The earrings of Pancas treasure: Analytical study by X-ray based techniques – A first approach

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1. Introduction – the Iberian earrings

The Pancas treasure, conserved nowadays at the National Museum of Archaeology (NMA) in Lisbon, was found in 1979 in Quinta das Pancas (Alenquer-Lisbon), and consists of 3 silver necklaces, 1 silver smelting drop, 10 gold earrings and 136 silver denarii from the Roman Republic period, giving a terminus post quem of 1st c. BC [1]. The earrings (Fig. 1) are representative of the development of technological traditions in the Iberian Peninsula during the Iron Age: the change from a massive casting, characteristic of the Late Bronze Age, to a repoussé work decorated with wires and granulation and the use of hard soldering [2].

Fig. 2 proposes a chronological evolution of the Iberian earrings, which starts with a single casted round ring typical of the Late Atlantic Bronze Age gold work and of the Northern European traditions. The arrival of new technologies and cultural influences from the Eastern Mediterranean [3] brings the application of granules joined by solder to the main ring (Au171), in different patterns (Au169), and finally the introduction of twisted wire and repoussé work (Au833 typologically close to the earrings of Serradilla, Cáceres [4]), typical of the orientalising period and the Etruscan traditions.

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