André Carneiro, Cláudia Teixeira and Paulo Simões Rodrigues

(Editors)

An Empire of many faces

CLÁSICOS DYKINSON

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COLECCIÓN
CLÁSICOS DYKINSON

Serie: Monografías

Director de la Colección:
ALFONSO SILVÁN RODRÍGUEZ

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An Empire of many faces

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Madrid
2023

CHAIA - Ref.ª UIDB/00112/2020/Base

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The volume titled *An Empire of many faces* is a direct result of the activities within the project *BioRom – Rome our Home. The (Auto)biographical Tradition and the Formation of Identity(ies)*, specifically its task 3, focused on the problem of regional and local identities.

The various papers that compose it present case studies that, as a whole, reinforce the idea that the construction of cultural identities in the provincial and local environments was based on a set of relationships and dynamic negotiation processes, both in the time(s) and space(s) where Roman culture encountered other cultures. Following postcolonial studies – which brought to light a new way of looking at the relations between the occupying powers and the colonised peoples and, consequently, promoted the systematic distancing of the vision of Roman identity from an essentialist perspective – this volume's papers address the problem of the construction of identities in the context of the continuous and multiple interactions that determined the life of individuals and communities in the spaces where Roman culture became global, thus arguing for the complex character of these interactions and their consequences. We should never forget that the theoretical framework that fostered this new way of approaching the complex problem of the formation of identities on the provincial and local scales of the Roman world was supported by archaeological evidence and data relating to material culture. In this context, studies such as those by Greg Woolf (*Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge, 2000), Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (*Rome's Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, 2008), Richard Hingley (*Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity and Empire*, Routledge, 2005) and Louise Revell (*Roman Imperialism and Local Identities*, Cambridge, 2008) have explored how material culture was a key element in the construction of Roman identity in the provinces. It is no coincidence that all the above titles, essential for setting new paradigms in the perspectives of these research fields, were published within eight years, at a time when the challenges of the third millennium have led us to think decisively about these issues.

Such studies, among others, highlighted the potential of Archaeology for the reconstruction of the mosaic of cultural processes that took place in the various parts of the Empire, insofar as the information provided by material culture makes it possible to understand and evaluate the complex processes – not only of cultural

assimilation, but also of resistance and counter-culture – that took place in the Roman world. These findings have also changed the role of Archaeology, which is no longer seen as a science that corroborates the grand systemic visions that historiography and literature have conveyed over the centuries, but as a science that raises new problems for History. In fact, if, on the one hand, the evidence gathered allowed us to prove that the dynamics between the dominators and the dominated peoples comprised a multitude of complex and non-homogeneous processes, on the other hand, it brought to light an unknown world, as it was ignored by most literary sources, which focused above all on the great historical facts and agents.

This new perception ran in parallel with the theoretical perspectives formed within post-colonialism, which shifted the analysis from the monolithic identities of colonial empires to the processes of acculturation that determined the way in which the Others perceived themselves and were perceived in the multi-relational framework of the societies they were part of. Archaeology was fundamental to this repositioning of perspectives regarding the debate on the Roman world and, consequently, to the development of other perspectives of analysis centred on the Other and on its revaluation. The redefinition of the Other, or rather of the various Others who inhabited the Empire, was made possible by two circumstances: firstly, because the archaeological record allows the inclusion of all segments of society and, for the first time in a consistent way, of ethnic minorities, gender elements, and the excluded and marginalised; secondly, because the archaeological record brought to our knowledge a body of material and non-material evidence that tells us "genuine stories" of what occurred in everyday social experiences, a subject until then excluded from the great historical and literary narratives. In this regard, it should be stressed that the "archive of time" that Archaeology aims to restore and understand includes not only the world of the living, but also the complementary funerary world, which shows the intention to integrate all the moments that express social practices.

However, if archaeological information has the potential to contradict the narrative of the *Big History*, revealing other aspects that might go against the established discourse, the truth is that, like any other record, the archaeological one should also be subject to a hermeneutic process, in order to produce knowledge that goes beyond models, typologies and listings. The great potential that archaeological information presents must be questioned in a thorough and creative way, so that material culture may reveal all the stories contained therein – not only in terms of the structural elements that have reached us, but also in what concerns the huge information that has been lost and can be recovered indirectly or by cross-referencing data.

For this reason, Archaeology itself has changed: today we are less interested in recovering great monumental structures, opulent constructions, or centres of power, and it has become equally or more relevant to recover the small spaces of life and death made of humble waste such as rubbish dumps, layers of dumping and debris,

capable of bringing us fundamental information to know objectively all the elements of historical reality. Thus, more and more "detached" from the narrative of the *Big History*, Archaeology progressively seeks to record the spaces where the agents who created the lively and dynamic societies lived and were buried.

Starting, therefore, from the assumption that the realities evidenced in relation to the construction of this Romanised world do not reveal a monolithic and watertight character, the papers in this volume examine contexts of interaction that highlight the multiplicity and flexibility of the processes, focusing, on the one hand, around the mediations intended to promote the supra-unification of Roman culture and, on the other, on the multiple responses that occur within the framework of these interactions.

The contributions in this volume express the immense wealth of approaches that Archaeology, starting from material data and confronting them with literary records, allows itself to use for the construction of knowledge. The collected papers show a wide diversity of data, from the reading of humble ceramic fragments to the iconographic and informative potential of coins, or even by the statues that remained, allowing us to compare the figures. They allow us to recover the role of the "people without history", understanding phenomena of counter-cultural resistance conveyed in the identity forms of claiming the past against the new powers or, on the contrary, how military and diplomatic treaties recognise otherness. The journey is long, starting from the pre-Roman world as a remaining substrate, passing through the forms of identity construction and the creation of new connections brought about by the Empire, considering the various expressions of the material culture found in dwelling places and funerary environments, until we end up with the identity connections in a time when the Empire was becoming a mere memory.

The variety of approaches expresses the way in which we can extract the full potential of material culture. In the first section ("The incorporation of the Other: images, representations and material culture in the dynamics of imperial development"), **Jesús Bermejo Tirado** gives voice to the "people without history", analysing the testimonies of peasant communities and identifying them as essential agents in the construction of territories.

We then move forward into history, but back to the past: we see how, in two areas, the claim to be the original is taken as an instrument of differentiation in frameworks of identity homogenisation. **Francisco Machuca Prieto** shows us how the *Phoenician past* is used as an instrument of statement within a community, similarly to what **Mauro Puddu** writes regarding the claim to memory among the communities of Roman Sardinia. These are two examples of how tradition can be used against the current of uniformitarian movements.

In contrast, we see how the iconography established by imperial programmes was used for the construction of a collective identity. We know well how the Empire masterfully used the power of images in order to create a common conscience, bringing together distant communities, blurring their own notions and seeking to create images and iconographies that worked as a reference for the collective. This is how we find in two studies the way certain forms were seen as vital for such strategy: **Aura Piccioni** shows us one of the most emblematic, for statuary has the power to bring us face to face with the key players who, from afar, ran the Empire. Bronze statues were the tangible power of the imperial administrators while, on another level, coins would be the example of the dissemination of economic domination and, so, **Helena Gozalbes García** and **Noé Conejo Delgado** analyse the way in which the provincial coinages reflect the conveyance of images in one of the most effectively devices used by imperial power.

The second section of the book ("The fragmentation of unity and the loss of identity cohesion: between texts and material elements") deals with the subject of identity in moments of loss of imperial cohesion. The way in which different communities claim and bind themselves to new groupings is studied by **Pilar Diarte Blasco**, who confronts literary information with known material data, increasingly bringing us new identities, whether from a religious or a cultural point of view.

At another level of analysis, ceramics also captures the changes of the *Big History*: **Mónica Rolo**, **Ana Martins** and **André Carneiro** study the circulation processes of ceramics in different routes of the Lusitanian territory, as well as the ongoing socio-political phenomena that had repercussions on material culture. For a specific universe, the funerary world, **Mónica Rolo**'s contribution shows us how the last resting place is, frequently, the space for full praise and claim to each person's identities. Finally, and contrasting this field of the individuality of the deceased with the more conventional sphere of diplomacy and military strategy, the study by **Rodrigo Gomes** leads us to understand how the Other was seen, in a period in which, in a progressive and unstoppable way, the Roman Empire was becoming increasingly distant, and the stage was now taken by protagonists who were paving the way for the medieval world.

In short, we have a series of approaches that show how the various dimensions of material culture can be addressed in order to include the immense diversity of the past in historical and literary discourse, proving how Archaeology has become a privileged area of knowledge for showing us the great diversity of cultural and social identities.

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André Carneiro
Fall/Winter 2022

I.

The incorporation of the Other: images, representations and material culture in the dynamics of imperial development

EL ANÁLISIS SOCIAL DEL CAMPESINADO ROMANO EN LA PENÍNSULA IBÉRICA: DE "GENTES SIN HISTORIA" A SUJETOS HISTÓRICOS

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Resumen

En este trabajo proponemos una revisión historiográfica de los estudios sobre el campesinado romano con especial atención al contexto específico de la península ibérica. En paralelo al desarrollo de los llamados *peasant studies*, el análisis histórico de este tipo de comunidades del pasado ha sufrido un cierto descrédito desde el final de la década de los ochenta. Sin embargo, el desarrollo de nuevas metodologías de análisis y, sobre todo, el surgimiento de nuevos registros arqueológicos a partir del estudio de evidencias procedentes de la arqueología preventiva ha generado un nuevo horizonte de investigación para su estudio como sujeto histórico. Todas estas nuevas perspectivas de trabajo generan nuevas posibilidades para el conocimiento de las sociedades rurales del pasado romano, pero también genera una reconfiguración historiográfica que no solo afecta a los estudiosos de la Antigüedad.

Palabras clave

Campesinado romano, Hispania romana, Peasant Studies, Arqueología espacial, Intervenciones preventivas.

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present an up-dated review on the study of Roman peasantry, with a special focus on Roman Spain. In parallel to the so-called peasant

studies, the historical analysis of these communities in the past has suffered some disrepute since the late eighties. However, the application of new analytical methodologies and -above all- the rise of new archaeological records produced by the development of preventive excavations has opened an entire research horizon for the study of Roman peasantry as a historical subject. All these new approaches are generating new possibilities towards a deeper knowledge of ancient rural communities, but also are producing an historiographical reconfiguration that is not only affecting Classics scholarship.

Keywords

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Este trabajo tiene como primer objetivo presentar una serie de reflexiones sobre el contexto historiográfico relativo al análisis histórico-social de las comunidades campesinas de época romana en la península ibérica. Para evitar cualquier posible confusión, hemos de señalar que nuestra contribución debe considerarse como un trabajo parcial en el marco de un programa de investigación un poco más amplio, desarrollado en los últimos años gracias a la concesión de varios proyectos[1]. Más que una propuesta exhaustiva, el lector debe considerar esta contribución como una suma de reflexiones basadas en nuestra propia experiencia, pero también en el trabajo de otros investigadores que han centrado sus trabajos en diversos escenarios regionales del Mediterráneo occidental. Esperamos que estas referencias puedan ser útiles a otros investigadores interesados en el estudio histórico de las comunidades campesinas del mundo antiguo en otros contextos geográficos y culturales.

Un primer punto esencial sobre los estudios relativos al campesinado hace referencia a su propia definición como categoría social de aquellos grupos humanos que, como indica la primera acepción del término campesino en la RAE, "viven y trabajan de forma habitual en el campo"[2]. Esta definición, ciertamente genérica, ha sido vinculada en el marco de las ciencias sociales del siglo XX (Mintz 1973; Edelman 2013; Pandey 2018), a otra categoría social más amplia: la subalternidad. Y es que, como

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[2] https://dle.rae.es/campesino

diversos autores han señalado (Wolf 1966: 13-17; Shanin 1971a: 15; Ellis 1988: 5-6), una de las pocas características sociales que han servido para definir a las comunidades campesinas es precisamente su carácter subalterno con respecto a los grupos de elite que ejercieron el poder político o económico a lo largo de la historia.

Más allá de estas características genéricas, hemos decidido adoptar una definición más funcional (inspirada en los trabajos de T. Shanin[3]) del concepto de campesinado. Esto nos permitirá acotar de un modo (un poco) más concreto nuestro objeto de estudio. De este modo, entendemos que los campesinos pueden ser identificados como pequeños productores agropecuarios que, con la ayuda de equipamientos básicos y el trabajo de los miembros de su unidad doméstica, producen rendimientos fundamentalmente orientados (aunque no exclusivamente) para su propio consumo y para satisfacer las cargas tributarias impuestas por aquellos que ostentan el poder económico y político.

Pero esta definición -ni ninguna otra que se haya planteado en el contexto de otras ciencias sociales (Shanin 1971b, Edelman 2013)- no debe ser entendida como un argumento para defender la existencia de una categoría universalmente aceptada para el concepto de campesinado como una especie de clase o condición social reconocible en cualquier periodo histórico. Por el contrario, el carácter subalterno de las comunidades campesinas a menudo ha dificultado la propia capacidad de estos grupos humanos para transmitir o codificar formas de identidad social o cultural claramente diferenciables de otros grupos de élite o aristócratas (Wolf 1966: 15-17, T. Shanin 1971a: 15). Más que de una "clase campesina" en realidad debemos hablar de una serie de dimensiones de una misma estructura social que puedan ser objeto de análisis. Para clarificar más el ámbito de investigación de este trabajo vamos a señalar cuatro dimensiones o áreas de estudio concreto en la que centraremos nuestra atención:

1) La explotación de los recursos ambientales y paisajísticos como medio principal de subsistencia para satisfacer la mayoría de las necesidades de consumo.

2) La granja como unidad básica para la organización de la vida económica y social en sus múltiples dimensiones.

3) Las estructuras culturales tradicionales vinculadas a la vida en pequeñas comunidades aldeanas.

4) Su posición subalterna. La dominación (y resiliencia) de estas comunidades por parte de poderes políticos y administrativos endógenos.

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[3] Posiblemente uno de los más relevantes sociólogos rurales de finales del siglo XX y principios del XXI, fallecido recientemente (vid. Shanin 1971a, 1971b, 1990).

2. EL CAMPESINADO EN SU DIMENSIÓN HISTÓRICA

A pesar de revistas como el *Journal of Peasant Studies* o el *Journal of Agrarian Change* se encuentran entre las revistas más citadas según el ranking SJR (Scimago Journal and Country Rank), no sería exagerado afirmar que los estudios sobre campesinado o *peasant studies* son considerados por muchos autores como un tema pasado de moda y que este tipo de estudios han pasado a un lugar secundario en las agendas investigadoras en las últimas décadas. De hecho, muchos autores evitan utilizar los términos campesino o campesinado, en favor de otros conceptos como granjeros, clases humildes o comunidades aldeanas[4]. Tampoco es difícil encontrar un rechazo explícito del campesinado como sujeto de estudio histórico o arqueológico en la historiografía reciente (Theuws 2010; Blair 2018; Sabloff 2019).

Pero, a pesar de todas estas críticas, algunos historiadores y arqueólogos han seguido trabajando de forma relevante en el estudio histórico de las comunidades campesinas. En un ámbito más arqueológico, un ejemplo de esta continuidad lo tenemos en el trabajo de Chris Loveluck *Northwestern Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600-1150*, en el que se presta una gran atención a los grupos campesinos, así como a otras formas de élite local, artesanos y comerciantes (Loveluck 2013). Otra obra de referencia en este sentido es el monumental trabajo de Chris Wickham *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800,* donde se define el "modo de producción campesina" como un modelo para el análisis de las dinámicas históricas en los paisajes de las sociedades rurales (Wickham 2005). Estos y otros trabajos encuentran algunas de sus más importantes raíces intelectuales en los trabajos de antropólogos como Marshall Sahlins (1972), Ester Boserup (1965) o Claude Meillassoux (1975). En definitiva, parece existir una cierta discontinuidad entre la "edad de oro" de los estudios históricos sobre el campesinado entre las décadas de los años sesenta, setenta y ochenta y la investigación reciente.

Hay varios factores que pueden servir para explicar este declive. Uno de ellos puede ser el ocaso de las "grandes narrativas históricas", resultado de la progresiva afirmación de perspectivas postmodernas, la historia cultural y el llamado giro lingüístico. Además, en función de la estrecha relación entre marxismo y *peasant studies* establecida en el tercer cuarto del siglo XX (Shanin 1987), también debemos tener en cuenta la existencia de una más que probable correlación entre el final del bloque soviético y el declive en el interés en este tipo de temáticas.

Al mismo tiempo, incluso cuando los estudios sobre sociología rural y los paisajes agrarios han seguido siendo relevantes campos de investigación, en las últimas décadas, también hemos asistido a una progresiva fragmentación de estas comunidades académicas a causa de una creciente especialización temática. La historia rural, a pesar de que muchas veces no ha recibido el reconocimiento académico que

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[4] En las publicaciones del mundo académico anglosajón podemos encontrar otros equivalentes comúnmente empleados como *non-elite, commoners, lowly people, farmers, or dwellers.*

merece, se ha establecido como un espacio de interacción muy creativa entre especialistas de diferentes disciplinas. El gran número de revistas y asociaciones sobre este tipo de cuestiones (en España hemos de destacar el caso de la revista *Historia Agraria,* editada por la Sociedad de Estudios de Historia Agraria) es síntoma de la buena salud de la que gozan este tipo de trabajos.

De un modo similar, la tradición antropológica y sociológica de los llamados *peasant studies* ha sufrido ciertas transformaciones en las últimas décadas. Los estudios de corte histórico se han ido progresivamente abandonando en favor de estudios centrados en lo que podríamos denominar como la economía política del mundo agrario contemporáneo. Desde la fundación del *Journal of Peasant Studies* en 1973, pasando por la del *Journal of Agrarian Change* en 2001 (Bernstein y Byres 2001), esta reorientación temática se ha concentrado en el desarrollo de estudio críticos sobre las políticas rurales, agropecuarios y el desarrollo[5], creando un verdadero abismo académico entre estos estudios actuales y aquellos centrados en el análisis histórico (Quirós Castillo y Tejerizo García 2020). A pesar de esta extensa tradición de los *peasant studies*, lo cierto es que todavía sabemos muy poco acerca de las comunidades campesinas del pasado. La mayoría de los historiadores y los arqueólogos tienden a centrar su atención en las elites rurales, sin duda más visibles en las fuentes históricas y en el registro arqueológico, y más accesibles a la hora de construir propuestas interpretativas. En consecuencia, las comunidades campesinas suelen retratarse como estructuras estables o pasivas que suscitan un menor interés. Su análisis ha sido marginalizado -cuando no directamente ignorado- considerando su estudio como un tema "superado" o "pasado de moda" que se suele identificar con acercamientos similares a los del marxismo ortodoxo que declinó con la caída del Telón de acero (McMichael 2008).

Sin embargo, el cambio del milenio ha servido para atestiguar la emergencia en diferentes áreas de Europa de una nueva arqueología histórica de las sociedades rurales como consecuencia, inicialmente, del impacto de la implantación de nuevas metodologías de prospección arqueológica y sistemas de teledetección no invasiva y, después, debido al impacto de la arqueología preventiva a partir de la promulgación generalizada de leyes de patrimonio histórico. Esto ha supuesto nuevas formas de entender el estudio de los territorios y de los paisajes rurales, así como el descubrimiento y excavación por primera vez en la historia de la investigación, de una gran cantidad de nuevos asentamientos rurales, fundamentalmente vinculados a campesinos y otros grupos rurales más humildes. Toda esta gran cantidad de evidencias históricas, unidas a la introducción de nuevos modelos de análisis sociales están revolucionando nuestros actuales conocimientos sobre la historia social de las áreas rurales en el contexto de la historia europea.

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[5] Un ejemplo de este tipo de perspectiva lo encontramos en la editorial del volumen 39 (1) del *Journal of Peasant Studies* correspondiente al año 2006.

3. *PEASANT STUDIES* E HISTORIA ROMANA

La segunda mitad del siglo XX marcó el inicio de los *peasant studies* como una subdisciplina dentro de las ciencias sociales e históricas. Durante esos años se produjo la publicación de varios trabajos tenían por objeto la definición del campesinado como grupo social diferenciable. La publicación de trabajos seminales de autores como E. Wolf (1966) o T. Shanin (1971a y 1971b), así como la propia recuperación de los trabajos de A. V. Chayanov a raíz de la traducción de una selección de sus trabajos al inglés (Chayanov 1925), sirvió para establecer las bases de un ensayo de caracterización económica, social y cultural del campesinado. Este impulso académico sirve también para explicar el surgimiento de una nueva generación de historiadores sociales centrados en el estudio de las comunidades campesinas de los periodos medievales y modernos de Europa. Mucho menor predicamento, por el contrario, han tenido este tipo de estudios en el marco de la Historia social romana.

En año 1979, en las páginas del *Cambridge Classical Journal*, el Prof. Peter Garnsey publicaba un artículo donde se trataba de responder a la pregunta de por qué historiadores y arqueólogos no se habían ocupado de estudiar a las comunidades campesinas de la península Itálica en época romana (Garnsey 1979). Según Garnsey, este vacío en la investigación se debe a la respuesta, negativa, que la historiografía precedente había dado a una cuestión previa: "Did peasants proprietors survive in significant numbers in the Late Republic and Early Empire?" (Garnsey 1979: 2). Sin embargo, a pesar de los intentos del propio Garnsey (1976, 1980), así como de otros notables estudiosos (Finley 1976; Frayn 1974, 1979; Evans 1980a, 1980b; Rathbone 1981; De Neeve 1984; Foxhall 1990; De Ligt 1990, 1991) por abrir un horizonte de investigaciones sobre, *proletarii*, trabajadores no esclavos o pequeños propietarios rurales durante el periodo romano, esta línea de trabajo quedó en punto muerto hasta fechas relativamente recientes.

Hay varios factores que sirven para explicar la falta de continuidad en este tipo de investigaciones. Quizá uno de los más influyentes se deba al innegable éxito académico cosechado por el modelo de la *villa schiavistica* como manifestación del modo de producción esclavista de época romana (Giardina y Schiavone 1981; Capogrossi Colonesi 1981; Carandini 1989), impulsado por la publicación de los resultados de las excavaciones arqueológicas dirigidas por el Prof. Andrea Carandini en la *villa* romana de Settefinestre (Carandini 1985). La autoridad conferida por la gran mayoría de los investigadores a un conjunto relativamente reducido de fuentes -conocidas como los tratadistas de *re rustica* (Martin 1971, para una visión más crítica de estos textos: Molina Vidal 2008; Kron 2017; Pelgrom 2017; Reddé 2018: 307-326) supuso la asunción generalizada de la idea de la progresiva sustitución de las tradicionales comunidades de ciudadanos-campesinos del periodo republicano por un modelo articulado en torno a las *villae* como centro de grandes explotaciones esclavistas.

La extensión de este modelo de producción agropecuaria basado en el concepto de la *villa schiavistica* como núcleo esencial de la estructura económica de otros territorios provinciales, en lo que se ha dado en llamar "romanización agraria" (Leveau 2014), se ha entendido como resultado natural de la expansión imperialista del Estado romano por todo el Mediterráneo (Remesal 2008). De esta manera, el concepto arqueológico de *villa* ha quedado establecido como correlato material del modo de producción esclavista romano y eje vertebrador de la vida social y económica del mundo rural en grandes sectores del Imperio.

4. MÁS ALLÁ DE LAS *VILLAE*

El estudio del mundo rural romano en los territorios hispanos, como en muchas otras partes del mundo romano, ha estado condicionado por el concepto (arqueológico) de *villa* (Dyson 2003: 13-35; Molina Vidal 2008). En esencia, se podría afirmar que la arqueología del mundo rural romano realizada en España ha sido una arqueología de las *villae.* Realizando una comparación de las principales obras síntesis sobre la arqueología de las *villae* romanas de Hispania podemos concluir que existe un consenso más o menos generalizado sobre el tipo de asentamiento al que nos referimos cuando hablamos de *villae* (Gorges 1979; Fernández Castro 1982; Chavarría Arnau 2007; Fernández Ochoa et al. 2008; Hidalgo 2016). Sin embargo, si realizamos una búsqueda más profunda en trabajos específicos y memorias de excavación veremos que bajo esta categoría en realidad se agrupan asentamientos de muy diversa naturaleza tanto en términos de forma como de escala (e. g. Casas i Genover et al. 1995; Chavarría Arnau et al. 2006; Teichner 2008; Fernández Ochoa et al. 2008; Fernández Ochoa et al. 2014; Revilla et al. 2008; Hidalgo 2016; Martínez, Nogales y Rodà 2020; D'Encarnaçao, Cardoso y Almeida 2020). Más allá de la discusión tipológica sobre estos asentamientos y sus características constructivas lo cierto es que la *villa* ha sido entendida, al menos de forma abstracta, como el centro de un sistema económico (Remesal 2008; Lunaro 2015). Incluso cuando sus practicantes parecen alejarse de cualquier posición teórica e historiográfica previa, este enfoque exclusivamente centrado en las *villae* puede considerarse como el correlato arqueológico del modo de producción esclavista exportado por el modelo de Settefinestre como lógico reflejo del proceso de expansión política de Roma en el Mediterráneo (Remesal 2016).

Esta primacía de las *villae* en la historiografía precedente se debe a diversos factores causales. Además de las mencionadas inercias historiográficas generadas por el triunfo del modelo carandiniano de la *villa schiavistica,* existen otros factores de corte estético y económico que también ayudan a explicar la atención casi exclusiva que la historiografía precedente sobre el mundo rural romano en Hispania ha prestado a las *villae.* Desde un punto de vista estético se percibe la tendencia a pivotar en torno a manifestaciones monumentales como núcleo de interés fundamental de la investigación precedente, en detrimento de otras realidades materiales más humildes

generadas por otros sectores de la sociedad rural hispanorromana. Otro factor causal que podemos acusar es de tipo puramente crematístico. El innegable valor económico de las *villae* monumentales como polos de atracción turística, especialmente en áreas rurales de España y Portugal, también puede plantearse como otro factor clave, especialmente en relación con la obtención de fuentes de financiación que sirvan para soportar proyectos arqueológicos.

El notable desarrollo de la arqueología de las *villae* señoriales acontecido en las últimas décadas ha eclipsado en cierta medida la investigación sobre otras realidades sociales, económicas y culturales -que nosotros agrupamos bajo la denominación de campesinado- también presentes en muchas áreas rurales del mundo hispanorromano. A diferencia de los *domini,* pero también los esclavos rurales que habitaron estas *villae* (Bradley 1988: 57-106; Bodel 2011), dichos sectores campesinos del mundo rural romano continúan siendo todavía un grupo de "gentes sin historia", parafraseando la famosa expresión acuñada por Eric Wolf (1982).

El conocimiento de todas estas comunidades rurales de época romana cuyas estructuras económicas y patrones de asentamiento no se ajustan al modelo tradicional de la *villa schiavistica* se enfrenta a dos problemas fundamentales. El primero de ellos se refiere a la búsqueda y discusión de aquellos indicadores arqueológicos que nos puedan servir para identificar la presencia y las condiciones de vida de las comunidades campesinas en las diversas áreas rurales de la Hispania romana. El segundo de los problemas fundamentales abordado en el marco de esta propuesta -directamente inspirado en la tradición antropológica de los *peasant studies*- se refiere a la posibilidad de definir estas comunidades en términos sociales, económicos y culturales, del mismo modo que otros autores han logrado hacerlo en otros contextos históricos y etnográficos muy diversos.

De la misma manera que el concepto arqueológico de *villa* no es solo un tipo de asentamiento sino, más bien, un modelo de estructura económica y social habitualmente calificado con el término *esclavista* (Carandini 1985; Remesal 2008), la documentación arqueológica de otros tipos de asentamientos rurales (fundamentalmente granjas y otras variedades de asentamientos agregados), puede relacionarse con otro tipo de formas de organizar la vida económica y social, caracterizadas por una estructura agropecuaria (aunque también de otras actividades artesanales) basada en la posesión o arrendamiento de pequeñas parcelas, el empleo de mano de obra basado en los miembros de la propia unidad domésticas y con una producción fundamentalmente orientada a la subsistencia, al pago de tributos impuestos por poderes políticos rectores más allá del contexto aldeano y, en algunos casos, la producción de moderados excedentes destinados a ser distribuidos en mercados locales o regionales.

No obstante, no debemos considerar ambos modelos (el de la *villa* esclavista y el de la granja campesina) como sistemas exclusivos o aislados (Lunaro 2015). Creemos que esa relación de dependencia con respecto a otros poderes políticos externos

al ámbito aldeano es una de las características fundamentales de las sociedades campesinas. Como se puede atestiguar en muchos ámbitos y períodos históricos del entorno Mediterráneo, más que de segregación deberíamos hablar de la conexión - cuando no directamente de la complementariedad - de ambos tipos de estrategias agropecuarias en los diferentes territorios rurales (Rathbone 1981; Reddé 2017b; Bermejo Tirado 2020).

No se trata de confrontar a los grandes *domini* latifundistas y a los campesinos (pequeños propietarios o *proletarii* rurales) como clases sociales totalmente aisladas y enfrentadas. Este tipo de oposiciones binarias, propias de la modernidad industrial, no suelen manifestarse de forma explícita en el mundo antiguo. De hecho, tenemos ejemplos claros, tanto en las fuentes escritas como en el registro arqueológico, sobre la promoción social de campesinos convertidos en miembros de las elites locales en diversos puntos del Imperio[6]. Pero, ante la abundancia de trabajos monográficos centrados en la *villa*, hemos creído conveniente centrar nuestra atención en la arqueología de los asentamientos campesinos como forma de acrecentar nuestro conocimiento del mundo rural en esta parte del mundo romano. Solo de esta manera conseguiremos llenar el vacío generado por el desigual tratamiento histórico y arqueológico dispensado a las *villae* señoriales en detrimento de los más humildes asentamientos campesinos de época romana documentados en la Península. Tal vez en un futuro no muy lejano, las granjas romanas puedan ser para el modelo de las economías campesinas lo que el concepto arqueológico de *villa* es para el modo de producción esclavista.

5. PRINCIPALES FUENTES PARA EL ANÁLISIS SOCIAL DEL CAMPESINADO ROMANO

En este punto vamos a realizar una presentación sintética de los principales tipos de evidencia documental (textual y material) que vamos a analizar en el marco del presente trabajo. Aunque el estudio del campesinado no goza del mismo desarrollo como otros campos de la investigación sobre el mundo romano como las ciudades o el de los asentamientos rurales con equipamientos ornamentales de prestigio, en los últimos años, sobre todo en relación a determinados proyectos de investigación como el *Roman Peasant Project* (Bowes 2021), *Rurland* (Reddé 2017b, 2018) o *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain* (Smith et al. 2016, 2018; Allen et al. 2017), se ha producido un cambio de tendencia centrado en el análisis de diferentes tipos de evidencias (Theng 2021). En el siguiente punto vamos a realizar un breve recorrido exploratorio por las características y posibilidades analíticas de los principales tipos de evidencias disponibles para el análisis de las comunidades campesinas en el mundo romano.

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[6] Es el caso por ejemplo de célebre campesino de Maktar, conocido por una célebre inscripción (*CIL* VIII 11824; *ILS* 7457, para el mejor estudio publicado hasta la fecha vid. Shaw 2013: 3-92, 281-298).

Nuestra revisión de las fuentes adopta una perspectiva multiescalar que se articula en torno a dos niveles básicos. Un primer nivel -más global- se centra en todas aquellas evidencias disponibles en todos los territorios que formaron parte del Imperio. Un segundo nivel -más local- se centrará en aquellos ejemplos que, en el marco específico de la península ibérica, podrían servir para articular propuestas de análisis particular o estudios de caso microrregional en el marco de nuestra propuesta.

5.1. Fuentes textuales

Aunque existe una variedad de términos latinos, tales como *rusticus* (Apu. *Metam*. XII. 24. 4)*, rusticanus* (Cic, *Ver*. V. 34)*, rusticulus* (Cic. *Sest*. XXXVIII. 82), *proletarius* (Aulo Gelio, *Att*. XVI. 10; Cic. *Res Pu*. II, 22, 10), *servus* (Juv. *Sat*. III, 9. 44) o *colonus* (Cic. *Pro Caec*. 57), que fueron empleados en diversas fuentes clásicas para designar a diversos tipos de habitantes del mundo rural en época romana, no existe ninguna palabra latina que pueda ser utilizada como una traducción exacta del término "campesino". Muchos de estos términos fueron empleados en diversos contextos para designar a una gran variedad de sectores sociales como arrendatarios, pequeños propietarios, trabajadores rurales e incluso a miembros de las elites locales en pequeñas ciudades provinciales. Sin embargo, en toda la historia de la literatura latina -por lo menos aquella que se compuso hasta el periodo bajoimperial- no es posible encontrar una sola fuente compuesta directamente por individuos que puedan ser identificados como campesinos. A pesar de que algunos autores se han preocupado por analizar los que podríamos denominar como las transcripciones ocultas (Scott 1990) contenidas en la obra de algunos autores latinos como los tratadistas de *re rustica* (Kron 2017), en las *Metamorfosis* de Ovidio (López Medina 2020), en la *Historia Natural* de Plinio (Shaw 2013: 278-279) o en las *Epístolas* de Dion Crisóstomo (Erdkamp 2005: 55-105), es muy poca la información detallada sobre la cosmovisión o las condiciones materiales de vida de estos grupos que podemos obtener a partir del cotejo de las fuentes literarias.

Otras fuentes textuales sí que nos ofrecen una información más directa sobre estas comunidades durante el periodo romano. Este es el caso de las leyes que regulaban los grandes dominios imperiales del norte de África, como la *lex Manciana* o la *lex Hadriana* (Kehoe 1988; Kolendo 1991; De Ligt 1998) conocidas en gran detalle gracias al estudio de una serie de inscripciones documentadas en diversos sectores de la *Proconsularis* (Kehoe 1984; González Bordás y France 2017; González Bordás y Chérif 2018). Otro tipo de inscripciones norteafricanas, en este caso funerarias, nos permiten acceder a otro tipo de referencias de corte ideológico sobre los usos y costumbres de estas comunidades campesinas del África romana. Este es el caso de la célebre inscripción del campesino de Maktar (*CIL* VIII 11824; *ILS* 7457, para el mejor estudio publicado hasta la fecha; vid. Shaw 2013: 3-92, 281-298), así como de otras inscripciones menos conocidas que contienen referencias biográficas sobre

las preocupaciones y virtudes asociadas a estas comunidades (Stone 1998). La doentación de otros textos legales, como los contratos de arrendamiento o de recolección de productos agrícolas (P. Sarap. 49 y 50; P. S. I. 789; P. Flor. 80 y 101; Montevecchi 1950), también nos ofrecen una notable información sobre las condiciones de vida de estos sectores de la sociedad rural en el contexto del Egipto romano (Bagnall 2005, Bowman 2009).

Un tipo de fuente epigráfica que nos sirve para conocer información relevante sobre la articulación territorial de las áreas rurales proviene del estudio de las inscripciones relacionadas con la ordenación y los límites territoriales (Ariño et al. 2004). De entre todas ellas hay dos tipos de fuentes especialmente relevantes para nuestro trabajo. El primer tipo es el de los llamados epígrafes agrimensores de carácter técnico (Ariño et al. 2004: 28-30). Este tipo de inscripciones, a menudo mencionadas por los tratadistas del *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* (Castillo 1996), contienen toda clase de informaciones que los agrimensores y propietarios romanos fijaban para establecer los *límites* de cualquier parcela o propiedad agraria. Un segundo tipo epigráfico, igualmente importante para el conocimiento de la articulación de los territorios rurales en época romana, son las *formae* y otras inscripciones con información sobre registros catastrales (Ariño et al. 2004: 34-37). Este tipo de inscripciones, como las llamadas *formae* de *Lacimurga* (Sáez Fernández 1990) o de Verona (Cavalieri-Manasse 2000), contienen información gráfica y metrológica sobre la configuración parcelaria de la *pertica* de una ciudad romana.

Todas estas fuentes contienen una información muy interesante sobre las condiciones económicas y la vida social de estas comunidades en diversos ámbitos provinciales del Imperio romano. No obstante, en el contexto específico de la Hispania romana lo cierto es que, salvo algunas pocas excepciones relativas a referencias genéricas a algunos asentamientos rurales (Curchin 1985; Le Roux 2009) o a determinadas referencias onomásticas o de parentesco relativas a formas de dependencia en contextos rurales (Sastre 2002, 2007), prácticamente no contamos con ningún tipo de fuente textual que contenga referencias a estas comunidades rurales. En gran medida, la investigación sobre las condiciones de vida y la evolución histórica de las comunidades campesinas de época romana en la península ibérica debe circunscribirse fundamentalmente al análisis de las evidencias arqueológicas.

5.2. Fuentes arqueológicas

Como han señalado autores como Antonio Gramsci (1934: 25, XXIII) o James C. Scott (1990), la posición subalterna de las comunidades campesinas se ha traducido en un desinterés de estos grupos por generar una identidad cultural definida. A diferencia de las elites sociales, los grupos campesinos no suelen generar productos intelectuales elaborados. A pesar de que en algunas ocasiones es posible registrar usos de la cultura escrita en este tipo de contextos (*e. g. grafitti* o marcas de propiedad), casi nunca lo hacen para codificar algo similar a un corpus teórico o filosófico

sistemático (McMichael 2008). Pero esto no significa que no sea posible encontrar evidencias documentales generadas directamente por los propios colectivos campesinos que sirvan para caracterizar social, económica y culturalmente a estos grupos de "gentes sin historia". Lo que ocurre es que, sobre todo en el contexto de las sociedades de la Antigüedad mediterránea, estas evidencias documentales son fundamentalmente materiales. A menudo la única forma que tenemos para conocer de primera mano cómo estas personas construían sus casas, cómo se ganaban la vida o cuál era su ideología o sus creencias religiosas es a través del registro arqueológico. Por este motivo todos los intentos recientes por caracterizar a este tipo de sociedades campesinas en el pasado se han fundamentado en el análisis del registro arqueológico desde múltiples perspectivas metodológicas (Rathbone 2008; Vigil-Escalera 2015; Quirós Castillo 2020; Quirós Castillo y Tejerizo García 2020; Bowes 2021; Bermejo Tirado 2017; Bermejo Tirado y Grau Mira 2022).

A continuación, vamos a proceder a la explicación de tres tipos fundamentales de evidencias contenidas en el registro arqueológico: las generadas en el contexto de trabajos de prospección arqueológica y análisis espacial, las documentadas en el contexto de excavaciones arqueológicas y las evidencias arqueobiológicas.

5.2.1. *Prospecciones y arqueología espacial*

Desde los últimos años del siglo XX, la introducción de sistemas de georreferencia por satélite como el GPS, supuso una verdadera revolución en el campo de la prospección y el análisis espacial en arqueología (Wheatley y Gillins 2002). La generalización de estas tecnologías espaciales en arqueología ha facilitado la localización de una gran cantidad de yacimientos arqueológicos y, sobre todo, la referenciación de ingentes cantidades de hallazgos individuales más allá de su adscripción a asentamientos o hábitats concretos (*off-site*) (Bintliff 2000). El análisis de toda esta información nos ha permitido conocer la implantación territorial y paisajística de las comunidades rurales del mundo romano a una escala y detalle inconcebibles hasta hace tan solo unas décadas.

En el caso concreto de la península Itálica, la aplicación sistemática de este tipo de técnicas ha convertido a esta región en una de las más intensamente prospectada de todo el mundo (Patterson 2006: 77-123). Especialmente destacados son todos los proyectos de prospección sistemática desarrollados en el marco de la actividad arqueológica de la *British School of Rome* (Smith 2018; Patterson, Witcher y De Giuseppe 2020), así como de los múltiples proyectos desarrollados por investigadores holandeses vinculados a las Universidades de Groningen y Leiden (Attema, De Haas y Tol 2010; Tol 2012) en diferentes áreas regionales vinculadas al hinterland de la *Urbs*.

Todos estos trabajos pueden considerarse como auténticos hitos que han servido para cambiar la tradicional concepción del mundo rural romano como un paisaje

exclusivamente formado por *villae*. Los resultados obtenidos por estos y otros proyectos pioneros en otros ámbitos provinciales como el *Atlas of Roman Rural Settlement in England* (Taylor 2013) o el proyecto *ager Tarraconensis* (Prevosti y Guitart 2010) nos revelan una realidad mucho más compleja articulada en torno a modelos de hábitat y poblamiento muchos más variados que los tradicionalmente vinculados al mundo rural romano (Dyson 2003: 36-78). Aunque existe una gran variedad en las formas de hábitat rural documentadas en estos trabajos de prospección, muchas de estas nuevas tipologías de asentamiento se asemejan más a un concepto variado de granja campesina que al modelo carandiniano de la *villa schiavistica* (Witcher 2012; Reddé 2017).

La generalización de sistemas de información geográfica ha permitido, además, analizar toda esta ingente cantidad de información espacial para plantear estudios comparativos relacionados con otra gran cantidad de variables geológicas y ambientales (Hughes et al. 2018; Verhagen, De Kleijn y Joyce 2021, para el ámbito peninsular vid. Grau Mira 2006; González Blanco et al. 2009). Estos trabajos nos permiten conocer la configuración paleogeográfica de los territorios rurales del mundo romano y su relación con la implantación de diversas estrategias de producción agropecuaria, de su acceso a diferentes tipos de recursos minerales o de su posición en relación con las principales vías de comunicación establecidas entre los asentamientos rurales y los principales centros urbanos de cada región. En definitiva, todos estos datos nos ayudan a conocer mejor la forma en que los antiguos pobladores de las áreas rurales de la Hispania romana desarrollaron diferentes modos de explotación del paisaje.

Un caso paradigmático lo encontramos en los trabajos de investigación desarrollados, entre otros, por Ignasi Grau Mira en el contexto de las comunidades rurales del área de Alicante. En términos macro-espaciales, sus trabajos han permitido identificar esta región costera de la provincia tarraconense dos patrones de asentamiento claramente diferenciados en función de las diferentes estrategias de explotación agropecuaria desarrolladas por sus pobladores (Grau Mira y Molina Vidal 2013; Grau Mira 2022). Por un lado, nos encontramos con una zona costera en torno al *municipium* de Dianium (Dénia, Alicante). El patrón de poblamiento de esta área se caracteriza por la presencia mayoritaria de *villae* seguramente vinculadas al desarrollo de una agricultura de extensión orientada a la producción de excedentes, algunos de los cuales serían reinvertidos en aparatos decorativos y otras formas de consumo suntuario documentadas en este tipo de residencia rurales. Por el contrario, la región del valle de Alcoi, más interior y caracterizada por la presencia de diversas formaciones montañosas está caracterizada por un patrón de poblamiento compuesto esencialmente por granjas campesinas dispersas y otros asentamientos agregados con un claro carácter rústico. En esta región, la presencia de *villae* monumentales es mucho menos frecuente que en las zonas costeras del hinterland de Dianium (Fig. 1).
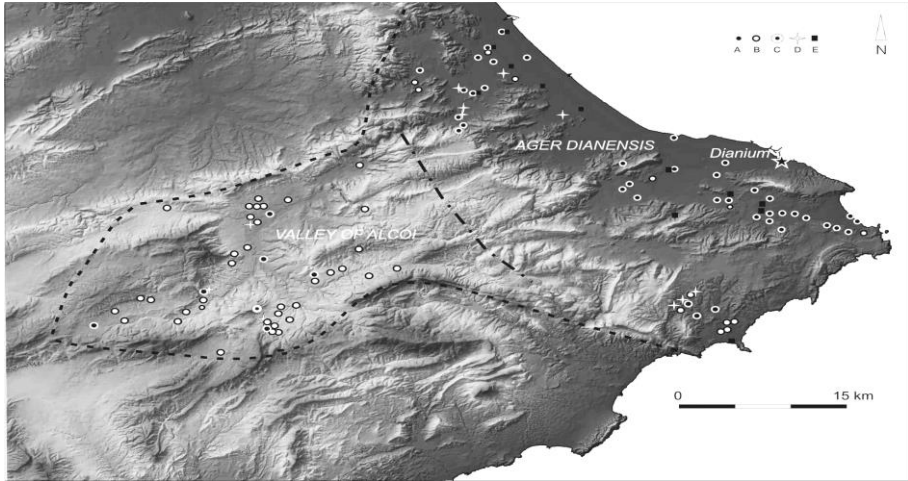
Fig. 1. Mapa con la distribución espacial de los asentamientos de época
romana en el entorno del ager Dianensis y el valle de Alcoi. Los puntos del
tipo (A) corresponden a *villae* y los del tipo (B) a granjas campesinas. Ima-
gen elaborada y amablemente cedida por Ignasi Grau Mira.

Estos patrones de poblamiento rural se explican teniendo en cuenta las diferentes
estrategias de explotación agropecuaria que seguramente caracterizaron a ambas re-
giones durante el periodo de la dominación romana. El potencial productivo de los
más bajos y llanos terrenos del entorno costero, unido a la más fácil -y sobre todo
barata- posibilidad de transporte de los rendimientos agropecuarios con relación a
las redes de comercio interprovincial seguramente animaron a la introducción y ma-
yor implantación del modelo de la villa catoniana. Sin embargo, la compleja orogra-
fía que caracteriza el sector del valle de Alcoi y la menor potencialidad agropecuaria
de sus suelos, seguramente está en relación con el mantenimiento de prácticas agrí-
colas de corte intensivo protagonizadas por granjas más humildes y orientadas a la
propia subsistencia o, en todo caso, a la producción de excedentes destinados a los
mercados locales.

El estudio de los patrones de distribución espacial de los hallazgos superficiales
también puede servir para conocer con mayor precisión la configuración del paisaje
a una escala local. Algunos proyectos desarrollados en los últimos años han servido
para probar el potencial de integrar los datos in-site y off-site a escala local (Grau
Mira et al. 2012; García Sánchez y Cisneros Cunchillos 2013). De nuevo, uno de los
ejemplos más interesantes de este tipo de metodologías de análisis es el desarrollado
en el valle medio del Serpis (Grau Mira et al. 2021) en un sector central de la región

de Alcoi (Alicante) que se puede caracterizar como un paisaje mediterráneo de montaña. La integración de los datos de prospección off-site en relación con la configuración espacial y la orografía de asentamientos rurales como el Mas d'Alfafar o Canèssia (Grau Mira 2022) han servido para caracterizar los modos en que los sucesivos habitantes de estos pequeños núcleos rurales articularon la explotación agropecuaria de su paisaje circundante (Fig. 2).
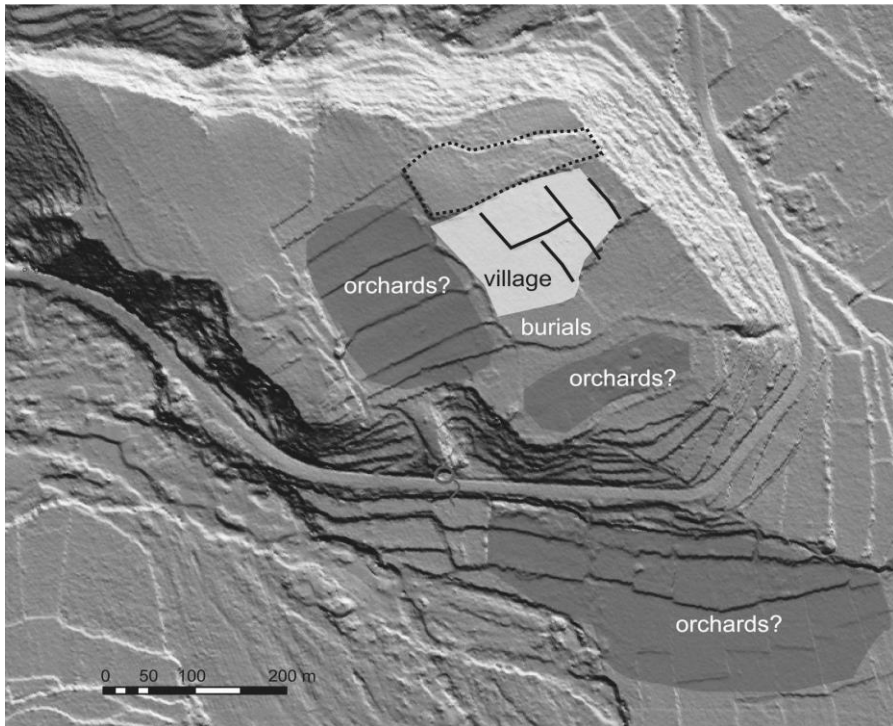
Fig. 2. Interpretación de los posibles usos de suelo circundantes a la aldea romana de Canèssia a partir de los patrones de concentración de hallazgos en superficie. Imagen elaborada y amablemente cedida por Ignasi Grau Mira.

5.2.2. *Excavaciones arqueológicas*

Como hemos señalado más arriba, desde principios del siglo XX la arqueología de las *villae* señoriales ha acaparado la mayor parte de la atención prestada a la investigación sobre el poblamiento rural hispano-romano (Fernández Ochoa et al. 2014). La gran mayoría de los proyectos de excavación sistemática que se financian en nuestro país centran sus esfuerzos en el conocimiento de este tipo de grandes residencias

aristocráticas y de sus equipamientos monumentales. Sin embargo, en las últimas dé-
cadas, a raíz de la promulgación de diferentes leyes autonómicas de patrimonio his-
tórico desde los primeros años noventa (Martínez y Querol 2013), hemos asistido al
desarrollo de una gran cantidad de intervenciones preventivas que han supuesto la
excavación total o parcial de un gran número de asentamientos rurales romanos de
diversas tipología y entidad, sobre todo en el contexto de las áreas metropolitanas de
grandes ciudades como Madrid o Barcelona (*e. g.* Bermejo Tirado 2017).

Fig. 3. Planimetría de las estructuras documentadas durante la intervención
preventiva desarrollada en el asentamiento romano de El Zarzalejo (siglos II-
III d. C.) (Arroyomolinos, Madrid), a partir de Vigil-Escalera (2012): fig. 2.

La promulgación de estos instrumentos legislativos, unida al desorbitado desa-
rrollo urbanístico acontecido entre los últimos años de la década de los noventa y el
estallido de la burbuja inmobiliaria de 2008, supuso un auge sin precedentes de la

actividad arqueológica preventiva en nuestro país. En unos pocos años se produjo una gran cantidad de excavaciones de urgencia en lo que sin duda puede caracterizarse como un periodo de frenética actividad arqueológica. Pero, en muchos casos, todo este gran caudal de información no ha recibido suficiente atención por parte de los estudiosos. El carácter parcial de muchas de estas intervenciones y la publicación fragmentaria de muchos de los datos y hallazgos registrados en estas intervenciones han dificultado en gran medida su adecuada comprensión[7].

Pese a todo, la ingente cantidad de datos obtenidos en el transcurso de todas estas intervenciones preventivas (*e. g.* Jiménez Ávila y Sánchez Barrero 1999; Picado 2001; Fernández Flores y Carrasco Gómez 2013-14; Sánchez Barrero 2013; Morín 2003; Morín et al. 2017a, 2017b; Vega et al. 2017) tienen un grandísimo potencial para el desarrollo de nuevas investigaciones sobre la arqueología del campesinado romano. Creemos que el análisis sistemático de toda esta información arqueológica vinculada a estas intervenciones preventivas como una de las principales vías de indagación en el futuro. El estudio pormenorizado de todos estos hallazgos en su contexto arqueológico y espacial abre un horizonte de investigación que ya está siendo aprovechado en el marco de varios proyectos nacionales (Bermejo Tirado 2022) e internacionales (Reddé 2017a, 2018; Smith et al. 2016; 2017).

5.2.3. *Evidencias arqueobiológicas*

El estudio de ecofactos y otros restos orgánicos constituye una de las principales fuentes de información para conocer las economías domésticas de los asentamientos en el marco de sociedades con una base productiva fundamentalmente agropecuaria como la romana. Gracias a los avances de los últimos años en los procedimientos de recolección y análisis de muestras orgánicas es relativamente fácil generar un retrato aproximado de las diferentes prácticas agropecuarias -así como otras formas de explotación de recursos naturales- desarrolladas en un gran número de yacimientos.

La recolección de carbones y otros restos macroscópicos (como semillas o restos de carcasas de cereales) nos permite conocer las especies vegetales consumidas o cultivadas en las diferentes fases de ocupación de un yacimiento (Zapata y Figueiral 2003; Peña et al. 2013).

La recolección y flotación de muestras de sedimentos procedentes de contextos arqueológicos cerrados nos permite también obtener información a partir del estudio de otros restos microscópicos (Buxó 2003). Todos estos datos se pueden utilizar para reconstruir las diferentes formas de articular las tareas agrícolas a lo largo de las estaciones del año (Monks 1981; Tietz 2021). Por ejemplo, la documentación generalizada de restos de diferentes cereales como el trigo, la cebada o la avena en un porcentaje elevado de asentamientos de la *Galia comata* (Lepetz y Zech-Matterne

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[7] Para un relato crítico de este contexto de actividad arqueológica frenética vid. Vaquerizo Gil (2018): 163-170.

2018) han servido para documentar la aplicación estrategias complementarias para optimizar la capacidad de obtener rendimientos agrarios a lo largo del año ya que los ciclos de siembra, mantenimiento y cosechado de estas diferentes especies de cereales se pueden encajar en diversos momentos del ciclo productivo de un solo asentamiento a lo largo del año (McCloskey 1991). Este tipo de prácticas, muy frecuentes en contextos campesinos de agricultura intensiva, se practican para minimizar los riesgos derivados de las cambiantes condiciones climáticas en el mundo mediterráneo (Gallant 1991; Halstead 2014).

Otra clase de analíticas arqueobotánicas, como los análisis antracológicos o las columnas de polen, son técnicas que permiten reconocer la utilización de recursos forestales para la explotación de otros recursos naturales (Euba y Palet 2010) o simplemente para reconocer la configuración paisajística de determinados sectores rurales durante diferentes periodos históricos (Blanco González et al. 2009; Orengo 2010; Palet et al. 2013).

Igualmente útiles para la caracterización de las economías domésticas en este tipo de asentamientos campesinos son los análisis de los restos faunísticos documentados durante su excavación. Más allá del obvio interés por la identificación de las especies domésticas y silvestres documentadas en el registro arqueológico, el análisis pormenorizado de determinados indicadores puede servir para revelarnos algunos aspectos desconocidos sobre la ganadería y el consumo de productos de origen animal en este tipo de hábitats rurales. Así, por ejemplo, el registro sistemático de las edades de los individuos a partir del análisis de los restos óseos de especies domésticas como los bóvidos o los óvidos documentados en estos asentamientos puede servir para reconstruir el régimen de aprovechamiento de estos recursos animales en cada fase de ocupación. Aquellos contextos en los que la mayor parte de los individuos documentados presentan edades avanzadas se relacionan con un aprovechamiento intensivo de estas reses en los que prima su papel como proveedores de productos lácteos o textiles antes de ser aprovechados como recursos cárnicos (Landon 2005). Por el contrario, aquellos casos en los que nos encontramos un alto porcentaje de individuos jóvenes o neonatos suelen identificarse con prácticas de consumo conspicuo de recursos cárnicos.

Otro ejemplo de variable morfológica que suele registrarse en este tipo de estudios son las partes anatómicas que aparecen representadas en cada contexto. La presencia recurrente de extremidades, sobre todo en relación con los restos de cerdos, suele relacionarse con la elaboración de jamones y fiambres que permiten la conservación de recursos cárnicos para su consumo mucho tiempo después del sacrificio de estos animales. El registro de los patrones de fractura de este tipo de restos óseos es otro tipo de variable morformétrica que suele registrarse dentro de este tipo de análisis arqueozoológicos. Los diferentes patrones de fragmentación en los que se documentan los restos faunísticos pueden servir para reconstruir diversas formas de

procesado y cocinado de los recursos cárnicos desarrolladas en el seno de estos asentamientos. La comparación de estos patrones con la composición y huellas de uso de las vajillas cerámicas de mesa y de cocina en varios asentamientos rurales del occidente romano es método muy efectivo para la caracterización detallada de las prácticas culinarias desarrolladas por las personas que los habitaron (Vaccaro y MacKinnon 2014; Colominas et al. 2014).

6. UN BALANCE HISTORIOGRÁFICO

El contexto pandémico que estamos viviendo ha servido para resaltar las múltiples contradicciones de nuestro actual estilo de vida. El modelo del capitalismo globalizador de las sociedades actuales se ha visto amenazado por las adversidades producidas por esta tragedia sanitaria. El repentino impacto social y económico generado por la COVID, unida al más lento pero inexorable impacto del cambio climático y la destrucción de los ecosistemas naturales, ha insuflado más fuerza a las reivindicaciones de los críticos[8] con el modelo urbano postindustrial implantado en una parte sustancial del planeta. En muchos casos, estas críticas han venido acompañadas de una reconsideración del mundo rural "tradicional" como un modelo de poblamiento más autónomo, sostenible y resiliente frente a este tipo de amenazas pandémicas o ambientales.

Este tipo de perspectivas, que no son nuevas en la historia del mundo occidental[9], a menudo surgen de idealizaciones más que del estudio analítico de las sociedades rurales (Freedman 1999) ¿Hasta qué punto las áreas rurales del pasado estaban habitadas por sociedades "tradicionales", autárquicas o aisladas en términos sociales y económicos? A pesar de que, incluso en la era del capitalismo globalizador, estamos siendo testigos del surgimiento de nuevos grupos campesinos (Ploeg 2008), nuestra comprensión de este tipo de fenómenos es todavía muy deficiente por la inadecuada percepción y caracterización de las sociedades campesinas a lo largo de la historia.

Nuestra propuesta pretende contribuir a la caracterización de estos grupos tomando como caso de estudio fundamental el análisis de las comunidades campesinas de época romana. De esta manera queremos ayudar a llenar los vacíos historiográficos sobre la evolución social y económica del campesinado preindustrial. Nuestro acercamiento a esta cuestión está fundamentalmente basado en el estudio del registro material generado por estas comunidades. Pero, más allá de la naturaleza de nuestras fuentes, existen otros problemas de corte teórico y metodológico que dificultan nuestra comprensión de la racionalidad y las formas de actuar de las comunidades campesinas del pasado.

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[8] No es casualidad que este periodo pandémico coincida con el momento de mayor vigencia de los debates sobre el problema demográfico de la llamada "España vaciada" y con la relevancia política de diversos colectivos reivindicativos surgidos en estos sectores del mundo rural.

[9] Baste recordar el *topos* medieval y renacentista del *locus amoenus* o los movimientos trascendentalistas del siglo XIX que tienen en Henry David Thoreau a uno de sus más destacados representantes.

Los campesinos y el campesinado de las sociedades premodernas son dos catego-rías de análisis difíciles de definir de un modo preciso. Esto sirve para explicar por qué su estudio ha sido relegado -e incluso rechazado- por muchos historiadores y arqueó-logos. En términos puramente abstractos, la noción misma de campesino ha estado sujeta a la introducción de múltiples prejuicios y ha sido aplicada a una diversidad de realidades sociales y culturales muy diferentes entre sí (Horden y Purcell 2000). Por otro lado, la excesiva compartimentación cronológica de la investigación actual ha di-ficultado el surgimiento de propuestas comparativas que ayuden a refinar teórica y conceptualmente la noción de campesinado desde una perspectiva de larga duración. Un claro ejemplo de ello lo encontramos en la diferente influencia de los *peasant stu-dies* en el contexto de la historia antigua y medieval de la península ibérica.

La publicación del seminal trabajo de M. Bloch, *La société féodale. La formation des liens de dépendance* (Bloch 1939) puede considerarse como la principal causa para el surgimiento de una narrativa sobre las sociedades rurales preindustriales eu-ropeas basada en la idea de un conflicto dialéctico entre los campesinos, reducidos a la condición de siervos, y los señores feudales legitimados en términos militares y religiosos. Esta forma de entender el mundo medieval será sublimada por posteriores autores adscritos a otros movimientos historiográficos como el materialismo histó-rico o la Escuela de Annales. Los debates historiográficos surgidos de estos trabajos no solo han sido influyentes para las siguientes generaciones de medievalistas, sino que también han enmarcado el surgimiento de la arqueología medieval como sub-disciplina (Schofield 2016).

La influencia de este tipo de narrativas en el marco de la historiografía española ha sido particularmente intensa. La centralidad de los modelos de historia social sur-gidos de la renovación disciplinar experimentada desde la transición ha supuesto la persistencia de estos modelos "feudalizantes" en una parte de la comunidad acadé-mica de los medievalistas hispanos (Wickham 2018). Este proceso de reafirmación del modelo del campesinado feudal entre los medievalistas hispanos coincide tem-poralmente con la implantación del modelo de la *villa schiavistica* como narrativa fundamental para explicar la estructura del mundo rural hispanorromano.

El desarrollo de la arqueología altomedieval en las universidades españolas se ha fundamentado en la aplicación de ambos modelos historiográficos como punto de partida (o de final, dependiendo de la especialización cronológica del autor) de cual-quier propuesta de síntesis sobre las comunidades rurales de ambos periodos (Quirós Castillo 2022). Con algunos matices, la mayor parte de los trabajos más influyentes sobre la arqueología del mundo rural hispano entre el final del mundo antiguo y la Alta Edad Media coinciden en aplicar esta visión idealizada del surgimiento del cam-pesinado feudal (Chavarría Arnau 2007; Vigil-Escalera 2015; Tejerizo García 2018). Se podría afirmar que la arqueología de la Antigüedad Tardía en la península ibérica se ha concebido como un proyecto intelectual para buscar factores causales que sir-van para explicar el fin del modo de producción esclavista y, por ende, el surgimiento

del modo de producción feudal sobre la base de una concepción demasiado rígida del materialismo histórico ortodoxo.

6.1. *¿Mundo antiguo vs. Edad Media? hacia una perspectiva de larga duración*

Los especialistas en el estudio del mundo romano y la Antigüedad Tardía están encapsulados en una problemática situación entre dos tradiciones historiográficas predominantes. De un lado están los prehistoriadores, quienes han aplicado sofisticados modelos teóricos (en gran parte tomando prestadas ideas de antropólogos y sociólogos) para el análisis del registro material de las comunidades campesinas del pasado. Del otro, tenemos a los medievalistas, además de otros historiadores de la Edad Moderna y del mundo contemporáneo, que tienen a su disposición detallados registros escritos sobre las sociedades campesinas que les permiten enfocar sus estudios desde diversas posiciones metodológicas.

En cierto modo, el estudio de las comunidades campesinas del mundo romano tiene -al menos desde una perspectiva historiográfica- muchos puntos en común con la reciente trayectoria investigadora desarrollada por los arqueólogos especialistas en las comunidades altomedievales. Si en el caso del periodo romano las principales narrativas históricas han estado sesgadas por la omnipresencia de la *villa* como sistema económico y la economía mercantil orientada al consumo de producto importados desde diversos territorios provinciales, la arqueología de las comunidades altomedievales se ha movido entre modelos primitivistas (muchas veces más propios de sociedades de la Edad del Bronce que de períodos históricos) que retratan a estas gentes como grupos pasivos, homogéneos y carentes de agencia.

Los nuevos registros arqueológicos generados en las últimas décadas, sin embargo, han revelado realidades mucho más complejas que no se ajustan de forma adecuada a ninguna de estas grandes narrativas históricas. La configuración del campesinado romano como sujeto de estudio histórico no solo requiere superar este tipo de posiciones aprioríticas en las que se ha basado el concepto del campesinado feudal, sino que debe establecerse sobre la base de análisis comparativos integrados en un proyecto más ambicioso sobre la evolución social de los grupos subalternos como motor de grandes transformaciones históricas.

La fragmentación académica que divide a los especialistas de los periodos romano y medieval, así como a los estudiosos de las fuentes textuales y lo material, limita nuestras posibilidades de comprender mejor a las sociedades rurales del pasado. A pesar de que desde nuestra sociedad posindustrial miramos a las comunidades campesinas desde la distancia -cuando no desde la sospecha- su análisis histórico nos ofrece nuevas perspectivas para entender el pasado de una parte sustancial de la historia de la humanidad y, por extensión, de nuestro propio presente.

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IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS AMONG THE PHOENICIANS IN ROMAN HISPANIA: THE ROLE OF PAST AND TRADITION

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the process of integration of the Phoenician communities of the south of the Iberian Peninsula into the structure of Rome, from the end of the Second Punic War in 206 BCE to the last quarter of the first century CE. Roman imperialism in Hispania clearly resulted in struggles over territory, power and cultural identity, but the archaeological and literary evidence points to a reality different than that underlying much of old narratives of opposition. Usually, those struggles have been conceptualized as Roman versus local identities, but not as a generational choices involving old and new practices. In the case of Phoenician communities of southern Hispania, the survival of cultural elements rooted in traditions prior to the arrival of Rome does not indicate an active and hostile resistance to Roman customs. On the contrary, this continuity is seen as a way of giving free rein to integration without renouncing the particularities, and putting emphasis on the past and the tradition. This phenomenon, equivalent to what is known as "symbolic ethnicity", could be linked to the need for legitimation of the local elites, immersed in the complex game of identity oppositions and aggregations that held the ideological structures of Rome, rather accommodating concerning the integration of the conquered peoples.

1. INTRODUCTION: ROMANIZATION, IDENTITIES AND GLOBALIZING FEATURES

In the last three decades ethnic and identity related subjects have attracted particular interest from scholars dealing with the Roman world. This issue may be explained to a large extent by the fact that long-held views concerning the traditionally so-called "Romanization" were gradually dropped in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Classical approaches had contended that the process of Romanization resulted, as is well known, in a uniform culture throughout all the territories incorporated into the Roman Empire.

In the early 1990's, however, leading research focused not only on the effects of Roman rule over conquered communities but also, and primarily, on ascertaining the role played by these very communities. Initially targeting the elites[1], researchers soon began to delve into other social layers including "subaltern" groups—harder to trace and less explored by historiography[2]. Networks, contacts and bidirectional transformations at play in the Mediterranean from the third century BCE onwards were also the subject of analysis. Against this background, interest emerged and consolidated in the study of regional ethnic and cultural identities within the Roman Empire. Romanization itself, if this term may actually still apply[3], can easily be perceived nowadays as a process of permanent and multidirectional social and identity change.

Identity and ethnic analyses in the Roman world remain, nonetheless, far from trouble-free. Despite their massive potential for contributing to an improved understanding of the social and cultural changes that took place as the process of province integration unfolded, the risk of applying a limited viewpoint that only celebrates diversity for its own sake exists, creating biased notions and essentialist constructs[4]. It must therefore be pointed out that just as Romanization cannot be interpreted in the traditional manner as a civilizing process, systematically considering any disruptive element to the ideal integration model as a successful instance of resistance and/or opposition to Rome from local populations is equally erroneous.

As opposed to both models, this paper defends the idea that the continuity of cultural elements going back to stages prior to the Roman period in the southern Iberian Peninsula does not necessarily involve an active and antagonistic resistance to Roman models. On the contrary, the process of ethnic revitalization noticed in the aforementioned territory from the arrival of Rome onwards, specifically amongst well-known Phoenician origin communities settled on the Mediterranean shore and

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[1] See, e.g. *The Romanization of Britain: An Essay in Archaeological Interpretation* (Millett 1990), which was to become one of the first works on the subject.
[2] Webster 2001.
[3] About this debate, e.g. Woolf 2014.
[4] Pitts 2007.

around the Straits of Gibraltar, with the leading city of *Gades* (Fig. 1), may be interpreted as a means to propitiate their integration within the Roman world without renouncing their own cultural identities. These identities, which have a strong ethnic content, eventually became a source of legitimacy. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that, usually, the memory of ancestors and the foundational stories have the function to express the identity and social cohesion of the group. The symbolic connection with the past, represented mainly through the figure of Melqart-Heracles, could have been used to enhance the legitimacy of the ancient Phoenician communities in the new Roman context.
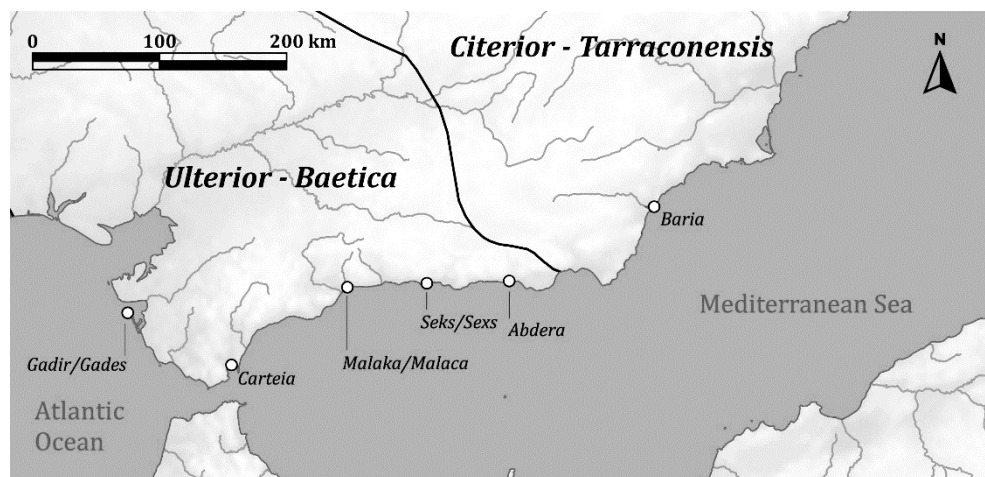
Figure 1. The major cities of Phoenician origin of Hispania.

Indeed, not only did Phoenician communities in the Iberian Peninsula continue to exist after the arrival of the Romans, but they underwent a period of great cultural vitality and economic boom. The Phoenicians of what is today the southern coast of Spain continued to shape their own cultural and political destiny, at least for a couple more centuries, despite the impact of Roman rule. The Roman presence in Hispania clearly resulted in struggles over territory and identity, but archaeological and literary evidence indicates a reality quite different from that underlying narratives of civilization and stories of opposition. It must be recalled that the Roman world may well be considered "a structured system of differences that was highly differentiated, by region, class, social locale, age and gender among other dimensions of variability"[5]. Roman imperialism, already deployed in the western Mediterranean by the time of the Republic, eventually resulted in global rule over an increasingly interconnected

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[5] Woolf 1997: 341.

scenario where diverse ethnic identities overlapped between unity –"the global" – and diversity – "the local" – within a supple legal-political framework. In this context, the model which had already been tested by Hellenistic monarchies in the East promoted what may be called "diversity within unity": under the cultural and ideological umbrella of ruling Hellenism in Rome an endless number of peoples and local communities strived –for the sake of their prestige and honour – to display older and more original traditions, be they real or putative[6].

2. ROME AND THE PHOENICIAN COMMUNITIES IN HISPANIA

Available sources concerning Phoenician communities in Hispania report the gradual and intense political shift of these communities, especially their trading oligarchies, towards Rome's interests already after the Second Punic War and the Roman victory over the Carthaginians. The *foedus Gaditanum* (206 BCE), known to us mostly through Cicero (Cic. *Balb.* 34)[7], constitutes the best instance of this fact. This pact of alliance granted *Gades*, formerly the Phoenician city of *Gadir*, significant privileges including wide-ranging political and economic independence. Strabo claims that the city achieved massive prosperity thanks to its unrelenting adherence to Rome (Str. 3.1.8).

This early approach to Rome, however, does not seem to have involved any major cultural transformation. From an archaeological point of view, in the entire southern Peninsula significant changes are not attested until the change of era as has been pointed out even beyond the Phoenician context[8]. As a matter of fact in some places, such as the Roman-Republican necropolis of *Gades,* a sort of Phoenician revival has been noted[9]. The material record of other southern necropoleis, such as *Carmo* – in the Guadalquivir valley – and *Baelo Claudia*, shows deep cultural hybridity during the High Empire, resulting from interrelations between local and increasingly dominant Roman traditions[10]. Moreover, the city of *Malaca* is also known to have maintained a typically Phoenician urban layout by the time Strabo wrote and constituted a major port and market for North Africa and the Numidians (Str. 3.4.2). In addition, we are now in a position to claim that Phoenician trade thrived in the Atlantic and Mediterranean contexts in the second and first centuries BCE, as evinced by the rich Gaditanian and Phoenician amphorae record in Portugal's Algarve, Gaul's southern coast and Pompeii[11].

Furthermore, extensive data suggest the continuity of the neo-Punic language and script throughout southern Hispania. They both remained active up until the imperial

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[6] Cruz Andreotti & Machuca 2022.
[7] See also López Castro 1991.
[8] Keay 1992; Machuca 2019.
[9] Niveau de Villedary & Martelo Fernández 2014: 170-171.
[10] Jiménez 2008.
[11] Sousa 2017; Bernal-Casasola & Sáez 2019; Luaces 2021.

period according to the legends on coins minted in the Roman period in Phoenician mints such as *Gadir/Gades*, *Seks/Sexs*, *Malaka/Malaca* and *Abdera* (Fig. 2). This latter city minted coins up until the period of Tiberius with legends in the original Phoenician-Punic alphabet and Latin[12]. The only mint whose coins featured exclusively Latin legends was *Carteia*, re-founded as *colonia Latina libertinorum* by the Roman Senate in the year 171 BCE (Liv. 43.3.1-4). In addition to this coin epigraphy, neo-Punic graffiti exist on fragments of Roman ceramics both on Campanian pottery and *terra sigillata* unearthed precisely in the cities of *Malaca* and *Sexs* dated to the second and first centuries BCE[13]. Further instances of Phoenician cultural continuity may be found on the iconography of coins, totally monopolized by the effigy of Melqart-Heracles on the obverses and related motifs on the reverses such as tuna fish, dolphins, bulls, altars, vines, wheat ears and various astral symbols[14]. Coins produced in Phoenician mints in the Iberian Peninsula, however, do not lack Roman elements either in terms of epigraphy or iconography which eventually resulted not only in remarkable instances of bilingualism – as may be noted on coins from *Abdera* – but also in what has been interpreted as "dual discourses", especially in the case of *Gades*[15].

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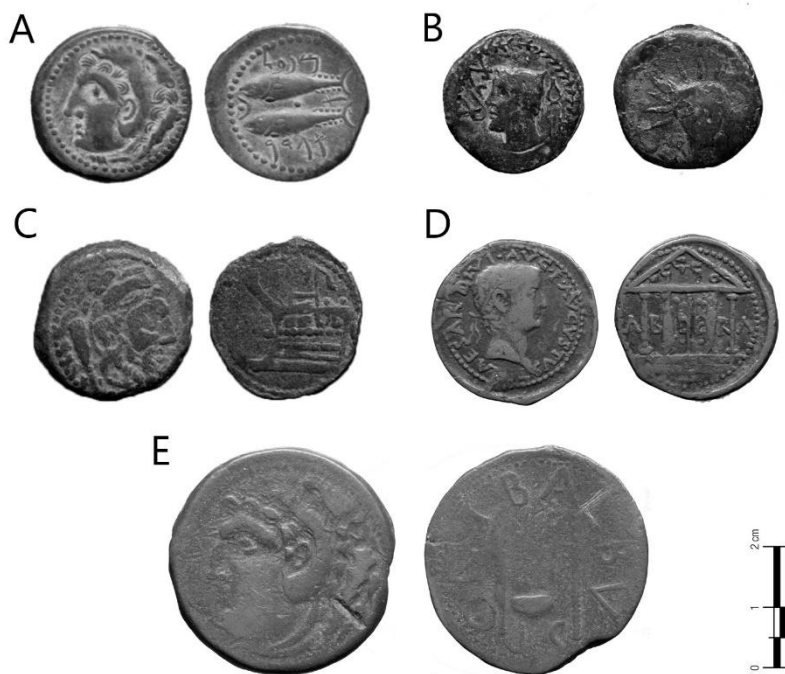
[12] *RPC* I 124-125.

[13] Machuca 2021: 163-164.

[14] Mora 2007.

[15] Chaves 2009.

Figure 2. Phoenician bronze coins from the Iberian Peninsula. A) *Gades* (200-101 BCE; Alfaro 1988, serie VI.A.1; CNH 86, 35): head of Melqart-Heracles with lion skin and club on the obverse, Punic legend *mp'l / 'gdr* – "minted by *Gadir*" – on the reverse. B) *Malaca* (175-91 BCE; *CNH* 101, 14): neo-Punic legend *mlk'* and head of Chusor-*Ptah/Vulcanus with Phrygian cap* on the obverse, radiate head of Helios – Baʿal Hammon – on the reverse. C) *Sexs* (100-1 BCE; *CNH* 106, 23): bearded head of Melqart-Heracles on the obverse, prow of ship and neo-Punic legend *sks* on the reverse. D) *Abdera* (14-37 CE; *RPC* I 125): TI. CAESAR. DIVI. AVG. F. AVGVSTVS with laureate head right of Tiberius on obverse, Latin legend ABDERA between the columns of a tetrastyle temple with two center columns in form of tuna fish and neo-Punic legend *'bdrt* in the pediment on the reverse. E) *Gades* (c. 19 BCE; Alfaro 1988, serie VII.A.1 = *RPC* I 85): head of Melqart-Heracles with lion skin and club on the obverse, Latin legend PONT. BALBVS with pontifical knife, *simpulum* and axe. Photographs: CER.es (http://ceres.mcu.es) – Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid, Spain).

In terms of religion, literary testimonies – e.g. Porphyry of Tyre's narration of the attack waged by King Bocchus of Mauretania (111-80 BCE) on the *Herakleion* in *Gades* – suggest that *Gades* essentially kept its ancestral cults and Phoenician ritual practices (Porph. *Abst.* 1.25). The rites performed in the temple of *Gades*, by the way, were closely linked to those of Tyre, the ancient metropolis[16]. Porphyry's narration, in which the Melqart-Heracles of the sanctuary of *Gades* manifests himself through dreams, is undeniably redolent – in terms of elements and structure – of the myth of the foundation of the city of Tyre reported by the Late Antiquity poet Nonnus of Panopolis Nonn. (40.423-539). Both legends describe an oneiric oracular revelation with the presence of a bird which is sacrificed of its own volition. Porphyry's passage reveals not only the existence in the temple of Melqart-Heracles in the Roman city of *Gades* of a mainly Phoenician ritual based on the narration of its founding myth – a replica of the founding myth of Tyre – but also the fact that this legend could have become consolidated already prior to the Hellenistic period, pointing at Melqart as the genuine founder of the city through the oracle, as in the case of Tyre[17]. It should be noted that various Greek and Latin writers in the Roman period, such as the aforementioned Strabo as well as Pliny, Diodorus Siculus and Pomponius Mela repeatedly refer to the Tyrian origin of *Gades* and the significance, prestige and antiquity of its temple dedicated to Melqart-Heracles (Str. 3.5.5; D. S. 5.20.1-3; Plin. 19.63; Mel. 3.6.46; App. *Iber.* 2). The recurrent reference to this topic from the Hellenistic period onwards indicates that the prominence of the temple

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[16] Ribichini 2000.
[17] Álvarez 2014: 25-26.

remained intact under Rome's rule, as is also demonstrated by the fact that it was visited by eminent Roman figures such as Fabius Maximus Aemilianus or Julius Caesar (App. *Iber.* 65; D. Cass. 37.52.2; Suet. *Caes.* 7.1). On the other hand, the survival of the genuinely Phoenician foundation myth points out the importance among the Phoenician communities in Hispania of the link with the past, seen as a source of prestige.

It is therefore hardly surprising that despite having approached the Roman orbit from the onset, the Phoenician communities in the Iberian Peninsula under Roman rule were always keen to defend their cultural diversity and the signed terms of the respective *deditiones* which were unquestionably negotiated once those communities were subdued in the context of the end of the Second Punic War[18]. The revolt in Hispania in the year 197 BCE points exactly in this direction (Liv. 33.21.6-9). In this revolt took part, in a way that remains unclear, both *Malaca* and *Sexs* as well as *Carmo,* whose Phoenician background has been clearly stated[19]. The reason behind the rebellion rests on the dissatisfaction of the subdued populations of Hispania, including the Phoenicians, due to the abusive and unjust administration due to a lack of Roman planning in terms of political structuration and integration of the conquered lands. It was not a properly anti-Roman revolt but the result of Rome's failure to meet the expectations generated amongst communities and peoples who had supported Rome in the war against the Carthaginians. *Gades* constitutes, once more, a paradigmatic instance. Earlier, in 199 BCE, the city had staged an act directly linked to the defense of its full political autonomy by protesting before the Roman Senate at the presence in the city of a *praefectus* contrary to the terms of agreement by the *foedus* (Liv. 32.2.5). The complaint was accepted, and the Roman magistrate was removed without any further issues. Although these two episodes referred – the rebellion of 197 BCE and the *Gades*' demand – have a different nature, both were blatant attempts to preserve their identity, as far as possible, in a situation in which it had been challenged.

None of the above, however, must be interpreted as a lack of success of the integration process or open resistance against it. In fact, from a legal point of view, towards the end of the Republic and during the first century of the Empire, the Phoenician cities of the southern Iberian Peninsula, all *ciuitates peregrinae* except *Carteia*, which was a Latin *colonia*, permanently became *municipia.* This was fundamentally due to the support they showed Rome, and more specifically Caesar during the civil wars[20]. *Gades*, for example, became a *Roman municipium* with full rights in 49 BCE, appearing in the sources as an *oppidum ciuium Romanorum* (Liv. Per. 110; Plin. 4.119). *Carteia* became a *municipium* under Augustus. Finally, the concession of *ius Latii*, thanks to the promulgation of Vespasian's famous *edictum* of

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[18] López Castro 1995: 95.
[19] Belén Deamos et al. 2000.
[20] López Castro 1995: 243-251.

Latinity in 73-74 CE, must have led to the remaining Phoenician cities of the Iberian Peninsula becoming *municipia* with Latin rights. The best known and documented case is that of *Malaca*, thanks to the partial preservation of its *lex municipali*s on a bronze plaque, the *Lex Flavia Malacitana* (*CIL* II 1964).

At any rate, from a cultural point of view it would be more appropriate to talk about "silent resistances" a concept which includes both "dual discourses" and the phenomenon of hybridity. The so-called "silent resistance" is usually perceived as a means to reassert local ways. Nevertheless, this would not involve an explicit renunciation of the foreign culture which could be occasionally used by the colonized communities, particularly by their leaders, to attain power or to maintain it within the new order. The nature of such resistance is determined by the mechanisms of control and the power struggles that produce and reproduce inequality at all levels: rather than mere opposition to changes, resistance stems from daily practises and – unbalanced – negotiations between two or more involved groups. Power cannot be solely exercised through coercion and open violence, nor can resistance. Consequently, such "resistance" may assume different shapes other than violent response or cultural rejection, as suggested by several analyses dealing with the hybrid practices and transformations undergone by Roman material culture through the local interpretation in other historical contexts in the Mediterranean such as, for instance, Sardinia[21].

Evidence therefore exists that integration within the Roman provincial world does not conform to one single model and cannot be explained in terms of unidirectional change. Romanization does not result in the overall replacement of ancient local cultures in the provinces with "Roman culture", which was also never homogenous, but in the appearance of a new network of social and identity relationships. For this reason, Strabo's claim that the Turdetanians "have completely changed over to the Roman mode of life" (Stb. 3.2.15) does not contradict his own words a few lines earlier where he stated that "these people became so utterly subject to the Phoenicians that the greater number of the cities in Turdetania and of the neighbouring places are now inhabited by the Phoenicians" (Stb. 3.2.13). This means that, in the time of Strabo – second half of the first century BCE – there were still in southern Hispania certain communities with distinctive cultural traits that could be identified as Phoenicians despite the fact that the Roman rule was already fully extended. The Roman phenomenon in the provinces occurs in a context of mutual cultural adjustments: the combination of their own and alien elements produces new categories of belonging, new and reformulated identities, with the ultimate purpose of adapting, uniting and creating legitimacy. It is not a minor matter that generally in the Roman world and throughout the Hellenistic framework, the legitimacy and prestige of a community often derive from cultural traditions and past and ancestral origins[22].

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[21] Van Dommelen 2001.
[22] Bickerman 1952.

3. PAST, TRADITION AND MEMORY: SOURCES OF PRESTIGE AND LEGITIMACY

The fact that these phenomena are highlighted does not cancel the power and deep significance of the process of cultural, political and legal integration attached to so-called "Romanization", quite on the contrary, its complexity and distinct nature are even further exposed. In the context of the southern Iberian Peninsula, protocols of unity and diversity occur which eventually result – in the specific case of ancient Phoenician communities – in what has been branded as "a Phoenician way of being Roman", that is, a particular form of integration based on local components stemming from the legitimacy attached to their historic past and prestige in the framework of Mediterranean Hellenism[23]. A phenomenon comparable to "symbolic ethnicity", which has also been described amongst Phoenician communities under Roman rule in the East[24]. This type of ethnicity refers to the consumption and use of ethnic symbols – e.g. clothing, cuisine, music and dances, rituals, festivities – in circumstances that do not imply "committed" modalities of ethnic affiliation[25]. It constitutes a nostalgic allegiance towards a cultural tradition which is perceived and experienced as one's own without generating disruptions in the main culture or in the hegemonic identity framework, in this case, Rome.

Reports of Phoenician economic vigour, the fame of the temple of Melqart-Heracles in *Gades* and its great age or its links with Tyre date from the second century BCE onwards, already within the Roman period. These accounts could therefore respond to the wish of the Phoenician oligarchs in the cities to celebrate their position rather than reflect reality in the colonial period[26]. Similarly, early dates are reported for several colonial foundations in the western Mediterranean, such as *Gades*, Carthage, Utica or *Lixus*, at times expressed in terms of competition[27]. Defending a specific origin and ancestral cultural traditions must have been an exceptional form of gaining prestige within the complex framework of identity oppositions and aggregations that held the ideological structures of the *imperium romanum*. For example, in the Late Republic and High Empire placing monuments, festivals, zoomorphic representations and cult images on coins was a common way of defining local identities in such ways[28].

Thus, when entering the Roman orbit Phoenician communities in the Iberian Peninsula resorted to their origins to construct a common history and ethnic identity placing the figure of Melqart-Heracles and his civilizing attributes in a central position. The ultimate goal of the process of identity construction and/or

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[23] Machuca 2019.
[24] Kaldellis 2019.
[25] Gans 1979.
[26] Álvarez y Ferrer Albelda 2009: 182.
[27] Presedo 1981.
[28] Kaldellis 2019: 687.

reformulation was to present themselves before the new ruler, Rome, as a people with a robust memory and rich history going back to the very city of Tyre, an emblem of their prestige and ancestry. It is at this point, in the second and first centuries BCE following the example set by *Gades*, when the aforementioned effigy of Melqart-Heracles appears on the obverse of numerous southern coins, minted even in locations whose origin may not be strictly considered Phoenician, but which were under Phoenician influence[29]. The appearance of a "Phoenician identity" must therefore be located mainly in the Roman period, not earlier, when the city constituted the pivot in terms of identity[30]. Additionally, this phenomenon may respond to the aspirations of these communities and of their elites to secure the best possible position in the relocation of power and social status within the Roman political system, flexible enough to incorporate provincial oligarchies into its network.

The *Cornelii Balbii* in *Gades* constitute the best possible instance. Lucius Cornelius Balbus Major, who had a close personal relationship with Caesar, became consul in the year 40 BCE, and his nephew of the same name was not only a *quaestor* in the *Ulterior* province in 44-43 BCE under Asinius Pollio, but was eventually appointed proconsul in the times of Augustus[31]. During his office, Lucius Cornelius Balbus Minor fought against the Garamantes, defeating them in the year 19 BCE for which he received a triumph (Plin. 5.36-38; *Acta triumph. capitolina* 37). He was also a *pontifex maximus*, as a group of commemorative coins minted in *Gades* reveal: the serie VII.A, typically featuring Melqart-Heracles on the obverse, shows genuine Roman ritualistic elements on the reverse and the Latin legend PONT. BALBVS, a clear instance of the above-mentioned "dual discourse"[32].

Indeed, the recurrent image of Melqart-Heracles on Phoenician coins from Hispania emanates mainly from his quality as the founder of cities. His description as *archēgétēs* goes back to Phoenician tradition, even prior to the syncretism of Melqart and Heracles[33]. A well-known passage in Strabo states that the oracle of Melqart in Tyre played a central part in what was known in the Hellenistic period as the legend of the foundation of *Gades* (Str. 3.5.5). Based on Strabo's account Melqart could also have been the founder of *Sexs* and *Onuba*. Consequently, the myth of the origin, linked to Tyre and to the city's main deity, Melqart, could act in the Roman period as an element of ethnic identity and memory, adding an element of prestige to the process of integration.

In the context of diverse ethnic identities in the southern peninsula, Rome's political organization basically revolved around the *ciuitas* as the nucleus of administration. This approach had an unquestionably positive effect on the need for

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[29] Arévalo & Moreno 2011.
[30] Ferrer Albelda 2013: 676-677.
[31] Rodríguez Neila 2011.
[32] Alfaro 1988, 153-154; *RPC* I 85-87.
[33] Bonnet 1988; Álvarez 2014.

legitimation of the elites of Phoenician tradition communities. At the same time, however, both in northern and southern Hispania, Rome would adopt strategies of control that vastly exceeded the scene of the *ciuitas*. In the first two centuries of Roman implantation the ethnic group, wherever affinity existed as well as an overall similar tradition, also became an established framework which contributed to filling gaps in the administrative network[34]. The *Ulterior* province, especially in coastal areas, was a territory where the Phoenician presence was still significant in terms of demography and culture by the change of era. Yet, the ethnic name "Phoenicians" is practically absent in the ethnic-geographical literature until the Late Republic. The most habitual name is Bastuli (Stb. 3.1.7; Plin. 3.8 and 3.19; Mel. 3.3; Ptol. 2.4.6), though sources also refer to other hybrid ethnonyms like Blastophoenicians (App. *Iber.* 56) and Bastuli-*Poeni* (Marc. 2.9). It has been suggested that "Tartessians" is also a designation with strong links to *Gades* and the Phoenician areas of the Strait of Gibraltar and lower Guadalquivir[35]. The gradual implantation of Roman rule could have therefore triggered a series of joint identity strategies and mechanisms of self-recognition amongst Phoenician communities in the Iberian Peninsula based on their common past and history – including the ethnonym "Phoenicians" – which served as the main element of legitimation.

Instead of opposing "Roman identity" this new "Phoenician identity" was perfectly incorporated within the former. The defence of "Phoenicianness" must not be understood as a reaction against "Romanness" but as the clear expression of a "Phoenician way of being Roman". The local re-elaboration of a common past to be defended with pride in Roman times constitutes, in our opinion, one of the reasons behind the long-term continuity of some Phoenician cultural traits in the southern Iberian Peninsula as those traits were used – either deliberately or not – in the construction and consolidation of an identity through which Phoenician-origin communities managed to maintain their ties with their past. Identity is not asserted against Rome but within Rome. Consequently, the Phoenician cultural traits which were preserved or even promoted could be nowadays considered elements of "symbolic ethnicity". In an increasingly global Roman world fully immersed in the Hellenist ideological context, counting on one's own past was a good, probably the best, tool to achieve legitimation and prestige. The instance of Peninsular Phoenician communities reveals that cultural contact, transformation and assimilation processes attached to Romanization did not necessarily result in the replacement of ancestral ethnic identities with a Roman identity. Instead, it indicates that the clearest outcome of the integration process is the emergence of a new identity that incorporates a variable amount of local elements. In this case, the local identity features both Phoenician and Roman elements and is therefore not alien to the global framework.

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[34] Cruz Andreotti 2011.
[35] Álvarez 2009.

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BEING *ORIENT* IN THE CENTRE:
MEMORY AND DECONSTRUCTION OF PEASANT COMMUNITIES AS *OTHERS* IN ROMAN-PERIOD SARDINIA

Mauro Puddu

Abstract

The postcolonial outline set-up by Said to deal with the "creation of the Orient" has proved to provide a valid theoretical tool to understand, deconstruct old – and construct new – concepts as foundations of our knowledge of antiquity. This paper aims to demonstrate that, although fallen out of favour lately, Said's paradigm, if it undergoes an important theoretical effort, still holds a high potential to improve our critical knowledge of current narratives on ancient communities that were bound to very unbalanced power relationships such as those with the Roman Empire. The accent will be placed here on two concepts that can help expand the contribution of Orientalism in interpreting life in Roman-period Mediterranean: the first, crucial for Said's formation as a young scholar, is the theory of the broken history of subalterns modelled by Antonio Gramsci; the second, important to de-localize the Orientalist paradigm from a specific place and time, is Ernesto De Martino's effort to overcome 20th century dominant ideas of a chaotic, irrational, and static subaltern popular culture. These models will intertwine throughout the paper to unveil the interpretive layers that deposited on a fitting case study for Said's Orientalism, Sardinia as a Roman Province, due to the continuous 'othering' process it underwent both in antiquity through the classical sources and today through modern scholarship. Both sources tend to make Sardinia an over-simplified and silenced – orientalised – object of passive knowledge. From Sardinia as a privileged point of view, this paper will question the current state of knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean through archaeology as an interpretive practice. It will investigate how much of the enthusiastic post-processual inclination towards diversity and inclusivity of knowledge is still critically applied, and how much we still tend, perhaps inadvertently, to make of the past an oversimplified object to dominate, perpetuating this vision not only on geographic units (i.e. the Roman provinces) but also on categories of human groups, at the advantage of the uplift of a dominating culture which is not only a generic west, but more precisely its elites.

Keywords: Sardinia, Othering Paradox, Orientalism, Elites, Subalterns.

Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION

This paper will provide a critical reading of the *othering* frameworks created around Sardinia's communities by both written ancient sources and by those that we may call classical texts of Sardinian archaeology. This approach highlights a *fil rouge* between them: the "orientalist eye". It stresses the idea that often the understanding of communities set in the past, temporarily distant from us, are simplified as much as geographically distant ones, resulting in the creation of exotic, immutable, essentialist worlds. After analysing this orientalising trend, and recounting how it is declined by the sources that describe the Mediterranean and Sardinia in the Roman period, this paper will propose alternative theoretical routes and will test their efficacy in unhinging the Orientalist paradox that emerges from such descriptions. These routes spin around the concept of subalterns, crucial in Edward Said's conception of the Orientalist paradigm. First, the paper will focus on the theory of the fragmented histories of subalterns modelled by Antonio Gramsci; second, it will concentrate on Ernesto De Martino's work towards the invalidation of the prominent idea of a countryside inhabited by a chaotic, irrational, disorganised and static subaltern popular culture. This paper tests the possibility that the introduction of such complex paradigms will help to, on one hand, obtain an image of otherness that is less stereotyped and closer to life-size figures, and, on the other, contribute to a theorization of identity closer to a dynamic and relational tool than to a static binary identification that still dominate the vision of ancient communities.

1. THE TOOLBOX: FOUNDATIONAL WORDS OF THIS TEXT

Three words constitute the spine of this paper's discourse: identity, subalterns, orientalism. Being such words used very frequently in the writings of archaeology and history, but being all the same rarely defined, I will provide here the definitions and ways in which these words are used throughout the text, with the aim to avoid misunderstandings. Starting from the last, one might wonder why quoting orientalism while dealing with the western Mediterranean and Sardinia: one of the pillars of "Orientalism"[1] as a paradigm theorized by Palestinian philosopher Edward Said is that cultures are, for political reasons (knowledge meaning control over the entity that is studied and known) often simplified, made homogeneous and resistant to change, in order to be more quickly known and more easily controlled; this

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[1] Said 2003.

methodology fits perfectly the case of ancient Sardinia, described, as will be shown in the next sections of this paper, as an island whose people were foreign to change, growth, and diversity. The second word foundational of this paper is subaltern: this is used here referring explicitly to philosopher Antonio Gramsci's theory drawn in the 25th of his Prison's Notebooks, "Ai Margini della Storia". There, subalterns are defined as classes that do not own their own history but who are left with only its fragmented and episodic remains.[2] Putting those fragments together is the mission of what Gramsci calls the integral historian who, to succeed, needs to understand the power-relationship between subalterns' initiatives and the élites who broke them. Doing archaeology, focusing on material remains of ordinary practices of likely subaltern communities, goes in this direction, contrasting hegemonic sources produced by those in power. The last word foundational of this paper is the identity, whose analysis here will intertwine with the words 'subalterns' and 'orientalism'. One of the most popular research objects in social sciences in the 90s' and early 2000s', identity's importance within the social studies has been heavily debunked in the last 20 years, but the word itself has not diminished at all but, if anything, its popularity has highly increased both within the social sciences and, particularly, in the civic discourses outside academia. This discrepancy between decrease in the studies centred on identity and on its definition and increase of the presence of the word identity in academic and civic discourses as a concept taken for granted should be the source of social worries. The reason for such concern lies in the fact that the less the word identity is object of systematic investigation and definition of its complexity, the more it is being appropriated by far-right groups that need a tool to justify division, unsustainable power relationships, and marginalization of minority groups. Several examples of this attitude come from today's political discourses that trend to simplify and freeze dominant identities in something that has always existed and hence needs to be defended/fought[3]: an example of strenuous defence of what is considered an identity by right is the 'Family Day' march held on Sunday 21st of June 2015, in Piazza San Giovanni, Rome to protest against the recognition of civil rights to same-sex unions as a threat to so-defined traditional families. In the last few years, E.U. officials have constantly referred to European identities as something to promote positively and to defend, leaving free interpretation to what identity is. The risk of confusing identity and identification is very high under these circumstances, as Pope Francis himself showed by declaring, during debates on ISIS terrorist attacks, that 'identifying Islam with terrorism is not fair and logically sustainable.'[4] Clearly, if the need of such declarations arise from such a public figure, the circumstances in which that simplistic identifications are applied are frequent. Equivalent discourses committing to self-preservation and discouraging change

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[2] Gramsci 1975: 2284-2287.
[3] Puddu 2019: 3.
[4] Declarations collected by journalists on the flight from Krakow to Rome on July 31st, 2016.

through contact with the 'other' are not alien to our study of the past, from which the knowledge obtained can for this reason contribute to enhance the quality of the current debates on identity and othering paradigms, as this paper will show. To avoid confusion then, the word identity is used here to indicate a dynamic and ongoing relational process that spins around decisions of and relations between ancient communities, rather than as a static binary correspondence between two elements (material culture and people, practice and people, buildings and ethnic tags) which is instead referred to here as identification.

2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL CONTEXT: ROMAN-PERIOD SARDINIA

Aiming at introducing relatively new concepts to the identity debate in order to contribute to the understanding of ancient communities in the Mediterranean, this paper focuses on the mechanisms of othering witnessed in the island of Sardinia. Sardinia became a Roman province in 238 B.C., and one year later became Provincia Sardinia et Corsica with the annexation of the island north of it, today part of France. But Rome started manifesting its interest towards Sardinia long before then. This interest, shared with Carthage, led to the Punic wars, a series of wars that took place over one century between 264 and 141 BC, and mainly described by the Greek historian Polybius. Long before the first Punic War, though, the island entered the orbit of Rome while under control from Carthage for centuries. During its life as a province, Sardinia and its people were several times mentioned in the official Roman literary sources.

Accounts of Sardinia, and of the practices of its people and even of their inner characters, are quite abundant especially during the Republican period. After that, Sardinia is not very often an object of accounts by Roman sources, for which reason historians Le Bohec, Le Glay and Voisen said in the early 2000s' that "Sardinia in imperial times stayed peaceful and obscure."[5] Such obscurity and peacefulness, in contrast with the sources that will be explored here in the next paragraphs, deserve to be explored thoroughly and tested archaeologically, in order to dismiss the risk to maintain peacefulness as a sign of a total cultural assimilation of local peoples to a nonspecific Roman identity not better defined if not as a generic loss of a distinctive indigenous culture, as often mentioned by those books that we may call classics of Sardinia's archaeology[6]. Although they tend to diminish in frequency during the imperial period, it can be fairly said that written sources maintain, across over 7 centuries, the same picture of "a people" living in Sardinia, whose features tend to be fixed and to perpetuate in time, although admitting that exceptions are contemplated, as it is in every case a whole people is derogatorily described as a

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[5] Le Bohec, Le Glay, Voisin 2009: 77.
[6] Lilliu, 1967; Contu, 2006.

monolith. This description tends to match perfectly the imagery of the other, and the connection between the official written source and Sardinia is that of a power relationship between the active agent who is writing that account of a passive object of study, making one the nemesis of the other.

This description represents a "win-win situation" for the writer, and a losing game for the object of the description. A typical example of this power relationship comes from *Ab Urbe Condita* by Livy, where the communities of Sardinia are described first as used to lose battles, *Sardis facile vinci adsuetis*[7], whereas later they are derogatory described as a people that is not yet pacified, *cum Iliensibus, gente ne nunc quidem omni parte pacata, secunda proelia* facta[8]**.** Which is to say, if they are pacified, they are losers because they are unable to win battles, but if they are not pacified, they are barbarians incapable of accepting the merge with a civilized culture that would bring them only advantages which they are unable to recognize and embrace. This instance fits the features of what we might call the othering paradox: a repetitive exercise in giving simplistic accounts of the other based on the needs of the moment, that systematically ends up being contradictory and paradoxical. Silence is the comfortable alternative – or rather the amplifier – to alike monolithic, essentialist identifications imposed by official literary sources in Rome to the communities of Sardinia. This paper will test the othering paradox by comparing some of the most quoted images of Sardinia produced by ancient literary sources with historical and archaeological accounts on Sardinia produced by modern scholarship. The aim here is to understand how the orientalising framework of otherness inherited from antiquity is dealt with in modern times. Once the othering paradox is tested, it will be further deconstructed by introducing the theoretical tools provided by Antonio Gramsci and Ernesto De Martino.

3. THE LITERARY CONTEXT: HIGHLIGHTING THE OTHERING PARADOX

There is a long list of writers mentioning Sardinia's power relationship with Rome. But there are only four main themes in relation to which Sardinian communities are cited. Turmoil being the favourite. Such sources can be divided relatively to the perspective they maintain on the peoples they describe, in four types, that can of course intertwine:

a)   requisition of grains and taxation;
b)   disturbance of public order - *tumulta*;
c)   their nation's long standing reputation;
d)   place of neglect.

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[7] Livy, 23, 40.
[8] Livy, 40, 30.

3.1. Sardinia as one of the *tria frumentaria subsidia rei publicae*: Requisition of grain and taxation.

What were the people living in Sardinia, and the island itself, known for? Diodorus Siculus (11.20) informs us that during the Punic wars, the general Hamilcar "at once sent off all these boats, ordering them to bring grain and the other supplies from Libya and Sardinia".[9] From this follows that for Carthage Sardinia was already a place for supplies, even before passing under the jurisdiction of Rome. Often, Livy mentions Sardinia in his Ab Urbe condita, to highlight that extra efforts to provide more grain provisions was asked to its communities, Sicily and Sardinia were "each required to supply two-tenths of their corn harvest for the year".[10]

In one passage of his De Imperio Gn. Pompei, amongst the most cited by historians of Roman Mediterranean, Cicero quotes Sardinia together with Sicily and Africa as the "*tria frumentaria subsidia rei publicae firmissimis praesidiis classibusque munivit*", the three great granaries of the republic"[11]. When this economic account is given, Sardinia is often depicted as one passive provider to Rome, where not much happened except what it was designated for.

3.2. *Tumultum*

Livy, in his *Ab Urbe Condita* [Book 41, chapter 6, History of Rome] writes that during the consulate of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, 177 B.C., the praetor Titus Aebutius, assigned to Sardinia the previous year, informed the senate through a letter to Rome that "*eodem tempore et in Sardinia magnum tumultum esse*"[12], a serious disturbance of the island, due to the invasion of the province at the time pacified, "*pacatam provinciam*"[13], by the two tribes of *Ilienses* and *Balares*. In line with what stated above around Sardinia's agricultural character, envoys from Sardinia demanding help to Rome, reported that "*iam enim agros deploratos esse*"[14], it was too late to save the fields, whose mention by Livy validates further the idea that the fields and the wheat were, for Rome, the priority in the island. In the following passage, this turmoil is compared to one just faced by the Roman senate in Greece, where the Lycians denounced the cruel tyranny of the Rhodians, who exercised their power over the former reducing them to the status of slaves. Although they do not seem commensurable, Livy offers this comparison to lead us further inside the disorders occurring in Sardinia.

Why turmoil like this is often reported by written sources dealing with Sardinia is told by the same Livy, when describing "the most memorable of all wars that were

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[9] Diod. Sicu. 11.20.
[10] Livy 37.
[11] Cic. De Imperio Gn. Pompei, 12, 33.
[12] Livy 41.6.
[13] Livy 40.30.
[14] Livy 41.6.

ever waged"[15]: indeed, the conflict is described as so balanced and uncertain that "*they who were conquered were more exposed to danger*"[16] than the two factions fighting the war. This uncertainty and the fact that their territory offered to Roman and Carthaginians the ground to fight their wars are the main reasons why the communities of Sardinia, destabilised in their sudden and multiple passage under the political control of either faction, agitated and protested regularly against the ruler. An attitude, this, that earned them the immediate imposition of harsh tributes to pay to the new rulers, starting off the relationship in a sensibly subordinated way.

Due to these recurring disorders, Cicero, in his *De Provinciis Consularibus in Senatu oratio,* attributed the infamous tag of *mastrucatis latrunculis* – "banditti clad in sheepskins" – to the people that were being faced in Sardinia by Titus Albucius, contributing to worsen their story as rebels by fixing it with a monolithic and ill-reputed iconography: a people dressed in wild clothing gathered from their sheeps, establishing their proximity to a natural wild world and by reflect their distance from Rome and their civilised conventions. This image amplifies the nature-culture divide that is often staged by the dominating people that needs to justify its actions of dominions over the other. The relationship between Rome and Sardinia, at least as reconstructed from literary sources, was one of that kind.

3.3. A "long standing reputation"

Cicero's strong but short-lived othering-image of the *mastrucatis lantrunculis* inhabiting Sardinia becomes a more complex, articulated, and durable othering-discourse in Cicero's Pro Scauro Oratio, where Sardinia's communities appear as a monolithic entity. Cicero wrote the speech in 54 BC to run in defence of Sardinia's *propraetor* Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, who was accused of extortion (*de repetundis*) against the communities of Sardinia by a young orator, Triarius. In his oration, Cicero applies at the outset a strategy that shall not be unfamiliar to our times' narratives: he never addresses the accusations moved to his assisted, and he does so, based on another evidence that he presents as irrefutable: this is the disreputable nature of the people who moved these accusations against his assisted, the Sardinian communities. To discredit the accusatory, Cicero starts off by doubting their existence as a distinct and cohesive socio-national entity, something that was, at times, attributed a positive value in antiquity: he addresses the accusers as *Afer*, Africans, to concede only one line later that he can refer to them as Sardinians, as they prefer being called like – *aut Sardus sane, si ita se isti malunt nominari[17]*. Hence, before even listening the imputations of which Scaurus is accused, Cicero asks the judges to let him lay down the solid principles on which his defence is based

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[15] Livy 21.1.
[16] Livy 21.1.
[17] Cic. Pro Scauro Orat. 15.

– *mea ratio et cogitation fert[18]*. (21) This ratio, far from being a complex one, is that Sardinian witnesses are not trustworthy due to three reasons: the unrealistic agreement amongst all of them in accusing Scaurus; their notorious greediness, being a people excited by the promise of rewards for the cause; finally, their national origins. This point is used as the main reason to dismiss the accusation, and shows to the judges all values spinning around a supposed ethnical purity which is for him guarantee of ethical practice: the main issue with Sardinians is that first of all they descend from the Poeni, Carthaginians, who are a mixture of African blood, and secondly they were brought to inhabit Sardinia not even in a colonization framework (likely acceptable for the ethical schemes in place at the time of Cicero) but as a destitute people which Carthaginians wanted to get rid of : *A Poenis admixto Afrorum genere Sardi non deducti in Sardiniam atque ibi constituti, sed amandati et repudiati coloni[19]*. This all is of course worsened by the fact that the Poeni derive from the Phoenicians which, for Cicero, are the most treacherous of all nations – *fallacissimum genus*.[20]

The *ratio et cogitatio* that Cicero lays at the process against Scaurus is exactly one in favour of racial/ethnic purity as an assurance of ethical credibility, and of racial/ethnic impurity as certainty of treacherousness. Of course, as all arguments based on supposed purities, Cicero's too is logically faulted from its very premises: indeed, if the equation is pure=credible against impure=not-credible, then how come the pure Phoenicians were not credible in the first place? This objection would dismiss the whole racist apparatus built by Cicero that, "as there was never anything honest in the nation when united, how must we suppose that its roguery has been sharpened by so many mixtures of different races?" [21] As this last argument shows, the conclusions are faulty all the same: first, because they dismiss the premise of their logical apparatus, where the purity of Phoenicians should correspond to their honesty and not of their implausibility; second, because they betray what in practice the roman republic and, later, the roman empire, became: a palimpsest of peoples, beliefs, practices, and socially dynamic identities dialoguing with people from the Mediterranean and beyond.

3.4. An island of neglect

The last passage, where in an enthusiastic archaeological momentum Cicero traces back the origins of Sardinian communities to the *amandati et repudati coloni* from Africa, introduces the fourth literary topos regarding Sardinia and the Roman sources: the island of oblivion. There is an event, told by several Latin writers, that

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[18] Cic. Pro Scauro Orat. 21.
[19] Cic. Pro Scauro Orat. 38.
[20] Cic. Pro Scauro Orat. 38.
[21] Cic. Pro Scauro Orat. 43.

strengthen this topic: this is the debate in Rome whether to expel 4000 Egyptians and Jewish people in Sardinia. Such expulsion is thought of for two main aims: the first was for dispersing the superstition of those religion in an attempt to restore the old polytheism; the second, possibly an excuse for the exile of those people, that of *coercendis illic latrociniis* [22]– quelling the brigandage on the island. What is most interesting of this expulsion is that, as Tacitus reports, *si ob gravitate caeli interissent, vile damnum*,[23] which is to say should they die, it would not be a big loss. The event is quoted by several other Latin writers, although told in slightly different ways. For instance, Svetonius quotes the same episode without thought referring explicitly to Sardinia[24]

This piece of news related to Tiberius' reign contributes to shape an image of an island, Sardinia, that in the Roman times was seen as a container of the most subaltern people from several reasons of status, religion, ethnicity: a literary place of dismissed people and, for what matters to us, a vibrant landscape of social encounter and acknowledgment of the other.

4. THE ORIENTALIST EYE

The accounts of Sardinia and its communities given by the Latin authors above express a type of othering that creates a passive, immutable, one-dimensional and backward image of the other as an object to know-to-control, often tending to flow into what was called above as the othering paradox: the attribution, to a determined community or people on which the writer needs to exercise its control, of a series of neat, almost caricature-like, characters that if looked at next to each other become logically unsustainable and hence their attribution to the same people paradoxical.

This paper will argue that, to treat such othering paradoxes and reveal the complexities and diversities of relationships in antiquity, the postcolonial approach is still an ideal framework. The rest of the paper will enrich this framework with the theories of Gramsci and De Martino mentioned above, and will test them on modern and ancient sources describing Sardinia in order to disengage from its image of an island ever resistant to change. Before taking that step, though, the paper will first look at the expressions created in the 1800s' and 1900s' by the orientalist eye laid on Sardinia. These images can have the function to link the ancient descriptions of the island to those produced by modern scholarship.

Brought about by 1800 and 1900 travellers, the orientalist eye tended to describe Sardinia as an island entrenched in a past from which it could not and did not want to move forward: Sardinia was a "forgotten island"[25] for the French writer and

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[22] Tacit. Ann. II.85.
[23] Tacit. Ann. II.85.
[24] Suet. Tib. 36.1.
[25] Vuiller 1893.

painter Gaston Vuiller, a "never won"[26] island for John Warre Tyndale, an island with "no history no race, no offering (…) outside of the circuit of civilization"[27] for D. H. Lawrence. Although these remarks sound in tune with the images provided by antique sources, the timeless dimension that Sardinia acquires in these travel books through expressions that represent eternity – i.e., no, never, outside of – is meant to be positive to the reader, in order to offer an exotic break from a frantic and civilized lifestyle: it cannot get more orientalist than this. Timelessness and resistance to change of Sardinia are put, by the orientalist eye, at the service of the traveller, who lives instead a dynamic and eventful lifestyle and is hence invited to enjoy its opposite for a bit. The same invite has not exhausted its potential with the age of grand tours, but it is adopted by today's touristic paradigms, embraced also by famous Italian Touring Club, that invites the tourist to explore an island that "for millennia has lived in conditions of interesting isolation, (…) having been immune from contacts and external influence"[28].

At this stage of the paper, having realised that the pattern of immobility pertained to Sardinia not only during the antiquity, when it was translated in backwardness and impurity from the Latin sources, but also in modern times, when it was shaped as an exotic enjoyment by the orientalist eye, it is time to verify how archaeologists of Sardinia dealt with these fixed interpretive models.

The next section will focus on the way two specific authors, highly quoted, and considered foundational for the archaeology of Sardinia, relate to such fixed interpretive patterns attributed to Sardinia and her communities both in antiquity and in modern times.

5. THE ORIENTALIST FRAMEWORK IN THE "CLASSICAL" TEXTS OF SARDINIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

At the beginning of his most quoted work, *La Civiltà dei Sardi,*[29] Lilliu highlights a "particular correspondence, in Sardinia, between physical and ethical landscapes"[30], which would have condemned the "archaic windy land laid between sea and sky, to a picturesque immobility; (…) to an ancestral and fossilised world, during the development of more recent and dynamic worlds and humanities; to become the didactic image of the prehistory in history"[31]. Such a strong introduction and words-choice lays down a hard-core deterministic idea, an interpretive threshold as theorized by Starobinsky[32] (1981: 193), that shapes all archaeological data presented later in the book. The identification between physical and ethical landscapes supports an image

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[26] Tyndale 1849.
[27] Lawrence 1999.
[28] Touring Club Italiano 2008: 23.
[29] The English translation of the original Italian quoted here in the text are entirely mine.
[30] Lilliu 1967: 2.
[31] Lilliu 1967: 3.
[32] Starobinsky 1981: 3.

of Sardinian civilization as an anti-classical one, "impulsive, that escapes the perfection and finitude, obeying to the suggestions of the disharmonies, derangement, barbaric improvisations"[33]. The strongest symbol of the reconstruction of the events that involved Sardinia in the transition between prehistory and history is represented by the archaeological token that characterizes the island's landscape the most. This is the nuraghe, a cone-shaped megalithic building constructed with dry roughly worked stones, that have been counted between 7000 and 9000 figures. These buildings, sometimes characterised by a singular tower and often by more complex modules of the same, were erected between the late bronze and iron ages, roughly between the 16th and 8th centuries BC, though new finds are suggesting that their construction can be possibly witnessed even later in time, in full historical period. This element has attracted so much attention in the reconstruction of the prehistory and history of Sardinia that *La Civiltà dei Sardi* defines the period of their construction not only as an age, the "*nuragic* period", but as "la bella età dei nuraghi" (the beautiful age of nuraghi), giving an aesthetic judgement that introduces the topic of the golden age. Indeed, the value of that period is underlined by the judgement given by *La Civiltà dei Sardi* of both the periods that precedes, characterised by "the tendency to recession and backwardness"[34] and those that follow, characterised by a "moral and political involution"[35] brought about by the arrival of people from elsewhere.

For what is the central theme of the book to which this paper wants to contribute, what matters the most in relation to this interpretive archaeological paradigm of Sardinia is that the communities of Roman-period Sardinia are regarded in *La Civiltà dei Sardi* not differently from how they were derogatorily described in Cicero's Pro Scauro. It is in fact the ethical side to be of interest in *La Civiltà dei Sardi* as much as it was in Cicero's speech. The othering paradigm that *La Civiltà dei Sardi* creates is one that, while admitting that we are not yet well informed on this cultural phase (i.e., Carthaginian, Roman)[36], affirms with certainty that "the archaeological data that will be collected will have to show phenomena of alteration, and barbarization of the traditional experiences and hybridism with forms of external cult civilizations"[37]. Exception made for those communities who resisted and continued building *nuraghi* in the centre of the island, regarded as islands of resistance[38], the main social effect of the power relationship excercised by Carthage and Rome on the communities of Sardinia is one that created the conditions for the moral and political

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[33] Lilliu, 1967: 131.
[34] Lilliu, 1967: 11.
[35] Lilliu, 1967: 268.
[36] Lilliu, 1967: 268.
[37] Lilliu, 1967: 268.
[38] Lilliu, 1967: 269.

involution of those people, who are equated to the status of *servi della gleba* (serfs), and *collaborazionisti* (traitors) at the service of outside power.[39]

The interpretive framework of *La Civiltà dei Sardi*, exactly as that underpinning the *Pro Scauro Oratio* written 2000 years before, maintains that the hybridization of the Sardinian communities produced an africanization that caused the spiritual lack of a people reduced to slavery from its original free state[40]. What remains in Sardinia during the Punic and Roman periods is a divided island, between the communities of the coastline that accepted the contact with the outside, with the other, being corrupted by such acceptance becoming "other" themselves by going through a cultural involution, and the communities of the interior, who stayed faithful to their supposed original self by resisting to the pressure of the 'other'. *La Civiltà dei Sardi* maintains that the evidence of such dichotomy between communities of the coast and of the interior is held in the stratigraphies of the nuraghe Barumini, today's UNESCO heritage site: this is a thick layer of ashes that, within the book's framework, were not remains by normal hearths, but of the fires of the houses of those communities who accepted the contact with the other, set-up by the communities of the interior that resisted to the mixture with the foreign ruler.[41]

The last passage is crucial: for the interpretive paradigm of *La Civiltà dei Sardi*, the collaboration between communities of Sardinia and communities from elsewhere provoked a social division that brought those who refused the contact to place themselves in sort of reservoirs and to equate those hybrid communities, in hatred, to the foreign peoples. This operation of identification is the same as that operated 2000 years earlier by Cicero in his fired appeal to Scaurus.

The one just drawn is a series of binary identifications that sustain the theoretical apparatus through which *La Civiltà dei Sardi* interprets the archaeological remains, such as |material evolution| =|moral involution| that bring eventually to the following syllogism:

> *if* |contact with foreign power|=|othering|
>
> and
>
> *if* |refusal of the contact|=|free people|,
>
> *then* |contact with the other|=|slavery|.

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[39] Lilliu, 1967:281.

[40] Lilliu 1967: 281. My translation of the original Italian text: 'commiste a elementi di sangue libico-punico, producendo quella sorta di "africanizzazione" della Sardegna' che causò la 'carenza spirituale d'un popolo ridotto da libero a schiavo'.

[41] Lilliu 1967: 281. My translation of the original Italian text: 'copiosi resti di cenere e carboni che non si spiegano con la presenza dei comuni focolari ma sono dovuti all'incendio delle dimore' caused by 'una sorta di spedizione punitiva [dei nuragici isolatisi sulle montagne] contro gli antichi fratelli, a una bardana contro gente che veniva accomunata, nell'odio, allo straniero'.

6. THE POSTCOLONIAL FRAMEWORK AND SARDINIA: NEEDS AND RISKS

Sardinia makes an ideal case study for the postcolonial approach to the knowledge of the past. The excerpts from *La Civlità dei Sardi* just analysed confirm what exposed by Dyson and Rowlands in their study on Sardinian archaeology, that the paradigms used in the interpretation of the historical development of the island "are a complex combination of conservative, empirical archaeology and Sardinian identity politics."[42] Such a paradigm, sustained by binary modules and projected towards the future of the people living today in the island, creates a long-lasting degree of influence on both academic and non-academic environments. Indeed, *La Civltà dei Sardi* concludes announcing a period of re-flourishing for the peoples of the island "provided that the ancient mistakes are not repeated again, so that finally the old evil of division will have to give way to unity." [43]

Such projection of the past into the future creates a sentimental bond with people who deal with Sardinia from within, whether academically, such as archaeologists, or outside academia, such as journalists, artists, essayists. Two examples: in the recent novel *Dures* by Tola, set in 2037 Sardinia, there are a foreign dominator, China, the divisions objectified by a long divisive wall, two Sardinias (one from the interior and one from the coast), and there is the dream of independence; in order to prove the value of classics of literature given by Sirigu to *La Civltà dei Sardi*,[44] in her *Viaggio in Sardegna*,[45] journalist Michela Murgia refers several times to archaeology and to the archaeologists of the island: the link between past, archaeology, and identity becomes neat when she introduces the idea by archaeologist Giovanni Lilliu that the number of nuraghi in the island is so wide to let him hypothesise that the nuraghi represent, aside from the abilities of their producers, the embryo of a first national awareness of Sardinians, developed in opposition with the foreign peoples coming from the sea.[46] Now, the fact that in the 21st century, the supposed original traces of a moderns nation – a concept that belongs to European states of the 19th century that made an intense political use of archaeology[47] are looked for in a 3000 years far past is meaningful in itself. Moreover, as Spivak reminds us, the "nativist ideas only reproduce a European fantasy about European origins through the image of a lost pure culture, the culture of the Other"[48]. When the tendency to introduce needs of the present of a specific place in the past is so strong, a postcolonial study of the othering paradigms deriving

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[42] Dyson and Rowlands 2008: 13.
[43] Lilliu 1967: 356.
[44] Sirigu, 2007: 181.
[45] Murgia, 2008.
[46] Murgia, 2008: 24.
[47] Meskell, 1998; Diaz-Andreu, 2005.
[48] Spivak 1988: 129.

from those needs is likely to prove very fruitful both for the knowledge of the past and the life in the present of that place.

La Civiltà dei Sardi has the undeniable and priceless merit to have created, in 1967, the first rigorous interpretive framework against which testing archaeological data. At the same time, though, the thresholds it created gave shape to an interpretation of the past with very neat-cut boundaries, deemed self-sufficient to explain the present of Sardinia. *"La Civiltà dei Sardi"* shows, page after page, numerous similarities with the words chosen by Cicero to describe the communities of Sardinia while aiming at discrediting them in the context of the process to Scaurus. The "collaborazionisti and servi della gleba" that make the anti-heroes of *La Civiltà dei Sardi* resemble in many aspects the *amandati et repudiate coloni* that represent the rivals of the *Pro Scauro oratio*.

Although from its first publication, research has sensibly advanced methodologically, as archaeological data are collected in Sardinia as everywhere else in a more refined way, the theoretical framework within which to interpret those data has had a much slower evolution, its impact of Lilliu's framework on academic and non-academic being still very strong if not, in some environments, even hegemonic. *La Civiltà dei Sardi* is for instance rightfully recommended as a textbook for the prehistory exams at Cagliari and Sassari Universities, although it has not been thought of as an object of an official critical reading yet.

The objective of a postcolonial reading is at least a twofold one. First, deconstructing paradigms of ethnic and cultural purity that might match, if anything, modern colonial situations where populations that never came into contact with each other before, start their interaction as a power relationship with clear roles of colonizers and colonized on the ground: such situations fit the colonization of Americas by Spain and the United Kingdom. Second, investigating the stories of the people who were left voiceless in antiquity, whether because belonging to ethnic minorities, to the working class, and so on. One of the mistakes that the latter aim can induce us to commit is that of attributing by default the category of voiceless people to the locals, the indigenous so to speak in classical postcolonial terms, without investigating the complexities of every society. Applying to the past straightforward interpretive models that fit modern colonization paradigms to antiquity is a concrete risk that needs to be treated theoretically. For this reason, this paper proposes to look at the foundations of postcolonial theory and at the authors and thoughts that inspired them. To fully explain this aim, it will be of help the introduction of another classical text of Sardinian archaeology, *La Sardegna Preistorica e Nuragica*[49] written by Ercole Contu, as well recommended as university exam text. This book introduces the idea that due to the domination that it had to endure, Sardinia so far has had "a partial history (…) a history of aristocracies and conquerors, history of hegemonic classes and hegemonic

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[49] Contu 2006.

peoples"[50] implicitly quoting Gramsci's history of the nations but without acknowledging him explicitly. In opposition, Contu's book aims at providing us with a "total history (even if with all of its gaps)"[51] because unconditioned by the documents written by others, meaning for others the Romans exercising an unbalanced power relationship on Sardinian communities. The beginning of this ratio is quite encouraging, as one would expect the author to work to balance the history of hegemonic classes of Sardinia by investigating the history of its subalterns. Instead, *La Sardegna Preistorica e Nuragica* elects the prehistoric and nuragic periods to the rank of the "most significant and original moment of all social development of Sardinia"[52] (Contu, 2006: 10), implicitly inviting his readers to abandon their hope to find any interest in the later periods. What a postcolonial framework should help for is exactly to prevent us from creating a cone of light on the only period that seemingly provides a sign of autonomous grandiosity of a specific territory, erecting it to the rank of symbol of an independent history by cutting the strings of time from what follows and precedes. Rather than a symbol, such equation between an ethos and a specific object is rather an allegory, which is in the definition given by Cirlot, 'a mechanical and restricting derivative of the symbol, whereas the symbol is a dynamic and polysemic reality, imbued with emotive and conceptual values: in other words, with true life.'[53] Not differently the books on the Romanization of Britain criticised by Mike MacCarthy, the two classical books of Sardinia archaeology seen here have a tendency to perpetuate "a VIP version of history focusing on conquest and elites (…)"[54]. In the case of Sardinia, it is at least singular that, when acknowledging that the history of the island is especially one of the élites coming from somewhere else, the reaction is not to investigate the lives and struggles of the non-élites during the period of conquest, but rather to look for a period in which the élites were locals. Such an inference, that certainly needs to be demonstrated, does not represent a change of paradigm, as it keeps seeking the élites, although allegedly native, and still ignores the narratives of the subalterns. The concept of subaltern is crucial in an accurate analysis of the othering paradigms such as the ones carried out in this book: it helps to demonstrate that frameworks of othering are normally imposed from élites to other élites which agree in implicitly keeping silent the subalterns. The first theory of subalterns used in this paper and analysed in the next subsection is that built by Antonio Gramsci.

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[50] Contu 2006: 11.
[51] Contu 2006: 11.
[52] Contu 2006: 10.
[53] Cirlot, 2015: xi.
[54] MacCarthy 2013: 9.

6.a. Gramsci and the reconstruction of the fragmented history of the subalterns

The immediate application of traditional postcolonial frameworks, like that of the Subaltern Studies born in India, to the study of Sardinia threats to make the investigation of the other as a private question between élites only: the heard colonial élites' voices and the voiceless colonised/local élites. Although the latter is certainly part of the task of postcolonial studies in order to create a knowledge of history that takes into account the voices of the colonised, the postcolonial mission is also to ask the voices of whose colonized are being given the stage. Even when local élites are investigated for their active role in the making of history, the non-élites – both amongst the colonisers and the colonised – keep being silent and forgotten. The analyses of the Latin texts and of the archaeological texts provided above has shown that the othering paradigms see the élites only occupy the role of active agents in the creation of history, whereas the non-élites, when non entirely absent, are attributed the passive role of recipients of monolithic accounts. To create a venue for archaeology to bring change in this historical issue, Antonio Gramsci's work on the fragmented histories of subalterns is an essential guide.

As mentioned in section 1 of this paper, Antonio Gramsci defines subalterns, in the 25th of his Prison's Notebooks, entitled *"Ai Margini della Storia",* not as much in terms of their limited access to material resources but in relation to the nature of their history. This specification reminds, as also underlined a few times in July 2021 during the conference from which this book originates, that the most important characteristic of subalterns is not poverty. Certainly, there are high chances that most communities with limited access to resources have also had a subaltern status in relation to the construction of history. Let us see one example: if a researcher wants to study 1990s' Sardinia focusing exclusively on Villa Certosa, a villa in the northern part of the island belonging to ex Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, he has to be ready to: a) not only exclude the non-elite people from an account of Sardinia (unless they put the focus on the workers employed in the villa only), b) accept that his/her research will have a very low representativeness of the social and material landscape of modern Sardinia, c) amplify even further the voice of that élite whose messages were already reported for decades by newspapers, tv, books and finally d) leave out all those subaltern voices, including the poor, the less poor, the working class, the entrepreneurs who did not reach fame and glory, that, if investigated would really help us to get the complexities of the practices, landscapes, agencies, choices of the communities of a specific historical time. Going back to the study of Roman period Sardinia, poverty is not the main reason why subalterns should be looked at, but rather their power relationships with the élites who, although already gifted by loud voices in the make of history, are often the focus of historical research. Defending the aim of providing less stereotyped voices and providing an account for social identity that is not anymore entrenched in monolithic and fixed binary

identifications opposing the colonisers to the colonised, the Romanized people and the resistant ones, the foreigners and the locals. These are all forms taken by one fundamental binarism: the one between |us| and |the others| that is the main source for the rise of essentialist othering paradigms.

The main sociological issue was, for Gramsci, already in 1934, the nature of history. For him, not only the history of a specific country, but all history has considered nothing but the initiatives of the ruling class, and since the ruling classes correspond with the State, the only history we have known so far is that of the hegemonic States. [55] Gramsci denounces the existence of a biassed history — of Italy, of the other states, and of antiquity — from which the large majority of its protagonists, the masses of subalterns, are excluded. Nevertheless, for Gramsci, also these unheard classes leave their signs that we can study to build a different history. We are left with the fragmented and episodic remains of the initiatives of the subalterns, systematically crushed by the dominant classes. Putting those fragments together is the mission of what he calls the integral historian who, to succeed, needs to understand the power-relationship between subalterns' initiatives and the élites who broke them. Since archaeology focuses mainly on the material remains of ordinary practices of likely subaltern communities, it can be a relatively natural task to pick up aimed at integrating – or even contrasting – the hegemonic sources produced by those in power.

Addressing explicitly the othering paradox and orientalist views on Sardinia and the ancient Mediterranean is a necessary preparatory action archaeology has the practical tools to undertake. Embracing a thorough theoretical work is necessary to succeed in the task of Gramsci's integral historian. The concept of subalterns developed by Gramsci, whose evolution has been tracked elsewhere,[56] evolves radically in his 25th notebook:

> The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. There undoubtedly does exist a tendency to (at least provisional stages of) unification in the historical activities of these groups, but this tendency is continually interrupted by the activity of the ruling groups (…). Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of the ruling groups (…) Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should, therefore, be of incalculable value for the integral historian. [1934–35]'[57]

This passage aims to recruit scholars of sociology, of the modern and of the ancient worlds, to integrate the knowledge of our history looking at the fragmented remains of the history of the non-élites, to create a less linear history. Contu presented the same issue for history of Sardinia, even if 70 years later, but he did not follow the

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[55] Gramsci 1975: sect. 90, Quaderno 3.
[56] Puddu 2019: section 4.
[57] Gramsci, Hoare and Smith 1999: 207.

path that Gramsci tracked, of investigating the fragmented remains of the subalterns' practices to build their histories, having Contu preferred to focus on the divide between local and |other|. Such focus on this divide is not an isolated one: the whole tradition of modern postcolonial studies results from a similar interpretation of Gramsci's writings. Let us take, for instance, the subaltern studies' group or subaltern studies Collective, a group of south Asian scholars who undertook a postcolonial study of the history of India and south Asia. Originally inspired by Gramsci's writings, even if in the 1980s' not all of it was available in English translation, this group focused on subalterns with no specific preference (gender, race, class, religion)[58] as active agents in social change; nevertheless, it was later criticised for losing its original focus and embracing a neat colonizers-colonized divide that hence became the trademark of subaltern studies in western academia[59]. Keeping the focus on the subalterns' definition provided by Gramsci, which is within the realm of their relationship with history, leaves enormous room for contribution to archaeology, particularly when one thinks that the material remains of their practices are certainly fragmented and that the role of the archaeologist is to recompose and interpret them anyway. Doing it with an awareness of aiming systematically at finding the signs of their initiatives and of the breakages of such initiatives by the élites can and will level up our production of complex and omni-comprehensive knowledge of antiquity.

The fragmented history of the subalterns is at the core of another scholar that inspired the postcolonial turn in the study of the world, Edward Said. This is a perfectly expected circumstance when one thinks that the main objective by Said was to first show and then deconstruct the homogenised and simplified ways in which western academia structured the knowledge of the cultures of the middle east, and that the idea of investigating the subalterns ignored by history would have been determinant to unhinge a both western-driven and élite-constructed version of middle eastern history. Finding the traces of the subalterns in the archaeological record will also be determinant, as shown elsewhere (Puddu 2019) in deconstructing the othering paradigms and othering paradoxes illustrated here above. In the next section, the analysis of some passages of De Martino's work will help understand that while attempting to find and recompose the remains of subalterns' initiatives as suggested in the framework by Gramsci, it is also necessary to refrain to consider them as a homogeneous class, void of complexities, and never leaning towards change.

6.b. De Martino and the deconstruction of the simplicity of subalterns

De Martino maintains, from the beginning of his essay, that the attitude held by the "western-European civilization" towards subalterns reflects the needs, the

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[58] Guha 1998.
[59] Sarkar 1997.

interests, and the humanistic limitations of the dominant classes[60]. In order to satisfy the needs of the dominant classes, for De Martino, it was necessary to produce a knowledge of the subalterns through the use of one specific tool, used to collect and classify in safe and fixed categories of space, time, and casualties, the subalterns: ethnology. Through ethnology a remarkable quantity of data on subalterns has been collected, in contrast with the very limited number of interpretive studies concerning the meaning of those subaltern cultures[61], which at best were objects of explicative speculations that, in De Martino's words, "in realtà non spiegano un bel nulla"[62] (in reality do not explain anything at all). Following this account, we are left with sterile charts of the diffusion and of causal connection of subaltern phenomena, that are seen more as natural than as human facts whereas to be significantly understood, they should be investigated with the same dignity with which "the human rights declaration" is studied. For De Martino, this descriptive tendency of the accounts of subalterns, that he calls historiographical inertia has precise reasons: the European-western naturalism of ethnological research reflects, on a level of scientific consideration, the naturalness with which the popular subaltern world is dealt with by the bourgeois on a practical-political level.[63] The words De Martino uses to describe the needs of the dominant classes towards the subaltern are neat and very significant: the popular subaltern world, the way it is described, is for De Martino a world of things, rather than a world of people, a natural world that melts with the exploitable nature: the world of subalterns has become, through the decades , a matter exclusively for conquerors, commercial agents and colonial officers,[64] as something chaotic that needs to undergo an operation of ordering that only trained technicians can operate.

The world of the subalterns, to which De Martino dedicates the iconic essay "Oltre Eboli", beyond Eboli, the place where Christ stopped in the novel by Carlo Levi, is a unhistorical world, which is treated "as a possible history but that currently does not poke into the memory of the historian"[65]. The application of statistical methodology in the study of the subaltern world, developed in Victorian times England and then adopted by all colonial states, is the final reason for the forgetfulness that a civilization is a living organism that needs being approached instead with a humanistic perspective.[66] Now, this VIP culture that puts the subalterns in some boxes, objects of classification, is, from different directions, pushing to enter history, says De Martino, not differently from what was written by Gramsci about the future of subalterns. Surely subalterns can enter history in the

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[60] De Martino 1949: 411.
[61] De Martino 1949: 411.
[62] De Martino 1949: 411.
[63] De Martino 1949: 412.
[64] De Martino 1949: 412.
[65] De Martino 1949: 412.
[66] De Martino 1949: 414-415.

present, something that De Martino believes close to those taking part of the revolutionary movements in Russia. Nevertheless, they can also overcome their subaltern condition by entering the history of the past, as suggested by Gramsci to the integral historian, and as this paper suggests to archaeologists dealing with the Roman times.

Nevertheless, entering history is not an automatic and obstacles-free process: the knowledge of the subalterns' ways to be in the world, and often to oppose the world we logically know, such as those entrenched in magic rituals, superstition, myths, can be exploited in an openly reactionary sense by the dominant classes, in order to keep their threatened hegemony going[67]. A risk, the latter, that can be avoided for De Martino, by historicizing the cultural forms of the popular subaltern world via assigning to archaic behaviours their precise historical place[68]. Indeed, archaic behaviour is often taken by the dominant classes as an attitude typical of communities – especially rural ones – that refuse change and stay equal to themselves: accounts of such communities are not so hard to spot as they are regularly accompanied by expressions like |always|, |still|, |never|, |everywhere|, that would help a dominant narrative to silent again the subaltern world under the othering paradigm that does not allow any room for change, self-initiative, decision-making.

At this stage, an example will help to visualise De Martino's theory on the historicization of the subaltern popular world. The example is one from Sardinia that has not been cited yet in this paper, due to its specificity to the argument dealt with in this subsection. Pope Gregory the Great, in one of his famous *epistulae* written during the Byzantine reign of Sardinia, wrote to Hospiton, addressed *dux barbaricinorum* – so a chief of the communities of inland Sardinia whose precise boundaries though are not known at all. In the letter, reported entirely here below, Hospiton, in war with the Byzantine chief Zabarda at the time, is asked by Greogry the Great to have an active role in the christianization of Sardinian communities, extensively described in the letter:

> «*Gregorius Hospitoni duci Barbaricinorum.*
> *Cum de gente vestra nemo Christianus sit, in hoc scio quia omni gente tua es melior, tu in ea Christianus inveniris. Dum enim Barbaricini omnes ut insensata animalia vivant, Deum verum nesciant, ligna autem et lapides adorent; in eo ipso quod verum colis, quantum omnes antecedas, ostendis.*
> *Sed Fidem, quam percepisti, etiam bonis actibus et verbis exequi debes, et Christo cui credis, offerre quod praevales, ut ad eum quoscumque potueris adducas, eosque baptizaris facias, et aeternam vitam deligere admoneas.*

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[67] De Martino 1949: 421.
[68] De Martino 1949: 422.

Quod si fortasse ipse agere non potes, quia ad aliud occuparis, salutans peto, ut hominibus nostris quos illuc transmisimus, fratri scilicet et aepiscopo meo Felici filioque meo Ciriaco servo dei solatiari in omnibus debes, ut dum eorum labores adiuvas, devotionem tuam omnipotenti domino ostendas, et ipse tibi in bonis actibus adiutor siti cuius tu in bono opere famulis solatiaris, benedictionem vero Sancti Petri Apostoli per eos vobis trasmisimus, quam peto ut debeatis benigne suscipere»

Gregory the great, in good substance, pleases Hospiton for openly embracing the Christian religion, in contrast with the Sardinians of the interior (called Barbagia, hence Barbaricini) who are said to live like meaningless animals - *ut insensata animalia vivant* – do not know the real god - *Deum verum nesciant* – and still venerate sticks and stones as in antiquity - *ligna autem et lapides adorent.* This account, given by one of the maximum representatives of the élites of the hegemonic culture, spins around a crucial word, the adverb |still| - *autem*. The adverb has an underpinning role in the othering discourse by Gregory the Great as it immediately projects the people he describes in an archaic motionless past that never is in line with the changing world around it. Hence, if it was probably fine, in the moral scale of Gregory the Great, to make objects of venerations sticks and stones in the prehistory, it was not anymore in the 6th century AD: this paradigm allows him to make of the subalterns of Sardinia an un-historical people entrenched in magic rituals and superstitions that cannot but justify the superiority of the hegemonic culture of which him and Hospiton as representatives.

For this reason, in order to successfully collect the evidence of the broken initiatives of the subalterns, as wished for by Gramsci, there is the need to escape the attempts to mere classification of remains and to refuse the temptation of defining the subaltern world, no matter how complicated to understand, in essentialist ways, as always equal to itself, and entrenched in a past with not beginning nor end. In synthesis, it is necessary to avoid imprinting, even in very specific regional contexts, the dichotomy western world/dominant class/culture *versus the eastern* world/subalterns/nature. For De Martino, help in this direction is coming from the crisis of the capitalist model, that is helping to shake those paradigms that tend to attribute a naturalistic form to the subaltern cultural world. As the system that needs exploiting resources is undergoing a crisis[69], the object of exploitation does not need to be described in such an objectified way anymore, plus, its members acquire awareness of their status in history. The dichotomy between historic and cultural peoples *versus* un-historical and natural ones (object of study of ethnology) is, for De Martino, at the basis of racism. He states clearly that the culture-historical approach, at the basis of both anthropology and archaeology, has always kept

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[69] De Martino 1949: 423.

considering primitive peoples is peoples "of nature", in the picture of the bourgeoisie culture[70].

Hence, the historical understanding of the present and past of subaltern communities is necessary for embarking on a logically justified path towards the liberation from such a subaltern status. To do so, it is necessary to face another problem posed by De Martino: reaching the precise knowledge of the history of every single community because the more precise the knowledge, the more likely the intensification of transformation of society. For him, ethnology, could not understand the historic character and the human meaning of the cultural forms of the subaltern popular world, being it a prerogative of the bourgeoisie society to keep that world entrenched in a subaltern condition: for this reason, bourgeoisie ethnology often limited its task to the collection, description and filing of primitive "curiosities", and some other times less innocently framed its philological work within ideologies that benefitted colonial administrations. On the basis of what seen so far, one crucial question that we should ask ourselves as archaeologists and scholars of the past is: when we contribute to the collection and classification of an enormous amount of data relatable to numerous unnamed members of subaltern communities, while creating qualitative interpretation of a relatively small number of named and known members of the élites, what narrative of history and what paradigm are we - even if unconsciously - supporting?

7. GETTING TO KNOW THE OTHER: ACKNOWLEDGING SUBALTERNS IN THE MAKING OF HISTORY

This paper has shown a specific type of othering process that, on the model of Said's Orientalism, tends to create an essentialist image of the *other,* finalised to justify its domination. It has offered several examples of othering processes of the communities of Sardinia, both from antiquity and from modern scholarship. Those examples have highlighted an unexpected continuity in the act of creating the *other* in Sardinia between texts written over 2000 years apart from each other. This finding has been used to underline that, both in antiquity and today, history can be used to justify thoughts and actions undertaken in the present. Although inspired by completely different aims, the writing by Cicero and those by Lilliu have as protagonists communities of Roman-period Sardinia animated by similar characteristics. Some foundational features of the *othering* of Roman-period Sardinian communities, such as primitiveness, hybridization with African ethnicities, resistance to change, lack of purity, tend to contradict each other. This contradiction has been named *the othering paradox*. This is the cognitive result of the repeated attempts of those in power to make "the other" look like a caricature, recurring in the risk of losing track of the inconsistency of such essentialist accounts.

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[70] De Martino 1949: 425.

These accounts have been proven necessary for keeping in place the unbalanced power relationships that grant survival and reproduction to certain social structures. The paper has shown this power- related necessity in two circumstances: the first, through the critical reading of both classical Latin sources belittling Sardinians reliability and the classics of Sardinian archaeology providing essentialist accounts of a specific period of its history; the second, through the theoretical account of Gramsci and De Martino's frameworks on the history of subalterns. The accounts of the history of subalterns by Gramsci first and De Martino second, have provided a theoretical venue to interpret in a more comprehensive way the *othering* processes exposed in this paper, showing that although the direct aims of each *othering* is different, they are inspired by similar recurring needs: keeping the power at the expenses of a subaltern community/ethnicity/historical period.

Through Gramsci and De Martino's works, this paper has expressed the exigence of putting in place a theoretical effort to involve more accurate account of subaltern communities in order to contribute to a more inclusive history. Nevertheless, the paper has also highlighted that the ambition to join a postcolonial critical study of history does not come without risks. For these reasons, it has advocated for a profound theoretical effort aimed at recognising the mechanisms through which the *othering* of the objects of study happen, before deconstructing them. This also showed that archaeology itself is not a risk-free discipline when it comes to silencing subalterns, although it deals with fragments of unknown communities and not necessarily élites-related ones. Furthermore, the paper has highlighted the similarities between the strategy of data collection, mainly quantitative, adopted by ethnologists highlighted by De Martino and that embraced by archaeologists.

How to put all these insights in place when it comes to producing high standard research? From a concrete point of view, De Martino acknowledges that his essays based on the theoretical understanding of the subaltern world coincided with his practical interest to participate to its real liberation[71]. Which is why he decided, practically, to stand by and make the centre of his work the "sofferenza secolare dei braccianti pugliesi",[72] the secular suffering of the workers from Puglia. This suggests that the body of the subaltern is the wisest witness of their struggle to access history. It is only that way that De Martino realises, and reveals to his readers at the end of his essay, that the liberation of the communities who are part of the subaltern world involves "*uomini diversissimi*", very different individuals, linked by hegemonic societies to backward forms of material existence.

The landscapes in which those bodies live, and which they contributed to shape, are the place where archaeological research can start from to recollect and interpret the signs of the fragmented initiatives of the subalterns. Nevertheless, in order to contribute to shaping diverse and broader histories, precision is queen: the account

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[71] De Martino 1949: 433.
[72] De Martino 1949: 433.

of the bodies under study has to be very precise, as well as the account of the specific material conditions that formed their landscapes. Eventually, what emerges from De Martino and Gramsci's writings is the need to acquire increasing awareness that just collecting a wide amount of material data on subaltern communities without a qualitative and theoretically informed interpretive follow-up, does not contribute to enrich history. It could rather only keep dehumanising the spheres of society that did not have access to power and resources.

Conversely, in order to obtain a more tridimensional and less monolithic account of history, a humanistic approach to the interpretation of the rich data collected is necessary. This way, Gramsci's goal to form integral historians can meet De Martino's aspiration to a humanistic and essentialism-free knowledge of the subaltern popular world, by working towards a disenfranchisement of subaltern communities from their condition, actively driving societal change in the present through the critical knowledge of the past.

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GODS AND EMPERORS IN BRONZE: ROMAN RAETIA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY[1]

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Abstract

My postdoctoral project, which was developed during the biennium 2019–2021 at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and was financially supported by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, analyzes the bronze fragments of Roman Raetia.

These material remains are particularly fascinating since the fragments originate from high-quality statues, which were a distinctive expression of Roman identity in many aspects. In Raetia, these statues largely represented emperors and gods, and stood in the civilian and military settlements of the province. Entire armies converged around imperial portraiture in military contexts, while the presence of such works of art in the cities' *fora* placed the emperor's image on the same plane as the divine. Such monuments were thus instrumental in establishing a local Roman Raetian identity, integrating other peoples into the empire, and distinguishing Roman *mores* from existing traditions.

These bronze statues constituted an 'implementation' of Roman identity in Raetia as they became the ideal embodiment of the emperor and the expression of an *Identifikationsgefühl* for the military as well as the civic body of the province.

Keywords

Bronze statuary, Roman Raetia, Imperial cult, Roman religion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interest in ancient Greek and Roman bronzes has increased in recent decades and has expanded to encompass all aspects of these artifacts. Particular attention has been paid to how bronzes were perceived from various perspectives, including the Roman one, as illustrated in a recent monograph on a collection in Catania.[2] However,

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[1] The author would like to thank her mentors, Prof. Nadin Burkhardt (KU Eichstätt) and Prof. Gabriele Cifani (Tor Vergata), for their constant support and precious advice.

[2] Cf. Pafumi 2020.

artistry in bronze has been the subject of numerous international studies. We may cite, for example, the International Conferences on Bronzes, the proceedings of which have recently been published.[3]

The present paper aims to assess the current status of research on ancient bronzes in Germany, particularly regarding Roman Raetia, focusing on how monumental bronze statues became symbols of identity of an entire province.

Dedicated research on bronzes in Germany can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when the first systematic excavations were carried out throughout the country.[4] These excavations continued into the 20th and 21st centuries, and their findings have been presented in dedicated publications.[5]

In recent years, bronze research in the area produced a major project entitled *Großbronzen am UNESCO-Welterbe Limes*, which led, among other results, to the compilation of a database[6] documenting evidence from Roman provinces along the Rhine and the Danube.[7] The database lists and analyzes around 5200 bronze fragments distributed along the entire *Limes*,[8] with an important part discovered in Raetia and Upper Germany.[9] Over the course of my project, it was however possible to analyze some new objects. The previous, big project was conducted by an international team, but the Raetia component was not completed. As such, the results of the research on this area, with the exception of the database entries, have only been partially available.[10] Thus, my postdoctoral project at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (*Römische Großbronzen am Limes – Fragmente im raetischen Raum*)[11] resumed the study of the evidence from Raetia, with the financial support of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung for the biennium 2019/2021 as well as support from the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, by the Landesmuseum Aalen, the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege of Baden-Württemberg in Regierungspräsidium Stuttgart, the Archäologische Staatssammlung of Munich, the Künzing/Quintana Museum, and the Gäubodenmusem of Straubing, and the help of various scholars.[12]

The vast corpus of bronze fragments deriving from the province's various settlements[13] has undergone extensive analyses. These examinations focused not only on the iconography of statues' fragments, aiming to reconstruct the originals, when possible, and highlighting their peculiarities, but also on their contexts. Nor was their chemical composition disregarded (during my project, this new research

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[3] Baas 2019.
[4] Stoll 1992: 10ff.; Sarge 2015: 105; Piccioni 2020: 327-328.
[5] Cf. Menzel 1960 & 1966; Gamer 1968: 53ff.; Menzel 1986; *Gebrochener Glanz* 2014; Kemkes 2017; Piccioni 2020: 327-328, with bibliography; Piccioni 2023.
[6] To find under: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/datenbank.html; cf. Piccioni 2023.
[7] Cf. Kemkes 2017 a: 11-14; Kemkes 2014: 12-13; Piccioni 2023.
[8] Kemkes 2017 a: 13.
[9] Cf. Heckmann 2017: 44.
[10] Among the results, s. the papers by Heckmann 2017; Sarge 2017.
[11] S. here: https://www.ku.de/slf/klassische-archaeologie/personen/aura-piccioni. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[12] Cf. Piccioni 2020: 327-329.
[13] Cf. Kemkes 2014 b: 131.

was conducted by Prof. Dr. R. Schwab): the fragments belonged to locally produced statues, as demonstrated by their chemical composition. Of course, chemical analyses had already been conducted also during the previous project.[14]

Bearing this in mind, the present paper will offer a glimpse into Raetian bronzes and their importance for the context of the province. In particular, several issues will be addressed: the purposes of Roman statues in Raetia (i.e., their 'use'); how imperial propaganda contributed to the diffusion of official portraits in both major and minor military settlements, including Rainau-Dalkingen, Aalen, or Mögglingen (Ostalbkreis). Such statues were often symbols of the imperial power and the imperial cult,[15] as will be illustrated. Their presence is also attested in civil contexts, including Augsburg, Kempten,[16] and Durach.[17]

Finally, it will be argued that the statues played a fundamental role in the establishment and promotion of Roman Raetia's provincial identity, not only from an artistic point of view but also from a social perspective. They not only cemented military loyalty but also cultivated civic solidarity and a sense of belonging to the empire.

2. SOME EXAMPLES

Bronze statues, or at least their fragments, constitute some of the most significant and ubiquitous objects from the Roman Empire's northern provinces.[18] Their original exhibition contexts were various, and their meanings related to the emperors (and their families),[19] the gods, and in some cases (presumably) important personalities of the province themselves, as the governor etc.[20] The fragments derive from sacred contexts (*sacella*) of the military settlements along the *Limes*, as some case studies demonstrate, as well as public areas, including the *fora* of cities such as Augsburg, Kempten, or Bregenz.[21]

Standing or equestrian/chariot portraits of the emperors were erected in the *principia* or at points of the settlements occupying positions that enhanced their official and 'ritual' character. Unusual exhibition spaces in Raetia included, for instance, amphitheaters, with one (hypothetical) case (Künzing,[22] along the Eastern

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[14] Cf. Willer, Schwab, Mirschenz 2017: 88-98.

[15] Pekáry 1986: 97-98.

[16] Willer 2014: 28-31.

[17] Cf. S. Heckmann, LfdNr. 1167 in the database (http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2222 [generated on June 28th, 2021]).

[18] Cf. Uelsberg, Heiligmann, Brouwer 2014: 12; s. also Piccioni 2023.

[19] Cf. Kemkes 2017 b: 56-64.

[20] Cf. Selke 2014: 77 for the case of Raetian Ehingen-Dambach; Willer 2014: 32, for the case of Augst, in Upper Germany.

[21] Cf. Kemkes 2014: 109-111; Willer 2014: 28-31; Witschel 2016: 91-92.

[22] On the excavations in Künzing, s. Schönberger 1975. In the case of the bronze fragments coming from the area of the amphitheater at Ehingen-Dambach, in present-day Bavaria, the situation does not seem to be as

Raetian *limes*).[23] By contrast, their presence in the *principia* of military settlements has been extensively documented. The discovery of bases that may be associated with the statues could help reconstruct the likely original context of their exhibition; in military settlements, such bases were found in various places of the *principia*, but not inside the *sacellum*.[24]

In military settlements, bronze statues' fragments have been found in deposits and in *aeraria*,[25] since the primary goal of their use after the destruction of the original image would have been 'recycling'.[26]

The presence of original statues in the *fora*, the centers of civic life, has been securely demonstrated.[27] The installation of emperors' images in such areas (as the case of Bregenz likely demonstrates[28]) alongside those of the gods had the specific aim of consolidating provincial identity, stressing the importance of gods and emperors as elements of unity—not only that of Raetia, but of the empire as a whole. The placement of emperors' statues alongside those of gods in the *fora* imbued them with sacrality; emperors assumed a status akin to that of the gods. A similar phenomenon was observed when such statues were erected inside the *principia*, as a constant reminder of imperial divinity and of the loyalty that should be attributed to such figures. These images thus became an instrument of social cohesion.

The aspect of the emperor's divinity was fundamental in military settlements. There, the statues (generically emperors' portraits as well as the category of *imagines*) appear to have been instrumental in the army's demonstration of its loyalty to emperor and empire.[29]

Social unity and cohesion were reinforced, as it is possible to infer, by state religion and particularly by the imperial cult, with the constant association between the gods, the emperors, and the *sacra* of the empire.[30] Several examples will verify how strong the visive and ideal impact of the bronze statues on the citizens and soldiers is likely to have been in Raetia.

For instance, in Augsburg (elected to *municipium* of *Augusta Vindelicum* during Hadrian's reign[31]) came to light an arm from a statue of Mercury,[32] likely exhibited in the city forum. Mercury in Raetia constitutes the perfect syncretism between a Roman

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clear as that in Künzing: cf. Heckmann, LfdNr. 1265 in the database (http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2320 [generated on February 6th, 2021]); Selke 2014: 327-328. Cf. Piccioni 2023.

[23] Cf. Piccioni 2023.

[24] Cf. Kemkes 2017 a: 65-66; Selke 2014: 78.

[25] Heckmann 2017: 44.

[26] Cf. Heckmann 2017: 44.

[27] Cf. Willer 2014: 27.

[28] Cf. Willer 2014: 31; cf. Piccioni 2023.

[29] Cf. Pekáry 1985: 42-43; Pekáry 1986: 99-100; Clauss 2001: 326-327; Witschel 2016: 120.

[30] Cf. Kemkes 2014: 109-111; Willer 2014: 28-31.

[31] Willer 2014: 30.

[32] Cf. Heckmann, LfdNr. 1343 in the database: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2398 [generated on July 27th, 2021].

and a Celtic god, depicted as Roman, but bearing Celtic features (e.g., the bag containing money),[33] as many well-known examples of statuettes from other settlements of the province attest. For instance, we may cite the relief depicting Apollo, Minerva, and Mercurius from Nassenfels,[34] in which the three gods appear together along with their attributes, with Mercurius holding the usual money sack in his hand.

However, other statues from Augsburg may have depicted the emperor. The famous monumental horse head discovered in Wertach creek's bank[35] as well as the larger-than-life arm of a rider or a charioteer[36] may have belonged to the same statuary group:[37] the horse head of Augsburg is comparable to a horse head from Waldgirmes,[38] as well as numerous heads, still attached to equestrian statues, discovered throughout the Roman world, including the well-known group from Cartoceto di Pergola.[39]

In the case of Augsburg, such statues could have been honorary depictions of an emperor, likely Claudius or Hadrian, alluding to his glory, for instance regarding the construction of the *Via Claudia Augusta* or the elevation of the settlement to the rank of *municipium*, respectively accomplished by the two abovementioned emperors.[40]

In Bregenz, the presence of at least a mythological portrait of an emperor—probably disguised as Hercules, if not the representation itself of a god—may be discerned.[41]

Two types of imperial portrait emerge from the survey of the Raetian province: bronze statues of various dimensions, standing or of an equestrian type, located at various points in the civil or military settlements, and the so-called *imagines*, small portrait-busts of the emperors. For instance, a fragment of a golden *imago* was found at Ehingen-Dambach,[42] whereas several bronze fragments from other Raetian settlements (for instance, from Theilenhofen)[43] may be interpreted as possible evidence of *imagines*.[44] Valeria Selke assumed that the original *imago* from Dambach might have been a private possession[45] and mentioned similar busts, such

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[33] Cf. Piccioni 2022: 38-40.
[34] Cf. *CSIR* 1973, pl. 69, no. 233; cf. Piccioni 2022: 38.
[35] Cf. Hahn 2014: 49; Heckmann, LfdNr. 1346 in the database: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2401 [generated on June 28th, 2021].
[36] Cf. Willer 2014: 31.
[37] Cf. Willer 2014: 31.
[38] Cf. Rasbach 2014: 40.
[39] Salcuni 2014: 23. For the fragments from Augsburg, cf. Piccioni 2023.
[40] Cf. Willer 2014: 30-31; Bakker 2004: 91.
[41] Cf. Willer 2014: 31; Heckmann, LfdNr. 1306 in the database: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2361 [generated on June 28th, 2021]. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[42] Selke 2014: 76-77. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[43] Cf. Heckmann, LfdNr. 1238 in the database, with bibliography: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/2293 [generated on June 28th, 2021]. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[44] Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[45] Selke 2014: 76.

as that of Marc Aurel from *Aventicum* (Upper Germany).[46] However, busts are also known to have been dedicated by soldiers of particular units on religious occasions.[47]

While the *imagines* were objects of the imperial cult, the importance with which imperial statues were generally invested is unsurprising, as sources recount that such statues were often the recipients of offerings. However, the question of whether the statues were actually the recipients of cult offerings remains the subject of debate among various scholars of differing opinions.[48] Some assume that the statues were involved as busts in the imperial cult, based on the worship of the emperor's *genius*,[49] while others take other factors into account,[50] even distinguishing between statues that were placed 'inside' a place having a specific symbolism, and those that were exhibited in public spaces and left to "allen Verschmutzungen".[51]

In any case, these images were ubiquitous in the life of Raetia, as the evidence illustrates, such as in the case of Rainau-Dalkingen[52] with its unusual monumental gate[53] (140–160 AD–233 AD), that was probably utilized by Caracalla during its final phase as a triumphal arch.[54] To this phase may be assigned some 140 bronze fragments of a larger-than-life cuirassed statue,[55] produced, according to Sascha Heckmann, at the beginning of the 2nd century AD.[56]

Further finds in unusual findspots in Raetia attest the ubiquity of bronze statues, as the nose from Mögglingen demonstrates.[57] Discovered along a creek at the boundaries between several German towns in present-day Baden-Württemberg, it was probably brought in for recycling,[58] and has been interpreted by Martin Kemkes as originally belonging to a statue of Severus Alexander. [59]

Among the Raetian fragments, some pieces may have been directly related to the imperial cult, including a *simpulum* (Limesmuseum Aalen, Inv.-Nr. 1979-35-466-1) from Aalen, probably to be interpreted as an applique belonging to an altar base. This

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[46] Cf. Selke 2014: 76, with bibliography.
[47] Cf. Clauss 2001: 302.
[48] Cf. Clauss 2001: 303.
[49] Cf. Gradel 2009: 162-164.
[50] Cf. Clauss 2001: 303.
[51] Quote from Clauss 2001: 303.
[52] Cf. Planck 2014: 76.
[53] Planck 2014: 24.
[54] Cf. Planck 2014: 57; 66-67; 77; 81.
[55] Cf. Heckmann 2014: 92; Heckmann 2014 a: 135. S. also Piccioni 2023.
[56] Heckmann 2014: 98. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[57] Kemkes 2008: 144ff., 148. Cf. Piccioni 2023.
[58] Cf. Kemkes 2008: 144.
[59] Kemkes 2008: 148.

piece, along with an *aspergillum*,[60] may be linked to the imperial cult by virtue of their probable association with altar bases.[61]

3. CONCLUSION

As the examples cited above highlight, bronze statues—and imperial portraits in particular—substantially contributed to the definition of Raetia's identity as a Roman province, especially in light of the convergence of various social components around public cult, whether imperial or pertaining to the pantheon more generally.

This brief overview of the fragments demonstrates the original ubiquity of such evidence and its importance for different aspects of life in the province. In fact, statues contributed in many ways to Raetia's sense of social cohesion and 'Roman identity': they accentuated the emperors' glory (as in the case of the statues of Augsburg), enhanced the meaning of the civic religion (for instance, in the *fora*) and of the imperial cult as significant not only for the army (as in Aalen), but also for the overall loyalty of entire cities.

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[60] S. Sarge, LfdNr. 152 in the database: http://grossbronzenamlimes.de/database/node/1207 [generated on July 27th, 2021]. Cf. Piccioni 2023.

[61] I thank Dr. Martin Kemkes for the opportunity of studying the materials from Aalen. Cf. Piccioni 2023.

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Online Resources

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COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN THE PROVINCIAL COINAGE MINTED BY *LIBERALITAS EBORA IVLIA* (ÉVORA, PORTUGAL)

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyse the phenomenon of identity projection of the iconologies adopted in the provincial pieces coined by the mint of *Liberalitas Ebora Ivlia* (Évora, Portugal). Our study is based on the analysis of the monetary icons, which show the identity characteristics that define the communities that identified with them; especially if we consider that the main elements of the provincial coinage were selected by the authorities of each mints. Therefore, in order to achieve the objectives, we believe that it is essential to take into account the main theoretical-methodological approaches of numismatic, iconological and historical-identity studies.

So that, in the line of numismatic researches, we have decided to analyse some elements related to the coins whose iconology is under study. Among these aspects are the emission volumes, the values related to these series, the presence of countermarks, etc. In the same way we also think it necessary to study the elements related to the iconology. We will analyse the origin of the image, the different meanings that it could have, the iconographic design of the image and its final appearance. In addition, our research focuses on the analysis of the historical-identity elements of the *Ebora*, for which we will examine the cultural and legal-political characteristics of this city and also study the manufacturing context of its provincial coins (possibility that the icons studied could have been adopted in other Hispanic productions, variety of selected iconologies in the rest of the territory's mints, etc.).

Keywords

Identity, Iconography, provincial coinage, Augustus, Lusitania.

1. INTRODUCTION

Situated in the centre of the Portuguese region of Alentejo, the city of *Liberalitas Ebora Iulia* sits on top of a high promontory that dominates a wide area around it. The city was part of the *conventus pacensis*, and is approximately 80 km north of *Pax Iulia* (Beja, Portugal) and 150 km the west of the capital of *Lusitania*, *Augusta Emerita* (Mérida). In recent decades, research has paid increasing attention to the history of this city, leading to interesting historiographical debates about the origin of the city, its legal status, and some of its most prominent citizens. Among the most interesting topics is the issuing of coinage in the city, which began around the turn of the Christian era. Although the coins issued by the city have been analysed before, some aspects are in need of revision. This work reviews published works about Évora´s coins and suggests new approaches to their iconography and legends, while emphasising the important role played by the city and its mint in *Lusitania*.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The construction of a Roman city on a high promontory that controls all the territory around it has led researchers to speculate with the existence of a pre-Roman *oppidum* there. Authors such as J. Alarcão even went as far as to suggest a Celtic origin for this settlement,[1] as the toponym *Ebora* has been documented in some Celtic-dominated areas in the Iberian Peninsula[2]. Although the existence of this pre-Roman settlement is widely accepted, to date, archaeological evidence has not been forthcoming.

Although no firm evidence exists for the foundation of the city (astride the triunvirates of Julius Caesar and Octavian), it is clear that the integration of the settlement in the Roman political-cultural framework was a key milestone in the history of the city, as demonstrated by the adoption of the *cognomenta Liberalitatis Iulia*. Importantly, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* included *Liberalitatis Iulia Ebora* in the list of Iberian *oppida veteris latti*[3]. The interpretation of this passage has triggered an interesting historiographical debate concerning when and how was the city promoted to *municipium*. For many authors, this must have occurred during Julius Caesar's time, as was the case with *Pax Iulia* and *Felicitas Iulia Olissipo* (Lisboa). This would explain the adoption of the *cognomenta Iulia* by the city[4]. Other authors, however, date the city's promotion to immediately before the establishment of the Principate, that is, before 27 BC, as part of Octavian's manoeuvres to exalt the image of Julius Caesar[5]. Other authors argue that the city was granted municipal status during the Principate itself[6]. Especially prominent among these is Manuel

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[1] Alarcão 2009: 499.
[2] Almagro-Gorbea, Davila 1995: 214; Berrocal 1998: 27.
[3] Plinio *HN* III, 117, alongside *Cascatum*, *Ercavica*, *Graccuris*, *Castulo*, *Saetabis*, *Salacia* and *Murtilis*.
[4] Étienne 1990: 221; Gorges 1990: 95.
[5] MacMuller 2000: 52, among others.
[6] Faria 2001a: 355-356, 2001b:72.

Marques de Faria, who used *Ebora*'s coins to show that *Liberalitatis Iulia Ebora* was already a municipality when it began coining money. According to this author, the city's earliest series can be related to the honours paid by the city to Augustus after his appointment as *PontifexMaximus* [7], and at the same time to the commemoration of its municipal promotion, materialised in the legend *Permissu Caesari Augusti*, engraved in the obverse of the coins. Faria argues that all the Hispanic cities that were granted permission to issue money, except for *Ebussus*, were colonies or *municipia* by the time this authorisation was granted. Therefore, given that the earliest coins from *Ebora* are dated to the last-but-one decade in the 1st century BC, the elevation of *Liberalitatis Iulia Ebora* to municipal status by Augustus is plausible. Finally, other authors have argued for the concession of this status in the Flavian period[8], like the remaining Lusitanian[9] and Hispanic cities[10]. It is true that *Ebora* underwent a significant process of monumentalisation between the late 1st and early 2nd century AD[11], but there is no direct evidence to connect this process with the concession of the municipal status, a connection which has clearly been attested in other Lusitanian cities[12].

Not many Roman remains are visible in *Ebora* today, because the centre of the city has been inhabited continuously since Roman times, and medieval and modern constructions have erased most earlier remains.[13] Along with some of the main Roman streets, identified inside the walled area of the city, one of the city's most significant monuments is the temple traditionally attributed to Diana (although its actual dedication is unknown), which has become the emblem of the modern city[14]. The temple was erected during the above noted process of monumentalisation undergone by the city, and the disposition of its surviving columns (made with local granite) suggests a peripteral hexastyle arrangement set up upon a large masonry podium. Its location in the highest point of the city suggests that the temple occupied a privileged spot in the urban layout, in the company of the buildings that constituted the city's forum[15]. The public baths, built during the same period, were situated nearby. Although only the *laconica* and the *natationes* are known, the building must have been rather large, and its profuse decoration fully adopted Roman models[16]. On the other hand, the rescue excavations undertaken in different parts of the city have documented a number of *domus* of different chronologies[17]. The information about

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[7] Faria 2001a: 355, siguiendo a Grant 1946: 337.
[8] Armani 2000: 271; Le Roux 2017: 590.
[9] Fabião 2017: 13-14.
[10] Le Roux 2017.
[11] Alarcão 2009: 499.
[12] Andreu Pintado 2005.
[13] Alarcão 2009: 499.
[14] Rodrigues 2012: 259-260.
[15] Hauschild 1991: 107-108.
[16] Reis 2004: 29, 71.
[17] Carneiro 2020.

these is, however, limited, especially because these excavations tend to be small-scale operations. Finally, we must not forget the city wall, the chronology of which is under discussion. Although the course of some sections can be dated to the Late Roman period, it seems that most of the wall was built in the Middle Ages[18]. Several studies have argued that the course followed by the current wall responds to a retraction of the city's defences in the turn of the 4th century AD. These challenges other interpretations that date the origins of the existing wall to the early imperial period, or even earlier. Future excavations will help to shed light on this issue, as well as bring new evidence to the historiographical debates noted above.

3. THE COINAGE FROM *EBORA*: STATE OF THE ART

The coinage from *Ebora* already featured in the earliest numismatic compendia of the Iberian Peninsula (Florez, Delgado, Vives). The most detailed study of this mint to date is Francisca Chaves Tristán's[19], which compared the coinage from *Liberalitas Iulia Ebora* and that from the mints in *Iulia Traducta* (Algeciras, Cádiz) and *Colonia Patricia* (Córdoba). These mints have many things in common and must be interpreted jointly, including the fact that all of the series issued by these mints bore the portrait of the reigning emperor in the obverse. According to Chaves, this is related to the use of sacerdotal elements in the reverse of *dupondi* (which was, as noted, is closely connected with the recent appointment of Augustus as *PontifexMaximus*) and the legend *Permissu Caesari Augusti*, again a privilege that had more to do with the emperor's propaganda than with legal and economic concerns[20]. These elements also allowed Chaves to date these series to 12 BC[21].

Francisca Chaves's study also addressed questions of technique and style. She reached that conclusion that *Ebora*'s mint, like those in *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*, must have employed Spanish engravers taught by Roman masters, judging by the good quality of the engravings[22]. The similarity of the portraits issued in *Ebora* and *Colonia Patricia* could suggest that both mints used the same engraver of workshop, but some details in the neck of the emperor and the tracing of the lines led Tristán to the conclusion that both mints had different personalities[23] Francisca Chaves also argues that the dies for obverse and reverse in *Ebora* were made by the same engraver. This is supported by the similarity in technique observed in both sides of the coins and by the short period of time during which the mint was active[24].

Francisca Chaves also examined the purpose of these series, focusing on the three mints mentioned above. Although *a priori* the aim of these workshops was to supply

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[18] De Man 2011: 209-211.
[19] Chaves Tristán 1979a; 1981.
[20] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 24.
[21] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 63-64.
[22] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 32-33.
[23] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 32-33.
[24] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 33-34.

the nearby territories with coinage (in the case of *Ebora*, central Alentejo), she also argues that the series issued by *Ebora*, *Traducta* and *Patricia* were part of the imperial propaganda mobilised by Augustus during his trip to Hispania between 15 and 14 BC[25]. Francisca Chaves insists on this in a later paper published with J.P. Bost, in which they analyse the geographical distribution of *Ebora*'s, *Emerita Augusta*'s and *Pax Iulia*'s coin series. For them, the dispersion of *Ebora*'s and *Pax Iulia*'s coins are indicative of the symbolic and propagandistic nature of these series, which were distributed at a regional scale in the former case and at a local one in the latter[26]. *Emerita*'s mint responds to an entirely different model; according to Chaves and Bost, the primary aim of this mint was clearly to meet the money demand in *Lusitania*, as suggested by the distribution of its series, which are found all over the Iberian Peninsula, the larger number of series struck, and the longevity of the mint itself, which was active for much longer than the other two mints[27].

In a related work, Francisca Chaves analysed in detail the countermarks borne by *Ebora*'s coins, and compared them with those from other mints in the Iberian Peninsula. One of the most common is the countermark DD, which corresponds to the abbreviation D(*ecretum*) D(*ecurionum.*)[28]. Although this mark is frequently found in Roman coins from the Iberian Peninsula, it is of vital importance to determine the date in which the city was granted municipal status. In fact, Manuel Faria thought that the presence of this countermark in the city's coinage was sufficient evidence to prove that the city was already a *municipium* when it issued these coins[29].

Ebora's coins have not been subject to further studies in recent years, with the exception of P.P. Ripollès's work on provincial Roman series[30]. This author also made a brief introduction to *Ebora*'s history and to the authors that have examined its coinage, and provided an up-to-date review on the coin types chosen, the countermarks found in them, the possible variants, and the collections and museums in which the known examples may be found. This is a good starting point for future works that wish to explore other aspects about *Liberalitatis Iulia Ebora*'s coinage, such as the ones presented in this work.

4. PRODUCTION AND USE OF COINS IN *EBORA*

As pointed out by Francisca Chaves[31], like mints in *Lusitania* and in contrast with the remaining Iberian provinces, *Ebora*'s workshop seems to have issued a very small number of series. According to the available evidence, its production was

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[25] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 69, 71.
[26] Bost, Chaves 1990: 117.
[27] Bost, Chaves 1990: 118-119.
[28] Chaves Tristán 1979b: 43-44.
[29] Faria 2001b: 73.
[30] Ripollès 2010: 65-66.
[31] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 69.

limited to one series of possible *dupondi*[32] and one series of ases[33]. However, even if we admit that the production of this mint was small by any standards, and especially if we accept the recent suggestion that the dies used to strike the largest coin types (like the *dupondi*) could be used to produce only a small number of pieces, the fact is that at least three different variants of Ebora's ases have been attested[34]. The differences concern the legend, specifically one of the abbreviations used. While in some coins the word is fully developed[35], in the other two series the final letters are missing[36], so the reverse of these coins presents a significantly different aspect. It is worth recalling that the existence of epigraphic differences in a single series has been interpreted as the result of the use of a relatively high number of dies, the characteristics of which could vary slightly. This is especially the case with the reverse dies, which suffered a greater degree of wear, as the series from *Ebora* illustrate.

Taking all this into consideration, alongside what we know about coin production in Roman Hispania, it can be argued that *Ebora*'s series were among the most abundant in *Lusitania*. According to this idea, which can only be confirmed by a thorough analysis of dies, *Ebora*'s mint only trailed behind that of the provincial capital, *Augusta Emerita*, the second most productive Hispanic mint, only behind *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza)[37]. In fact, it cannot be ruled out that *Emerita*'s substantial production aimed to make up for the small output of other Lusitanian mints, which were, in addition, closed before the beginning of Tiberius' reign. For these reasons, we think that our interpretation does not completely contradict Francisca Chaves's argument about the function of these coins[38]. In any case, we agree with her that, initially, *Ebora*'s series were related to the above noted propaganda policies, but this does not mean that, over time, these pieces could no also play an economic role, helping to meet the money demand in *Lusitania*, and becoming the second mint in importance in the province.

As was common in the western provinces of the Empire, all the coins struck in *Ebora* were made upon copper/bronze planchets. Their legends were invariably only in Latin and their iconography adopted typological and epigraphic features associated to the reigning emperor: Octavian Augustus. It is therefore clear that these coins were issued at some point during his long rule. As noted, the inscription in the obverse of all these coins includes the abbreviation *P M*., and it is thus likely that

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[32] *RPC* I, 50.
[33] *RPC* I, 51.
[34] *RPC* I, 51a-c.
[35] *RPC* I, 51c.
[36] *RPC* I, 51a-b.
[37] Ripollès, Muñoz, Llorens, 1993.
[38] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 69, 71.

production did not begin until 12 BC at the earliest[39], because this is a direct appeal to the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, which Augustus assumed in that year. However, the exact moment when these *dupondi* and ases were put in circulation is uncertain, and we lack sufficient data to narrow down the chronology.

Figure 1. Countermarked *Ebora*´s ases.
1.1. Coin with countermark on reverse (*RPC* I, 51$_c$) (MAN 1993/67/10630).
1.2. Coin with countermark on reverse (*RPC* I, 51) (MAN 1993/67/10636).
1.3. Coin with countermark on obverse (*RPC* I, 51$_c$) (MAN 1993/67/10641).
1.4. Coin with countermark on obverse (*RPC* I, 51$_c$) (MAN 1993/67/10643).

In any case, the career of *Ebora*'s mint must have come to an end in this same period (12 BC- AD 14). However, the presence of countermarks in at least a dozen specimens[40] suggest that a small part, at least, of these coins continued circulating beyond this period. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that only one of these marks, one which represents the letter 'B', can be related to the use of a punch. The rest (DD, CPAR, CR and MAL), are stamped countermarks, as the marks of the outer lines of the stamp attest. This, and the fact that these countermarks appear repeatedly on *Ebora*'s coins, and in coins issued by closely related mints, suggest that the marks were official in character.

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[39] Burnett, Amandry & Ripollès, 1992: 74; Chaves Tristán 1979a: 63-64; Collantes Pérez-Ardá, 1997: 145; García-Bellido y Blázquez cerrato, 2001: 112; Ripollès, 1997: 339-340; 2010: 66; Rippollès y Abascal, 2000: 251; Villaronga y Benages, 2011: 676-677.
[40] Amandry, Burnett, Carradice, Ripollès, Butcher, 2014: 3; Burnett, Amandry, Ripollès, 1992: 74; Ripollès, 2010: 66; Ripollès, Burnett, Amandry, Carradice, Butcher, 2015: 9.

It could be that these countermarks were made by some local authority with the purpose of corroborating the value of old coins (local or otherwise) and thus keeping them in circulation in cities in which there was not enough money in the system. In fact, these marks have been directly associated with this sort of monetary context. For instance, the countermark DD (figure 1.4), and its different variants, have been attested in coins from many provincial mints, such as *Iulia Traducta*[41], *Colonia Patricia*[42], *Carthago-Nova*[43] (Cartagena, Murcia), *Sagumtum*[44] (Sagunto, Valencia), *Tarraco*[45] (Tarragona), *Emporiae*[46] (Sant Martí de Empúries, Girona), *Lepida-Celsa*[47] (Velilla del Ebro, Zaragoza), *Caesaraugusta*[48] and *Calagurris*[49] (Calahorra), having been interpreted as an official mark to endorse old coins. The countermarks CPAR, CR and MAL (figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) have also been documented in coins issued in *Iulia Traducta*[50], *Colonia Patricia*[51] and *Celsa*[52], and have been put in relation with stamps made in *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*. This clearly indicates that some of the specimens coined in *Ebora* were in circulation for a long time and that, for a while, the immaterial connection that linked the city and the icons and symbols that it had once chosen for its coins remained strong.

Ebora was the only Hispanic mint to pay as much attention to its intermediate values as to its multiples. In fact, *Ebora* was, along with *Gades*[53] (Cádiz), the only Iberian mints that, having struck coins belonging to two different monetary species, did not issue fractions. This is particularly significant if we take into account that the remaining mints in *Lusitania* rarely issued fractions either. The mint in *Salacia*[54] (Alcacer do Sal, Portugal) only issued ases, like those in *Pax Iulia*[55] and *Baesuris*[56] (Castro Marim, Portugal). We also know that *Emerita Augusta* only produced a limited number of *quadrans*[57] and *semises*[58], *dupondi*[59] being much more abundant (especially during Tiberius' reign). These data can be used to argue that the series from *Ebora* followed the general trends of coin production in *Lusitania*, where the demand for fractions may have been low. Although we lack reliable data concerning

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[41] *RPC* I, 107-108.
[42] *RPC* I, 129.
[43] *RPC* I, 179.
[44] *RPC* I, 151.
[45] *RPC* I, 228.
[46] *RPC* I, 241, 243, 246-247, 250, 253-254 & 257.
[47] *RPC* I, 261 & 270-271.
[48] *RPC* I, 322.
[49] *RPC* I, 435 & 439.
[50] *RPC* I, 108.
[51] *RPC* I, 129.
[52] *RPC* I, 263-264, 269, 273 & 278.
[53] *RPC* I, 77-95.
[54] *RPC* I, 51, 51B & 51C.
[55] *RPC* I, 52, 52A y 53.
[56] *RPC* I, 53°.
[57] *RPC* I, 5A, 9, 18A & 18B.
[58] *RPC* I, 8, 14, 14A, 15-18, 37A, 49 & 49A.
[59] *RPC* I, 10, 10A, 12, 20-21, 23-25, 30, 38, 39 & 41.

the dispersion of the finds, we can argue that, over time, the coins issued in *Ebora* may have been used in local economies in which ases and *dupondi* were in high demand, such as southern *Lusitania* and nearby regions.

5. *EBORA*'S MONETARY ICONOGRAPHY

5.1. Augustus' portrait and title

The magistrates in charge of producing money in *Ebora* followed the most popular provincial iconographic trends, and chose the most common obverse in provincial Roman coinage, that is, the emperor's portrait. Although the type is very widespread, we do not think this was the result of an imposition from above, but a deliberate choice by the local oligarchy, even if the state directly benefited from the dissemination of its propagandistic language. The fast generalisation of the type, which, according to some specialists was adopted in some Hispanic mints even before the foundation of the Empire[60], as much as the exceptions (i.e. cities that did not adopt it, such as *Carteia*[61] – San Roque, Cádiz – or *Emporiae*[62]) suggest that this was a voluntary[63] move within the framework of Augustus' propagandistic efforts.

For this reason, the selection of this iconography reveals a substantial ideological transformation, which in *Ebora*, like in the other cities of the Empire, could have been threefold. First, it marks when the city assumed one of the most successful formulas to signal the emperor's ascent to power. Second, it reveals the adoption in the territory of *Ebora* of an efficient tool to disseminate the new political order. Moreover, the reproduction of the *princeps*'s effigy served a much deeper purpose than merely representing the personal portrait of a specific ruler, as he was considered the model citizen of the new Roman order. Third, the choice of motif demonstrates that *Ebora* was awake to the latest iconological trends. For this reason, the acceptance of this typology shows how keen the elite was to express the circumstances in which they had joined the Roman imperial culture, profiting from the authority that the new order, effectively granted them.

In *Ebora*'s coins Augustus is always portrayed looking left (Figure 2.1). It must be recalled that in most coins in which this emperor is depicted in Lusitania, Hispania and most of the western provinces, Augustus is represented looking right. Of the 21 provincial mints that adopted Augustus' effigy, only half issued coins with Augustus looking left, including *Ebora*, *Emerita Augusta*[64], *Irippo*[65] (Alcalá de Guadaira,

[60] Chaves Tristán, 2005: 62; Faria: 1989: 108-109; García-Bellido y Blázquez Cerrato, 2001: 261-262, 311-312, 234-238. 306, 308, 221.222 & 338-341; Grant, 1946: 336-355; Ripollès, 2010: 72-73, 77-78, 188, 197, 256-260, 287 & 290.

[61] *RPC* I, 111-123.

[62] *RPC* I, 111-123.

[63] Gozalbes García, 2015a: 6-7.

[64] *RPC* I, 18, 18A & 18B.

[65] *RPC* I, 56.

Sevilla) (figure 2.3), *Osset*[66] (San Juan de Aznalfarache, Sevilla)*, Carthago Nova*[67]*, Ilici*[68] (Elche Alicante)*, Caesaraugusta*[69]*, Bilbilis*[70] (Calatayud, Zaragoza) and *Ercavica*[71] (Cañaveruelas, Cuenca)*,* but this they did only in small numbers. Only the mints in *Iulia Traducta*[72] (figure 2.6) and *Colonia Patricia*[73] (figure 2.7) produced a large number of coins with Augustus looking left. The total figures make this issue appear even more significant. Of the many Hispanic series in which Augustus was represented, the emperor appears looking left in 34 and right in 109. As such, it can be argued that the obverse of the coins struck in *Ebora* was atypical. Iconographically, however, the situation is completely different. Augustus was represented free from any adornment, as in many other mints in *Lusitania* and *Baetica*, including *Emerita Augusta*[74] (figure 2.2), *Pax Iulia*[75], *Laelia*[76] (Olivares, Sevilla), *Irippo*[77]*, Osset*[78] (figure 2.4)*, Italica*[79] (Santiponce, Sevilla) (figure 2.5)*, Iulia Traducta*[80] and *Colonia Patricia*[81]. The mints in the *Citerior Tarraconensis* often represented the emperor wearing a laurel wreath.

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[66] *RPC* I, 59.
[67] *RPC* I, 173.
[68] *RPC* I, 191.
[69] *RPC* I, 308, 308A, 309, 311-312, 314, 318, 328-329, 329A & 330-332.
[70] *RPC* I, 393.
[71] *RPC* I, 460.
[72] *RPC* I, 98-99, 107-110.
[73] *RPC* I, 127-131.
[74] *RPC* I, 17, 18A & 18B.
[75] *RPC* I, 52, 52A & 53.
[76] *RPC* I, 54 & 54A.
[77] *RPC* I, 55-57.
[78] *RPC* I, 58-59 & 59A.
[79] *RPC* I, 60-63.
[80] *RPC* I, 98-100 & 107-110.
[81] *RPC* I, 127-131.

Figure 2. Obverse of augustean coins produced by some Hispanic mints.

2.1 Obverse of an *as* minted by *Ebora* (*RPC* I, 51$_c$) (MAN 1993/67/10632).
2.2. Obverse of a *semis* minted by *Emerita Augusta* (*RPC* I, 17) (MAN 1993/67/10880).
2.3. Obverse of an *as* minted by *Irippo* (*RPC* I, 55) (MAN 1993/67/6609).
2.4. Obverse of an *as* minted by *Osset* (*RPC* I, 55) (MAN 1993/67/7272).
2.5. Obverse of an *as* minted by *Italica* (*RPC* I, 60) (MAN 1993/67/11588).
2.6. Obverse of an *as* minted by *Iulia Traducta* (*RPC* I, 108) (MAN 1993/67/7272).
2.7. Obverse of an *as* minted by *Colonia Patricia* (*RPC* I, 129) (MAN 1993/67/10253).

Concerning style, *Ebora*'s coins represented Augustus as a young man with a serene and vivacious expression. The locks of his hair formed a small fringe on his forehead, before and behind his ear, forming a visible sideburn, and behind the neck. The emperor's eyes were large, as was his nose, in contrast to his mouth, which has very thin lips. The emperor's neck is muscular, and his Adam's apple is not visible. In terms of figurative style, iconography and orientation, this portrait is very similar to that in some of the series issued by the cities of *Iulia Traducta*[82] and *Colonia Patricia*[83]. This also applies to the legends, which in all cases made reference to the

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[82] *RPC* I, 107-110.
[83] *RPC* I, 127-131.

emperor's titles and to the imperial permission to issue coinage. The latter inscriptions are rare, as they have only been attested in Augustan series in from *Emerita Augusta* and *Italica*.

At this point, we think it is worth returning to the similarities in the coins issued by *Ebora, Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*. As pointed out by Francisca Chaves[84], the differences in the obverses are few, which made her argue that all the dies used in *Ebora* could have been made by the same craftsperson, and even that this same artisan may have previously worked in the other mints. We shall not enter this debate, about which much has been written, but we think that this similarity could have interesting social implications, especially concerning the users of the coins. It is obvious that any individual who had the opportunity to handle specimens from these mints could have compared them and appreciate their similarity. This is not an outlandish proposal, for it is known that the mints in *Colonia Patricia* and *Iulia Traducta* produced large quantities of coins (especially of the types issued by the mint in *Ebora*), and they must have circulated in more or less the same regions, including the Alentejo. As such, the similarity in their coins could have become a significant identity marker.

But some differences exist, which would not have gone unnoticed to the users. In the obverses, these differences mostly concern the messages conveyed by the legends. The coins from *Ebora* mention Augustus's pontificate, while those from *Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia* omitted all references to this title. Therefore, although, *a priori*, the mention to Augustus' religious office could be considered an unimportant epigraphic element, we think that it ended up becoming one of the most outstanding features in *Ebora*'s coin series.

5.2. The civic crown

The rulers of *Ebora* adopted for their coins the most common iconography in Roman Hispania, and also chose different types for the two denominations issued. The ases depicted a crown[85], a garland that totally encircled the coin, leaving very little room between the leaves and the line of points that featured on both sides of the piece. The symbolic reproduction of this element constitutes the mobilisation of a fully political language. The simplicity of the symbol, nothing but a wreath of laurel or oak leaves, and its unequivocal meaning, partially related to the honours that the Senate granted Augustus, were in themselves the source of the exceptional potency of this icon[86].

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[84] Chaves Tristán 1979a; 1981.
[85] *RPC* I, 51.
[86] Gozalbes García, 2015b: 68-70.

Figure 3. *As* minted by *Ebora* (*RPC* I, 51$_c$) (MAN 1993/67/10623).

The crown in *Ebora*'s ases presented a small undecorated *clipeus* in the top part, and a garish ribbon knotted at the bottom. The leaves were large and shaped like an ear of corn, with two rounded points, so the top end of one leave overlapped with the bottom end of the next (figures 3 and 4.1). This characteristic representation was somewhat different from those adopted in other Hispanic series, in which the garland took over less of the field and/or the leaves were finer, they were not so tightly woven with one another, had more than two points or, simply, were all identical. This is the case for example with *Emerita Augusta*[87], *Tarraco*[88] and *Caesaraugusta*[89] (figure 4.4), some *semises* from *Carthago-Nova*[90] and *Tarraco*[91] and several ases from *Bilbilis*[92] (figure 4.6) and *Turiaso*[93] (Tarazona, Zaragoza) (figure 4.5); unsurprisingly, in *Iulia Traducta*[94] (figure 4.2) and *Colonia Patricia*[95] (figure 4.3), the wreaths were virtually identical to those of Ebora, another point of similarity between these mints.

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[87] *RPC* I, 9 & 18A.
[88] *RPC* I, 214 & 217.
[89] *RPC* I, 313, 316, 324, 329A & 332.
[90] *RPC* I, 172-173.
[91] *RPC* I, 216.
[92] *RPC* I, 392-393 & 395.
[93] *RPC* I, 405-407, 407A, 408 & 410-411.
[94] *RPC* I, 99-100 & 108.
[95] *RPC* I, 129.

In addition, *Ebora*, *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia* were the only mints in the southern and western regions of the Iberian Peninsula that chose this image for the base units. In fact, these three cities put this icon in all the ases they put in circulation, emphasising its symbolic value, as this was the most commonly used denomination. This is also confirmed by the fact that the ases were the only coins from *Ebora* to be countermarked at a later date. In *Tarraconensis*, *Bilbilis* and *Turiaso* decided to strike this image in their base units, using a very similar iconography that was very different from that used in *Ebora*, *Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*.

The legends struck alongside the representation of the civic crown varied widely. The full name of the city featured inside the garland in *Ebora*'s ases, in some cases with a reference to the city's legal status. These inscriptions occupied three[96] of the four[97] horizontal lines, spanning the whole width of the crown, an uncommon design in Hispania, not even found in the mints of *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*. This makes us think that the typological and epigraphic features found in *Ebora*'s coinage were neither merely decorative nor unrelated elements, but fully deliberate and complementary, clearly distinguishing the city's series from the rest. For instance, in the semises from *Emerita Augusta* legends were arranged in two horizontal lines inside the garland, some times making reference to the reigning emperor[98] and others to the issuing city[99]; in the ases from *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia,* for their part, the legend was similarly arranged in two lines inside the garland[100], again including a reference to the cities' legal status[101]; the quadrans from *Tarraco* carried the abbreviated name of the city in a single horizontal line, again inside the garland[102]; the semises from *Carthago-Nova*, in contrast, presented a circular external legend that made reference to a local magistrate and two horizontal internal lines mentioning King Ptolemy[103]; in some of these series, the crown was complemented with a lotus flower and a crescent[104]. Some of the quadrans from *Caesaragusta* feature three internal horizontal lines that mention two local magistrates[105], while others only featured one line with the city's name and juridical status in very abbreviated form[106]; the ases from *Bilbilis* and *Turiaso* featured both

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[96] *RPC* I, 129.
[97] *RPC* I, 51c.
[98] *RPC* I, 9.
[99] *RPC* I, 18A.
[100] *RPC* I, 99-100, 108 & 129.
[101] *RPC* I, 18A.
[102] *RPC* I, 214, 216 & 217.
[103] *RPC* I, 172-173.
[104] *RPC* I, 172b.
[105] *RPC* I, 313, 316, 324 & 329A.
[106] *RPC* I, 332.

circular external legends and one internal horizontal line, making reference to the name of the city[107], its juridical *status*[108] and at least one local magistrate[109].

    As a result of these small differences, it was hard to find two series that looked the same, so the arrangement of the crown and its legends had a strong symbolic connection with the issuing city. In other words, the icon represented the issuing city clearly and unequivocally. Naturally, that the choice of types could be affected by other factors, such as the apparent relationship of *Ebora*'s mint with those in *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*, cannot be ruled out, but this choice must have significantly affected the city's emblems thereafter, and the icon ultimately become the city's central symbol.

Figure 4. Augustean coins produced by some Hispanic mints.
4.1 *As* minted by *Ebora* (*RPC* I, 51) (MAN 1993/67/10642).
4.2. *As* minted by *Iulia Traducta* (*RPC* I, 108) (MAN 1993/67/7278).
4.3 *As* minted by *Colonia Patricia* (*RPC* I, 129) (MAN 1993/67/10281).

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[107] *RPC* I, 392-393, 395, 405-407, 408 & 410-411.
[108] *RPC* I, 392-393, 395, 405-406, 408 & 410-411.
[109] *RPC* I, 392-393, 395, 408 & 410-411.

4.4 *Quadrans* minted by *Caesaraugusta* (*RPC* I, 312) (MAN 1993/67/8043).
4.5 *As* minted by *Turiaso* (*RPC* I, 417) (MAN 1993/67/13102).
4.6 *As* minted by *Bilbilis* (*RPC* I, 392$_b$) (MAN 1993/67/7842).

At any rate, if we focus again on the general symbolism of the icon, it can be observed that the will of *Ebora*'s rulers, and those in the rest of issuing cities, to use original icons and legends not only affected the denominations issued, the iconography adopted and the style of representation used, but also the meaning of the icon itself. Although it seems clear that the representation of this icon was at all times connected with the provincial dissemination of metropolitan ideological and cultural values, we think that, once assimilated, these same symbols began acquiring genuinely local meanings. In this way, while in the metropolis the civic crown was pretty much exclusively related to the honours conferred by the Senate to the emperor, in some Hispanic cities, including *Ebora*, this icon could have evolved into a more complex and multi-layered reference.

In this sense, the link between the icon and the epigraphic direct, and, in the case of *Ebora*, central allusions to civil life, become hugely important. This is not only because this sort of inscriptions endorsed the series legally, but because, through the propaganda message that they conveyed, the city's magistrates could claim a direct relationship with Rome, where the crown stood as a commemorative and political symbol. In this way, this complex monetary iconology allowed local rulers to connect with the all-powerful figure of the *princeps*, to whom the crown was bestowed, and whose image featured in the obverse of these ases. As such, without relegating Augustus from his superior plane – he was the only individual that could be represented in Roman coinage – the magistrates from *Ebora* could identify themselves with an easily recognisable symbol of authority. This power emanated from the centre which they represented, in this case the power of the Roman senate, whose prerogative it was to grant its symbolic representation.

5.3. The *sacerdotalia instrumenta*

The reverse of the *dupondi* coined in *Ebora* featured various sacerdotal and liturgical implements (*sacerdotalia instrumenta*) [110]. All the items represented in these coins had to do with ceremonies involving water or some other liquid, again a form of ritual that directly appealed to the Roman metropolitan imagery. In fact, they also feature in several series issued in Rome and other Hispanic cities, which allowed *Ebora* to present itself as a city that was fully integrated in the religious practices of the Empire. Therefore, Francisca Chaves's proposal[111] (inspired by Grant[112]) that this

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[110] *RPC* I, 50.
[111] Chaves Tristán 1979a: 69, 71.
[112] Grant, 1946.

monetary type commemorated the adoption by Augustus of the title of *Pontifex Maximus* is very convincing.

The *sacerdotalia instrumenta* represented in Ebora's coins include a sacred circular container (*patera*) depicted on the top centre area of the field; a hyssop (*aspergillum*), represented below, to the left (this instrument was use to sprinkle liquids and was constituted by two parts, the container that was dipped in the water and the handle); a jar (*praefericulum*), immediately to the right of the hyssop, which scaled down from its normal size to fit that of the other implements (it is likely that the engravers of the dies were trying for the coin to look as symmetrical as possible, so they were forced to reduce the relative size of these jar); a large ladle (*simpulum*), on the right centre area, the bowl being so large that it was almost as big as the handle; and a fairly large knife (*secespita*) at the bottom, contributing to frame the central area and the *aspergillum*, *praefericulum* and *simpulum* represented within it. The legend, which surrounded the three central motifs and the *secespita*, referred to the name of the city in abbreviated form. The inscription did not embrace the upper part of the field; this was reserved for the *patera*, which therefore framed the whole composition.

Figure 5. Dupondius minted by *Ebora* (*RPC* I, 50) (MAN 1993/67/10619).

Like *Ebora*, many other Hispanic cities used these images during the Augustan period (with or without the aim of commemorating the emperor's appointment as *pontifex*). In *Emerita Augusta*, for instance, the magistrates decided to engrave a *patera,* a *praefericulum* and a curved staff (*lituus*) in a single series of quadrans[113]; the *municipium* of *Gades* also chose these types, representing a knife, a *simpulum*

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[113] *RPC* I, 19.

and an axe in several series of sesterces[114] (figure 6.1) and *dupondi*[115] (in some of these the knife was missing[116]); similarly, some of the fractions coined by *Iulia Traducta* (figure 6.2) and *Colonia Patricia* (figure 6.3) also borne these items, specifically a *patera*, an *aspergillum*, a *praefericulum* and a *lituus* in several series of quadrans[117], and a *desimpulum* and a mitre (*apex*) in several more of semises[118]; the colony of *Acci* (Guadix, Granada) also represented these two icons in several series of semises[119]; *Carthago-Nova*, for its part, used the *simpulum* in quadrans[120] and, in the company of an axe, an *aspergillum* and an *apex*, also in a number of series of semises[121] and one of ases[122] (figure 6.4); *Ilici* represented a *simpulum* in several series of semises[123].

Although *Ebora* was not the only city to choose *sacerdotalia instrumenta* for its coins, the typology chosen by *Ebora* was totally original, and no links can be drawn with any other monetary iconology. First, for the denominations in which these images were displayed. *Ebora* and *Gades*[124] were the only cities to use these symbols in high-denomination coinage (and, in fact, *Ebora* adopted these representations in all its *dupondi*). Second, for the combination of motifs selected, for which there is no parallel. Finally, for the orderly and well-framed arrangement of the items. This iconology was markedly different from that used in the cities to which *Ebora* was, in monetary terms, most closely related (*Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*), so it can be argued with absolute certainty that *Ebora*'s typological programme was entirely original.

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[114] *RPC* I, 85.
[115] *RPC* I, 86.
[116] *RPC* I, 87 & 88-91.
[117] *RPC* I, 109 & 130.
[118] *RPC* I, 110 & 131.
[119] *RPC* I, 136.
[120] *RPC* I, 165.
[121] *RPC* I, 166 & 168-169.
[122] *RPC* I, 167.
[123] *RPC* I, 187-188.
[124] *RPC* I, 85-91.

Figure 6. Augustean coins produced by some Hispanic mints.
6.1 *Sestertius* minted by *Gades* (*RPC* I, 85) (MAN 1993/67/756).
6.2. *Semis* minted by *Iulia Traducta* (*RPC* I, 109$_a$) (MAN 1993/67/12139).
6.3. *Semis* minted by *Colonia Patricia* (*RPC* I, 130$_a$) (MAN 1993/67/10473).
6.4. *As* minted by *Caesaraugusta* (*RPC* I, 176$_a$) (MAN 1993/67/9158).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Ebora was one of the four Lusitanian mints to issue coinage around the turn of the Christian era, and the second most prolific in the province. The two series struck show that the city had fully adapted to the empire's monetary practices. Several factors support these conclusions. First, the fact that some of the pieces issued continued circulating, endorsed by a countermark, for some time after they were struck; second, the fact that the metrology of these coins was similar to that shown by the coins issued by other provincial mints; third, the fact that the legends in these coins were written in Latin; fourth, the mention to various aspects of the political, juridical and cultural life of the empire in the legends: e.g. the emperor's title, the permission to issue coinage, and/or the name of the city's name; fifth, the fact that *Ebora*'s magistrates selected for obverse and reverse types that were widespread in the provinces, such as the imperial portrait, the civic crown and the *sacerdotalia instrumenta.* In fact, these coins were very similar to those struck by other cities such as *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*.

There is no doubt that this full integration in the provincial monetary system became a key element in the city's identity. Both the magistrates responsible for these issues and the users must have been aware that *Ebora*'s series were one with the economic and propaganda policies of the period. Despite this, the detailed analysis of these coins also reveals that they, at the same time, represented the city's idiosyncratic features. First, because *Ebora* was among the few Hispanic cities that coined the same number of series of *dupondi* and ases and, second, because considerable similarities existed with the coinage issued in *Iulia Traducta* and *Colonia Patricia*, something that surely did not go unnoticed at the time. These similarities include the mention to Augustus' appointment as *pontifex*, the adoption of a greatly original legend that occupied three of the four horizontal lines in the reverse, and the depiction of four neatly arranged *sacerdotalia instrumenta* in the *dupondi*. All these elements, those that connected *Ebora*'s coins with those from *Traducta* and *Patricia* and from the empire more broadly, and, especially, those that distinguished them, may have been key aspects of *Ebora*'s ideology.

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II.

The fragmentation of unity and the loss of identity cohesion: between texts and material elements

DEFINING POST-ROMAN IDENTITIES IN HISPANIA: CONTROVERSY BETWEEN TEXTS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

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Abstract:

In recent years, the study of the identities of the societies of the past has increased considerably in an effort to deepen the knowledge of customs and cultural and socio-political characteristics, as well as the perception that peoples have of themselves. The possibility of using the archaeological record for this analysis is explored in this article, which analyzes the process of the arrival of 'barbarians' between the 5th and 8th centuries AD and their interactions with the local populations in both urban and rural settings. The end of 6th century marked the dominance of one of the new peoples settled in the peninsula, namely the Visigoths, who had previously shared power in a fragmented peninsula with Suevi, Vandals, Alans, and Byzantines.

The theoretical questions concern: the link between these newcomers and the Roman substrate; the evidence or lack thereof existing identities; and the degree to which different patterns of settlement and social organization are evident in the landscape. How we understand these changes and the relationship, if any, between texts and the archaeological record of this period are key to this investigation.

Keywords: Iberian Peninsula, Visigoths, Suevi, Byzantines, Identities

1. INTRODUCTION: WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS

In the general context of the Migration Period[1] that, between the 4th and 5th centuries, affected a good part of the Western Roman Empire, the arrival and brief establishment of Vandals[2] and Alans in the Iberian Peninsula and, for a much longer period, the Visigoths and Suevi, represented an important readjustment in all areas of Hispanic life. The natives - the so-called Hispano-Romans-, attended the progressive settlement of these people, with whom from this moment on, would sometimes coexist and/or come into conflict with others. This ended in the beginning of the 6th century when the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo began to impose stable conditions, lasting at least until the end of the 7th century when the kingdom was under crisis. Soon after, Muslims quickly formed a *coup de grâce* to take over the Kingdom.

The arrival of these people meant the entry of new actors within the Peninsula[3]. This, logically, had an impact on the Hispano-Roman substrate, which shaped and characterized the area during the previous centuries. During the Low Roman Empire, the image that Latin writers offer of these barbarians was based on the consolidated archetype between the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, which in turn was inherited from the Greek world[4]. The savage way of life and weaponry were probably the elements that most obviously defined the main barbarian groups of people. In fact, on many occasions, there seems to be similarities when it comes to citing different groups and establishing common characteristics: the Goths, for example, are cited in some sources as Scythians or Getas; and all of whom were understood with shared clichés such as having worn skins and their ability to fight on horseback[5].

The savagery of these Goths is also transferred to Hispanic writers who emphasize their ferocity, with scenes such as those evoked by Hidacio in the 5th century in which he even speaks of cannibalism[6]. Other authors from this period, such as the Galician Paulo Orosio, insist on the Goths' unreliability and their tendency to breach treaties and laws[7]. However, Orosio highlights their Christian religion and sees them as a positive force that helps to end the Rome of luxury and paganism. The bishop of Hispano-Roman origin and theorist of the fundamental ideological framework of the Visigothic kingdom, Isidore of Seville, presented them, even in the 7th century, as primitive people in their customs but virtuous and innocent, linking their roots to a Biblical past (descendants of Magog, son of Japheth) and,

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[1] A valuable introduction, from an historical and archaeological point of view, to the subject is Christie 2011, 51-111.
[2] Arce 2002
[3] Diarte-Blasco 2020.
[4] Martínez Maza 2015.
[5] Amm. 31, 12, 17.
[6] Hyd. Chron. 48.
[7] Oros. Hist. 1, 4, 2; 7, 43, 5-6.

therefore, with a distant past linked to Christianity, which the Romans did not possess[8].

The Suevi, named and cited in numerous Latin sources since the 1st century BC, are described - already in Tacitus[9] - as a collective that brings together a number of differentiated groups that, in the 5th century, would form the first barbarian kingdom on imperial soil in Hispania. The lasting descriptions we have of them indicate that they had long hair, which is consistent with most descriptions of the Germanic peoples. Similarly, features such as blond hair and blue eyes appear common to most Germanic peoples[10].

The signs of identity just described constitute the elements that would have made it possible to identify some of the barbarians in the late-antique world. However, its usefulness has been highly questioned by historians who often consider these extensive descriptions that, since Herodotus, accumulates prejudices - even using the same attributes for different people in different periods - and consequently offers an unclear image of the reality of these people. As a result, written sources have been subjected, in recent years, to intense scrutiny and criticism, which has allowed us to analyze, from new perspectives, the otherness of the so-called barbarians. The complicated translation of this alterity to the material trace is still being studied, which, without losing sight of the fact that there is no simple correlation between biological, socio-political and cultural identities[11], we try to document in Archeology. This article explores the evidence or lack thereof concerning existing identities and their relation with material culture and with different patterns of settlement and social organization evident in the landscape of postclassic Hispania.

2. THE HISPANIC SCENARIO AND THE SO-CALLED MIGRATION PERIOD: SHAPING A NEW MODEL OF SOCIETY

The tensions, violence and movements of people are something we sometimes forget in the big-picture discussion concerning this period. The arrival and final settlement of these groups of people was related to the Roman incapacity to control their frontiers and the ability to successfully defend their territories. For this reason, the concept of frontier has always been present in the discussion and was maintained during these centuries, when the Hispanic territory was divided between the existence of two kingdoms, Suevic and Visigoth, and the Imperial presence in the southeast.

Of these three groups of people, the Visigoths, were the most stable, managing to slowly extend their kingdom within the Hispanic territory. From the early 5th century,

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[8] Valverde 2015, 70.
[9] Tac., *Ger*., 38, 1-4.
[10] In the 4th century, for example, the poet Ausonius (Bis.4) dedicated a poem to his Suevi slave Bissula, describing her "German face, blue eyes, and blond hair". See also, Pohl 1998, 51-61.
[11] Zakrewski 2011

with different degrees of intensity, these Goths progressively occupied different areas. It is difficult to determine exactly when – we still do not know if it was a gradual process or an abrupt one – and how many people entered the Peninsula, but we know that in the first decades of the 5th century Visigoths had fought against the Vandals and Suevi, while they founded the Kingdom of Tolosa. After the defeat in Vouillé of the Goths by Franks in 507, it seems that they began a large-scale migration into the Iberian territory. Potentially, however, their presence may have begun before. Whether they were established previously in the Peninsula continues as an important research theme (Fig. 1)[12].

Since the early 20th century, some very important archaeological sites of the Visigothic cultural horizon have been explored. From these first findspots, mainly funerary contexts in Spain's Central Plateau area, the so-called (by A. Jepure) 'Visigoth theory' developed in the 1930s, which viewed the burial grounds – chiefly on the basis of the funerary goods – as a genuine material realization of the Visigothic presence and, also, a signifier of the core area of their settlement[13]. The distribution of cemeteries, as Reinhard[14] pointed out, was concentrated between Toledo, Calatayud and Palencia, forming a sort of triangle in the interior of the Peninsula, in which a low density of urban centres of this area supported the claimed rural character of these populations. Nonetheless, we can argue that the Visigothic elites were based in the towns, even though relevant burials are not yet known.

The funerary sites (which include Carpio de Tajo in Toledo, Castiltierra in Segovia and Herra del Pisuerga in Palencia, only to name the most known-ones) and the assemblages of artefacts from many (but not all) of the tombs, mainly large bow-brooches and polychrome belt-buckles appeared in female burials, were the basis of the paradigm of the Visigothic occupation and also of a chrono-style division between Gothic, Visigothic and Byzantine periods (Fig. 2)[15]. Nowadays, this division is no longer accepted by the majority of scholars and instead we have three main different groups within these burial grounds: Post-imperial/Roman, Visigothic and Hispano-Visigothic[16]. The first group, dated to the 5th century, is defined by ceramics – in many cases *terra sigillata hispánica tardía* – glass jars and personal adornments (such as rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings or needles for hair) that appear in male, female and children burials, whereas for the end of this century and probably until the first half of the 7th century, there appear Visigothic burials with distinctive brooches and belt-buckles of characteristic *Danubian style* – these deposited mainly in female graves[17]. The last group, the Hispano-Visigothic one, has chiefly been categorised by the absence of such personal items and materials, although it is important to recognise

[12] See Jepure 2009, 181.
[13] Jepure 2009, 181-182; Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera 2011, 159-161
[14] 1945, 124-139
[15] Martinez Santa-Olalla 1933, 171.
[16] See Vigil-Escalera 2013, 259-262.
[17] Ripoll López 1991; 2007.

that these three groups are not always clear-cut in the archaeological record and their definitions and boundaries and thus in debate, and even in constant revision.

In the last decade in particular, a process of deconstruction of the Visigothic paradigm has occurred[18], avoiding the approaches of cultural historicism. This deconstruction is based on the evident problems that this settlement distribution had. For example, there is a recognised absence of these material types from the capitals of the *Regnum Gothorum*, including Toledo[19], in which funerary rites appear, in many cases, without any grave goods. The same is true for *Reccopolis*, the city founded by Leovigild in 578 and, currently, the sole archaeologically-attested Visigothic city foundation in the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 3)[20]. Meanwhile, it is very striking that 'Visigothic' cemeteries from the Kingdom of Tolosa are still archaeologically undetectable[21]. Why? Perhaps they buried their dead without grave goods, in line with the broader late Roman tradition (though of course there were regional variations to this). The 'Visigothic' burial customs are in reality only evident in the Spanish Central Plateau and in the southern French Mediterranean coastal strip of *Septimania*[22]. So, are we talking about the same groups of people? Did this people disappear and then reappear in the archaeological funerary record? Why though are they only prominent materially in the rural contexts of the Central Plateau?

Apart from the fact that the majority of cemeteries of the Iberian Peninsula between the 5th and the 7th century lack objects of personal adornment, weapons or any kind of goods[23], what seems clear, from current research, is that the concentration of *Visigothic horizon* cemeteries is more or less the same as described by W. Reinhart one century ago. Accordingly, it is difficult to accept that these rural cemeteries in the provinces of Segovia, Soria, Valladolid, Madrid, Guadalajara and Toledo respond only to a coincidence. These necropoleis always have associated habitats[24], as can be documented in many cases thanks to rescue archaeology work[25]. We may also include in this rural occupation zone – but so far without the supporting funerary evidence – the nearby regions of Salamanca and Ávila[26], in which we find, belonging to between the 6th to 8th centuries, an intriguing series of 'inscribed slates' – labelled as *Pizarras Visigodas*[27]. These are thin slate stones with inscribed texts in Latin, often lists, which,

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[18] See especially discussion in Quirós Castillo and Castellanos 2015.

[19] Until its final location in Toledo by the end of the 6th century (589, Third Council of Toledo), the *sedes regiae* had fluctuated in the Peninsula, with royal residences sited according to the events and military control aspects - see Velázquez Soriano and Ripoll López 2000.

[20] Olmo-Enciso 2006; Olmo-Enciso, Castro-Priego and Diarte-Blasco 2018.

[21] Heather 1996, 203.

[22] James 1980, 236-237; Jepure 2009, 189.

[23] Quirós Castillo and Castellanos 2015.

[24] Ripoll López 1989.

[25] Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera 2011, 166-167.

[26] Ariño 2006; Ariño *et al.* 2002; Ariño *et al.* 2012.

[27] Velázquez Soriano 1989; id. 2000; See also, for an English summary of these, Halsall 1999, 72.

while there are still problems of interpretation, appear to represent a form of private documentation for these late antique groups. Certainly, they form clear evidence for the existence of a literate and functional Visigothic administration, aware of ownerships, economic needs and agricultural production[28]. Recently, it has been suggested that these slates were probably related with a monastic domain located around Salvatierra de Tormes (Salamanca), or less likely with a *fundus.* Whether aristocratic or religious, the most of these slates came from near this centre[29].

This area of the Central Plateau embraced a mainly rural population. But some important urban areas existed in the Iberian Peninsula in centres like *Toletum, Barcino, Emerita*, *Tarraco* and *Valentia*, to name only the best-known ones, where an important dynamism was evident mainly thanks to the Church and its ecclesiastical architecture.

Active also in this period was *Bracara,* the capital city of the Suevic Kingdom[30]. However, archaeologically, apart from coin evidence[31], the Suevi are virtually invisible in the peninsular west, because the possible archaeological materials related to this Kingdom appear frequently devoid of context. Furthermore, in the current state of knowledge, much of this material could be simply seem in a general 'Germanic horizon'[32] and it seems impossible to recognise a specific Suevic pottery.

But more now can be said about the Suevic Kingdom and its social organization. Although the economic basis was sustained by farming, an intensive commercial trade can be detected via the ceramics – from North Africa, south of the Iberian Peninsula, and the Eastern Mediterranean – especially with Byzantium but also with other Atlantic areas[33]. Important data derive from the port of Vigo, which show exchanges with the Mediterranean continuing until the mid-7th century, with a peak in the since mid-6th century[34]. A long journey to the Galician ports could be only explained if the traders were very interested in the Spanish north-western goods, probably tin and gold, metals that were extracted to a lesser extent than in the High Empire, but no less important still. There were changes in the production system, now on a more limited scale and based on alluvial and open-pit mines –which makes it difficult to have substantial archaeological evidence. These data are in fact corroborated by paleo-environmental studies, which have noted a sharp increase in the lead pollution in the atmosphere in this area for the 6th and 7th centuries[35].

It is quite probable that control of these exploitations lay with the local elite, as a donation or concession from the Suevic kings in exchange for a fee[36]. In fact, it has

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[28] Martín Viso 2006; Díaz Martínez and Martín Viso 2011.
[29] Ariño 2011, 267-270.
[30] Díaz Martínez 2000; 2011, 126-138.
[31] Barral i Altet 1976.
[32] López Quiroga 2004, 217-219.
[33] Fernández Fernández 2011; Sánchez Pardo 2014, 986-987.
[34] Fernández Fernández 2010; 2014.
[35] Lead was fundamental in extraction processes: Martínez Cortizas *et al.* 2005.
[36] Sánchez Pardo 2014, 1003-1004.

been suggested that there was a relationship between the controversial 'laudas de estola'– considered as typical high-status tombstones from this area[37] – with the most important zones of this new system of production[38].

Far from the Suevic Kingdom, yet, with strong trade relations with them, was the Byzantine province of *Spania* situated in the south-east coast of the Peninsula. This was probably one of the most romanized areas of the Peninsula and, as a consequence, featured an important number of towns and cities. It is difficult to determine the precise limits of this area, and yet scholars such as S. Ramallo and J. Vizcaíno accept that the main spaces under Byzantine control included the Balearic Islands and the modern regions of Alicante, Murcia until the *fretum gaditanum,* including the town of *Septem* (Ceuta) in North Africa. The first imperial military contingents had arrived in the Peninsula probably in 552, but first taking the Balearic Islands and *Septem*[39]. This arrival was part of the *Renovatio Imperii* program by the Eastern emperor Justinian, in order to recover the territories that had formerly made up the Roman Empire and were now under the power of the barbarians. For circa seventy years[40], the Byzantines played a key role in this area, with *Carthago Spartia* as the Byzantine provincial capital and important cities as *Malaca,* managing military and commercial matters. It is very interesting to observe the different developments between this reclaimed imperial area and others, namely Africa and Italy, probably as a consequence of the conditioning factors that the imperial initiative found in this unstable space[41].

The archaeology of the Byzantines in the Iberian Peninsula has always been mediated for its relationship with Visigothic Kingdom and its stylistic influence on this *Regnum*[42], practically as a secondary aspect of Visigothic archaeology[43]. Fortunately, thanks to new data obtained from excavations, especially in Cartagena and its territory[44], but also in some southern areas[45], more clarity is emerging about this imperial stronghold in Hispania.

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[37] Recently, some scholars have proposed that these 'laudas de estola' are later in date, see Sánchez Sánchez 2000.

[38] Sánchez Pardo 2014, 1003.

[39] Bernal Casasola 2013.

[40] The core historical processes and debates generated are outlined in Goubert 1945 and 1946 and in Vallejo Girvés 1993.

[41] Vizcaíno Sánchez 2008.

[42] See the debate in the volume of Caballero Zoreda and Mateos Cruz 2000.

[43] Izquierdo Benito 1994; Olmo-Enciso 1992.

[44] Ramallo Asensio and Vizcaíno Sánchez 2002; Vizcaíno Sánchez 2007.

[45] Bernal Casasola 2003.

3. CITIES AND TERRITORIES: LOOKING INTO THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The area of the Suevic kingdom was characterised – as true also in the Roman period – by a low number of *civitates* compared to other parts of the Iberian Peninsula (but not with the adjacent Visigothic area of the Duero basin, where there was a similar low density of towns). Some Roman foundations like *Lucus, Bracara*, capital seat of this kingdom, and *Asturica* remained very active during these centuries; similarly, *vici* such as Iria, Vigo, Orense and Tuy endured and evolved[46]. Some *villae* also had an extended life, running even into the 6th century[47]. Otherwise, in rural contexts archaeologists are tracing small-scale farming operations as well as the creation, from the 4th to 6th century, of an interlinked settlement structure[48]. Scattered secondary rural centres[49] appeared in the form of farms and hamlets. Furthermore, the phenomenon of the use of hilltop settlements is prominent across Suevic territory (examples include Viladonga, San Cibrián das Las and Santa Tecla), although most were in valleys and the more fertile agrarian areas[50]. Furthermore, some hilltop sites were related to mining activity, as can be claimed for Penadominga (Quiroga, Lugo) and *Castellum Litoria* (Nogueira de Ramuín, Orense), perhaps as control and security checkpoints[51].

The situation is not much different for the Visigothic kingdom, especially in its northern area (in the southern sub-plateau, there were more urban centres than in the northern sub-plateau) (Fig. 4). In the Duero basin, after the mid-5th century AD, we see a collapse of the Roman rural system and in some cases the subsequent re-occupation, with a different spatial organization and probably with different owners, of *villae,* as well as the emergence of new farms and village communities from *c.* AD 500. These new settlements signify a fairly busy exploitation of the landscape, broadly centred on animal husbandry[52]. Also noteworthy are the characteristics of some domestic structures of these new habitats, with buildings on stone plinths and also featuring sunken featured buildings (Grubenhäuser type), documented so far in various cases in the region of Madrid, the Basque Country[53], Cataluña[54] and a few cases only in the Duero valley[55]. It is important to identify a further development of this rural settlement in the area closest to the capital of Toledo, while in the villages

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[46] Perez Losada 2002.
[47] López Quiroga 2006.
[48] Sánchez Pardo 2008.
[49] Pérez Losada 2002, 51; López Quiroga 2006; Sánchez Pardo and Rodríguez Resino 2009.
[50] Sanchez Pardo 2013, 153-154.
[51] Sánchez Pardo 2014, 1001-1002.
[52] Tejerizo García 2013a.
[53] Quirós Castillo 2010, 11-22; Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera 2011, 173-174.
[54] Roig Buxó 2009; 2011; Ariño 2013, 102.
[55] See overview in Tejerizo García 2013b.

of the Northern Plateau, in a peripheral position, a less complex organization of the domestic structures and also of the economic and social structures prevails[56].

As in the Suevic Kingdom, apart from these new types of rural settlement, hilltops became very important in the new pattern of occupation and fortification of the landscape, mainly sited on the margins of urban territories or else in spaces lacking towns, probably articulating and managing these 'empty' areas[57]. Some of the best-known examples are in the Burgos region, such as Amaya, Tedeja, La Yecla de Santo Domingo de Silos, in the Soria region, including Castellares de Suellacabras, Tañine, Castejones de Caltañazo, in Salamanca region as Yecla de Yeltes and Las Merchanas, in Segovia region as the Cerro del Castillo, and in other areas, such as in the region of Palencia, with the famous example of Monte Cildá and Cabeza de Navasangil in Ávila[58].

Currently, due to virtually undifferentiated constructive structures and pottery, it is very difficult to archeologically determine what hilltop settlements/forts were in the orbit of influence of each power. The situation is usually easier with towns. Thanks to the historical sources, we can tell if they were episcopal sees with churches that are listed in the *Parrochiale Suevum* – the so-called 'Suevic Parish List' – compiled in the second half of the 6th century[59], or were otherwise named in one or more of the Visigothic Church councils held, for example, in Toledo. Indeed, the fact that the Suevic territory was divided in many small bishoprics compare to the larger Visigothic dioceses is showing a different administrative organization, which could help to see the 'theoretical' division between these two kingdoms.

The tension between both areas endured until the end of the Suevic Kingdom and perhaps it is for this reason that the Suevi created or forged a special connection with the Byzantines (these also an enemy of the Visigoths). This connection is strikingly evident archaeologically in the north-west of the peninsula in the noted ceramic assemblages which point to commercial traffic from North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean[60]. Seeking in this commercial traffic a possible reflection of the existence of a *limes* between Visigoths and Byzantines is an ongoing question. Efforts have been made to read the presence of certain types of ceramic in a specific territory as an element of differentiation; if accurate, then this may help archaeologists in areas where the evolution of landscapes, settlements and towns that have otherwise been similar to what we see in other parts of the peninsula.

The first problem is to determine the territory held by the Byzantines. Initially, scholars anticipated a sizeable area from Alicante until the Portuguese Algarve and extending also into the Spanish inland, including *Hispalis* and *Corduba*[61]. Nowadays

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[56] Tejerizo García 2013b, 327-328.
[57] Quirós Castillo 2011.
[58] A general overview of these hilltop sites is in Diarte-Blasco 2018, 70-75.
[59] Díaz Martínez 1998.
[60] Naveiro Lopez 1991, 67: Ariño and Diaz Martínez 2014, 182-183; Sanchez Pardo 2014.
[61] As first proposed by Goubert 1945; 1946.

scholars agree that its extension was not as wide[62], being confined to a narrow coastal strip (Fig.5). This area was protected by a particular orography, with important mountain ranges (the Baetic System), which probably was core in the defence and control of the Byzantine urban centres[63]. So far, archaeology has failed to document any programmes of fortification similar to what is known for Byzantine North Africa[64], perhaps with the exception of *Pollentia*[65].

These *urbes* and *civitates* were the core of the settlement pattern (although we need more archaeology to hope to trace any 'Byzantine imprint' in these), in which there are no substantial differences to other peninsular areas. We see also the emergence of hilltop sites and the disintegration of the Roman rural system, in which it is possible to find different answers to the same process. Noticeable are instances of new village settlements that occupied former *villae* in terms of site location, as seen in the *Carthago Spartia* territory[66]; but in other parts of the same territory villages lay in the vicinity of former villas, but did not overlie their built space[67]. Recently new information has come from the area around *Gades*, modern Cádiz, above all for its commercial relations[68]. As a consequence, we can trace a great quantity of imports and see the vitality of *Portus Gaditanus* (Puerto de Santa María) and *Traducta* (Algeciras), each becoming increasingly important during the 6th and 7th centuries. Nevertheless, it seems that the ancient capital of this region, *Gades,* lost out to *Asidona* (the sole episcopal see in this area), in the interior, playing a notable role both with Byzantines and Visigoths – it was recovered twice by Leovigild in 571 and Sisebut in the 610s[69]. In fact, new activity in the *territorium* can be observed, marked by a growing number of secondary agglomerations in rural contexts and associated necropoleis[70].

The question of hilltop settlement is complex in this area because some of the best known cases (*Begastri*, Tolmo de Minateda and Cerro de la Almagra) lay in Byzantine hands until their annexation by the Visigoths, as occurred with other *civitates* like *Baria, Urci* and *Basti*[71]. In particular, *Begastri* and *Eio* (or *Elo*) – present day Tolmo de Minateda, once conquered by the Visigoths, were promoted to episcopal sees in the 7th century, probably as counterpoints to the Byzantine episcopal sees of *Carthago Spartia* and *Ilici*[72]. Furthermore, in the case of Tolmo de

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[62] Ripoll López 1996; Ramallo and Vizcaíno 2002.
[63] Ripoll López 1996, 258.
[64] Ramallo and Vizcaíno 2002, 321.
[65] Equip d'excavacions de Pollentia 1994, 220; Orfila 2000, 155.
[66] Murcia Muñoz 2000.
[67] Murcia Muñoz 2010, 146-151; Ramallo *et al.* 2012.
[68] Bernal Casasola 2008.
[69] Vallejo Girvés 1993, 152-154, 294-296.
[70] Bernal Casasola and Lorenzo Martínez 2000; Bernal Casasola 2008, 367-368.
[71] Abad *et al.* 2008, 324.
[72] The creation of new episcopal sees by territorial segregation is unusual, being more frequent the annexation of the conquered territories to existing neighboring bishopric. In these two cases, this situation was probably

Minateda, a Byzantine-style of defensive walls is claimed, based on the bastion and the flanking towers[73], although this is disputed[74]. The significance that this *civitas* assumed around the 7th century coincided with renewed urban activity and its elevation to episcopal see, generated the creation of *ex novo* settlements with their own necropoleis (e.g., Loma Lencina and Loma Eugenia), and other kind of small villages, usually occupying hilltops in fertile areas[75]. A similar situation is assumed for *Begastri* and its *territorium.*

We know of other examples of possible hilltop sites and other kinds of defensive structures, but these are often ascribed to later Islamic period fortifications. Nevertheless, the historical sources, notably Paul the Deacon (*Historia Longobardorum*, III, 21) and Isidore of Seville (*Historia Gothorum*, 49), do mention this frontier and also a network of Byzantine *castra*– something yet to have a clear archaeological confirmation. Apart from the three cases cited before, we can include the Salto de la Novia (Ulea, Murcia), Cerro de San Miguel (Orihuela, Murcia) and the Cerro de Montroy (Villaricos, Almería) among these fortifications[76] that, together with the mountains and other geographical features, were surely vital in the conflict between Goths and Byzantines. On the other hand, the Visigothic defence system also had a network of fortifications, such as those documented in the Valencia region, like Valencia la Vella[77], la Senda de l'Horteta[78] and Punt de Cid[79], facing the Byzantine province[80].

4. DISCUSSION: A QUESTION OF ETHNICITY AND/OR IDENTITY?

The archaeological data related to the different groups of 'barbarians' – not just Visigoths and Suevi, but also Alans and Vandals[81] –, are characterised by a heterogeneous variety of funerary goods (brooches, belts, necklaces, etc.), which always shared the *Germanic style*[82]. For many years, the criteria employed for the identification of these people was based exclusively on the funerary material culture, which has proved to be as an insufficient way of analysis; however, in any case, no

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related to the huge area of the *Carthago Spartia* and *Ilici* bishoprics (Vallejo Girves 1993, 241; Ramallo and Vizcaíno 2002, 321; Gutiérrez Lloret et al. 2005, 363).

[73] Gutiérrez Lloret 1999, 109-110.

[74] Abad *et al.* 2008, 328-329.

[75] Gutiérrez Lloret and Grau Mira 2012, 190-193.

[76] Gutiérrez Lloret 1999, 113-114; Olmo-Enciso 1992, 192; Ramallo and Vizcaíno 2002, 326.

[77] Roselló 2000.

[78] Alapont and Tormo 2005.

[79] Arasa 2000.

[80] Jiménez *et al.* 2014, 274-275.

[81] There are perhaps some traces of Vandals in the Peninsula's north west (see König 1981), such as might be indicated by some belt buckles, but nothing of the Alans yet exists (not surprising if we think that they were only in the Peninsula for ten years). In fact, when Isidore of Seville wrote his *Historia of Gothorum and Suevorum,* he made no mention of the Alans (Arce 2005, 124-127).

[82] cf López Quiroga 2004.

denying the fact that these materials still being the most recognisable way to trace their presence in the territory or, at least, the easier one. As seen, in terms of settlement patterns, based on the current archaeological evidence, there are no major differences between each group and some of the particularities seem to be related to geographic/topographic aspects or to natural resource access.

A well-recognised and notable problem relates to the fact that most of our historical record about this process of transitions in power comes from late Roman historians who provided an external view of the process, often with a simplified view of the socio-political structure of these *gentes*[83]. As a result, some of the names of these peoples/groups appear and disappear in the historical sources without a clear reason. Indeed, it is not just archaeologists who have problems with the recognition of these heterogenic groups of people, since historians too have difficulties identifying these *gentes barbarae*. In this context, concepts such as ethnogenesis and ethnic identity were developed[84], which have created interesting debates – arguably not well taken up in Spanish scholarship until recently[85] – about the origins, characteristics and social organisation of these barbarian groups.

Although it seems clear that, in general, ethnicity is far more a modern construct than an early medieval category, it is also true that collective identities are a reflection of social reality. For Sebastian Brather[86], ethnicity is a subjective concept, which archaeology struggles to break into, because unfortunately the original significance of the culture symbols and their relations with identity are unknown to us. I do not agree at all with this idea because Archaeology demonstrates – and not only for the Early Middle Ages – that it is possible to move closer to cultural traits thanks to the archaeological record. As Florin Curta[87] has argued, 'material culture is not a passive reflection of ethnicity, but an active element in its negotiation' and, in consequence, 'the selection of ethnic symbols is a political strategy in the same way that choosing a certain dress style is for the construction of social status'. In this sense, it is important to point out for my study that the approach to the archaeological data never considers a relationship between ethnic identity and biological group affiliation. In other words, a few cultural elements found in a burial ground can help to identify a cultural horizon, but never by themselves can they indicate a genetic issue. Ethnicity is considered exclusively as a social product that can be analysed in cultural terms.

Nevertheless, what seems clear in the current state of knowledge is that identifying these 'barbarian' groups, their settlements and cultural boundaries using just the archaeological data remains problematic. It is also true that it is complicated to ensure that we can define these three areas such as 'ethnic' territories, with their

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[83] Pohl 2002, 221-240.
[84] Wenskus 1961; Pohl 1998 and 2000.
[85] An interesting overview comes in Quirós Castillo and Castellanos 2015, 21-40.
[86] 2004, 27-28.
[87] 2007, 170.

clear own particularities and specificities. We should not ignore that together with the Hispano-Roman inhabitants, these populations lived for many decades and were a key part of the irremediable transformation that occurred in the Early Medieval Ages in the Iberia Peninsula, which transformed the old ancient landscape and configured the Medieval one. I tend to think that the differences between the original substrate and the new incomers where, at least, evident in the first moments of the settlement and ended up generating a new order, mixture of the ancient one and the one brought by these *gentes*.

5. CONCLUSION: LOOKING FOR IDENTITIES IN POST-ROMAN HISPANIA

In the case of the late antique Iberian Peninsula and the (uneven) process of settlement by diverse barbarian groups/powers, we need first to recognise that, in the current stage of knowledge, it is practically impossible to trace the relatively fleeting presence of both Vandals and Alans. The situation improves when we focus on the much less transient groups of the Visigoths and Suevi. Yet, as seen above, in general terms, there were no major differences between the settlement patterns of these groups and so it is difficult to try to pinpoint culture markers based just on settlement typology. The phenomenon of hilltop occupation is widespread but need not be viewed simply as a military creation; instead, it was perhaps a way of territorial administration, tax collection and, probably, also could have marked the creation of power centres and fortified residences for new local elites[88]. Nevertheless, the main problem related to these hilltop sites is not their profusion, but rather the very minimal material cultural presence that might help us to assign these to a specific cultural horizon.

The relationship of these to other rural sites, namely villages and hamlets, is yet to be fully assessed. More research and excavation are required to understand these different types of habitats. Noticeably, however, sunken-featured buildings – a type of small- to medium-sized timber buildings with sunken floors, or partially subterranean storage-cum-work spaces – appear in inland territories of the Visigothic Kingdom but are so far unknown for the south-east Byzantine. It has been suggested[89] that these distinctive sunken structures had no relationship with foreign/Germanic arrivals, since the region featured comparable house forms also in protohistoric times; however, this long-distance historic link does not seem that secure – especially considering its complete absence across the long span of Roman domination; accordingly, I prefer to see in these buildings some actual association with the settlement of new populations and of 'Germanic' influence in the formation of the new landscapes, as other scholars have proposed elsewhere[90].

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[88] Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005.
[89] Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera 2011, 173-174.
[90] cf for Italy: Valenti 2008, 82-84; Fronza 2009 and 2011, 121-130.

If we focus on the archaeological data, interesting images emerge. We can see, for example, an important concentration of Visigothic funerary goods in the Duero Valley that should point to intensive rural occupation in this area. While, as said, we should not expect a simple correlation between socio-political and cultural identities, in this case, this concentration may well speak of a distinctive 'heartland'. Similarly, we can note the evidence of the Visigothic slates or *Pizarras Visigodas*, which occur in a specific area, near this concentration of cemeteries, but outside of these graveyards and unrelated, at least currently, with the sunken-featured structures which appear from the late 5th century in the Peninsula.

A more prominent cultural identity is claimed in the Byzantine contexts, with a repertoire containing many materials from the Eastern Mediterranean, but above all from North Africa[91]. This pottery appeared in the Byzantine south-east but also, to a lesser extent, in the Suevic Kingdom and in some inland centres such as the royal city of Toledo and *Reccopolis*[92]; these imports also appear, if fewer in number, in inland Byzantine territories, as at Tolmo de Minateda and *Begastri*[93]. However, such imports are totally absent in the Duero basin[94]. This situation indicates that we cannot talk about 'commercial frontiers' related to political boundaries, but rather we need to think along geographical issues, since these could be said to have largely determined the behaviour of the territories. In fact, in the coastal area of *Tarraconensis*, the modern Catalan region, such imports continued to arrive[95], even after the 470s when it was taken by the Visigoths. While the quantity of some of these imports diminished following the Byzantine conquest of the south east, this trade persisted through into 7th century. While its cessation may be linked to the Islamic conquest of Carthage in 698[96] there was also, internally, a progressive increase of local ceramic production, such as the slow wheel-thrown pottery in the coastal area[97].

In general terms, in the Iberian Peninsula, these imports always reached the coastal areas[98], and sometimes significant inland foci like the capitals, but rarely percolated into the interior[99]. Accordingly, their absence in a mostly rural area, such as the Duero basin, is understandable.

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[91] Ramallo Asensio and Vizcaíno Sánchez 2002, 317.
[92] C.E.V.P. 1991; Gallego-García 2010; Omo-Enciso, Castro-Priego and Diarte-Blasco 2020.
[93] Vizcaíno Sánchez 2007, 601.
[94] Quirós Castillo 2011, 294-303.
[95] Járrega Domínguez 2000; 2013; Vizcaíno 2007, 599-601.
[96] Atlante 1981, 15
[97] Járrega Domínguez 2013, 165.
[98] Especially their urban centres – see Járrega 2013, 159-166
[99] In the Western Mediterranean, an important similarity in the archaeological contexts is evident, above all in terms of pottery imports, to the degree that it has been suggested that the barbarian kingdoms gave freedom of trade in this area; see Murialdo 2001, 306.

The limited capacity of penetration that these ceramics had towards the interior is more evident when we compare the data from the Suevic Kingdom, which remained – for economic reasons still to be fully determined – an attractive target for Mediterranean merchants[100]. Quite possibly a weakened economic status for sites and territories of the Visigothic Kingdom's interior – spaces outside of the traditional channels of communication – had no appeal for long-distance traders. A weakened or fractured economy is of course shown by the loss of some urban centres, especially in the Duero basin, and a breakdown in the old Roman rural system, meaning a loss of obvious market foci.

One might also observe that some of these settlement changes coincided with the so-called Early Medieval Cold Episode (AD 450-950), characterized by lower temperatures and greater aridity[101]. This potentially significantly damaged agriculture as a result of the degradation of the soil, plant environment and also the development of extensive farming, with a marked deforestation evident across many parts of the Iberian Peninsula. It is likely that this phenomenon of cold and aridity was more accentuated in inland Spain than in the coastal area, where the sea acted as a 'moderator', helping to temper the climatic conditions. Recall also that it was the coastal areas that maintained maritime trade relations.

Taking into account all these factors, we might argue that the large estates of the Central plateau suffered a major crisis in production in this period, thus declining to a self-sufficiency economy and probably a regional-scale trade[102]. This economic trend is evident from the 5th century in this area and slowly extended to other areas of the Peninsula (including the rural inland territories of the coastal zones) by the late 6th and the 7th century.

As discussed, the economic development of the three political/state groups does not appear uniform. But the pottery and archaeological data are arguably a good indicator of economic boundaries, being more related with a particular geography than a political reality and / or identities issues. If we look just at the theoretical territories of these *gentes*, however, we fail to find large differences in their rural or urban settlement, which could not help to explain the existence of three different cultural trajectories – we can see only contrasts between coastal and interior dynamics.

Finally, we need to recognise that, without the textual or documentary sources, it would be very hard to identify a set of different powers in this post-Roman Hispania; in fact, in many cases, we currently assign a cultural horizon or ethnic name to an urban centre or a rural area, just because a bishop's name appears in a Visigothic or

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[100] In any case, we should not think of problems with land communication, since the old Roman road system seems to have continued to function during this period; in the early 8th century, in fact, these roads were core to the rapid progress of the Islamic troops; see Gozalbes Cravioto, 1996.
[101] Desprat *et al.* 2003; Curras *et al* 2012.
[102] Quirós Castillo 2011, 298.

Suevic list. At the same time, it is so difficult to prove through material remains the occurrence of (often presumed regular) armed conflict and/or confrontation which the historical sources highlight. In recent years, however, new landscape-oriented projects have started to help 'flesh out' the rural images of the late antique and early medieval Peninsula; key next stages will be to develop research via targeted fieldwork and excavations to determine if these population groups did indeed have any specific and diverse settlement characteristics and spheres of influence; from these, then, we might be able to try and assess their politico-economic relationships. But, for the moment, we must start the process to observe and interrogate the dynamics of these three different geographical areas and power groups in this turbulent period. Ideas will then emerge on what made an early medieval 'identities' in the Peninsula and how these landscapes of conflict impacted on society, landholding, and power and how these all evolved prior to the Islamic conquest when another new chapter began.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Fig. 1 – Principal sites named in the text.

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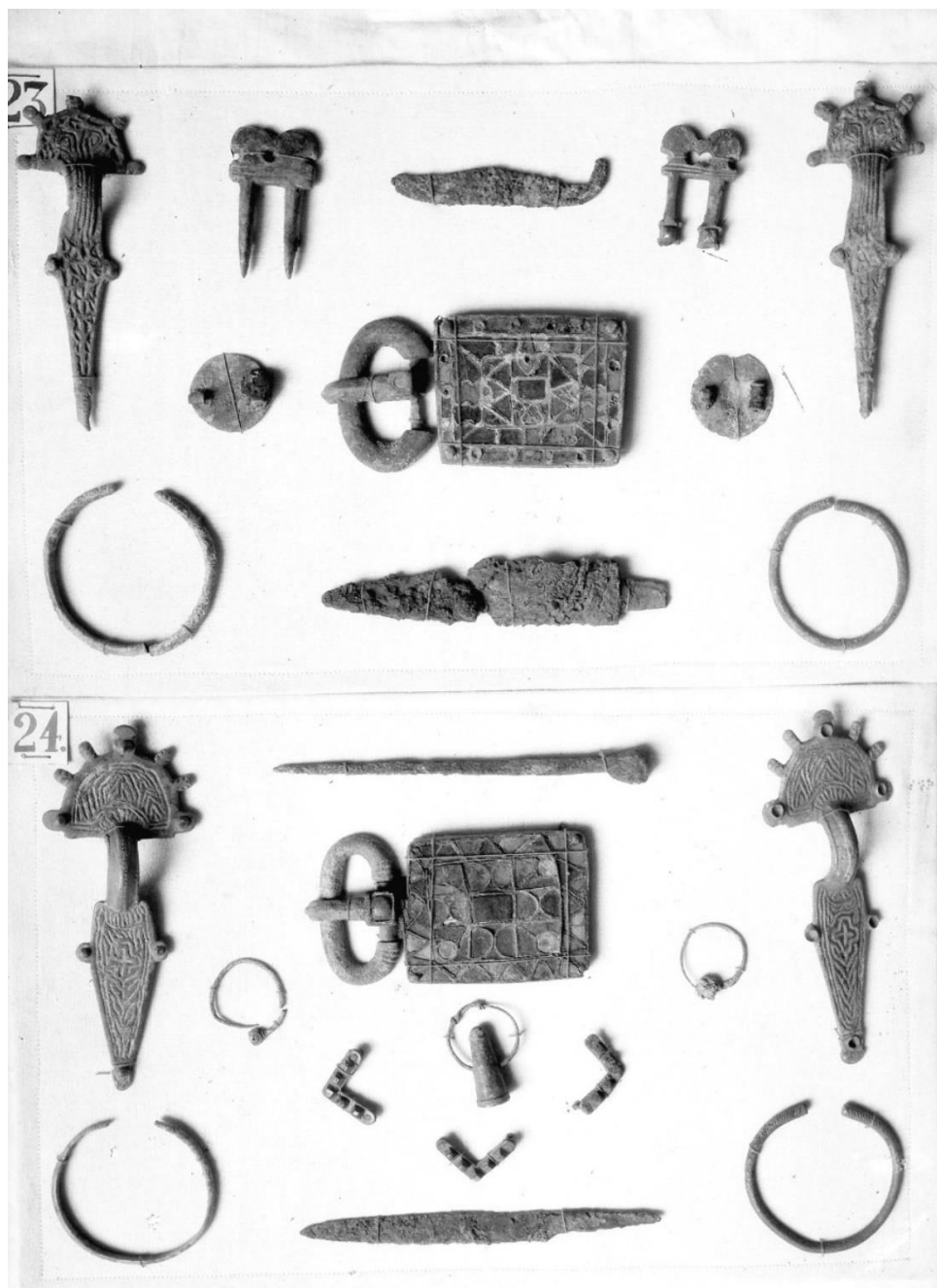Fig. 2 – Grave goods from the cemetery of Castiltierra (Image courtesy of Museo Arqueológico Nacional).

Fig. 3 – *Reccopolis*

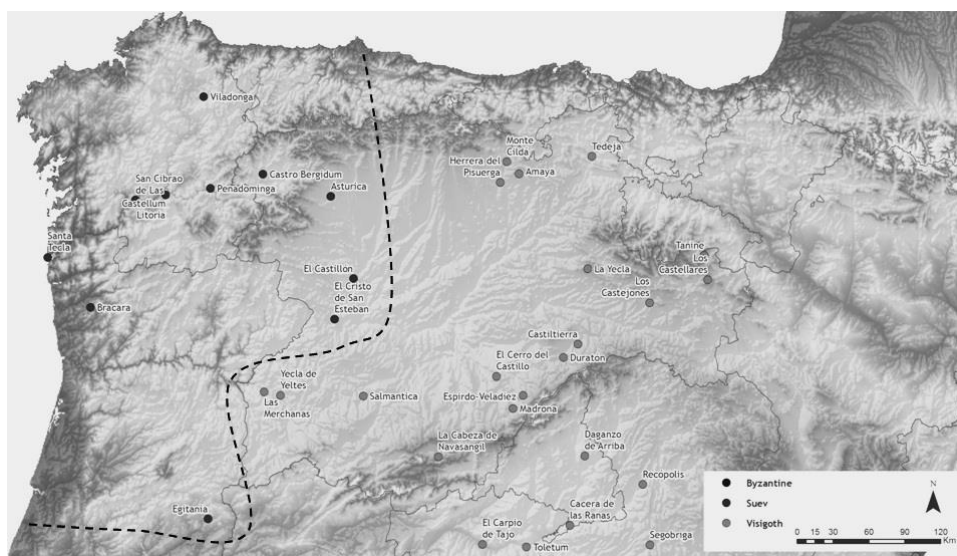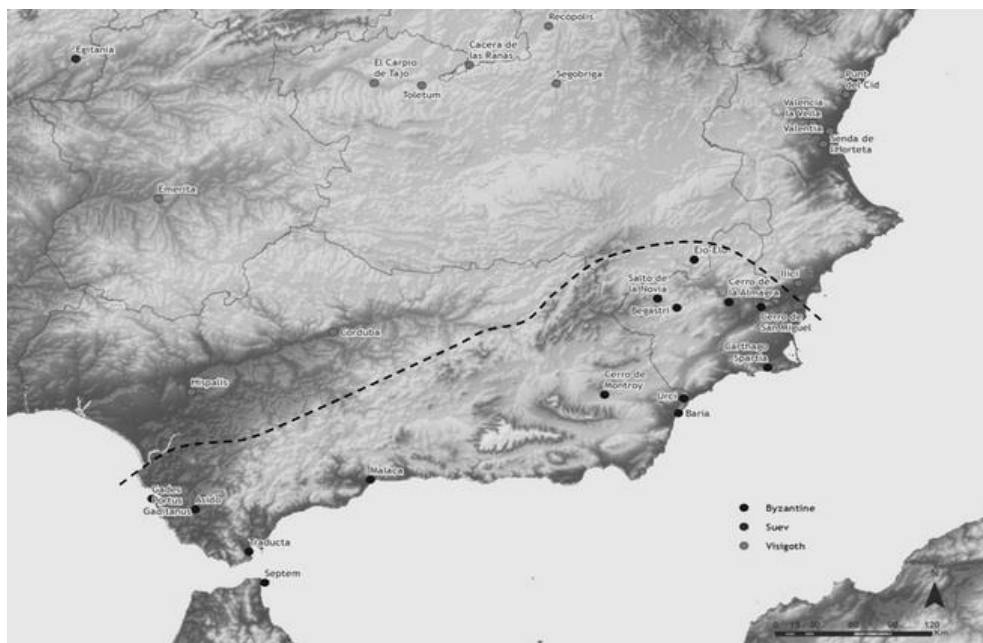Fig. 4 – Approximate frontier line and zone between Suevic and Visigothic territories in NW Hispania.

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Fig. 5 – Approximate frontier line and zone between the Byzantine and Visigothic territories in SE Hispania.

IN THE OTHERS WE SEE OURSELVES.
QUESTIONING IDENTITIES AND CHANGE IN RURAL *LUSITANIA*[1]

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Abstract

In Horta da Torre Roman *villla* (Fronteira, Portugal), ongoing excavations since 2012 have revealed a major double-apsed room with a *stibadium*, belonging to a major *villa*. The space has probably been used as a *triclinium aestivalis*, where an elaborated decorative programme and sophisticated architectural solutions show the opulence displayed by the owner. During the 5th century AD, the area was carefully abandoned, but further occupation(s) left archaeological evidences. The construction of a perishable structure documents the precarious presence of people and animals (fauna recollected) in the once sophisticated room.

This evidence reflects new patterns of daily activities that strongly contrast with the previous occupation. Contextual analysis and stratigraphic evidence of ceramics and faunal remains allow us to interpret dramatic changes in economic strategies and cultural backgrounds. Questioning this evidence, we can search for patterns of change: in the funerary sphere; in material culture, and also in the connections between *villae* and urban sites in *Lusitania*, trying to characterize the agents in the territory. In this perspective, it is important to question how these major shifts occurred, their causes and the protagonists in the ground.

Keywords

Lusitania; *Villa*; Patterns of change; Subsistence; Contextual analysis; Identities

[410] *"The barbarians who had entered Spain pillaged it with a vicious slaughter. A pestilence wreaked its own devastation just as vigorously." 16: "As the barbarians ran wild through Spain and the deadly pestilence continued on its savage course, the wealth and goods stored in the cities were plundered by the tyrannical tax collector and consumed by the soldiers. A famine ran riot, so dire that driven by hunger human beings devoured human flesh; mothers too feasted upon the bodies of their own children whom they had killed and cooked with their own hands; wild beasts, habituated to feeding on the bodies of those slain by sword, famine, or pestilence, killed all the braver individuals and feasting on their flesh everywhere became brutally set upon the destruction of the human race. And thus with the four plagues of sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts raging everywhere throughout the world, the annunciations foretold by the Lord through his prophets came to fulfilment."*

(Hidatius, 410: XV-XVI, *in* BURGESS 1993: 83)

1. IDENTITIES IN THE RURAL WORLD: THE AGENTS

Hydatius, bishop of *Aquae Flaviae* (nowadays Chaves, North Portugal), described the fate of *Hispania* in 410 AD in what can only be labelled as an apocalyptic tone. Employing swords, famine and pestilence, the "barbarians" acted as the agents of the Apocalypse, bringing with them misery and cannibalism, reducing men and women to their original bestiality. What appeared to be an *annus horribilis* would, however, turn out to be the starting point of a much broader process of continuous atrocities that would ensue until 469, the year in which the bishop of Chaves' chronicle came to an end, presumably as a result of his death. Throughout this time, successive hordes would engulf *Hispania* in fury - agents of imperial authority acting as autocrats (*tyrannicus exactor diripit*), and even (especially) external contingents – particularly the Suebi (Barata Dias, 2020: 292) – who insisted on breaking negotiations as a result of their natural perfidy (Burgess, 1993: 111; Carneiro, 2019). The "waves" of invaders were relentless. After the Goths, Vandals and Heruli, came the Suebi in 467, surrounding and destroying *Conimbriga*, ravaging the city and surrounding area (*regio desolatur et ciuitas*, Burgess, 1993: 119), an event that has conditioned interpretations of the archaeological finds in the place[3].

The perception of "barbarians" as *gentes vagae* - nomadic communities that had no intention of settling on the land - was not exclusive to Hydatius. In fact, this idea was a central literary *topos* in the Ancient world, possibly coined from Herodotus, and applied by the author to the Cimmerians (Historias, 1.6: 15-16) and Scythians (1.73; 103-106), to name but two examples. This descriptive tool would prove long-lasting, serving to symbolise a civilizational chasm between the "civilised" urban

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[3] The remains of a resident were found inside the main pool of the *domus* said to have belonged to Cantaber carrying two coins of Honorious (402-408), "[which] certainly serves as evidence of the attack on this house and the death of its unfortunate inhabitant" – a reference made to the Suebi attack (Alarcão, 1999: 75) - as well as the fragments of African *terra sigillata* found in amongst layers of destruction attributable to the Suebi attacks. (Delgado, Mayet and Alarcão, 1975: 288).

communities and "uncivilised" nomadic tribes. As such, the cultural uprooting, inadaptability to urban norms and animalistic behaviour of these agents was accentuated, factors generally applied to all "barbarians", culminating in the most "vagant", or nomadic, of all: the Huns. A portrait that marks and conditions all subsequent historiography, as well as the entire perception of phenomena of migrant communities presented in much of the investigative work carried out to this day.

With this context in mind, this paper will serve to analyse archaeological data in the South-western part of Lusitania **[Fig. 1]** with the aim of seeking interpretations of unclear processes, the first of which will be those found in rural contexts.

2. CONTEXTS OF CHANGE IN RURAL AREAS: THE CASE OF HORTA DA TORRE

The Alto Alentejo presents a rural landscape in which a remarkable scarcity of urban nuclei has been identified, and in which private monumental structures predominate: the *villae* (Carneiro, 2014). Although few locations have been subject to rigorous archaeological excavations that were subsequently accurately published, in the past years the work carried out at the Horta da Torre *villa* since 2012 has allowed for a phenomenon relevant to understanding the process generically referred to as "the end of the *villae*" (Chavarría Arnau, 2007) to be identified. It has done so by shedding light on the process of abandonment undergone, and the subsequent re-inhabitation of the site.

Horta da Torre is located in the parish of Cabeço de Vide in the municipality of Fronteira, a short distance from what was then the route XIV of the *Antonine Itinerary* (Carneiro, 2008). The excavated area of the complex, which measures around 30,000m^2, is no bigger than 1000m^2, but the data collected has been consistent though the area is limited **[Fig. 2]**. It has allowed for interpretations to be formed of what would have been an opulent construction: a double apse crowning the monumental room with a *stibadium*. A sluice was located behind this device, on the wall of the internal apse, which allowed for water entrance to be controlled, covering the *opus signinum* pavement. The room opens onto a large peristyle (which has been only partially excavated to date), featuring a column-lined *exedrae*, surrounding a pleasant garden. A small peristyle lay to the south of the main one, sectioned off by a wall, housing *cubiculae* placed around an *impluvium* fed by a fountain, creating a private, relaxing environment. The GPR surveys carried out on this structure identified its location as being on the periphery of a much broader structure yet to be excavated.

A methodical, careful archaeological excavation suggests that the structure underwent a planned abandonment process in the mid-5th century, as no evidence of fire or destruction has been unearthed in the excavation. We consider the possibility that the main decorative ornaments were stripped before the abandonment, as the marble plaques in the room were removed, and this could have been a logistically

complex task (Munro, 2012). In contrast, the following archaeological evidence demonstrates particularly precarious processes:

2.1. Stibadium Room

The floor of the room was drilled into in order to build a shelter out of perishable materials, similar to others witnessed in *Hispania* (Tejerizo Garcia, 2015; table in Carneiro, 2020: 257)[4], occupying over half of the double apse room, which measures approximately 100m^2. Horse bones were collected, indicating that both people and animals would have occupied the space (Carneiro, 2020).

2.2. Small peristyle

The floor of the private resting area around the *impluvium* also presents with boreholes, serving to support what appears to have been a small fence used to contain animals (?). The structure's rooves had collapsed and the tiles were thrown into the *impluvium*. The aisles were used as disposal areas, the northern wing especially, a practice reflected in the thick layer of dark sediment found here, filled with coarse ceramic cooking vessels, remains of *dolium* used to store food and various remains of bones, including jaws **[Fig. 3]**. A marble column base was placed upside down to be used as a seat in a small *cubiculum* off to the side of the peristyle.

2.3. Large peristyle

Further boreholes have been found in the flooring of the excavated area, which is still limited. The inner area of the *impluvium* would have contained a garden, or *viridarium,* which was used as a disposal area for remains and rubble, in which several fragments of coarse ware pottery and several sections of bone were found, including jaws, which presented marks made from cutting and consumption.

These material and archaeologically detectable processes of change allows us to take interpretations in two additional perspectives:

2.4. Technological

The material culture found demonstrates that a profound change was undergone in the daily lives of the *villa*'s inhabitants. The period of Imperial occupation is characterised by the *villa*'s integration in a globalised Mediterranean economy, proof of which is provided in materials originating from very distant sources: late Hispanic and North African *terra sigillata*, for example. These materials also demonstrate patterns of opulent consumption in the presence of *amphorae,* which would have been filled with wine and fish preparations, but above all in the large quantities of

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[4] As seen in engraving *II Seville Council. Emilian Codex*. Library of the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo of El Escorial, MS D.I. 1, fol. 205v.

mollusc shells found in waste disposal areas located in the uncovered area of the double apse room. These indicators allow for an assumption to be made that the logistics behind goods transportation networks were reasonably straightforward and well-connected over extensive and supra-provincial areas. In contrast, locally manufactured and rudimentary ceramics have been found. They can be ascribed to the post-Roman occupation phase: ceramics made using pastes filled with non-plastic elements, moulded according to linear shapes and baked at low temperatures, leading to highly fragmented pieces scattered in the archaeological record. The usage patterns on these pieces show clear signs of systematic and prolonged use, with marks made by fire covering almost the entirety of the containers. Fragments of millstones provide evidence of grinding operations used to make flour to complement diets, suggesting both precariousness and technological scarcity.

2.5. Economic

The archaeological record (Carneiro, 2020) uncovered also demonstrates a profound shift in daily consumption patterns and economic strategies employed. Evidence of two diverse circumstances was found in the *stibadium* room: on the one hand, the presence of large fauna, especially cattle, and on the other the constant practice of *venatio*, in addition to elements of the world-economy referred to previously (*amphora* and molluscs). Fragments of *lucernae* provide evidence of banquets that would last during the night. In contrast, the post-Roman occupation demonstrates the predominance of sheep and goats, which would have been cooked and consumed in medium-sized containers used to make soups and stews, which display an abundance of fire marks. These findings provide evidence of unsophisticated pastoral operations involving highly resistant animals, from which by-products like wool and cheese could also be extracted, therefore providing extra income and dietary supplements.

2.6. Horta da Torre: discussion of the data

We can place an easy and direct question: can it be assumed that Horta da Torre was destroyed and occupied by "barbarians"? What does this radical shift in the human presence mean - one in which, in a short period of time, an opulent "imperial model" gave way to a "low-profile model" seeking not to rehabilitate the ruin but merely to provide shelter and use from it? Can it be assumed that the ruins were occupied by *gentes vagae*?

To answer to this question is essential to recall that the traditional process of understanding the "end of the *villae*" has benefited from a remarkable number of contributions in recent decades (Lewit, 2003; Chavarría Arnau, 2007). As such, the process is no longer believed to have been sudden - the result of the invasions of hordes of barbarians who dismantled sites and brought an abrupt end to the lifestyle

experienced previously - nor as a *continuum*, where a medieval "village" would have been born from the *villae*. Further research in *Hispania* has demonstrated the existence of intermediary phases, of which understanding is now being gained thanks to accurate stratigraphic records and planimetric readings bringing marked regional variations, which make it difficult to make generalisations about the process undergone.

Take Horta da Torre as an example: about 10km to the south, a geophysical survey carried out in the *villa* of Monte de S. Francisco allowed to document a process through which a significant number of graves (over a dozen) were installed very close to the urban area (Carneiro, García Sanchez, Stek, Kalkers, 2019: 52-53). About 10km southeast of Horta da Torre, however, stands the well-known *villa* of Torre de Palma, which seems to have visibly flourished in several ways in the 5th century AD: the wine cellar and/or olive oil storage area was expanded, along with the progressive expansion and monumentalisation of areas related to Christian worship – the basilica and baptistery (Lancha, André, 2000). These findings shed light on the complexity of the question, with such diverse phenomena being recorded in *villae* located mere kilometres apart. It should also be noted that less than 5% of the estimated occupation of the site has been excavated at Horta da Torre, which means that other phenomena, spaces and contexts may still be identified, thus contributing to more complex interpretations being made.

Another fundamental problem also applies to the rural world: how to determine the identities of the various agents in the ground. This is the case on various levels: on the one hand, a recurring difficulty exists in determining who the elites were, as they seem to have disappeared from the countryside to some extent, as pointed out by Tamara Lewit (2003). However, the same problem also exists for other groups: it is worth noting how huge necropolises existed during the Imperial period, made up of relatively prototypical graves that varied very little from one to the next (Rolo, 2018). This phase was followed by one in which more graves were added, sometimes for hundreds of people at a time, who would have been buried with no artefacts indicating their identities (for a provincial case, see Teichner 2017; for a general discussion about the "ethnic" and cultural contents, see Eger 2020). Who were these people and what was their role in the countryside? For multiple reasons, it is unwise to assume that these were communities of *gentes vagae* or "barbarians", as they would undoubtedly have had with them identity markers, which would (it can be assumed) have been worn with pride.

In the *villa* sphere, Horta da Torre documents two circumstances:

a) the shelter erected in the *stibadium* room implied a certain level of investment; that is, the wooden hut structure indicates a desire to remain in the *villa* for some time, thus making the effort required to drill holes into the *opus signinum* worthwhile. This permanence is also visible in the large amount of food residue found in various parts of the excavated area;

b) a lifestyle based around mobility resulting from the pastoral operations carried out, which also required shepherds to have a high degree of knowledge about the region. It can therefore be assumed that shepherds would move around the local area, choosing abandoned structures in which to shelter and stay for a while before rotating to the following structure. This suggests that these shepherds would have had an elaborate "mental map" of locations that could serve as accommodation and in which the resources could be used.

Even when deprived of the operations characteristic of the previous phase, these *villae* operated as centres of attraction, magnets for agents travelling through the local area - people who knew them, the resources available at each one, and how to maximise them. As such, layers of sediment were uncovered due to elements being torn out or moved or containing remnants of everyday operations - fireplaces and combustion structures, materials abandoned, etc. – which require increasingly rigorous excavations with particular focus placed on the multiple indicators available for collection.

This evidence points to abandoned sites still leaving their marks on the landscape - ruins visible from important, busy roads, therefore attracting visitors. Several people continued to visit Horta da Torre to seek shelter, remove materials, keep livestock, cook meals and dump waste, all of whom left behind marks of their presence. These agents gave new meanings to old spaces, testimonies of a bygone era that has since been permanently lost. While other places proved to have been specific hubs of operations, occupation of these locations developing over time, this *villa* became marginalised. It did not, however, lose its power or appeal, meaning it continued to be frequented though in a radically different way to that envisioned in its construction and design. It is worth noting that this is the only *villa* in the area with no signs of Christianisation. As such - and the agents not having left behind any identity markers or cultural indicators that would allow for their identities to be determined - until new data is found, it is plausible to assume that this presence came about as a result of Horta da Torre being seen as a relevant ruin in mental maps of the region, drawing people in through fascination, and because of their utilitarian interest in extracting relevant materials.

3. FUNERARY PRACTICES IN THE RURAL WORLD: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE 'WORLD OF THE LIVING'

The fragility and scarcity of a funerary archaeological evidence in the Alto Alentejo as a whole can be put down to intensive agricultural practices carried out from the second quarter of the 20th century onwards, which have inevitably made it more challenging to preserve and identify any possible archaeological remains. In addition, old excavations, associated with arguable criteria and methodologies, produced most of the data available relating to religious funerary practices during the Roman Empire and in Late Antiquity. Consequently, the available information

is incomplete, and records of archaeological work carried out during the mid/ late 20th century are scarce or non-existent. In most cases, any osteological material found would not have been collected, for example, making any anthropological studies essentially unfeasible. The nature of these interventions, which was non-systematic and lacked rigour, thus leads to an assumption being made that the known data available makes up only a small part of the vast informational potential contained within the sites explored, but that, due to limited methods, recording equipment and/or interpretation, has been irreversibly lost. This information deficit is particularly consequential when it comes to funerary practices in Late Antiquity, either due to the difficulty in accurately identifying and interpreting archaeological records from the period or the scarcity of literary sources available. Unavoidable difficulties are therefore faced in terms of implementing a multidisciplinary approach, which would allow for the analysis carried out to go beyond material culture, tomb architecture and ritual practices, allowing for the identity(s) of individuals to be identified and the communities that inhabited the territory at the time to be determined (for an example of a working model, see the case studies presented in Carroll, 2013, or Leach et al., 2009).

Notwithstanding the constraints exposed above, the material culture identified relating to funerary practices dating back to Roman times and Late Antiquity seems to reinforce some fundamental evidence observed of daily practices from the time, therefore also complementing interpretations made of the 'world of the living'. One such example is the 'world economy', of which evidence was found dating back to imperial occupation of the *villa* in Horta da Torre, which was echoed in funerary practices. Large amounts of funerary offerings were often present during burials in the high-imperial period, which were almost always of a diverse nature (imported fine ceramics, glass, coarse ware pottery), attesting to the dynamism of commercial networks and the ease with which local communities could access foreign products. Examples of such funerary assemblages include those found in tombs E5 and G3 of the necropolis of Santo André (Ponte de Sor) (Viegas et al., 1981: 155-156, 163-165), graves 14 and 30 of the necropolis of Serrones (Elvas) (Rolo, 2018, I), and grave 1 of the necropolis of Pocilgais (Carneiro, 2005: 297-301). A progressive decrease was seen in funeral remains as time went on, becoming especially evident in tombs dating back to the 5th – 7th centuries AD (Frade & Caetano, 2004: 337). This trend was also witnessed in other provincial areas (Vaquerizo & Vargas, 2001: 161; Smith et al., 2018: 269), seemingly reflecting the spread of a new worldview shaped by new cultural and religious references. A generalised impoverishment of material culture was seen, visible not only in the aforementioned reduction in funeral offerings (in most cases limited to jewellery and clothing) but also in the rudimentary quality of ceramic containers (mainly beakers and jars) identified in the context of late-antique funerary practices. See, for example, the jugs with a trefoil rim collected in the necropolis of Torre das Arcas (Elvas), linked to a late funerary use of the site

(Rolo, 2018, I: 237) **[Fig. 4]**. This predominance of low-quality, locally sourced materials is also evident in domestic contexts, specifically in the late-antique occupation of Horta da Torre. Seeming to have come about as the result of a new 'post-classical' economic model, it was more autarchic, less demanding and adhered to less sophisticated consumption patterns.

Equally illustrative of this depletion of material culture is the 'forced' long-term usage of some pieces, or the 'reconversion' of others, adapted to new functionalities. An example of the first case is African *terra sigillata* dish Hayes 61A, which is attributed to the Carrão's archaeological site (Elvas). Although the piece is not believed to be linked to funerary practices, it is notable for several reasons. The first is the connection between the residential area of Carrão and the funerary area of Chaminé (Elvas), which served as a necropolis from the high-imperial period to the 6th/ 7th centuries AD when (at least some) of the *villa*'s old structures were 'necropolised'. The second is the piece allegedly serving as a "liturgical dish" (Deus et al., 1955: 569), therefore allowing a connection to be drawn to a newly Christianised community. The care taken in repairing the Carrão dish by those who used it – one lead rivet and holes for three more can be observed – allows for inferences to be made as to the importance (or at least perceived importance) of maintaining it for as long as possible, whether for ritual or religious purposes (Rolo, 2018, I: 356; III, Est. 128). As its archaeological context has not been determined, the piece cannot be dated or its 'lifetime' ascertained. It could, therefore, have been in use for a timeframe far beyond that generally attributed to ceramics such as this one - 325 - 400/420AD (Hayes, 1972: 107). **[Fig. 5]** In any case, two major ideas can be drawn from these findings: firstly, that this was the last burst of activity experienced from the commercial circuits between the late 4th and early 5th centuries AD in this rural part of *Lusitania* - an idea backed up by the material culture found at Horta da Torre (Carneiro et al., in press); and secondly, what seems to be an attempt "to perpetuate Roman cultural values and meanings at a time of increasing disruption and change" (Swift, 2015: 112).

The 'recycling' of material culture witnessed in the late-ancient phase resulted in a loss of cultural references from the previous period, as is documented in the late reoccupation of Horta da Torre. This rupture is evident in funerary assemblages and in practices such as the reuse of materials from high-imperial burials to build graves during Late Antiquity, therefore reflecting a change in beliefs and ritual practices. The necropolis of Camugem (Elvas) is a good example of this, as tombstones from the 1st century AD were reused as construction material for Late Antique graves (Rolo, 2018, I: 265, 373), thus serving as proof of "a significant shift in how people perceived their social relationships or obligations to those buried there" (Wanner & De Sena, 2010: 22-23). Changes can also be seen on other levels, such as areas that had previously been inhabited becoming burial sites, demonstrating somewhat of an 'invasion' of the world of the living - even if the buildings or structures

'necropolised' had already been abandoned and lost their original functionality. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the thermal building of Pombais (Marvão), which was taken over by a necropolis during the late 4th or 5th century AD (Carneiro, 2014: II, pp. 299-302). This can also be seen in Defesa de São Pedro (Campo Maior), where a sarcophagus was placed in the centre of a building (Carneiro, 2014: II, pp. 95-100).

Parallel to this rupture, the symbolic dimension of some funerary areas remained. Many ancient necropoleis continued to work as reference points/marks in the landscape, and, given the context of mobility described above, it is not unreasonable to think that their symbolic value increased, along with their polarising effects. As Ripoll states, "it is only logical to imagine that every settlement will produce a 'funerary habitat', but an old cemetery can also generate such a habitat" (Ripoll López, 1989: 390, translated). This may have been the case of the aforementioned necropolis of Chaminé (Elvas), which seems to have undergone an extensive occupation from the Late Iron Age (3rd / 2nd century BC) to Late Antiquity (Rolo 2018, I). The data available suggests the stability of the burial site and the polarising role of the archaeological site of Chaminé as a necropolis, which also made it a *locus religiosus* (Vaquerizo, 2011: 95) for several communities. In the necropoleis of Torre das Arcas (Elvas) and Serrones (Elvas), different phases of funerary use were also identified. Between the mid-1st century and 6th/ 7th centuries AD, different communities chose the places as their burial sites. However, somewhat paradoxically, in terms of these necropoleis remaining symbolic references throughout these periods - whether for longer or shorter times, for larger or smaller communities - a break in cultural references and the memory of previous communities materialised in the reuse of graves. For instance, in Serrones necropolis (Elvas), the tombs 82, 84 and 90 (high-imperial cremation burials) overlapped with tombs 83, 88 and 89, respectively. The latter three corresponded to burials that can be dated back to Late Antiquity due to their structural characteristics and the absence of funeral offers (Rolo, 2018, I: 211).

During Late Antiquity, funerary evidence excavated *in agro* suggests a phase of social and ideological transition, along which old and new rites and beliefs coexist. In a general view, funerary practices for this period in the Alto Alentejo characterise by a relative discretion in funerary evidence, a remarkable polymorphism in tomb architecture, and a gradual decrease of funeral assemblages over time. The variability of the funerary evidence documented and the recurring absence of identifying elements in tombs make it challenging to carry out a plausible 'physical and cultural reconstruction' of the necropoleis and the local communities using them (Ortalli, 2008: 142). As such, the 'agents' who inhabited the area from the 5th century AD cannot be identified linearly. Were these new populations with new beliefs? 'Heirs' of the communities who had lived here during Roman times, having since adapted the old *modus vivendi* to new times and new habits? Or, as the evidence suggests, a

combination of both scenarios? Two key ideas must therefore be highlighted. The first is that the variability of funerary practices arose as a result of the different motivations "dictated by locale, population, roots and outlook – which are all things hard for us to trace and understand" (Christie, 2018: xiv). The second is that archaeological evidence from the late-Roman or high-medieval period does not always provide a clear picture of local communities and their experience. Instead, it could be said that the data available paints an image of "a complex panorama in which the change in the patterns of life and death becomes muddled as old relationships with locales are maintained" (Carneiro, 2005: 54, translated).

3.1. The funerary world: discussion of data

Funerary evidence plays a fundamental role in knowledge about any ancient civilisation. Firstly, because it is considered a "cache" – items with their own symbolism that are intentionally buried. Secondly, because funerary archaeology can provide relevant and complementary information (some of which rarely found in domestic contexts) on the living, their background and identity(ies).

Even so, an overview of the Alto Alentejo cannot be determined, as contradictory indicators inform the scope of "deathscapes" or "necrogeography" (Semple and Brookes, 2020). Continuity supports the idea that these funerary spaces were validated by the community: necropoleis used for almost a millennium, even if not continually, create systemic "memory landscapes" and invoke a deep sense of belonging and attachment to the place. Disruption, which occurs at various levels, however, contrasts with this idea – spanning the looting and reuse of previous materials rendering them obsolete and unrecognisable, obliterating old memories and referential markers. Likewise, the 'funerary appropriation' of living spaces, breaking the classic differences between both spheres, demonstrates new ethical, cultural and religious conceptions guiding the behaviour of these (new?) agents.

As such, one central question must be weighted regarding funerary practices: who were the protagonists of this period? The widespread absence of remains in tombs from the 4th century AD onwards – the dead having generally been placed with unmarked ceramic containers – renders it impossible to truly know who the agents were. Whether concerning their identity and beliefs - no proper markers have been found - no interpretations can be made whatsoever, except for rare and isolated cases. An oil lamp (*lucerna*) with a *Chrismon* was found in the aforementioned site of Pombais (Marvão), but, found out of context, could the meanings of this easily recognisable symbol be ascertained? And does the old thermal building used for funerary purposes reflect an intention to erase its 'impure' prior use, or just a pragmatic way of making use of an abandoned structure where buildings materials were available? Without more accurate referencing of the identities and motivations of these agents – produced through further higher-quality excavations - all the potential meanings of ongoing processes remain to be clarified.

4. CONTEXTS OF CHANGE IN URBAN AREAS: COMMERCIAL REDISTRIBUTION AND CONNECTIONS WITH RURAL SPACE

In urban *Lusitania*, the timeframe between the early 3rd and early 4th centuries AD was characterised by change. The population was recovering from the crisis and instability that had begun in the second half of the 2nd century AD, which resulted in that several cities on the Baetican and southern Lusitanian coastlines, dependent on maritime trade, had to deal with significant supply problems, from which few managed to recover. As an aggravating factor, some of the local mines, such as *Vipasca* (Aljustrel), faced declining production levels in around 150 AD, linked to the crisis that arose in *Baetica*'s metal-producing areas (Quaresma, 2012: 260).

Following the crisis, maritime trade began to grow again in this region, as did the amount of imported fine ceramics. The change in consumption patterns and commercial connections is evident. The previously predominant networks linking the Iberian Peninsula to southern Gaul and the Italian Peninsula were replaced mainly by links to Northern Africa. This fluctuation in the numbers of imports was also noted in the production and export of food products from *Lusitania*, resulting in a period of high outflows between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD (Bombico, 20 17: 416). In terms of influx, imports were also of relevance. Items produced in central Tunisia (African *terra sigillata* C), in the main workshop located in Sidi Marzouk Tounsi, followed by others, such as Haffouz, Henchir Bloul, Henchir Tebraria and Henchir el-Kouky (Bonifay, 2004: 50-51), were found in coastal cities between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD. Imports to coastal urban areas endured until 550 AD, at which point "a reduction in the flow to less than half was observed" (Fernandes, 2012: 102). As for African *terra sigillata* D, its high quantity and variety meant it spread further throughout the Empire. Originating from the area of Carthage, with production dating back to between the early 4th and mid 7th centuries AD, four production areas stood out: the lower Medjerda valley, the centres of Oudhna and Sidi Khalifa, and an unidentified area named "workshop X" (Bonifay, 2004: 49).

Other late productions were identified in the coastal cities, but in much smaller numbers, as is the case of Late Roman C ware and Late Gaulish *terra sigillata* luisante DSP (derived from paleochristian *sigillata*). The former, from Phocia, on the western Turkish coast, dates back to between the 5th and 7th centuries AD (Hayes, 1972:323). On what concerns the Late Gaulish "luisante", it was produced in the workshops of Conjux and Portout (Savoy) and date back to between the second half of the 3rd and the first half of 5th century (Raynaud, 1993a: 504-510). The DSP was produced in Marseille, Narbonne and Bordeaux and dates back to between the late 5th and the very early 6th centuries AD (Raynaud, 1993b: 410; Carandini, 1981: 5-6). However, these imports were restricted to coastal areas. Having not reached inland settlements, they were consequently not redistributed to rural areas (Quaresma and António, 2017).

In terms of inland urban centres, similar data was collected in two different contexts, demonstrating increasing supply difficulties from 375 AD onwards, recorded in different patterns of material culture. While African imports persisted over time, though relevant variations between *Ammaia* and *Abelterium* were noted (perhaps due to route XIV, which had more significant foreign predominance), a break in consumption of *amphorae* was witnessed at the beginning of the 4th century, followed by a generalised collapse of all imports as the century drew to a close (Quaresma and António, 2017: 95-96). Similarly, supplies delivered to *villae* seemed to anticipate the pattern, as a break is visible in the late 4th, early 5th century AD - that is, deliveries of *amphorae*, *lucernae* and *terra sigillata* trailed off in this period (Carvalho and Almeida, 2005), as was also witnessed in the municipality of Fronteira.[5] In terms of the *terra sigillata* supplied to the southernmost parts of this area, a mention of a "crash from which they will never recover" was made in the mid-5th century (Fernandes, 2012: 101, translated). A logical pattern therefore seems to emerge for the circuits. Located further away from primary urban environments, private sites in rural areas were the first to face problems with supplies, problems that would only come to an end in the mid-5th century. As a result of this lack of supply, pieces that could not be replaced were often repaired, as documented in the case of Carrão's "liturgical plate". In small inland towns, breaks can be seen in the late-5th century, while, as would be expected, coastal cities were able to maintain long-distance commercial networks until much later.

Although the political-administrative reorganisation carried out during the Diocletian principate, between the late-3rd and early-4th century AD, seems not to have had any negative influence on the south-west of the Peninsula (for the Algarve see Viegas, 2011: 71), the same cannot be said for the internal conflicts and dismantling of political-administrative structures that took place from the second half of the 4th century onwards. A case study of the city of *Ossonoba* shows that numbers of ceramics imported from North Africa dropped as of the first third/half of the 5th century (Martins, 2019); this was the case for other urban areas in the mid/third quarter of the 5th century AD (Viegas, 2011), or even early 6th century (Bernardes et al., 2020) **[Fig. 6]**. At this point, North African imports ceased definitively, though shipments of Late Roman C continuing (demonstrating the broader geostrategic changes taking place on the Mediterranean). However, "around the second quarter or the mid-sixth century", these oriental imports began to no longer be included in the urban register (Fernandes, 2018: 106, translated). The most significant factor, however, is that these imports did not reach inland cities, remaining restricted to the coast, thus exhibiting the breakdown of inter-regional circuits.

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[5] The study of North African *terra sigillata* in the municipality of Fronteira was carried as part of the Degree in Archaeology at FCSH-UNL by Rodolfo Manaia Ferreira, in 2004, though it was never published.

In urban centres, populations concentrated in areas that had previously been reserved to political, administrative and religious functions. These areas were reconverted to serve other purposes, with populations seeking the safety of newly constituted walled precincts, therefore transforming town centres into mixed areas, where political, administrative and religious structures, housing, and commercial activities converged. This arrangement, in which cities remained dynamic and active while an enormous urban transformation took place, leading to socioeconomic and political-administrative activities restricted to the same areas as everyday life in these urban agglomerations, "survived" the passage of time from the Roman world to the medieval (Diarte-Blasco, 2020: 352).

However, signs of crisis and change can be seen in the way cities interacted with their surrounding areas, through the decrease in the arrival of imported ceramics, as recorded in other Western cities, such as *Balsa* (Viegas, 2011), *Mirobriga* (Quaresma, 2012) and *Baelo Claudia* (Bourgeois and Mayet, 1991), and the increasing levels of difficulty faced to supply their rural surroundings.

4.1. Urban/rural world connections: discussion of the data

Few urban centres were located in South-western *Lusitania*, with those that did exist generally characterised as medium-sized and spread out very far apart. This settlement pattern implies that local identities were essentially forged from the dynamics of the rural world. During the Roman Empire, *urbes* played an important role, both as consumer centres and as platforms from which products would be sent to the surrounding rural territory, reflecting how trade flows evolved over time. However, shortages - and even the progressive collapses in supplies from abroad, as witnessed from the 5th century onwards - would always reflect, first and foremost, in rural areas, since, as one would expect, when a short supply of products arrived in urban centres, none would make it out to more remote locations.

This phenomenon may explain the progressive convergence of settlements in rural areas towards urban centres, which could be witnessed from the 5th century AD onwards[6], resulting in the abandonment of peripheral territories due to the lack of population and/or resources in times of economic downturn. Simultaneously, however, the phenomenon also points to the progressive loss of power and influence of urban centres over rural territories in *Lusitania* or, (alternatively though not contradictorily), to the constant autarchic organisation of rural communities, which allowed them to gain strength in the same measure as urban centres ceased to provide services that, strictly speaking, they were never able to guarantee (judging by the small dimensions and absence of urban equipment). While served as a symbol of power and integration, the disappearance of such objects signified a loss of this identification with external archetypes, consequently reinforcing local systemic identities.

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[6] Ongoing study undertaken by Pedro Trapero Fernandez, using GIS analyses and modelling of the Alto Alentejo's territorial resources.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By exploring the various spheres of analysis for the south-western peninsular area - the rural world; the funerary world *in agro*; and the patterns of ceramic imports and distribution – interpretations can be made of a complex time for which few references exist, that is, from the early 5th century AD onwards. Although case studies on the subject are scarce, they provide enough information to point to significant trends that hinge on four key concepts:

a) *Diversity* - Despite the common trends and patterns detected, we can establish that each archaeological site experienced its own processes and dynamics resulting from multiple factors.

b) *Identities* – Paradoxically, and contrary to the commonplaces of traditional historiography, pinpointing the identities of agents in the ground is a complex task. The presence of foreign items or specific timeframes at which new beliefs and behaviours emerged cannot be pinpointed, due to the lack of distinctive markers present in material culture and archaeological materiality.

c) *Localisms* – This being an eminently rural territory, it is not surprising that local identities have a more independent, self-sufficient character, with individuals able to adapt to new circumstances and technological limitations. The marks left by human presence in most sites demonstrates adaptive behaviours that exceed those necessary to simply adjust to developing lifestyles.

d) *Simplification* - Changes and breaks in international supply flows triggered the adaptive processes referred to in the previous point, with a switch taking place, from a globalised world economy to resources being obtained locally, with agents on the ground demonstrating "patterns of resistance" and adaptation.

In brief: in this paper, we try to enhance the way to integrate patterns of activity and reflections of agents evolving, adapting and transforming the territory. Rural sites, burial places, material patterns did not follow a uniform effect, but they show various and, sometimes, contradictory elements of change and transformation. It is always complex to contrast the written texts with the elements found in excavations, but the material culture and the archaeological evidence have significant potential to bring out information in itself. In fact, they can show us different scopes for the agents, bringing to our scope agents that are absent in the literary sources. One key point is that we can draw more information from elements coming from discards, waste, fragments, absences and resistances in places of life and death. From these indicators, new stories can be told - not the stories of the great protagonists and movements, which have become fixed in historical texts, but the stories of the forgotten people who remained in the territory, maintaining their daily activities and choosing places to bury their dead.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 – Geographical area considered in this paper: the South-western *Lusitania* in the Iberian Peninsula
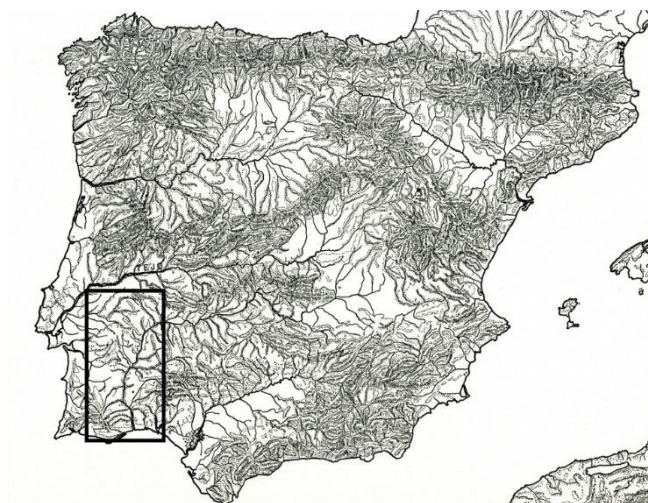
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ARQ 1507 (Rolo, 2018, I: 356; III, Est. 128; photo by Mónica Rolo)

André Carneiro / Mónica Rolo / Ana Martins

Fig. 6 – Distribution of the percentages of the MNI of the terra sigillata from Faro by the sites studied until now (DSP – "dérivée de sigillée paléochrétienne"; TSL – terra sigillata 'Luisante'; Tsfoc – Late Roman C; TSA – African terra sigillata; TSH – Hispanic terra sigillata; CI – sigillata imitations type 'Peñaflor'; TSSG – Southgaulish terra sigillata; TSI – Italic terra sigillata; TSOA – Oriental terra sigillata).
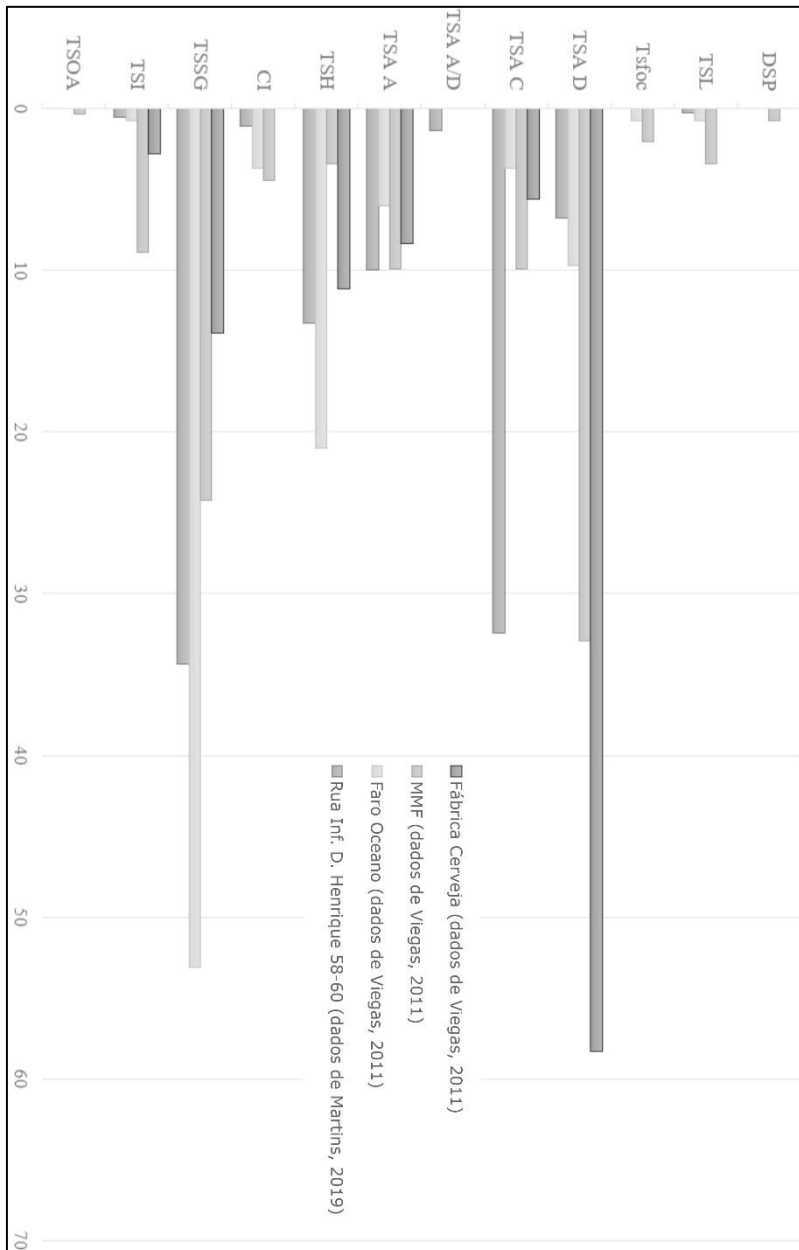
THE ORPHEUS MIRROR – DEATH AND IDENTITIES THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

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Abstract

As our image on a mirror, the archaeological record also reflects an unrepeatable image of past societies, moulded by time, space, and internal and external dynamics. In this sense, funerary evidence may be seen as a privileged window to look through. The treatment of death is, as life itself, an intrinsically social process. The analysis of variables such as mortuary and ritual practices, burial contexts, grave goods and funerary epigraphy, gives an insight into the rural communities that have lived in the area of rural *Lusitania*, since the first contact with Roman contingents until the dawn of the Empire. In general, and despite the constraints imposed by the available data, it stands out the idea of a hybrid and plural society, attesting that the concept of 'glocalisation' is as applicable in this area of *Hispania* as in any other part of the Roman Empire. Giving shape to more or less fluid identities (individual and/or group scale), the old and the new values coexisted and the phenomena of continuity, acculturation and rupture are, after all, images reflected by the same looking glass.

Keywords

Lusitania, funerary archaeology, material culture, identity, society.

Resumo

Como o nosso reflexo num espelho, o registo arqueológico devolve-nos uma imagem irrepetível das sociedades do Passado, moldada pelo tempo e espaço, e por múltiplas dinâmicas internas e externas. Neste sentido, assume-se o tratamento da morte como um processo intrinsecamente social e a evidência arqueológica funerária como um contexto liminar no qual se cruzam diferentes dimensões da vivência das comunidades. Com a intenção de traçar um retrato das comunidades rurais que, durante as épocas romana e tardo-antiga, habitaram parte do território da antiga *Lusitania*, propõe-se uma abordagem tão abrangente quanto possível das evidências

funerárias documentadas naquele território. Através da análise de variáveis como práticas mortuárias e rituais, contextos funerários, bens sepulcrais, e epigrafia funerária – procura-se contribuir para a caracterização destas comunidades e respetivo enquadramento socioeconómico e cultural. Em geral, e não obstante os inúmeros condicionalismos impostos pela natureza da informação disponível, parece sobressair a ideia de uma sociedade híbrida e plural, demonstrando que o conceito de 'glocalização' é tão aplicável nesta área da antiga *Hispania* como em qualquer outra parte do Império Romano. Dando forma a identidades (individuais e/ou de grupo) mais ou menos fluidas, os antigos e os novos valores coexistiram, e os fenómenos de continuidade, aculturação e ruptura são, afinal, imagens reflectidas pelo mesmo espelho.

Palavras-chave

Lusitania, arqueologia funerária, cultura material, identidade, sociedade.

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"*mirrors are gates through which death comes and goes*"
(*Orphée*, Jean Cocteau, 1950)

</div>

1. INTRODUCTION

The film *Orphée* (1950) by the French filmmaker Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) served as a starting point for the present article, following our participation in the International Conference *Othering and the Other – Performing Identity in the Roman Empire* (CECH/ Coimbra University and CHAIA/ Évora University, Portugal, July 2021). In Cocteau's film, one watches the metaphoric use of the mirror "as the medium of transition from the world of the living"[1] and, simultaneously, as the element that "brings us closer to death"[2]. Parallelism with the archaeological funerary record and all its associated information potential is here established. We therefore propose, through the analysis of the funerary evidence in Northern Alentejo (Portugal), to trace a portrait of the attitudes towards death and society that, during Antiquity, were to be found in this western region of the Roman Empire.

2. THE LAND

The geographical framework of the present study is limited to the central part of the territory of the ancient Roman province of *Lusitania*. We refer specifically to Northern Alentejo, located in the Portuguese territory, south of the river Tagus and close to the current border with Spain. The choice of this geographical framework is primarily due to the state of the archaeological research on the funerary world in

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[1] Tsakiridou 1997: 33.
[2] Cocteau 1994.

Roman and late antique periods. The 1930s to 1950s were a particularly fruitful period for archaeological activity in the region, with the identification and excavation of more than a hundred archaeological sites of various chronologies[3]. Around 20 years of collecting, guided by a clear preference for intervention in necropoleis (assumed to have greater artefactual potential compared to archaeological sites of another nature), explains why this regional area provides information on the Classical and Post-Classical funerary world unequalled in the Portuguese panorama.

Secondly, our choice is based on the image of a certain cultural homogeneity revealed by this geographical area's archaeological evidence. It is an eminently rural territory, bounded by the *civitates* of *Ammaia* (Marvão), to the north, and *Ebora Liberalitas Iulia*, to the south. Nevertheless, the geographical proximity to the provincial capital of *Augusta Emerita* and the integration of part of this regional territory in the *ager emeritensis* seem to have played a decisive role, not only in the settlement of exogenous communities - conveyors of classical cultural models - but also in a remarkable economic and social dynamism, as the archaeological record suggests.
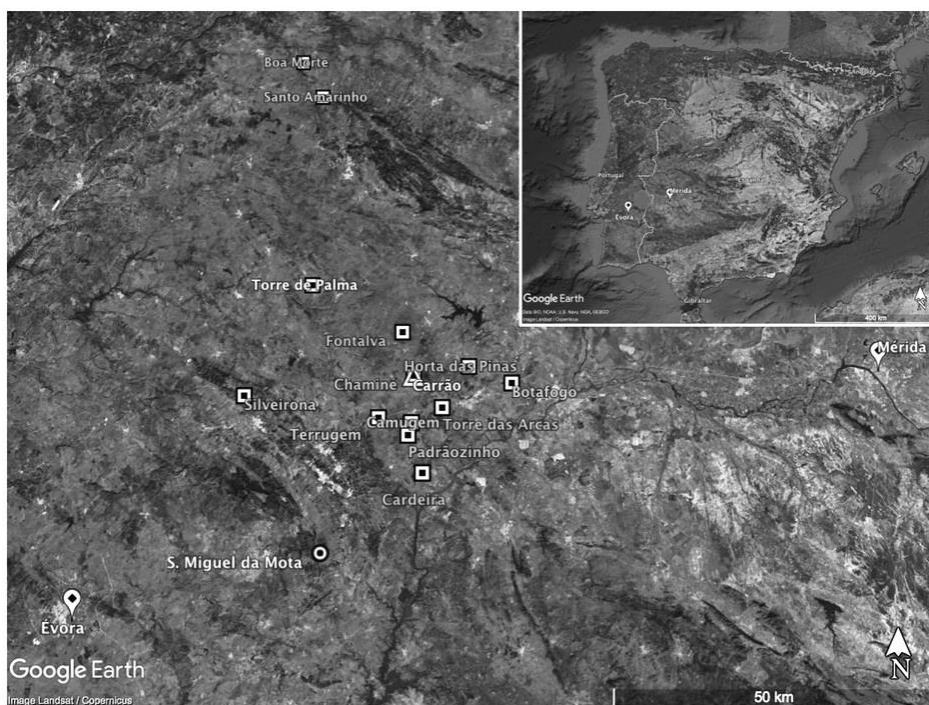

Fig. 1 – Location of the geographical area of analysis in the Portuguese territory. (Google Earth. Adapted by the author).

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[3] Rolo 2018.

3. THE LOOK

The conceptual approach that guides the present article is rooted in the idea of the archaeological funerary record as a context of a liminal and polyhedral nature. On the one hand, and similarly to the leading role attributed in Cocteau's film to the mirror as a "the border through which the characters traverse the film's two worlds"[4], the funerary record is understood as a context in which different dimensions of the daily life of individuals and communities intersect. It is a border between different spheres – the dead and the living; the worldly and the heavenly; reality and mythology/ religion; the individual/ the self and the society/ the others, etc. On the other hand, the multiple aspects composing the funerary archaeological record (ritual practices, tomb architecture, funeral offerings, spatial organisation and funerary topography) and their variability point to multiple causes or motivations and, ultimately, to a plural society, comprised of individuals with different backgrounds and life paths. The treatment of death is hence understood as the embodiment of key social and cultural values, and death rites as a dynamic process. From this perspective, it is assumed that funerary practices "offer important insight into the perception and representation of 'self' and the visual showcasing of various aspects of identities"[5].

In the regional framework, there is a fluidity between indigenous tradition and Roman influence in the treatment of death, alongside an evident persistence of the symbolic dimension of the funerary spaces in use since at least the Iron Age. This seems to reflect a process of gradual cultural transformation and appropriation, which goes far beyond "a simplistic reading in terms of antithetical oppositions between change and continuity"[6]. Bilateral interaction and 'negotiation'[7] between autochthonous populations, foreign contingents, and the new political-administrative authority may largely explain the difficulties in clearly identifying the so-called "'us-them' boundary"[8] in the funerary record.

The present approach and interpretation of the known data for the geographical and diachronic framework under analysis are largely conditioned by the limitations of this same data. The amount of available information, although vast, is unbalanced. Literary sources for this western area of the Empire during the Roman and late antique periods are scarce. Furthermore, most of the known information comes from excavations carried out in the mid-20th century, many of them by amateurs and the curious. These archaeological works were generally characterized by the interest in collecting the maximum possible quantity of artefacts in a good state of conservation, in contrast with the absence of methodological, contextual or stratigraphic concerns. The field records are deficient or even inexistent, and the collecting of ecofacts and osteological material was neglected. In addition to these limitations, there is a clear

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[4] De Velde 2020.
[5] Carrol 2013: 573.
[6] Johnston 2017: 14.
[7] Mihajlovic 2014: 194; Carrol 2013: 573.
[8] Marshall 2001: 49.

imbalance between the information available for habitat sites and funerary contexts, the former being clearly superior in numerical terms, with one funerary context for every 10 Roman habitat sites[9].

Due to such constraints, the emphasis of our analysis lies on the formal typology of the tombs, funerary rites (incineration or inhumation) and, in particular, on the material culture identified in these necropoleis (grave goods, adornment/ clothing elements, and funerary epigraphy). We recognize that this approach may seem too simplistic or reductive, since the multidimensionality of the funerary archaeological record, the performative character of the commemoration and treatment of death, as well as the complexity of identity expression go far beyond the material culture identified in this kind of context. This is, however, an attempt to portray the communities that inhabited the region during Antiquity and Late Antiquity, through the identification of presumable identity marks.

4. THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE 'LOOKING GLASS'

For the regional area under analysis, and in light of the current state of research, any intention to study the construction of individual identity based on variables such as age, gender or ethnicity is seriously conditioned. In general, the available data does not allow studies of a paleoanthropological or archaeogenetic nature. Nor do they enable us to identify the status, gender, age, or cultural and religious background of the individuals, based on the necropoleis' spatial organisation patterns (the differentiation of burial areas with distinct funerary characteristics and practices). It is worth noting, for example, that for the majority of Northern Alentejo necropoleis, the attempt to identify female or child-age individuals among the communities represented in those funerary spaces is based, exclusively, on material culture, specifically on the presence of certain elements, such as adornment objects (hairpins, earrings, etc.) or shells[10]. Yet, as we well know, this interpretation is not a linear one, since the differentiated treatment that particular individuals may have received at the time of their death, according to age or gender, does not always have a clear and direct expression in the funerary archaeological record[11].

Despite the limitations of the available data, and regarding the construction of identities and their expression in the funerary record, the archaeological evidence of the Roman and late antique period in this rural area of ancient *Lusitania* leads us to two key ideas: variability and stability.

The variability of funerary practices is clearly evident in terms of tomb architecture, burial containers, rituals, and grave goods. If, in some cases, this diversity seems to be associated with the different phases of funerary space usage – see, for example, the necropoleis of Torre das Arcas, Cardeira and Terrugem (Elvas,

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[9] Carneiro & Rolo 2019: 166.
[10] Stroszeck 2012. See, for example, the funerary assemblages of grave 35 of Torre das Arcas (Elvas, Portalegre) necropolis and grave 2 of Herdade do Reguengo (Monforte, Portalegre) necropolis, both with a shell (Rolo 2018: I, 346; IV, Catalogue TDA.eco.001_35; Caldeira 2004: 128).
[11] Belard 2017: 19, 237.

Portalegre)[12] –; in other cases, it can hardly be explained by different chronological frames; seeming rather to reflect social, cultural or economic causes (age, gender, ethnicity, rank, family traditions, etc.). Consider, for example, the necropolis of Horta das Pinas (Elvas)[13]. It seems likely that the formal diversity of the approximately 60 burials (cremations), dating from the second half of the 1st century AD to the early next century, was related to personal/family motivations, or to the dynamics of the organization of that funerary space. We are convinced that this variability, documented on a local scale, would have manifested itself within communities and between communities, even if framed by the 'normalizing' imperial political-administrative system. In this sense, it seems to reflect not only the different backgrounds of the individuals but also how these backgrounds determined the understanding and appropriation of the idea of 'Romanness' or, if we prefer, the idea of "what 'Roman' was"[14], in the fields of the Empire's most western province.

The observed variability is thereby linked to the image of a plural and, in some cases, culturally 'hybrid' society. This plurality is well expressed in funerary epigraphy.[15] In general, the known examples of funerary epigraphy demonstrate the use of Latin aesthetics, onomastics and formal forms by the local communities[16]. However, and in parallel with this assimilation of the cultural matrix of Roman tradition and with the adoption of the epigraphic habit, these communities did not cease to reveal their recent or incipient 'Romanisation'. This appeared, for example, through the use of onomastics of indigenous origin or the use of Latin onomastics in an indigenous manner – see, for example, the gravestones of *Calaetica Severa* and *Maxuma*, daughter of *Modesta*, from the necropolis of Camugem (Elvas, Portalegre)[17] (Figure 2). The gravestone of *Atilia Maxuma* (Fontalva, Elvas, Portalegre) seems to reinforce this idea of a diverse social fabric, composed of individuals with distinct origins, distinct cultural matrices and different degrees of familiarity with the Roman *modus vivendi*. In this case, the identification of the dedicants stands out: the first dedicant is a female individual identified with *tria nomina* (perhaps indicating a high socio-economic status), while the second is identified through the use of the *cognomen Servatus*, usually associated with the region of *Gallia Narbonensis*, which leads us to think about the presence of elements foreign to *Lusitania*[18].

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[12] Rolo 2018: I.
[13] Rolo 2018: I.
[14] Revell 2008: 38.
[15] The numerical inferiority of rural funerary monuments, in comparison to their representation in urban contexts, reinforces the partial and selective nature of the portrait of society provided by epigraphy (Edmonson 2005: 346).
[16] Rolo 2018: I, 370.
[17] Encarnação 1988, 2017; IRCP 594; Rolo 2018: IV, Catalogue CMG.epi.004, CMG.epi.005.
[18] Encarnação & Rolo 2017.

Regarding this appropriation of the epigraphic habit in local communities' commemoration of death, it seems relevant to have in mind that, on the one hand, the epigraphic habit "was an aspect of culture, not a practical necessity", thus emphasizing its importance as an individual expression (of identity and memory) within the group itself. On the other hand, we should remember that "the use to which people put their literacy is not the same thing as the level of literacy itself"[19].

Fig. 2 – Funerary plaques (marble) from Camugem necropolis (Elvas, Portalegre). (Photos by the author)

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[19] Macmullen 1982: 237, 238, 244.

The funerary evidence allows us to identify burials that, by their formal characteristics and/ or associated material culture, are distinct from the others, suggesting rank, cultural or religious differences. In this regard, it is worth recalling the eminently rural nature of the territory under analysis, inhabited by communities that would be mainly dedicated to agricultural activities and the exploitation of any other endogenous natural resources, namely mining and marble extraction[20]. This is the portrayal that we can draw from, for example, the metallic tools (associated with agricultural activity, cattle-raising and carpentry) collected in graves of the Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa) and Torre das Arcas (Elvas) necropoleis, as well as in the archaeological sites of Fontalva and Terrugem (Elvas)[21] (Figure 3); or even from the votive epigraph dedicated by a *marmorarius*, of servile condition, to the indigenous deity *Endovellicus*, worshipped at the sanctuary of São Miguel da Mota (Alandroal, Évora)[22].

Generally speaking, the most prominent idea is that the economic resources available to these communities would enable them to have access to imported goods, such as, for example, fine ceramics (*terra sigillata*, fine-walled ceramics and lamps) and glass vessels, redistributed by the provincial capital, *Augusta Emerita*. However, at the same time, these resources would impose the need for thorough management and the concern with making the most of the 'useful life' of the material culture. See, for example, a plate of Hispanic *terra sigillata* form Draggendorf 36, from the necropolis of Horta das Pinas (Elvas, Portalegre), which, having a hole in the base (internal and external), was repaired with lead, apparently so it could still be used (Figure 4)[23]. See also the plate of African Red Slip Ware (D fabric) form Hayes 61A, attributed to the archaeological site of Carrão (Elvas, Portalegre). This item, presumably a "liturgical plate"[24], still has a metallic clamp and the holes for other identical elements, with the function of keeping the fragmented plate whole (Figure 4)[25]. In this case, one cannot avoid questioning to what extent the presence of this curated artefact can be interpreted as an attempt "to perpetuate Roman cultural values and meanings at a time of increasing disruption and change"[26], rather than as a reflex of the socio-economic status of its users.

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[20] Marble has, since Roman times, been one of the main economic resources exploited in the region under analysis. The limestone massif of Estremoz, which crosses (in a NW-SE direction) the territory of the present-day municipalities of Sousel, Estremoz, Borba, Vila Viçosa and Alandroal, is an impressive feature in the landscape, in the transition between Northern and Central Alentejo. Recognized for their exceptional quality, the 'Marbles of Estremoz - Vila Viçosa' have been exploited on a large scale since Roman times (Alarcão 1988: 144; Álvarez Pérez et al. 2009: 63).

[21] Rolo 2018: I; IV.

[22] IRCP: 577-578, n.º 497.

[23] Rolo 2018: IV, Catalogue HPI.tsh.0035.

[24] Deus, Louro & Viana 1955: 569. As we have pointed out on another occasion (Rolo 2018: I, 356), we have no data to attest a ritual and religious use for the artefact in question, as suggested by its 'discoverers' in the middle of the last century. Nor is it possible for us to infer whether the repair of the plate took place between the early 4th and early 5th centuries AD, according to the chronology associated with the Hayes 61 form (Hayes 1972: 107), or at a later stage.

The reference to artefacts attributed to the Roman *villa* of Carrão is important, since the community that inhabited the site is thought to have used Chaminé's necropolis (Rolo 2018: I, 170, 192-193).

[25] Rolo 2018: IV, Catalogue Carrão.tscl.002.
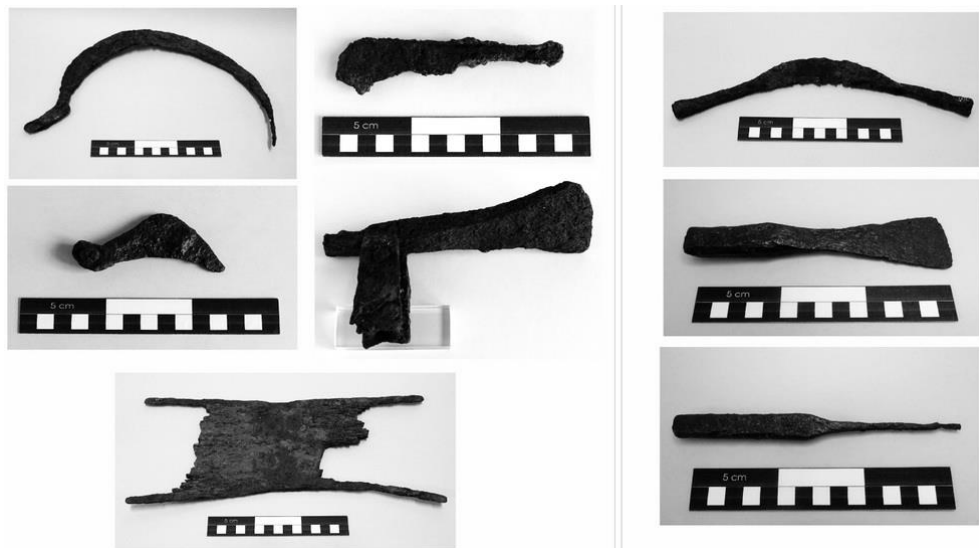
[26] Swift 2015: 112.

Fig. 3 – Metallic tools (iron) from the sites of Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa, Évora), Torre das Arcas, Fontalva and Terrugem (Elvas, Portalegre). (Photos by the author)

Fig. 4 – Curated Red Slip Ware plates from Horta das Pinas necropolis and Carrão Roman *villa* (Elvas, Portalegre). (Photos by the author)

In a social framework apparently characterized by communities of modest resources, the few known examples of what we would call 'privileged graves' stand out. The marble sarcophagi documented at the archaeological sites of Eira do Peral and Herdade de Botafogo (Elvas, Portalegre), or even the sarcophagi identified at Torre de Palma (Monforte, Portalegre) and Silveirona (Estremoz, Évora)[27] seem to be illustrative examples of these 'privileged graves'. Likewise, the funerary epigraphy and some of the grave goods found in these necropoleis also suggest a differentiated socio-economic status and the existence of local elites. Regarding epigraphy, see, for example, the funerary plaque dedicated to the couple *Sextus Soius Quartius* and *Catinia Maxsuma* (1st century AD), from Camugem necropolis (Elvas, Portalegre) and probably associated with a tomb structure of the mausoleum type[28]. See also the set of Palaeochristian epigraphy, dating from the 6th century AD, from the necropolis of Silveirona II[29], which brings us not only to a new cultural and religious milieu, but also to the emergence of new elites in the rural world. Three particular examples of grave goods are outstanding. Chronologically disparate, they are representative of different funerary contexts and practices. Firstly, there is the antennae sword, type Arcóbriga/ Quesada VI[30], from the Late Iron Age urnfield identified at the Chaminé site (Elvas, Portalegre)[31]. Interpreted as an item of prestige and social distinction[32] (and possibly of gender differentiation), it seems to point to the stratification of the indigenous communities that inhabited this territory when the Romans arrived. Secondly, there are the two silver weight plates from tomb 84 of Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa, Évora)[33] (Figure 5), probably linked to the professional activity of the deceased (possibly related with trade). Thirdly comes the silver spoon with the inscription '*Aelias vivas in Chr*(isto)', found in one of the tombs (presumably a child's grave) of the late antique necropolis (4th-6th centuries AD) of Terrugem (Elvas, Portalegre)[34]. This votive-liturgical object can be interpreted as an attribute of status within the local community, but also as a symbol of the new emerging religiosity and the growing implantation of Christianity in the countryside.

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[27] Rolo 2018: I, 158-160; Carneiro 2014: II, 201; Pires 1901: 212; Cunha 2008: 105 and 232.

[28] On the epigraph, see IRCP 597. See also Rolo 2018: I, 262; IV, Catalogue CMG.epi.002.

[29] Cunha 2008: 91-97; Dias & Gaspar 2006: 204-209.

[30] Quesada Sanz 1997.

[31] Rolo 2018: IV, Catalogue CHA.mt.047.

[32] Fabião 1998: I, 392.

[33] Rolo 2018: II, Anexo 1; IV, Catalogue PDZ4.mt.012_84 and PDZ4.mt.013_84

Tomb 84 of Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa, Évora) necropolis corresponded to an incineration grave, datable from the middle of the 1st to mid-3rd century AD, and which included the two silver plates and five coarse ware pottery vessels among the grave goods (Rolo 2018: II, Anexo 1).

[34] On Terrugem's spoon, see HEp 30100; García y Bellido 1971: 93-94, fig. 1; Rolo 2018: I, 255, 371; IV, Catalogue TRG.mt.012. See also Carneiro & Rolo 2019: 175-177, Fig. 7.

Fig. 5 – Weight scale plates (silver) from Padrãozinho necropolis (Vila Viçosa, Évora): tomb 84, mid 1st century – mid 3rd century AD. (Photos by the author)

In fact, during Late Antiquity, the phenomenon of death took on a new understanding in the light of the Christian faith. At a regional level, cremation and inhumation coexisted from the second half of the 2nd century until the middle of the 4th century AD, as can be seen at the necropolis of Torre das Arcas (Elvas, Portalegre)[35]. With a usage diachrony running between the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 7th century AD, most of the burials identified at Torre das Arcas are datable to the 2nd and 3rd/4th centuries AD. The coexistence of the two funerary rites during this phase of the necropolis' use and the diversity of the tomb architecture, with formal models common to cremation and inhumation graves, is in line with the idea that "the choice of cremation or of inhumation during the first three centuries AD cannot be referred to by different funerary speeches, but more probably with two modes of expression of the same speech"[36]. During the late antique period, funerary practices point to a gradual shift in the mental, cultural and religious framework of local communities. As has been observed in the Camugem necropolis (Elvas, Portalegre), where High Imperial gravestones were reused as construction material for late antique graves (inhumations) [37], this 'recycling' of material culture and the reuse of old graves for new burials (see, for instance, the apparent reuse and reconversion of incineration graves into inhumation graves in burials 67 and 68 of Torre das Arcas necropolis, Elvas, Portalegre[38]) lead us to infer "a dramatic transformation in cultural norms"[39]. The loss (or replacement) of old symbolic

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[35] Rolo 2018: I, 221-238.
[36] Blaizot et al. 2007: 318.
[37] Rolo 2018: I, 259-266.
[38] Idem: I, 225-226.
[39] Swift 2015: 112.

references (namely, the importance of the memory of ancestors, direct or not) was combined with "pragmatic limits to the construction of identity by the burying group"[40], as seen, for example, in the usual occurrence of charnel assemblages[41].

The aspiration for Resurrection and Eternal Glory led to the adoption of new funerary practices – in general terms, a gradual prevalence of the inhumation rite, a decrease in the grave goods and epigraphic habit, and a new organization of the funerary spaces. In the necropoleis *ex novo*, the graves were aligned in a West-East direction, to ensure the desired 'awakening' of the neophytes. See, for example, the necropoleis of Santo Amarinho and Boa Morte (Marvão, Portalegre), in which the alignment of the graves reveals an intentional care in the arrangement of those funerary spaces[42]. In parallel, the sacrality of the religious buildings and of the potential presence of tombs of martyrs (or individuals seen as models of virtue by the communities) also became a focus of attraction for the new burials, similar to what is known, for example, in the late antique basilica of Torre de Palma (Monforte, Portalegre) or the Palaeochristian necropolis of Silveirona II[43].

Despite the countless motivations and socio-political and religious changes that dictated the diversity of the funerary landscape in Northern Alentejo, between the late Iron Age and Late Antiquity, the idea of stability also stands out. Several necropoleis in this regional area – such as, for example, Chaminé, Terrugem and Torre das Arcas (Elvas, Portalegre), or Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa, Évora)[44] – document long diachronies of use. These long diachronies are not necessarily synonymous with the uninterrupted use of the funerary spaces. Rather, they invariably reflect a preferential use of these spaces as necropoleis and places of memory by different communities at different moments. Note, for example, the stability of the funerary topography at Chaminé (Elvas, Portalegre). In Chaminé, around 225 burials and, at least, (though partially overlapping) four different phases of funerary use have been identified: the urnfield, datable to the end of 4th century – early 2nd century BC; a second phase, dated from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD and overlapping the urnfield, with cremations *in busta*[45]; a third moment documented by 25 burials (inhumations) from the 3rd-4th centuries AD; and a last phase, documented by 50 inhumations datable to the 5th-7th centuries AD[46]. It is interesting to observe that the group of High Imperial tombs identified maintained, in general terms, the same formal characteristics as the urnfield burials of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC – cremations with deposition in pottery urns,

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[40] Pearce 2015: 474.
[41] See, for example, the 50 burials, datable to 5th-7th century AD, identified at Chaminé (Elvas, Portalegre). Except for two burials that did not provide any osteological material, all the others contained one or more skeletons (up to eight skulls per grave), with the ossuaries placed in the foot region, next to the sidewall of the grave, or in an attached cavity built for that purpose (Rolo 2018: I, 187-188).
[42] Prata 2012: 84, 146, 180.
[43] Carneiro & Rolo 2019: 167-168; Cunha 2008: 81-82.
[44] Rolo 2018: I.
[45] Idem: I, 179-187.
[46] Idem: I, 179-197.

placed in simple pits, signalled by small stones –, differing from the Late Iron Age tombs in the type of grave goods – *terra sigillata*, thin-walled ceramics, lamps, glass vessels[47]. This continuity of pre-Roman cultural practices, together with the incorporation of new cultural forms and a new material culture, points to "the complexity of syncretism and changing social contexts"[48], as well as to the different rates of 'acculturation' and redefinition of behaviour and identities on an individual and group scale. In addition, this intensive use of space, associated with the phenomenon of 'overlapping necropoleis' leads us to consider that Chaminé, as well as other funerary spaces with similar evolutionary processes, may have functioned as ""neutral sites"", i.e., "points of intersection between past and present, points of divergence between selves and others"[49]. Whether for cultural affinity or opportunistic mimesis, it is evident that these communal necropoleis became, over time and for different communities, 'symbolic landmarks'; as if visual reminders, with social impact[50].

5. FINAL 'REFLECTIONS'

First and foremost, the most prominent idea is of the archaeological funerary record as the 'reflecting surface' that gives us back one image (not necessarily a global and accurate image) of the deceased, their family, and community. This image, partial and selective (as is the nature of the archaeological record itself), may be easily misunderstood and, consequently, distorted. The intentionality of the gesture (that reflects the self and the others) in funerary practices is not always tangible. Therefore, tracing and interpreting the underlying motivations for funerary practices' diversity (different social, economic, cultural or religious factors; distinct phases of use of the burial grounds; different communities; different identities) becomes a complex task. The archaeological funerary record seems to be converted into "a no man's land where one hovers between life and death"[51].

Overall, the funerary evidence known for this geographic area highlights the idea of necropoleis as "places in which collective memories were constructed and maintained"[52]. These burial grounds stand out as symbolic and territorial references, in some of the cases, like Chaminé (Elvas, Portalegre) or Padrãozinho (Vila Viçosa, Évora), for a long term and for different (generations of) communities. At the same time, the funerary evidence also reflects the image of regional variability and of a plural and fluid society. The expression of one's local roots did not exclude the possibility of commemorating death "in the Roman fashion", and therefore of

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[47] Idem: I, 180-187.
[48] Fear 1996 *apud* Revell 2008: 111.
[49] Johnston, 2017: 36. As far as funeral ceremonies are concerned, rituals tend to be gatherings, thus amplifying the social dimension of these spaces.
[50] Smith et al. 2018: 243-250.
[51] Cocteau 1994.
[52] Torres-Martínez et al. 2021: 13.

affirming oneself as a part of the Roman world[53]. We are, thus, faced with a kind of double 'mirror effect' – on one hand, funerary practices as the ultimate form of expression for posterity of individual or collective identity; and, on the other, as the reflection of a process of fairly conscious transformation, along which the rural communities living in this peripheral area of the Roman Empire were, "like Rome herself, (…) continually being reimaged, (…) discursively [renegotiating] the bonds of inclusivity and exclusivity – the ideas of the self and the other – and the meaning of those bonds"[54].

ABBREVIATIONS

HEp = *Hispania Epigraphica*.
IRCP = ENCARNAÇÃO, J. d' (1984), *Inscrições romanas do Conventus Pacensis*. Coimbra: Institute of Archaeology of the Faculty of Humanities of Coimbra University (Portugal).

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[53] Carroll 2013: 573.
[54] Johnston 2017: 13.

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ROMAN-BYZANTINE PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGN ARMIES AND PEOPLES IN THE MILITARY TREATISES OF LATE ANTIQUITY (4TH TO 7TH CENTURIES)

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Abstract

The Roman ethnography of Late Antiquity is mainly divided into two distinct genres: the patristic and the secular writings produced by Christian and non-Christian authors, which incorporate elements of the Greco-Roman ethnographic models, and several *topoi* from the classic authors (Herodotus, Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus). The texts that provide more detailed information about the military customs of foreign peoples are the historical narratives (Jordanes' *Getica*, Procopius' *History of Wars* and Theophylact Simocatta's *History*) and the military treatises. It is precisely in this latter subgenre of military literature that we can find various descriptions relating to the equipment, tactics and military organization of the armies of some of the ethnic groups who, during the contemplated period, invaded or settled within the *limes* of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires (E.g., Persians, *Heruli*, Huns, Avars, Slavs, Franks, Lombards). Similarly, these treatises included some of the military and non-military customs of the conquered civilizations, useful for the instruction of imperial generals and soldiers. The purpose of this work is to analyse in detail the passages of war manuals from this period (the *de rebus* bellicis, Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, Urbicius' *Epitedeuma*, and Pseudo-Maurice's *Strategikon*) that describe the armies of each *ethne* (from the *Barbaritas* and the oriental borders) that faced the Romans and Byzantines; as well as identify the main literary technics used by the authors to represent the enemies and the peoples who inhabit the Empire and their goals in including this type of information in their writings.

Keywords

Late Antiquity; Ethnography; Military Treatises; *de rebus bellicis*; *Epitoma Rei Militaris*; Urbicius' *Epitedeuma*; *Strategikon*.

1. INTRODUCTION

This work aims to analyse the various ethnographic information accessible in the military manuals of Late Antiquity, namely in the *de re militari* writings (the *de Rebus Bellicis* and Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris*) and in the Byzantine treatises (Urbicius' *Epitedeuma* and Pseudo-Maurice's *Strategikon*). Through the analysis of these passages, we will try to identify the authors' main intentions in including the military practices of foreign armies and of ethnic groups settled in imperial territory in their idealization of the Roman army of their period. Concurrently, we intend to verify to what extent the foreign military practices mentioned in these writings are corroborated by the remaining works of contemporary military literature, or if they are merely the reproduction of ideas and concepts already established in other Greco-Roman literary trends of the Classical period and/or of the Principate, such as the geographic and climatic determinism in the development of the ethnic groups and the superiority of the Romans' military practices in relation to those of the groups of people conquered by them and those of their enemies. Thus, this work portrays the results of an intertextual and comparative analysis, capable of responding to these questions and establishing to what extent the foreign military practices were relevant to the military theorists of Late Antiquity and whether these effectively influenced the *modus operandi of* the Roman-Byzantine armies.

Furthermore, the development of these questions will be outlined within the broader spectrum of historiographical research focused on the various aspects of Roman-Byzantine military ethnography of Late Antiquity. Mainly, the various studies about the incorporation and evolution of foreign vocabulary in the Roman military lexicon[1], but also those which examine the literary framework of these passages and explore aspects related to the dependence of the writers of military treatises on the literary classicism of this period, transversal to many Roman and Byzantine writers of other types of military literature[2]. Equally important are the investigations that analyse the incorporation of ethnographic information in the military manuals from the perspective of their authors, that seek to identify its usefulness in the construction of the military *ethos* proposed in these works[3]. Ultimately, the studies with archaeological and anthropological evidence will be used wherever possible to corroborate the practices described in the military texts mentioned above[4].

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[1] Rance 2014; Rance 2015.
[2] A general outline of these questions can be found in: Haldon 1997; Kaldellis 2013.
[3] Haldon 2013: 386; Kaldellis 2013: 82-88; Rózycki 2021: 85-93, among others.
[4] Curta 2001; Curta 2005.

2. ETHNOGRAPHIC ASPECTS IN THE *DE RE MILITARI* TREATISES OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Among the military treatises written in Latin during the Late Roman Empire, Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris* is the main source of ethnographic information from this period. Written at the end of the 4th century[5] or in the first half of the 5th century[6], this manual provides a lot of information concerning military aspects of the various civilizations that the Romans conquered and/or established contact with. The abundance of data on foreign military customs in this handbook can be explained by the usefulness granted to them by the author, who defends the improvement of the armies of the Late Roman Empire through the incorporation of some of these practices, as well as the need for Roman generals to know them in detail in order to make effective decisions in enemy territory.

Conversely, the inclusion of aspects of the military *praxis* of ethnic groups who had already been defeated and/or integrated into the empire at the time of the treatise's writing, shows, on the one hand, the military relevance attributed to them by Vegetius, and on the other, the author's need to incorporate in his text several *topoi* from Greco-Roman literature that describe this type of practices[7]. Vegetius' need (as well as that of other military manuals writers of Late Antiquity) to incorporate these literary descriptions serves mainly two purposes: legitimize several military ideas and concepts that he describes through the reproduction of excerpts from many writings of military *auctoritas* (which he identifies at various points in the manual[8]), partly because the author would have little to none military experience[9]; and to facilitate the understanding of his ideas by the readers and his target audience who, for the most part, would be familiar with the works he consulted and quoted. However, unlike the other treatises of Late Antiquity, much of the ethnographic information contained in this treatise is presented in the form of *exempla* that emphasises a certain value or practice that should be encouraged by the Roman generals and put into practice by their armies.

Vegetius' interest in this type of information can be seen in his warning about the need to know the habits of the foreign peoples (and the diplomatic relations they established between themselves) before attacking them, punishing military officers who conducted an expedition in enemy territory without exploring and spying on it

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[5] During the rule of Theodosius I (379-395): Mazzarino 1956: p. 487-489 and 542-543; Sirago 1961: 467-475 and 493; Chastagnol 1974: 59-80; Barnes 1979: 254-257; Sabbah 1980: 131-155.

[6] In the reign of Valentinian III (425-455) or Theodosius II (408-450): Gordon 1974: 35-55; Goffart 1977: 65-100; Birley 1985: 57-67.

[7] A summary of the origins of Greek Ethnographical writings can be found in: Skinner 2012: 233-253.

[8] Veg. *Ep.* 1.8., 2.3.

[9] Milner 1996: xxxv-xxxvi; Richardot 1998: 8; Monteiro & Braga 2009: 89.

beforehand[10]. In spite of this exhortation, which reproduces the warning presented by Polybius about the need for the Roman armies to carry out a good reconnaissance of enemy territories[11], and the relative lack of this type of operations in the Latin sources, especially those that describe the armies of Late Republic and of the Principate, there are some examples of Roman generals (Julius Caesar and Agrippa[12]) who efficiently used the information acquired by the *speculators* and *exploratores*[13] during their expeditions and in periods of peace. Overall, the efficient use of the information provided by spies and scouts would fall to the leaders of the Roman armies, such that in this military treatise one can find a direct appeal to the commanders of this period to promote this type of practices, which would have fallen into disuse[14].

In view of the importance given by Vegetius to the generals' knowledge of this type of information, it is not surprising the frequent mentions of military aspects of the enemies' armies, which brings the manual closer to other Roman literature that focuses on the history and evolution of the ethnic groups regarded as barbarians. It is the case of Tacitus' works, well known by Vegetius, as well as those of other later writers, such as Jordanes, Procopius and Gregory of Tours. The influence of these writings, as well as that of other types of military narratives, can be seen in the opening chapters of the treatise[15], which present a brief ethnographic categorisation of the foreign armies that the Romans defeated and of their main strengths, only surpassed by the discipline of the Roman armies. Notwithstanding Vegetius' main intentions in including these passages at the beginning of the manual, which were certainly not to develop an ethnological description of the conquered peoples, but rather a comparative physiology of Roman recruitment[16], the information presented makes it possible to establish some of the aspects considered more distinctive by the military authors of Late Antiquity of the foreigners who faced the Romans.

Among these, it is worth mentioning the allusion made to the tall stature of the Germanic soldiers when compared to that of the Romans, already mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus and Julius Caesar, who compares it to the Gaulish warriors[17].

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[10] Veg. *Ep.* 3.6., 4.27.

[11] Polybius gives as an example Hannibal's campaigns in the Italian peninsula, which were only successful because of the Carthaginian general's prior orders to his scouts and spies to reconnoitre this territory and the *modus operandi* of the Roman armies and the other Latin peoples: Plb. *Hist.* 3.48.

[12] Caes. *Gal.* 5.8.1.; Tac. *Ag.* 38.2.

[13] It is not possible to establish with precision the differences between these two groups of soldiers. The functions of the *speculatores* would be closer to those of scouts and those of the *exploratores* to those of spies: Austin & Rankov 1995: 42-60; Southern 2006: 226. A review of the terms found in Late Antiquity literature to designate the first types of soldiers and the reconnaissance operations in which they specialised can be found in: Rance 2014: 474-501. For the mentions of this type of soldiers in the Roman military treatises see: Rózycki 2021: 155-160.

[14] On Vegetius' emphasis on these operations see: Austin & Rankov 1995: 7 and 13.

[15] Veg. *Ep.* 1.1-2.

[16] Dagron 1987: 208.

[17] Amm. Marc. 16.12.47; Caes. *Gal.* 1.39.1, 2.30.4., 4.1.9. Cf. Milner 1996: 2(n.6).

Likewise, a distinctive aspect of the armies of the Germanic and the peoples of Northern Europe emphasized by Vegetius and other authors, such as Tacitus[18] and Cornelius Nepos, is their large size compared to that of the Roman armies, being frequently represented as poorly organized hordes (*catervae*), that did not follow the military conventions of the Greco-Roman civilizations[19]. The apparent irrationality with which these warriors disposed themselves on the battlefield was perceived by the Romans as one of the features that most distinguished the civilised world (*humanitas*) from the uncivilised one (*barbaritas*)[20].

Moreover, the contrast made by the author between the organisation of the Roman armies and the indiscipline of the barbarian hosts can be found again in the Book III of the manual, when he states that the Germanic peoples believe that only war should be cultivated, putting it above all other areas of society[21]. If, on the one hand, Vegetius praises the fact that the Lacedaemonians and the Romans of the Republican and Principate period have encouraged this art, for example through the production of military treatises[22], and that it is necessary to foster some of these practices which, at the time of the author, were neglected, on the other hand, he denigrates the barbarian peoples for having allowed themselves to be dominated by war[23].

The military indiscipline attributed to the armies of the ethnic groups that Vegetius generically designated as 'barbarians' appears to be a common subject within the *de re militari* writings of this period. Indeed, in *de Rebus Bellicis*, a military and economic handbook written very possibly in the 4th century[24] by an anonymous author whose military knowledge does not come from direct battlefield experience[25] but from other works of military literature[26], the superiority of the military practices of the *humanitas* over those of the *dolosi barbari*[27] is also verifiable. According to the anonymous, the superiority of the Romans was justified not exactly by the greater discipline of their armies, as Vegetius argues, but rather

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[18] One of the mains sources in the descriptions of the Germanic peoples in military literature: Krebs 2012: 29-56.

[19] Veg. *Ep.* 1.1., 2.2.

[20] As seen bellow, the contrast between *humanitas* and *barbaritas* is tangible in many military treatises: Woolf 1998: 54-60; Rózycki 2021: 86-87.

[21] Veg. *Ep.* 3.10.

[22] Some of the Roman authors of these manuals are quoted in: Veg. *Ep.* 1.8., 2.3.

[23] Idea also presented in: Sen. *Ira*, 1.11.3-4.

[24] Despite the existence of several hypotheses that point to a redaction already in the 5th or 6th century, it is accepted by the majority that the *terminus post quem* for the elaboration of the work corresponds to the death of Emperor Constantine in 337, and the *terminus ante quem* to the disaster of Adrianople (378): Sánchez-Ostiz 2004: 16-20.

[25] *de Reb. Bell.* 12. About this issue see: Sánchez-Ostiz 2004: 14-15 and 132. However, the author's military inexperience is not entirely consensual: Jones 1964: 354.

[26] The anonymous writer shows direct or indirect knowledge of the writings of Xenophon, Philo of Byzantium, Vitruvius, Caesar, Suetonius, among others. Cf. Giardina 1989: xxxiii-xxxv; Ireland 1984.

[27] Generic designation used by the anonymous, which included not only the peoples situated on the northern frontier of the empire, but also the Persians and other southern ethnic groups: *de Reb. Bell.* 6.1., 19.4. Cf. Ireland 1979: 127-128; Bruzzone 1994-1995: 20-21.

by the inexistence of technicians in the foreign armies, whether Germanic or Persian, capable of building and using effectively siege engines[28]. However, this idea would not be entirely true, but rather an emulation of the Latin writers' anti-barbarian sentiment already stated in some works of the Roman literature produced during the Principate[29]. Evidence of this can be found in several contemporary and later examples in which not only the use of siege engines by foreign armies is attested, but also the exchange of military knowledge between the Roman generals and soldiers and those of the so-called 'barbarian' peoples[30], a phenomenon that, as we shall see, even the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* mentions.

The overcoming of the enemies' military advantages, listed by Vegetius in the inaugural chapter of this treatise, through the discipline of the Roman armies is emphasized again in the second chapter of Book I, in which the author presents the best geographical and climatic conditions from which soldiers should be recruited and trained. According to him, the best warriors came from areas with a more temperate climate, in the Mediterranean, and this improved their military discipline and efficiency[31]. Accordingly, the peoples who lived in high-temperature climates, mainly the Africans and the Asians ethnic groups, were more astute and intelligent, with a better aptitude for using ruses and other less conventional strategies, but less firm in hand-to-hand combat. On the other hand, populations inhabiting northern regions, such as the Gauls or the Germanic peoples, were better prepared physically for war, but did not possess as much intelligence and military organisation as the Mediterranean folks[32]. This contrast fits with the ethnographic theories developed by Greek and Roman scholars, such as Herodotus, the Hippocratics, Posidonius or Strabo), which advocates the geographical and climatic determinism in the development of various civilizations[33].

Although the influence of these theories on Vegetius' writings is easily verifiable[34], it is possible to find several references in the treatise, some of them somewhat ambiguous, that contradict these ideas. For instance, the inclusion of the Dacians, Moesians and Thracians in the list presented in the manual of the cultures that stood out for their military valour and courage, mostly composed of Italian and Greek cities. The warlike qualities that the author attributes to these civilisations that inhabited the regions near the Danube are so significant that he even associates them with the birthplace of the god Mars[35]. However, Vegetius' praise of these peoples is not the only example in the Roman Empire literature. Dio Chrysostom praised their

[28] *de Reb. Bell.* Pr.7.
[29] Sen. *Vit. Bea.* 26.3.; Tac. *Ann.* 12.45.3.
[30] Amm. Marc. 19.2.8.; Prisc. 1b; Procop. *Goth.* 8.11.27 et seq.
[31] Vitr. 6.1.; Strab. 6.4.1.
[32] Balsdon 1979: 59-64.
[33] On the evolution of this model and his impact in the narratives of Classical Antiquity see: Thomson 1948: 106-110; Nafissi 2018: 162-202.
[34] Irby 2006: 257-260.
[35] Ov. *Fast*. V.251-260.

intelligence[36] and wrote extensively about their habits, in a work that has since disappeared[37]. Therefore, the apparent scarcity of 'chorographical' treatises written in Latin and the relatively general lack of interest in the ethnographic study of the 'barbarians' during the imperial period[38] did not prevent some writers from focusing on ethnographic aspects of these peoples, a tradition that Vegetius sought to continue.

On the other hand, how this theorist views the military value of the various peoples who inhabited temperate regions is also quite different to the way that the writers of the geographical and climate determinism perceived it. If in the *Epitoma rei Militaris* the observations made about the Greek military art are quite laudatory, highlighting their wisdom and warlike characteristics, being the Lacedaemonians the first to write a book on the art of war[39], and their impact on the Romans' art of war that lasted until Vegetius' time, the same cannot be said of the references made to Hannibal and the Carthaginian armies. The military prowess of these people mentioned in the manual is due, according to the author, not to the skill of their generals, but to that of the Lacedaemonians drillmasters who were hired to advise the commanders of Carthage. Among these, Vegetius highlights Xanthippus who, after carrying out a series of reforms on the Carthaginian army[40], managed to defeat the army of Atilius Regulus in a single encounter (255 BC)[41].

Similarly, according to Vegetius, during the Second Punic War (218-202 BC) Hannibal hired a Spartan drillmaster whose recommendations were essential to the many victories the Carthaginian general achieved against the Roman armies. This Greek drillmaster sought by Hannibal was identified by Wheeler as Sosylus[42], a Lacedaemonian scholar who, among other things, taught Greek to the Carthaginian general[43]. Although the surviving fragments of the *History of Hanibal* that he wrote show a thorough knowledge of various military tactics[44], his decisive influence on Hannibal's campaigns advocated by Vegetius cannot be proven[45]. Thus, the reference to this Greek drillmaster in the treatise stems either from the author's ignorance of the main aspects of Hannibal's campaign in Italy or, more likely, from his intentions to discredit Hannibal's military expertise by allocating a big part of it to his military advisor. Likewise, when the author mentions for the first time in the treatise

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[36] Portraying the Dacians as natural philosophers: Sidebottom 2007: 5.

[37] Sidebottom 1990: 180-204.

[38] Rawson 1985: 257.

[39] Veg. *Ep.* 3.pref. However, this cannot be proven, since among the military treatises written in the Archaic and Classical period that have been identified and analysed by modern historiography, none was drawn up by a Lacedemonian.

[40] D. C. 43.24.; Plb. *Hist.* 1.32.; D. S. 23.14.; Cic. *Off.* 3.99.; Flo. *Epit.* 1.18.23.

[41] Veg. *Ep.* 3.pref.

[42] Wheeler 1983: 1-2.

[43] Nep. *Han.* 13.3.

[44] Milner 1996: 63(n.2).

[45] De Man 2006: 79(n2).

Hannibal's victories, he attributes them not to the Carthaginian general's military virtues, but to the Romans' idleness and failure to take up arms after the First Punic War[46], an error that would only be corrected by the military training programme implemented by Scipio in Carthago Nova, in 209 BC[47]. Furthermore, Vegetius also mentions a strategy invented by the Spartans and later used by the Carthaginians and the Romans, which consisted in placing the most experienced soldiers in reserve units that were placed near the first lines of the army so that they could reinforce them if these were broken[48]. Indeed, this tactic was used and perfected by Hannibal, for example, at the Battle of Cannae, and Scipio, during the Second Punic War[49].

So, based in these passages, one can conclude that, although Vegetius generally subscribes to the Greco-Roman theories of geographic and climatic determinism, he does not always choose to adopt them in his descriptions of the military virtues of foreign peoples, presenting several contrasts between the armies of civilizations that inhabited areas with a very similar climate, such as the Mediterranean. These incongruences would come most probably from the author's own intentions in highlighting the martial prowess of the Romans and of the Greeks, as well as from the adoption of other Roman literary conventions in order to appeal to the target public of this treatise.

As mentioned previously, the dichotomy between the Roman and the Barbarian world persisted, and in some instances was accentuated, in the imperial literature of the Late Roman Empire, and in the writings *de re militari* of this period. However, the progressive "barbarisation" of the Roman armies would have led to the growth of the number of distinct identity groups[50], something which alerted many writers of the time who even recommended the extermination of these soldiers[51]. Despite the adverse feeling towards these groups of warriors, their percentage within the Roman units would not be very high[52]. Regardless of the numbers, the opinions against the incorporation of this type of warrior in the imperial armies would have increased during this period, being these shared by Vegetius who, certainly not completely unaware of this phenomenon, attributed to these soldiers some faults, especially their indiscipline[53], in order to try to dissuade the emperor to whom he dedicates the treaty from using them.

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[46] Veg. *Ep.* 1.28.

[47] Plb. *Hist.* 10.20.; Liv. 26.51.3.

[48] Veg. *Ep.* 3.17.

[49] Plin. *Nat.* 30.pref.; Liv. 22.47.6-10.

[50] Some historians associate this growth with the declining of the quality of the imperial armies: Gibbon 1994 (ed. D. Wolmerley): 1 and 623-5; Ferrill 1986: 16; MacMullen 1988: 176; Southern & Dixon 1996: 52-55; Richardot 2005: 63-73 and 293-318.

[51] Amm. Marc. 31.16.8.; Zos. 4.26. Of these authors, the one who adopted a more extreme position is Synesius who proposed the elimination of all officers of barbarian origin in order to proceed to the purification of the army: Sin. *De Reg.* 14-15.

[52] It is estimated that they will never have exceeded about 25% of the imperial soldiers: Elton 2007: 300.

[53] Veg. *Ep.* 2.2.

Thus, in general, the barbarian peoples are seen in the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* as the enemies of the emperor that should be civilised by him[54], an idea which fits with the ideology of the Roman military aristocracy of this period, especially the one linked to administrative positions as is the case of Vegetius, of moral and civilisational superiority towards the foreigner. The presentation of some strategies and weapons used by the 'barbarians' in the manual serves mainly to facilitate the preparation of countermeasures that should be adopted by the Roman officers and not exactly to value military practices of foreign armies, not least because, in certain passages, the adoption by these populations of weapons previously used by the Romans and Greeks is implied. This is the case of the protections used to protect the workers who built and handled the siege engines (*vineae*) which[55], according to the author, were now produced by the barbarians, who called them *cauciae*[56].

The usefulness that the author intends to give to this type of information can be verified in the reference to the need for the imperial armies to once again build military camps surrounded by a moat and with palisades, since only in this way would it be possible to counter the surprise attacks (day or night) of the 'barbarian' horsemen[57]. Although this passage represents a rhetorical exaggeration by the military theorist that advocates that the Roman armies of his time were unprepared and untrained, if compared with other sources of Late Antiquity, it is possible to infer that the auxiliary soldiers of the Late Roman Empire had less aptitude for building fortified camps, when compared with that of the soldiers of the 1st and 2nd centuries, often refusing to carry out this type of task[58].

Likewise, the reference made to the *carrago*[59] ("wagon-city") used by 'barbarian' peoples (first by the Goths[60] and later by the Alans[61], Huns[62], Slavs,[63] as well as other Germanic peoples[64]) to protect themselves from nocturnal attacks appears mentioned in various sources from before and after this period[65], among which Urbicius' *Epitedeuma* should be highlighted[66]. This, once again, serves to exhort the Roman

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[54] Something clearly expressed in: Veg. *Ep.* 2.pref.

[55] These are already mentioned by several authors of the republican period: Liv. 5.7.2., 21.10.10.; Caes. *Gal.* 2.21.3., 3.21.3.; Caes. *Civ.* 1.36.4.

[56] Veg. *Ep.* 4.15. They were built with very light wood, being about 2.40m wide, 2.10m high and 4.80m long: Varandas 2006: 131; Monteiro & Braga 2009: 467(n.232).

[57] Veg. *Ep.* 1.23. See also: Veg. *Ep.* 2.3.

[58] Amm. Marc. 17.6.2., 19.5.2. However, this idea is contradicted in: Amm. Marc. 31.8.9.

[59] In addition to *carrago*, there are other examples of the inclusion of Germanic military vocabulary in this military treatise, as is the case of the word *tufa* which appears in the list of military standards: Veg. *Ep.* 3.5. About this and other Germanic words in the Latin military lexicon of Late Antiquity, see: Rance 2015: 51-93

[60] Amm. Marc. 31.7.5-7., 8.1., 12.11., 15.5.; *SHA Gall.* 13.9.; *Claud.* 6.6., 8.2 and 5., *Aur.* 11.6. Cf. Nefĕdkin 2002: 9-15.

[61] Arr. *An*. 5.22.4.; Claud. *Bell. Goth.* 605.; Amm. Marc. 31.2.18.

[62] Amm. Marc. 31.3.10.; Jord. *Get*. 40.

[63] Theo. *Hist*. 7.2.4-9.

[64] See the following non-specific allusions: Claud. *In Ruf.* 2.124-9.; Claud. *De Cons. Stil.* 1.94.; Malch. 18.1.; Zos. 4.25.3.; Marc. Comes 481.

[65] On the evolution of the use of this term in Roman and Byzantine military literature of Late Antiquity see: Rance 2015: 56-57.

[66] Military treatise drawn up in the 5th century, which mentions this type of tactical arrangement associated

generals for the need to invest in their field fortifications, since the Germanic peoples, by arranging themselves in this way, were able to protect themselves from the nocturnal attacks of their enemies[67]. This appeal is reinforced by the *exemplum* given of the Persians, who, by building camps surrounded by moats, imitated the Romans of old and, due to the characteristics of the terrain in which they fought (drier and sandier), chose to prepare trenches with sacks full of earth that they dug *in loco*[68].

Effectively, characteristics of the *modus operandi* of the enemy armies had influenced how the Romans thought and waged war, something that it is noted frequently by Vegetius, sometimes serving to justify the neglect of a particular practice or discipline of warfare. This is the case of the little relevance given to naumachia in the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* which, according to the author, is because most of Rome's enemies waged war mainly by land[69]. However, this situation would soon change, from 419 onwards, the Vandal naval capacity began to pose a serious threat to the imperial navy, such that in this year a law was enacted (integrated into the *Theodosian Code*) which established capital punishment for imperial citizens who provided technical information related to the construction of ships to the barbarians[70].

Conversely, the critical view with which Vegetius comments on certain practices of the foreign armies is not transposed to the different ethnic groups that lived in Roman territory, and it is common for the author to advise the use of soldiers from a certain conquered area, praising their special skill in the use of a certain weapon or in performing a certain operation. That is the case of the passage that mentions the inhabitants of the Balearic Islands who were the first to use slings for war, having acquired an outstanding skill in its handling[71]. Similarly, the *Bessi* (a tribe from the gold mines of Thrace[72]) are referred as the best sappers, many of them having served as auxiliaries in the Roman armies[73]. However, they were not the only ethnic group conquered by the Romans who were skilled in this type of operations[74], in such a way that the mining operations in the imperial armies were often led by officers of the *legiones palatinae* and of the *auxilia palatina* designated *cunicularii*[75].

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with the barbarians' armies: Urb. *Epi.* 14 (Greatrex & Elton & Burgess 2005: 66).

[67] Veg. *Ep.* 3.10.

[68] Practice that is also described in: Aen. Tact. 32.1.8.

[69] Veg. *Ep.* 4.31.

[70] *Codex Theodosianus* 9.40.24.

[71] Veg. *Ep.* 1.16. Mentioned in: Flo. *Epit.* 1.43.5.

[72] Claud. *Cons. Mal. Theod.* 38-41.; Amm. Marc. 31.6.6.

[73] Veg. *Ep.* 1.11., 4.24.

[74] See, for example, Caesar's comments on the expertise of the Gauls in carrying out these types operations, which according to the Roman general would be the result of their experience in exploiting various iron reserves: Caes. *Gal.* 7.22.2.

[75] Amm. Marc. 31.6.6.

The weapons and military practices of the conquered peoples could have such an importance in the *modus operandi* of the Roman army that, in certain situations, they could be largely disseminated. One of the most paradigmatic examples[76] is the standardization of the imperial war vessels according to the Liburnians model, thereafter called *Liburnae*[77]. The first maritime contacts between this Dalmatian tribe and the Romans are much earlier than the period when Vegetius wrote the manual[78], after they were conquered, they became very useful allies of the the Roman navy, playing an important role, for instance, in Octavian's victory at Actium[79]. Nevertheless, the generalized use of the term *liburna* to designate any war vessel[80] in the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* does not mean the inexistence of other types of imperial war vessels in Late Antiquity, but rather the generalization of this term to refer to light biremes[81].

During the analysis of these passages, it is possible to conclude that Vegetius, far from trying to construct an ethnological description of these peoples, wished to emphasize the relevance and usefulness that some of these practices may have in perfecting the Roman army of his time. In this sense, the aspects of military ethnography presented correspond mainly to *topoi* and *exempla* from other literary works, that the writer uses and replicate in order to legitimise his precepts. Thus, contrary to the Byzantine military manuals of Late Antiquity (mainly Pseudo-Maurice's *Strategikon*), the information about foreign military practices present in the *Epitoma Rei Militaris* is almost exclusively taken from, or at least inspired by the literature from the Roman Republic and Principate. In this way, the analysis of theses passages can be very important for the study of Roman military thinking of Late Antiquity. Despite the introduction of some anachronisms in these descriptions, their inclusion in the treatise allows us to understand how the aristocracy and cultural elites of the time perceived and described the 'other' and the way in which they sought to study and take advantage of his warlike qualities to perfect their military customs.

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[76] Another instance is the use of battle cries by the Roman soldiers of the Principate, inspired by the *barditus* (Veg. *Ep.* 3.18. - *barritus*) of barbarian warcraft: Tac. *Ger.* 4.; Amm. Marc. 16.12.43., 26.7.17., 31.7. *Cf.* Alföldi & Ross 1959: 174-175.

[77] Veg. *Ep.* 4.33.

[78] They date back to the 4th century BC: Liv. 10.2.4.; App. *Ill*. 3.; Var. *R.* 8-9.; Serv. *A.* 1.243.; Lucianus *Am.* 6. It is probable that Vegetius has taken this term from: App. *Ill.* 3.7.

[79] App. *Ill.* 13-16.; Flo. *Epit.* 4.11.

[80] Hor. *Epod.* 1.1.; Plin. *Nat.* 10.63.; Oro. 6.19.8.

[81] Emanuele 1974: 53-54.

3. THE ETHNOLOGICAL SECTION OF PSEUDO-MAURICE'S *STRATEGIKON* (BOOK XI)

Written at the end of the 6th century or the beginning of the following century, the *Strategikon* is one of the most relevant military manuals of Late Antiquity, having exerted a significant influence on several later military manuals written during the Middle Ages, such as emperor Leo VI' *Taktika*, and at the same time, constituting partially a departure from the Greco-Roman tradition of military treatises[82]. This manual is the first to feature a section entirely composed of ethnographic information on the various populations fixated on the frontier of the empire during the 6th and 7th centuries. Largely analysed by the scholarship of the last century[83], but in a way that some researchers now consider to have been rather positivist[84], the Book XI explores many foreign military aspects of this period, although it presents also several ethnographic *topoi* of classical literature, combination that, with few exceptions, represented a novelty within the genre of military treatises[85]. Comprising four chapters, this section describes ethnographical aspects and military practices of the following ethnic groups: the Persians (XI.1.); the "Scythians", i.e. the Avars, Turks and other nomadic civilizations from the steppes (XI.2.); the "light-haired peoples", i.e. the Franks and Lombards (XI.3.); and the Slavs and Antes (XI.4.).

Regarding the description of the Sassanid Persians, the historical enemy of the Romans and Byzantines, and often considered by some scholars as their equals[86], it is important to mention the somewhat derogatory way in which the author presents them, characterizing them as a perverse, hypocritical and servile people, who are, however, obedient and patriotic[87]. Throughout these passages it is possible to identify some literary *topoi* already reproduced in other Greco-Roman military works, namely, in the *de re militari* writings produced during the Late Empire which emphasise the military superiority of the Romans over the Persians[88]. Likewise, these writings also feature the Persians as a treacherous people, but with plenty of military skills that, in certain situations, should be copied by the Byzantines. However, it is possible that the similarities between these works may also exist due to the historical continuity of some of the Sassanid customs, and not to the author's possible use of information from other works[89]. Moreover, these were not the only influences of the

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[82] Rance 2017: 217-219.
[83] Labuda 1954: 167-173; Zásterová 1971; Wiita 1977; Dagron 1987 and 1993.
[84] Kaldellis 2013: 82; Rózycki 2017: 112-113.
[85] Rance 1993: 132.
[86] Mango 1985: 91-118; Dagron 1987: 211-213.
[87] This psychological contrast between the Roman soldier (courageous and obedient) and the Persian (cunning and subservient) is denoted by the author throughout this section: Dagron 1993: 279.
[88] Amm. Marc. 23.6.80.; *de Reb. Bell.* 19.4.; *Panegyrici Latini* 4(10).38.3. Cf. Giardina 1989: 104.
[89] Rance 1993: 138-139.

theoretician who, in describing the ethnographic aspects of these peoples, also drew on his military and/or diplomatic experience[90].

An important aspect presented in the manual is the obedience that the Sassanid warriors had towards their leader, so much so that in the treatise these are the only soldiers that the author does not recommend to be bribed, possibly because they are very difficult to corrupt[91]. Other sources attest to this idea[92], mentioning that most of the deserters coming from these regions were Christians and individuals of other ethnic groups instead of the Persians[93], which were certainly motivated by the Sassanid laws that applied strict punishments to deserters[94]. But this loyalty was not always fruitful for the Persian armies, since if the commander died or the banners were taken down, the soldiers more easily fell into retreat even if they found themselves in an advantageous situation[95].

In a similar way, Maurice's description of the Persians as a group of people who, because they live in a region with very high temperatures, are very resistant to heat, thirst and lack of food[96], is in line with the Greco-Roman theories of geographical and climatic determinism already mentioned, whose influences can also be seen in other passages of this Book[97]. Thus, this description represents a literary *topos*[98] that would not always correspond to the truth, since there are some references in military narratives of Late Antiquity to the defeat of the Sassanid armies caused by the thirst of its soldiers[99]. The mention of the difficulties that the Byzantines had in negotiating with the Persians is also described in numerous Byzantine sources of this period, possibly drawing from pieces of evidence of the byzantine diplomatic and military *praxis*[100]. Actually, the spies, embassies and prisoners of war would remain the main sources of information about the military customs of foreign peoples[101], just as roman prisoners could provide important military intelligence to the empire's enemies[102]. However, many of the examples of this kind of situation were presented by the writers of this period as a justification for the easiness with which the enemies of the

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[90] Something common in other Byzantine military writers, such as Procopius and Menander: Treadgold 2007: 176-310; McDonough 2011: 57.

[91] Wiita 1977: 61-62.

[92] Strano 2009-2010: 184-185.

[93] Procop. *Pers.* 1.15.31-33.; Theo. *Hist.* 2.7.7.

[94] Amm. Marc. 24.5.3.; Procop. *Pers.* 1.14.17-18.; Eva. *Eccles. Hist.* 6.15.; Agath. 4.23.2-3.; Theo. *Hist.* 2.5.7-8.

[95] Procop. *Pers.* 1.15.15-16.; Jo. Eph. 6.26.; Theo. *Hist.* 3.6.3.

[96] Also present in: Amm. Marc. 23.6.77.

[97] For instance the Avars, a people with robust people due to the harsh climate they endured, or the Slavs: Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 11.2. This type of consideration was common to other peoples of the steppes: Amm. Marc. 31.2.4. (Huns); Procop. *Vand.* 3.14.28.; Teo. *Hist.* 6.7.2-4., 6.8.14.

[98] Wiita 1977: 66.

[99] Jo. Eph. 6.36.; Theo. *Hist.* 2. 5. 4-6.

[100] Peeters 1944: 106-109.

[101] On their importance see: Kaldellis 2013: 26-43.

[102] Theo. *Hist.* 2.16.

empire, uncivilised and undisciplined in the eyes of the Byzantines, were able to frequently threaten their territories[103].

On the other hand, although byzantine writers often considered the Persians as barbarians – the basis of these stereotypes had already been shaped by the Late Roman authors – the contrasts that they presented concerning the Roman and Greek cultures provoked some interest and admiration for their civilisation in the eastern Roman Empire, although a position of cultural superiority was generally maintained[104]. This admiration is verifiable not only in the *res gestae* of the 6th and 7th centuries, but also in the technical military literature itself, in which the *Strategikon* is included. Therefore, this tendency can also be seen in the Book XI of the treatise, for example, when the author stresses the fact that Persian officers promote military reflection and strategy, favouring the organisation of their armies over the audacity and impulse of their warriors[105].

Furthermore, there must have been quite a lot of cultural exchange between Byzantine and Persian military scholars, something that can be inferred by the similarities and influences that the byzantine treatises had on Sassanid military writings and vice-versa[106]. Thus, it is not surprising that the byzantine generals sought to incorporate in their armies some of the military practices of the Persians' armies, something that is quite explicit in some passages of the *Strategikon*[107]. However, the information about the military practices of the Persians in this chapter[108] serves mainly to instruct the Byzantine officers on how to prepare and quickly proceed. Accordingly, the ethnographical and military information about their armies is followed by suggestions from Pseudo-Maurice on how to fight against this type of enemy, composed, for instance, of many archers' units who can inflict heavy losses in their adversaries, especially in steep terrains[109]. With this in mind, the author instructs the reader to face them in areas with cold and rainy climates, to which they are not accustomed, because when the rain wets the strings of their bows, the effectiveness of their archers is greatly reduced[110]. The Byzantine commanders should also advance the infantry units in order to fight hand-to-hand the Persian units, to eliminate the danger of the enemy archers' shots[111].

If the Persians were considered by the Byzantines as a civilisation whose military art could be compared in certain aspects to that of the Romans, the same cannot be said of the peoples of the steppes, whom Pseudo-Maurice calls generically

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[103] Pohl 1999: 132-134.
[104] Drijvers 2011: 67-76.
[105] Strano 2009-2010: 185.
[106] Wiita 1977: 64-65; Dagron 1987: 212(n.14).
[107] For example, the author recommends that Byzantine soldiers learn to shoot arrows in the Persian manner: Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 1.1., 12.B.3. Cf. Greatrex 2014: 170; Kardaras 2019: 162-166.
[108] For example, on how they build their encampments, similarly described in: Veg. *Ep.* 3.10.
[109] Procop. *Pers.* 1.18.32-34.
[110] Zach. *Syr. Ch.* 7.3., 9.6.
[111] Procop. *Pers.* 2.18.24-25.

"Scythians"[112], which correspond to the Avars and Turks, whose military customs are described in the second chapter of this book. The anachronistic characterization of these peoples with whom the Byzantines coexisted throughout Late Antiquity was fairly common in the works of the Greek scholars, who sought to reproduce Herodotus' descriptions of the nomadic Scythians in the Book IV of the *Histories*[113].

Therefore, how Pseudo-Maurice describes these ethnic groups, presenting them initially as a shapeless agglomeration of cultures, and only later proceeding to the enumeration of their more specific traits, is very similar to the techniques of cataloguing nomadic peoples used by Roman-Byzantine historians of Late Antiquity[114]. These scholars viewed the steppe populations in a rather negative way, an outlook that Pseudo-Maurice seems to share. According to him, the Avars were quite treacherous, they were not satisfied with gifts and did not easily accept truces and/or agreements. As other byzantine sources show, the successive embassies that the emperors sent to the Khans of the Avars were never successful, due to the supposed opportunism and interests of the leaders[115].

However, contrary to what the Roman-Byzantine writers defended, these peoples had a certain level of social and political organisation, being divided into several families and tribes. Usually, one of these would achieve prominence and overcome the others[116], according to the author of the *Strategikon*, through force and fear[117]. Thus, the way this treatise and other byzantine writings describe the Avars and the nomadic peoples is not without ambiguity, since it tends to attribute some uniformity to them, referring to them all as "Scythians", but, at the same time, portrays their societies as too plural and diverse[118], which is partly due to the fact that this group, at the end of the 6th century, dominated many other nomadic and Slavic populations that had settled in Pannonia[119]. These social and political divisions were also transposed to their armies, which, according to Pseudo-Maurice, did not march in a cohesive tactical arrangement, but rather through small units, each composed of the warriors of each family or tribe, that moved independently.

The Byzantines took most certainly advantage of the dispersion and division of the Avars' armies several times, being one of the key factors to the many victories that the emperors managed to achieve against these peoples, even when Roman armies were outnumbered[120]. Indeed, if the Byzantine generals forced the Avars to

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[112] An overview of how these peoples were perceived in the Byzantine sources of this period can be found in: Carile 1988: 55-87. See also: Dagron 1993: 280; Kardaras 2019: 166-170.

[113] Zásterová 1971: 11; Zásterová 1988: 16-19; Spadaro 2000: 234-235; Strano 2009-2010: 185.

[114] Mathisen 2011: 17-32.

[115] Theo. *Hist.* 1.3.; Men.Prot. 63-66.

[116] Zásterozá 1971: 33-34.

[117] *Idem* 1971: 19-20; Carile 1988: 65; Carile 2008: 17-18.

[118] See, for instance, Theophylact Simocatta's description of 'true' and 'false' Avars: Theo. *Hist.* 8.7.10 ss. Cf. Dagron 1988: 213.

[119] Whalim 2020: 41.

[120] Theo. *Hist.* 2.11.

face them in open combat, they were usually victorious[121]. These defeats in turn diminished their social cohesion and the authority of their leaders, something that can be seen, for example, in the aftermath of the failed Avar expeditions to Thessaloniki and Constantinople in the early 620s, which ultimately allowed the Byzantines to reconquer much of the Balkans[122]. Therefore, the author of the manual incites the generals to take advantage of the supposed Avar's disunion, encouraging some of their tribes to desert the confederation or become allies of the Byzantines, something that might have happened with some frequency[123].

Like the previous chapter, the description given in the *Strategikon* of the military customs of the Avars is proceeded by a series of suggestions on how to best fight the armies of these nomads. Once again, the author emphasizes the importance of the Byzantine infantry, which must counter the advances of the enemy cavalry if the mounted units of the empire were defeated[124]. This suggestion demonstrates a change in the byzantine military thinking towards the Avar's armies, since during Justinian's reign (527-565) the tactics used to repel the mounted archers from the steppes focused on the Byzantine cavalry rather than the infantry, which was to face them in hand-to-hand combat. In fact, the Avar's cavalry is regularly presented in the treatise as an exemplary unit whose armament and tactical provisions were to be copied by byzantine cavalry[125], so these suggestions may have influenced the military reforms carried out during the reign of Heraclius (610-641)[126].

In turn, it is probable that the description of the Turks, an ethnic group also presented in the second chapter of Book XI, is influenced by various *topoi* from Roman literature about the 'barbarians', although there is the possibility that the literary similarities between many of these pieces of information are due to the historical continuity of many of their customs[127]. Characterised by their polyanthropy and by their courage in facing the enemies[128], the Turks described in the manual would correspond to the populations of the Western Turkic Khanate who, because they were often at war with the Sassanid Persians, became one of Romans' natural allies after several embassies were sent from both sides[129]. Likewise, the Turkish nomads were very numerous and independent, neglecting almost all the sciences, being only trained to act bravely in the face of their enemies. Not only is this description close to Herodotus' digressions on the Thracians and to the

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[121] Theo. *Hist.* 8.2.
[122] Haldon 1997: 44-48.; Curta 2006: 90-96; Kardaras 2019: 82-87.
[123] Theo. *Hist.* 8.6.1 *Cf.* Curta 2005: 132. Similarly, there are records of the desertion of the Hunnic army due to the bribing of many of its soldiers by the Romans: Agath. 9.5.
[124] Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 12.B.17.
[125] Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 1.2., 2.1. *Cf.* Kardaras 2019: 166-170.
[126] Kaegi 1979: 226-227.; Karabantis 2005-2006: 28-41.
[127] Rance 1993: 138-139.
[128] Strano 2009-2010: 185.
[129] Men.Prot. 10. *See.* Wiita 1977: 122-123.

ethnographic descriptions of the Northern 'barbarian' peoples[130], but the theme of barbarian fecundity is also used by several byzantine writers of this period[131].

As for the organisation of their armies, they would follow a model very similar to that of the Avars, being dispersed into various units that could support each other or act independently[132]. Although the author recommends the readers to take advantage of the frequent dispersion of the Turkish and Avars armies, their excessive subdivision could be advantageous, as it allowed them to cover a larger area during looting and land-burning operations, as well as giving them more versatility and a greater ability to adapt to adverse situations. In this aspects Pseudo-Maurice praises them[133], comparing their military model to those presented by the Greek and Roman military scholars also composed of several units[134].

If the ethnographic aspects presented in this treatise about the Avars and Turks were more practical due to their mostly military nature[135], the same cannot be said of the description given of the "light-haired peoples", presented in the third chapter of this ethnological section. Shorter than the others[136], this chapter of Book XI deals with the most generic and comprehensive *ethnos* of them all, that of the Germanic peoples, which, besides the Franks and Lombards, could also include other ethnic groups that had settled in Western and Central Europe, such as the Visigoths, Burgundians or Anglo-Saxons[137]. Although Pseudo-Maurice' aim is to differentiate this agglomerate of peoples from the others already described, making them a distinct group of Byzantium enemies, how he describes them is very similar to his characterisation of the Avars and, above all, the Turks. Thereby, these western populations are also portrayed as being independent and free, as well as possessing great courage on the battlefield[138]. As seen in Vegetius' treatise, this description represents a *topos* of the characterisation of the Germanic peoples in the Greco-Roman literature, which dates back to at least the writings of Tacitus[139], and is reproduced by several Byzantine authors of Late Antiquity[140].

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[130] Carile 1988: 64.

[131] Agath. 4.13.7., 5.17.4.; Theo. *Hist.* 7.7.11.

[132] Wiita 1977: 148-149.

[133] Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 1.1., 12.B.17.

[134] Rance 1993: 94, 110-111, 238-239.

[135] And most probably because of the bellicose relation between emperor Maurice and the Avars: Rózycki 2017: 119; Kardaras 2019: 43-48.

[136] Probably because the Romans accumulated the knowledge on how to fight against the Germanic armies through the century-long acculturation: Rózycki 2021: 91.

[137] Rance 1993: 133.

[138] Dagron 1987: 214-215; Dagron 1993: 280.

[139] Tac. *Ger.* 4.

[140] Procop. *Goth.* 7.25.; Agath. 1.2-4. On the influence of this and other *topoi* in the description of the Franks and Lombards in Byzantine military literature of this period see: Cameron 1968: 95-140.; Bachrach 1970: 435-441; Garzya 1983: 171-198.

Similarly, these peoples also despised strategy and tactics which could compromise their military campaigns[141], and were easily corrupted[142], however, unlike the Turks and the Avars, as well as the Slavs, they had a weaker physique, not being able to endure fatigue so easily. Feared by the prowess of their infantry[143], they were more vigorous in hand-to-hand combat than the nomadic peoples, preferring to fight on foot rather than mounted, possibly because their horsemen were easily ambushed when the enemy simulated an escape[144], although this type of tactic was also used efficiently against the other peoples described in Book XI[145], as well as against the Byzantines themselves[146].

Ultimately, the last chapter of the ethnographic section of the manual is dedicated to the Slavs and Antes, incorporating not only a set of practical instructions whose presentation follows the structure of the previous chapters, but also other types of information which goes beyond the main objective of this Book to transmit the main military customs of these peoples[147]. Despite these two ethnic groups being considered in a similar way to the other[148], the Antes, during the period in which the treatise was written, were allies of the Byzantines, a situation that lasted until the end of the 6th century or the beginning of the following century[149]. Like the nomadic and Germanic peoples, the Slavs and Antes are described as two independent ethnic groups[150], who refuse to be enslaved or conquered, are quite numerous and resistant to cold, heat and shortage of provisions. According to Wiita[151], unlike earlier descriptions of the Turks and Germans, this characterisation is not based on an older *topos,* and can be attested in other contemporary byzantine writings[152], however, this opinion is not entirely consensual[153]. For instance, Pseudo-Maurice' description of Slavic women, who were quite sensitive and attached to their husbands, many of them even preferring suicide to live as widows, is associated by some researchers with Herodotus' description of Thracian women[154]; however, this influence is not

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[141] Strano 2009-2010: 187.

[142] Men.Prot. 49.

[143] Agath. 1.14.*,*1.27.*,*

[144] Agath. 1.22. Cf. Rance 1993: 119.

[145] Theo. *Hist.* 2.17.11. (Avars); Procop. *Goth.* 6.5.11 (Ostrogoths); Theophil.Ed. 2. (Persians); Georg.Psid. *de Exp. Pers.* 3.186-212. (Persians).

[146] Procop. *Goth.* 7.13.2-4, 19, 27. (by the Goths); Procop. *Goth.* 7.38.9-14. (Slavs).

[147] Rózycki 2017: 119.

[148] As in: Procop. *Goth.* 7.14.; Jord. *Get.* 5. The Slavs in particular are highlighted by Procopius in his ethnographic descriptions, largely influenced by the *topoi of* classical literature: Rózycki 2017: 120. A similar view of these peoples can also be found in: Pse. Mau. *Strat.* 9.3.7-8., 12.B.20.5.

[149] Jo. Eph. 6.25.; Theo. *Hist.* 8.5.13. Cf. Kardaras 2010: 74-85.

[150] Dagron 1993: 280.

[151] Wiita 1977: 269-270.

[152] Procop. *Goth.* 7.14.28.

[153] Zásterová 1971: 45-57.; Dagron 1997: 213-214.

[154] Zásterová 1971: 48.

certain, since this practice appears associated with other Late Antiquity civilisations[155].

Another feature of these peoples highlighted in the treatise is their ability to counteract the two main weaknesses of their armies: the impatience of their soldiers and their inability to organise themselves in disciplined tactical dispositions[156]. The Slavs and Antes were also known for their hospitality towards foreigners and prisoners of war, which, according to the author, would be a characteristic associated with their religion and culture. However, this friendly treatment is debatable, since other writings from this period describe occasions when Byzantine prisoners were ill-treated and even executed by Slavic armies[157]. In contrast, there are also some examples of individuals of other ethnicities and religions who have managed to integrate into the Slavic society[158]. The danger of Byzantine deserters choosing to take refuge in the territory of these peoples was apparent, so much so that Pseudo-Maurice suggests severe penalties for those who fled and large rewards for those who escaped their territories[159].

According to the manual, the Slavs and the Antes favoured a form of warfare based on ambushes, preferably in forests, and other types of stratagems that sought to instil fear and indiscipline in their enemies[160]. The preference for these unconventional strategies was mainly due to two aspects. Firstly, their armies would not have possessed very efficient cavalry, although Slavic horsemen were often recruited by the Byzantines, as happened, for example, during Justinian's Gothic Wars, since the detachment of mounted Hun archers that integrated the Byzantine army had several ethnic Slavic horsemen[161]. Secondly, the equipment of these soldiers would not be very durable, often being improvised during the campaigns, which in turn meant that the Slav infantry did not pose much of a threat to the byzantine heavy infantry units[162].

Once again, the writer highlights the apparent disunity of these peoples as the main reason behind their military weakness and failures, suggesting to the readers to take advantage of the hostility between the different tribes, persuading some of them with gifts, especially those that inhabit the regions near the frontier[163]. However, the descriptions given in other Byzantine sources allow us to conclude that this division would not be permanent, since sometimes Slav warriors defeated by the Byzantines

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[155] Procop. *Goth.* 6.14.6-7. (Heruli women).
[156] Strano 2009-2010: 187.
[157] Procop. *Goth.* 7.38.20-21; Theo. *Hist.* 7.2.
[158] Theo. *Hist.* 6.8.13., 6.9.1-2. *Vide.* Wiita 1977: 271-273.
[159] Rózycki 2017: 120.
[160] Rózycki 2015: 23-29.
[161] Procop. *Goth.* 5.27.1-3.; Teo. *Hist.* 7.4.11.; Jo. Eph. 3.6.25. Having adopted many of the tactics of these Steppe people: Kazanski 2009: 229-237.
[162] Procop. *Goth.* 7.14.; Jo. Ef. 6.24. Cf. Shlosser 2003:76; Kazanski 1999: 197-236.
[163] Shlosser 2003: 77.

were taken in and protected by other families[164], these being organised by an assembly, in such a way that the imperial officials and diplomats were not always able to manipulate and take advantage of the hostilities and relationships between the various Slav tribes[165].

Moreover, when attacking the Slavic settlements north of the Danube, it is suggested in the manual that the Byzantine generals divide their armies into several units so that the soldiers could attack and plunder a wider area extending up to 20 km from this river. These instructions are very similar to the information presented by the Theophylact Simocatta' descriptions of the imperial expeditions in this region during the 590s[166]. Thus, unlike the ethnographic considerations which opened this chapter, traditionally associated with *topoi* from Greek literature, namely Herodotus' digression on the Scythians[167], these military instructions were based on the author's own empirical knowledge and/or on information found in other works and documentation from the same period[168].

4. CONCLUSION

As can be seen, the inclusion and description of some military characteristics of other ethnic groups in the Roman-Byzantine treatises of Late Antiquity served specific purposes, depending on the work and the writer. On the one hand, by listing the main strengths and weaknesses of the various ethnic groups that the Roman Republic and Empire faced and defeated, Vegetius does not try to elaborate a description and analysis of the most relevant military practices of each *ethnos* inhabiting the empire, but rather a comparative physiology of the Roman recruitment at the time, especially by identifying the most adequate regions to recruit and train the soldiers. On the other hand, the Book XI of the *Strategikon* constitutes the first section of a military treatise composed entirely of ethnographic information, describing the customs of the various peoples surrounding the empire against whom the Byzantines fought and, in some cases, recruited as mercenaries.

Furthermore, the analysis of the passages devoted to this type of information in the military treatises of Late Antiquity, including Urbicius' *Epitedeuma* and the *de Rebus Bellicis*, leads to the conclusion that the authors relied mostly on the descriptions already present in other subgenres of military literature. Thus, it is frequent to find in these treatises military customs already described in other works,

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[164] Theo. *Hist.* 6.8. Cf. Curta 2001: 329.
[165] Theo. *Hist.* 6.2.10-3.1. These passages have been the subject of much debate. Many studies deny their veracity, despite the appearance of Byzantine gold in the territories occupied by these peoples: Barford 2001: 59-60.
[166] Theo. *Hist.* 6.6., 7.5.
[167] Zásterová 1971: 45-57.; Dagron 1997: 213-214. Although this view is not shared by some scholars: Wiita 1977: 269-270.; Rance 1993: 136.
[168] Rance 1993: 135-136.

which are often associated with different ethnic groups that had physiological similarities or inhabited the same regions as the peoples mentioned in these manuals. The use of *topoi* can also be seen in the reproduction of the literary model that defends the geographic and climatic determinism in the development of peoples, quite evident in the first two chapters of the *Epitoma Rei Militaris,* but also present in the descriptions about the Persians in Book XI of the *Strategikon*. Moreover, how this last theoretician describes the practices of the Avars and Turks, presenting them first as a disparate group of ethnic groups, and only later enumerating more specific characteristics of each one, is similar to the techniques of cataloguing nomadic peoples used by historians of this period.

Ultimately, despite the almost stylised form with which a considerable part of this type of information is described, the inclusion of military customs of foreign armies and ethnic groups conquered by the Romans would not merely be the result of an exercise of erudition and/or literary extrapolation on the part of the writes, but mainly a symptom of the impact, and in many instances, diffusion of certain foreign practices in the *modus operandi of* the imperial armies of Late Antiquity.

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