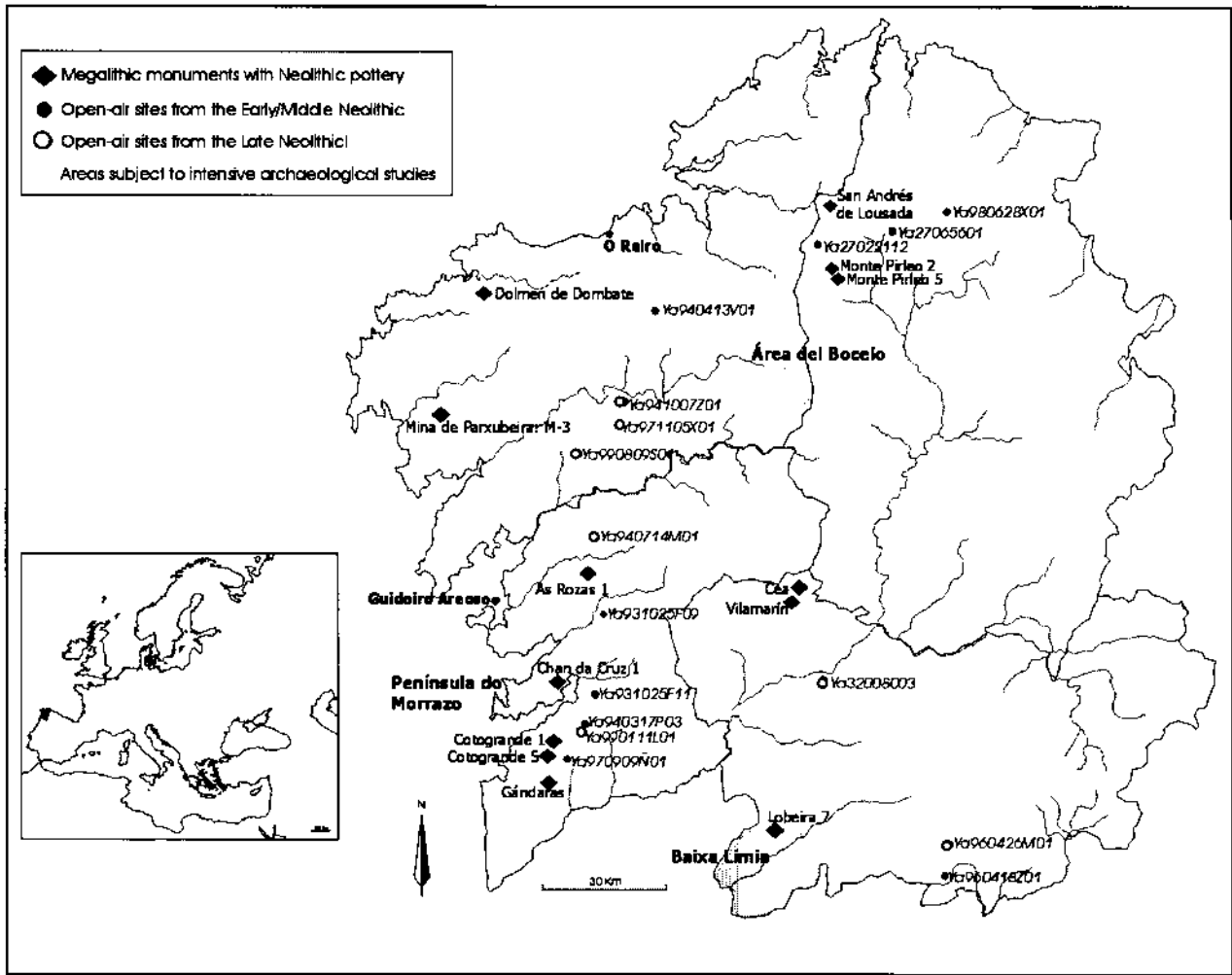


Figure 1. Distribution of sites from the Neolithic period in Galicia

motorways, railways and the concentration of smallholdings)² (Prieto 2000). The remaining sites were dealt with using the existing bibliography. The following are sites discovered during archaeological investigations taking place alongside major public works:

- Ten at initial or intermediary stage: As Pontes (YA980628X01), A Gándara (YA970909N01), O Cabrón (YA27065601), Monte das Modias (YA27022112), Monte do Espiño de Arriba
- (YA931025F11), Porto dos Valos (YA940317P03), O Coto (YA940413V01), Cutián/Val da Porca (YA931025F09), Alto da Plaza (YA960418Z01) and Saídos das Rozas (YA931023V01).
- Seven in their final stage: Monte do Cereixo (YA990809S01), A Millara (YA960426M01), Ramil (YA971007Z01), A Pedra II/Agra dos Campos (YA971105X01), Cartas de Vilar 4 (YA990111L01), As Pipileiras (YA32008003) and Anllada (ZO940714M01).

In figure 1 we have indicated other areas in Galicia where sites have been recorded which belong to the period: in the area of **O Bocelo** eight sites are known with Neolithic

ceramics (González 1991): four have proved difficult to identify (PA 99, PA 100, PA 194 y PA 196), one is from the E/MN (Pena Martiña), and from the final stage of the Neolithic we have one emblematic site in the region, Carballeira de Bragaña-Requeán (comprising PAs 58, 60 and 202). In **O Morrazo** we know of five sites with Neolithic ceramics: O Regueiriño, A Fontenla (Peña 1985a), Lavapés (Peña 1985b), As Forcadas (Suárez 1986), and A Cunchosa (Vázquez 1988). The last of these has materials from the Early Neolithic, with the others having material from the LN. In the area of **A Baixa Limia** eight sites are known with LN ceramics (Eguileta 1996): Crasto do Ferreiro, Illa de Pazos, Veiga de Requiás, As Conchas, Santa Comba, Outeiro de Veiga, Porto Quintela and Maus de Baños. Other more isolated sites are known, for example **Guidoiro Areosos** (Rey 1995) with materials from the final stage of the Neolithic, and **O Reiro**, which has been described as from the Ancient Neolithic period (Vázquez 1988).

In funerary contexts, our documentary basis is basically bibliographical, and considers 13 sites. For the E/MF there are two³ and for the LN there are eleven⁴ (those in which

² The archaeological work was carried out by members of the Laboratory of Archaeology and Cultural Forms (LACF) from the University of Santiago de Compostela.

³ Mina de Parxubeira M-3 (Rodríguez 1989) and Vilamarín (Fábregas and Fuente 1988).

⁴ Monte Pirleo 2 and 5 (Fábregas and Fuente 1988), As Rozas 1 (Patiño 1985b), Chan da Cruz 1 (Patiño 1985a), Lobeira 7 and Cea (Eguileta

Penha-type ceramics have been discovered), in some of which bell-beaker type ceramics have been found.

There are many archaeological difficulties connected with these sites, as there are very few excavations in domestic contexts, and the little information we do have about them is based on the result of exploratory studies. In funerary contexts, the excavations that do exist are now outdated, there is little documentation, and what does exist is unreliable⁵. The only real way of comparing these ceramics is through systematic formal analysis, which will help to lay the foundations for the study of ceramics discovered in sites excavated in the future.

3. GENERAL PROPOSALS

Our study is a proposal based on **Landscape Archaeology**, which considers archaeological elements and the material culture contained within them not as isolated elements, but instead as **forms** produced by social action, and which may therefore only be fully understood in relation to the cultural context within which they were created (Criado *et al.* 1991, Criado 1993). Accordingly, both pottery as a specific material product and the person who makes it are social products, and therefore reproduce and produce the symbolic system of the society to which they belonged. This does not only mean that the finished products are socially significant, but also that the technological knowledge which made a 'manner of doing' possible is profoundly involved in the whole system (Cobas and Prieto 2002). The formal models, and the specific ceramic styles within them, are transformed according to the patterns of rationality which governed a particular society⁶.

The working methodological hypotheses, which have been proposed and explained in greater detail in previous articles (Prieto 1998, 1999 and 2001) are the following:

- The **degree of visibility**⁷ is an important element in ceramic production, related to other material circumstances, and according to the social criteria which existed when it was made.
- Ceramic production, and not only decoration, takes place according to the visibility strategies of social action.

1987), Cotogrande 1 and 5 (Abad 1995), Dolmen de Dombate (Bello 1991), Gándaras and San Andrés de Lousada (Criado and Vázquez 1982).

⁵ For this reason, we have selected so few sites from the Mid-Neolithic, as the precise definition of the ceramics is not clear in the bibliography. Furthermore, the group of sites we have used is sufficient for us to carry out a formal comparison between contexts, despite its small size.

⁶ It would be interesting to complement this paper with another being presented at this same congress which deals with ceramics from the Bronze Age in Galicia (Prieto 2002).

⁷ Throughout the text, when dealing with the different characteristics related to the process of manufacturing ceramic pieces, we have also evaluated if these could contribute to the invisibility, visibility, 'monumentalising' or concealment of the finished products. We have considered two different aspects: firstly, formal aspects according to the OTC, and secondly (when this has been possible), the contextual aspects, considering how ceramic products are presented within the context in which they are found. This is only possible in the case of excavated sites, meaning that information of this kind will be more limited.

- The degree of visibility and material complexity are related to the degree of social complexity.
- Ceramic production is the result of strict cultural criteria (although these are not predetermined).
- The variety of ceramics corresponds to social fluctuations.
- The use of ceramics is differential.
- Ceramic production is local.

Our main **objective** is to characterise Neolithic ceramics from Galicia⁸ and to compare their different features, based on their production process. It will then be possible to define the patterns of formal regularity of societies which have existed in specific areas in particular historical periods. We also attempt to contrast the presence of formal categories within each of these patterns of regularity, with the intention of connecting them with the societies that produced them. This means that it is not only important to analyse the way different formal products are manufactured as a technological feature, but also to characterise the way of creating formal identities using ceramic products as a cultural feature. By identifying the aspects which maintain a certain homogeneity or 'continuity points' within and between periods and 'rupture points' which indicated a heterogeneous situation, it is possible to detect the changes which occurred within these societies, and to interpret these changes at sociological level.

At **methodological level**, we will describe the reconstruction of the **operative technical chain** (Cobas and Prieto 1998a and 2002) of two important monuments from the Galicia Neolithic period. We use the initial formal deconstruction of each of the groups of elements, of the features related to the morphology of the site, their technical treatment and decoration. Our procedure begins by describing the specific aspects of the ceramics found until arriving at the most general aspects of the global group of elements, although in this particular paper we have only included the results of the investigative process.

We will therefore attempt to firstly characterise the ceramic styles of each type of society using the different formal categories that were documented at the time of describing the materials. 'Category' describes the formal group formed by the selection of a series of specific technical choices according to the technological knowledge of these societies (similarities or continuity points). Within each category, it is possible to see stylistic tendencies, which are the varieties or versions of each of the categories; by using them it is possible to observe differences or rupture points, without detracting from the general features observed within the same category. The formal relationships or relationships between categories mean that it is possible for us to globally define the ceramic style of each of these societies, within which there is a pattern of formal regularity, or a 'range of restricted rules' (from Lemonnier 1986: 153) that are maintained within a certain

⁸ This study follows in the line of investigation in Material Culture developed by the LACF. Some important results have been obtained by comparing ceramics from the Bronze and Iron Ages (Cobas and Prieto 1998a, 1998b, 1999) and ceramics from recent Prehistory in open-air sites (Prieto 2000), in Galicia.

type of technological knowledge or symbolic system. Tendencies or substyles are not types; instead they are variants within a formal category, and do not directly refer to specific types of ceramics, but refer to the use of a series of common and specific technical resources conditioned by the category involved, despite the fact that all this is in turn submerged within a *modus operandi* which finally refers to style⁹ (in this case, ceramic style), a formalisation based on technological knowledge. In fact, it is quite common to observe the simultaneous existence of at least two stylistic tendencies corresponding to one or two different categories within the same site.

4. THE FORMAL CHARACTERISATION OF NEOLITHIC CERAMICS IN GALICIA: STUDY

We carried out our investigation by comparing the formal features of ceramics from the E/MN and LN using the **operative technical chain** as our methodological instrument. We indicated the common aspects or 'continuity points' and identified aspects which were different, or 'rupture points' throughout the Neolithic period and between different contexts, and indicated which aspects made it possible to refer to the **degree of visibility** of the ceramics in the final product (figures 2 and 3).

Although the term 'visibility' is applied to studies of landscape archaeology, we believe that it is closely related to all aspects of Material Culture, as "the fact the results of social action itself, whether they are more or less visible, may be related to a 'desire for visibility' which may be either conscious and explicit, implicit, or even unintentional" (Criado Boado 1993: 43). We consider 'visibility' to be "the way of exhibiting and emphasising the products of Material Culture which reflect the existence of a social group. Considering that the effects of this social process are reflected spatially, we may define the conditions of visibility of the archaeological record by 'looking over' the elements which form it, and attempt to work out the whys and wherefores of their visual features" (Criado Boado 1991: 23).

The concept of visibility may be applied to any element of material culture, and is specifically applied to ceramics by analysing both the different technical choices made in the different phases of manufacture as well as its material consequence or final product¹⁰. This means that as well as considering their decorations, it is important to consider aspects related to their morphology, size, grain, finish and colour, as these may be used indifferently as resources for a visibility strategy. However, we should not overlook the invisible elements (in the final product) in the sequence of technological production (compactness of the clay used, modelling techniques, grain, firing technique), as unseen

elements may be equally laden with symbolic significance. We should therefore evaluate all types of ceramic materials, not only those with decorations, as doing so may give us information about some of the cultural norms of the societies we are studying¹¹.

With the **morphological treatment**, although technical simplicity governed the Neolithic period, in the LN a wider variety of resources was used, particular with regard to general morphologies, necks and edges. The morphologies here are similar in both contexts throughout the Neolithic: in the E/MN there was a predominance of simple closed profiles within the funerary context, compared to open-air settlements which offer a wider variety. In the LN simplicity may be seen in both contexts, with a prevalence of '*longobordos*' – flared neck edges – in the domestic environment, and some crenated ceramics in the funerary context. One particularly outstanding aspect in both periods and contexts is the morphological similarity found in all of the pottery. This scant variety may be seen in several sites.

With regard to **technical treatment**, there are several common features in Neolithic ceramics. They are hand-made, with mainly light colours, monochrome oxide firing, finishes both rough and medium-smooth, and there are no technical differences between undecorated and decorated ceramics within each site. In general, ceramic pieces from the Neolithic period have a matt finish, with some rare exceptions. Again, this scant variety may be seen from site to site. It is difficult to define a site when only undecorated ceramics are found, meaning it is necessary to use the global information from the archaeological record to evaluate it. Aspects which may differ slightly are the following:

- In the E/MN there was a predominance of fine and thick textures, whereas in the LN they were medium.
- There is a wider range of grains (mica, quartz, granite) in the LN than in the E/MN (micas, granite and quartz are rarely seen).
- In the LN, some pieces with a glossy finish (with more refined manufacture, micas, dark tones and reduction firing) started to be differentiated from the main body of ceramics. It was an appearance which contributes to differentiating substyles within a formal category, and is rare in pieces from the E/MN.

Finally, the **decorative treatment** used represents the most important differences between ceramics from the E/MN and the LN. Although it is true that a common model was maintained, there are stylistic differences. The aspects which give a sense of continuity in both periods are: the techniques used (incision and stamping) the instruments used (punches and combs), as well as the design of basic decorative

⁹ "Considered as one of the mechanisms of the discourse of power, as may be seen in the formal products of a society: the external formalisation of power, in its 'Foucaultian' sense (see Foucault's concept of power in Foucault 1981)" (Prieto 1998, 1999).

¹⁰ Sometimes, the same result is not obtained after making the same technical choice, as the final result depends on the different combinations present in each stage of production.

¹¹ The degree of visibility, achieved in a given ceramic piece following the choice of a specific technique throughout the technological sequence, acquires a new, more enriching significance if we consider other aspects, such as the different visibility strategies for different contexts known in Recent Galician Prehistory – the domestic and funerary contexts. This aspect was considered in a previous study applied to the Bronze Age (Prieto 1998). A preliminary summary is included in Cobas and Prieto (1998b).

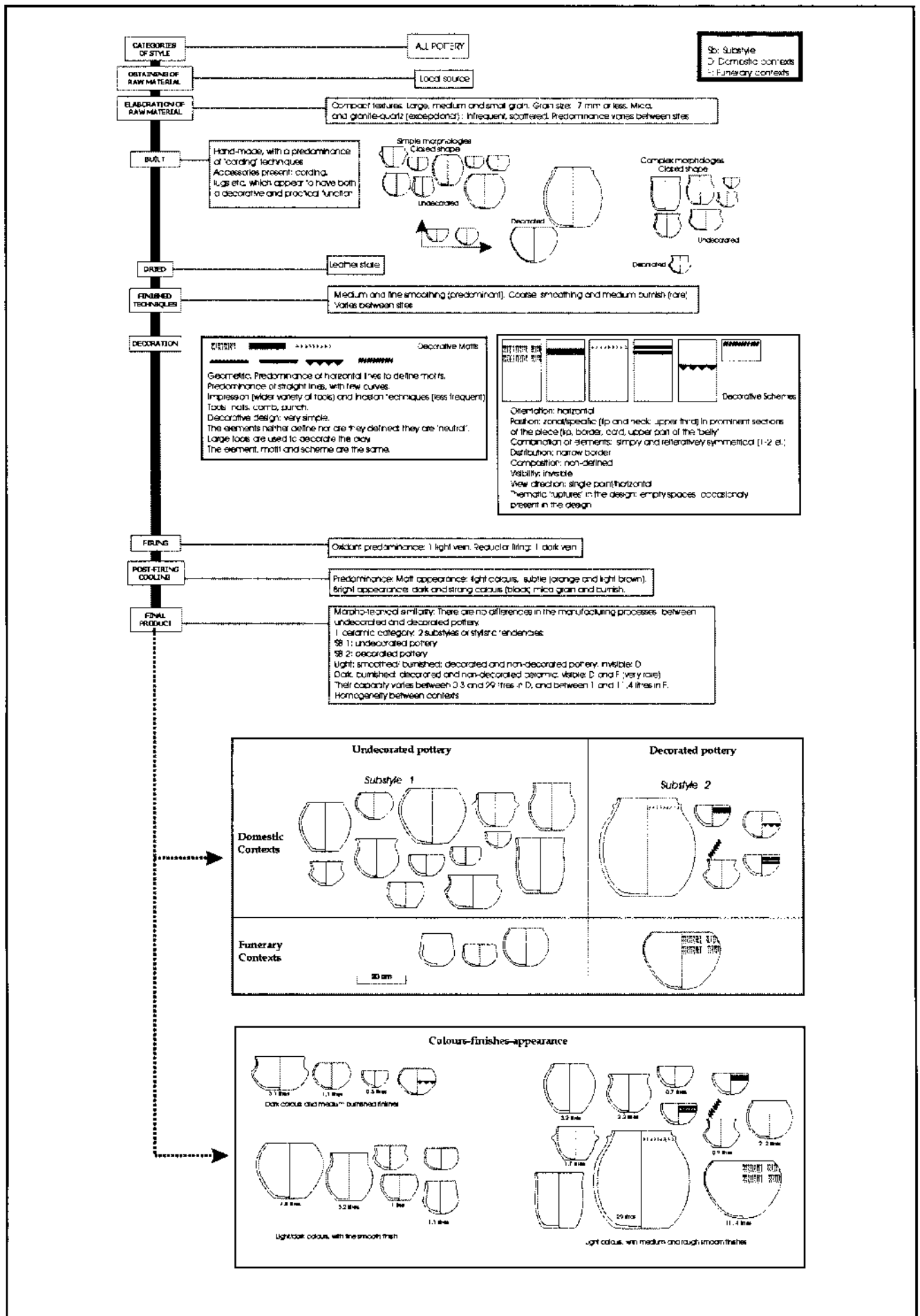


Figure 2. Formal characterisation of Early/Middle Neolithic pottery in Galicia (NW Spain)

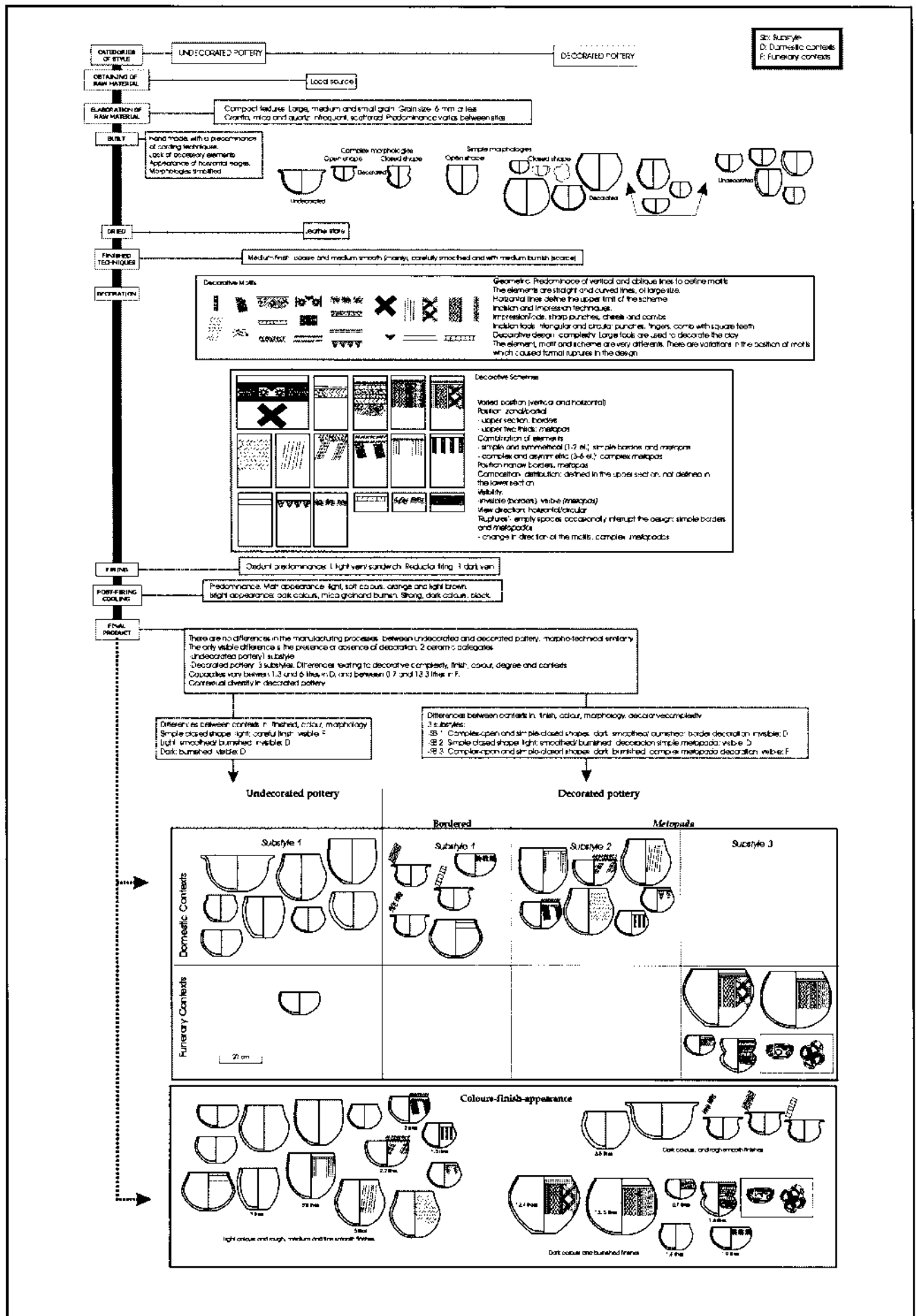


Figure 3. Formal characterisation of Galician Late Neolithic pottery

elements. The motifs offer a break with the thematic sequence, with important differences in size and the types of stamps applied. Decoration is applied to specific areas, on the upper part of the ceramics; the orientation is both horizontal and vertical, and to 'read' the piece properly it must be turned both horizontally and around its axis; the visibility of the decorative element is real (by now there is no possibility of confusing techniques and elements of different types); the visibility of the decoration is based on the way the different decorative instruments were applied, and on the decoration having been applied to the most visible part of the piece. The variety of decorations depends on each site, and it is difficult to find identical decorations in two different places. The aspects which best define the differences for both periods are as follows:

- In the LN decoration with combs appeared, together with sharp punch marks, and it appears that marks made with fingernails disappeared, as had been common in the E/MN.
- Score marks made by instruments are larger and deeper in the LN than in the E/MN, where at times decorations are barely visible on first inspection.
- There is a wider range of marks in the LN, together with more decorative elements and motifs.
- The element, motif and scheme are formally the same in the E/MN, whereas in the LN the element (as the smallest object within the design) and scheme (as the decorative whole) are more highly differentiated and complex.
- There is no strict positioning of the elements, motifs and schemes in the E/MN. However, there is upper and lateral definition together with a very obvious separation of designs in the LN.
- The type of rupture in the sequence of motifs is more complex in the LN, combining elements with different directions, or introducing large, undecorated sections which help to break the thematic continuity of the design. In the E/MN the formal break between motifs is very faint, and is limited to the use quite narrow undecorated sections.
- Curved lines appeared in the LN, which had not yet been used in the E/MN.
- The situation of decorations in the E/MN is limited to the upper third of the ceramics (from the upper part of the belly to the lip), whereas in the LN this was extended down to the middle part of the belly, occupying the upper two thirds of the piece.
- Decorations from the LN offer more possibilities for visibility, and are quite conspicuous compared to decorations from the E/MN, which despite all efforts are still invisible.

As regards the **final product** obtained, we found differences between the LN and E/MN.

In the E/MN, we may refer to a **single formal category**, considering the morphological and technical similarity present, and which contains **two tendencies**: undecorated and decorated ceramics. The presence of decoration distinguishes them slightly, although it is a subtle difference

when the decoration is invisible. The ceramic piece is 'invisible', as all the technical choices in the different stages of manufacture contribute to achieving a final, matt product. Both decorated and undecorated ceramics are invisible. The morphologies of decorated and undecorated pieces are similar, which contributes to not perceiving the differences which exist between them; technically they have the same characteristics, using clays rich in micas, with light colours and medium finishes (either smoothed or brushed), with a matt finish. The few outstanding pieces are dark, burnished, micaceous, and are not necessarily decorated. There are only three outstanding pieces from the total selection, two of which are burnished and slightly sparkling. One is morphologically important as it is carenated, the other because it is larger (it has a corded section decorated with a pattern made using the fingernails), and the third because it is both large and has a different type of decoration within the funerary context. They are important pieces as they have 'suggestive' features which are different from the other ceramics.

In the LN, despite the fact that undecorated and decorated ceramics continued to be made using the same manufacturing process both at morphological and technical level, more visible differences appeared with their decorative features. It is therefore possible to refer to the presence of **two ceramic categories**: undecorated and decorated. There are also differences in the types of decorated ceramics, at formal and contextual level, as it is possible to see differences in the degree of visibility of some pieces compared to others, meaning that within this category we can refer to **three stylistic tendencies**.

Consequently, there is an undecorated, 'invisible' type of ceramics (one category and one stylistic tendency), with a matt finish and quite unassuming, as the clay used has light, gentle tones; the glazes used on the surfaces vary between granite, quartz and mica, and have predominantly rough or medium finishes; there are few pieces with any type of treatment that makes them more conspicuous (smooth or polished finishes, micas or strong colours are the exception).

However, there is variability in decorated ceramics, as three formal resources may be seen in their design which makes them 'visible': their larger size (stamp marks and other elements) and the interplay of different positions used in their motifs. These differences in the degree of visibility are yet another aspect which confirms the existence of three stylistic tendencies within this ceramic category. These are:

- Pottery with **decorated borders**, which is visible, although not to the extent of *metopada* ceramics. They have a bright appearance (with dark colours and micas), or may be burnished or be given a rough finish that is not quite as visually appealing. Despite being visible, their decoration may be diluted after the clay is treated, as it was either first decorated and then had the final finish applied to its surface, or to its rim (in the case of pieces with horizontal, less visible rims). To date, this type of pottery has only been recorded in domestic contexts.
- **Simple metopada** ceramics have visible decoration, are large, and are made more attractive by the treatment given

to the clay (using clear and bright colours) . Again, this type of pottery has only been found in domestic contexts.

- **Complex *metopada*** ceramics have very conspicuous decorations, with the treatment given to the clay contributing to their appeal (using bright, clear colours and mica grains). This type of material is mainly found in funerary contexts¹².

In general terms, both the undecorated and decorated ceramics have a similar morpho-technical treatment. Their decoration is the most prominent feature when estimating differences in degrees of visibility in the pieces. Their classification is further complicated as we proceed through the Neolithic period, as we go from having one ceramic category with two tendencies in the E/MN, to having two categories and three tendencies within one of these categories in the LN.

5. FINAL EVALUATION

The features we have described allow us to affirm that although there is a shared formal model in these Neolithic ceramics, there are also **two well-differentiated styles**, which are visible in the different formal relationships present in both phases, and are particularly visible in the decoration used.

Ceramic material culture was of little importance in Neolithic societies, particularly in its early stages, as the features discovered would suggest simplicity, scarcity, fragmentation and invisibility within the known contexts.

Ceramics in the LN became increasingly important in social life, as there was a degree of variability, and it is proportionally more abundant (in known sites). It is visible, and uses decoration as its most important formal resource. This importance would seem to be connected with the funerary world, where the decorations used were more complex and had similar characteristics to the decorations found in Megalithic paintings in Galicia.

The formal similarity of ceramics throughout the Neolithic period in Galicia has led us to consider that for the time being we should do away with the term 'Chalcolithic'. Our study of ceramic materials is not the only reason we have for believing this, as there are other characteristics present in the record: types of fortified settlements in other parts of the Iberian Peninsula which are not found in Galicia (with the north of Portugal having the example closest to Galicia); factors shared with other Neolithic settlements from an earlier date, such as the type of emplacement chosen; finally, the absence of any relationship between ceramics from the LN with bell-beaker pottery, (traditionally considered as being from the Upper Chalcolithic), whose introduction meant a

¹² It is also recorded in domestic contexts from sites included in the bibliography, although we have not been able to carry out a systematic study, for example in the site of Requeán (González Méndez, personal communication), or in sites from the north of Portugal (S.O. Oliveira 1986). The most important factor in this case is that for these contexts the number of ceramic pieces is truly exceptional.

change in the formal conception of ceramics, and the relationships between different ceramic products and the context in which they appeared (Prieto 2002). These, together with other social areas such as emplacement, contain a range of differential characteristics which are significant enough to reveal a number of strong socio-cultural differences related to the Chalcolithic period. It would therefore appear to be more convenient to use the concept of the LN.

We end this text by proposing a working hypothesis for the future, which has been more fully developed for Bronze Age societies (Prieto 1998, 1999 and 2001). In it we consider that ceramics, like any other element of material culture, express in some way both the social relationships and the pattern of rationality of the society that manufactured them. We therefore believe it is particularly important to consider the work of Clastres (1981), when the author characterises and compares primitive/undivided societies with state/divided societies. We believe that Neolithic ceramics express the characteristics of an undivided society, 'homogenous in its essence', which seeks dispersion and fragmentation, and is at the same time an autonomous whole, a homogenous unit (Clastres 1981: 112-205).

The pottery expresses this pattern through its formal features, revealing a degree of formal diversity between sites (and contexts) and a strong sense of formal similarity within each site. It is true that there are slight differences between the E/MN and the LN, as in the LN a certain internal diversity appeared in decorative features, with the division of decorative features found on ceramic pieces possibly being a sign of the complexity and social division of the LN (the Chalcolithic period in other regions). These features are invisible in the E/MN. It will be necessary to contrast this hypothesis with other elements from these societies' material culture, such as emplacements, dwellings, art and burial sites, and particularly megalithic elements. It will then be possible to see which elements define internal homogeneity and external diversity, and with what degree of complexity they are expressed within the societies in both periods.

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