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CAMPANIAN WARE FROM MESAS DO CASTELINHO (PORTUGAL)

1. Introduction

This paper aims to present the data concerning Campanian ware from Mesas do Castelinho (**fig. 1**) from the vast collection of archaeological material recovered over 23 excavation campaigns (1989–2012) directed by Carlos Fabião and Amílcar Guerra. The ensemble is one of the most significant in what is now Portuguese territory, at least of those already published², and raises several issues, such as the presence of rare or unique forms or makes, but perhaps most importantly, the observation of stratigraphic sequences which allow us to establish a connection with the Romanization of the settlement, its relations with the surrounding territory and its integration in trade routes connected to the Mediterranean.

The artefact assemblage presented covers the entirety of the italic black slip ware (Campanian A, B from Caes or Arezzo and C ware) chronologically attributable to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, as well as greyish and orange black slipped productions of Campanian ware, totalling 2,881 potsherds (**fig. 2**). However, only 786 of the total fragments permit a typological classification. Of these 389 were recovered from Roman Republican contexts, totalizing 366 MNV.

2. The archaeological site

Mesas do Castelinho is an archaeological site located in the Monte Novo Estate – a part of the Almodôvar region of the Beja district. It is situated on the southern bank of the Ribeira de Mora, in a schistose barrier which acts as a natural transit point, allowing a passage between the Alentejo plain and the mountainous terrain of the Serra do Caldeirão in Algarve. The site is confined to a rectangular platform to the north and another, smaller, but higher and rounded platform, to the South (**fig. 3**).

Taking into consideration the orographic characteristics of the site, it becomes clear that defence was not a dominant concern, as the settlement is not located in any particularly prominent landscape feature. However, the choice of site

appears to be closely related to the geographical layout of the region, and control of a natural passage point, a land route that runs from the northwest to the southeast, connecting the lower Alentejo to the Algarve. This passage would, nevertheless, be a secondary one³, as the nearby, navigable Guadiana river was the primary route for the movement of people and goods.

The occupation sequence of the site starts with a fortified Iron Age settlement (founded around the 5th century BC). This is followed by a late Roman Republican occupation characterized by an architectural reorganisation in an urban orthogonal layout, without the defensive system, with an impressive accumulation of artefacts that pointing to the existence of early, direct ties with the Roman world.

3. The ensemble: forms, facies and chronologies (**fig. 4**)

3.1. Campanian A ware (**fig. 5**)

In Mesas do Castelinho, Campanian A produced in the Gulf of Naples accounts for 37.28% of the classifiable sherds of Roman Republican contexts: 256 fragments of identifiable shape, regardless of their stratigraphic context. Of these the more common types are F2970, F2820, F1300-1400 in addition to a reasonably large percentage of F2234, and smaller percentages of F1122, F1443, F2154, F2614, F2648, F2787, F2840 and F3131. Compared with the nearest sites of western Andalucía, this assemblage is typologically similar to the 2nd century *facies* of classic Campanian A, as defined by Ventura Martínez⁴.

A later *facies* is also well represented by the *paterae* F2250 and F2260-80, as well as by the F2970 and F1300–1500 types, which include decorative features and shapes attributable to a later phase of production, such as the tapered rim of the F2974 type, also discovered in Faro⁵ and the lower, thick short-rimmed dishes like the F1300. It is also worth mentioning, in relation to the F1300 *paterae*, that they exhibit a tendency towards becoming lower, with

¹ UNIARQ – Universidade de Lisboa and FCT grant holder (Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia).

² ALVES 2010, 27–28. This article is a revision and updating of data.

³ C. FABIÃO, O mundo indígena e a sua romanização na área céltica do território hoje portuguesa (Lisboa, dissertação de doutoramento, policopiado 1998) 276.

⁴ J. J. VENTURA MARTÍNEZ, La cerámica de barniz negro de los siglos II–I a.C. en Andalucía occidental. In: Aquilué Abadías et al. 2000, 177–215.

⁵ VIEGAS 2009, 138.

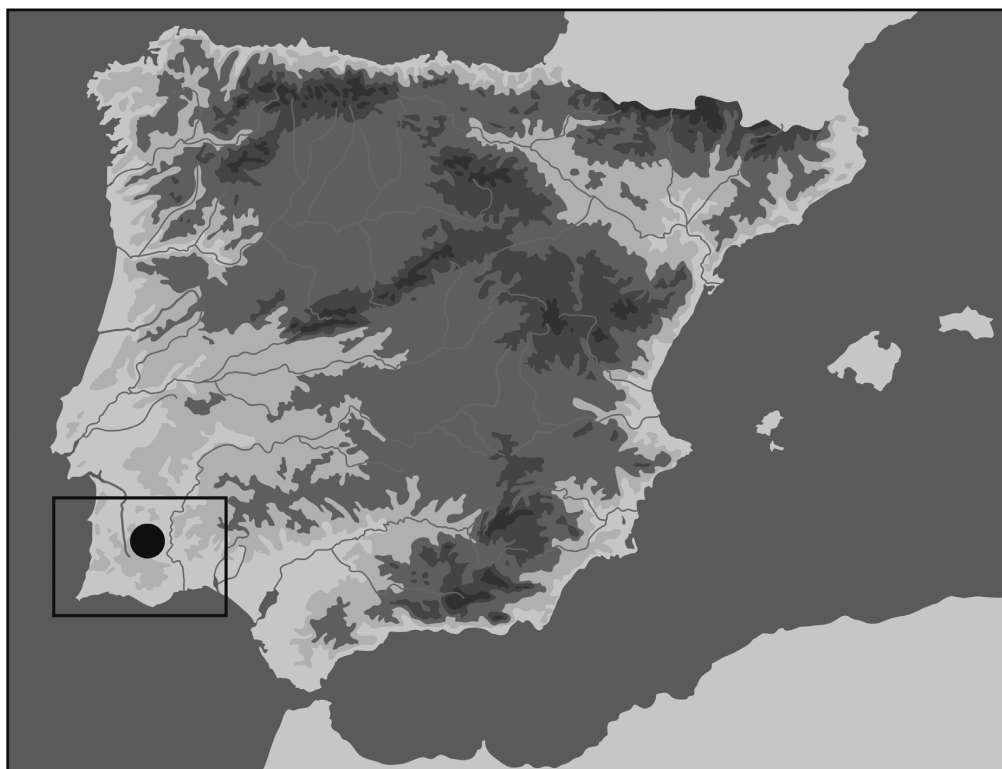


Fig. 1. Location of Mesas do Castelinho in the Iberia Peninsula.

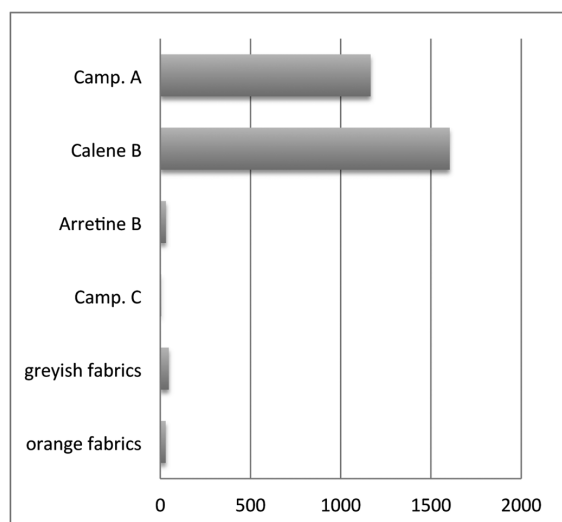


Fig. 2. Sample composition.

straighter, thinner rims during the 1st century BC⁶. In addition to this, the data from Mesas do Castelinho also indicate a trend towards thicker walls and smaller diameters⁷.

A frequent feature of the Campanian A sherds are the striations resulting from the smoothing of the fabric, typical

⁶ P. ARCELIN, Note sur les céramiques à vernis noir tardives en Provence Occidentale. In: J.-P. Morel (coord.), Journées d'étude de Montpellier sur la céramique campanienne. Arch. Languedoc 1 (Montpellier 1978) 108.

⁷ ALVES 2010, 55.

of late Neapolitan productions, as are also the piling marks, visible as a reddish ring on the inside of the base of some pots. This feature is also seen in the Calene wares, although 13 of 19 examples are Neapolitan wares, predominantly of the F2250–80 types. Normally the bases of Campanian A wares are not completely slipped, with the exception of the decorated types.

Stratigraphically speaking there seems to be a higher concentration of stamped motifs in the contexts of the 1st phase of Republican building/occupation, which immediately overlaps the pre-Roman contexts. This is unsurprising, as the remaining material from this phase is consistent with an occupation starting around the end of the 2nd century/beginning of the 1st century BC, at a time in which some of the makes still survive in their classic phase which features this type of decorative motif, which is progressively replaced by the simpler, quicker motifs of the Calene wares, for e. g., concentric incisions on the base (fig. 6).

3.2. Campanian calene ware (fig. 5)

Also from Roman Republican contexts, imported B ware of Northern Campania represents 56.81%, a total of 485, independent of any chronological context. Among these identified types there is an overwhelming presence of F2300 bowls (including some chronologically significant examples like F2360, which provide a date in the second half of the 1st century BC, effectively defining a time-frame for the Roman Republican occupation) and F2230-80 *paterae*, along with the decorative motifs characteristic of

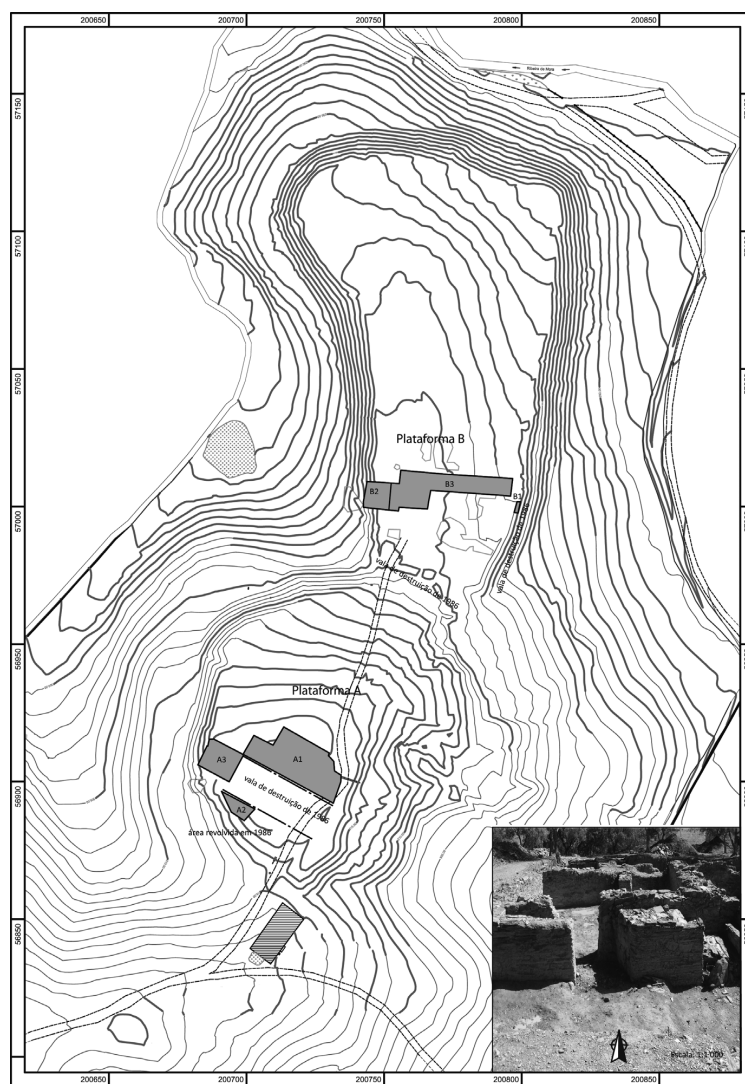


Fig. 3. Topographic implantation of the archaeological site (adapted from FABIÃO/GUERRA 1998). Excavation areas.

the 1st century BC. It is also worth mentioning the F7500 type, one of the most characteristics of this production. Even though it has not been possible to define the corresponding *espèce*, by extrapolating the chronological data from the well-preserved fragments, it is reasonable to suppose that their import and use is relatively restricted to the first half of the 1st century BC, in addition to a late Republican phase associated with later shapes with low and angular legs.

According to the chronological sequence proposed by Pedroni⁸ it is possible to include this assemblage in the late variant produced in Cales (82–40 BC) and it is indistinguishable from other assemblages of the same production centre identified in Faro⁹ and in Mértola¹⁰.

There seems to be a direct association between Calene Campanian wares and thinner, less adhesive slips that detach easily, often giving the ceramics a flaked appearance. In Mesas do Castelinho, this make often features a lack of

slip on the outer base of the pots, particularly on the F2300 *genre*, as well as greater wear on the carinate areas and on the upper parts of the rims, where there is greater contact with and exposure to other surfaces.

3.3. Arretine campanian ware (fig. 5)

Generically, this make features a high quality, dark black, very adhesive slipped finish, and hard, pinkish-beige, homogeneous, lustrous clay. Some of these features are common to other makes, which often leads to great difficulty in distinguishing them from Etruscan B types and high-quality Calene B. In the absence of chemical analyses, this make can, however, be identified by analysis of certain morphological attributes. It is the case for e.g., of the typical bumps on the inside of the feet. This method permits a reasonably safe analysis of the ceramic assemblage. However, there is some risk of mistakenly identifying some of the Arretine wares for those of other production centres. This may occur because of the small size of the potsherds involved, which may not exhibit those attributes, which

⁸ L. PEDRONI, *Ceramica calena a vernice nera. Produzione e diffusione* (Napoli 2001).

⁹ VIEGAS 2009, 139–141.

¹⁰ LUÍS 2003, 99–104.

MOREL	A	Cales / Teano	Arezzo	greyish fabrics	orange fabrics	C	# Frags.	# MNV [*]
1122a	2	1					3	3
1220		5		1			6	5
1300-1400	15			1			16	16
1410	1	1					2	2
1443	1						1	1
1500	2						2	2
2154	5						5	5
2234	14						14	14
2250	8	38					47	46
2230-80	17	76	4	1			97	84
2270-80	2	15	8				25	25
2310		4					4	4
2320 (40)		49		3		3	53	48
2360		14					16	16
2614-48	4	4					8	8
2650				1			1	1
2787	3				1		4	4
2820	17						17	17
2940 (43/45)	3	2					5	5
2970	48						48	44
2984-85	1						1	1
3131	1						1	1
3451c		2					2	2
7500		9					9	9
p212c3	1						1	1
p221c4		1					1	1
p172d1			1				1	1

Fig. 4. General distribution of Campanian ware forms by fabric types, recovered from Roman Republic contexts.

* This was done according to the Protocole Beauvray 1998 (P. ARCELIN/M. TUFFREAU-LIBRE [dir.], La quantification des céramiques: conditions et protocole [Glux-en-Glenne 1998] 141–157).

allow distinctions to be made. We believe it may also be the reason for the absence of these types in publications of Portuguese assemblages to date.

At Mesas do Castelinho, Arretine Campanian ware is represented by the typical forms from the 1st century BC, specially the large, very wide *paterae*, with high, near-vertical rims of the F2250–80 types, particularly significant in the F2270 and F2280.

As stated above, the difficulty in identifying these types justifies their rarity in the site's assemblage, reaching a mere 3.34% of the total fragments collected in Roman Republican levels. However, because of this, there seems to be no categorical basis for stating that this ware was not widely distributed through maritime trade.

The potter's mark Q.AF¹¹, attributed to the workshop of *Quintus Afranius*, produced between 40 and 20 BC has never been elsewhere identified in Portugal. In fact, there are no other known examples of such marks in the area, apart from the same site of another characteristic mark featuring two opposing C's.

3.4. Campanian C ware (fig. 5)

The time-frame in which this ware was made (150–50 BC¹²) does not affect the possibility that it was included in the Roman Republican contexts in the Iberian Peninsula, even though it is accepted that it was not widespread in Hispania¹³. The known cases are rare, always a small portion of the assemblages and were identified for the first time in what is now Portugal. That being said, it has been possible to identify four potsherds belonging to the F2350–60 type in Mesas do Castelinho: two connecting rims and two bases exhibiting an unvarnished exterior surface. The colour of the fabrics – grey with a chocolate coloured centre and a slip which resembles a polished engobe – are features which go with the descriptions of this make¹⁴, leaving no doubt as to their classification.

Even though it is a somewhat unusual type, there is no reason to think it restricted to Mesas do Castelinho. There are ample references to grey fabric pottery in Portuguese documentation, and the hypothesis that they may belong to this type has never been given serious consideration.

¹¹ C. FABIÃO/A. GUERRA/T. LAÇO/A. RAMOS, Mesas do Castelinho, Almodôvar. Relatório de Campanha 12–2000 (Policopiado, Lisboa 2001).

¹² J.-P. MOREL, Céramique campanienne: Les formes. École Franç. Rome (Paris 1981) 104.

¹³ AQUILUÉ ABADÍAS ET AL., 2000, 409.

¹⁴ J.-P. MOREL/M. PICON, 1994 Les céramiques étrusco-campaniennes: recherches de laboratoire. In: G. Olcese (dir.), Ceramica romana e archeometria: lo stato degli studi. Atte delle Giornate Internazionali di Studio, Castello di Montegufoni (Firenze 1994) 44–45.

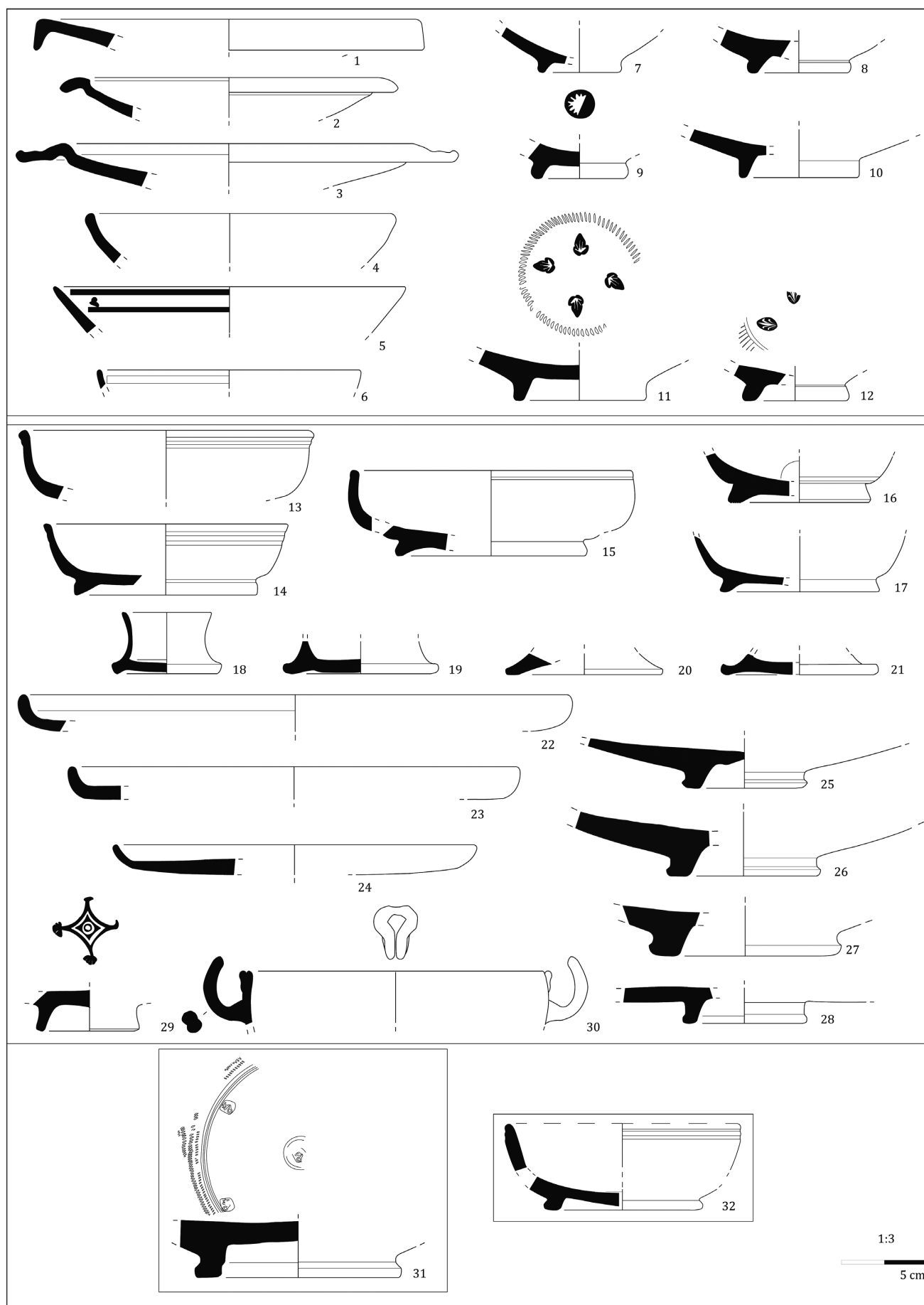


Fig. 5. Campanian A ware: 1 F1122; 2 F1310; 3 F1443; 4,7–11 F2820; 5 F2154; 6 F2970; 12 F2234. – Campanian calene ware: 13–17 F2320; 18 F7500; 19–20 F7541; 21 F7550; 22–24 F2250; 25–27 F2257; 28 F2250-80; 29 F2230-80; 30 F3131. – Arretine campanian ware: 31 F2286. – Campanian C ware: 32 F2250-60.

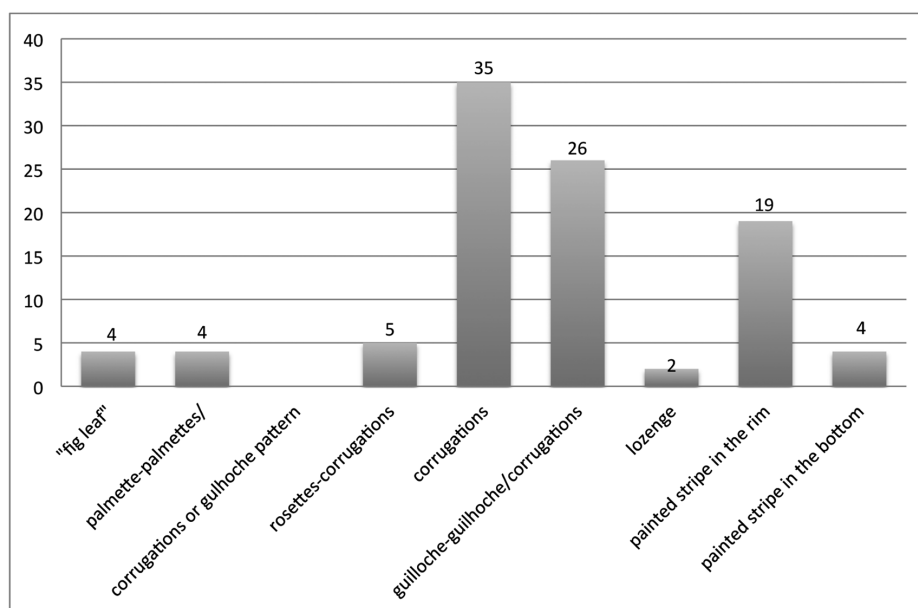


Fig. 6. Decoration range.

3.5. Campanian ware (greyish and orange fabrics) (fig. 5)

Also worth noting is a set of black slipped and high quality polished engobe potsherds, which are not included in the Italic makes of A and B wares, but whose forms imitate them. They were probably produced in Hispania and vary between orange (one fragment) and grayish fabrics. Even though the latter, represented by the three most representative types F2320–60, F2250–80 and F1220, do not define the site's consumption habits, their presence seems to place it in the network of trade relations of the Guadalquivir valley.

An aspect which seems relevant, and which needs to be taken into consideration in the future, is the possibility that there were Iberian-made reproductions of Calene wares. It is not altogether strange that potters could have migrated to and remained in these areas, a situation which is attested by the production of Italic *Terra Sigillata* in the 1st century BC in the Roman camps of Herrera de Pisuergra and Lyon¹⁵, even if these were directly related to military factories.

4. Replacement of Campanian A ware by Campanian B ware?

The difference between the percentages of Campanian A and Calene B wares is merely 15%. One would expect the difference to be more significant, particularly since the greater part of the occupation of the site took place in the 1st century BC, when Calene production reached its zenith, effectively dominating the western Mediterranean market with its exports. Nevertheless, this historical fact is not reflected in the archaeological record of Mesas do Castelinho, as both Campanian A and Calene B are more

or less equally present in the different periods identified. This situation is a clear example of the impossibility of overestimating the major presence of Calene Campanian wares as an element of determining a chronological frame. It would be tempting to observe in the 2nd quarter of the B3 sector¹⁶ a phenomenon in which the Campanian A ware was replaced by B ware, based on a stratigraphical sequence which allows a statistical assessment and the identification of a moment in which there is a marked inversion of the respective values. However, taking into consideration the absence of a parallel for this occurrence (which either does not take place or does so only gradually) in the other areas of the settlement, it does not make much sense to attempt to give it chronological importance or to attempt to relate it to existing commercial dynamics. This being said, it seems that the best explanation would be connected to the function of the space. This central area of the site is characterized by a concentration of metalworking furnaces¹⁷. In face of the ease with which Northern Campanian wares could be acquired, their loss, degradation or destruction was less of an issue than the loss of Neapolitan-made tablewares. This scenario seems to be obvious in a work-related setting, suggesting that the concentration and association of predominantly Calene wares in this situation does not imply the replacement of Campanian A by B wares.

On the coast of Andalucía, Campanian A wares were imported until the third quarter of the 1st century BC. On the other hand, in the interior, the transition to the use of Calene B ware is far earlier and more abrupt¹⁸. Mesas do Castelinho, seems to exhibit an intermediate pattern between these two situations; there seems to be an earlier break in the import of A wares, even though they are not abruptly replaced by the B

¹⁵ A. MORILLO/V. GARCÍA-MARCOS, Producciones cerámicas militares de época Augusto-Tiberiana en Hispania. RCRF Acta 37, 2001, 147–155.

¹⁶ FABIÃO ET AL. 2008.

¹⁷ FABIÃO ET AL. 2008.

¹⁸ AQUILUÉ ABADÍAS ET AL. 2000, 402–403.

wares. Instead, there seems to be a certain balance between the two, which continues to the final period of occupation.

Unlike the situation in sites like Valentia¹⁹, where there are significant differences in the overall presence of A and B wares which have been chronologically defined, in Mesas do Castelinho it has not been possible so far to determine the moment at which the markets change, at least not from a replacement point of view. It seems to be a site, which, unlike Valentia, did not import directly from the production centres, which makes the verification of these phenomena significantly more complex. Maybe the late depletion of the Neapolitan range of wares is an issue here, which must never be considered residual, even though the settlement was obviously not impervious to the changes in the Italic production system and the corresponding exports to the West²⁰.

Thus, because of the impossibility of establishing a non-existent replacement of the A wares by B wares, we are left with the observation of a moment, around the start of the 1st century BC, in which the Calene B wares become a part of the market and of the archaeological record of Mesas do Castelinho, becoming more common (percentage-wise) towards the later phases of the 1st century BC.

The consumption of Calene B in the final stages of the site does not seem to decline and decay until its abandonment. Instead it seems to remain relatively stable throughout the 1st century BC until the end of the Republican occupation in the final part of the third quarter of the century. Indeed, Calene B ceases to be used almost as abruptly as it was adopted, again reflecting the change of influences and habits introduced by the new Roman economic and political scene.

The end of the import of Campanian wares is a matter still under discussion, underlining the need to understand, at each site, the termination of production and the depletion of certain shapes and types of ceramic. Undoubtedly it is not a homogeneous, linear transition, but an occurrence shaped by a number of factors, like the economic conditions of the regions, the trade routes, and even the habits and tastes of the people in particular settlements or regions.

5. Some considerations ...

In the current state of affairs, the most significant assemblages of Campanian wares in the South of what is now Portugal are limited to Castro Marim (504 fragments)²¹, Faro (452 fragments)²² and Monte Molião (465 fragments)²³ in the Algarve, and Mértola (572 fragments)²⁴ in the lower Alentejo. The differences in terms of percentages between these sites and the assemblage of Mesas do Castelinho cannot be based on interpretations of chronology and/or commercial distribution, but must be related to differences in the size and volume of the excavations, or to the absence

of monographic publications of hitherto excavated sites. For example, Mértola, one of the main redistribution centres for the areas further from the Guadiana, should not have a volume of imports lower than sites like Mesas do Castelinho, which it supposedly supplied.

The data so far available reveal, chronologically speaking, that southern settlements occur around the second half of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. In Faro, for instance, there is a predominant presence of Campanian A ware, 51% of the total. Of these earlier types, the set made up of the F1300–1400, F2154, F2230, F2600, F2820 and F2970 types are particularly noteworthy. On the other hand Calene Wares are, for the most part, represented by the F2300 and the F2250–80²⁵ types. It is also important to mention, as a further example in the Algarve region, the site of Monte Molião²⁶ where the F1300, F2250–80 and F2970 Campanian A types are predominant, along with the B types F2270–80, F2250–60, F2240 and F2300. In the excavation of the outlying area of this site, a set of around 800 potsherds was unearthed in a large underground feature, more than 80% of which are A wares (F2970, especially the bevel-rimmed F2974, F1300 with short rims, and a tendency to lower shapes, F2240–80 and F2234), as well as some examples of Calene B wares, mainly the F2250 type. This assemblage seems, therefore, to support the attribution of a late 2nd century/early 1st century time frame. Also worthy of note is the conspicuous absence of shapes typical of the 1st century BC, such as the F2300²⁷ type. In Mértola, on the other hand, the assemblage is comparable with that from Faro. This being said, the F2250–80, F2154 and the F1400–1500 types are the most representative examples of Neapolitan wares, while the F2250–80, F2300, F1200 and F7500 types are the most representative of the Calene wares.

In the Castle of Castro Marim, the rarity of Campanian A wares (2%) reflects the site's chronological context, 50–30 BC, the most common types being F2300 and F2230–80 in their later shapes²⁸, and the F2250–80 types of Calene wares. Alcácer do Sal and Miróbriga feature an early assemblage, composed of F1300–1400, F2820, F2600, F2970, F3130 types, belonging to the early/middle 2nd century BC. This is also the case in Forte de São Sebastião, with the addition of F2230 and F2970 types, from the 2nd and early 1st centuries BC, taking into consideration “the considerable dimension of the Campanian A assemblage, associated with the complete absence of B-óide shapes” as well as the “absence of ceramics exclusively produced in the 1st century BC, such as the amphorae of the Guadalquivir area”²⁹.

²⁵ VIEGAS 2009, 415.

²⁶ DIAS 2010, 58–59.

²⁷ E. R. B. SOUSA/M. SERRA, Resultados das Intervenções Arqueológicas realizadas na Zona de Protecção do Monte Moleão (Lagos). Actas do 3º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve. Xeb 6/1, 2006, 11–26; C. ALVES, Urbanização do Molião (Lagos): uma ocupação romano republicana. Poster apresentada no V Encontro de Arqueologia do Sudoeste Peninsular, Almodôvar 2010.

²⁸ A. M. ARRUDA, Nota sobre a ocupação romana-republicana do Castelo de Castro Marim. In: Actas do 5º Congresso do Algarve 1 (Silves 1988) 13–17; VIEGAS 2009, 414.

²⁹ A.M. ARRUDA/C. PEREIRA, As ocupações antigas e modernas no Forte de S. Sebastião, Castro Marim. Actas do 5º Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve. Xeb 8/1, 2008, 365–395.

¹⁹ C. MARÍN JORDÁ/A. RIBERA I LACOMBA in: Aquilué Abadías et al. 2000, 93.

²⁰ PEDRONI 2000, Cerámicas de barniz negro de los niveles republicanos del anfiteatro (Cartagena). In: Aquilué Abadías et al. 2000, 348.

²¹ VIEGAS 2009, 413.

²² Ibid. 136.

²³ DIAS 2010, 54.

²⁴ LUÍS 2003, 63.

The consumption pattern of these sites has to be seen from a perspective in which the markets reflect their degree of Romanization, so that throughout the 1st century BC there is an increase in the consumption of Italic products like the Calene wares, simultaneously with a decrease in the recorded Campanian A wares and an adaptation to later shapes, for e.g.

Although infrequent, it is not surprising to find Italic productions dating to the first half of the 2nd century BC forming part of an early commercial relationship prior to the mass import of Campanian B productions, a situation probably related to the presence of agents involved in the Romanization of the region, and the direct influence of the port of Cadiz, controlled by Rome since the late 3rd century BC, which would gradually affect the habits of the peoples of the Peninsula, especially from the 2nd half of the 2nd century onwards. A good example of this is the presence of potsherds produced exclusively during the 1st half of the 2nd century BC such as the F2574a 1 or the fragments of the “fish plates” recovered in the excavation at Mesas do Castelinho (or at Monte Molião³⁰). However, it is not plausible that the Roman Republican occupation predates the second half of that century, when the site undergoes urban reorganization.

Mesas do Castelinho cannot therefore be seen as a secondary site in the ebb and flow of the trade dynamics that dominated the region, but as an integral part of them. It is no coincidence that the assemblage analysed is paralleled in sites like Faro and Mértola, an occurrence that integrates it in the trade sphere of the Mediterranean. South of the Tagus, instead of the Atlantic trade route, strong commercial and cultural relationships with the Mediterranean basin operated through the navigation of the Guadiana river, which became a favoured route between the commercial outpost of Mértola and the Mediterranean world. This city, located at the navigability limit of the river would have a fundamental role in the distribution of products through secondary land-routes to the whole of the Lower Alentejo³¹. Even though Mesas do Castelinho is an interior site, this apparent geographic limitation did not prevent it from becoming a part of the larger networks of trade (proved

by the frequent contacts with the outpost, reflected by the set of coins recovered, and by the similarities in the ceramic assemblages), receiving large quantities of Italic imports. The location of the site in the natural passageway between the Algarve and the Lower Alentejo, lessens the effects of this apparent weakness, and indicates yet another possibility for communication with the Mediterranean coast.

The simultaneous existence of traditional, indigenous elements and the first imports contemporary with the Roman presence demonstrates that the indigenous inhabitants were able to seize the opportunity when offered and adapt to this new influence by becoming part of the new markets and consequently improving their own economic capacity. This newfound affluence is reflected in the site's material culture, its architecture, and in its growth, thus reinforcing the idea that the Roman presence was experienced as a non-violent imposition. It is equally evidence of the existence of traditional routes connecting the interior of the Alentejo to the Mediterranean basin, which carried on supplying markets abandoned by the trade of black slipped Attic pottery.

In Mesas do Castelinho Campanian Wares begin to appear in relatively modest quantities (at least in the first levels of the 2nd century BC associated with the first contacts with the Roman world). Nevertheless, during the late 2nd century BC they quickly become an extremely common and significant ware. This tendency towards a progressively greater degree of assimilation into the trade dynamics of the time is not completely limited to the presence of tableware, but is also reflected in other Italic imports³² such as the amphorae³³.

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³⁰ DIAS 2010, 58.

³¹ LUÍS 2003, 59.

³² A. M. ARRUDA/R. ALMEIDA, Importações de vinho itálico para o território português: contextos, cronologias e significado. In: Actas da IIIe Table ronde sur la Lusitanie romaine, Madrid 1997 (Madrid 1999) 307–337.

³³ J. PARREIRA, As Ânforas romanas de Mesas do Castelinho (Dissertação de mestrado, Univ. Lisboa 2009).

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