

A TALE OF TWO (?) CITIES: LISBON AND ALMARAZ AT THE DAWN OF THE IRON AGE

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Abstract: During the last two decades, archaeological data concerning the Iron Age occupation of the two main settlements located in the Tagus estuary, the hill of Castelo de São Jorge (Lisbon) and Quinta do Almaraz (Almada) has strongly increased. Their close geographical proximity, along with the strong Phoenician presence attested in both sites, since at least the late eighth – early seventh century BCE, are elements that allow us to revisit the available data in order to better understand the links that connected these important locations during the so-called “Orientalizing” period. This article presents and argues the hypothesis that both settlements were, in fact, part of a single political-administrative cell, which was the main base of the Phoenician presence in the Tagus estuary. This new approach enables a more comprehensive reading concerning the impact and strategies of Phoenician colonization along the Iberian western Atlantic shores.

Keywords: Western Atlantic; Phoenician Colonization; Tagus Estuary; Orientalizing Period; Material Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies concerning the Phoenician colonization of the Iberian western Atlantic coast, particularly in the Tagus estuary, have grown exponentially during the last decade. The escalation of urban archaeological field works and the development of a recent research project concerning the Phoenician presence in innermost areas of the riverbanks,¹ recovered significant elements that enable a better understanding of the strong impact that the settlement of western Phoenician groups had in the region. The area’s territorial strategies of occupation and exploitation changed radically between the Late Bronze Age and what is known as the “Orientalizing period” (late eighth to late sixth century BCE), revealing, in this latter phase, the undeniable relevance that the Tagus assumed as a structural element of human occupation. Similar transformations are also visible on a micro-topographical level, revealing that the settling of these foreign groups also had strong implications in the formation and development of the area’s main settlements, which is clearly detectable in Lisbon and Quinta do Almaraz. During the first half of the first millennium BCE, both these sites, located in the mouth of the estuary, played a crucial and strategic role in controlling the main commercial routes that circulated across the region, having probably emerged as the main bases of the Phoenician presence in these remote western shores.

2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Separated by only 5 km, and located, respectively, on the Tagus’s right and left bank, Lisbon and Almaraz controlled the narrowest section of this course, where the river opens to the Ocean and, consequently, to the most important commercial routes that later connect to the Mediterranean basin and to Southern Iberian Phoenician settlements (FIGS. 1-2).

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1 Arruda *et al.* 2017.

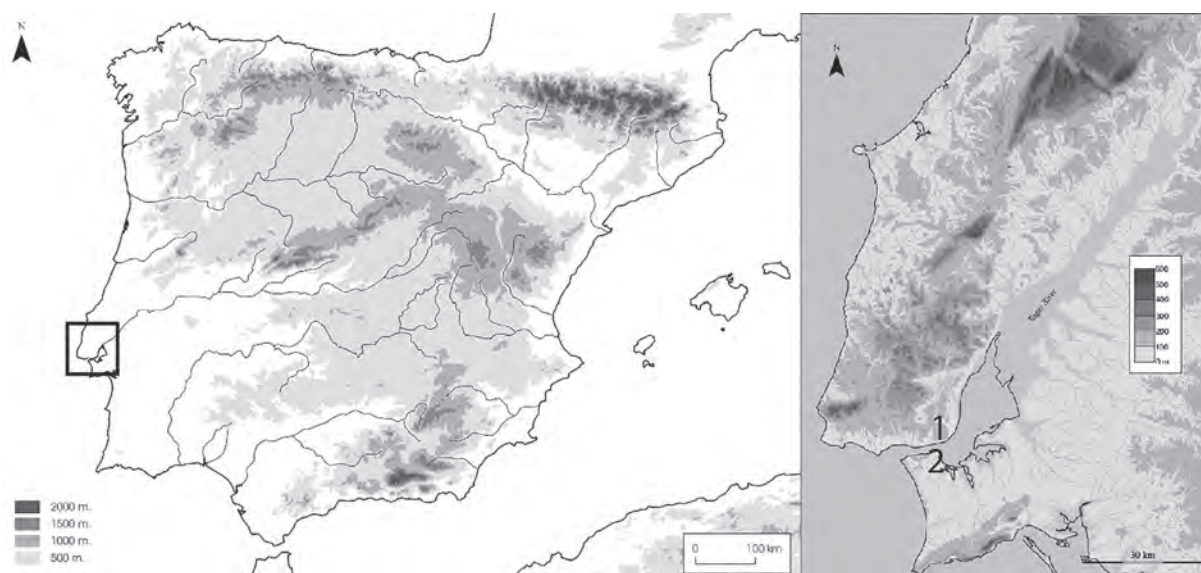


FIG. 1. Location of Lisbon (1) and Almaraz (2) (author's elaboration).

In Lisbon's urban area, the Phoenician presence is limited to the Castelo de São Jorge' Hill, a prominent elevation with about 90 m high, which, during the first millennium BCE, was mostly surrounded by water. During the "Orientalizing period", its occupation extended for at least 11 ha² and is concentrated on the southern slope of the hill, oriented towards the Tagus, with direct visual contact of the other shore, where Quinta do Almaraz is located.

On the river's left bank, in Almada, the main nucleus of Phoenician occupation is located in the western area of a narrow spur, about 50 m high, known as Quinta do Almaraz. Its estimated extension during the "Orientalizing period" is about 6 ha.³

Both sites share an absolute visual dominance, not only towards the Tagus banks but also over the surrounding plains, from Serra de Sintra to Arrábida, as well as a natural ease of defense provided by its steep slopes and cliffs. The estuary, the existence of secondary water streams and their proximity to an authentic "inner sea", known as "Mar da Palha", also provided advantageous port conditions that were certainly crucial in the selection of these areas by Phoenician settlers. The importance of Castelo de São Jorge's Hill and Quinta do Almaraz is also manifested by their proximity to the Tagus's natural resources (gold and agricultural/husbandry potential) and by enabling direct control of commercial routes that flowed through the river, which connects the littoral coast to the rich metallic resources of the innermost territories (gold and tin).

3. THE OCCUPATION OF THE TAGUS ESTUARY MOUTH DURING THE FIRST MILLENNIUM BCE

Data concerning the Late Bronze Age (LBA) occupation in the mouth of the Tagus reveals the existence of a particular type of settlement, traditionally known as "casal agrícola".⁴ They correspond to apparently small habitats dedicated to agricultural activities, husbandry and exploitation of marine resources, located in variable

2 Arruda 1999-2000.

3 Barros – Cardoso – Sabrosa 1993.

4 Cardoso 2004.

altitudes (from 10 to 170 m high), although there seems to be no particular concern with territorial visibility or ease of defense. There are, so far, several examples of this type of settlement in the nearby area, and its exclusivity indicates that it was a preferred strategy for the local LBA communities.⁵ For the purpose of this paper, and due to its proximity to the forthcoming Iron Age nucleus, it is important to highlight the cases located in close range of the Tagus mouth: Praça da Figueira, in Lisbon;⁶ Quinta do Percevejo and Quinta do Marcelo,⁷ in Almada.

The archaeological evidence retrieved in these sites is in accordance with the typical regional LBA horizon: handmade wares, sometimes decorated with incisions or burnished patterns and, on some occasions, flint sickle elements. Exceptional artifacts were collected only in Quinta do Marcelo, namely small iron knives, a *tranchet*, double spring and elbow *fibulae* and an amber bead.⁸ Equally important was the recovery of a perforated vessel apparently used in cupellation of silver, stone pylons, and the identification of traces of mercury and gold in the interior of a ceramic cup,⁹ indicating the development of metallurgic activities that may justify its importance in the framework of LBA long distance contacts.

Nonetheless, these sites seem to have been abandoned immediately before or during the first stages of the settlement of western Phoenician settlers in the area. With the arrival of these groups, we witness a substantial transformation of the settlement pattern, which now occupies widely visible areas that gather a natural ease of defense: the Hill of Castelo de São Jorge and Quinta do Almaraz. This profound paradigm change in the settlement pattern is an indicator of important modifications in the area's economic and commercial strategies, which are surely related to the Phoenician colonization process.

Thus far, excavations that took place in both sites¹⁰ revealed no sign of previous LBA occupation. Although materials that recall local native communities were recovered (handmade wares that reproduces the LBA traditions) they always appear associated with significant amounts of Phoenician artifacts.

Considering the available data, two hypotheses can be formulated:

- 1) After the first contacts with Phoenician groups, the LBA communities autonomously restructured their settlement pattern, shifting its habitat to higher grounds in order to gain a visual domain towards the Tagus mouth, and therefore controlling the commercial routes that flowed through the river, which gain, during this time, an extraordinary importance.



FIG. 2. Hill of Castelo de São Jorge (1) and Quinta do Almaraz (2) in the Tagus estuary (author's elaboration).

5 Sousa 2016a.

6 Silva 2013.

7 Barros 1998; Cardoso 2004.

8 Barros 1998; Cardoso 2004; Vilaça 2006.

9 Cardoso 2004.

10 Barros – Cardoso – Sabrosa 1993; Sousa 2016b.

- 2) The transformations in the area's settlement pattern, material culture and economic-commercial strategies are directly related to the implementation of a Phoenician colonial model in the mouth of the Tagus estuary, which may have also incorporated significant segments of pre-existing populations.

The archaeological data retrieved in the Hill of Castelo de São Jorge and in Quinta do Almaraz seems to corroborate strongly the second hypothesis. Although several elements indicate an important and active native participation in the emergence of the regional Iron Age horizon, it is undeniable that the Phoenician colonial matrix is the one that will dominate all aspects of this new reality.¹¹

In terms of the ceramic repertoire, and immediately after the early seventh century BCE, handmade vessels that reproduce the LBA tradition decline exponentially, being replaced by wheel-made pottery made according to western Phoenician traditions (*amphorae*, *pithoi*, common ware and gray and red-slip tableware). The majority of these vessels are already produced locally, indicating the presence in this area of potters who mastered all the technological, morphological and decorative prerogatives necessary for the production of these different categories, which are virtually identical to those manufactured in other southern Phoenician colonies, like Cádiz,¹² Cerro del Villar¹³ or La Fonteta.¹⁴ Handmade vessels appear with a higher weight (61%) only in a particular context excavated in Rua de São Mamede ao Caldas,¹⁵ dated from the late eighth / early seventh century BCE, being the oldest known in Lisbon. Whether this singularity is due to its ancient chronology, to sampling issues related to the nature and formation of archaeological layers, or to the existence of more indigenous cultural areas in the interior of Castelo de São Jorge's Hill habitat, are questions that we cannot address at this point due to the shortage of contextual data concerning the site's earliest phases of occupation.

After the early seventh century BCE, however, and according to the data collected in the hilltop, in Largo de Santa Cruz do Castelo 7, handmade wares never exceed 10% of the assemblages recovered, and this was reduced to even smaller percentages during the sixth century BCE.¹⁶ Quinta do Almaraz reveals similar data, with only 3,6% of handmade vessels in seventh and sixth century BCE contexts.¹⁷ This pattern shows that the incorporation of wheel-made pottery was not gradual, as one would expect in an indigenous cultural framework. In Lisbon and Almaraz, the western Phoenician ceramics are introduced in massive amounts, rapidly overcoming local traditions, which soon become residual. This scenario does not translate a progressive transfer of knowledge between Phoenician and native agents in the context of pottery manufacture, but rather as the radical implantation of fully configured western Phoenician productive traditions in the mouth of the Tagus estuary during the early Iron Age.

This pattern is comparable to others identified in several colonial settlements from southern *Iberia*: in the second phase of Teatro Cómico (Cádiz), dated between the mid-eighth and early sixth century BCE, handmade vessels represent about 30% of the set;¹⁸ in La Fonteta, between the late eighth and the late sixth century BCE, they display percentages between 20 and 30%.¹⁹ More similar patterns to the ones observed in Lisbon / Almaraz were identified in Toscanos, where between the late eighth and the seventh century BCE

11 Sousa 2015a.

12 Ruiz Mata – Pérez Perez 1995; Torres *et al.* 2014.

13 Aubet *et al.* 1999.

14 Rouillard – Gailledrat – Sala Sellés 2007.

15 Pimenta – Silva – Calado 2014.

16 Sousa – Guerra 2018.

17 Barros – Cardoso – Sabrosa 1993.

18 Torres *et al.* 2014.

19 Rouillard – Gailledrat – Sala Sellés 2007.

handmade productions represent 4% to 8% of the sets,²⁰ and in Malaga and Cerro del Villar, with weights between 1 and 2%.²¹ These patterns, which ultimately relate to habits of food consumption, reveal that the communities from Lisbon and Almaraz are clearly integrated in western Phoenician traditions, shared also by most southern Phoenician colonial environments.

A remarkable similarity can also be traced in terms of culinary practices: local wheel-made cooking pots from the mouth of the Tagus estuary correspond, in the majority of cases, to S-shaped vessels usually decorated with parallel incisions. The clays used in these containers are different from other productions, using higher concentrations of non-plastic elements, and displaying a rougher finishing, making them more apt for fire exposure.²² Identical cooking pots are frequently found in colonial environments of Southern *Iberia*, from Cádiz²³ to the coast of Malaga,²⁴ seeming to reflect a recurrent western Phoenician tradition in the framework of culinary practices.

Another aspect to highlight is the existence of an important *amphorae* production in the Lower Tagus, responsible for the manufacture of over a thousand containers during the Iron Age, thus revealing an important commercial and economic dynamic. This phenomenon is, once more, comparable with others that occurred in southern *Iberia*, particularly in the coast of Cádiz and Malaga, although in the case of the Tagus estuary, their distribution seems to reach only regional circuits.²⁵ Nonetheless, they testify to the capacity of these communities in creating a well-structured consumption market in the central Atlantic coast of the Portuguese territory (FIGS. 3-4).

Architectural evidence also corroborates the application of classical Mediterranean construction techniques since the earliest phases of occupation in the Hill of Castelo de São Jorge and Quinta do Almaraz: domestic structures display orthogonal plans, built with stone walls, adobe bricks or *taipa*. Pavements are usually made of clay, with colors that vary between red, yellow and green, but also with gravel and flattened stones.²⁶ Defensive structures were detected only in Almaraz: excavation works made it possible to identify a defensive pit, with an average 6,5 m width and 3,5 m depth, apparently associated with at least two lines of defensive walls²⁷ (FIG. 5).

Last, but not the least, another important element to take under consideration is the undeniable evidence of knowledge and use of Phoenician language and writing, attested in two inscriptions²⁸ recovered in Lisbon:

- The first inscription, retrieved in the top of the Castle's Hill, was written on an *amphorae* fragment. Dated from the first half of the seventh century BCE and written in Phoenician characters, it seems to refer to a toponym, *klpš*, which could be related to *kálpē* / *kálpis*, the ancient name of Rock of Gibraltar, or with another toponym, eventually ended in *ipo*, which suggests its relation with the ancient name of the Sado river, *ka(l)lípous*.²⁹ However, another possibility is that this toponym could actually be related to the nucleus where it was actually discovered. In this framework, it is important to highli-

20 Schubart – Maass-Lindemann 1984.

21 Recio 1990; Aubet *et al.* 1999.

22 Sousa 2014; Sousa – Guerra 2018.

23 Ruiz Mata – Pérez Pérez 1995; Torres Ortíz *et al.* 2014.

24 Aubet *et al.* 1999.

25 Sousa 2014; Sousa – Pimenta 2014.

26 Barros 1998; Guerra 2017; Gomes – Gaspar 2017; Ribeiro – Neto – Rebelo 2017.

27 Barros – Cardoso – Sabrosa 1993.

28 Arruda 2013; Zamora López 2014; Neto *et al.* 2016.

29 Zamora López 2014.

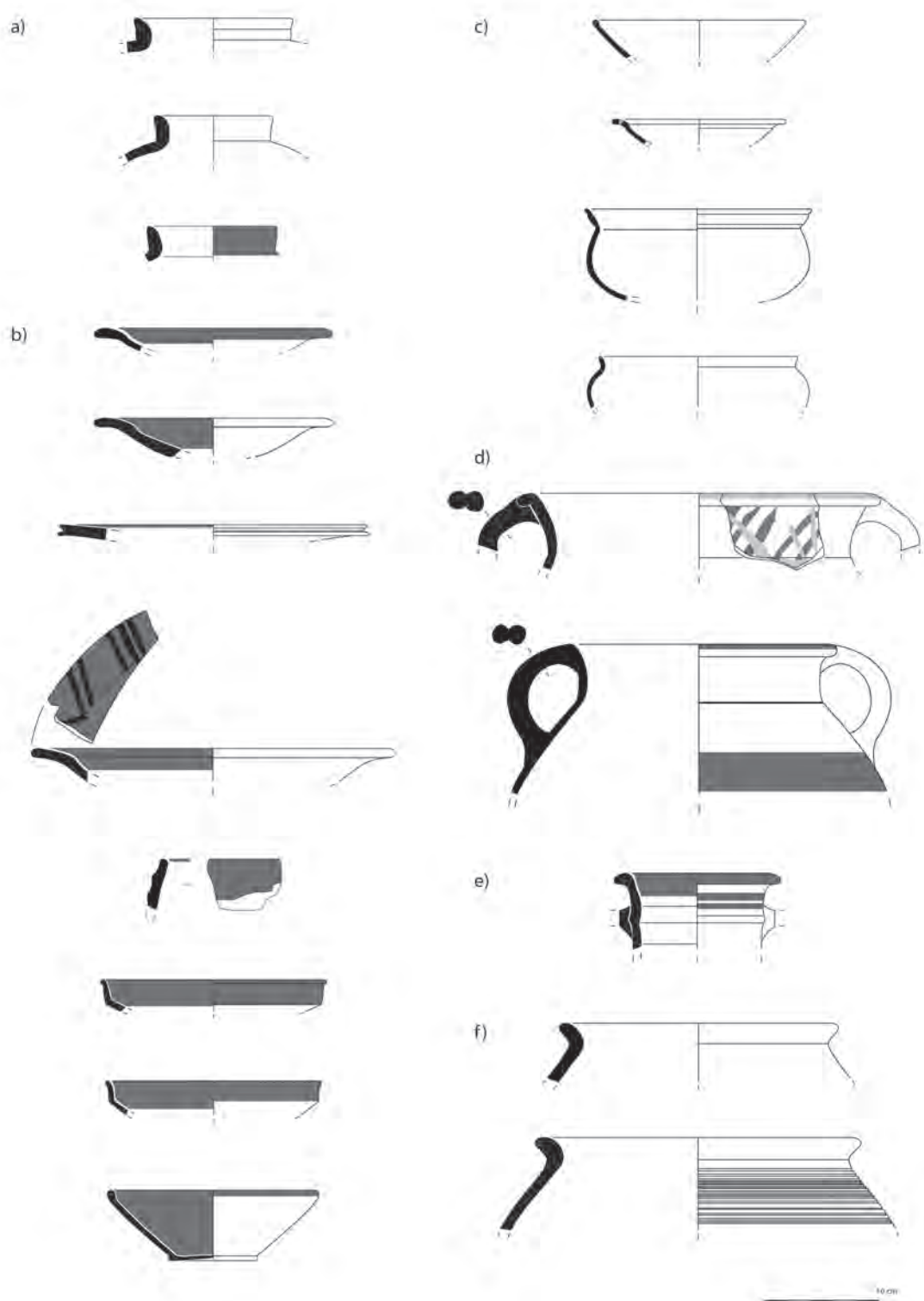


FIG. 3. Lisbon, "Orientalizing period": a) *amphorae*; b) red-slip ware; c) gray ware; d) *pithoi*; e) Cruz del Negro type urn; f) cooking pots (after Pimenta *et al.* 2014; Sousa 2016b; Sousa – Guerra 2018).

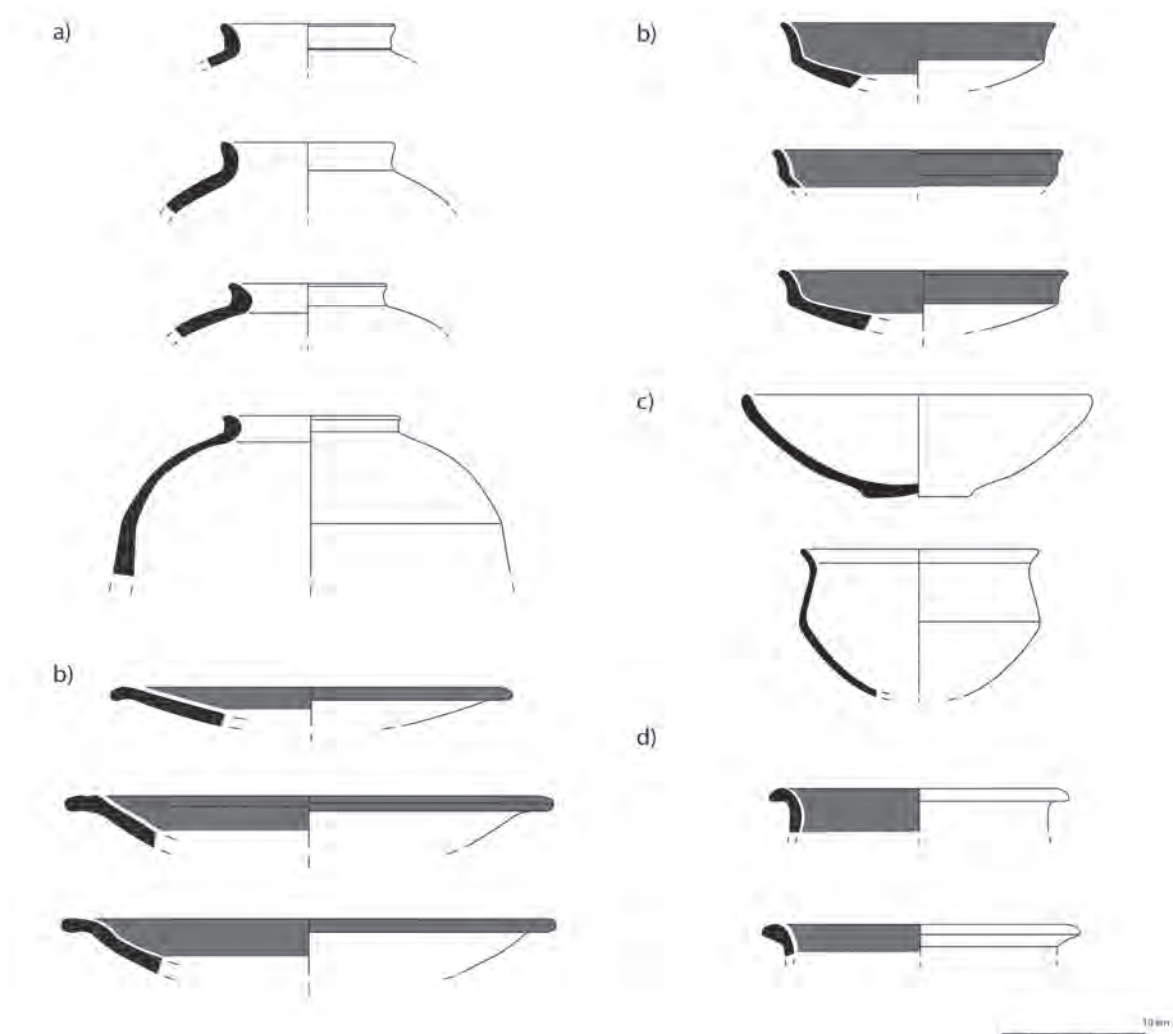


FIG. 4. Almaraz, “Orientalizing period”: a) *amphorae*; b) red-slip ware; c) gray ware; d) *pithoi* (after Barros *et al.* 1993; Barros – Soares 2004; Olaio 2018).

ght the original context of recovery of this inscription: an archaeological layer, apparently a pit filled by domestic debris, related to the earliest phase of occupation in the top of the Castle’s Hill, where regional handmade vases appeared in association with Phoenician *amphorae*, red slip and gray wares.³⁰ Although this important archaeological context is still not properly published, one may wonder if its formation may not be related to a simple domestic use but instead with foundational rituals which celebrated the birth of a new settlement, which would also imply that the presence of this inscription would not be accidental. An interesting hypothesis would reside in a possible relation between this inscription and Lisbon’s Roman toponym, *Olisipo*, being the first an earlier version of a toponym which would suffered alterations during the following five centuries, and would result in the name transmitted by Roman Literature and Epigraphy. Nonetheless, this and other hypothesis can only be discussed

30 Silva 2013, pp. 59-60.



FIG. 5. Section of Almaraz's defensive pit (after Olaio 2018).



FIG. 6. Inscription retrieved in Castelo de São Jorge (after Arruda 2013).

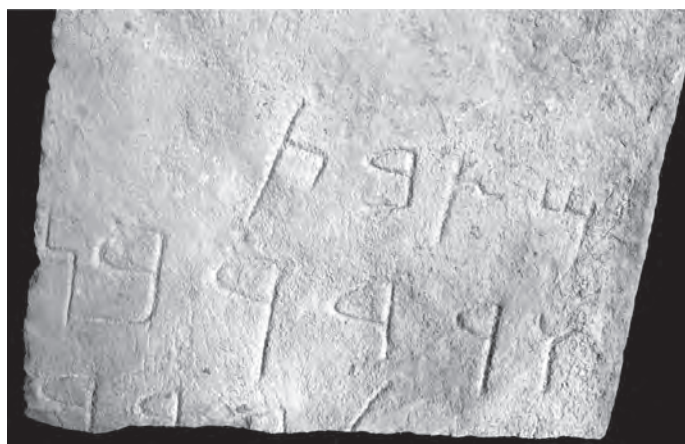


FIG. 7. Inscription retrieved in Armazéns Sommer (after Neto *et al.* 2016).

in the framework of linguistic studies. On the other hand, we cannot deny that the use of the suffix *ipo* has been systematically related to more indigenous spheres;³¹ however, we should also take into consideration the fact that western Phoenician language may have incorporated Iberian native linguistic elements in its vocabulary, especially after almost 150 years of coexistence previously to their arrival at the Tagus estuary.³² Therefore, even if the toponym written in the *amphorae* fragment actually ended with the suffix *ipo*, it is not mandatory to relate it exclusively which indigenous communities, since western Phoenician groups could also

have used it (FIG. 6).

- The second inscription is an extraordinary finding that was retrieved during the excavations in Armazéns Sommer.³³ It is a funerary inscription made upon a stone stele, dated from the seventh century BCE, in which appear two anthroponyms: *Wabdar*, son of *Ibadar*. Apparently, these names are

31 Torres Ortiz 2005, 2013; Almagro Gorbea – Torres Ortiz 2009.

32 Sousa 2015b.

33 Neto *et al.* 2016.

not frequent in the lists of known Phoenician personal names, although some resemblances may be traced; it seems, however, more likely that they correspond to indigenous names,³⁴ an hypothesis that would enable the formulation of interesting questions related to cultural interactions between Phoenician and native groups in this area. Nonetheless, only a more detailed study of this extraordinary finding will enable further readings concerning its meaning (FIG. 7).

Regardless of their reading and the origins of their participants, the mere existence of these inscriptions clearly attests to the presence, in the mouth of the Tagus river, of agents that could speak, read and write Phoenician during the Iron Age earliest stages, which, once again, indicates the profound exogenous nature of its occupation.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF LISBON AND ALMARAZ AS THE MAIN PHOENICIAN NUCLEUS OF THE TAGUS ESTUARY: AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE

Assuming, as a hypothesis, that both the hill of Castelo de São Jorge and Quinta do Almaraz were western Phoenician foundations, one must reflect on the nature of the links established between them during the late eighth to the sixth century BCE. Their close geographical proximity and the undeniable similarity of their material culture suggest a shared cultural background. Simultaneously, the territorial setting indicates a single, complementary and carefully planned strategy that aimed for the control of the strategic area were the Tagus opens to the Ocean circuits, and ultimately, to the Mediterranean world.³⁵

These elements enable the formulation of an hypothesis that is somewhat controversial, but that could enable a better understanding of the magnitude of the impact that the fixation of Phoenician groups had in the western Atlantic shores: that both sites (hill of Castelo de São Jorge and Quinta do Almaraz) were part of a single political-administrative colonial cell founded by western Phoenician groups during the late eighth / early seventh century BCE (traditional chronology).

It is important to recall that both centers are separated by only 5 km, a distance entirely encompassed by the Tagus, and that their location is set in the closest area between its banks. In the perspective of Phoenician colonial communities, so familiarized with fluvial and maritime navigation, rivers, and in this particular case, the Tagus, were not necessarily an obstacle, but instead a privileged means of communication that united both its shores. Surely it is not by coincidence that the number of ships representations, fossilized in ceramic supports, are so frequent in Lisbon and Almaraz during the Iron Age,³⁶ testifying to the importance and preference of navigation during this period (FIGS. 8-9). At this point, it is also relevant to highlight the existence of two areas identified both in Lisbon and Almada that seem to be related to boarding piers structures used during the “Orientalizing period”: in the lower area of Quinta do Almaraz, in Cacilhas, archaeological excavations brought to light a structure that was interpreted as a boarding pier, apparently associated with storage facilities;³⁷ in Lisbon, recent work in Armazéns Sommer revealed the existence of a slightly inclined stone ramp that allowed access to the river,³⁸ which could also be related to port functions. Although the data related to these contexts are still scarce, it suggests the existence of port structures that may have systematically connects both the river’s shores.

34 Neto *et al.* 2016.

35 Arruda 1999-2000.

36 Arruda 1999-2000; Cardoso 2004; Sousa 2014.

37 Barros – Henriques 1998.

38 Ribeiro – Neto – Rebelo 2017.

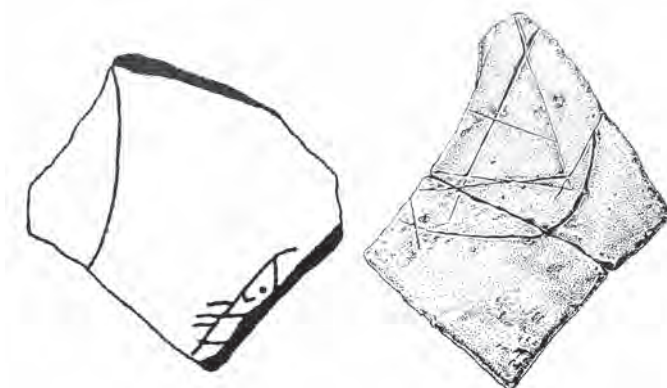


FIG. 8. Ships graffiti from Almaraz (after Cardoso 2004).

The existence of a physical separation in the interior of urban spaces is not an unprecedented strategy in the framework of the western Phoenician colonization, and was apparently applied in its most prominent colony: Cádiz. Interpretations following the discovery of an important domestic area in the insular area, in Teatro Cómico, and that aimed to justify the plurality of separated areas of occupation, which also include Castillo de Donã Blanca, Chiclana, spaces dedicated to ceramic productions, fish-factories, funerary spaces and ritual areas, argue for the existence of a polynuclear urban

model, structured according to differentiated functionalities, and incorporating multiple habitat areas.³⁹ It is possible that a variation of this model, naturally in a smaller scale, may also have been used in the area of Lisbon / Almaraz.

Another highly significant analogy can be found in the Lower Guadalquivir Valley, specifically in the cases of Seville (*Spal*) and El Carambolo, also physically separated by the river, with different but complementary functions, which in this last case are clearly related with the religious sphere. Both sites were also integrated in a single political Phoenician cell, divided in an urban and port area (Seville) and sanctuary (El Carambolo).⁴⁰

According to these perspectives, and based on the available archaeological evidence, it is highly likely that the center of political, administrative and economic power was originally located in Almaraz.⁴¹ In this framework, it is important to highlight the exceptionality of several artifacts recovered in this site:⁴² Middle Corinthian ceramic fragments, Egyptian scarabs, ivory plaques and alabaster vases, whose association with western Phoenician elites was already established.⁴³ The presence of these prestigious elements does, in fact, suggest the presence of an elite with high social-economic power, and the fact that they were recovered in domestic contexts or in the filling/abandonment layers of defensive structures⁴⁴ indicates their original use on a daily basis (FIG. 10). These types of artifacts are, so far, absent in Lisbon, although this fact may be related to the shortage of published data concerning its Iron Age earliest phases, as well as with the limitations implicated by the exercise of archaeology in current urban contexts.

Nonetheless, other highly suggestive evidence that indicate important differentiations are the elements that imply that Quinta do Almaraz functioned as an important metallurgical production center, not only of iron and bronze artifacts, but also of gold and silver.⁴⁵ The placement of these activities in an area with a strong ease of defense, reinforced by defensive anthropic structures, may translate the conscious intent, by this assumed elite, in directly controlling these activities. The same reasoning may be applied to commercial transactions, considering that the only lead weights recovered in the mouth of the Tagus estuary were disco-

39 Domínguez Monadero 2012; Padilla Monge 2014; Niveau de Villedary y Mariñas 2015.

40 Escacena Carrasco – García Fernández 2012, p. 778.

41 Although it would be tempting to also associate religious functions, the available data is still insufficient to allow this connection.

42 Cardoso 2004; Barros – Soares 2004; Arruda 2005.

43 López Castro 2006.

44 Barros – Cardoso – Sabrosa 1993; Barros – Soares 2004.

45 Melo *et al.* 2014.

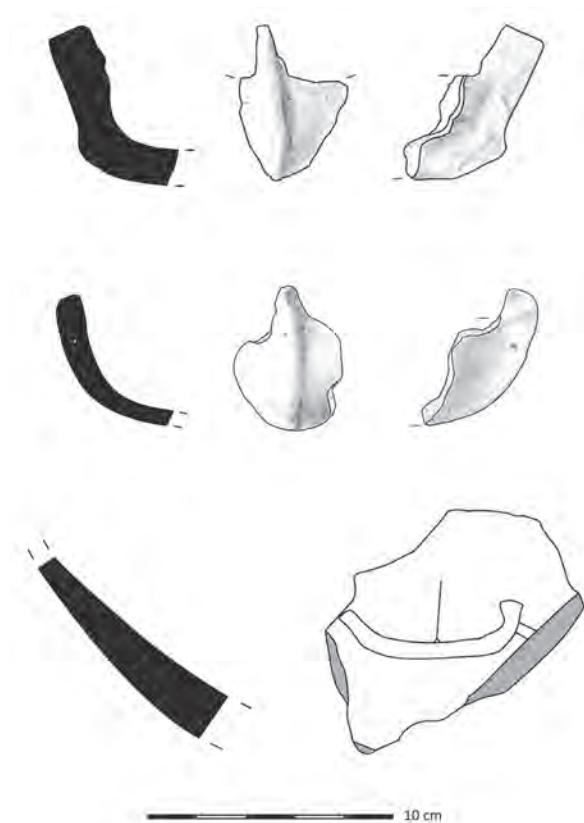


FIG. 9. Ships terracotta miniatures and graffiti from Lisbon (after Sousa 2014).



FIG. 10. Alabaster vases, Middle Corinthian ceramic fragments, Egyptian scarab and ivory plaque from Almaraz (after Cardoso 2004).

vered in Almaraz. According to recent studies, these artifacts are related to the Phoenician unit of 7,5/7,9 g, attesting the importance of the role played by this site in regional and maybe even in long distance commercial transactions.⁴⁶ Therefore, it seems plausible to admit that at least part of the community that inhabited Quinta do Almaraz held a strong economic, commercial, social and maybe even religious power over this presumed vast urban nucleus of the estuary that extended over both the river's banks.

The occupation of the Hill of Castelo de São Jorge may, on the other hand, have sheltered mainly domestic functions. Productive activities in this area appear to be limited to ceramic manufacture⁴⁷ that was, however, also produced in Almaraz.⁴⁸ This right bank of the Tagus may have also incorporated funerary areas, if we take under consideration the recent identification of the funerary stele retrieved in Armazéns Sommer.

Despite of these apparent social and economic differentiations, we believe that the cultural background of the inhabitants of both margins was the same, constituted mainly by western Phoenician populations but also by segments of indigenous groups. We recall that the only evidences for the use of Phoenician writing was recovered in Lisbon, attesting to the existence of literate agents in this area. This same cultural

⁴⁶ Vilaça 2011.

⁴⁷ Gomes – Gaspar 2017.

⁴⁸ Olaio 2018.

background is also visible in identical patterns and morphologies in ceramic productions,⁴⁹ as well as in their consumption patterns in both sides of the river.

If there was, in fact, a social-administrative differentiation in the core of this presumed urban cell during the “Orientalizing period”, it seems to have undergone important changes after the mid first millennium BCE. The archaeological data indicates that after the fifth century BCE, Lisbon gains a strong capitality, while the occupation in Almaraz appears to become less expressive, a situation that curiously also occurs in the Lower Guadalquivir Valley.⁵⁰

The Greek pottery from the Classic period is scarce in Almaraz when compared to Lisbon,⁵¹ as well as typical *amphorae* productions from the second half of the first millennium BCE.⁵² During this time, we observe a considerable increase of the occupied area in Lisbon, which now reaches the lower areas of current Baixa Pombalina.⁵³ This occupation is materialized, in the framework of material culture, in an exponential diversification of local production, but also in the presence of several fragments of Greek red figure and black glazed pottery,⁵⁴ as well as some *amphorae* imports that include not only southern-Iberian productions, but also from the central Mediterranean.⁵⁵ This remarkable dynamism that takes place in Lisbon during the mid-first millennium BCE is also reflected outside the city’s limits.

The data suggest that this nucleus was directly responsible for the foundation of several new settlements located in the Lisbon basaltic complex and in the Tagus inner shores, being its most important supplier of manufactured products.⁵⁶ Even in pre-existing centers located in northern areas, such as Alcáçova de Santarém, Chões de Alompé, Alto do Castelo and Porto do Sabugueiro, we witness, during this phase, several artifacts produced in the estuary’s mouth, indicating the important commercial and economic role played by Lisbon in innermost circuits.⁵⁷ This phenomenon, which emerges following the so-called “sixth century crisis”, implied a profound restructuring of territorial exploitation strategies, and, ultimately, considerable changes in an economic, commercial and social-political level, which seem to be headed mostly by Lisbon. This process recalls others that took place, during the same time, in other important colonial areas of Southern Iberia; Lisbon practically behaves like a small “central Atlantic Cádiz” after the mid-first millennium BCE,⁵⁸ assuming a capital role on the region’s development and evolution. The prerogatives that potentiated this type initiative are, once again, to be associated to traditions developed within ancient colonial Phoenician frameworks rather than within Orientalized indigenous communities.

As already mentioned, the colonial features we defend for the genesis of Lisbon / Almada does not exclude indigenous participation. For the moment, it is not possible to estimate the number of western Phoenicians who arrived at the Tagus estuary, nor the initial contingents in the foundation of any other Iberian colonial center. However, what seems to be more or less certain is that the incorporation of segments of native populations must have been decisive for the demographic success and survival of any colonial establishment during its earliest phases. This phenomenon is indeed reflected in several acknowledged southern

49 Arruda 1999-2000.

50 Escacena Carrasco – García Fernández 2012.

51 Arruda – Sousa in press.

52 Olaio 2018.

53 Sousa 2014.

54 Arruda – Sousa in press.

55 Sousa 2014.

56 Sousa 2014.

57 Arruda *et al.* 2014; Arruda *et al.* 2017.

58 Sousa 2016b.

colonies⁵⁹ and proof of these symbiotic relationships resides in the variable quantities of handmade ceramics of autochthonous tradition, demonstrating that the incorporation of pre-existing populations was a reality within the framework of western Phoenician colonization.

A far more complex issue focuses on how negotiations with these indigenous communities developed, considering these colonial environments are almost always located in areas that correspond, directly or indirectly, to territories previously controlled by local groups. It is commonly accepted that Phoenician settlers impose, to some extent, their interests on these relations; the systematic presence of native groups in colonial environments has even been interpreted in the framework of coercive workforce.⁶⁰ However, it is also likely that these negotiations did not take place *en bloc* and did not equally affect all segments of pre-existing communities. Agents of greater prominence in the local hierarchy have certainly had, at least at an early stage, a preferential treatment in the establishment of pacts and alliances with western Phoenician groups, through which the latter obtain “permission” to establish themselves in new territories, and, simultaneously, the recruitment of the workforce necessary for developing their economic activities. These relations, which may take on different types of interactions,⁶¹ such as inter-ethnic marriages or the political-social distinction of certain individuals, even within the colonial environment itself, could justify the funerary evidence recovered in Lisbon, which suggest that in the framework of western Phoenician social environments, elements of apparent native origin or descent gain a certain social prominence, if, in fact, it does refer to local individuals.

Whatever the intensity and importance of these covenants and alliances may have been, the Phoenician agents that arrived at the central Atlantic western coast of Iberia eventually constructed a true colonial landscape in the Tagus estuary, where contacts and spaces of circulation were predominantly fluvial and maritime, and which had as its main base of operations a city structured in function of the river, and that corresponds to the first stage of implantation of urban models in the Portuguese territory.

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