

Mirroring Worlds

Rural Domestic Spaces through Multidisciplinarity in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

Edited by
Silvia Berrica and Júlia Olivé-Busom



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A te, per la magia dei ricordi.

*Dicono sia impossibile rivivere il passato,
eppur a volte la vita ci dà nuove possibilità.*

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Contributors

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Ana Mateos-Orozco holds a Ph.D. in History and Archaeology from the University of Seville, researching the Early Islamic period in Western Andalusia and focusing on the study of ceramics. She also has a master's degree in architecture and Historical Heritage. She has participated in various international events about her research topic and has been a visiting researcher at the universities of Bamberg (Germany) and Leicester (United Kingdom). In addition, she has participated in different archaeological interventions in Spain, Italy, Germany, and Portugal.

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in the Early Middle Ages. Production systems, consumption patterns and peasant agency in western Iberia” (2020.01697.CEECIND) is funded by FCT via CEEC - Individual Call to Scientific Employment Stimulus (3rd Edition). She focuses on landscape, settlements, and the material record to analyse the transformations of the early medieval countryside.

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Introducción

Esta edición surge de la experiencia de organizar una sesión en la European Association of Archaeologists (EAA 2023) celebrada en Belfast. Así, la idea de este volumen se gestó en paralelo a la propuesta de nuestra sesión en este evento anual que conecta diferentes arqueólogos de multitud de países, disciplinas y etapas de investigación.

Esta edición es un reflejo de la diversidad que este tipo de encuentros acogen, y recoge publicaciones que tienen por objeto de estudio la arqueología del mundo altomedieval rural. Todas ellas se focalizan en nuevas aproximaciones que, sin perder una óptica y lectura en clave arqueológica, incorporan métodos propios de disciplinas cercanas. De este modo, aquí se recogen estudios faunísticos, ambientales, espaciales, o bioarqueológicos que emplean datos procedentes de contextos funerarios, la trashumancia y estudios de parcelario, y de centros domésticos y de producción. Todos ellos surgen de la necesidad de generar respuestas a problemáticas comunes -dentro de un contexto europeo- con tal de actualizar, suplementar o contribuir al conocimiento del mundo altomedieval rural a nivel local o regional.

Es de nuestro parecer que solo a través de un análisis exhaustivo de cada asentamiento y su influencia en el entorno territorial podremos descubrir las particularidades que definen cada área. Este enfoque permite delinear un contexto microrregional que facilita el desarrollo en diferentes etapas, las cuales transitan por diversos niveles de comprensión. Al abordar estas características de manera sistemática, será posible avanzar hacia un entendimiento más profundo de las zonas regionales y, a su vez, ampliar este conocimiento a escalas más amplias. De esta forma, cada asentamiento se convierte en un punto de partida para la exploración de dinámicas sociales, económicas y culturales que, al ser interconectadas, contribuyen al crecimiento y a la integración de las regiones en su conjunto. Los artículos que esta edición recoge son un ejemplo de tal aproximación.

Una problemática fundamental en el estudio del mundo rural durante la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media es la escasa representación de este periodo en el registro arqueológico. Esto se debe a que, a medida que se pasa del mundo clásico a un contexto altomedieval, se observa una notable disminución de la materialidad y una reestructuración en la escala de urbanización. Esta transición refleja la mayor regionalización y la pérdida de un enfoque globalizado que caracteriza los períodos anteriores.

La referencia a investigaciones previas en diferentes regiones europeas es comúnmente aceptada que esta tendencia no es exclusiva de una localidad, sino que se trata de un fenómeno ampliamente documentado. La falta de datos arqueológicos significativos lleva a una cierta inclinación por centrar la atención en los restos urbanos, donde se dispone de una mayor cantidad de información. Este enfoque, aunque comprensible, crea un sesgo en la investigación que podría limitar la comprensión del desarrollo rural.

Adicionalmente, hay que mencionar como las leyes de protección del patrimonio fueron usualmente implementadas tras grandes cambios en el entorno rural, así como la escasez de documentación escrita que refiere al mismo. Ambas limitaciones evidencian aún más la necesidad de recurrir al estudio arqueológico para obtener una visión más completa y matizada de la vida en el mundo rural altomedieval.

La arqueología, entonces, surge como una herramienta clave para abordar esta falta de datos, permitiendo el análisis a nivel local y regional y la identificación de tanto similitudes como diferencias a nivel local, regional y europeo. El enfoque pluridisciplinario que este volumen propone es esencial para superar las limitaciones del registro arqueológico convencional. Los diez manuscritos reunidos ofrecen un espectro

diverso de enfoques metodológicos que, aunque pueden parecer inconexos a primera vista, comparten un objetivo común: enriquecer nuestra comprensión del mundo rural en un periodo histórico que ha sido, en gran medida, marginalizado.

Por tanto, esta edición quiere ser una invitación a reevaluar y redirigir el enfoque hacia el mundo rural, reconociendo su importancia en el contexto más amplio de la historia europea y mediterránea de la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media. Con ello, no solo se amplían los horizontes de investigación, sino que también se contribuye a una representación más equilibrada de la historia en su conjunto. La importancia de la edición de este libro radica en su contribución decisiva al campo de la arqueología rural, un ámbito que ha sido históricamente subrepresentado en la literatura académica. Al consolidar investigaciones sobre la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media, este volumen no solo llena un vacío, sino que también propone un enfoque multidisciplinario, brindando una comprensión más rica de las dinámicas socioeconómicas y culturales en las comunidades rurales de Europa. Este esfuerzo por revalorizar el mundo rural es vital, dado que subraya su importancia en la narrativa histórica, desafiando concepciones simplistas sobre la transición de periodos históricos y revelando la interconexión y adaptabilidad de estas comunidades ante los cambios políticos. Además, el libro aboga por una metodología robusta y colaborativa, que enfatiza la ética en la investigación arqueológica y el fortalecimiento de vínculos con las comunidades locales. Al instar a los futuros investigadores a explorar áreas menos estudiadas y a utilizar métodos innovadores, este volumen no solo enriquece el acervo académico, sino que sienta las bases para un continuo ciclo de descubrimiento y reinterpretación del pasado, actuando como un verdadero catalizador para repensar la historia de Europa y el Mediterráneo desde una perspectiva inclusiva y comprensiva.

La investigación de Silvia Berrica sobre el siglo VII en la Sierra de Guadarrama (España) aporta una interpretación valiosa y enriquecedora sobre cómo los nuevos asentamientos transformaron la estructura socioeconómica de la región, al mismo tiempo que refleja un intenso dinamismo cultural y organizativo. A través de su análisis arqueológico, se evidencia que la diversidad en las aldeas no solo responde a la variabilidad geográfica, sino también a la complejidad de las relaciones sociales y económicas que se desarrollaron. La mención específica de la Dehesa de Navalvillar subraya cómo la especialización en metalurgia y explotación minera no solo fue un reflejo de la destreza técnica de la época, sino también de la existencia de un tejido social que fomentaba el trabajo artesanal y el intercambio comercial. Este enfoque nos invita a replantear la noción de jerarquía en estos asentamientos, identificando la potencia de una élite local que, lejos de ser aislada, se vincula con un contexto más amplio de control fiscal y organización espacial que sostenía redes dinámicas de comercio. La investigación establece un diálogo enriquecedor entre la arquitectura, la economía y las estructuras sociales, ofreciendo así una comprensión holística de las complejidades de las sociedades altomedievales. En última instancia, el trabajo de Berrica nos invita a reflexionar sobre las interacciones entre innovación y tradición en la conformación de identidades locales y regionales.

El artículo que Jorge Rouco Collazo y José María Martín Civantos presentan sobre las fortificaciones alpujarreñas (España) representa un avance significativo en el entendimiento de estas estructuras históricas, al abordar limitaciones de metodologías anteriores con un enfoque interdisciplinario. La combinación de fuentes históricas, Arqueología de la Arquitectura y del Paisaje, junto con herramientas modernas como la fotogrametría y los Sistemas de Información Geográfica (SIG), proporciona una base sólida para un análisis detallado y riguroso. Este estudio no solo enriquece nuestro conocimiento sobre la función de las fortificaciones como refugios comunitarios en un contexto de inestabilidad, sino que también desafía concepciones previas sobre su integración en redes defensivas organizadas por el estado. Al concluir que estas estructuras emergieron como respuestas locales a las necesidades de seguridad, se abre un nuevo camino para reconsiderar la relación entre la administración califal y las comunidades. Además, la recomendación de llevar a cabo excavaciones sistemáticas destaca la

importancia de seguir investigando para revelar cambios en su materialidad y funciones a lo largo del tiempo, lo que podría profundizar nuestra comprensión de la dinámica entre el poder político y las comunidades locales en la Alpujarra. Esto no solo es un llamado a la acción para futuros estudiosos, sino que también pone de relieve el valor de la investigación continúa en la reconceptualización de la historia regional en contextos más amplios.

El estudio analítico de Vesna Tratnik y Nejc Dolinar sobre las ruinas del asentamiento en Zidani Gaber (Eslovenia) no solo nos ofrece una mirada al pasado, sino que también nos invita a reflexionar sobre la resiliencia humana y la capacidad de adaptación ante las adversidades. A pesar de las limitaciones geográficas y la difícil accesibilidad del lugar, los habitantes de Zidani Gaber encontraron formas de prosperar, estableciendo un asentamiento que no solo se defendía con una muralla, sino que también se integraba en una red comercial más amplia. El hallazgo de artefactos relacionados con la orfebrería y el comercio, junto con la evidencia de prácticas agrícolas, revela una sociedad dinámica y emprendedora que supo aprovechar sus recursos, adaptándose a un entorno que, a primera vista, parecía hostil. Además, la continuidad del asentamiento entre los siglos III y VI d.C. sugiere una profunda interconexión entre las comunidades de la región, desafiando la noción de que la geografía determina el éxito o la relevancia de un asentamiento. En última instancia, la historia de Zidani Gaber se convierte en un testimonio de la tenacidad y la inventiva del ser humano frente al cambio.

Celtia Rodríguez González aborda el estudio de la vida cotidiana en el noroeste de la Península Ibérica durante un período de importantes transformaciones sociales y políticas, a medida que se producía la transición de la Antigüedad a la Edad Media. La autora destaca la falta de atención en la investigación arqueológica hacia los aspectos domésticos y cotidianos, un vacío que el artículo busca llenar mediante el análisis de datos arqueológicos de asentamientos rurales, específicamente el de O Castelo de Valencia do Sil. El artículo se centra en la vida diaria en un contexto de transformación del Imperio Romano, empleando una metodología fenomenológica para entender cómo las sociedades se adaptaron a cambios políticos y económicos, y cómo estas adaptaciones se reflejan en la materialidad de los espacios domésticos. La autora describe el entorno geográfico de la comarca de Valdeorras, destacando la influencia del río Sil como un eje significativo para la romanización y el desarrollo de asentamientos. Se presenta un análisis detallado del yacimiento arqueológico de O Castelo, que revela una compleja organización espacial con áreas dedicadas a la vida cotidiana, como almacenamiento de alimentos y actividades culinarias. Asimismo, se identifican espacios para la producción textil, reflejando una vida comunitaria diversa y funcional. El artículo concluye subrayando la importancia de estudiar las prácticas cotidianas para entender mejor la dinámica social y económica de estas comunidades durante un periodo de cambio. La investigación proporciona un punto de partida para futuras exploraciones sobre la vida en los asentamientos posromano y es una llamada a considerar la cotidianidad como un elemento clave en la narración histórica de la transición entre la Antigüedad y la Edad Media.

Laura Blanco-Torrejón explora la evolución de las prácticas funerarias en el noroeste de la Península Ibérica durante el periodo comprendido entre los siglos V y VIII. En este espacio temporal, la llegada y expansión del cristianismo se entienden como un punto de inflexión en las costumbres funerarias y en la disposición de los cementerios. A través de enfoques propios de la Arqueología de la Muerte y de la Arqueología del Paisaje, el estudio analiza casi 400 sitios funerarios, revelando una variedad y transformación significativas en la morfología de las tumbas y en los bienes funerarios, lo que indica unas prácticas funerarias más complejas de lo que se había documentado previamente. Mediante su análisis, sugiere la existencia de un paisaje funerario diverso, donde coexisten diferentes tipos de sepulturas, y la interacción de estos espacios con el entorno refleja una conexión comunitaria con el paisaje. A medida que la iglesia consolidó su poder, se produjeron cambios en la distribución de los cementerios y las relaciones sociales en estos espacios, evidenciando la lucha de poder entre diferentes grupos sociales, incluidos los campesinos, las élites locales y los clérigos. El análisis de sitios en Galicia muestra una

continuidad y un cambio en las prácticas funerarias, desde el uso de infraestructuras romanas hasta la aparición de cementerios medievales. Finalmente, concluye que esta fase se define por la ‘petrificación’ de las tumbas en piedra, un símbolo del poder de las élites y de la creciente influencia del cristianismo, al mismo tiempo que refleja una lucha constante por el control territorial entre los diferentes actores sociales.

Júlia Olivé-Busom y sus coautores presentan un estudio arqueológico del cementerio gestionado por la comunidad cristiana que habitó en Santa Coloma d’Àger, en el noreste de la Península Ibérica, desde el siglo V hasta el XI d.C. Se ha propuesto que el origen de este cementerio se encuentra en una iglesia construida en el siglo V, la cual dió pie a la estructuración de un cementerio a su alrededor, una tradición que, como su comunidad, sobrevivió a la conquista musulmana de la península. Las excavaciones iniciales en la década de 1980 revelaron diversas estructuras funerarias, incluyendo sarcófagos, tumbas en cista y losas, datadas entre los siglos VII y XII. Las campañas más reciente, han permitido identificar sarcófagos intactos del siglo V, así como otros reutilizados en los siglos VII al VIII y tumbas fechadas entre los siglos IX y XI. El estudio subraya la continuidad de rituales funerarios cristianos en la zona, a pesar de que a principios del siglo VIII, el valle fue sometido al dominio musulmán, convirtiéndose en parte de Al-Andalus. Se discute, además, cómo y en qué términos algunas comunidades mantuvieron sus prácticas cristianas, y se citan ejemplos de otras necrópolis vinculadas a contextos cristianos que muestran similitudes. La investigación también incluye un análisis bioarqueológico de 107 esqueletos excavados durante las campañas de 1997 y 2010, con un particular enfoque en la salud, la dieta y el bienestar de esta comunidad. Gracias a este enfoque multidisciplinar sobre un mismo cementerio, Olivé-Busom y colegas consiguen rescatar del olvido una comunidad mozárabe de la que se tenía muy poca, por no decir nula, información. Con ello, el estudio del yacimiento muestra cómo esta comunidad cristiana no solo persistió durante el periodo musulmán, sino que su forma de vida y procesos funerarios reflejan una continuidad cultural a pesar de los cambios políticos y sociales de la época.

El artículo de Andreia Arezes y Catarina Magalhães explora un asentamiento rural en el margen izquierdo del río Leça (Portugal), que muestra una fuerte conexión con el río y el océano Atlántico. Su investigación sugiere que Castro de Guifões tuvo un papel estratégico en las rutas comerciales atlánticas, posiblemente actuando como un antiguo puerto que facilitaba la distribución de productos en el interior del territorio. El proyecto de investigación arqueológica GUIFARQ, iniciado en 2016, busca profundizar en el estudio científico de este asentamiento. Las primeras campañas de excavación revelaron importantes conjuntos de cerámica y otros materiales que datan de la Antigüedad Tardía, incluyendo un notable hallazgo de *dolia*, que sugieren prácticas de almacenamiento y comercio. Un componente esencial de la investigación es el estudio arqueobotánico asociado; se realizaron análisis de muestras de suelo que arrojaron datos sobre la diversidad de especies vegetales utilizadas en el asentamiento. Se identificaron fragmentos de madera que indican una variedad de prácticas de tala y quema, reflejando el uso del bosque local. Las conclusiones apuntan hacia una compleja red de intercambios que caracterizó la vida en Castro de Guifões durante la Antigüedad Tardía, desafiando la narrativa de crisis y estancamiento económico en esta época.

La investigación presentada por Daša Pavlovič destaca por su aporte a la comprensión del periodo de transición entre la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media en el contexto esloveno. La autora logra articular, de manera clara y concisa, un análisis arqueológico y arqueométrico que no solo ilumina la dinámica de asentamiento en la región de Ljubljana, sino que también ofrece nuevas perspectivas sobre la continuidad y el cambio cultural y económico en tiempos de turbulencia. Uno de los aspectos más positivos del artículo es su enfoque multidisciplinario. La combinación de análisis arqueobotánicos, metalúrgicos y de cerámica permite una comprensión más rica y matizada de la vida en Pržanj. Así, desafía las narrativas simplistas sobre la desaparición de tradiciones antiguas y sugiere una compleja interacción entre las poblaciones indígenas y las recién llegadas. Además, la autora destaca la importancia

del sitio de Pržanj no solo como un espacio de producción, sino también como un posible punto de intercambio comercial. Esta idea es particularmente interesante y abre nuevas vías para explorar las redes de comercio que pudieron existir en este periodo, resaltando cómo las comunidades de las tierras bajas de Eslovenia se integraron en dinámicas comerciales más amplias, intercambiando productos locales como el hierro por bienes exóticos. En conclusión, el trabajo de Daša Pavlovič contribuye significativamente al conocimiento sobre el asentamiento en Pržanj, e invita a reflexionar sobre las complejas interacciones socioeconómicas en tiempos de cambio. Su enfoque innovador y exhaustivo así como su capacidad para integrar múltiples disciplinas en su análisis, la posicionan como una pieza fundamental en el estudio de la historia medieval eslovena.

Ana Mateos-Orozco y José María Gutiérrez López, presentan una investigación exhaustiva y bien fundamentada que aporta nuevas perspectivas sobre la ocupación islámica en el sur de la Península Ibérica. A través de un enfoque multidisciplinario, los autores analizan el yacimiento de Torrevieja, un enclave estratégico que ha sido utilizado de manera reiterada a lo largo de la historia. Los autores no solo describen las características del yacimiento, sino que también elaboran una narrativa convincente sobre su importancia geoestratégica, lo cual es crucial para entender los patrones de migración y asentamiento en el periodo emiral. La meticulosa descripción de la topografía, junto con un sólido análisis de la cerámica y la fauna encontrada, contribuyen a una imagen rica y matizada de la vida cotidiana en ese periodo. Además, el trabajo destaca por su enfoque dinámico hacia la complejidad y variabilidad de los procesos de islamización y ocupación rural. Al resistir las interpretaciones simplistas de la etnicidad y la cultura material, los autores abren la puerta a nuevas maneras de entender cómo diferentes grupos poblacionales influyeron en la conformación de la nueva sociedad andalusí. La propuesta de un modelo de ocupación efímero o estacional, en lugar de estructuras habitacionales permanentes, es un aspecto innovador que resalta la adaptabilidad de estas comunidades rurales a su entorno y refuerza la idea de un dinamismo social y cultural en el paso de época. Este enfoque no solo es audaz sino que también invita a la comunidad académica a reconsiderar sus suposiciones sobre los modos de vida en al-Andalus, impulsando futuras investigaciones en otros yacimientos similares. Por último, la inclusión de referencias a trabajos anteriores y las conexiones establecidas con otros yacimientos en el Norte de África abren nuevas líneas de investigación, subrayando el carácter interconectado de estas poblaciones a ambos lados del Estrecho de Gibraltar. Esta perspectiva holística invita a un diálogo continuo y enriquecedor en el campo de la arqueología islámica y la historia.

Sara Prata y Fabián Cuesta-Gómez presentan una contribución significativa al estudio de las comunidades campesinas en el contexto de la Alta Edad Media, sobre todo por su enfoque en la región de Castelo de Vide y el Alto Alentejo en Portugal. Este trabajo destaca por su exhaustiva revisión de la literatura existente y por la integración de métodos arqueológicos que van desde el análisis espacial hasta la datación por radiocarbono, ofreciendo una visión multidimensional del paisaje rural en un periodo histórico a menudo poco comprendido. La investigación presentada arroja luz sobre la complejidad de las dinámicas sociales y económicas que caracterizaban a las comunidades campesinas de la época. Los autores logran articular una narrativa convincente sobre cómo las transformaciones que emergieron tras la caída del Imperio Romano dieron lugar a nuevas configuraciones de asentamiento y organización social. Esto es particularmente relevante, ya que el artículo desafía la perspectiva tradicional que se basa predominantemente en fuentes escritas, y en su lugar, pone de relieve la importancia de los datos materiales. Uno de los aspectos más destacables del artículo es su capacidad para identificar patrones en la disposición de espacios domésticos, funerarios y de producción, sugiriendo que estos elementos no deben ser considerados de manera aislada, sino como partes de un todo integrado que refleja la vida cotidiana de comunidades en un contexto de transición. La meticulosidad en el trabajo de campo y la recolección de datos arqueológicos son igualmente dignas de elogio. La identificación de nuevas estructuras y el uso de materiales locales, así como los hallazgos de áreas de producción, sugieren una economía agrícola más descentralizada y adaptativa a las condiciones geográficas de la región. Además,

el enfoque colaborativo con la comunidad local en la preservación del patrimonio cultural demuestra un compromiso con la historia vivida que enriquece tanto los hallazgos como la narrativa en torno a ellos.

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Castro de Guifões (Northwest Portugal) during Late Antiquity. Perspectives on archaeological and anthracological data recovered in an Archaeological Research Project framework

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Abstract: This study examines the archaeological and anthracological findings from Castro de Guifões in Northwest Portugal, focusing on its significance during Late Antiquity. Strategically located by the River Leça, the settlement served as a hub of trade, facilitating connections between diverse communities through land and maritime routes. Evidence suggests it functioned as an ancient docking harbor, characterized by extensive archaeological materials, particularly ceramics from various origins, indicating vibrant trade networks. The research, under the GUIFARQ Project, conducted soil sampling and anthracological analyses, revealing a rich diversity of charcoal samples that illustrate changes in plant exploitation over time. Notably, *Castanea sativa* predominated in Late Antiquity, reflecting shifts in local agricultural practices. The findings highlight continuity and transformation in resource management practices and underscore the site's role in broader economic and cultural exchanges across Iberia. This multidisciplinary investigation contributes to our understanding of rural settlements in the context of changing societal dynamics during Late Antiquity.

Key Words: Late Antiquity Period, Archaeobotany, Anthracology, Settlement, Trade Networks

Introduction. Notes on a settlement with particular features

This text focuses on a rural settlement that benefits from a fruitful and umbilical relationship with the River Leça and the Atlantic Ocean. Three poles of a more comprehensive network, populated by different agents, also fed by land routes and paths, and the scene of a vast flow of goods (daily and prestigious) that, over a long period, provided the maintenance of lines of contact between different communities and production centres.

Located in the left margin of the Rio Leça, Castro de Guifões overlooks its estuary, whose flow is currently silted up and restricted (Almeida and Santos 1974: 49; Varela 2013: 75). However, it was a favourable axis for navigation between Protohistory and the dawn of the Modern Period, allowing fluvial circulation till the medieval bridge, built at the foot of the elevation (Varela 2011: 111; Varela 2013: 75-76). The tides converged there (Almeida and Santos 1974, p. 50), as did vessels carrying products from more or less distant regions. Products that, directly or indirectly, were recognized by collecting the archaeolog-

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ical materials that contained them, wrapped by the layers of earth that gradually covered the settlement, excavated since the 19th century (Vasconcelos 1901: 35).

Materialities and positioning: the basis that supports the hypothesis defended by some authors about the existence of an old “docking harbour” at the base of the settlement. This settlement, identified as a *vicus*, was part of an active Atlantic route (Morais 2013: 104-105; Moreira and Silva 2011: 133), which possibly prompted its function as a motor to the distribution of traded products to the interior of the territory (Fernández Ochoa and Morillo 2013: 65). On the one hand, this hypothesis arises from an extensive collection of finds, with a particular focus on ceramics of bétican, italic, and oriental origin; on the other, the combination of geomorphological conditions offered by the Leça River valley (Morais 2013: 107; Moreira and Silva 2011: 133; Soares *et al.* 2011: 23-27). The estuary consisted of a natural anchorage, protected by rocky escarpments, the “leixões” coastal accidents that led to the formation of a kind of “natural breakwater” which would give rise to the current harbour: an expanding infrastructure with an intense activity that took its name from the escarpments mentioned earlier (Blot, 2003: 48; 115), and serves not only the cities of Matosinhos and Porto but the north of Portugal.

In this respect, it’s important to emphasise that the geographical position of Castro de Guifões, along with that of the Aljube site in Porto, could also have been capitalised as an access path to the auriferous explorations of the north-west and to supply the Roman army in the initial phase of the assertion of imperial power, taking advantage of the fluidity and efficiency of the sea and river communication routes (Morais and Monfort 2004: 112; Morais 2013: 109). Regardless of whether this wide range of possibilities has been intensively explored, and the physical existence of this much-evoked “harbour” of the ancient world is proven, the intimate connection between the settlement and its surroundings with the river and the sea is deeply established (Arezes *et al.* 2023: 485).

Even with the advance of chronology, utilizing the resources enhanced by the waters remained operative. The movements of the tides continued to ensure the operation of the salt pans and to foster prolific salt exploitation from the 11th century onwards (Varela 2013: 80). The marked landscape changes resulting, to a large extent, from the construction of the harbour infrastructure, which, from the last decades of the 19th century onwards, transformed the configuration of the coastal strip adjacent to Castro de Guifões, not only affected the traditional activity of salt extraction but may also be responsible for the lack of salt pans identified around the settlement (Costa and Cleto 2008: 65-66). In contrast, salt extraction structures appeared just over 8 kilometres north of the Guifões, close to a Roman *villa* on the coastline. However, the current archaeological void around the settlement does not reflect an actual absence. There are several documents relating to the purchase and sale of properties with salt pans by secular and ecclesiastical lords, which indicate the existence of a prolific activity from the 11th century onwards, spreading from Guifões to the mouth of the River Leça, where the settlement rises (Varela 2013: 80).

Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that the references to Guifões in medieval documentation are not restricted to notes on salt exploitation. It is possible that the old settlement was abandoned at some point after the 6th century AD (Varela 2011: 145). However, in the year 1000, it was once again active. The top of the elevation was the stage for building a rudimentary fortified structure, erected in the mould’s characteristic of 10th and 11th-century *incastellamento*, that is, the process of reorganising the landscape around the castles (Almeida 1978: 37-38; Barroca 2017: 201; 208). Echoes of this process can be found in the documental references to *Castrum Quifiones*, the medieval name associated with the site (Barroca 2017: 207). These references, spread over 15 documents produced between the 11th and 12th centuries, more prominently/ in the first half of the latter century, suggest that the strategic nature of the elevation was maintained. Its geographical location provided control over the navigation in the Leça estuary area, the salt pans, and the medieval road, which, after crossing the medieval bridge, continued its route around the northern foot of the settlement (Barroca 2017: 234). It should be noted that the bridge in question, built

at the behest of King Afonso the III, ended up collapsing in 1979, during one of the recurring floods of the Leça river (Arezes *et al.* 2023: 482-483).

A dynamic process involving construction, razing and re-use guided the settlement's architecture and stratification. At the peak, there is no visible evidence of the rests from the early medieval castle, which may have used perishable materials, or from the previous Iron Age and Roman structures (Teixeira 2011: 191; Arezes *et al.* 2023: 484). From the 1970s onward, the building of new structures in the Acropolis area destroyed or, at best, concealed the remaining vestiges (Arezes and Varela 2017: 127). But this dynamic process can be traced back deep in time.

The excavations carried out halfway up the slope revealed that, during Late Antiquity, artificial terraces cancelled out the unevenness of the land. It should be noted, however, that the demolition of previous buildings erected in the 1st and 2nd centuries was necessary in order to level the land and carry out the construction effort which resulted in the structuring and building of a complex / compound inhabited between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD. These, in turn, were preceded by huts made of perishable materials, signaled by a series of scattered post holes (Varela and Pires 2019: 55-57). This complex, which has stood for about 1600 years, has since been severely damaged, concretely in 2018, not by new constructions but by the passage of heavy machinery and the rolling of eucalyptus trunks: a combination of circumstances that coined deeply the old-built landscape (Arezes 2019b: 60).

There are, however, other stories to tell about Castro de Guifões, which act as a counterpoint to a long history of depredations and alterations to the settlement's structure.

The exploitation of the ground located at the foot of the settlement

At its base, very close to the course of the River Leça and from where the medieval bridge crossed it, spreads the land known as Campo da Ponte: a flattened area outside the last line of Iron Age walls that surrounded the site (Arezes and Varela 2017: 127).

Covered by scrub and pine trees, it was cleared and ploughed in the early 1960s to take on agricultural use. However, the intrusive actions uncovered archaeological materials and structures, motivating the excavation of the land by Joaquim Neves dos Santos, a local industrialist passionate about archaeology who had previously undertaken explorations elsewhere in Guifões, although not implemented adequately with scientific methodology and rigour. Nevertheless, these excavations allowed the identification of rectilinear stone alignments built in Late Antiquity, along with structures of circular configuration attributed to the Iron Age (Arezes 2019a: 185). At the same time, the wide range of recovered ceramics is worth noting. From this collection, it is essential to highlight the remarkable set of African Red Slip Ware: exquisite table forms, some with exceptional decoration, which came to Castro de Guifões (Almeida and Santos 1974: 50) from different production workshops in Proconsular Africa (Hayes 1972: 13; Morais 2020: 516).

GUIFARQ Project - Guifões archaeological research project

Around 50 years later, in the same Campo da Ponte and an area adjacent to where Joaquim Neves dos Santos discovered the Late Antiquity structures and materials mentioned above, new excavations began this time as part of the GUIFARQ Project - Guifões Archaeological Research Project. This project, implemented in 2016, aims, on the one hand, to develop scientific study and the production of knowledge about the settlement and, on the other, to function as a teaching/learning space in Archaeology. It is anchored in the curricular unit, "Practices of Field Archaeology", which is part of the Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology study plan at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto (Arezes and Varela 2017: 131).



Figure 1 - Perspective of the Castro de Guifões, with signposting of the Guifões Archaeological Research Project excavation area and the course of the River Leça.

The first campaign revealed promising lines of work. Part of the stratigraphic units identified and excavated at the time led to the collection of materials that could be dated back to Late Antiquity. Although domestic ceramics (most of which were used for cooking food and on the fire) were the most common among the items retrieved, one must highlight the recovery of a very significant quantity of storage material, especially relating to *dolia* (Arezes 2023: 83; 86). This type of container is presumed to have been manufactured by skillful hands, not only because of its enormous size but also due to the constraints it would impose on transport (Salido Domínguez 2017: 246). Although the primary function of these large vases seems to be storage, their use as shipping containers has also been attested through data recovered on shipwrecks (Járrega Domínguez 2008: 61; Salido Domínguez 2017: 239; 244; 277).

The recovered fragments belonged to different containers, produced in varying-quality pastes, and characterised by various degrees of purification. Similarly, the treatment of the surfaces is also different. While some show particular roughness regarding texture, others are more careful; in some cases, they show decorations, such as plastic cords with finger marks (Arezes 2023: 85-86). African red slipware was collected in the same campaign as a counterpoint to such testimonies of local or regional production, clearly a majority in quantitative terms. One of the fragments (production D) is worth mentioning. Its flat base, probably corresponding to Hayes' shape 67, whose manufacture lasted approximately from the end of the 4th century to the end of the 5th, shows stamped decoration (style A) (Hayes 1972: 116; 242-243). It is one of several pieces of evidence that point towards maintaining the import networks that fuelled contact and exchanges between the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, particularly from present-day Tunisia. Also, it should be highlighted that although vases of North African origin have all the production phases attested in the peninsular archaeological record, the

occurrences, particularly on the coastal strips, are most prominent between the 4th and 5th centuries, naturally with a particular focus on the coastal areas (Morais 2020: 516-517).

Still on imports, but from continental territories, it is worth mentioning the recovery of part of a bowl with a C profile, compatible with Isings form 116 b (Isings, 1957: 144-145). The main feature of this piece is that it displays figurative decoration, is cold-engraved, and explicitly refers to the front of a horse and its rider (Arezes 2019b: 62). The partially exposed scene, imbued with movement, reveals affinities with the so-called “Wint Hill” group, characterised by the presentation of similar themes, decorative techniques, and design specificity, shared by a series of specimens identified in dispersed geographies (Harden 1960: 47-67). It is likely that the bowl exhumed in Guifões, similarly to the other specimens in the “Wint Hill” group, came from the Rhineland. In fact, given the number of finds in the area surrounding present-day Cologne, the production center could coincide precisely with this place, which became one of the most dynamic glass production centers in the Empire from the 4th century onwards (Harden 1960: 47; 79; Adams 2015: 23).

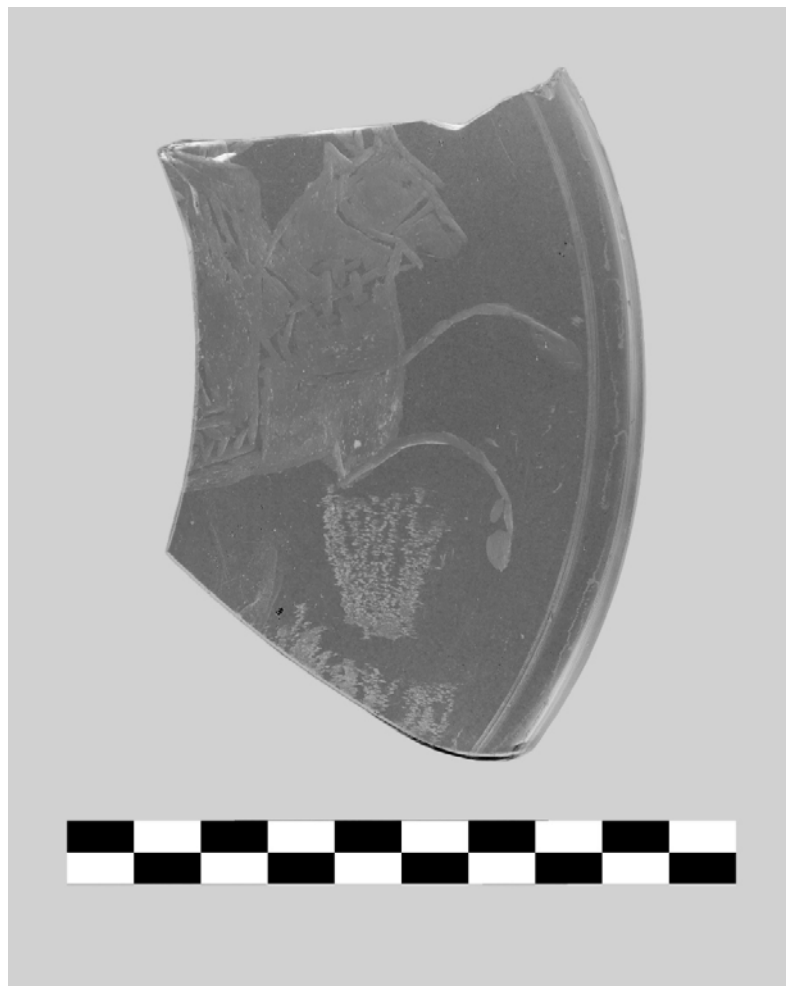


Figure 2 - Image of the external surfaces of the glass bowl with engraved figurative decoration
(Photo by César Guedes - CITCEM).

However, most of the coeval glasses exhumed in Guifões excavations, such as the fragments of a troncoconic bowl, which have a deep green colour and result from the continuous recycling and reuse, were made in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, probably in the workshops of *Bracara Augusta* (Cruz

2009a; Cruz 2009b: 24-25; Arezes 2019b: 67). A city founded by *Augustus* at the time of his second voyage to *Hispania* (Morais 2010: 7) and, as early as the 4th century, the capital of the newly formed province of *Gallaecia* and the seat of the bishopric, it took on a central political, economic, and cultural role. Multiple routes flowed through it, so contacts with other occupied settlements would have been fluid even in this chronology (Martins *et al.* 2012: 38; 56-61; Alarcão 2017: 232; 237).

The diversity of origins of the evoked materials is significant regarding the perception of Castro de Guifões, its networks, and connections (Arezes 2019b: 70). But at the same time, it also allows us to question historiography's view of Late Antiquity as a period marked by crisis and commercial stagnation (Ward-Perkins 2005: 4; 28). According to what has been revealed by multiple field studies carried out at other sites on the Iberian Peninsula, especially in coastal areas or relatively close to the seashore, artefactual collections seem progressively more compatible with another scenario, marked not by total paralysis but by a flow of considerably vitalistic dynamics (Quaresma 1999: 70-75; Fabião 2009: 26-32; Alarcão 2017: 297; Amorós Ruiz and Gutierrez Lloret 2018: 523-535; Cau Ontiveros *et al.* 2023: 1-3; 12; Rodríguez Martorell *et al.* 2023: 71; 79), although naturally less intense than in the Augustan period. In fact, at Castro de Guifões, one of the most prevalent groups of materials at the turn of the millennium is precisely that of the *amphorae*, transport containers that travelled in boats of considerable draught with a wide range of origins. But most *amphorae* finds, both in Guifões and the coeval settlements in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula, come from the Guadalquivir Valley (*Baetica*) and the workshops that produced the frequently mentioned Haltern 70, as well as related typologies (Morais 2013: 107-108; Fabião 1998: 180-181).

Having given an overview of the initial stages of the excavation carried out under the GUIFARQ project, it is essential to emphasise that subsequent campaigns have made it possible to ascertain the existence of contexts that can be dated to the Iron Age in this same lower part of the settlement, at the foot of the elevation, and near the River Leça. In this regard, it is worth highlighting, for example, the identification of two combustion structures in the eastern area in the 2018 campaign. Embedded in the substrate, cut out, and lowered to fit them, they showed, in one case, printed sequential circles. Covered by a layer that allowed the collection of indigenous micaceous ceramics, these two hearths confirmed occupation outside the last line of the Iron Age wall before the Romans settled (Arezes 2019a: 186). In this regard, see how previous indications suggested such a possibility. Regarding this, it should be drawing attention to a detail shown in the plan made by Joaquim Neves dos Santos (and published posthumously) (Santos 1995): the existence of an alignment with a circular outline, potentially compatible with an Iron Age structure. At the same time, part of another circular structure was uncovered during the 2022 campaign (Arezes and Varela 2023: 54). Therefore, new data collected has turned the hypothesis into a solid fact.

Knowing the potential of this settlement for bringing to light new insights into Late Antiquity, a multidisciplinary approach was planned since the GUIFARQ project's first year. Therefore, soil samples began to be collected in each excavation campaign. After that, carpological and antrachological research was carried out. It is this sphere that we are now going to discuss.



Figure 3 - Final view of the excavation area at the end of the 2023 campaign (Photo by Rodry Mendonça - Arqueologia & Património), in which the spatial coexistence of different of structures, with variable configuration, can be observed.

Archaeobotany

Since the first campaign, the GUIFARQ project has implemented a soil sampling strategy. The team carried out this work in the field according to the guidelines proposed by João Tereso (CIBIO-BIOPOLIS). In this context, Luís Seabra developed a Carpology study (Seabra 2020) and, in parallel, an Anthracology study, which resulted in the master's thesis of one of the authors of this text (Magalhães 2020), from which some pertinent aspects will be brought and discussed.

Materials and Methods

Thirty-six samples from the excavations at Campo da Ponte, at the slope of the settlement, with a total volume of 184 litres, were studied. From the Augustan Period, five samples were taken from the fills of the negative structures [46] and [93]. Samples from Late Antiquity, such as the fills [23] and [202], which can be correlated with hearths, were recovered from primary contexts. Secondary contexts were also sampled, twenty sedimentary and eight manuals, referring to abandonment layers: from residential structures, such as [11] and [25]; from circulation areas, such as [17] and [19]; and from negative structures, such as [41] and [185], the latter excavated from the bedrock.

The study mainly focused on Late Antiquity contexts, which is evident from the significantly higher number of samples studied for this period compared to the previous ones. This was because sampling efforts were concentrated on these contexts due to their better material and stratigraphic potential resulting from the early stage of the excavation process. However, more carpological and anthracological analyses for Augustan/Ancient Empire contexts will be developed soon.

Each sedimentary sample had a standard volume of 10 L, processed through bucket or machine floatation with a 0.5mm mesh. A minimum of 100 charcoal fragments with over 2 mm were analysed, increasing when a new taxon was found in the last 50 analysed charcoals.

Each fragment's cross, tangential, and radial sections were observed under a stereomicroscope and reflected-light microscope. The anatomical characteristics were compared with wood anatomy atlases (e.g., Schweingruber 1990) and CIBIO's reference collection. The adopted criteria by Tereso (2007: 150) from the description of Queiroz and Van der Burgh (1989) were followed to identify the genus *Erica*. For each charcoal fragment, dendrological characteristics and anatomical alterations were registered, namely the tree-ring curvature (Marguerie and Hunot 2007: 1421), the presence of bark, radial cracks (Thery-Parisot and Henry 2012), vitrification (McParland *et al.* 2010) and signs of biodegradation (Moskal del Hoyo *et al.* 2010).

Results

A total of 3559 charcoals were identified (see Table 1). The study revealed that the settlement contained great taxonomic diversity, with the taxa identified being similar in both phases. In the Augustan phase (N=539), *Quercus* sp. deciduous was the most frequent taxon (43,8%), followed by Fabaceae (20,0%). Scattered among less than 50 charcoals were the remaining taxa, namely *Castanea sativa* (8,0%), *Quercus* sp. evergreen (8,0%), *Salix* sp. (6,3%), *Erica australis/arborea* (2,6%), and *Quercus* sp. (2,1%).

In Late Antiquity (N=3020) the predominant taxon is *Castanea sativa* (53,8%), followed, with a marked difference, by *Quercus* sp. deciduous (22,6%) and Fabaceae (12,3%), being all the rest limited to less than 100 coals identified per taxon, namely *Corylus avellana* (4,0%), *Quercus* sp. (2,3%), *Fraxinus* sp. (1,5%), and *Salix* sp. (1,0%). Other occurrences are residual. Most charcoals identified in both phases had a weak curvature (62,7 %), unlike a minority with a strong curvature (12,5 %). The recording of dendrological attributes also made it possible to identify changes in the growth of the annual rings of trees, mainly *Castanea sativa*, which may be related to silvicultural practices.

Among the anatomical alterations, the presence of vitrification was noted in 504 charcoals (14,0%), mostly corresponding to Dicotyledons (21,5%) and *Quercus* sp. (18.5%), which may explain the difficulty in identifying them. On the other hand, the presence of radial cracks was detected only occasionally (3,18%). In three charcoals, xylophagous galleries were identified, corresponding to the study's only signs of biological degradation.

At the same time, 217 fragments of extremely porous indeterminate organic material were found, the nature of which could not be determined. These were separated for future studies but were not considered for this work.

Period	Early Imperial Empire				Late Antiquity								Total
Description	Secondary deposit				Primary deposit		Secondary deposit						
Context	Filling layer of [42]	Filling layer of [94]	Stone structure [99]		Archaeological deposit		Stone structure [99]		Filling layer of [42]	Filling layer of [208]			
Stratigraphic unit	46	93	23	202	11	17	19	25		41	185		
<i>Acer</i> sp.											10	10	
<i>Alnus</i> sp.	2	2										4	
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>											2	2	
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	36	1	65	56	574	80	55	304	123		26	1320	
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	1	2						2	4		90	99	
<i>Erica australis/arbores</i>	11	1										12	
<i>Erica scoparia/umbellata</i>	6	3			9			3		2	3	26	
<i>Erica</i> sp.		1										1	
Fabaceae	63	29	16	11	75	2	6	30		120	33	385	
<i>Fraxinus albus</i>											6	6	
<i>Ficus</i> sp.	8											8	
<i>Fraxinus</i> sp.	6				7		1	21		8	1	44	
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>					3							3	
<i>Pinus pinaster</i>		7					2					9	
<i>Pinus pinaster pinaster</i>					2		3				1	6	
<i>Quercus robur</i>					4							4	
<i>Quercus</i> sp. deciduous	152	49	117	53	105	32	25	74		70	64	741	
<i>Quercus</i> sp. evergreen	16	21										37	
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	10			45	5				1		6	67	
Rosaceae Maloideae		1						2				3	
<i>Salix</i> sp.	27	2		5				6		6	8	54	
<i>Salix</i> sp. <i>Populus</i>								1		1		2	
<i>Vitis vinifera</i>										4		4	
<i>Dicotyledonae</i>	48	29	4	29	42	15	7	7		24	39	244	
<i>Gymnospermica</i>	1	1										2	
Indeterminate	3			1								4	
Total	390	149	202	200	826	129	99	450		363	239	3897	

Table 1

Discussion

The results show a variety of taxonomies but with three taxa predominating: *Quercus* sp. deciduous, *Castanea sativa*, and Fabaceae.

In the Augustan Period, the contexts revealed a predominance of deciduous *Quercus* sp. (deciduous oak), followed by Fabaceae, and punctuated by other taxa with residual expression, such as evergreen *Quercus* sp., from evergreen or mixed woodlands, *Salix* sp. (willow), *Alnus* sp. (alder), from riverside areas, *Erica scoparia/umbellata* (broom heather), and *Erica australis/arbores* (red heather/white heather), from heathlands, or in understorey zones or woodland edges, both in oak woodlands and riparian formations.

The presence of *Castanea sativa* in the Augustan fill ([46]) of the pit ([42]) could be related to a post-depositional process of vertical migration of lighter elements, such as anthracological and carpological macrorests. Such a hypothesis is put forward because this wood appears in large quantities in the later phase. Also, some fragments were recorded in the stratigraphic unit [41] that covered this fill. Plus, a segment of rye rachis was identified (Seabra *et al.* 2020: 1296), which, although it may appear in contexts from the turn of the era (Seabra *et al.* 2023: 8), is a cereal that more frequently occurs in Late Antiquity contexts, including in this same archaeological area of the Guifões site. On the other hand, although uncommon, chestnut wood has been found in contexts from the 1st century AD (Vaz *et al.* 2021: 378). Another species of economic interest, *Ficus* sp. (fig tree), was also identified in the stratigraphic unit [46].

In Late Antiquity, the chestnut tree predominated. The high ubiquity of occurrences indicates that its use was recurrent. The presence of deciduous oak and shrubby Fabaceae are also a constant. The other fourteen taxa identified correspond to occasional occurrences, with minimal expression, although correlated with various species from different plant formations. In this chronology, firewood from a wider variety of species seems to have been collected than in the previous period, some of which had yet to be identified (see Table 1). Rosaceae Maloideae and *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree), which could correspond to small trees, are such cases. These small or medium-sized taxa could be found in shrubby formations or simply as part of the understorey or edge of the region's woodlands. There are also riparian trees, such as *Acer* sp. (maple), *Fraxinus* sp. (ash), *Corylus avellana* (hazel), and *Laurus nobilis* (laurel). In the Late Antiquity fill ([41]) of the pit [42], the residual presence of *Vitis vinifera* (grapevine) was identified.

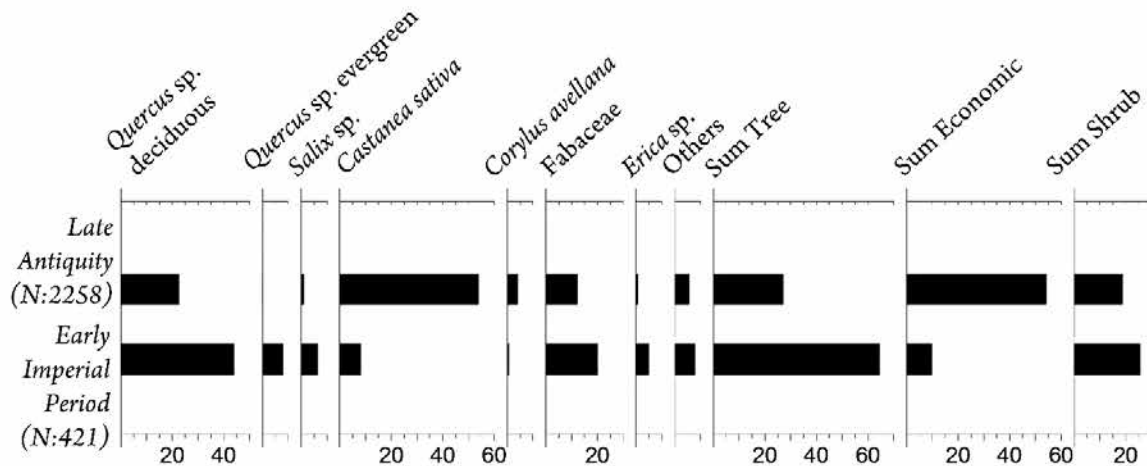


Figure 4 - Percentage distribution of the different taxa per period, with more than 30 charcoals identified. 'Others' represents all the taxa with less than 30 charcoals in both periods. The 'Sum economic' represents *Castanea sativa*, *Ficus sp.*, *Laurus sp.*, and *Vitis vinifera*.

Identifying specific dendrological characteristics made it possible to obtain relevant taphonomic information. According to the data, one could understand that collection in both periods focused mainly on already developed, large-calibre individuals, which meant, for example, cutting down the trunks of adult trees.

The use of logs may be due, on the one hand, to the need to use large quantities of firewood and, on the other hand, to maintain long-lasting combustion. There is also the possibility that the remains in question result from a deforestation process. It is essential to note that small branches or foliage would have been used to initiate combustion, so it is understandable that many of these small-calibre elements did not survive combustion and, therefore, did not have much anthracological significance.

Only Fabaceae showed rings with a strong curvature, which aligns with the anatomical characteristics of these species, essentially small shrubs. Overall, there were few radial cracks, which indicate that the wood was green at the time of combustion (Théry-Parisot *et al.* 2010: 145), and almost half of the cases were identified in charcoals with weak curvature. From another perspective, the lower percentage of cracks in wood with a strong curvature could indicate either that the twigs or small branches used for combustion consisted of dead wood, which doesn't seem feasible in the long term, as wood from nearby forests would be collected and consumed repeatedly (Martín Seijo 2012: 47-48), or that the small-calibre green wood was entirely consumed during combustion. However, fungi and xylophagous galleries, which could indicate wood is beginning to decompose, proved to be either non-existent or rare in the group analysed.

It can be inferred that the wood used as fuel in Castro de Guifões came from different vegetation units. These include deciduous forests dominated by deciduous oak, where many other species, such as chestnut, maple, and ash, could also be found. It is impossible to deduce these oak forests' extent or proximity to Guifões. Still, considering that the site has a long history of occupation, the oak forests in its vicinity could be less extensive. The subserial formations, resulting from anthropogenic pressure on the forests (Figueiral and Bettencourt 2004: 225), are represented in the group studied by shrubby Fabaceae and *Erica* spp. The presence of some species, such as willow, ash tree, alder, hazelnut tree,

laurel, and oak, suggests riparian formations served to collect firewood. One must note that several species mentioned coexist with deciduous forests and riparian galleries, so it is difficult to draw their boundaries. On the other hand, the chestnut tree that could be found wild in those formations in the period studied here is probably already the result of cultivation. The same could be said about laurel.

From this, there is continuity in the selection of wood from wild species. This gesture goes back as far as the Iron Age. There is a parallel process, which began in the Augustan Period but was most prominent in Late Antiquity, of the possible expansion of arboriculture (Peña-Chocarro *et al.* 2019: 64). The combined presence of chestnut, fig, grapevine, and laurel trees suggests this possibility. In the context of Late Antiquity, the mentioned increase could have two distinct interpretations that are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, there is the hypothesis that the wood and fruit came from wild individuals, considering that these are native species. On the other hand, they could come from domesticated populations of these species since these crops are widely attested for these chronologies in different regions of the Iberian Peninsula and along the Mediterranean basin (Buxó 2005: 110, Krebs *et al.* 2022: 14, Peña-Chocarro and Pérez-Jordà 2023, Zohary *et al.* 2012: 114-115).

From the appointed species, however, only the chestnut tree stood out. Although its identification in the region is relatively rare, this discrepancy has already been noted in other anthracological studies of Late Antiquity contexts in the north-west, such as in the Castro do Monte Mozinho (Vaz 2017: 1334). Charcoal from Roman contexts was also collected at the Castro de Cidadelhe (Vaz *et al.* 2016), the Castro do Monte das Ermidas, and the Castro de Penices (Figueiral 1990, 121), as well as the Cividade de Bagunte (author unpublished results), but without specific chronological information.

This trend, which seems to occur all over the western Mediterranean (Krebs *et al.* 2022: 14) and on the Atlantic seaboard, despite some possible exceptions (Jarman *et al.* 2019: 21), signals a transitional phase with repercussions on the palaeolandscape, cultural habits, and relations with the forest, which are reflected in its exploitation and maintenance, influencing the availability of resources. Among forest management practices, we can highlight pruning, which was recognized in chestnut and deciduous oak fragments with shortened annual ring successions.

The presence of these woods, as well as areas of forestry, provided fruit with carpological evidence, namely acorns (*Quercus* sp.), chestnuts (*Castanea sativa*), and blackberries or raspberries (*Rubus* sp.) (Seabra *et al.* 2020: 1295). The presence of hazel tree and strawberry tree wood are indicators of the possibility of accessing these fruits.

Allochthonous fruits must also have been available, especially from the 1st century AD onwards, with the intensification of commercial networks driven by the Romanisation process (Peña-Chocarro and Pérez-Jordà 2019: 64). The fragments of peach stones found in the Augustan levels attest to this availability (Seabra *et al.* 2020: 1295). It is known that there have also been changes in terms of the consumed species, particularly cereals, such as *Secale cereale* (rye) (Seabra *et al.* 2020: 1296), which, although it already existed in the Iron Age as a weed, may have been re-introduced as a crop during the Low Empire (Seabra *et al.* 2023: 15).

And, as demonstrated by local (Seabra *et al.* 2020) and regional (e. g. Tereso 2012) carpological data, and in line with palynological evidence (e.g., Granja 2022, Ramil Rego *et al.* 2011), there would have been an agricultural area nearby since this was a phase marked by deforestation and soil erosion (Seabra *et al.* 2020). This is a phase of cultural transformation. The changes in the location of the settlement areas, from the top of the hillforts to the valleys (Alarcão 2017: 223), must have led to a shift in production and consumption habits. Still, at Castro de Guifões, and given the approximate size of the settlement, wood harvesting had to be carried out on a local scale, as opposed to urban centres that needed an organised wood supply

chain, as may have been the case in *Bracara Augusta* (Vaz *et al.* 2021: 379). Even so, the archaeobotanical study shows that new practices and specialisation may have been acquired, particularly regarding forest management strategies. Considering the current state of research, we assume that even a rural area like the one presented will have participated in this long chain of sharing and exchanging knowledge, reflected in the archaeological data.

Conclusion

Archaeological data recovered in Castro de Guifões present a non-linear reality guided, on the one hand, by continuities at some levels and, on the other hand, by introducing knowledge, techniques, and new products. Thanks to multidisciplinary studies of archaeobotanical nature, new approaches can be advanced beyond the mere recognition of material productions, providing, for example, the identification of the introduction of organic archaeological elements, such as edible fruits: one of many other pieces of evidence suggesting the circulation of products, cultures, and diets.

The GUIFARQ project's transdisciplinary nature encourages data cross-referencing. It has gradually led to new possibilities for understanding this rural settlement's economic, cultural, and social framework. Combined interpretation of the different types of archaeological remains reveals a constant uptake and assimilation of exogenous products, with relations extending as far as the Mediterranean or Northern Europe: a circumstance that had consequences on the resources available for combustion, manufacture, construction, and feeding. And that unfolds perspectives on the ways of life and contact networks of the communities that inhabited the Castro de Guifões in the long diachrony.



Figure 5 - Map indicating the origin of some of the products and materials identified at the Castro de Guifões. Adapted from Magalhães *et al.* 2023. Caption: 1) Roman common Ware with non-vitrifiable Red Slip - *Lucus Augusti*. 2) Truncated troncoconic bowl - *Bracara Augusta*. 3) Amphora Haltern 70 - Guadalquivir Valley, Baetica. 4) Part of a bowl with engraved figurative decoration - Rhineland. 5) *Castanea sativa* (Photo by Nasia M.). 6) African Red Slip Ware - Proconsular Africa. 7) Amphora Keay 59 - Byzacena. 8) *Prunus persica*.

In future excavation campaigns, we will continue the studies whose preliminary results are published here. The aim is, on the one hand, to increase our understanding of the landscape surrounding Castro de Guifões and, on the other, to contribute to the palaeoethnobotanical interpretation of what would have been the local and regional north-western Peninsular rural world on an imperial scale in Late Antiquity.

Likewise, chromatographic analyses of ceramics, geophysical prospecting, and geomorphological studies will continue in the laboratory and the field. All these contributions aim to complement the panorama of the settlement's occupation patterns and foment an understanding of its strategies and dynamics in the long diachrony.

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