

THE CIRCULATION OF SOUTH GAULISH *SIGILLATA* IN SOUTHERN LUSITANIA: THE ALENTEJO REGION AND THE ALGARVE (PORTUGAL)

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Abstract

Research carried out recently in different contexts at Roman sites in the Algarve and Alentejo has defined distinct sets of South Gaulish *sigillata*, so elucidating an understanding of the main consumption trends in that region.

In this work, recent and older sets of data concerning this category of tableware imported from La Graufesenque are revisited, presented and discussed. The plain and decorated forms are analyzed, as well as the potter's stamps from sites in southern areas of the present Portuguese territory, which in Roman times corresponded to the province of Lusitania. Even in the case of samples with very unequal compositions, we have identified different consumption patterns between the Alentejo and the Algarve sites, and have compared them with each other and with sets from other regions of Lusitania and Baetica.

Resumo

A investigação realizada recentemente nos sítios algarvios e alentejanos em distintos contextos permitiu uma abordagem aos diferentes conjuntos de *sigillata* sudgálica possibilitando uma leitura acerca das principais tendências do consumo naquela região. Neste trabalho, apresentam-se dados recentes e revisitam-se conjuntos antigos desta categoria de cerâmica de mesa importada de La Graufesenque. Analisam-se as formas lisas e decoradas assim como as marcas de oleiro provenientes de sítios do Sul do actual território português que em época romana correspondia à província da Lusitânia. Mesmo tratando-se de amostras com significados bastante desiguais identificaram-se diferentes padrões de consumo no Alentejo e Algarve que foram comparados entre si e com conjuntos de outras regiões da Lusitânia e da Bética.

Keywords

South Gaulish *sigillata*, Lower Alentejo region, Algarve, consumption patterns.

Palavras-chave

Terra *Sigillata* Sudgálica, Baixo Alentejo, Algarve, padrões de consumo.

1. Introduction

The region of today's southern Portugal, comprising the Alentejo and the Algarve, was part of the Roman province of Lusitania, with its capital in *Emerita Augusta* (Mérida) and integrated within the *Conventus Pacensis*, whose centre was the Roman town of *Pax Iulia* (today Beja) (**Fig. 1**).

This paper is based on a series of assemblages of South Gaulish *sigillata* (SGS), originating in different archaeological projects undertaken in the last years in the Lower Alentejo region. Utilizing this sample, which included pottery from several sites in the region of Mértola (Maia, 1974; Alves 2014), Beja (Grilo, 2007; 2014; 2015; Grilo and Martins, 2013), Almodôvar (Viegas, 2019) and Castro Verde (Maia, 1987: 118, Est. VI nº 6), we have tried to characterize the pattern of imports of South Gaulish *sigillata*, on the one hand, and also to compare it with the available data in the Algarve urban centres of *Ossonoba* (Faro), *Balsa* (today Quinta de Torre d'Ares, Tavira) and *Baesuri* (Castro Marim) (Viegas, 2011). Within this framework, data from previous publications concerning the *sigillata* from Represas