

## **The land of Tartessos in the light of laboratory ceramics studies**

The land of Tartessos, now the Lower Guadalquivir region in western Andalusia, offers one of the most intriguing fields of research within the archaeology of the Iberian Peninsula. Its fame is due to the classical sources: Tartessos was regarded not only as the western end of the world, but also as a sophisticated kingdom that owed its wealth to commercial contacts with the Phoenicians and the Greeks. The Tartessian material culture was deeply influenced by the newcomers from the East. Particularly, the pottery technology changed significantly: the potter's wheel was introduced in Iberia at the time due to influence from the eastern Mediterranean.

The aim of this project is to broaden our knowledge on ceramic production and use in the south-western part of the Iberian Peninsula from the Late Bronze Age until the collapse of Tartessos. The current state of the art about ancient Tartessos is insufficient. Investigations on the function and usage of vessels will be carried out. The pottery will be analyzed in order to determine their content. This project is characterized by a multidisciplinary approach; archaeological techniques (for example conventional morphology-based classification) and also chemical and geological methods (thin-section petrography, SEM-EDS, XRF, organic residue analysis) will be employed.

It is expected to identify the scale of the shift in ceramic production in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The application of up-to date methods opens up new lines of enquiry which will enable us to discover the organic substances absorbed by the walls of vessels and thus determine the type of foodstuff which they may have held.