
Early and Late Neolithic Pottery of Ifri n'Etsedda, Eastern Rif, Morocco.

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Abstract

Since 1995 archaeological research has been carried out in the Eastern Rif by a Moroccan-German research team with a participation of the Institut National des Sciences de l'Archéologie et du Patrimoine du Maroc, the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, the Autònoma University, Barcelona and the University of Cologne. During that time several hundred sites from the Lower Paleolithic up to Islamic times were discovered, of which several were excavated. A major topic of the project is the transition to food production and related developments. Altogether 18 epipalaeolithic and neolithic sites were excavated. Neolithic innovations such as pottery and domestic species begin around 7.6 ka calBP. Plant cultivation for cereals and pulses is clearly documented for this time period; representing the earliest evidence of plant cultivation for the entire African continent. Two important sites within the study area are the shelters Ifri Oudadane and Ifri n'Etsedda. Both provide epipalaeolithic as well as neolithic deposits. While lithic artefacts may bear witness to already existing technological and behavioral traditions, innovative technologies such as pottery production or cultivation attest new external influences.

Whereas the pottery from Ifri Oudadane has already been presented, the publication of the pottery from Ifri n'Etsedda remained a desideratum. This paper now presents the pottery assemblage of the later. The Early Neolithic deposits date 7.2 and 6.1 ka calBP, overlain by a Late Neolithic layer. The settlement focus is the late Early Neolithic C between 6.6 and 6.1 ka calBP. While the Pottery at the Beginning of the early Neolithic is mostly decorated with Cardium impressions using rocker stamp technique, the later material provides a so-called "Herring-bone" motif using a non denticulated shells or combs.

Keywords: Maghreb, Pottery, Neolithic Transition, Morocco

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