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ÍNDICE

EDITORIAL 05

António Carlos Valera

“ÍDOLOS” FALANGE, CERVÍDEOS E EQUÍDEOS.
DADOS E PROBLEMAS A PARTIR DOS PERDIGÕES 07

Beatriz Bastos

POTENTIAL OF LIPID ANALYSIS ON PREHISTORIC
PORTUGUESE POTTERY 21

António Carlos Valera, Rui Ramos e Patrícia Castanheira

OS RECINTOS DE FOSOS DE COELHEIRA 2
(SANTA VITÓRIA, BEJA) 33

António Carlos Valera

CIEMPOZUELOS BEAKER GEOMETRIC PATTERNS:
A GLIMPSE INTO THEIR MEANING 47

Patrícia Castanheira

MISERICÓRDIA II (BERINGEL, BEJA):
ALGUMAS NOTAS PARA O ESTUDO DO BRONZE FINAL
NAS TERRAS DE BARROS 53

José Carlos Quaresma, Alexandre Sarrazola, Inês M. da Silva
PRODUÇÃO DE VIDROS E IMPORTAÇÃO DE TERRA
SIGILLATA EM FINAIS DO SÉCULO V / PRIMEIRA METADE
DO SÉCULO VI: O CASO DA MARINHA BAIXA, AVEIRO 63

Alexandre Sarrazola, Mónica Ponce,
Teresa Freitas, Marta Macedo
A RAMPA DOS ESCALERES À REAL CORDOARIA,
BELÉM / JUNQUEIRA (SÉCULO XVIII) 77

Ana Olaio, Pedro Angeja, Álvaro Pereira,
Gonçalo Sá-Nogueira, André Texugo
ACTIVIDADE ARQUEOLÓGICA E DIVULGAÇÃO DO
PATRIMÓNIO EM SANTARÉM 83



EDITORIAL

Chegamos, com a presente edição, ao número dez dos volumes publicados da Apontamentos de Arqueologia e Património. Dez números em oito anos, com algum abrandamento e irregularidade nos últimos tempos relativamente aos primeiros. Nestes dez volumes publicaram-se 94 artigos, nos quais foram autores 80 colaboradores, que em vários casos aqui realizaram as suas primeiras publicações.

O projecto inicial, conforme se declarava no editorial do número um da revista, visava a “publicação de pequenos textos informativos ou problematizantes cuja divulgação por outros meios não se justifica por si só ou poderá ser demorada.” Pretendia-se “contribuir para a rápida difusão, referenciável e citável, de informações, ideias, pequenos estudos ou análises, cuja disponibilização mais imediata seja importante para o desenrolar da investigação e da actividade arqueológica colectiva”, respondendo desta forma às crescentes dificuldades financeiras que se colocavam às edições em papel e à proliferação da actividade arqueológica no âmbito da Arqueologia de Salvamento.

A intenção inicial, porém, viria a ser progressivamente alterada pela realidade. A tradicional tendência para publicar pouco, que sempre caracterizou a Arqueologia portuguesa nos seus mais variados âmbitos, tem mais a ver com uma postura que com qualquer ausência de meios.

Como resultado, a revista acabou por enveredar pela publicação de alguns textos de maior fôlego (que fogem a um Apontamento) a par de outros que melhor respondiam às intenções originais e o seu ritmo de publicação adaptou-se à produtividade daqueles que se disponibilizaram a colaborar.

O resultado, contudo, tem sido positivo, e a julgar pelas citações que, no país e no estrangeiro, os textos da Apontamentos têm merecido, a iniciativa ganhou já o seu espaço no panorama editorial da Arqueologia portuguesa.

Justifica-se, pois, o esforço e, como desde o início, a revista continuará aberta a todos os que com ela queiram colaborar

António Carlos Valera

CIEMPOZUELOS BEAKER GEOMETRIC PATTERNS: A GLIMPSE INTO THEIR MEANING¹

António Carlos Valera²

Resumo:

Padrões geométricos do campaniforme Ciempozuelos: um olhar sobre o seu significado.

Neste curto apontamento analisa-se a decoração de dois fragmentos cerâmicos integrável no complexo decorativo de Ciempozuelos, a qual possibilita avançar sobre eventuais significados de alguns motivos e organizações deste estilo. Os fragmentos, recolhidos no complexo de recintos de fossos dos Perdigões (Reguengos de Monsaraz, Sul de Portugal), apresentam uma decoração idêntica, mas que num caso se apresenta num estilo naturalista e no outro num estilo esquemático geométrico. Argumenta-se que os motivos presentes na representação naturalista revelam um simbolismo relacionado com a agricultura (ou produtos agrícolas) e que a organização se decompõe em motivos que ocorrerem isoladamente ou reorganizados noutros recipientes sob um estilo esquemático geométrico, podendo remeter para o mesmo simbolismo genérico.

Abstract:

In this short paper the decoration of two beaker sherds integrated in the Ciempozuelos style is analysed. Collected at Perdigões ditched enclosure (Reguengos de Monsaraz, South Portugal), the sherds present the same decoration, assuming a naturalistic style in one case and a schematic style in the other. It is argued that the motif of the naturalistic representation shows a symbolism related to agriculture (or to some of its products) and that the decorative organization can be divided into specific motifs that appear isolated or reorganized in a schematic geometric style in other pots, possibly addressing the same general symbolism.

1. Introduction

In Iberia, apart from relatively rare deer representations, beaker decorative patterns are highly geometrical, schematic and normalized. That fact makes it quite difficult to look at those patterns and constitutive elements as symbols and interpret them. The possibility that those motifs may be an ideographic representation of some sort, carrying specific messages related to specific realities, could be suggested but difficult to demonstrate. So beaker decorative patterns rarely cross the borders of stylistic classification based on motif and techniques used to produce them.

This short paper presents what might be a “window” into the meaning of some decorative patterns of Iberian Ciempozuelos style. That “window” is open by two beaker sherds collected at Perdigões ditched enclosure complex: one with a naturalistic and realistic incised decoration and the other with exactly the same pattern, but in a more schematic and geometric way.

2. The sherds context

The sherds in question come from the well known Perdigões ditched enclosure, at Reguengos de Monsaraz, Évora district, in the province of Alentejo, South Portugal.

In 1996 the site was deeply ploughed for a vineyard plantation and its nature and dimension were then revealed: ditch lines became visible and thousands of archaeological materials came to the surface. In 1997 a first archaeological

¹ Paper presented at the meeting “Bell Beaker Pottery. Symbols of an European Cultural Community 5000 years ago”, Torres Vedras (2008), unpublished.

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intervention was done to diagnose the impact of that work (Lago et al., 1998) and several beaker sherds were collected at the surface and through archaeological excavation. Some were recorded at the central area of the enclosures while others came from the fillings of the outside ditch (Ditch 1), that have recently been dated from the second half of the 3rd millennium BC (Márquez Romero et al., 2013; Valera et al., 2014). Since 2009, new excavations were developed in the central area of the enclosures providing more bell beaker sherds and a dagger (Figure 5).

The specific fragments that detain our interest were collected in the central area of the enclosure during the survey of 1997 (Lago et al., 1998), in a sector now designated by Sector Q (Figure 1). One, the naturalistic one, came from a layer preserved immediately above the bedrock and partially overlapping a negative feature; the other, the schematic one, was recovered in the above plowed soil.

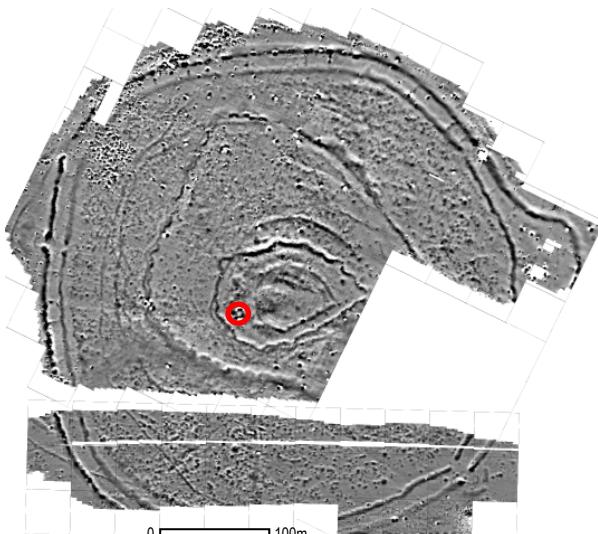


Figure 1 – Perdigões ditched enclosures: area of provenance of the analysed beaker shards.

3. The sherds

In general, the majority of Perdigões beaker sherds present incised patterns that can be ascribed to the Ciempozuelos style, but some International patterns and a geometric combed one are also present (Lago et al., 1998; see also Figure 5). The analyzed sherds belong to the first group.

3.1. Sherd 1

Part of the rim, Sherd 1 presents the following decoration described from bottom to top (Figure 2):

- a) Two parallel incised lines;
- b) Above those lines, there is a sequence of elements that seem to represent plants. Each element is composed of three pairs of diagonal impressions (carpels ?) forming a “V”.

Inside of each impression there is one dot that seems to represent a “seed”. On the top, the representation ends with three vertical impressions (each one with a “seed” inside).

- c) Above that sequence there is another set of three parallel incised lines.
- d) Above that, a similar sequence of plants, but now the three vertical impressions are at the bottom followed by a sequence of three “V” pairs of diagonal ones. All have an inside “seed” representation.

This pattern assumes an unusual naturalistic style, being evident that the potter wanted to represent plants / crops.

3.2. Sherd 2

The second sherd, also part of the rim from another pot, has exactly the same pattern, but illustrated in a more schematic way, where the carpels (?) are represented by simple lines and the inside “seeds” disappear (Figure 3).



Figure 2 – Naturalistic decorated shard (Shard 1) from Perdigões and details of the carpels (?).

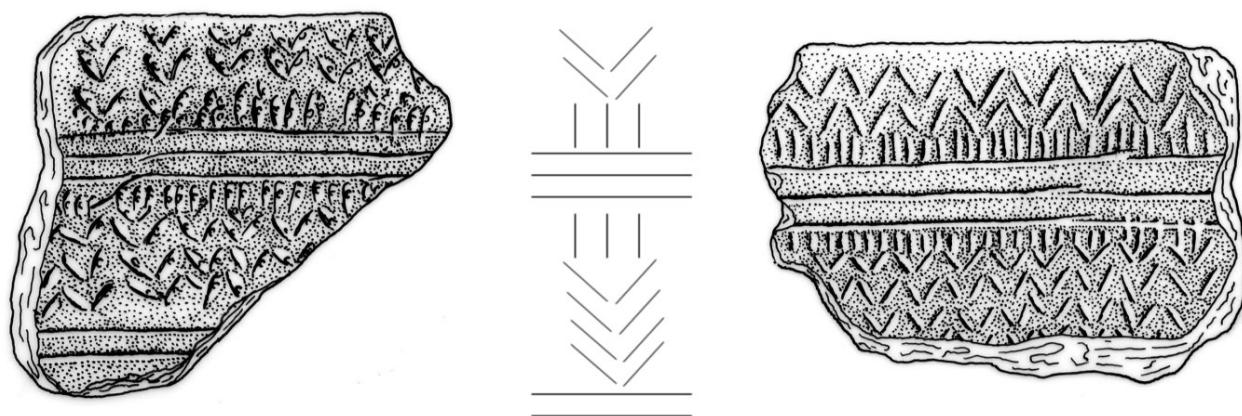


Figure 3 – The same pattern: naturalistic representation on the left (Sherd 1) and a more schematic one on the right (Sherd 2).

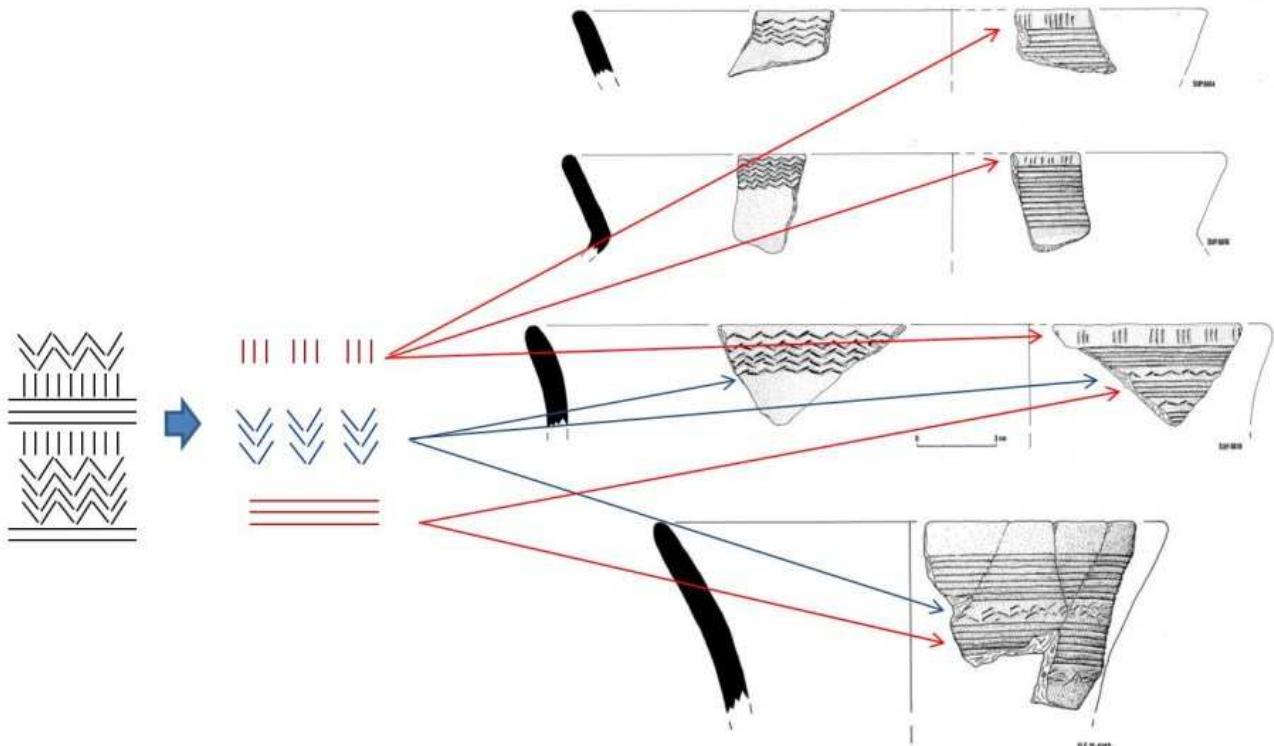


Figure 4 – Decomposition of the specific pattern of Perdigões beaker in three elements and their recombination in other patterns typical of Ciempozuelos beaker style.

4. Discussion

The pattern of Sherd 1 clearly represents a sequence of plants, probably in a plowed field suggested by the sets of parallel lines. The inversion observed in the top sequence (with the vertical carpels (?) at the bottom, just above the lines) could be interpreted as a representation of the germination process and the cyclical nature of agriculture. So we could argue that this pattern represents crops in plowed fields in different moments of the agricultural cycle. The second sherd preserves the same pattern, only through a more schematic method, and we can assume that it also represents crops in ploughed fields.

When we look to this particular decorative motif and compare it with others from Ciempozuelos style, several homologies arise and a general process of schematic representation of a specific message is suggested. I argue that a given decorative pattern representing a given idea related to crops developed into a procedure of iconographic decomposition and recreation, supported by a mental process of part / whole relationship.

This process operates through a decomposition of a given representation pattern into several constitutive elements, which gradually become autonomous and are reorganized into new stylistic compositions or appear isolated, but maintain the symbolic relation to the general and original meaning expressed by the whole. At a mental level, this means that a participation process is established: the part participates of the qualities and meanings of the whole and, therefore, a process of homology occurs and the whole is represented or "embodied" by any of its elements. That mental link provides the opportunity for a more schematic representation and for recognition of the symbolized through a smaller and particular part of the symbol or through different combinations of several elements of that symbol.

That process can be seen in the so called "symbolic decoration" of Chalcolithic Iberia. The iconographic image has several elements that identify it and they may appear together, isolated or in different combinations and in different objects, but reminding us the complete iconography.

Based on Perdigões sherds, we can assume that a similar process could have occurred with some Ciempozuelos geometric patterns. The pattern of Perdigões sherds can be decomposed in three main elements: the set of horizontal lines; the V sequences of stripes; the short vertical strips (Figure 4). Those elements are present and organized in a great variety of combinations in a vast number of Ciempozuelos beakers, and specific combinations seem to have particular spatial distributions (Garrido Pena, 1996).

For instance, in Perdigões and other peripheral sites (like Monte do Tosco 1 – Valera, 2000) we can observe patterns organized with sets of horizontal and parallel lines combined with one or several rows of zigzag lines (that represent the lateral fusion of the V sequences) and with groups of vertical stripes. One of these elements – the rows of zigzag lines – is also frequent inside the rims. The processes of simplification

and recombination of those elements in schematic patterns can be interpreted as maintaining the general reference to crop fields. So, at least some of the Ciempozuelos decorative patterns may be seen as text, communicating messages related to agriculture in general or to a specific agricultural product (eventually also evoking special moments of consumption of those products) and its social role.

The Ciempozuelos decorative patterns that use those constitutive elements have a vast distribution through Iberia and, naturally, the question of a concrete and unique meaning is questionable. The relations between symbol and symbolized are dynamic and schematization may easily lead to meaning variation and help to overcome a concrete set of references. Though, it is also possible that a general meaning related to agriculture (or specific products, connected or not with specific uses of the recipients) could be read in those geometrical and schematic patterns in vast regions of central Iberia through a shared decoding ability. At least, the sherds from Perdigões allow us to suggest that possibility, attempting to go behind the simple stylistic approach and have a glimpse into the discourse inserted in to those recipients.



Figure 5 – Unpublished sherds and dagger from central area (recent excavations). Incised: 2-5 and 7; Inprint comb: 6.

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