



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Quaternary International

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/quaint

The beginning of the Neolithic in Andalusia

Dimas Martín-Socas ^{a, *}, María Dolores Camalich Massieu ^a, José Luis Caro Herrero ^b,
F. Javier Rodríguez-Santos ^c

^a U.D.I. de Prehistoria, Arqueología e Historia Antigua (Dpto. Geografía e Historia), Universidad de La Laguna, Campus Guajara, 38071 Tenerife, Spain

^b Dpto. Lenguajes y Ciencias de la Computación, Universidad de Málaga, Complejo Tecnológico, Campus de Teatinos, 29071 Málaga, Spain

^c Instituto Internacional de Investigaciones Prehistóricas de Cantabria (IIIIPC), Universidad de Cantabria. Edificio Interfacultativo, Avda. Los Castros, 52. 39005 Santander, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 31 January 2017

Received in revised form

6 June 2017

Accepted 22 June 2017

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Iberian Peninsula

Andalusia

Neolithic transition

Chronology

Economy

Technology

ABSTRACT

The Early Neolithic in Andalusia shows great complexity in the implantation of the new socioeconomic structures. Both the wide geophysical diversity of this territory and the nature of the empirical evidence available hinder providing a general overview of when and how the Mesolithic substrate populations influenced this process of transformation, and exactly what role they played. The absolute datings available and the studies on the archaeological materials are evaluated, so as to understand the diversity of the different zones undergoing the neolithisation process on a regional scale. The results indicate that its development, initiated in the middle of the 6th millennium BC and consolidated between 5500 and 4700 cal. BC, is parallel and related to the same changes documented in North Africa and the different areas of the Central-Western Mediterranean.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd and INQUA. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic and its consequences in Europe and Africa is one of the topics that receives most attention from researchers into the recent prehistory of these two regions. The Iberian Peninsula, as the western extreme of almost both continents and often a nexus uniting them, has been a focus of interest for understanding the expansion or diffusion of animal and plant domestication. In this process of change, Andalusia had a fundamental role.

Thus, the general theories raised for the Neolithic in the western Mediterranean have marked its interpretation within this geographical framework. Especially within the diffusionist paradigm, from the beginning the debate has revolved around the access routes. It has focussed on the African and the Mediterranean routes, the latter via Southeastern Iberia. Since the 1980s, based on the findings from a series of cave sites in western Andalusia, a hypothesis has been built up on the indigenous character of the first

signs of the Neolithic in the region.

In recent times, there has been an advance in knowledge about the Neolithic communities in Andalusia. However, despite the progress made, the main problems in addressing a regional synthesis of the Neolithic process derives from five fundamental factors: 1.- The enormous breadth of the territory, with marked geographical and environmental differences between the different physical zones; 2.- Systematic archaeological research has only been carried out in very specific areas, through prospecting and excavation. This has led to a very fragmentary explanation of the characteristics of the first Neolithic occupation. Furthermore, the number of systematically excavated sites whose results have been presented as a whole is very small. In addition, part of the documentation used derives from records of old excavations; 3.- The focus of research has been mainly on cave deposits and also overly concentrated on the Sub-Baetic area; 4.- The small number of contextualised absolute datings that permit an accurate chronology of the beginnings of the food production economy in the region; and 5.- The study of the material evidence is only partial, since interest has been focussed on characterising the agriculture and livestock-raising activity. The analysis of the different handicrafts has been mediated by the technological importance assigned them,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: dsocas@ull.edu.es (D. Martín-Socas).

as indicators of the changes produced by the Neolithic process. However, they are addressed independently, rather than as a result of the overall production process defining the economic and social relations within these communities. To these problems, it should be added that historical explanation is excessively linked to the traditional tripartite organisation of the Neolithic, conditioning and skewing any interpretation. This is the case of the so-called *Cardial model*, a paradigm used to explain the emergence and expansion of Neolithic cultures in the western Mediterranean; but also, uncritically, as the determinant indicator of the correspondence or not of a particular site to the beginnings of production.

2. Regional setting

Andalusia is a region with a sharply-defined and complex geographical structure, where unity must be sought more in historical development than in the physical framework. The latter is defined by three large areas formed by the interaction of the various physical factors that affect a natural environment marked by strong contrasts. Thus, its landscape is divided into the wide plains of the Baetic depression, and high mountain ranges and chains, such as Sierra Morena and Baetic Ranges. In the latter case, their distribution parallel to the coast has led to a compartmentalisation of the different spaces, owing to the most important mountain barriers. Among them, the Intrabaetic Basin stands out, made up of a set of small discontinuous depressions running parallel to the Mediterranean coast that communicate Andalusia with southeastern Spain. The diversity is also reflected in the coasts, the Atlantic dominated by beaches and low coasts, vs. the Mediterranean characterised more so by cliffs. The relief is marked by an interior with great morphological complexity and a coast where the Atlantic and Mediterranean converge. This duality also generates a climatic variety that has influenced the forms of occupation and exploitation of these territories throughout history.

3. Material and method

As already stated, only a small number of sites have been systematically excavated and their results are presented very differently, despite being the most important documentary base regarding the Neolithic process in Andalusia. They are the caves: Parralejo (San José del Valle, Cadiz) (Pellicer and Acosta, 1982; Acosta Martínez and Pellicer Catalán, 1990; Acosta Martínez, 1995), La Dehesilla (Algar, Cadiz) (Acosta Martínez, 1987; Acosta Martínez and Pellicer Catalán, 1990), Chica de Santiago (Cazalla de la Sierra, Seville) (Pellicer and Acosta, 1982; Acosta Martínez, 1995), Los Murciélagos at Zuheros (Zuheros, Cordova) (Vicent and Muñoz Amilibia, 1973; Gavilán Ceballos and Vera Rodríguez, 1992, 2001; Peña-Chocarro, 1999; Gavilán et al., 1996; Vera Rodríguez and Gavilán Ceballos, 1999; González-Urquijo et al., 2000; Zapata Peña et al., 2005; Gavilán Ceballos and Mas Cornellá, 2006; Peña-Chocarro and Zapata, 2010; Carvalho et al., 2012; Peña-Chocarro et al., 2013), El Toro (Antequera, Malaga) (Martín-Socas et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Égüez et al., 2014) and Nerja (Nerja, Malaga) (Pellicer Catalán, 1963, 1987, Pellicer and Acosta, 1986, 1995; Pellicer and Acosta Martínez, 1997; Aura et al., 1998, 2009, Aura Tortosa et al., 2010, 2013; Jordá Pardo and Aura Tortosa, 2008; García Borja et al., 2010, 2014; Gibaja et al., 2010a; Aguilera Aguilar et al., 2015); as well as the settlements: Embarcadero del río Palmones, (Algeciras, Cadiz) (Ramos Muñoz and Castañeda, 2005), El Retamar (Puerto Real, Cadiz)

(Ramos Muñoz and Lazarich González, 2002; Ramos Muñoz, 2003; Ramos et al., 2005), Los Castillejos (Montefrío, Granada) (Afonso Marrero, 1993; Afonso Marrero et al., 1995; Cámara et al., 2005; Martínez Fernández et al., 2010; Cámara Serrano et al., 2016), Cabecicos Negros (Vera, Almeria) (Camalich Massieu et al., 1999; Goñi Quinteiro et al., 1999, 2002), Cerro Virtud (Cuevas del Almanzora, Almeria) (Montero Ruiz and Ruiz Taboada, 1996; Montero Ruiz et al., 1999; Rihuete Herrada et al., 1999; Ruiz et al., 1999), and La Higuera (Ardales, Malaga) (Espejo Herrerías et al., 2013).

3.1. Timeframe

3.1.1. Evaluation of the sample

One of the most serious problems in evaluating the neolithisation process in Andalusia arises from the scarcity of available absolute datings. The chronological framework, together with the spatial distribution and type of sites, is the basis for understanding how the new food production economy was established along with its relationships with the Mesolithic substrate communities. In spite of the mentioned circumstances, the datings have been used uncritically, aimed at fixing the commencement of the Early Neolithic in Andalusia and its relationship with similar developments in the western Mediterranean, be it in Southeast Spain, Southern Portugal or North Africa. However, assuming the early datings from La Dehesilla and Chica de Santiago caves were correct, they have also been the argument used to propose an indigenous origin of the Neolithic in western Andalusia at the end of the 7th millennium cal. BC. From the analysis of the available data, the meagre sample of preceding Mesolithic deposits stands out. In the case of Nerja and Bajondillo caves, the hiatus between a Mesolithic occupation and the later Neolithic occupation makes the chronological correlation between the two periods imprecise. But these datings additionally present three fundamental questions to consider. First, only a small set of datings derive from systematically excavated sites with well-defined stratigraphic sequences and contexts. The others were made from samples from decontextualised collections deposited in museums or other institutions. The exceptions would be represented by Nerja cave. There, studies of the documentation of old excavations have been directed not only at correlating the material records with the stratigraphy, but also at dating those samples that allow its chronological and cultural development to be understood (Aura et al., 1998; Simón et al., 2005; Jordá Pardo and Aura Tortosa, 2008; Aura et al., 2009, Aura Tortosa et al., 2013; García Borja et al., 2010; Aguilera Aguilar et al., 2015). Second, except for work carried out in recent years, it is not clear on what type of specimens the dating has been made. And finally, the enormous deviation many of them present distorts the antiquity of the evidence linked to the first Neolithic communities.

The collection of the oldest Neolithic datings to date holds 100 items from 24 sites, 20 of which come from caves (Carrasco Rus and Martínez-Sevilla, 2014). Due to this origin, most of these deposits were considered to be associated with funerary contexts without taking into account the results of the systematically excavated and studied sites. In the evaluation, the Early Neolithic in the region, before 5500 cal. BC, would be represented in 9 sites. The remainder corresponds to an advanced period, between 5500/4900, which can be assimilated into an Epicardial in the region. The development of the Early Neolithic would be short, transforming into a scarcely represented and ill-defined Middle Neolithic, since the Los Castillejos sequence was established as the most precise chronostratigraphic base to exemplify

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7450192>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7450192>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)