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## ALTO DO CASTELO'S IRON AGE OCCUPATION (ALPIARÇA, PORTUGAL)

### *La Edad del Hierro en el Alto do Castelo (Alpiarça, Portugal)*

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**ABSTRACT:** Alto do Castelo, in Alpiarça (Portugal), is a site recognized by its close spatial relation with the Late Bronze Age necropolis of Tanchoal and Meijão. Although always connected with this moment of Proto-history, a Roman Republican occupation was also early assumed, based not only in a set of archaeological findings collected in the early xx<sup>th</sup> century and during the excavations directed by Ph. Kalb and M. Hock, but also by the identification of a wall and double ditch directly linked to this phase. However, Casa dos Patudos retains several Iron Age materials recovered during the fieldwork of the German Archaeological Institute team, and others found, in recent years, on the surface of the site. These Iron Age materials display characteristics that allow its association with the arrival and installation of the Mediterranean populations in the Tagus valley during the second half/late viii<sup>th</sup> century bc. This data makes possible to integrate Alto do Castelo in a dense network of Orientalized settlements discovered in the two banks of the Tagus river. The role played by these sites and their relations should be analyzed, taking into consideration the type of geographical disposition, the occupied areas, and of course, the archaeological materials.

*Key words:* Phoenician; Tagus estuary; *Amphorae*; Common ware; Gray ware; Settlement network.

**RESUMEN:** Alto do Castelo, en Alpiarça (Portugal), es un sitio reconocido sobre todo por su estrecha relación especial con las necrópolis del Bronce final de Tanchoal y Meijão. Aunque siempre se ha conectado con este momento de la Protohistoria, también se ha constatado una ocupación romanorrepública a partir del conjunto de materiales arqueológicos recogidos a inicios del pasado siglo, en las excavaciones que Ph. Kalb y M. Hock efectuaron en este yacimiento, pero también a partir de la identificación de una muralla y el foso doble que aparecen directamente asociados a esta fase. Sin embargo, la Casa dos Patudos conserva diversos materiales de la Edad del Hierro recuperados en los trabajos del Instituto Arqueológico Alemán, así como otros hallazgos de superficie, realizados en fechas recientes en este yacimiento. Estos materiales de la Edad del Hierro presentan unas características que permiten asociarlos con la llegada y la instalación de poblaciones mediterráneas en el valle del Tajo durante la segunda mitad y la etapa final del s. viii a. C. Esta datación permite integrar el Alto do Castelo en una densa red de establecimientos orientalizantes identificados en ambas riberas del Tagus. Se analiza el papel jugado por estos sitios y su interrelación teniendo en consideración su disposición geográfica, las áreas ocupadas y, por supuesto, los materiales arqueológicos.

*Palabras clave:* Fenicios; Estuario del Tagus; *Amphorae*; Cerámica común; Cerámica gris; Red de asentamientos.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The historical and archaeological significance of Quinta dos Patudos causes that the name Alpiarça is internationally associated with one of the richest periods in the history of the Tagus Valley-The Bronze Age.

Although the studies and dissemination of this unique heritage has had an auspicious beginning, since the early eighties little has been done to attract attention to its importance.

The Museum of Casa dos Patudos retains an important collection of archaeological artifacts gathered in Alto do Castelo and Cabeço da Bruxa. These materials result from excavations, in both sites, of the German Archaeological Institute team deposits, and also from a series of surveys that were carried out over the last 40 years.

In 2011, the preparation for a temporary exhibition at the Museum of Vila Franca de Xira featuring the settlement of Santa Sofia, two of the signatories (J. P. and H. M.) found, among the Casa dos Patudos reserves, a set of ceramic shreds that altered the knowledge concerning the proto-historic occupation of Alto do Castelo, in particular its chronology. This set included Iron Age wheel made pottery and a fragment of a reasonable sized *pitheos*, which was selected for the exhibition “Vila Franca de Xira há três mil anos. O povoado de Cabanas de Santa Sofia” (Pimenta, 2012).

Given the unprecedented nature of this occurrence, and aware of the relevance of an eventual Iron Age occupation of Alto do Castelo, the same signatories have undertaken the preparation of a Research Project aimed to analyze the artifacts in the custody of Alpiarça county, as well as the reparse of the archaeological site<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. The human occupation of Alto do Castelo

Alto do Castelo is a well-known archaeological site in the Portuguese archaeological literature,

<sup>1</sup> This paper was carried out under the project FETE (PTDC/EPH-ARQ/4901/2012 –“Fenícios no Estuário do Tejo”).

<sup>2</sup> We thank the support of Alpiarça's City Hall President, Dr. Mário Fernando Pereira and the Director of the Museum Casa dos Patudos, Dr. Nuno Prates.

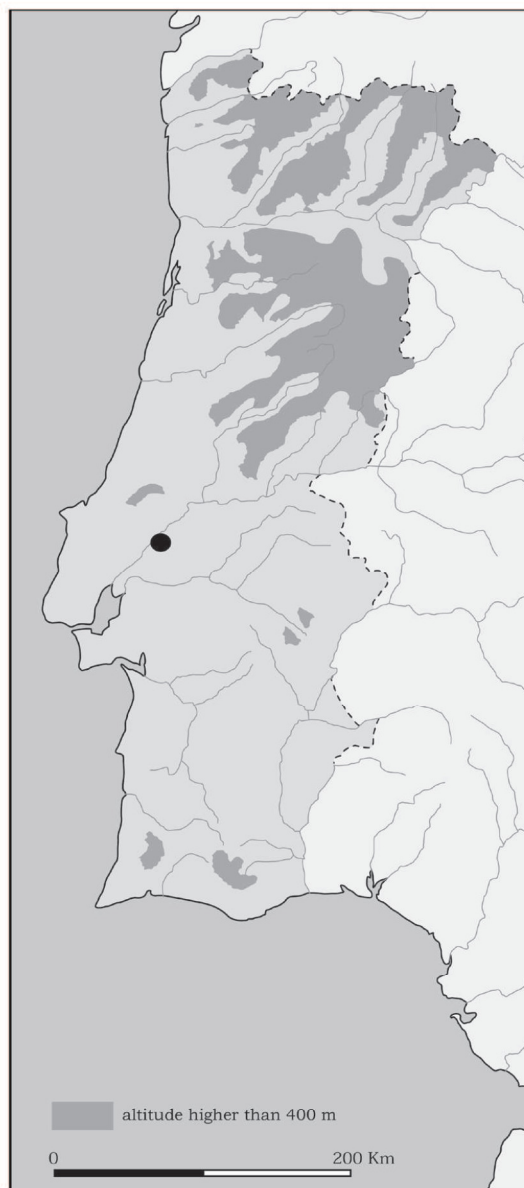


FIG. 1. Location of Alto do Castelo in the Portuguese territory.

largely due to its proximity to a series of Late Bronze Age necropolis (Tanchoal, Meijão, Cabeço da Bruxa, Cabeço da Bruxinha). We recall that these sites and their materials gave rise to one of the most problematic and discussed concepts in Portuguese Archaeology, the Culture of Alpiarça, whose chronology has always been questioned (Corrêa, 1916, 1928, 1936; Marques, 1972; Andrade and Marques, 1974), until the 14C datings (Vilaça, Cruz and



Gonçalves, 1999) allowed to relate the erroneously named “urn fields” incinerations (Corrêa, 1936; Savory, 1951; Almagro Basch, 1952) with the Late Bronze Age (Vilaça, Cruz and Gonçalves, 1999).

Alto do Castelo is located between the necropolis of Tanchoal and Meijão, in wide plateau (a quaternary terrace) in the confluence of the Patudos and Atela riversides. It is relatively well detached among the surrounding landscape, with an altitude of 32 meters and an extension of 28 hectares.

Known since the works of Mendes Corrêa, it was, in the early 70s, surveyed by Gustavo Marques, who identified an earth rampart (Marques, 1972), and, during the 80s, excavated by P. Kalb and M. Höck (1982, 1988). This fieldwork resulted in the excavation of two areas, revealing the existence of two lines of earth ramparts, identical in terms of construction, which were not, however, contemporary. The first one would limit an area of 5 ha, occupied during the Late Bronze Age. The second one, associated with a double ditch, was assumed to have been built during the Roman Republican phase, having an extension of 1500 meters long and 4 meters high, which surrounded the entire 28 ha platform. These data were summarily published (Kalb and Höck, 1982, 1988), stating the existence of a Chalcolithic and Late Bronze Age occupation, this last one contemporary of the surrounding necropolis, and yet another phase dated from the Roman period, which the authors identified as the Roman Republican army camp of Moron (Kalb and Höck, 1982, 1988). There is no reference to an Iron Age occupation, with the exception of a faint reference to the destruction of a seemingly Iron Age tomb that was cut by the construction of the roman fortification (Kalb and Höck, 1988: 195).

The artifacts retrieved in these excavations were consigned in Casa dos Patudos, and confirm the



FIG. 2. *Alto do Castelo seen from the South.*

chronology of these occupations. In fact, some flint and ceramic artifacts, including some bell-beaker fragments, show that Alto do Castelo was occupied during the Chalcolithic. Other pottery shreds and a Porto de Mós type dagger certify the Bronze Age occupation. The Romans materials are abundant, and diversified, with emphasis on a considerable number of Dressel 1 *amphorae*, mainly published by G. Marques (1972).

Concerning Alto do Castelo's Iron Age occupation, the data are practically nonexistent, apart from the aforementioned “tomb” (Kalb and Höck, 1988: 195). However, and as it was said in the Introduction, we have identified, among the Casa dos Patudos reserves, materials that can be related to this chronology, a factor that lead to a survey campaign carried out in 2011 by two of the signatories (J. P. and H. M.), and allowed the collection of other Iron Age artifacts. In the context of the UNIARQ's (Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa) ongoing project, Project FETE-Phoenicians in the Tagus Estuary (PTDC/EPH-ARQ/4901/2012), we felt it was important to publish these new data, considering that it could allow the integration of Alto do Castelo among a quite dense network of Iron Age settlements that



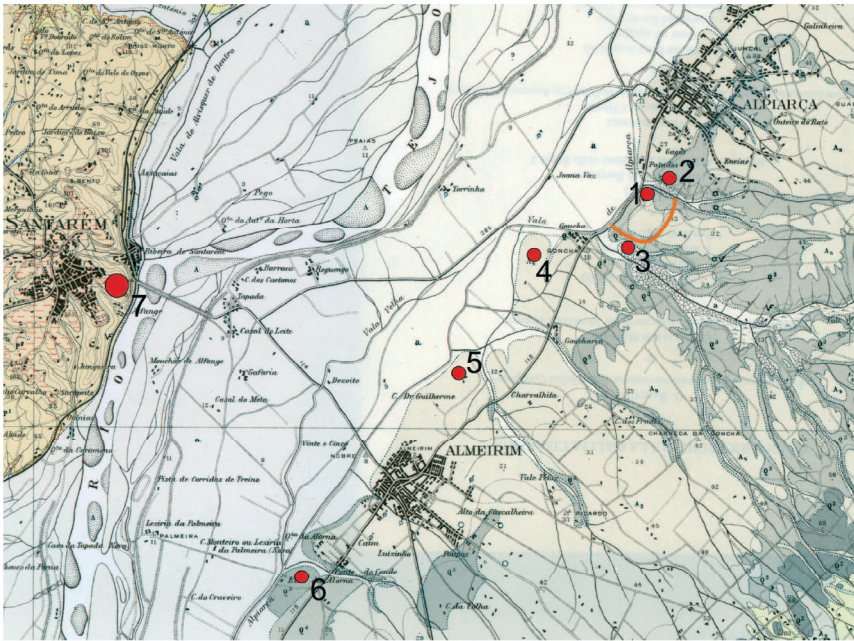


FIG. 3. *Late Bronze Age settlement in the upper Tagus estuary (Carta Geológica de Portugal 1: 50.000): 1) Alto do Castelo (in orange, the Roman fortification); 2) Tanchoal; 3) Meijão; 4) Cabeço da Bruxa; 5) Alto dos Cacos; 6) Eira da Alorna; 7) Alcáçova de Santarém.*

has recently been discovered on the left bank of the Tagus.

### 3. Artifacts

The Iron Age artifacts collected in Alto do Castelo during the 2011 surveys carried out by J. Pimenta and H. Mendes, a set of 152 ceramic fragments, include *amphorae*, gray pottery and common ware. These materials, along with nine other fragments deposited in Casa dos Patudos, and presumably resulting from excavations of German Archaeological Institute team, were included in the analysis that is now published.

The macroscopic characteristics of the ceramics suggest an overwhelming regional production, which has been recently characterized (Sousa, 2013)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> See also: Sousa, F.: *A ocupação pré-romana da foz do Estuário do Tejo durante a segunda metade do 1º milénio a.C.* PhD thesis presented in 2011 in the Lisbon's University. <http://repositorio.ul.pt/handle/10451/4508>; Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: "A produção de ânforas no Estuário do Tejo durante a Idade do Ferro". In *Actas do II Congresso Internacional de la secah – ex officina hispana*, in press.

<sup>4</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: "A produção de ânforas no Estuário do Tejo durante a Idade do Ferro". In *Actas do II Congresso Internacional de la secah – ex officina hispana*, in press.

<sup>5</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Sousa, E.: *A ocupação pré-romana da foz do Estuário do Tejo durante a segunda metade do 1º milénio a.C.* PhD thesis presented in 2011 in the Lisbon's University.

### 3.1. Amphorae

Among the *amphorae*, we have identified 60 fragments (38 rims and 22 handles), 30 of which allowed a typological classification.

Firstly, it should be underline the presence of 13 rim fragments (2, 9, 12, 26, 37, 44, 46 and 69) that appear to integrate Orientalizing morphologies. They appear to correspond to a Tagus estuary production, which was recently designated as Type 1<sup>4</sup>. This type encompasses containers inspired in the so called R1 *amphorae* (types Ramon Torres 10.1.1.1 and 10.1.2.1), that acquire, in this geographical area, a series of specific features, namely a wider rim diameter and a remarkable diversity in terms of the rims profile, a tendency that increases particularly in later periods<sup>5</sup>.

The beginning of this *amphorae* production seems go back to the late VIII<sup>th</sup>/early VII<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>6</sup>, being, however, quite probable that it endures until the mid I<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, according to the data of Rua dos Correiros (Lisbon), were evolved morphologies of this type are present - group 1B<sup>7</sup>. *Amphorae* Type 1 are also present in other sites across the Tagus estuary, as, for example, in Alto dos Cacos, in Almeirim (Pimenta, Henriques and Mendes, 2012) and Quinta da Marquesa, in Vila Franca de Xira (Pimenta and Mendes, 2010-2011). This last site may even correspond to one of its production sites, if we take under consideration the recovering of several deformed *amphorae* fragments that may result from high firing temperatures,



as well as numerous ceramic prisms (*ibidem*), artifacts that are related with potter activities, specifically drying and separation / support during the firing process (Gutiérrez López *et al.*, 2013).

The remaining *amphorae* types seem to relate to later chronologies, displaying a series of variations, which are typical from the Central Atlantic coast after the mid-1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC.

Ten fragments correspond to the Tagus estuary type 3 (60, 80, 133 and 138), which includes oval shaped *amphorae*, with a short neck and an everted rim<sup>8</sup>.

This type is quite characteristic of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, all indicating that its production began during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, according to the data from Rua dos Correeiros<sup>9</sup>. It is, however, difficult to determine its chronological length<sup>10</sup>. This type is well represented in other areas of Lisbon, namely in Castelo de São Jorge<sup>11</sup> and Travessa de Chafariz d'El Rei<sup>12</sup>, as well as in other settlements of Amadora (Moinho da Atalaia, Baútas, Casal de Vila Chã Sul and Fiat Alfragide), Sintra (Santa Eufemia and Castelo dos Mouros)<sup>13</sup>, Cascais (Espigão das Ruivas) (Cardoso, 1991), Santarém (Arruda, 1999-2000) and Chões de Alpompe (Diogo, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Sousa, F.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Filipe, V.; Calado, M. and Leitão, M.: "Evidências orientalizantes na área urbana de Lisboa: o caso dos edifícios na envolvente da Mãe de Água do Chafariz d'El Rei". In *Actas do VI Congresso Internacional de Estudos Fenícios e Púnicos*, in press.

<sup>13</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

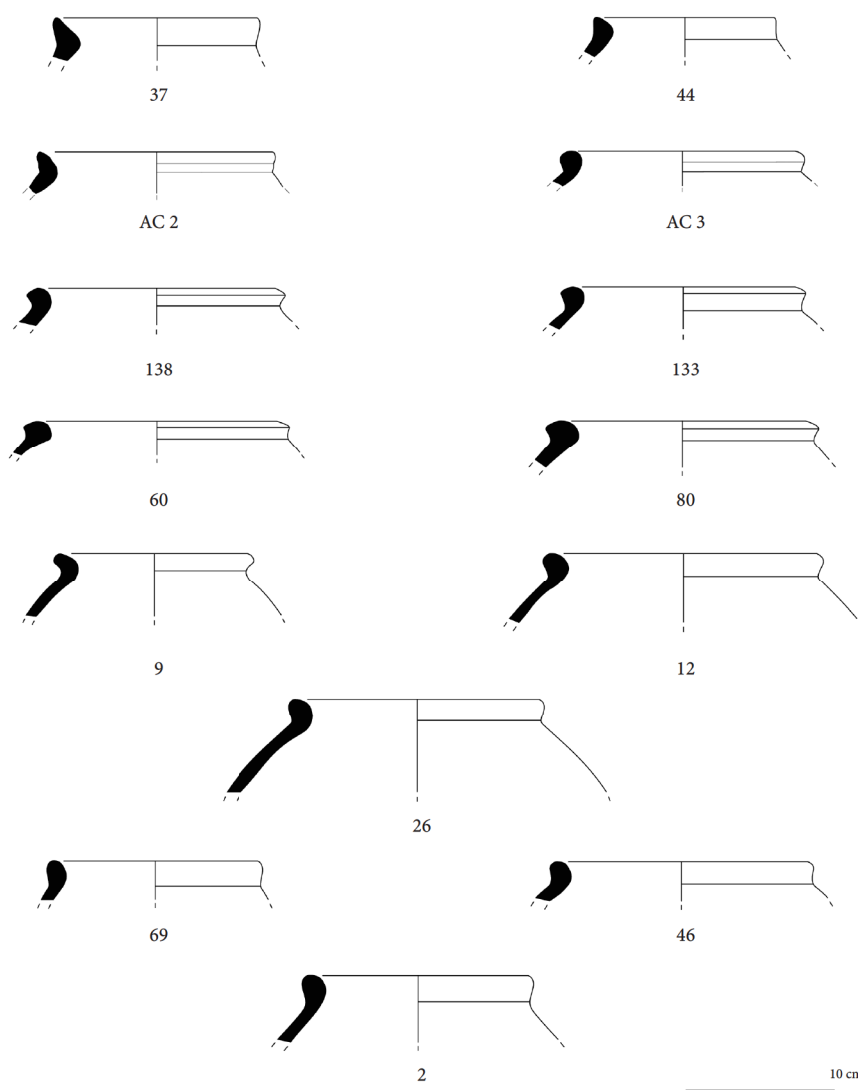


FIG. 4. Alto do Castelo: amphorae.

The remaining *amphorae* fragments correspond to the Tagus estuary type 4 (8, 10, 11, 13, 40 e 62), which includes oval shaped containers, with a high rim, straight on the outside and thickened internally.

The chronology for these recipients is identical to that determined for Type 3, and they are quite frequent across the Tagus Estuary<sup>14</sup>. They appear with some frequency in Lisbon (Rua dos Correeiros)<sup>15</sup>, Almaraz (Barros and Soares, 2004), in Amadora region (Moinho da Atalaia and Fiat-Alfragide),

<sup>14</sup> Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

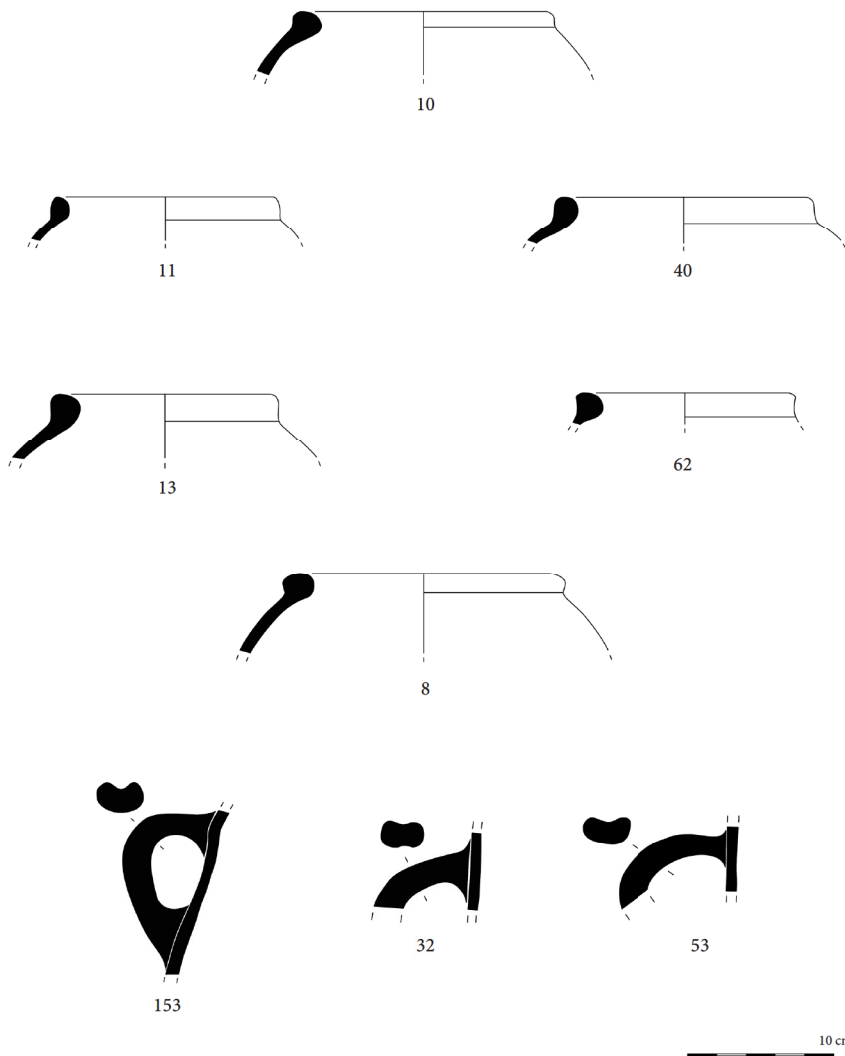


FIG. 5. Alto do Castelo: amphorae.

Sintra (Santa Eufémia)<sup>16</sup>, and, in the interior, in Alto dos Cacos- Almeirim (Pimenta, Henriques and Mendes, 2012).

In addition to the rim fragments, we have also identified a series of *amphorae* handles whose profiles vary between circular and sub-oval shapes. Among the latter, we counted several specimens exhibiting a groove in the outer area (32, 53), a characteristic that is widespread among the *amphorae* productions of the Iberian Peninsula central Atlantic coast (Sousa, 2013)<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>17</sup> See also: Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7; Sousa, E. and Pimenta, J.: *op. cit.* n. 4.

### 3.2. Gray ware

The gray ware recovered in Alto do Castelo is constituted by 43 fragments (36 rims and 7 bases), 36 of which enabling a typological framework.

The most common type corresponds to open and relatively deep bowls that integrate, in general terms, what was refer as type 1 in Lisbon Cathedral (Arruda, Freitas and Vallejo Sánchez, 2000). This morphology is widely documented in numerous Iron Age sites across the Iberian Peninsula, without displaying more specific timelines. Sub-type 1Aa, established in Rua dos Correiros<sup>18</sup>, with arched and convex walls, is the most frequent, counting 20 fragments (A.C. 1528-III-1, A.C. 1463.13, A.C. 1545-II-1, A.C. 1528-II-1, A.C. 1516-II-1, A.C. 1516-II.3, A.C. 1545-III-3, A.C. 1435-68, 6, 21, 4, 25, 92 e 27). Rua dos Correiros sub-type 1Ab<sup>19</sup>, with straight walls, is also well represented among Alto do Castelo's gray ware (22, 14, 7, 24, 96, 95, 101).

Another type identified in this set, with two fragments, corresponds to smaller containers, with everted rims, and a carinated profile (20, 3). It matches Rua dos Correiros type 2Ab<sup>20</sup>, and is also documented, in Lisbon, in Travessa de Chafariz d'El Rei<sup>21</sup>, and Almaraz<sup>22</sup>. In Amadora, this type

<sup>18</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Filipe, V.; Calado, M. e Leitão, M.: "Evidências orientalizantes na área urbana de Lisboa: o caso dos edifícios na envolvente da Mãe de Água do Chafariz d'El Rei". In *Actas do VI Congresso Internacional de Estudos Fenícios e Púnicos*, in press.

<sup>22</sup> Henriques, S.: *A cerâmica cinzenta da Idade do Ferro da Quinta do Almaraz (Almada, Cacilhas)*. Master thesis presented in 2006 in Lisbon's University-Faculty of Letters. [http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/3020/2/ulff082229\\_tm.pdf](http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/3020/2/ulff082229_tm.pdf).



was also identified in Moinho da Atalaia<sup>23</sup>.

Small pots are also present in Alto do Castelo gray ware, and are divisible in two different sub-types.

The first, represented by a single fragment (16), exhibits a globular shape with a short and slightly everted rim, that matches Lisbon's Cathedral type 3 A (Arruda, Freitas and Vallejo Sánchez, 2000). It is relatively frequent across the Tagus Estuary, being dated from the second half of the VI<sup>th</sup> century BC. It appears also in Santarém (Arruda, 1999-2000) and in Amadora (Baútas)<sup>24</sup>. Its absence in later contexts, such as Rua dos Correiros, indicates that this form does not extend beyond the V<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>25</sup>.

The second sub-type, represented by 5 fragments, maintains the everted rim, displaying a higher neck (18, 5, 139, 19, 88). Despite the high fragmentation of these specimens, they appear to correspond to the sub-type 3Ba of Rua dos Correiros<sup>26</sup>. We should also highlight the presence of a fragment (18) with incised decoration, exhibiting a geometric motif on its outer surface. In Lisbon, these vessels appear in Rua de São João da Praça (Pimenta, Calado and Leitão, 2005), and, on the other bank of the Tagus, in Almaraz<sup>27</sup>. It was also documented across Amadora (Moinho da Atalaia, Baútas, Moinhos do Filipinho and Casal de Vila Chã Sul) and Sintra area (Santa Eufémia and Sepultura do Rei Mouro) (Serrão e Vicente, 1980)<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Henriques, S.: *op. cit.* n. 22.

<sup>28</sup> See also: Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

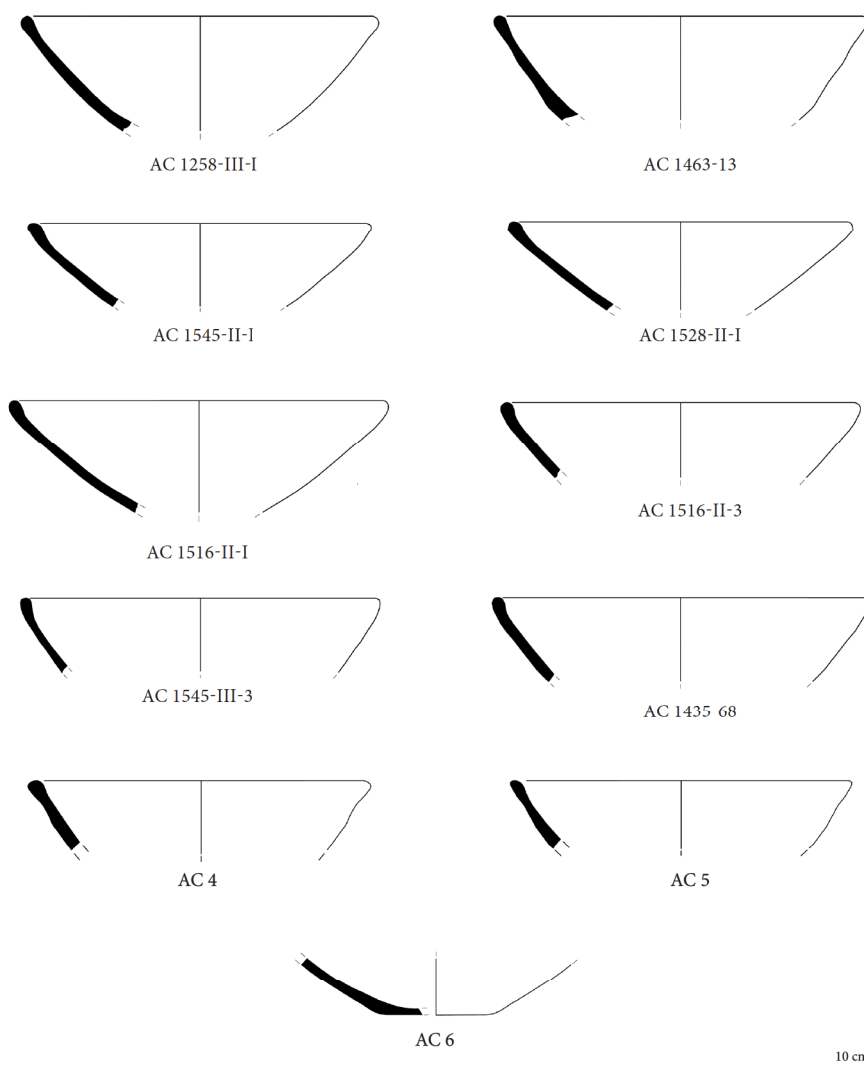


FIG. 6. *Alto do Castelo: gray ware.*

In addition, we have recovered several bases, displaying a flat and slightly convex profile (15, 23) and, in one case, an annular foot (17).

### 3.3. Common ware

The Iron Age common ware set includes 50 fragments (38 rims, 6 handles and 6 bases), 27 of which led to a typological classification.

Among them we find large storage vessels, of which at least one (1407) corresponds to a *pithos*. This vase exhibits a red painted red band on its upper interior surface and a triangular and pending

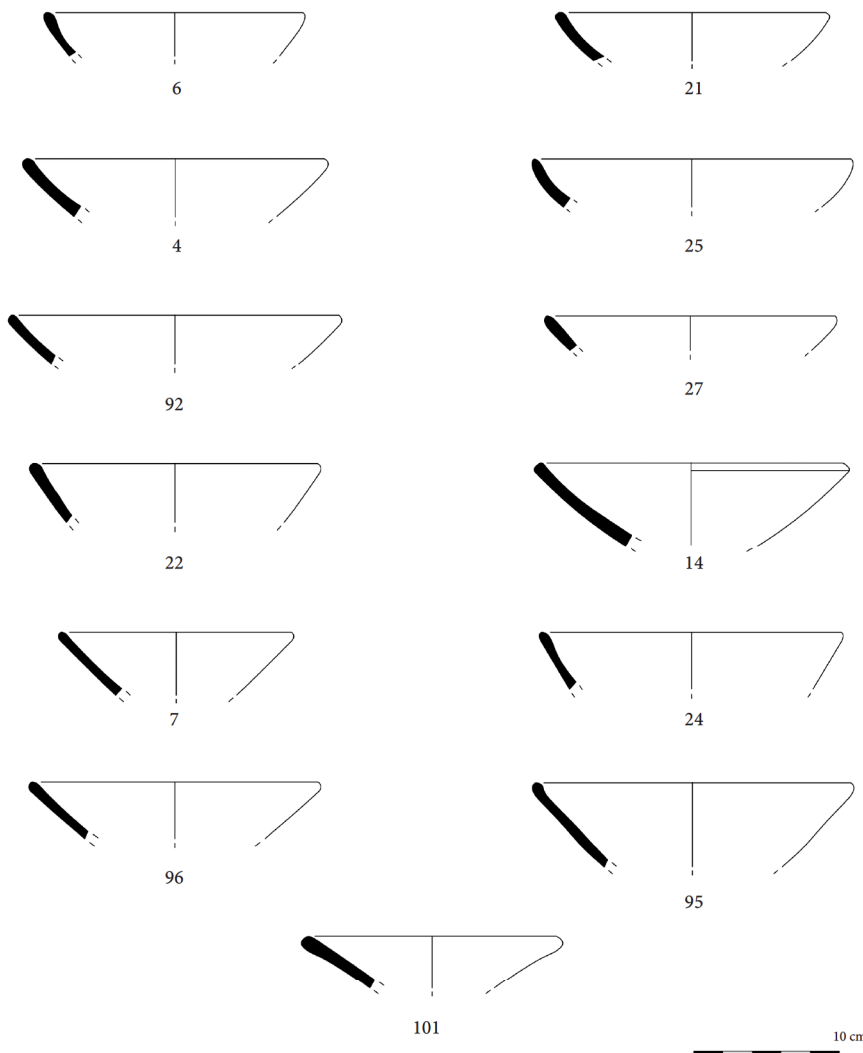


FIG. 7. Alto do Castelo: gray ware.

rim. The neck is short, truncated, with straight walls, and is separated from the body by a well-marked ledge. The wing is bifid. This is a common type among the Tagus valley Orientalizing contexts, being dated, in Santarém, between the second half of the VII<sup>th</sup> and the late VI<sup>th</sup> century BC (Arruda, 1999-2000: 192). The features of Alto do Castelo's *pithos* indicate a chronology centered in the second half of the VII<sup>th</sup> century BC. In Lisbon, this form is common, particularly in the Cathedral (Arruda, 1999-2000), Judiaria (Calado *et al.*, 2013: 121), Pátio do Aljube (Fernandes *et al.*, 2013) and Largo do Chafariz de El Rei<sup>29</sup>. In the Tagus right bank,

<sup>29</sup> Filipe, V.; Calado, M. and Leitão, M.: *op. cit.* n. 21.

specifically in Santa Sofia and Quinta da Marquesa (Pimenta and Mendes, 2010-2011), similar *pithoi* fragments were also collected. On the left bank, our *pithos* has the best correspondence in Alto dos Cacos, Almeirim (Pimenta, Henriques and Mendes, 2012), and in Porto do Sabugueiro, Salvaterra de Magos.

Another two fragments from Alto do Castelo (61 e 39) share an everted rim that ends with a small pending lip, with a triangular or subcircular profile.

A considerable amount of vessels seem to correspond to morphologies that evolve from *pithoi* prototypes, although they lose the bifid handles and exhibit a wide variety in the profile of the neck and rim. They correspond to Rua dos Correiros type 10B<sup>30</sup>, being divided between the sub-type 10BA (14 fragments - 39, 78, 84, 48, 142, 77, 151, 75), with a triangular and pointed rim and sub-type 10Bb (6 fragments - 1, 61, 55, 76) with subcircular profile rims. These types are very frequent across the Tagus estuary (Lisbon - Rua dos Correiros<sup>31</sup>, Rua de São João da Praça (Pi-

menta, Calado and Leitão, 2005), Rua dos Douradores (Cardoso and Carreira, 1993), Lisbon Cathedral (Arruda, 1999-2000); Almada - Quinta da Torre (Cardoso and Carreira, 1997-1998); Amadora - Moinho da Atalaia, Baútas, Moinhos do Filipinho, Casal de Vila Chá Sul, Fiat-Alfragide, Alfragide Segundo Sul<sup>32</sup>; Sintra - Santa Eufémia, Castelo dos Mouros<sup>33</sup>; Cascais - Espigão das Ruivas (Cardoso and Encarnação, 1993) and Freiria (Cardoso and Encarnação, 2013); Santarém (Arruda, 1999-2000).

<sup>30</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.



Among the closed vessels group we have also identified Rua dos Correiros sub-type 10Aa (Sousa, 2011), with simple and everted rims (63, 144) and sub-type 10Aa.2 (Sousa, 2011), with handles (152). This is a common morphology among Tagus Estuary Iron Age settlements, identified so far in Amadora (Moinho da Atalaia, Baútas, Casal de Vila Chã Sul and Fiat-Alfragide), Sintra-Santa Eufémia<sup>34</sup>, Cascais-Espigão das Ruivas (Cardoso and Encarnação, 1993) and Freiria (Cardoso and Encarnação, 2013), Almada-Almaraz (Barros and Henriques, 2002) and Santarém (Arruda, 1999-2000).

Although it is still difficult to determine precisely the chronological limits of these 10Aa type vessels, we know they were used during the v<sup>th</sup> century BC, according to the data of Rua dos Correiros<sup>35</sup> and Freiria (Carbon 14 dating) (Cardoso and Encarnação, 2013).

In addition, we have also identified 6 handles (circular and bifid profile) and 6 bases (flat and ring foot).

Among the open vessels category, we have counted one rim of a large basin that corresponds to Rua dos Correiros type 5Ad<sup>36</sup>. Unfortunately, its high fragmentation state did not allow a graphical representation.

Another fragment (7) belongs to a plate, with a wide and flattened rim. Its inclusion among common ware was due to the absence of any trace of red slip on its surfaces. However, this morphology is common in other Phoenicians and Orientalized settlements Iberian Peninsula,

<sup>34</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

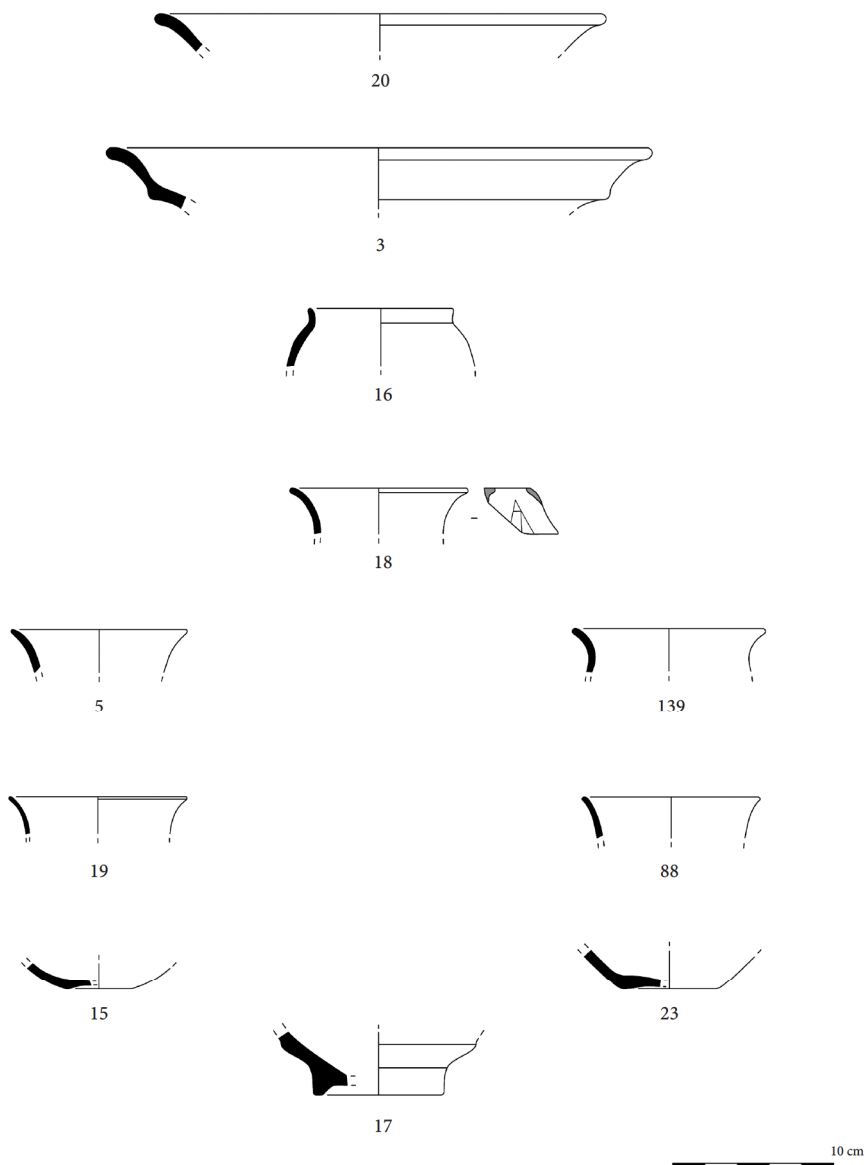


FIG. 8. *Alto do Castelo: gray ware.*

exhibiting a red slip or, in the case of the Central Atlantic coast, gray polished surfaces. Although we can exclude the possibility of being gray ware, the same cannot be stated for the red slip ware. It is possible that due to post-depositional phenomena, the red slip wasn't preserved. We should also highlight the reduced width of the rim (2.8 cm) and a relatively large diameter (22 cm), which could indicate a chronology, centered between the late VII<sup>th</sup> and the VI<sup>th</sup> century BC, if we consider Santarém's red slip ware data (Arruda, 1999-2000: 184-186).

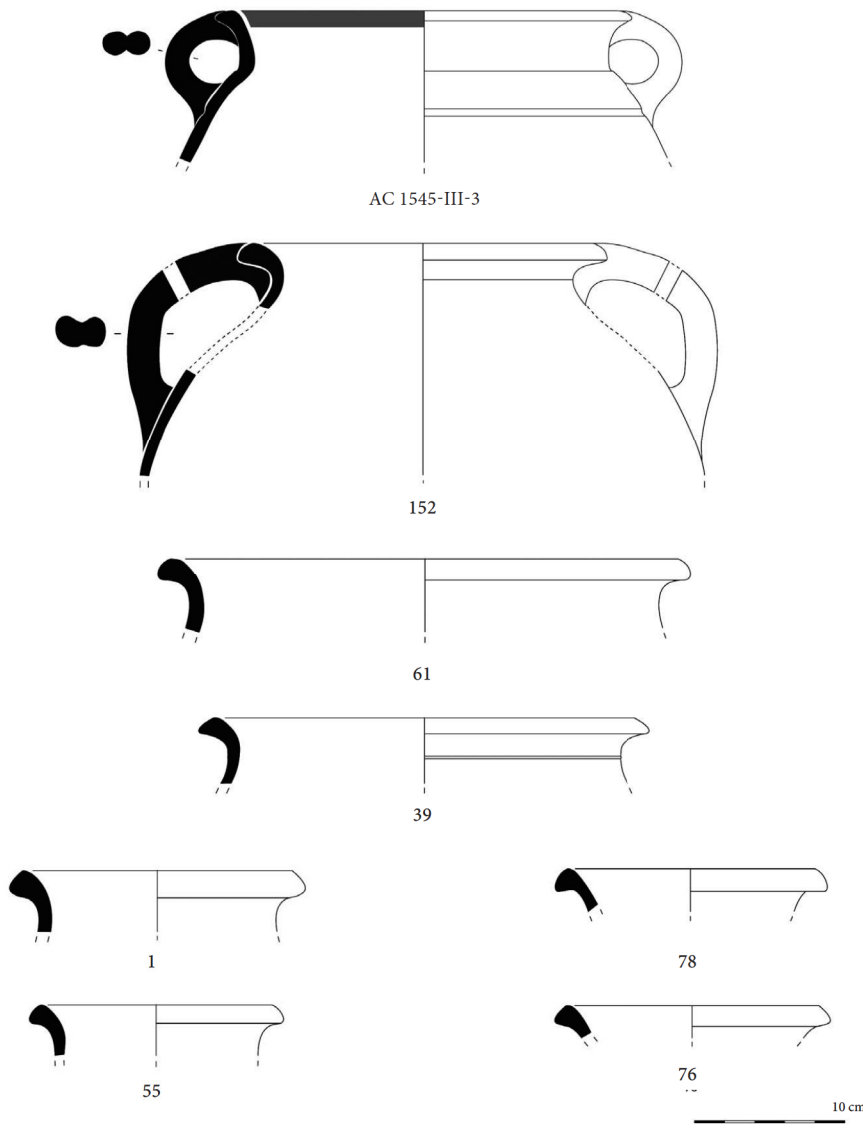


FIG. 9. Alto do Castelo: common ware.

#### 4. Discussion

The Iron Age ceramic set recovered in Alto do Castelo deserves to be discussed in terms of its regional significance, but also its terms of its relevance concerning the Western Iberian Peninsula Orientalizing phenomena and its subsequent effects.

Regarding this last issue, it should first be noted that some materials, particularly those that relate with an earlier chronology, as for example the *pithos*,

the R1 type *amphorae* and common ware (red slip?) plate and even some of the gray ceramic bowls, display morphological features that relate to the eastern and southern orientaling world of Andalusia, the Iberian Peninsula Southeast and Ibiza. In fact, it is in these areas that we find the best parallels for our artifacts, in addition to those already mentioned in the nearby region. Thus, as seems evident, Alto do Castelo can be integrated, as many other settlements in the Tagus area, but also in Algarve, Sado and Mondego, in a wide phenomena, that, after the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, developed the “colonization” of the Portuguese coast, and was carried out by Western Phoenicians settled in the Strait of Gibraltar area.

Naturally, we must never lost sight that the moment of arrival cannot be confused with a long and slow process, which led to the effective occupation of territories that were already occupied by native communities that coexisted with the exogenous groups.

The remaining artifacts recovered in Alto do Castelo indicate, firstly, the permanence of those foreign groups in the Atlantic Portuguese area, and secondly, a continuity of the orientaling tradition. In fact, and as it was already stated in previous works (Arruda, 1993, 1999-2000, 2005; Sousa, 2013)<sup>37</sup> the population that inhabited this area, both native and Phoenician, groups that after some time were no longer distinguishable from each other, due to entanglement relations, maintained, in terms of their material culture, and until Roman times, an obvious Orientalizing conservatism, a

<sup>37</sup> See also: Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.



phenomenon that in southern regions wasn't as expressive. As a matter of fact, the *amphorae*, common and gray ware, which is mostly from the mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, reflect a local development of the prototypes from earliest centuries, not showing the massive addition, as happened in the south of *Iberia*, of new forms or specific decorative styles typical from the Andalusian area. Once again, it is possible to re-emphasize that the mid 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC corresponds to a period when, even in areas that share a common past, the peninsular regionalisms gain a strong expression, which has been explained in the framework of the deconstruction of the Phoenician colonial world (*ibidem*). Therefore, as in Western Andalusia the Turdetanian/Punic-gaditanian 'culture' acquires prominence, and in the Eastern Mediterranean coast emerged the Iberian 'culture', in the Portuguese western shores we also notice a development of another reality, different from the previous (Sousa, 2013)<sup>38</sup>. It is characterized by a direct extension of morphologies and decorative styles, heirs of the Orientalizing phase, and by a very limited number of imports that reflect a significant descent in contacts with the Mediterranean world.

As for the regional context, we recall that the Tagus estuary is, on the whole, an area with a high density of settlements connected with the western Phoenician colonization, and its historical evolution was a direct result of this phenomena. But the truth is that, until recently, the true extension of this process was virtually unknown, and only Santarém (Arruda, 1993; Arruda, 1999-2000),

<sup>38</sup> See also: Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

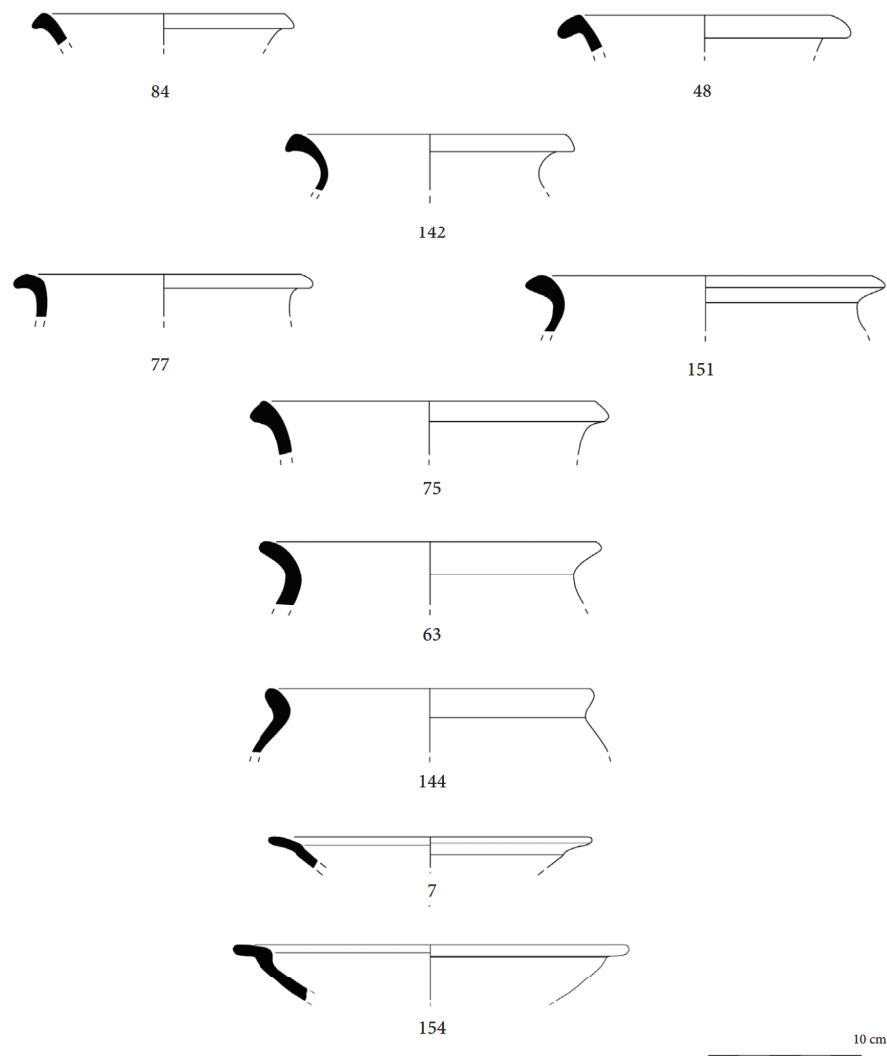


FIG. 10. *Alto do Castelo: common and red slip (?) ware.*

Lisbon (Arruda, 1999-2000) and Almaraz (Barros, Cardoso and Sabrosa, 1993), whose chronologies went back to the second of the VIII<sup>th</sup>/VII<sup>th</sup> century BC, were consecrated as places of choice in terms of Phoenician and Orientalizing occupation. Everything indicated that the "colonization" of nearby areas had begun only in the late VI<sup>th</sup> and mainly during the V<sup>th</sup> century BC, focusing in innermost regions, such as Almada, Sintra, Cascais, Oeiras and Amadora, and aiming for the agricultural exploitation controlled, more or less directly, by the

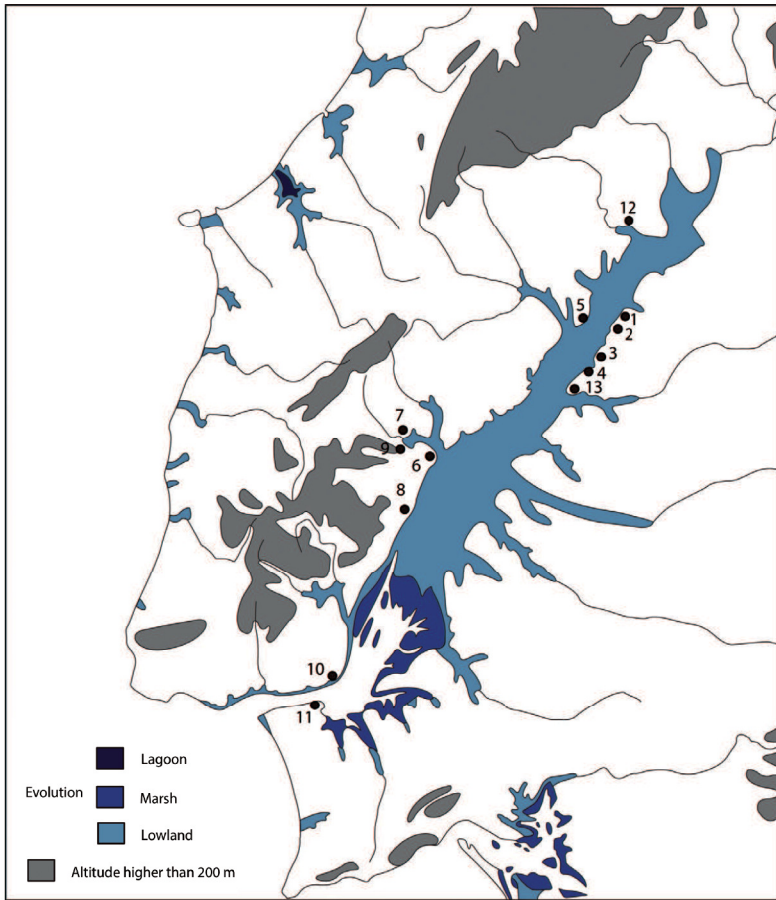


FIG. 11. Tagus estuary's Iron Age settlement (8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century BC): 1) Alto do Castelo; 2) Cabeço da Bruxa; 3) Alio dos Cacos; 4) Porto do Sabugueiro; 5) Santarém; 6) Quinta da Marquesa; 7) Castro do Amaral; 8) Santa Sofia; 9) Quinta da Carapinha; 10) Lisboa; 11) Almaraz; 12) Chões de Alpompé; 13) Eira da Alorna.

(Pimenta, Henriques and Mendes, 2012), Cabeço da Bruxa and Alto do Castelo, in Alpiarça, are part of this settlement network. This last site is distinguishable from the others for a more prominent roll in the landscape, gathering an important visual domain across an extensive area. This dense settlement network may be related to the control of the river navigation and/or to the Tagus valley agricultural exploitation, which, until today, remains as one of the most fertile regions of the Iberian Peninsula.

It should also be noted that the data from Alto do Castelo show an intense relation with Santarém, and both sites are intervisible. On the other hand, the similarity of the pottery fabrics in certain vessels (as, for example, the *pithos*, that displays the same petrographic and fabric characteristics) indicates a common origin in the pottery production of Santarém and Alto do Castelo. We do not know, for now, the actual components of this relation (cooperation, dependency, domination), as well as for their relation with other settlements located in the nearby Tagus shores. Nevertheless, the data seems to indicate that this settlement network was hierarchical, and it is quite likely that such an organization had been previously planned.

large settlements of the Tagus mouth, Lisbon and Almaraz (Sousa, 2013)<sup>39</sup>.

Recent surveys carried out in Vila Franca de Xira (Pimenta and Mendes, 2010-2011) and Almeirim (Pimenta, Henriques and Mendes, 2012) allowed us to recognize the existence of a complex and dense network of riverside settlement, with a high number of sites located along the river, which go back to the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, specifically from the late VII<sup>th</sup> until the late VI<sup>th</sup>/V<sup>th</sup> century BC. On the left bank, Porto do Sabugueiro, in Muge (Pimenta and Mendes, 2008), Alto dos Cacos, in Almeirim

<sup>39</sup> Sousa, E.: *op. cit.* n. 7.

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