

Raquel Vilaça | Miguel Serra

(editores)

Matar a fome, alimentar a alma, criar sociabilidades

Alimentação e comensalidade nas sociedades pré e proto-históricas

To feed the body, to nourish the soul, to create sociability

Food and commensality in pre and protohistoric societies



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The western Iberia silver hoards: tradition and innovation in Later Iron Age societies commensality

Os tesouros de prata do Ocidente da Península:
tradição e inovação na comensalidade das sociedades da Idade do Ferro Tardia

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Abstract

Western Iberia silver treasures are archaeological complexes remarkable for the fact that, in their diversity, they reveal significant trends about the practice of the *symposion* in the communities of the Later Iron Age of the region.

Among these trends one can count the treasuring and para-monetary ostentation of wealth directly associated with the objects included in the treasures, something which is a tendency of Hellenistic origin but inscribed in a set of traditional practices.

Another element of analysis is the comparison of the use of precious metal serving sets with the use of other sets, namely of Greek vases but also local wares.

Lastly, and to the limited extension to which it is possible, the comparison of the settings in which these commensality practices occur is revealing of the mix of innovation and tradition in the social *praxis* of these communities.

Keywords

Iron Age, Rituals, Silver vases, Symposion.

Resumo

Os tesouros de prata do ocidente peninsular são conjuntos arqueológicos notáveis por, na sua diversidade, revelarem algumas tendências significativas relativas à prática do *symposion* nas comunidades da tardia Idade do Ferro da região.

Entre estas tendências conta-se o entesouramento e a ostentação para-monetária de riqueza, associada diretamente aos objetos, que é uma tendência de origem helenística, mas que se inscreve num conjunto de práticas tradicionais.

Outro elemento de análise é a comparação das práticas inerentes à utilização das baixelas de metal precioso com outras práticas congêneres utilizando outros conjuntos de utensilagem, nomeadamente a cerâmica grega mas também as cerâmicas locais.

Por último, na limitada medida em que é possível, a comparação dos quadros em que estas práticas de comensalidade decorrem é reveladora da interpenetração de inovação e tradição, na *praxis* social destas comunidades.

Palavras-chave

Idade do Ferro, Rituais, Vasos de prata, Simpósio.

Introduction

The aim of this text is to understand and explain an important problem of the evolution of precious metals workmanship and social use in the later stages of the Iron Age of Western Iberian Peninsula: the substitution of gold by silver and the appearance of table ware produced in this latter metal.

The obvious relation of that tableware with commensality practices was, no doubt, in the mind of the organizers of the conference who invited the author to present some ideas on the issue, and indeed there is a relation between those subjects that is worth studying, but the problem is more complex and has other implications that go beyond the practices of commensality.

There is a basic assumption that the issue of the use of silver from the IV c. BC onwards is the result of peninsular communities being faced with a new Mediterranean world, changed dramatically by the conquests of Alexander both in the political realities and the economic ones, in the latter case due to the vast amounts of Persian booty brought to the Greek world (Correia *et al.* 2013: 117; cf. Rostovtzeff 1941: 74-126).

This is a starting point and also a *parti pris*, that extends to societies in the West the traditional narrative of Hellenistic impact in Rome and the broader West (Grimal 1975: 260-263; Rostovtzeff 1926: 5-6) on the basis of the same arguments that are used to propose the existence of a “world system” as far back as the Bronze Age (for the concept Wallerstein 1990: 337-346; cf. the studies by M. Rowlands, K. Kristiansen and P. Brun published in Kristiansen & Jensen 1994). Understanding (and explaining, from that point of view) the range of issues involved, sheds light on an important period of the life of those communities.

The context of the hoards

The silver vases that K. Raddatz (1969 I: 22-25; II karte 2) called “Tagus Group” were exclusively found in deliberate occultations which must relate, due to the historical era in which the vases were used, to major demographic and military upheavals; for these reasons such groups of objects cannot be analyzed as functionally assembled sets without prior examination.

This analysis can be especially useful in two respects: the first is the relationship between hoards, inasmuch their chronological or geographical distribution trends testify the existence of specific phenomena that lead to concealment; the second is the internal relationships of pieces in them (Raddatz 1969: 34-44), considering that its composition can bear witness to a preliminary selection process, which can give indications on the use of such items before their amortization in the hoards. That use is unproblematic regarding coins; not so much with regard to jewelry, but that is a topic for some other occasion; the original use of the vases is problematic and that is what makes it crucial for the present purposes.

Considering that the vases sometimes appear with jewelry, and the latter, with some frequency, appear along with coins and, in one case, the three categories of materials were grouped in a single hoard (Chão de Lamas), spreading the first approach of this issue to all those materials is an essential step, the result of which is presented in the table annexed. Hoards with unclear or insufficient information, either on its composition or about its chronology, were left out (Table I).

The summary table recalls all hoards including silver objects, down to the times of the Sertorian wars, which apparently are an important turning point in the military and economic life of the area. The upper chronological limit of the selection, of course, cannot be precisely determined, due to the lack of clear indicators, such as coins, but typological analyses of some pieces do not suggest dates much earlier than the III c. BC, which is one of the reasons that the assumption that most of these pieces belong to Hellenistic times gains credence. There is, however, some danger of circularity in the argument.

Hoard	Jewelry		Coins		Date BC	Vases 4g	Others	References
	Ag	Au	Romans	Iberian				
Romariz (Vila da Feira)	1 lunula	1 bracelet (?)	71 denarii	1 denarii	74	An amphora (?)	-	Centeno 1977, 209-219; Blázquez 1988, 128 n° 72; Villaronga 1993, 54 n° 123
Viscu	-	1 lunula, 1 torque	-	-	-	-	-	Raddatz 1969, 283.
Coígo (Penacova)	1 fragmented torque	-	20 denarii	-	82-81	-	-	Ruivo 2002, 145-156.
Chão de Lamas (Miranda do Corvo)	1 lunula, 2 twisted torques 1 large figured lunula	-	7 denarii	-	138 (Vill. 148)	2 type Bandera VIIb and a lid.	Fragments of another torque, reduced to scrap?	Raddatz 1969, 274-6; Villaronga 1993, 44 n° 76. Figure 1.
Cabeça da Corte (Soure)	-	-	158 denarii	1 sekobirikkes denarii	74	-	-	Villaronga 1993, 53 n° 114.
Fonte do Alvorge (Ansião)	-	-	17 denarii	-	100	A patera (?)	-	Martin 1966, 338, n° 32.
Casal Ascenso Antunes (Ferreira do Zêzere)	-	-	15 denarii	-	79	-	-	Ruivo 1997, 23 n° 1
Monsanto I (Idanha-a-Nova)	4 fibulae, 4 twisted torques, 1 torque with filigree, 2 plain torques and 3 bracelets	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ruivo et al., in p.
Monsanto II (Idanha-a-Nova)	-	-	-	-	-	1 type Bandera IB, 2 type Bandera II, 1 type Bandera VIIc	-	Raddatz 1969, 279-80; Fabião 2004.
Idanha I (Idanha-a-Nova)	1 twisted torque.	-	4 denarii.	-	89	-	-	Gomes & Beirão 1988. Figure 2.
Idanha II (Idanha-a-Nova)	-	-	1346 denarii	21 moedas	100	-	-	Raddatz 1969, 278; Villaronga 1993, 53 n° 117.
Penhagarcia (Idanha-a-Nova)	-	2 fragmented bracelets, remains of na articulated necklace (?)	110 denarii	-	91 (Vill. 104)	-	-	Blázquez 1988, 122 n° 52; Villaronga 1993, 42 n° 60.
Monforte da Beira (Castelo Branco)	3 (or 4) twisted torques	1 twisted necklace	Non-specified denarii	-	Sec. I	-	-	Raddatz 1969, 282; Villaronga 1993, 45 n° 82
Padrão (Proença-a-Nova)	-	-	-	-	-	2 type Bandera II, 2 type Bandera VII B (a large and a smaller one).	-	Raddatz 1969, 278; Faria 1992, 87-92.
Santarém	-	-	192 denarii	-	74	-	-	Raddatz 1969, 280; Beirão & Gomes, 1985, 482-3. Figure 3.
Santana da Carmota (Alenquer)	3 torques (1 twisted)	10 earrings	134 denarii	2 coins	76	-	1 frag. ingot	Barbosa 1994, 239-244; Ruivo 1997, 34-37 n° 16
Pinhal do Alvarinho (Alenquer)	-	-	c. 1000 denarii	-	c. 125	1 vase with inscription Sucin(us) Asedi (filius)	-	Viegas & Pereira 1984; Villaronga 1993, 49 n° 98; Ruivo 1997, 38-40 n° 18.
Pragança (Cadaval)	1 torque, 3 lunulae	1 torque	-	-	-	2 type Bandera VIIc (1 severely damaged)	-	Hipólito 81-82, n° 116.
Columbeira (Bombarral)	-	-	968 denarii (Ruivo 980)	-	82	-	-	Raddatz 1969, 273-4. Figure 4.
Bombarral	3 torques (1 twisted)	3 Segura/Serradilla type plaques, 1 earring)	?	?	?	1 type Bandera II	1 simpulum, 1 dagger	Villaronga 1993, 53 n° 115; Ruivo 1997, 29-32 n° 12.
Charneca (Torres Novas)	-	-	9 denarii	1 bolskan coin	82	-	-	Ferreira 1977, 203-218; Cardoso 2004, 267-269.
								Villaronga 1993, 54 n° 125; Ruivo 1997, 32-33 n°s 14-15.

Table 1 – Silver hoards in the region between Douro and Tejo.

Geography and chronology: two conjoining realities

The geographical distribution of hoards and their chronology are not two absolutely independent variables, because they are - at least partly - product of military activities, either directly as concealments carried out by soldiers who treasured their stipend or booty (or a combination of both), or indirectly, as indigenous occultations (by individuals or communities) trying to put their possessions to safety, under the threat, real or perceived, of the same military operations. This fact is demonstrated by the relative abundance of hoards of the Sertorian period in the region between the Tagus and the Douro, compared to its shortage in the Guadalquivir Valley (Chaves 1996: 497), obviously a result of a substantial shift of the theater of military operations to the North.

From the point of view of geography, the treasures can be grouped into three distinct areas: the southern access to the Mondego basin (5 hoards, Fig. 11, 3-7), the access to the Cova da Beira (7 hoards, Fig. 11, 8-12) and the peninsula of Lisbon (7 hoards, Fig. 11, 13-19); there are other isolated spots in the territory; such as there is diversity in the chronology of occultations. But what seems a significant point is that the hoards of the last region (Lisbon) are of all Sertorian time, with three uncertain exceptions: Pragança with residual inclusion of vessels; Bombarral altogether uncertain and Pinhal do Alvarinho, of which only three coins could be identified from the thousand originally found, hence of uncertain chronology. The two other regions have more hoards of early date (securely, or presumed because of the unique presence of vases and / or jewelry).

However, the Beira Litoral and Beira Interior show a different chronological spread of hoards:

- In the Mondego region and its southern access, there is not a clear concentration of hoards in any specific time interval; this may be due to the fact that on a commonly used circulation corridor (as the region was, at least since the expeditions of Decimus Brutus Junius), there could have been a multitude of reasons and local problematic occasions leading to occultations, maybe sometimes due to minor events, which left no trace in the sources, but locally perceived as very important. It is also apparently an area where the hoarding was made in smaller amounts than in any of the other regions.

- The Beira shows a clear concentration of treasures (with coins) in 100-89 and an equally important set of occultations without coins. This can be interpreted in two alternative ways: i) a moment of hoarding on a date prior to the dissemination of currency in the territory (Ruivo 1997: 81); ii) hoarding processes carried out simultaneously by communities with a radically different economic behavior. This second model would configure itself clearly as a very marked duality, where the Roman troops hid their salary (and some looted jewelry) while the indigenous hid their tableware and jewels, but this explanation begs out of being simplistic.

Favoring the chronological interpretation, emphasizing the criterion of presence/absence of coins as its indicator for all the regions involved (and not as an indicator of different ethnically explained behaviors) the Chão de Lamas hoard could represent the tipping point where the occultation of vases and jewelry occurs for the first time with the presence of Roman coinage in appreciable amount. The typology of the *lunulae* (with very close parallels in Pragança and Viseu) suggest that these various occultations took place in a rather close timespan (even if the jewelry may have had a long life, it should be noted that *lunulae* are relatively fragile objects and that none of them shows signs of heavy use).

The hoarding of silver vases between the Tagus and the Douro could therefore be generally attributed to dates ranging from the second half of the III c. BC to the first half of the I c. BC, and mostly due to indigenous communities not integrated yet in Roman economic circuits; and indeed the military situations leading to the occultation of the hoards could have nothing to do with the Romans directly, but with the Carthaginian movements in the region, as J. S. Ruivo (loc. cit.) has suggested. The hoard at Santana da Carnota would probably represent an exception, of an occultation by Roman soldiers

that would have looted some jewelry from an indigenous site (very likely Vaiamonte) and hid it with a substantial part of their salary.

These suggestions are important because if indeed we're mainly dealing with occultations uncontaminated by looting activity, then it can reasonably be assumed that the vase sets roughly correspond to actual tableware sets, as they were used by their possessing communities and in this sense not only the pieces individually, but the configuration of the sets themselves can be taken as a significant factor in the study of their original use.

The typological problem: production and exchange

Hemispherical vases

In 1969, K. Raddatz (1969: 86-89) was faced with a typological problem posed by the hemispheric vases present in the Iberian silver hoards (Bandera 1986: 607-694: type I, with variants), combining on the one hand, the evidence of their Mediterranean parallels and on the other, the irregular distribution (with cases in the Black Sea, rare in Italy and Continental Greece, just one Syrian example, and unknown elsewhere). The author decided at the time this academic problem arguing for a "Hellenic model" which would manifest itself, for example in black glaze vessels from Megara, although the exact location of the production or indeed the very nature of the model (metallic vases? pottery?) could not be ascertained.

Interestingly enough, two decades later, the same kind of paradox of the silver vases under consideration was evident regarding the distribution of a particular type of black slip pottery (Shefton 1995: 136-138): the stemless cups with inset lip commonly designated "Cástulo cups" that, generally considered in the Attic pottery class, are in fact rare in Athens and show a peripheral distribution (Black Sea, Iberia).

In both cases it is difficult to indicate the location of the center of production that, for various reasons (largely indeterminate) has resulted in a distribution pattern so irregular, although phenomena like the "preferential market" or the "specific indigenous taste" could have played a role.

In the peninsular case it is in fact highly likely that there is a center of production for many of the vases; in the case of the associated jewelry, the *lunulae* of Pragança, Chão de Lamas and the gold one from Viseu (Correia *et al.* 2013: 119; Silva 2007: 358) such a center should be assigned to a single workshop and, as the distribution of these objects is uniquely Western, this should also be the location of their workshop, in general terms.

Further still, the concentration of hoards in the Castelo Branco region has been suggested as indication for the location of a production center (Fabião 2004: 167); this would be consistent with the existence of earlier metallurgical activities in the region (Vilaça 1998: 350-358), but it is precisely in this same area that there is evidence of the import of silver vases (Gomes & Beirão 1988: 135), rather than their local production.

In any case, the typological precision that has to be done is the fact that the use of the Greek term *mastos* for these vases (Gomes & Beirão 1988: 127-128) should not be seen as a perfect extension of the use of the term for the ceramic pieces in the shape of a female breast (Richter & Milne 1935: 30). True Greek *mastoi* were often provided with two asymmetrical wings and decorated with satyrs or other Dionysian scenes, betraying its very specific use, which seem indeed not to survive to advanced dates (they are notoriously absent from frequent Dionysian representations in IV c. BC pottery; cf. Metzger 1951, *passim*). The use of the term can actually be authorized by popular uses, notably in Cyprus (Daremberg & Saglio, 1873, 3.2 1625, s.v. *mastos*), but these silver vases from the West are something different and their use certainly obeyed to specific dispositions.

In fact the Greek term that probably most directly refers to the type of silver vase under consideration is *cymbè* (Daremberg & Saglio 1873, I.2 1698, s.v. *cymbè*, *cymbium*), which relates to the *phiale* and the *rhyton*, as vessels in a category very specifically destined to a ritual use.

However, that ritual use did not remove them from possible uses in private commensality because both spheres intertwine on occasions and should not be considered as separate areas of activity of an individual or of a community.

The typology (and the specific nature of their distribution pattern) is therefore a key indicator of the use of these vessels and of particular commensality practices.

Carinated vases

K. Raddatz (1969: 83-85) emphasized the originality of the decoration of the carinated vases of the hoards of the West of the Peninsula (Bandera 1986, 607-694: type 7, with variants) and of the decorated cover piece associated with them in the hoard of Chão de Lamas, which should give an indication of its production area.

It should also be noted that this form was popular, from very early dates, in pottery productions. This can only mean that it performs a specific, perhaps irreplaceable function, deeply rooted - for reasons that cannot be determined with the information available - in commensality rituals of these societies.

The shape is, in particular, very characteristic of certain productions of fine gray pottery from Conimbriga (Alarcão 1974: 66 n. 246-249. Figure 5), constituting a clear case of imitation of metallic forms by local potters, something which is still visible in other ceramic types (cf. Correia 1993: 245).

There is not a sure proof that in Conimbriga such ceramic forms predate the use of silver vessels because the earlier stratigraphies of the Roman city have not been identified in primary, undisturbed positions, at least for dates prior to the second half of the I c. BC., but apparently the form already exists in Santa Olaia (Rocha 1971: 67 n. 152 est. XVII), which indicates their dating prior to the IV c. BC, at least. Neither should be ruled out the resemblance of the generic form with carinated pottery forms from the Late Bronze Age; hence, there are equivalent possibilities of potters imitating silversmiths or just the opposite.

Local vases and imported vases

The traditional character of the shapes of the vessels, as proposed, collides *prima facie* with the fact that, demonstrably at least in one case (Monsanto), we are faced with an import from the celtiberian area: the vessel originally belonged to an individual who is recognized as “Belaisco” (‘of Contrebia Belaisca’, according to Gomes and Beirão 1988: 132-134). The overall distribution of the vases makes this plausible.

However, the fact that the silver vessels are mostly produced in another region, is not necessarily incompatible with the traditional character of their use and of the basic rituals in which it took place, because there is no prior notion invalidating that the conditions of the choice of ritual vase models could be basically the same in the various peninsular regions, and in any case physicochemical inquiry to determine if all vessels can indeed be assigned to a single production center would still be necessary.

The situation looks as if it can be better explained as consisting of a set of ritual determinants for the choice of prestigious objects widely shared by the various peninsular communities, be it caused by a strong community of traditional practices, or by an intense circulation sphere of people and their ideas on those dates. Against this background, workshops and production centers concentrated their activity in specific categories, responding to local requests but also to the wider geographical areas needs. This scenario has already been identified, for example, in the Northwestern “Castro’s” jewelry (Silva 2007:

330-331) or the activity of the jewelry workshop based in Vaiamonte (Correia in print).

Large specter exchange and use of local production capacities are thus the two volleys of the diptych that lead to the formation of these prestigious tableware sets.

The composition of services: typology and commensality

The existence of services for socially representative functions of eating together is not a novelty of advanced Iron Age societies. In the region between Douro and Tagus such services in metal, are known from the Late Bronze Age (Senhora da Guia; cf. Silva *et al.* 1984: 81-89) and the traditional aspect of some forms of silver vessels in question reflect just that.

The important phenomenon that is crucially new is the use of precious metal in tableware. This requires addressing some interconnected aspects, necessarily with different methodological approaches; they are:

- The relationship of silverware with other tableware, prestigious or otherwise of special use, by these and other communities.
- The ideological aspects to the formation of the hoards and their original use.
- The socio-political framework of commensality rituals, as much as it is possible to reconstitute it.

The composition of tableware sets

The dual role of silverware, as prestige goods and conviviality element, suggests its contrast with other sets that in many ways bring together similar qualities. Greek pottery, which is imported and is associated with the *symposion* played a role, if not identical, at least symmetrical to these sets of silver vases in dates not very different (although probably somewhat earlier).

In addition to the chronological question it is also necessary to refer to a geographical differentiation, for the distribution of Greek ceramics north of the Tagus is sparse and the sets do not allow the same type of group analysis as they do south of that river. The distribution map, however, is punctuated enough (Arruda 1997: 81-84; id. 2007: 135-140) for stating that the spread of Greek pottery on the Atlantic was something more than just episodic. It is a fair deduction from that pottery the possible spread of the *symposion* practice, a subject that meets extensive bibliography; some details on the extreme West of the Peninsula are nonetheless required.

The first observation is that, as far as it is possible to evaluate the available evidence, sets in the peninsular west differ from what P. Rouillard (1991: 184-185) called the “Andalusian service”, normally comprising bell crater and stemless cup with continuous curve wall. In southern Portugal two cases (Alcácer do Sal and Cerro Furado; cf. Rouillard *et al.* 1989: 56-78, and Arruda & Lopes 2012: 404-409, respectively) show the use of the *krater* with *skyphoi*. That is not explainable by the simple effect of imports “in series”, but certainly reveals something of the specific choices of local purchasers of Greek pottery. It will be interesting to see if the pattern is repeated further north, where most of the identified pieces actually are craters, but as said the sets are too fragmentary to fully understand its composition.

Second observation is the more systematic presence on sites of stemless cups with inset lips (the “Cástulo cups”) that are plentiful even in small habitats like Alto do Castelinho da Serra (Gibson *et al.* 1988: 207; cf. Jiménez & Ortega 2004: 123-134) and are notoriously absent from funerary contexts such as Alcácer Sal. It seems as if there is, on the part of purchasers of Greek pottery, a selection of uses and contexts of disposal for such pieces.

This conclusion, although very partial within the global reality of the phenomena, is important because it is legitimate to make the argument that these communities, being able to do functional selections with results recognizably different in the archaeological record concerning scarce materials (imported ceramics) certainly did not fail to do so on their own productions, either in the selection of the forms of traditional products chosen, or in the progressive selection of innovations admitted in pottery when imitating imports (pottery, metal or other).

It is therefore especially important to look for evidence in the archaeological record of that local manipulation of aristocratic symposion-related practices in their dissemination among lower levels of society (levels measured for this purpose by the ability to access the imported material).

For its “immediate” nature, the fossilized remains of the communal meal in the altar of Capote (Berrocal 1992: 192-201; id. 1994, *passim*. Figure 6) are of greatest interest. There it was possible to reconstitute a “service” majorly consisting of beaker and cup, accompanied by medium-sized containers and some special specimens, including the burners (Berrocal 2010: 270-272). Garvão (Beirão *et al.* 1985: 45-135), perhaps even richer than Capote in what regards total number of preserved vases, shows nevertheless the disturbed character inherent to its secondary deposit condition; and yet it is possible to reconstruct comparable services.

Quantitatively the most significant set of Garvão is the pair formed by the beaker of S-shaped profile and a hemispherical cup, wheel turned and fired in an oxidizing atmosphere kiln. In a strictly functional interpretation this set can be assimilated at the pair carinated vase / *cymbè* that the Padrão or the Chão de Lamas hoards clearly demonstrated to exist as an operative set.

But the materials in the deposit of Garvão show the coexistence of another pottery tradition, hand turned pottery fired in reduction environment (or, simply, in artisanal ovens), often exuberantly decorated, where the hemispherical cups are replaced by small ovoid beakers.

In either type of production burners are remarkable, by their number and by the obvious investment (in formal imagination and in decorative care) put into in these objects.

It can be considered somewhat natural, that actually used sets included parts of both productions. That is what happens with group IX in the deposit (Fig. 7), identified and published as such, which shows the presence of a *oenochoe* and a carinated vase (wheel turned) and another small carinated vase, two beakers and a small *thymiaterion* in manual pottery.

These elements reproduce, with the manifest temporal and qualitative distances of the material, the orientalizing ritual equipment that is known, paradigmatically, in tomb 17 of the La Joya necropolis at Huelva (Garrido & Orta 1978: 63-128) that show the presence of three rituals acts: fluid eversion, libation and fumigation. They also appear in funerary evidence, contemporary with the sites and sanctuaries discussed, as is shown by the equipment of tomb 15 of the El Mercadillo necropolis, one of the funerary sites of the ancient Tamusia (Hernández & Galán 1996: 40-43. Fig. 8).

Throughout the archaic religion of the Mediterranean (where we meet more direct sources about the Greek and Roman), these acts are part of the sacrifice, indistinctly public or private, properly religious or of more open social nature (Rudhardt 1992: 158-161; Dumézil 2000: 549-551). This happens because religious offering, where rituals acts are performed, is immediately succeeded by consumption by the community (regardless of the circumstantial definition of it) of the unconsecrated parts of the sacrificial victim (which may even be the larger part of it). But, symmetrically, the private feast is preceded by an act of atonement, where the ritual acts are essentially the same. And these two processes, symmetrical and complementary, occur whether we speak of private piety acts, of public or official religion activities, of commensality (proper) or of offering of meals to the community at large. In short, the question of the ritual character *versus* the utilitarian nature of these sets (including silver treasures, cf. Prados 2010: 252-261), runs the risk of becoming a redundant inquiry, either on

the effective use of the pieces, about whose life we know nothing, or on their ideal (and properly ideological) classification, since all everyday use includes a ritual and sacralized element and all the ritual eventually has an ultimate utilitarian function.

What are then the acts that make part of those ritual and social practices? From the evidence that has been visited they can be counted as: maintenance of liquid (large vases); its distribution or mixing with other liquids or elements (smaller vases), consumption (cups); accessorially Capote shows the use and distribution of meat cooked on a grill over fire, and several instances document the use of fumigation. The relevance given to the liquid element, presumably wine, by the use of exotic material (silver, Greek pottery) hence must give some indication of the prestige associated with it, whilst the polymorphism of the sets and the traditional nature of some of its elements is a good indicator of the integration of exotic practices and products in the local sphere (Dietler 2006: 232-235).

The meaning of the hoards

The existence of a *continuum* of ritual and socially ritualized practices, where it is not immediately distinguishable what is sacred and what is secular in purpose (nor should they be completely compartmentalized), makes it important to look at the composition of treasures, namely that particular aspect which is the coexistence of vessels and jewelry in some sets.

The simultaneous presence of jewelry and vases is most suggestive in sets such as Chão de Lamas, but the presence of jewelry, including a bracelet of twisted silver threads, among material of the altar of Capote (Berrocal 1994: 239-244) is an important archaeological fact and an element sufficient to demonstrate that the jewelry display is part of the set of practices that are also associated with ceremonies where silver vessels could have been used. It is therefore very important to deepen the analysis of these jewels, including those from Chão de Lamas, where the decorated great *lunula* reveals a set of ideological data that, in this perspective, is relevant to understand the practices associated with use of the vases, the display of jewelry and the social and cultural context in which such acts take place.

The decoration of the Chão de Lamas *lunula* (Prados 2010: 251-261. Fig. 9), consists of three distinct elements: an animal, in all likelihood a swine or perhaps a bovid; a bird that, by design, seems to want to pose as a scavenger and a human head inside a border; these elements, interspersed with geometric motifs, are distributed in the *lunula* in two symmetrical lines in the indicated order, with the heads in the center of the piece.

The central motif, the severed head, is an artistic motif with a deep ideological root in the traditions of Iron Age societies of Western Europe (ever since Reinach 1913: 38-286; for recent surveys of the basic issue – actually severing the head of someone: Sterckx 2005 and Dedet 2013, *passim*), and raise a very significant set of questions about the *Weltanschauung* of the communities that we are dealing with.

It must be said immediately that the presence of this motif in the *lunula* of Chão de Lamas is not an isolated instance in the archaeological record. The severed heads appears in Orientalizing and later jewelry of the West, such as a ring from Aliseda (Almagro 1977: 209 n. 73), an unidentified object from Pajares (Celestino & Blanco 1999: 112-115; id. 2006: 141-143), and the Segura de León necklace (Enriquez y Rodriguez 1985, *passim*; Celestino & Blanco 2006: 144-145) with parallels in one of the Serradilla hoard plaques (Almagro 1977: 223-225; Celestino & Blanco 2006: 146-148) and on the comparable pieces of Bombarral (Ferreira 1977: 203-218; Cardoso 2004: 266-268), one of which shows the head surrounded by psychopomp birds (these are also present at Serradilla). This set from Bombarral was published in association with some silver vessels (cf. table 1), but unfortunately it is not clear that it is a real archaeological unit, or if we have just an assembling of pieces after the find, and having they been

lost, never subject to autopsy after publication, the case cannot be easily decided.

Second, the severed head comes up at the altar of Capote, represented in pottery (one unfortunately incomplete vessel. Berrocal 1994: 427 n. 4482), multiplying this representation in different media echoing a feature that is generally European.

Lastly, it is essential to recall the likely foundational sacrifice which presided over the deposition of the *bothros* at Garvão (Correia 1996: 101-102, with the earlier references; Alfayé 2009: 287-288): the deposition of the head of a middle-aged woman, felled with blows from a stone ax. This case should put in perspective some metallic and choroplastic representations from the same sanctuary (Beirão *et al.* 1985: 112-118) and also some anatomical votive pieces representing the lower jaw (id. 94, n. 115), that may very well echo of ritualized practices of corpse mutilation associated, in Central Europe, with the same issue of severed heads (Moinat 2009: 5-8).

What is the meaning of these rituals and, above all, of the representation of this ritual in jewelry and apparatus pieces? The answer, surely, will never be simple, not even unambiguous, and its pursuit falls outside the intent of this text, but it is nevertheless essential in this context to develop parts of it.

The “cruelty of the Celts” is an element of a certain ethnography of horror, which has deep roots in classical culture and that through Posidonius, wins real buzzword status, being transmitted by Strabo (*Geog.* IV, 4, 5) and Diodorus Siculus (*Bib. Hist.* V, 29) and comes to shape almost all reasoning about the phenomenon, archaeologically documented, of the handling of corpses and / or ritualized processes to execute some people, occurring (commonly, can actually be said) in non-Mediterranean Europe (and which were not, however, unknown to classic Mediterranean cultures as very proper acts, imbued with tradition and ritual value. Cf. Dumézil 2000: 449-450).

It is current to find two different approaches to this practice as a form of cultural, ideological and social expression between communities of the European Iron Age: one more connected to their interpretation eminently as a warrior practice, as an expression of elites of knights and raiders, as a statement of invincibility and magical domain of the enemy, even after his physical extinction; the other values more the community aspects of ownership of extinct friends or enemies, as a form of physical and metaphysical world domain (cf. Gallay 2012 for a more nuanced perspective. Personally I think some of the observations, oblique as they are, of Lorenz 1959 are still useful). The different hypotheses, which clearly are not incompatible, may have been present in the field of intentions of the communities who observed these practices. Even if it is possible to determine, in specific acts, if there prevailed the one interpretation or another, the decisively “timeless” character of this act gave it the potential to evolve, from an original intention, through successive generations who can manipulate, according to their own intentions, its meaning. Ultimately, the individual act of the warrior who, according to the Posidonian narrative, collects the head of his enemy as proof of victory, and if this victory was truly significant, has the potential to be remembered by later generations; it created a ritual device, a magical object whose value, meaning and concrete use these generations will determine without necessarily respect the initial set of intentions.

It is also important to stress the idea that the archaeological evidence of the Iberian Peninsula (read from the above occurrences and others directly comparable to them) shows quite eloquently, that these practices cannot be considered as exclusive of what is commonly referred to as Celtic Europe, because if indeed they were quite common among the *Keltoi* (and it is to them Posidonius’ narrative refers) and took place between communities related with them in the Iberian area, as the *Celtiberi* or the *Celtici* of *Baetouria*, they are also present among other communities, which are designated by other ethnonyms and which appear to have belonged to other linguistic and cultural environments, and indeed they are referred to amongst the *Lusitani* (Strabo, *Geog.*, III, 3, 6), which would be the *ethnos* to which the silver hoards can more readily be ascribed.

Hence it seems advisable to address our research to non-immediate interpretations of the rites underlying the manipulation of the body of victims (against the case of Garvão: Alfayé 2009, loc. cit.) and non-binding interpretations with respect to the communitarian or ethnic identification of their perpetrators. Considered with sufficient amplitude, motivational factors of ritual performance or of handling of the corpse, resulting from the former or from other circumstances, the laudatory or punitive nature of the reaction to this act (which can be - and probably were - different as different communities were differently affected) and the evolution of these conditions over time (particularly when exceeded the existential limits of direct actors), the ideological device of the “severed head” may gain a plurality of different meanings and emphases.

Among these different meanings there is, of course, the mere use of anthropomorphism as an artistic device of mere stylistic – if not just ludic - meaning, as seems to be the case with some well-studied examples of Celtic art (Jacobsthal 1969: 12-24).

However, the peninsular environments do not suggest such an extension of the use of the ideological device: anthropomorphism was not in any way a decorative motif abundantly represented. Using the representation of the severed head is sufficiently rare to be certain to have assumed a special ritual character, which certainly remained present in the minds of the creators and users of its products, as indeed also seems to happen in comparable dates in the Italian peninsula, where the motif is known among the Gauls of Cisalpine, but where it is used with a parsimony that only reinforces its ideological importance (as with the Manerbo sul Mella pateras. Arslan 1991: 466-468).

The representation of severed heads in jewelry used in occasions when silver tableware was also used – the circumstance that mainly interest us - was therefore an effect of public display of ideological devices of great significance in the socio-cultural structures of these communities. Commensality can be an ostentatious occasion for this ideological device, for it refers mainly to the history of an individual or of an individual’s ancestors, or to the historical circumstances of the community where diners are integrated (and non-diners excluded). Commensality, ritual and historical (or mythological) evocation are thus the main circumstance for community statement, be that community family, clan or ethnic entity, that is called to bring together a number of related individuals, or the inhabitants of a village, or other groupings of population that may have existed (as *fratriai* type organizations; cf. Coulanges 1980: 139-144 [Homer, *Illiad*, II, 362], actually stressing the commensality aspects of the institution). As said, commensality and ritual are to a large extent, one and the same thing: the important issue at stake is the extent to which the *symposion* (with its ritual element) affirms the *syggeneia* between (selected) members of the community with their gods (for the italic situation: Pairault-Massa 1992; Menichetti 1994: 37).

We are then in a position to argue that the use of silver pieces found in hoards and the use of associated jewelry and, in other circumstances, the use of special tableware types, pre-determined or determined by the very concrete circumstances in which the ritual took place, are part of the performative array available to the communities, to ensure their cohesion through the mythopoietic function of evocating a common history. And this mythopoietic function is especially important because in some cases it might have led to narratives, currently unknown to us, but which certainly were highly complex, as is witnessed by the bas-reliefs of the Pozo Moro monument (Almagro 1978: 251-278) or the engraving in one of Tivissa’s pateras (Raddatz 1969: 259-264), illustrating myths of which we unfortunately lost all elements of narrative. But its existence is enough to suggest that identical narratives once explained the choroplastic decorations of Garvão and its region (Beirão & Gomes 1984: 450-482; Gomes 2011: 99-102), just as we should imagine that the circumstances of manipulation of these objects, their use and their occultation, may have given rise to other accounts - mythical or mythicizable - such as those that may have surrounded the obliteration of Capote’s altar,

the concealment of the *bothros* of Garvão, or the condemnation of sites like Cancho Roano (Jiménez 2012: 190-202); also possibly the very concealment of the silver hoards we're dealing with.

The social cohesion that the mythopoietic function of manipulating these objects with the set of social practices associated with it produces develops itself in the historical path of communities and it is its perennial survival in social memory which gives them importance. For this reason, in certain circumstances, it gained architectural expression - certainly understood as the more enduring expression of all - as in the paradigmatic sanctuary of Roquepertuse, with lintels decorated by skulls and topped by the figure of a psychopomp bird, who presides to the representation of the worshiped gods (Benoit 1969: 59-69; Gantés 1990: 162-164). The *lunula* from Chão de Lamas, with the representation of severed heads, scavengers and “verracos” echoes this combination of ideological elements.

In the region that particularly interests us - the West between the Tagus and the Douro - a similar demonstration, no longer architectonic (from what survived) but epigraphic is known: inscriptions in indigenous language, recorded in the Roman period, commonly called Lusitanian inscriptions.

Rituals and sacrifices

The evidence of Lusitanian inscriptions (Tovar 1985: 227-254; Untermann 1997: 725-758; for the latest addition to the *corpus* Carneiro et al. 2008: 1-11 and Prósper & Villar 2009: 1-32) is especially relevant for the study of the practices associated with the silver hoards of the Tagus group for several reasons: first the coincidence of the find-spots of the hoards with the location of inscriptions in the same broad region; second is the narrower chronological gap between hoards and inscriptions than among hoards and some of the phenomena recalled in this analysis, which in some cases date back to ancient times in the Iron Age – this still stands with the uncertainty of the dating of the Lusitanian inscriptions for which chronologies well within the imperial era were sometimes suggested; lastly hoards and inscriptions undisputedly belong to the same cultural world, the local societies of the Iron Age - even if dated from the Roman Imperial period and using the Latin alphabet and partly Latin in their text, these inscriptions reflect a religious practice of local and traditional nature and are dedicated to a local pantheon, using the indigenous language by a deliberate choice, which can be connected to an injunction that would prevent the invocation of the gods in a language other than the traditional.

The large offerings made to the gods, registered on the rocks of Cabeço das Fráguas (Schattner & Santos 2010, *passim*) and Lamas de Moledo, on the boulders of Arroyo del Puerco and Arronches (which may have had a more or less elaborate architectural framework) and even on the altar of Marecos (which most likely had such a framework correspondingly to a stronger Romanization of ritual practice observed here; cf. Le Roux & Tranoy, 1974: 252-255), are the best possible example for the type of circumstances in which silver treasures may have been manipulated.

The best archaeological example of these practices are (yet again) the remains of the ritual meal at the altar of Capote, showing the tableware used by the co-celebrants / diners who consumed the non-sacrificial fraction of the offerings, along with the equipment used in its processing (grills, skewers, knives) and other objects belonging to some of these individuals, as weapons and jewelry (Berrocal 2010: 270-272).

Archaeology also offers us some direct representations of at least some aspects of the ceremonies, the choreography of these rituals, such as the votive car from Vilela and others

(Correia 2000b: 182-183; Armada & García-Vuelta 2006: 164-175), showing a sacrifice with accompaniment distributed in two rows, separated by gender, while in other cases the vases used and jewelry (especially the torque) that accompany these social acts return.

The communality status of the Lusitanian inscriptions fits in the more general phenomenon of clanic or ethnic affirmation through appropriation of acts of their members carried out on specific occasions; appropriation happens through the registration of those, which almost could be called *ad perpetuam rei memoriae*. Communitarian integration of individual actions of godly devotion or violent actions against other individuals traditionally become part of the relationship between community and individual, by which the former recognizes social relevance to the latter in return for the individual effort of protection of the community (magical or concrete, real or perceived), just as the community is able to exact censure, if individual acts are perceived as malign or just inadequate.

This interplay between individual and community could raise the issue of the silver ware being individually owned or common property, but on closer examination it is clear that this issue is as redundant and idle as the wish to determine whether the acts in which they were used were private occasion or religious rituals.

As an inscription celebrates an act of communal piety and states which were the specific individuals responsible, and probably as a priest who officiated was at other times, an individual with other functions in the community, these treasures (jewelry and vessels) may have had an ambivalent character, perhaps transient in some episodes of their life. Appropriated by the community as a whole, or by specific individuals with possibilities to do so within it, the circumstances of their initial acquisition or production, their use in concrete situations throughout its existence as useful objects and finally their amortization or occultation (temporarily or permanently), all of these situations formed their cultural biography, which in turn was part of the social memory of that community through the mythopoietic function that these prestige objects perform.

		Maintenance of liquid	Mixing and distributing liquid	Consumption	Fumigation
Silver vases	In hoards	Bandera type VII (large)	Bandera type VII (small)	<i>Cymbè</i>	
Greek pottery	In necropolises	Bell crater		<i>Skyphos</i>	
	In sites			Cástulo cup	
Local pottery	In necropolises	Carinated vase		Cup	<i>Thymiaterion</i>
	Garvão	Carinated vase	S-profiled vase	Open cup, small cup	<i>Thymiaterion</i>
	Capote	Carinated vase	S-profiled vase	Open cup, small cup	<i>Thymiaterion</i>

Table 2 – Archaeological evidence for ritual acts.

Conclusions

The use of silver plate by the communities of the late Iron Age in the region between the Douro and Tagus rivers, communities of which we know so little otherwise, is part both of traditional historical currents and very innovative processes.

The manipulation of community subsistence through resource management and its calendar, provisioning by booty when in conditions of scarcity and the statement of warrior prestige that comes in its wake, the control of the relationship with the sacred through coopting processes of the elite born of this prestige, were three traditional forms of power assertion in these communities, among others – might we assume. For all of them, the control of community relations with their more or less distant neighbors and with individuals from other regions (such as merchants), was decisive, because the effects of change capable of causing substantial alterations in local balances are most likely to arise from these spheres, something which, regardless of the degree of isolation that one wants to reconstruct about these communities, didn't cease to happen throughout the late Bronze Age and the entire Iron Age.

From the IV c. BC onwards, the situation surely changed, quickly and exponentially. The enlargement of the Carthaginian *epicrateia* (Arteaga 2001: 235-238) in Iberia and its effects (primarily tributes and recruitment of mercenaries, which may in certain circumstances have been one and the same thing or two complementary aspects of the same reality), were able to decisively affect the local balances. The exposure, directly or indirectly, to the typical practices of Hellenistic aristocracies (of which the Barca family is the westernmost example; cf. Polybius *Hist.* VIII, 9 *apud* Grimal 1975: 358-359) and, most likely, the mere narrative element of the context of these practices (by the recruiters or by returning mercenaries, for example), can have played a dramatic role as an element of change.

All the cultural elements discussed in this paper with regard to the vessels of silver do raise an issue that may have been important at the local level: the permutation of a wide range of elements and ritual and ideological common practices, originally traditional in specific regions of Western Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. That permutation is a more easily understandable situation if intercultural contact is a factor entered into the equation. It was imposed by the very existence of the *epicrateia* of Carthage under the Barca family and the very direct effect it had through recruiting mercenaries from different regions and integrating them into common military bodies (perhaps an inevitable practice considering the feeble regional demographics that it can be presumed to have existed). How many mercenaries actually returned will never be determined, but the sheer impact of their recruitment and the enormous potential of any story about them should not be underestimated (García y Bellido 1934: 2-16).

The introduction of currency, in the form of silver coins, as a tangible factor of top economics, linked directly to the tribute after the Roman conquest and with the effect of substantial parts of the local wealth being excised of the traditional domain of society, was another process cumulative with these new realities. It contributes to put into focus the underlying social problem the silver occultations testify: the impossibility of traditional structures of social and political domination, based on the charismatic power of some of its individuals (Weber 2005: 25-32) to respond effectively to change (Correia 2000a: 420-421). This impossibility did not have to do with the exercise of that power by external parties (something that the elites had more than a thousand years' experience in accommodating) but with the very circumstances in which the parties establish the relationship, an unsuspected echo of Alexander's conquests, which paves the way for the historic step of Romanization.

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Fig. 1 – The hoard from Chão de Lamas (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. Photo: Francisco Rodríguez Pérez-Conjunto 252).

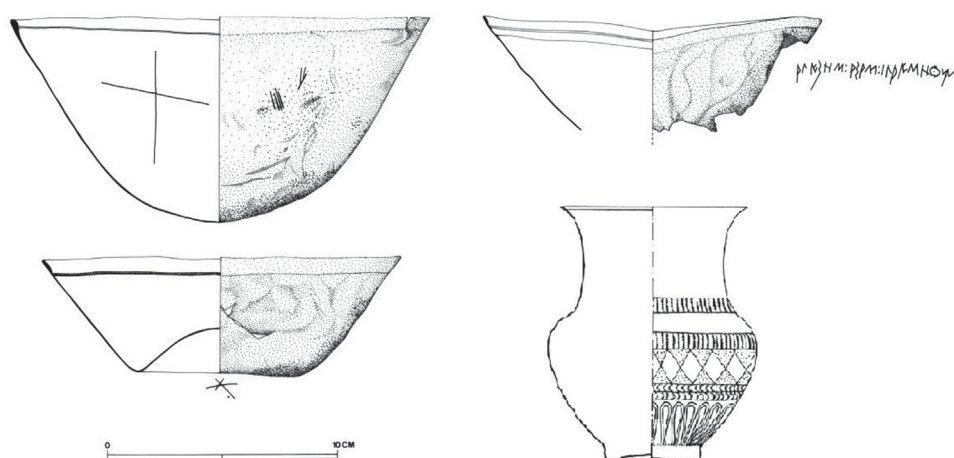


Fig. 2 –The hoard from Monsanto (from Gomes & Beirão 1988, figs. 2 and 8, modified. Originals courtesy of Mário Varela Gomes).



Fig. 3 – The hoard from Padrão (from Beirão & Gomes 1985, est. VII-A. Courtesy of Mário Varela Gomes).



Fig. 4 – Silver vase of the hoard from Pragança (Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Lisbon. Photo: José Pessoa/DGPC/ADF-Inv.Au212).

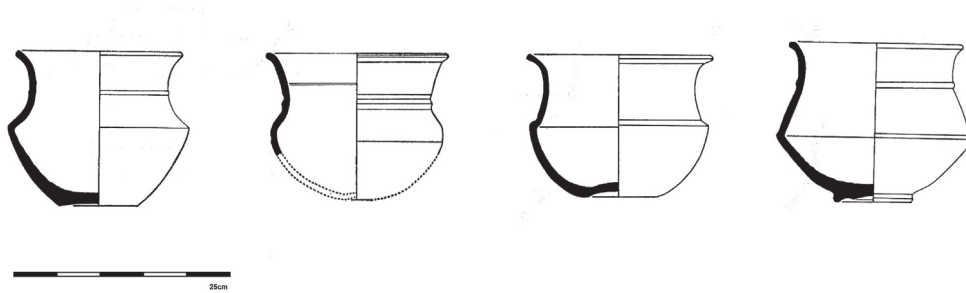


Fig. 5 – Carinated vases produced in fine gray ware, from Conimbriga (from Alarcão 1975, pl. XII).

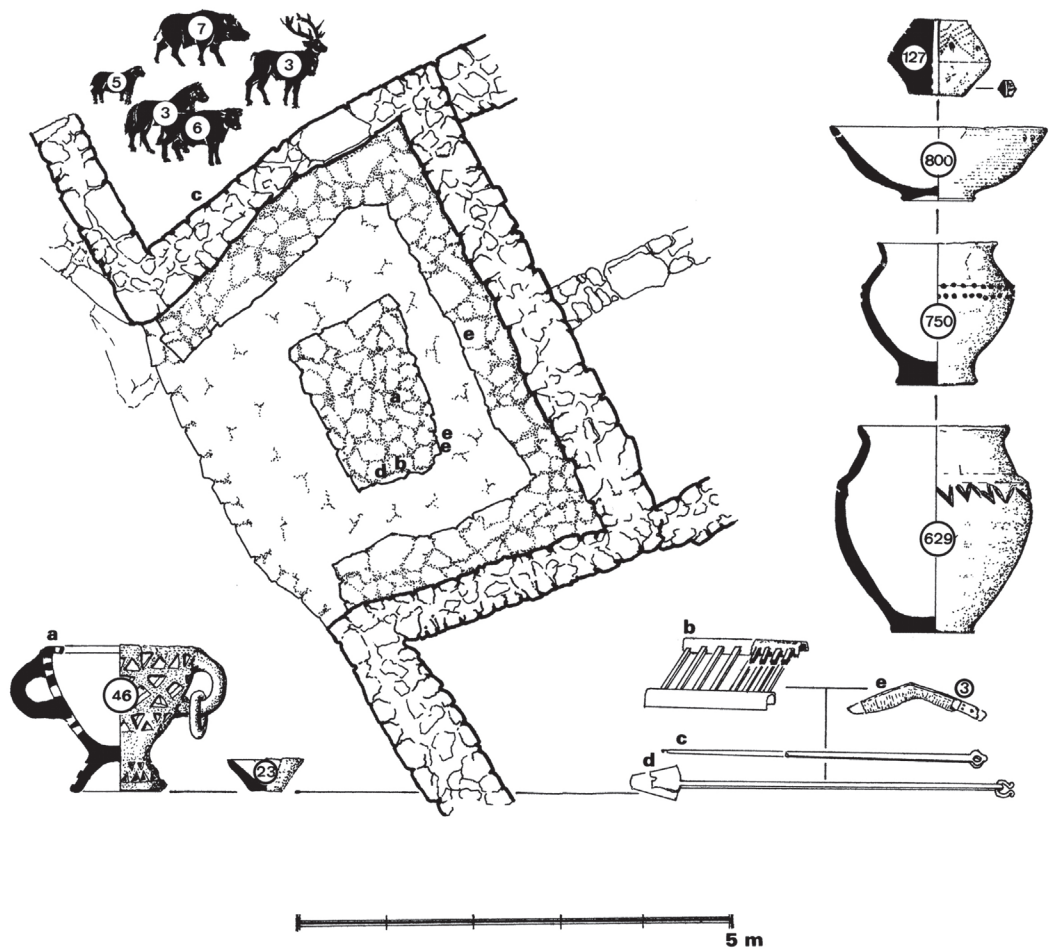


Fig. 6 – The sanctuary at Capote reconstructed (from Berrocal 2010, fig. 3. Courtesy of Luís Berrocal Rangel).



Fig. 7 – Ceramic set of group-find IX from Garvão (from Beirão et al. 1985, fig. 39, modified).

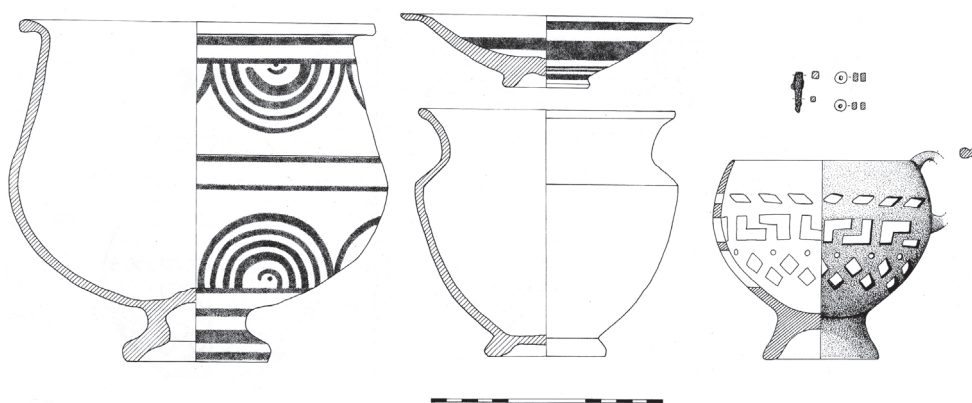


Fig. 8 – The funerary equipment of tomb 15(2) of El Mercadillo necropolis (from Hernández & Galán 1996, figs. 17 and 18, modified).



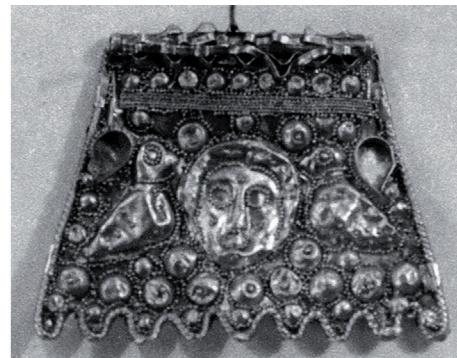
Fig. 9 – Figured lunula from the hoard of Chão de Lamas (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas-N.I. 28589).



1



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3



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5

Fig. 10 – Severed heads representations: 1 – Chão de Lamas; 2 - Segura de León; 3 – Bombarral; 4 – Capote; 5 – Garvão (1, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. Photo: Ángel Martínez Levas-N.I. 28589; 2 and 4, courtesy of Luís Berrocal Rangel; 3, courtesy of João Luís Cardoso; 5, Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Lisbon. Photo: José Pessoa/DGPC/ADF-Inv.Aul I 59).

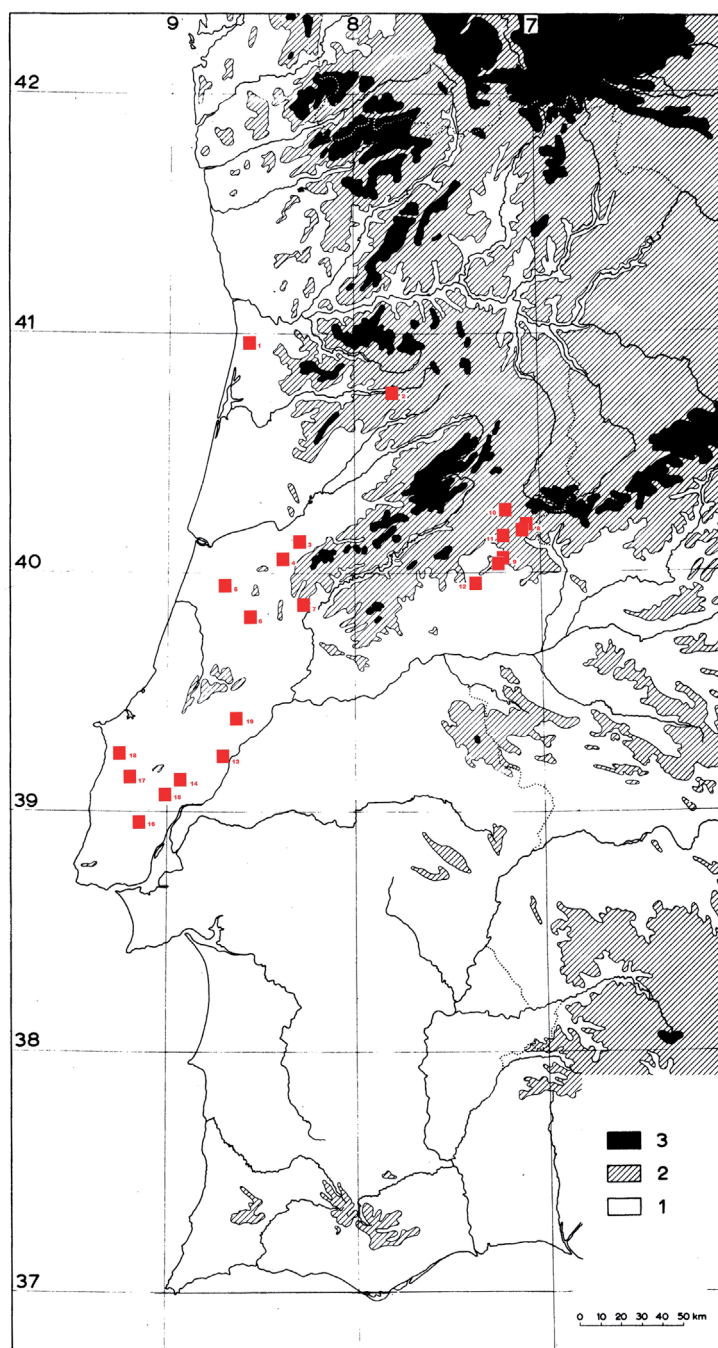


Fig. 11 – Approximate location of hoards discussed: 1 – Romariz; 2 – Viseu; 3 – Coiço (Penacova); 4 – Chão de Lamas; 5 – Cabeça da Corte; 6 – Fonte do Alvorge; 7 – Casal Ascenso Antunes; 8 – Monsanto; 9 – Idanha; 10 – Penhagarcia; 11 – Monforte da Beira; 12 – Padrão; 13 – Santarém; 14 – Santana da Carnota; 15 – Pinhal do Alvarinho; 16 – Pragança; 17 – Columbeira; 18 – Bombarral; 19 – Charneca. (Base map: Ribeiro et al. 1987, I 169; Heights: 1 - < 400m; 2 - >400m, <700m; 3 - >1000m).



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